

BLACK HISTORY SUPPLEMENT



FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH
MARCH IS 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE
SUPPLEMENT FROM PAGE 19

US lawmakers ask Bush to appoint peace envoy for Sri Lanka

A group 38 US lawmakers have asked President George W. Bush to appoint a special envoy to help bring about peace in conflict-ridden Sri Lanka.

The legislators from the House of Representatives said in a letter to Bush that they were troubled by renewed violence and a rising number of deaths as well as a big

increase in unsolved kidnappings across Sri Lanka.

"It is time for the United States to provide global leadership to help advance peace for the people of Sri Lanka," they said. New Jersey Democratic Representative Rush Holt initiated the move.

[Full Text of Letter on page:34]



'Playing with hearts', at a Visual Arts Exhibition by Upali Ananda in Colombo, Sri Lanka
[Pic: HumanityAshore.org]

"Life is the flower for which love is the honey" - Victor Hugo (1802-1885) French poet



ANOTHER NEW BRANCH AT MORNINGSIDES & MILNER, SCARBOROUGH DETAILS ON BACK PAGE-48

Indian PM requests Sri Lankan President to present Devolution Package before end of February

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has conveyed a message to the President of Sri Lanka Mahinda Rajapakse that the devolution package promised by him should be submitted before the end of February, according to news reports.

The above message was conveyed through the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Ratnasri Wickramanayake

when he visited India recently.

The Indian Prime Minister also told the opposition leader of Sri Lanka, Ranil Wickramasinghe during his recent visit that the President must be in a favorable position to introduce the political package as promised to India last November since he has a majority in Parliament now.



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Saravana Bhavan Specialities

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PAGE 42

Provincial By-Election Special

TESTING GROUND FOR RULING LIBERALS BEFORE GENERAL ELECTION

Details on Page 3



Michael Chan, Liberal candidate for Markham By-Election on Feb 8th with Logan Kanapathi, Councillor Ward 7 on the left and Neethan Shan, School Trustee for York Region District School Board in Area 4 (Wards 7 & 8)

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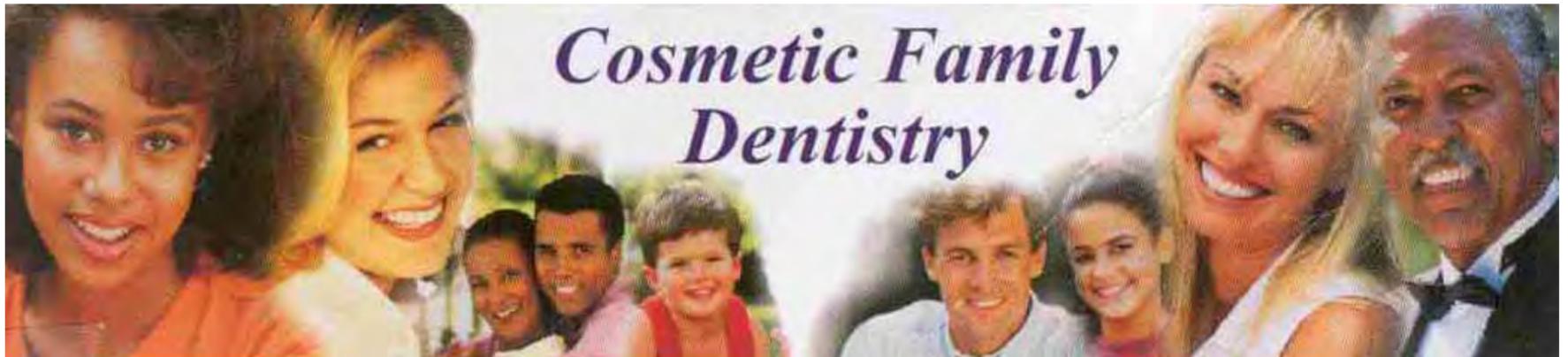
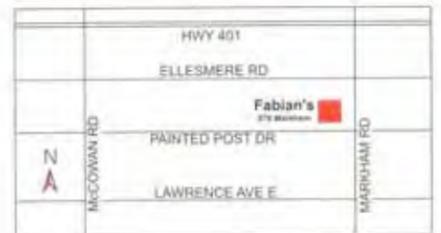
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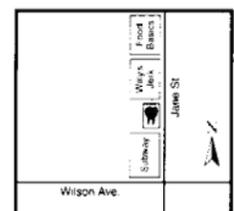
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NEWS FEATURES

Provincial By-Election Special

TESTING GROUND FOR RULING LIBERALS BEFORE GENERAL ELECTION

Shiyam Loganathan

Voters in three GTA provincial ridings go the polls Feb. 8 for what promises to be a sneak preview of the Oct. 4 provincial general election. The political future of the provincial Liberal and Conservative parties will probably be decided in the rich band of 905 votes that surrounds Toronto. So it's no surprise that the upcoming by-election in Markham has turned into a hard-fought nail-biter of a race. Former Liberal MPP Tony Wong took the riding from high-profile Conservative candidate Minister David Tsubouchi, a pivotal victory that pointed to new voting patterns in the once Tory-blue 905 belt. After Wong resigned last year to run for Municipal elections, the Liberal party

sought a strong local candidate for the battle ahead -- Michael Chan.

The Liberal hopeful has been fully supported by his party with resounding endorsements from Premier Dalton McGuinty, MP John McCallum and Former Markham Ward 7 Councillor Khalid Usman. Michael Chan also has community leaders such as Keith Bray, President, Markham Board of Trade, Pat Howell, Past President, Markham African Caribbean Association and Colin Smith, Past Chairman, Markham Race Relations Committee supporting his efforts to become MPP for Markham. These prominent individuals have praised Michael Chan's



Michael Chan

willingness to serve others, his drive and determination, his volunteerism and especially his community spirit.

Michael Chan's campaign platform deals with the pressing issues local to Markham. He promises to make education even better, help newcomers succeed, improve health care, relieve gridlock and create opportunities for business. He intends on coming through with his promises by ensuring schools are built, fighting for more English as a Second Language Programs, fighting for recognition of foreign-trained professionals, ensuring funding keeps pace with growth in terms of health care in Markham, fighting for

federal funding for subway expansion to York Region, designated bus lanes, and expansion of the 404 highway, and finally by having a greater emphasis on research and development and leveraging Markham's diversity by improving trade relations with foreign countries.

Liberal candidate Michael Chan says, "When people are given the opportunity to prosper, the entire community prospers." Chan also says that he is a strong voice for our community. His strong voice may elect him for Markham and send waves around the province as to how the provincial elections will turn out in October.

Treasury Board Minister Hon. Vic Toews Meets South Asian Community Members in Markham

Meeting organized by D'Arcy Pigott, who is standing for nomination for the Provincial PC Party in Oak Ridges riding in October 2007

An evening event with Treasury Board Minister Vic Toews was organized by D'Arcy Pigott, PC nominee for Oak Ridges riding in the October 2007 provincial election. The



Hon. Minister Vic Toews and Shawn Fried Policy Advisor

function was held late last month specifically to meet with various members of the South Asian community. D'Arcy Pigott sent invitations to Tamil Advisory Board and members of the South Asian Moslem communities. Mr. Siva Sivapragasam and Logan Velumailum attended on behalf of Monsoon Journal. Others present at this event were Shawn Fried, Policy Advisor for Treasury Board, Karma Macgregor, Regional Organizer GTA PC, Harry Jeganathan, Vice-President PC for Markham-Unionville, Lanka Jeganathan,

P.Eng and Duncan Gabriel, Executive Member PC for Oak Ridges.

Similar meetings will be followed with other events in the South Asian communities later this year, as the Minister wants to involve the leaders in Conservative Party functions and to include many of them in the party itself.

D'Arcy's work with the various South Asian cultural communities started in 1993, when he was asked by former Premier Mike Harris and former Minister David Tsubouchi, to create "outreach programs" for each of the different groups. He was also requested to involve members of these communities in riding associations and the party process. This entailed attending Mosques, temples and churches in various parts of the GTA and also setting up advisory committees for the different Ministries. This was done to assure these cultural groups that they could gain access to the programs and funds that the province had set aside for use in infrastructure, education in "English as a Second Language" and money for sports and ethnic cultural programs.

This work continues today and has been broadened over the years to include the same program in the Federal Conservative Party, from Jean Charest and Joe Clark, through

to Steven Harper and the ruling Conservative party of Canada.

In conclusion, D'Arcy Pigott wants to take this to the next level and therefore he is standing for nomination for the



D'Arcy Pigott

Provincial PC Party in Oak Ridges riding in October 2007. He feels that, with the help of all his friends in the South Asian Communities and that as MPP, he could broaden the work all are doing to help the people from these groups enjoy a real position in working inside one of the greatest political parties in Canada and bringing about a real change and growth for everyone.



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 the loving ones give out everything" -
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Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce Based in Toronto, Program details for 2007 is available in website www.ctcc.ca For details & bookings: info@ctcc.ca Business Convention & Expo Friday, Mar 23, 2007 Awards Gala Saturday: April 21, 2007 Walkathon: Sunday, June 10, 2007

From the Publisher's Desk International Community must act to prevent past failures

From eradicating poverty to global warming, spread of AIDS/ health issues and global conflicts, the role of United Nations is important today than ever before.

The world awaits prudent action by the United Nations Organization, along with its member states, in moving forward to the benefit of humanity.

The world body now has a new Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon. While the pending issues reached their current crisis point over the past decade, the new Secretary General is in a position to make new inroads in addressing the concerns.

With international hot spots and humanitarian disasters arising from them are calling for urgent attention, the credibility of the United Nations will always be at risk when the world's response to mass atrocities is inadequate.

Secretary General Moon is said to have the solid backing of key Security Council member states. The UN was called upon to act to prevent humanitarian disasters in the recent past and it failed. Addressing the issues this time in a concerted manner is vital to avoid the same miserable failure once again.

It's a new Secretary General, a new year and a new path of hope is what needs to be created by the United Nations Organization and member states.

The Monsoon Journal urges, the United Nations and member states to alleviate the sufferings of the internally displaced persons from civil strives and prevent humanitarian catastrophes.

Many citizens around the world and analysts credit Kofi Annan for his dedication to democratic justice, objective

analysis, wise forethought and necessary action without fear of the inevitable criticism. His occupation of the secretary general's hot seat restored the belief that great intelligence and calm insight into the political, economic and social human condition can still exist in an office of virtually universal responsibility, say the analysts.

However, the world body under the recently departed Secretary General was also marred by the failure of the United Nations, its members, and its peacekeeping forces to prevent the atrocities that occurred in Rwanda and Bosnia.

Canadian General Romeo Dallaire criticised Annan after the Rwandan genocide, saying that he was overly passive and ignored continued requests for more UN troops, which could have prevented the catastrophe.

For his part, Mr Annan has stated that the entire world let Rwanda down.

The Monsoon Journal urges the prevention of this same 'blame game' again. The new Secretary General and member states must address the issue in the face humanity alone and not just geo-politics.

Not only urgent action is needed in countries with internal conflict, measures must be put in place to prevent future humanitarian catastrophes.

To this end, member countries, notably countries such as Canada, wielding more clout than others in the International Community - must take lead roles in ensuring a repeat of the past failures and inactions of the United Nations Organization is eradicated from the horizon.

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The Centre for South Asian Studies of the University of Toronto and the University of Windsor will host an interdisciplinary Tamil Studies Conference in Toronto from May 31- June 2, 2007.

The disciplines represented range from Anthropology, Archaeology, Diaspora Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature, Political Studies, Psychology, Public Health, Religion, Sociology and Theatre Studies. Over 40 scholars from universities including Columbia University, University of California (Berkeley), Massey University (New Zealand), French Institute of Pondicherry, McGill University, University of Toronto, University of Batticaloa and the University of Peradeniya will participate in this important conference.

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ANNOUNCEMENT BY ICCC

The Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce that Premier McGuinty will be speaking at a "Post Mission" dinner ICCC is hosting on Feb.13, 2007 at the Sheraton Centre, Toronto. For more details, contact ICCC. ICCC is pleased to offer all delegates of the mission the ICCC member rate for this special event.

By: **Ajit Khanna, President, ICCC:**
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NEWS FEATURES

A newspaper ombudsman looks back on a tightrope act

Bindu Shajan Perappadan

The Guardian's outgoing Readers' Editor, Ian Mayes, shares some of his experiences

London: Britain's first Readers' Editor, Ian Mayes, is set to hand over charge as the independent internal ombudsman of *The Guardian*, a post he has held for nearly a decade. Taking over from him in March will be Siobhain Butterworth, now the newspaper's legal director.

Speaking about the significance of an ombudsman, the challenges associated with the office and the changing face of news, Mr. Mayes observes that the core values of journalism are not in any danger of being lost.

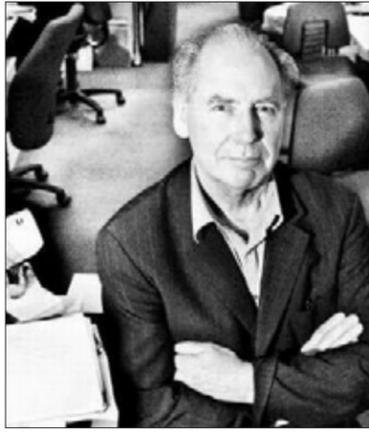
"At the core of the business of providing news is news gathering and verifying facts – that is the central core and that doesn't change. I am optimistic about the future of journalism. I am impressed with the quality of the younger journalists and the work that they are putting together," he said in an interview with *The Hindu*, the first newspaper in South Asia to have an ombudsman, since last year.

"I'm often asked about the changing face of news and whether the development of new technology and mediums of communication will adversely hit newspapers. The answer is no. The development and introduction of technology does not worry me at all."

Mr. Mayes is president of the Organisation of News Ombudsmen (ONO), a group of some 100 newspaper ombudsmen from around the world, including *The Hindu's* Readers' Editor, K. Narayanan.

Word of caution

Even as he travels extensively to popularise the concept, Mr. Mayes cautions newspapers against going for an ombudsman just for the sake of having one. "There is a substantial growth in the number of people being appointed as Readers' Editor. Newspapers in Latin America, Eastern Europe and parts of the former Soviet Union are welcoming the idea. But I want to warn newspapers against adopting the system for cosmetic purposes. If not done



Ian Mayes

for the right reasons, bringing in a Readers' Editor can damage the reputation of the newspaper, as readers today can see through the move. But papers that have adopted the system to bring in a positive change are happy with it."

Mr. Mayes believes he has managed to walk the tightrope of being Readers' Editor fairly well, and encourages this correspondent to crosscheck with his colleagues on this fact.

Mr. Mayes, however, warns Readers' Editors against getting involved in pre-publication decisions. "That is not part of the Readers' Editor's job, as it can lead to confusion about his role as an internal censor – which he is certainly not. He can, however, contribute to bringing in positive reporting; ensuring that the end result appears more humane and has the principles of good reporting to back it. In our newspaper we have re-worked the manner in which we report about suicides. Detail about the method of the suicide is not included to prevent copycat suicides and it has been appreciated by our readers. Readers' Editors are not media reporters. My job is to look at readers' complaints and speak about what is right-wrong, good-bad in a report."

Mr. Mayes admits that for a Readers' Editor, the secret of working well is collective participation with journalists. "I try to be open and accessible. Reporters are consulted before readers' queries are answered and the name of the reporter is included in the reply only if it is essential. We also try and minimise the blame game, as

correction then takes a long time coming," says Mr. Mayes, sitting in his first-floor, "glass box" office in the middle of the newsroom.

The Guardian recently faced many complaints about its use on the front page of a picture of Saddam Hussein soon after his execution. Says Mr. Mayes: "We got 200 complaints about the use of the picture. I believe that whenever we use a picture like that the Editor has to take into account the reactions that it will bring along and be clear about his reasons for using the picture. Adding an editorial note explaining the use of the picture helps readers understand the picture's significance."

Other issues

But it is not just controversial pictures that have brought in sharp responses from the readers, notes Mr. Mayes. "We got 300 complaints when we took two crosswords appearing on two different pages of the newspaper and put them on one page. We had to revert to the original format taking into account what our readers wanted. Readers today are sensitive even to small changes."

Pointing out the most common mistakes that journalists should watch out for, Mr. Mayes says: "Inaccuracy while reporting facts, misquoting and spelling names incorrectly are the most frequently made mistakes. I believe that these are occupational hazards when you are working to meet deadlines. While some of them may seem trivial, it speaks about the general attitude of the journalist and in turn the newspaper. Special effort should be made to get the facts right."

Mr. Mayes is now to begin work on a project of putting together the history of *The Guardian* since the 1980s.

His book, *Journalism Right and Wrong*, a collection of his columns in *The Guardian*, is due next month.

His other works include *Only Correct: The Best of Corrections and Clarifications* (Guardian Books, 2005) and *More Corrections and Clarifications* (Atlantic Books, 2002).

Courtesy: the Hindu

Readers Corner

About Monsoon Journal

Thank you very much for sending the electronic version of the January edition of "Monsoon Journal" and for featuring TiEQuest 2007 in it prominently. Your support for TiEQuest 2007 is greatly appreciated.

By the way, I also appreciated the excellent quality of your magazine and the number of informative articles in it featuring both local and international news and the prominence given to local talent. Keep up the good work.

Regards,
Kalyan Sundaram
Director, Administration
TiE Toronto

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Thank you & best regards

Chandra Silva

I went through "Monsoon Journal" January issue. It is excellent. Infact, Mr. Logan visited our office and was kind enough to hand over the copies to me. I look forward to your participation and coverage of our seminar.

Thanks and regards,

Perri Muthuraman.

Thank you for your e mail of 13/01/2007.

My father passed away on 3rd of January, in Singapore.

Your article is well appreciated by all my family members.

Thanking you once again.

Arul S.G. Gnamam

Managing Director

St. Anthonys Group - Sri Lanka

(The reference here is to the Appreciation article published about the Late A.Y.S. Gnamam-leading Industrialist & Chairman

of Virakesari Newspaper Group in Sri Lanka)

Thank you for the information. You are doing a great job. Keep it up.

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With regards,

Ram C. Ramanathan,

M. Sc., P. Eng.

President, Canada Tamil Parents' Association and

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Thank you so much!

It (Reference to Monsoon Journal) looks fabulous.

Kavitha

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It (referring to Monsoon Journal) has come nicely and covers interesting features including Thai Pongal and Indian republic day. Sangetha, shalini and Bharathy enjoyed the cinema pages.

Congratulations.

Paramalingam LLB (UK)

"Monsoon Journal" the monthly English publication printed and published in Toronto is showing its continued commitment to public service possessing a unique independent voice in journalism since its inception in June 2006.

With an excellent layout and sound editorial the Monsoon Journal will be a force to reckon with and will take the position as the leading English print monthly publication within the communities. Congratulations to the Management and staff of Monsoon Journal for the vision and dedication for a job well done.

Bill Redwood

Representative for Khaleej Times in Toronto



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FEATURES

KUMAR PUNITHAVEL

Maha Sivarathiri

Kumar Punithavel



While bathing the lingam the devotee prays, "Oh Lord! I will bathe thee with water, milk, etc. Do thou kindly bathe me with the milk of wisdom, do thou kindly wash me of all my sins, so that the fire of worldliness which is scorching me may be put out once and for all, so that I may be one with thee- the one without a second. In the great legend Mahabaratha, Bhishma, while resting on the bed of arrows awaiting for the time of his demise, and conducting discourse on Dharma, refers to the observance of Maha Sivarathiri by King Chithirabanu.

This story is frequently explained mistakenly to mean that, even if some one unknowingly keeps vigil on Sivarathiri will be blessed by God. Nothing is further from truth and foolish to believe God bestows ignorance. The Hindu mythology has deep meaning and only a serious seeker of truth will find it unfolding. Let us see the story and its true meaning. Once upon a time while King Chithirabanu was observing the Maha Sivarathiri penance with his wife, the Sage Ashtavakra came to visit the court of the king. On arrival, the sage asked: "O King! Why are you observing a fast today?" The king who had the gift of remembering incidents from his previous births answered the sage. In his past birth, the king said, he was born a hunter in Varnasi and his name was Saswara. His livelihood was to kill and sell birds and animals. One day he got lost in the forest and was overtaken by nightfall. Unable to return home, he climbed a tree for safety and shelter. This happened to be a *Beal* tree. Earlier he had shot a deer and he bundled the carcass and tied it to a branch far above the ground.

Since he was concerned that he may fall down, he kept himself awake the whole night. Whenever he thought of his wife and children going hungry that night, he shed profuse tears. In

order to pass the night away, he engaged himself by plucking the *Beal* leaves and dropping them down. When day dawned, on his way home he sold the deer and bought some food for the family and himself. But while he was about to break his fast, a stranger came begging for food. He served him first and then took his food. At the time of his death in the past birth, he saw two messengers of Lord Siva who had come to take him to the abode of Lord Siva. It was then he learnt he had earned great merit by unconsciously worshipping Lord Siva on Sivarathiri, for there was a Siva Lingam buried at the foot of the tree. The leaves he had dropped had fallen on the Lingam. The tears he shed out of pure sorrow for his family fell on the Lingam and had washed it. He had also on fast the whole day and night. Later, even before breaking his fast, he had fed a poor man. Thus he had unconsciously worshipped the Lord with all the required rules of rituals and thus gained merit. After living in the abode of the Lord for a very long time he was now born as King Chithirabanu. This story may appear as a simple one. It says that even if one does the ritual of worship by accident, Lord Shiva will bless him. This story is a metaphor; it has deeper and profound meanings. It is an allegory, which is explained in the scriptures of the Hindu faith. The wild animals the hunter fought and killed are conceived as evils like lust, anger, greed, jealousy and so forth. The jungle was nothing but his mind! It is in the mind these wild animals roam freely. A person pursuing a spiritual path must first destroy these evil tendencies. The name of the hunter in this story was Suswara. The word itself means "melodious". A person practicing the said path in spiritual life will develop certain external signs of a yogi. The first marks are lightness of the body, health, and clearness, of countenance and pleasant voice. This is clearly portrayed in the *swetaswata Upanishad book 2 verse 13*.

Lightness, freedom from disease, steadiness,

Clarity of complexion, sweetness of voice,

A pleasant smell, little urine or excrement

Tell of the first arising of yoga

The hunter himself has practiced yoga for many years and had reached the first stage; thus the name Suswara is given to the hunter. The point midway between the eyebrows is called Ajna charka by yogis. It is regarded as the meeting place of the three nerve currents {nadis}, namely the Ida, Pingala and Sushuma. An aspiring yogi is instructed to focus and concentrate on this point. This

will help him to conquer his desires and evil qualities like anger and other shortcomings. It is here that he will get a vision of the Divine Light within himself. The tree represents the spinal column of the yogi. The climbing of the tree is meant to represent the ascension of the Kundalini Shakti, the serpentine power from the lowest nerve centre called the Muladhara to Ajna Chakra; that is the goal of a Yogi.

By The reason to select a *Beal* tree has been clearly explained by the fact that the leaves of *Beal* tree are three folds. They represent the Ida, Pingala, and Sushuma nadis, which are the regions for the activity of the moon, the sun, and fire respectively, or which may be thought of as the three eyes of Lord Siva. The Yogi was in the waking state when he began his meditation. He bundled up the birds and the animals he had slain and tied them on the branch of the tree before he rested. By this act, he had fully conquered his thoughts and rendered them inactive. He had gone through various steps and was practicing concentration and meditation. When he felt sleepy, it meant he was about to lose consciousness and go into deep sleep. In this story, his wife and children is none other than the world. One who seeks the Grace of God must become an embodiment of love. He must have an all-embracing sympathy. His shedding of tears is symbolic of his universal love. In yoga also, one cannot have illumination without Divine Grace; without practicing universal love, one cannot obtain that Grace. One must perceive one's own self everywhere. The preliminary stage is to identify one's own mind with the minds of all created beings after which, he should rise above the limitations of the mind and merge it in the Self. That happens only in the stage of Samadi, not earlier. The dropping of the leaves from the tree shows that all his activities were confined to the three nadis. The leaves of the *Beal* tree, as explained earlier, represent the three nadis. The vigil he kept the whole night means he passed the deep Sleep State successfully. The dawning of the day symbolizes the entrance into the state of super consciousness. When he came down and had a vision of Siva Lingam, he had reached the super consciousness stage. He had seen the Siva Lingam or the icon of Siva in the form of the inner lights. It was the vision of the Lord.

Stories of the Hindu faith have profound meanings. One should go deep and study to be exalted by them.



This year the Maha Sivarathiri festival falls on the 15th of February. The Hindu belief is that when the creation was completed, Lord Siva and Parvathi Devi went to live on summit of Mount Kailas. Parvathi Devi asked, "Oh venerable Lord! Which of the many rituals observed in thy honor pleases you most?"



The Lord replied, "The 14th night of the new moon, in the dark fortnight during the month of *Masi*, is my favorite day. It is known as Sivarathiri. My devotees give me more happiness by mere fasting and observing vigil than by ceremonial baths and offerings of flowers, sweets and incense. "The devotee observes strict spiritual discipline in the day and worships me in four different forms during each of the four successive three-hour periods of the night. The offering of a few *Beal* leaves is more precious to me than the precious jewels and flowers. My devotee should bathe me in milk at the first period, in curd at the second, in Ghee at the third, and in honey at the fourth and last. Next morning, the observer should feed the poor first and, after performing the prescribed ceremonies, can break the fast. Oh Devi! There is no ritual which can please me more than this simple routine of sanctity."

Parvathi Devi was deeply moved by what the Great Lord said. She repeated it to her celestial friends who in their turn passed it on to the ruling princesses on

earth. Thus was the sanctity of Sivarathiri broadcast all over the world.

There are three natural *gunas* or characters in human being. They are *Rajes* (the quality of passionate activity to possess all) *Thamas* (that of inactivity), and the last is *Sathviha* (the quality of saintly activity of righteousness). When one *guna* dominates, the other two subsides. The Sivarathiri viratha aims to control the first two so that the last one will dominate. The entire day is spent at the feet of Lord Siva. Continuous worship of the lord necessitates the devotee's presence in the place of worship. The passionate activity of the human nature is controlled by this. Evils like lust, anger, and jealousy, born out of *Rajes guna* are ignored and subdued. The devotee observes vigil throughout the night and thus conquers *Thamas guna*. Constant vigilance is imposed on the mind. Every three hours a round of worship of the Shiva Lingam is conducted. Sivarathiri is a perfect viratham (penance) where, mans in-born good nature, is brought to the surface. The formal worship consists of bathing the lord. Lord Siva is considered to be of the form of Glow (which the Shiva Lingam represents). He is eternally glowing with the fire of austerity. He is therefore best propitiated with cool bathing.

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FEATURES



Valentine's Day

Raymond Rajabalan

Millions of people around the globe send Valentine's Day cards to express their affection for someone special. But how did this holiday originate?

When we think of Valentine's Day, we call to mind hearts, chocolates, flowers and expressions of love. Yet before joining in the fun, wouldn't it be interesting to know where this tradition comes from.

Origins of Valentine's Day

Saint Valentine's Day or Valentine's Day falls on February 14. It is the traditional day on which lovers express their love for each other; sending Valentine's cards, candy, or donations to charities. It is very common to present flowers on Valentine's Day. The holiday is named after three men, all Christian martyrs named Valentine. The day became associated with romantic love in the High Middle Ages, when the tradition of courtly love flourished.

Roman Roots

The history of Valentine's day is obscure, and further clouded by various fanciful legends.

Valentine's Day began when the early Roman Catholic Church tried to Christianize an ancient pagan Roman holiday called **Lupercalia, celebrated by shepherds on February 15**. The word Lipercalia comes from *lupus* or wolf. That celebration was a licentious festival that

honored **Lupercus**, the hero-hunter of wolves. This festival was so immensely popular among the Roman people that Pope Gelasius 1(492-496) recast this pagan festival as a Christian feast day circa 496, abolishing lupercalia and replacing it by St.Valentine's day to be celebrated on February 14.

Valentines Galore

Which St. Valentine this early pope intended to honor remains a mystery: according to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, there were at least three early Christian saints by that name. One was a priest in Rome, another a bishop in Terni, and of a third St. Valentine almost nothing is known except that he met his end in Africa. Rather astonishingly, all three Valentines were said to have been martyred on Feb. 14.

Most scholars believe that the St. Valentine of the holiday was a priest who attracted the disfavour of Roman emperor Claudius II around 270. At this stage, the factual ends and the mythic begins. According to one legend, Claudius II had prohibited marriage for young men, claiming that bachelors made better soldiers. Valentine continued to secretly perform marriage ceremonies but was eventually apprehended by the Romans and put to death. Another legend has it that Valentine, imprisoned by Claudius, fell in love with the daughter of his jailer. Before he was executed, he allegedly sent her a letter signed "from your Valentine."

Although all historical sources contain some of the same notions about how Valentine's Day developed, each one highlights another facet of the story.

According to one of the sources, part of the ancient ceremony entailed putting girls' names in a box and letting the boys draw them out. Couples would thus be paired off until the following year. The Church substituted saints' names for girls' names, in the hope that the participant would model his life after the saint whose name he drew. But by the 16th century, it was once again girls' names that ended up in the box. Eventually the custom of sending anonymous cards or messages to those one admired became the accepted way of celebrating St. Valentine's Day

Over the centuries, the holiday evolved, and by the 18th century, gift-giving and exchanging hand-made cards on Valentine's Day had become common in England. Hand-made valentine cards made of lace, ribbons, and featuring cupids and hearts eventually spread to the American colonies. The tradition of Valentine's cards did not become widespread in the United States, however, until the 1850s, when Esther A. Howland, a Mount Holyoke graduate and native of Worcester, Mass., began mass-producing them. Today, of course, the holiday has become a booming commercial success.

One Language all over the World...

By Poet Vaali

In the spirit of pre Sangam era poet KaNiyar Puungunran's "All lands home, all men kin" and universality, Poet Vaali wrote "Love as the Universal Language" in MGR's 1966 movie, Nadodi...i.e "Ulagamengum Ore Mozhi". Here is a translation of the song for Monsoon Journal readers:

*Language spoken by hearts in love..
Language spoken without sound..
Language of sphere-less divine....*

*A bird in varied colors
One lyric many ragas
Nights are alike but seasons differ
Delight is same for the many souls*

*When separated by sea and sky
Love unites faster than the speed of wind
Souls may be separated into two
But love is just one - named divinity*

*One sky - one and only moonlight
Years those gone by are in millions
Imparted by love, reciting poetry and delving in arts
The united were in millions*

*Mass in the millions spoke it yet
Love sprouts swiftly
Be globe trotting, still
Love Google's to unite*

*One language all over the world..
Language spoken by hearts in love..
Language spoken without sound..
Language of sphere less divine....*

- By Kavignar Vaali (In 1966
MGR Hit Movie Naadodi)

[TamilWeek.com]



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Sethusamudram project killing whales say activists

Nita Bhalla

At least six whales have died since July as a result of digging under the sea to create a shipping route off India's southern coast, proving that the controversial plan hurts the environment, activists said.

The digging or dredging is part of the \$560-million Sethusamudram Ship Canal Project which will carve a channel in the narrow strip of sea between southeastern India and western Sri Lanka, reducing distances and cutting costs.

But environmentalists, who have opposed the project claiming it will badly affect marine life, said the death of the whales proved their concerns were valid.

"Since July, at least six whales have died after getting stranded on beaches or have been washed ashore already dead," said Ossie Fernandez of Coastal Action Network, an alliance of over 45 social and environmental groups.

"But local fishermen have seen more dead whales so it could be as high as 10," he said, adding that most of the dead whales were found off the coast of Rameswaram -- a southeastern Hindu holy town in Tamil Nadu.

Activists said the whales' navigation sensors get affected by the loud noise of the dredging and the powerful sound waves emitted by sonar machines used to conduct

marine surveys.

As a result, the marine mammals lose their sense of direction and get stranded in the shallow waters near Rameswaram.

"It is shocking that up to 10 whales have died in the last six months, compared to around an average of one or two whale deaths that we normally see in a year," said Fernandez.



six whales died since July'06

According to the state-run Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) and marine life wardens, there have been around 43 whale deaths in the area over the last one century.

But government experts said the recent deaths were not connected to the dredging, taking place about 125 km northeast of Rameswaram.

"Whale stranding is a periodic phenomenon and we cannot say it

has increased after the dredging," said G. Gopakumar, a CMFRI marine biologist based in Mandapam town near Rameswaram.

"There is no evidence to link the death of the whales to the Sethusamudram dredging."

The channel -- 12 metres (40 ft) deep, 300 metres (985 ft) wide and almost 90 km (55 miles) long -- will cut through a chain of small islands known as Adam's Bridge and link the Palk Bay with the Gulf of Mannar between India and Sri Lanka.

When the project is finished, ships sailing between India's western and eastern coasts will no longer have to go around the south of Sri Lanka, and are expected to save up to 400 nautical miles (730 km) and 36 hours of sailing time.

But environmentalists say the dredging will also mean dumping sediment in deeper water further out to sea. This and increased freight traffic could harm marine life and threaten the livelihoods of thousands of fishermen in both countries.

Some 3,600 species live in a marine park in the Gulf of Mannar, including about 400 species -- such as the sea cow or dugong, and three species of sea turtles -- which are endangered. (Additional reporting by S. Bhagwan Singh in Chennai) [Courtesy: Reuters-India]

Sethusamudram project work crane sinks into the sea

A giant crane sent to retrieve the spud that broke while trying to cut the "Ramar Sethu" or Adams Bridge in the Palk Strait has also broken and a part of it had sunk in the sea, officials said.



The spud of the "Cutter-Sucker-Dredger Aquarius" had broken last week while cutting the bridge, dealing a blow to the dredging work. With the crane also broken, the project was likely to be delayed further, the officials said.

The 150-tonne floating tug crane "Thangam", hired for several lakhs of rupees a day by the



Sethusamudram Ship Canal Project to cut cost

project officials, could not pull out the spud and broke in the process yesterday.

The crane's locking-key

had broken and it would take another 10 days to retrieve and repair it.

Officials were now thinking of bringing a bigger crane - Hanuman - having 200 tonne capacity from Vishakapatnam to retrieve both the sunken crane and the spud.

AIADMK supremo Jayalithaa has opposed dredging in the area of Ramar Sethu bridge, stating that it was a historical monument.

According to Hindu mythology, Lord Ram constructed a stone bridge to enable his 'Vaanara Sena' to cross the Palk Straits to wage war with Ravan, King of Lanka, who had abducted his wife Seetha.

"Will fight any move to demolish 'Ramar Sethu' bridge"

The BJP would fight any move to demolish the 'Ramar Sethu' or Adams Bridge in the Palk Straits between India and Sri Lanka, for constructing the Sethu Samudhram channel and would make it a national issue, the party's State president L Ganesan has said.

(According to Hindu mythology, Lord Ram constructed a stone bridge to enable his 'Vaanara

Sena' cross the Straits to wage war with Ravana, King of Lanka, who abducted his wife Seetha).

Ganesan pointed out that nations all over the world are evincing great interest in protecting heritage sites. Even Pakistan had decided to renovate some heritage sites, including Hindu temples. "It is regrettable that the UPA government is trying to destroy

them" (sites), he said, speaking to newsmen at Karaikudi, about 80 km from here yesterday.

He said the SSCP, conceived by the previous NDA government was different as they had suggested that the project be taken up in four stages. But the UPA cabinet did not approve it.

The UPA government had also dropped a project approved by

the NDA government to deepen Dhanushkodi area to avoid any damage to the bridge and had instead taken up dredging work on SSCP. Besides being expensive, it was also causing damage to the 17,000 year old heritage site. A case against damaging the site was pending in Court, he pointed out.

The BJP demanded that the State Election Commission be

transferred in the light of the recent adverse comments by the Madras High Court pertaining to the Chennai Corporation polls. "The election should be held with another person as SEC. But I doubt if the DMK government will change him," Ganesan said

He also demanded that the state release the list of real beneficiaries under the free-land scheme. [PTI]

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TAMIL NADU NEWS

From Our Madras Correspondent

DMDK to contest Municipal polls

Chennai, Feb 1: Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK), led by actor Vijaykanth, has announced that it will contest the re-elections to 100 wards in the Chennai Municipal Corporation to be held on February 18.

In a statement here yesterday, Vijaykanth said though there were



DMDK leader and actor Vijaykanth

apprehensions that the elections would not be free and fair under the present State Election Commissioner and police officials, boycotting the elections would pave the way for easy win for the DMK alliance candidates, "who indulged in malpractices" during the elections held in October last.

He appealed to the election officials to conduct the polls in a free and fair manner and urged police officials to give proper protection to the voters and prevent violent incidents.

Main opposition party the AIADMK and its ally MDMK had threatened to boycott the re-elections if they were held only in 100 wards and under the present State Election Commissioner and police officials. (Our Correspondent)

Mu Ka—all praise for Sonia's courage

Madurai, Jan 30: Students should take Congress chief Sonia Gandhi as their role model for her exemplary courage and love for the nation, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi said here yesterday.

Participating in the golden jubilee celebrations of the Thiagarajar College of Engineering, Karunanidhi said students should try to emulate her.

Karunanidhi said Sonia had politely turned down his request to take additional security in view of the threats to her life, saying that "one cannot live in fear".

He also recalled how she rejected prime ministership

when she had every opportunity to take the post.

"Like Sonia Gandhi one should love the nation and the people more than the posts," he said.

The Chief Minister recalled with gratitude how Sonia had praised him for his efforts to declare Tamil as a classical language. (Agencies)



PRESENTING BOOKS: Radha Thiagarajan, chairperson of the Thiagarajar College of Engineering handing over books to Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, at the golden jubilee function of the college in Madurai on Monday.

— Photo: K. Ganesan

Chennai Book Fair

More than one crore of books were sold and over seven-lakhs of visitors attended the Chennai Book Fair held in Chennai from January 10 to January 21. Chief Minister **Muthuvelu Karunanithi**, a writer himself, inaugurated the Book Fair and went around the stalls most of which displayed his writings. It was a trip down memory lane for the Chief Minister when he saw the books written by him over the years displayed in the Kavignar

Arivukoodam Stall. One of his reminiscences was the purchase of his first car after he scripted dialogues for the Cinema. Gate collections during the period of the Fair exceeded rupees thirty-lakhs. The President of the Book Publishers Association **Mr. Gandhi Kannadasan** remarked that the highest sales recorded at the Fair were in Tamil Fonts, Encyclopedia, Games, CDs and books of specific authors like Bharathi and Puthumaipithan.



Hon'ble Chief Minister, M. Karunanithi inaugurated the 30th Chennai Book Fair

Poet Vaali named for Padma Sri Award



Film's popular lyrics' writer Poet Vaali who completes 50 years in the industry has been named for the Padma Sri Award. Vaali whose real name is Rangarajan wrote devotional songs before composing film lyrics. He won the blessings of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C.N. Annadurai for some of the songs he composed. He adapted himself later to write songs which became popular with the younger generation. He has established a record of writing over 10,000 songs. He has also taken minor acting roles in some films.

Sathiya Sai Baba visits Tamilnadu Chief Minister Karunanithi.

Sathiya Sai Baba from Puttaparthi visited Chief Minister Karunanithi recently at the latter's Gopalapuram residence. Both met for more than an hour. After the meeting the Chief Minister remarked that "Baba never spoke



SHARING A POINT: Sri Sathya Sai Baba of Puttaparthi with Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi at the latter's residence in Chennai on Saturday. — Photo: S.R. Raghunathan

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NEWS-FEATURES

K. T. KUMARAN

Patients get surgeries faster in new Wait List Clinic

Jan. 29, 2007

Rouge Valley Health System

News Release

One-stop shopping approach at Rouge Valley clinic benefits patients -

Rouge Valley Health System is reducing wait times for high demand

procedures including hip and knee replacement with the official opening of its Wait List Clinic.

"The opening of this clinic will shrink wait times by more than 50 percent for procedures, which used to require our patients to wait a few months. Our staff and physicians of the Wait List Clinic are to be congratulated on re-organizing this valuable service and advancing quality family centred care yet another notch at Rouge Valley," says Natalie Bubela, Vice-President of Programs and Support Services.

PATIENTS ALREADY BENEFITING

Bilateral knee replacement patient Gayle Burgess already knows the value of the Rouge Valley Wait List Clinic. "It took me three weeks from my referral at my family physician to the time I saw (surgeon) Dr. (Jon) Hummel," says the 65-year-old resident of Northumberland County. "I was expecting it to be several months at least. But already I don't need my walker anymore. I'm able to get around with two canes outside and, at home, I don't even need the canes. The staff at the clinic treated me very well. They were also very informative."

MEDIA INVITED

The Wait List Clinic has been seeing patients for a few months at its location at Rouge Valley Centenary hospital site, in east Toronto, but celebrates its official opening from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 1. A surgeon, patients and staff will be available for interviews. "We've already seen our hip and knee surgery wait times go from three months to two weeks. So we know as we fine-tune our process our patients will be getting the medical treatment they need much sooner than in the past," says Donna Woodhams, Surgical Program Manager at Rouge Valley Centenary. "The key has been that we've been able to decrease referral time for patients from the time of assessment to referral to a specialist," she says. This combined with the one-stop shopping approach of the Wait List Clinic has moved patients into surgery or other treatments more quickly. Woodhams adds, "With the relocation of our Preadmission Assessment Clinic to the shared office space, the clinic has nurses, physiotherapists, anaesthetists and surgeons located at one place to facilitate a smoother and faster system for patients at

Rouge Valley."

Dr. Jon Hummel, staff surgeon, is delighted to be part of the new clinic. "It's the prototypical clinic really. Our clinic is the way of the future of how we, in healthcare, should manage our joint replacement patients from pre-admission, education, assessment, planning, surgery and follow-up. It's all done at our Rouge Valley Wait List Clinic. It's the most efficient way to do it."

WAIT LIST CLINIC SERVICES

Specific services of the Wait List Clinic include:

- Timely coordination and assessment after community referral;
- Prioritization of appointments to see the physician;
- Post-operative follow-up;
- Rapid assessment for a large volume of patients, facilitating increased patient flow at Rouge Valley Health System.

Rouge Valley Health System is an innovative leader in quality family centred care, with regional programs in cardiac care, mental health and paediatrics. Rouge Valley consists of several health sites, including two hospitals: Rouge Valley Centenary, in east Scarborough; Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering, in the west Durham Region. Together a team of doctors including 224 general practitioners and 325 specialists, more than 1,000 nurses and many other professionals, care for a broad spectrum of health conditions. In consultation and partnership with community members, other hospitals, healthcare organizations and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, Rouge Valley continues to improve its programs and create new ones catering to the needs of the growing communities of Scarborough, Ajax, Pickering and Whitby. It's in our nature to care.

www.rougevalley.ca.

For more information, please contact:

David Brazeau

Manager

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Canada's entry, Mehta's 'Water' nominated for Oscars

Deepa Mehta's "Water", a story about the plight of Hindu widows in 1930s whose shooting in India had to be scrapped following protests from Sangh Parivar outfits, was today nominated for the Oscar Awards in the Best Foreign Film category from Canada.

The film, starring John Abraham, Lisa Ray and Seema Biswas among others, made it to the final five. Other entries in the category include "Pan's Labyrinth" (Mexico), "After the Wedding" (Denmark) and German Cold War drama "The Lives of Others".

"I am so thrilled with this news. This film has meant so much to me, we have seen so much, that to have it all end in such a way is best thing I could have asked for," Mehta told PTI over phone from her residence in Canada.

The movie, which has a dominantly Indian cast, stars John Abraham, Lisa Ray, Seema Biswas and others and is the last in Mehta's

trilogy, which include "Fire" and "Earth".

After cancelling the shooting in India, Mehta completed the film in Sri Lanka.

"Water" had originally starred Shabana Azmi and Nandita Das and was scheduled to be shot in the holy city of Varanasi but was aborted after Bajrang Dal activists blocked its filming.

Mehta refused to be drawn into the past saying, "I know we have gone through a lot but that doesn't really matter. I am just happy that we have got there. Finally, all that happened doesn't really matter. I am over the moon with the Academy award nomination."

Asked whether she would be present with the entire cast on the day of the award ceremony, Mehta said "Of course I will be there, dressed in a sari and I hope the rest of my cast including John, Lisa, Seema and all others can join me."

Set in Varanasi in 1930's, "Water" depicts the plight of

a group of widows forced into poverty at a temple.

Mehta's films have always managed to tackle sensitive subjects. While "Fire" dealt with the taboo topic of lesbianism, "Earth" was set in the tumultuous times of the partition.

Aamir Khan-starrer "Rang De Basanti", directed by Rakesh Omprakash Mehra, the Indian entry into the Oscars, was knocked out in the first scrutiny.

"I wish 'Rang De Basanti' was also in the running, I would have enjoyed it," Mehta said.

The film's producer Ravi Chopra expressed happiness at the news, saying "I loved the film when I first saw it and I am so glad it has been nominated. We will soon fix up a date for the release of the film. Now that it has been nominated for the Oscar, there will be even more curiosity about it." [PTI]

New President for Baba Centre in Scarborough

Geetha Vigneswaran has assumed duties as the new President of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Scarborough, Ontario.

The announcement was made at the Bajan held on Sunday, Jan 28th at Woburn Collegiate. She will serve for a term of two years.

Geetha Vigneswaran has been associated with Scarborough Sai centre for well over 15 years.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Scarborough had a memorable event, last year on Saturday May 27, 2006 when members, well wishers, and dignitaries gathered in the early morning hours for the ground breaking ceremony.

There were more than one thousand devotees from various parts of **Canada** to grace this occasion. Once the National Anthem was recited by the Sai Centre Band group, the special guests, Prof. **Anil Kumar** Kamaraju, Dr. V. P. Singh, Central Coordinator for



Canadian Sai Organizations, George Smitherman, Minister of Health & Long Term Care, Mr. Derek Lee, M.P., Mr. Bas Balkissoon, M.P.P., Mr. Surinder Bagga, Project Architect, Mr. Thurairajah, Regional Coordinator, Mr. Sri Siva, Past Centre President, and Mr. Bala Chandran, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, participated in the Ground Breaking Ceremony

In his welcome speech, Mr. Bala Chandran mentioned that the presence of Prof. **Anil Kumar** Kamaraju was made possible only by Divine will.

Professor **Anil Kumar**, in his

inspiring speech, mentioned that the Sai Centre will serve the community at large by the meaning of SAI, where "S" stands for Service, "A" stands for adoration, and "I" stands for illumination.

George Smitherman, Minister of Health & Long Term Care, mentioned that with the message Love being emphasised by other speakers, he was confident that the centre projects would help to build a strong community for Ontario.

The Sai Centre building will include a Prayer Hall, an auditorium, Class Rooms, Library, and other facilities to accommodate more than 1,200 devotees at any function. The Centre building is expected to be completed within one year.

An abundance of enduring support to the Centre and its new President Geetha Vigneswaran would expedite construction of the permanent facility and enhance future activities, say the devotees.

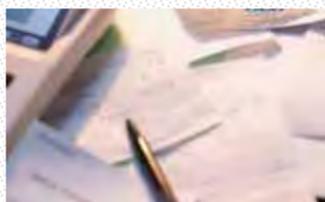
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Donors warn against military solution to Lanka conflict

Foreign aid donors on Monday warned Sri Lanka against a military solution to the island's drawn out ethnic conflict and said the government must enter into a power-sharing deal with Tamil Tigers.

The United States, Japan and the World Bank came out strongly against any military action to resolve the conflict which has already claimed over 60,000 lives.

"We remain unwavering in our conviction that there can be no military solution to this terrible conflict," US Ambassador Robert Blake said at the opening of a two-day meeting here to review foreign aid to the island.

"We hope Sri Lanka will seize the opportunity to forge a power-sharing proposal that can form the basis for talks with the LTTE that could finally bring an end to conflict in Sri Lanka," he said in the presence of President Mahinda Rajapakse.

The World Bank's South Asia vice president Praful Patel said the country's future depended on ending the Tamil separatist conflict peacefully.

"There is no way to politely skirt this issue," Patel said.

"As a major development partner to Sri Lanka, the World Bank would be failing if we did not place the conflict front and center in our deliberations for it is this that constrains the country's development and stands in the way of its tremendous potential."

He warned that this year will be a difficult one for Sri Lanka unless the government

addressed the issue of runaway inflation currently at over 19 per cent.

"If inflation continues at the current levels of nearly 20 per cent, 2007 will not be a good year for the economy," Patel warned.

Japanese ambassador Kiyoshi Araki warned that Sri Lanka's "future was at stake." He said the conflict must be resolved through dialogue and not violence.

Japan is Sri Lanka's largest single aid donor.

President Rajapaksa asked the international community to fund rehabilitation work in areas where the military had captured from Tamil Tigers.

The president also vowed to build on military gains and subdue the rebels.

The US ambassador was also critical of the Sri Lankan authorities for blocking access to international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in areas where troops had stepped up attacks against the Tigers.

"The USAID staff and NGO partners are sometimes denied access to deliver assistance to people in need," Blake said.

"Many NGOs have been the target of unsubstantiated allegations in the Sri Lankan press that have caused the staff of these NGOs to be subject to physical harassment and intimidation."

Sri Lanka's military has accused several foreign organisations of supporting the Tigers, a charge repeatedly denied by them. [PTI]

Canada participates in overseeing Sri Lankan process to investigate human rights violations



Hon. Peter MacKay

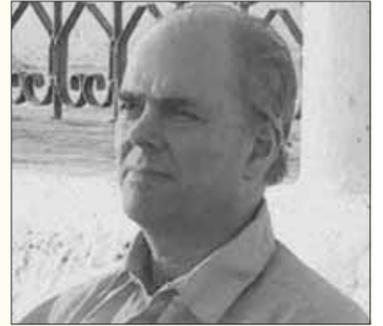
The Honourable Peter MacKay, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, on Jan 24th announced the nomination of Professor Bruce Matthews to join the International Independent Group of Eminent Persons (IIGEP), which will monitor the Sri Lankan Commission of Inquiry into recent human rights

violations in that country.

"I am encouraged by the Sri Lankan President's initiative to invite foreign experts to participate as observers of the inquiry into allegations of human rights violations, and I am very pleased to announce the participation of Professor Bruce Matthews in this initiative," said Minister MacKay. "We look to Professor Matthews, in conjunction with the other members of the Group, to try to ensure the Commission of Inquiry's work proceeds in a transparent, objective and credible manner."

Conflict has raged in Sri Lanka between the Government and the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam for more than 20 years. Despite commitments by both sides to peace talks, this conflict has brought with it a humanitarian crisis and accusations of gross human rights violations.

Professor Matthews is Professor Emeritus of Comparative Religion, Asian Culture and History at Acadia University in Nova Scotia. He has extensive



Professor Bruce Matthews

experience studying the links between religion, culture and conflict in Sri Lanka. He brings to the Group a vast understanding of Sri Lankan history and culture, and of the dynamics of the conflict. Matthews' nomination has been accepted by the Government of Sri Lanka, which invited Canada to participate in this initiative. Matthews will join fellow IIGEP candidates from the United States, United Kingdom, Netherlands, India, Japan, European Union, Australia, Bangladesh and Indonesia. [Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada]

Sri Lanka Navy takes fishermen near Colombo into custody

Sri Lanka Navy have taken into custody six fishing craft and twelve fishermen at Uswetakeyyawa says All Ceylon Fisheries Union. President of the Gampaha branch of the All Ceylon Fisheries Union (ACFU), Aruna Roshantha said the fishermen were arrested on Tuesday when they were returning after fishing.

There are twenty one fishermen among those arrested in connection with the alleged attack on the Colombo Port on Jan 27th.

"Our boats were fishing about 20 miles from Colombo in the deep sea when the Navy Dvora gunships surrounded them", Roshantha of ACFU said.

On the day navy arrested occupants in two boats and the same day night another six, Roshantha said.

These fisherman had seen a fishing boat attacked by the Navy.

"The boats caught up fire and blew up. Nine crew members from the blown up boats were detained. Three are still in custody", he said.

He said one of the boats destroyed by the navy bearing no. OFRPA 1666MBO belongs to fishermen.

Military spokesman Brigadier Prasad Samarasinghe told BBC Sandeshaya that the navy spokesman will be providing the

"necessary information" to the media at a briefing on Wednesday in Colombo.

Roshantha referring to this incident said, Lankadeepa newspaper carried a news item claiming that fishermen in Negombo had taken a bribe of Rs.10 million from the LTTE for spying.

He said this type of irresponsible reports are derogatory and harmful to the fishing community.

"Lankadeepa does not quote anybody from the Navy but merely say a spokesman", Roshantha added. [BBCSinhala.com]

Tamil refugees arrive in Rameswaram from Sri Lanka

Seven Sri Lankan Tamil refugees arrived at Rameswaram on Sunday Jan 27th, from Jaffna, official sources there said. They add that the refugees had been sent to the Mandapam camp here after police verification.

The officials said the

refugees told them that there was a severe food scarcity in their country and they had no option other than leaving.

Its reported that about 50 refugees from Trincomalee and Vavuniya regions have landed in batches in Rameswaram between Jan 24th-27th, 2007.

India wants peace process expedited

By Kelum Bandara

While expressing concern over the collapse of the MoU signed between the SLFP and the UNP, India now expects President Mahinda Rajapaksa to submit the peace proposals soon as the government now enjoyed a majority in Parliament.

In a recent meeting with a Sri Lankan UNP delegation led by Opposition UNP leader Ranil Wickremesinghe, Indian Prime

Minister Manmohan Singh expressed these sentiments while the government now has 122 members in its rank with the UNP reformists, the SLMC, JHU and CWC joining it.

However, the Indian government saw the collapse of the SLFP-UNP MoU as an obstacle to finding a solution to the national question in a bi-partisan approach.



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NEWS-FEATURES

Source: The Morning Leader - December 27, 2006 I hail from Britain. I am a passing traveller. I have done some studies with regard to the recent history of Sri Lanka. My discipline is law and history. I had occasion to read the speech made by Pirapaharan, the LTTE leader.

With great deference to the Sinhalese people many of whom I have found to be excellent hosts and good natured people, I feel Pirapaharan has spoken the truth with regard to the successive governments that governed this country since the 1920s (until 1948 of course under the over lordship of my country — Britain).

Yeoman service

The brothers Sir P. Ramanathan and Sir P. Arunachalam during their time did yeoman service for the cause of creating a united, composite, integrated nation. They were told that northern and eastern parts of this country were admittedly occupied by majority Tamil speaking people and that their supremacy in those regions would always be protected.

They were also told that adequate representation for the Tamils in the Western Province would also be ensured. But when the representative for Colombo was to be elected, having given the assurance that a Tamil would be elected to the said seat, a Sinhalese candidate was put forward.

Naturally Sir Arunachalam felt cheated and humiliated. On his assurance the Jaffna Association had joined the mainstream Ceylon National Congress to put forward a common, united scheme of recommendations to the British to obtain self rule. Having obtained certain benefits from the British through the good grace of the Tamil leaders, the Sinhalese leaders back-stabbed them. Thereafter it was a continuous stream of laws and activities which were more or less calculated to deprive the equal status that the Tamils enjoyed under the British.

That the British wished to divide and rule the Sinhalese and Tamils in Ceylon was a canard. The Tamils had done well in all activities having had the benefit of excellent schools in the peninsula. They were hard-working, thrifty and industrious. But it was made out that the Tamils received special attention from the British. The British had no reason to divide and rule Ceylon since your country never had a freedom movement akin to India. Comparatively your citizens were very docile and selfish. The British never felt threatened in this country. All they were interested in was meritocracy which would in turn ensure economic prosperity for them.

Republican Constitution

The Pan-Sinhalese cabinet of 1934, the calculated colonization schemes at Gal Oya, Trincomalee District and elsewhere to seat southern Sinhalese in areas where Tamils and Muslims predominated without giving the three communities at least equal opportunities, the refusal to accommodate 'fifty - fifty' by which the majority community would not have been able to pass discriminatory laws in the face of a united minority get-together, the passing of Sinhala Only Act despite Article 29 of the 1948

Stifling the aspirations of the Tamils

By: E. Stylo (Point of View)

constitution (which was held to be ultra virus the constitution by a judge called de Kretser but nevertheless continued in practice by the state, the refusal to accommodate an Article similar to Article 29 in the new Republican Constitution of 1972,

the deleting of provisions when preparing the Republican constitution which enabled courts to hold any law ultra virus the constitution, the refusal to accommodate a federal form of government when enacting two new constitutions to devolve powers to the northern and eastern provinces, making out deliberately that federalism was separation when in fact federalism was an effective alternative to separation, continuous harassment of the Tamils through pogroms and riots such as in 1958 and 1983, standardization which prevented very capable Tamil students from the north as well as from Colombo entering university, non recruitment of Tamils into the military services giving the impression Tamils were unwanted in the administration of the country, foisting of favours on the Muslims and others when they were prepared to play ball with the powers that be, total Sinhalese of the public service, in recent times the evolution of a judiciary insensitive to the aspirations of the Tamils,

the impending referendum in the Eastern Province having demerged the north and east and systematically changed the demographic content of the Eastern Province by state colonisation and other means to ensure the uncoupling of the Tamil speaking areas for ever and to divide and rule the north and east, the undue prominence given to renegades among the ranks of the LTTE, making use of them to destroy the struggle of the Tamils for self government by killing prominent Tamil politicians, deliberate inaction in the investigation of crimes against Tamil citizens, destroying of Tamil and Sinhalese media personnel seeking to bring out the truth with regard to the happenings in this country, continuous mouthing of words like maximum devolution of powers and decentralisation but in effect not granting any powers whatsoever to the Tamils (they having to make complaints to the police in the Northern Province in the Sinhala language even now),

the continuous stationing of an occupation army in the Tamil speaking areas, deliberately drawing a mythical line between the Tamils and their military arm (the LTTE) to paint all who agitate for rights and probably self-determination as traitors and terrorists, forgetting the militaristic reactions of the Tamils which stem from the atrocities committed by the state through its military, law enforcement authorities and para-military forces, using the phantom of terrorism among the international community to camouflage the actual state of affairs in Sri Lanka which is the refusal of the majority community to recognize the lawful agitation by the minority Tamils for over half a century to obtain redress; these are but a few of the 'atrocities'

committed by successive governments on the Tamil people.

Criminalisation of the freedom struggle of the Tamils as terrorism is the modus operandi of the powers that be in this country to prevent any rights being given to the Tamils. Pirapaharan is quite rightly convinced as follows 'it is now crystal clear that the Sinhala leaders will never put forward a just solution to the Tamil national question. Therefore we are not prepared to place our trust in the impossible and walk along the same old futile path.'

Committed atrocities

When spoken to, my Sinhalese friends point out the following 'atrocities' of the Tamils — the Tamils received a special position under the British and when that position was endangered they started quarreling unreasonably.

This is not true. The Tamils were good workers, professionals, administrators and so on. If you check on the better officers in any field today in Sri Lanka still it happens to be the Tamils and now Muslims. The Sinhalese are lotus eaters. Go into any department and you will see that. If the Tamils' position in the south was unacceptable to the Sinhalese after independence, it was incumbent on the part of the Sinhala leaders to grant autonomy to the Northern and Eastern Provinces where the Tamils and Muslims were majority.

Instead deliberate steps were taken to change the demographic pattern in the east. Thereafter the canard that north and east were always Sinhala Buddhist has been put forward especially by the Buddhist priests. My understanding of Sri Lankan history shows that the Dravidians were the original inhabitants of this country. Their religion was Hinduism. The Sinhala language is over 40 percent Tamil in content and the rest of it has been borrowed from Pali, Portuguese, Dutch and other languages.

If Buddhist names have been found in the north and east it must have been the relics of the time when large sections of Tamils in the north and east were Buddhists. They reverted to Hinduism like in India. That does not mean that Tamils and Hindus did not occupy this country from pre-historic times.

True there was successive influx of Tamils from South India at different times. But many such Tamils have now got integrated into and become Sinhalese too. The Sinhalese people as well as their language owe a lot to the Tamils and their language.

Pirapaharan was correct again in referring to the Mahawamsa mentality. Mahawamsa is not a historical document. It was written long time after the incidents mentioned therein took place, with certain ulterior religious motives. There is no historical evidence to show that Vijaya and his 700 lieutenants came from India en block at the time mentioned in the Mahawamsa.

Ideal solution

The next criticism against the Tamils is that they ask for too

much. If that is so I point out to my friends a federal system is the ideal solution. The Tamils will look after themselves within the Sri Lankan polity. To that they are opposed saying the Tamils might separate if federal structures are put in place.

History has shown that federal structures have prevented separation. The type of inhuman activities presently carried out by the Colombo government would force the international community in time to come to lend support to the cause of separation. Secession has to follow genocide. If self determination is not put in place to a unit which has a distinct area, language, religions, culture, climate and so on but subjected to extreme hardship and harassment, International Law would deem it necessary to accept secession as the only way out, though it would conflict with the idea of recognizing democratically elected governments.

In Sri Lanka the democratically elected representatives from the north and east have almost unanimously asked for self determination though the government is trying its best to convert the Muslims to oppose self determination for the north and east, wanting in the long run to make this country Sinhala Buddhist.

Legitimate rights denied

First the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Tamils were denied soon after independence. When the Tamils protested their political leaders were subjected to innumerable harassment, hardship and indignities. When the youngsters decided after their leader Chelvanayagam who said in 1976 that there was no alternative to separation in the light of successive Sinhala prevarications and cheating, to take up to arms now the strain is terrorism.

All in all the Sinhala leadership, it is apparent, is not interested in solving the problems of the Tamils. They would prefer to have a scorched desert in the north and east rather than give any rights to the minorities in those areas.

Muslims now seem to have realized the ulterior motives of the rulers of this country to dominate and keep under control the several minorities — religious, ethnic and linguistic. There is so much difference between India and Sri Lanka. The former has a Muslim as president, a Sikh as prime minister and an Italian as leader of the dominant political party in India.

In Sri Lanka even for a non Govigama, non Buddhist Sinhalese to become prime minister would be opposed by the Buddhist clergy. The clergy seem to expect special treatment in Sri Lanka wanting to follow the traditions followed by ancient kings. What they forget is that their background and knowledge are anachronistic to the modern world. Sri Lanka cannot be insular any more. No Sinhala leader had been capable enough to tell this to the Buddhist clergy.

Terrorising the Tamils

The third criticism levelled at the Tamils is that they have resorted to so many atrocious terrorist activities killing so many innocents. Surely any objective observer taking the trouble to study your history would tell you that it was the Sinhala polity that started terrorising the Tamils and others.

You started with Pan Sinhalese cabinet in 1934 after hailing Sir Ramanathan for fighting the cause of the Sinhalese before Queen Victoria in 1915, then came colonisation schemes which did not recognize the Tamils and Muslims in their pre-dominant habitat, then came Sinhala only and 1958 riots, then came 1974 Tamil Conference' deaths in Jaffna then burning of the Jaffna Library, then 1983 riots, the PTA had come into effect in 1979, then the continuous occupation of the north and east by the Sri Lankan military forces, their atrocities — the list is long.

Tragic incidents

The Sinhalese, most of them are unaware of what had been taking place in the north and east, the perpetration of tragic incidents the responsibility for which can be placed at the doorstep of successive Sri Lankan governments. Only when something takes place in Colombo the Sinhalese shout loudly about terrorist activities. The carpet bombings including on St. James Church and other religious places of worship, the killing of Tamil politicians which are hardly investigated into, the Bindunuwewa calamity for which none had been found guilty, the killing of so many youths in the past as well as in the present mainly by the military and many a time by para military forces employed by the military or the governmental authorities are also terrorist activities.

There cannot be different standards for violence. Violence is violence. The reason why the state uses violence in Sri Lanka is because it does not want to give up the power it had somehow grabbed for the Sinhala community under the British. The Tamils could have asked for separation like Mohamed Ali Jinnah if they wished to in 1948. But they were lulled into believing the Sinhala polity would be reasonable.

In fact the Bandaranaike - Chelvanayagam Pact appeared reasonable at that time. But it was opposed by Buddhist priests and others. It is ironical that followers of the Great Buddha who gave up material possessions for a life of religion and love should hold on to power, position, and parochial considerations preventing a humane solution to the Sri Lankan calamity.

To place criticism at a rebel organization having given birth to it by your own inconsiderate actions and activities would be to beg the question. This country needs a strong humane statesman politician to pull the chestnuts out of the fire. I see none.

I am an outsider. This is a beautiful country. If you Sinhalese and Tamils and Muslims cannot resolve your differences pronto I foresee foreign influences taking you on a path of no return. It is the Sinhalese who should wake up. You are living on the top of a powder keg.

The Sinhalese people please forgive me if I have been too hard on you. But you must wake up to reality. Otherwise you will wonder what hit you. Then it would be too late. I shall leave soon. But I shall keep in touch. If any of you care to reply my letter I shall most certainly reply. I am fairly sure of my knowledge of Sri Lankan history.

NEWS FEATURES

Sri Lanka - Fifty nine years of independence: some reflections

Rajan Philips

At fifty nine Sri Lanka is both old and young. It has a much longer history than its years of independence would suggest. Indeed, the island has too much history for too little geography, and therefore too many unnecessary problems. It is also a young country, much younger in terms of demographics than the working of the human biological clock that at fifty nine would already be winding down. A full quarter of Lanka's 20 million people are under thirteen years of age, nearly one half under 25 years, and close to two thirds are below 35 years. A young country with young life expectations and attendant challenges, but paradoxically sacrificing a disproportionate number of its youth to the all consuming political fratricide that has been on a roll since 1983, perhaps since 1971.

After independence in 1948, Sri Lanka has neither been able to shake off the shackles of history nor to effectively meet the expectations of its young population. Calling Sri Lanka a failed state would be more emotional than analytical, but one has to strive hard to compose a convincing success story about the country based on its political and economic performances after independence. The pathetic failure to properly manage the tsunami reconstruction works and the rehabilitation of the tsunami victims is the latest symptom of our continuing malaise.

Even our generally remarkable achievements in social welfare are being vitiated by the pressures of globalization and the never ending ethnic conflict. Sri Lanka has high rates of life expectancy, comparable to developed countries, for both men (71 years) and women (77 years), but faces enormous challenges in youth unemployment, social and physical infrastructure deficits, regional disparity and rural poverty.

Yet, many sections of the population have experienced socially mobility and cultural contentment. Although the opportunities and outlets for their talents and creativity have been limited, Sri Lankans have done well whenever they were able to find such opportunities and outlets. One such opportunity and outlet where all Sri Lankans have been united in appreciating the accomplishments of their compatriots is in the game of cricket, the most positive legacy of colonialism to South Asia. But cricket itself has not been spared the ordeals of political interference and mismanagement, and kudos to our merry band of cricketers who have surpassed everyone's expectations despite the roadblocks and distractions they have had to encounter.

The inability of the country to absorb and employ its own qualified and employable population has led to massive exodus of its professional classes since the 1960s, and the current export of young women and men as domestics and workers to Malaysia and the Middle East. Sri Lanka probably has the highest per capita rate in the world for losing high caliber academics, doctors and engineers to other countries.

When Sri Lanka became independent, I.D.S. Weerawardena, the political scientist, pointed to the then prevailing high rate of employment of domestic servants as a disturbing sign of social and economic backwardness. Now sixty years later, and thirty years of them under the much vaunted open economy, the country is exporting maids to the world. Sri Lankan women workers carry the proverbial double burden, not only as homemakers but also as wage workers. Women are the principal workforce in the three main sources of national income: the tea plantations, the garment industry, and foreign employment remittances. Women, mostly poor women in the hinterland, also carry the material and emotional burdens of sacrificing their husbands, fathers and brothers to the war.

The South Asian Family

In the South Asian family, Sri Lanka is bigger than Bhutan, Nepal and the Maldives, may be performing better than Pakistan and Bangladesh, but cannot claim to have progressed to the same qualitative extent as India in regard to (a) consolidation as a nation-state, (b) the establishment of a consistently liberal democratic and constitutional polity, and (c) the foundation and takeoff of the national economy.

The partition of British India was a huge betrayal of the subcontinent's freedom struggle and fatally wounded the newly created West and East wings of Pakistan, with the latter separating almost in a preordained manner into Bangladesh within twenty five years of British departure. For India, as it turned out, the partition proved to be a blessing in disguise, particularly in consolidating the residual but still massive nation-state. While immeasurably weakening the cause of the Muslims, the partition increased the "specific weight" of the Southern States, as Hector Abhayavardhana used to put it, and prevented a north-south schism of the Indian

nation-state.

The Congress Party became the sole inheritor of the mantle of the independence struggle and party of government of independent India. It acquired a near unanimous support in the country in setting up and delivering on the agenda of national unity, constitutional government and planned economic development. Rather triumphantly, Jawaharlal Nehru declared that "India is the Congress, and the Congress is India", and the equation held until his death in 1964, quite productively for India. More important, the builders who came later, despite the not infrequent deviations and malpractices, have by and large kept faith with the hopes expectations of the founding fathers.

The Indian political and constitutional system has not only survived but remarkably matured in the face many challenges: the reorganization of state boundaries, the disintegration of the Congress and the emergence of regional political parties, the egotistical and centralizing spell of Indira Gandhi, the crises in Punjab and Assam, as well as the more recent a secular, Hinduthva madness of the BJP. The Indian economy is growing from strength to strength as the two Asian giants, China and India, are fundamentally changing the balance of forces in the world economy.

Reversals and Reciprocals

In contrast, Sri Lanka's problems are the result of what the country did not have and what its political leaders failed to do or did wrongfully. The task of national unification at the time of independence was not a serious challenge in Sri Lanka and therefore did not necessitate a substantial political response unlike in India. All that was done was elitist patching up in Colombo and national unity was taken too much for granted. The celebration of national identities and symbols was systematically discouraged during the first years of independence by the superficially westernized elites and the stage was set for the eruption of conflicting ethnic identities from 1956 onward.

Neither did Sri Lanka have a vehicle like the Indian Congress to manage its transition from colonial rule to home rule. The Ceylon National Congress, a mendicant apology in the best of times, was long gone, and the United National Party that formed the first government had been hurriedly cobbled together primarily to contest the 1947 election. It was not a mass or broad based party, like the Indian Congress, but a collection of notables around the core of a father figure (D.S. Senanayake), his son, and his cousins and nephews.

However, as the island's first Prime Minister, Mr. D.S. Senanayake did grow in stature in office and would have left a more durable founding legacy but for his machinations to ensure that he would be succeeded by his son, Dudley Senanayake. This led to the breakaway of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike from the government, and the deceased father was succeeded first by his son and then by his blundering nephew, Sir John Kotelawela. The Senanayake-Bandaranaike schism would plague the country for decades to come, feudalizing its politics and maligning its constitutional development.

Both D.S. Senanayake and S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike had a more inclusive concept of a Sri Lankan nation than what had been deduced from their rather aberrational acts, namely, the disenfranchisement of the Indian Tamils under the former in 1949, and the latter's Sinhala Only Act in 1956. They both tried to compensate for these aberrations; to wit, Senanayake's rapprochement with G.G. Ponnambalam and his inflexible support for the use of both Sinhala and Tamil as official languages, as well as Bandaranaike's formal agreement with S.J.V. Chelvanayakam in regard to regional autonomy and Tamil language rights.

Tragically, these inclusive positions of the two leaders were recklessly jettisoned by their successors, John Kotelawela (1953-1956) and Sirimavo Bandaranaike (1960-1965 and 1970-1977) who succeeded her slain husband as his residual heir. The former clownishly turned the language question into political hara-kiri, while the latter could not understand the need for structural solutions to minority claims that her late, lamented husband had the capacity to envision. She simplistically thought that having Tamil and Muslim friends and co-opting them for concessions was all that was needed to address the political concerns of the minorities. These reversals in the South have been duly reciprocated in the North over time by the rise of separatism and the abandonment of the ideal of a united but restructured Lanka that Ponnambalam, Chelvanayakam and practically every Tamil born before 1956 genuinely believed in.

[TamilWeek.com]

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FEATURES

MukiBaum Treatment Centres 'Dreams Big' with Narthanalaya

Ashley Grant - Manager of Fundraising & Corporate Relations
MukiBaum Treatment Centres

Everybody dreams. Some of us dream about owning a big house, driving a luxury car, having a family, and simply "living the life." People with Autism may just want to smell a beautiful flower and understand what it is, listen to a conversation and comprehend what was said or hear a sound and not feel the need to cover their ears. Dreams come in all shapes and sizes; providing hope to everyone regardless of ability and physical well-being. For over 28 years, MukiBaum Treatment Centres have been striving to make dreams come true for the people we serve.

Founded in 1979 by Dr. Nehama Baum, MukiBaum Treatment Centres provides children and adults who have complex disabilities with innovative treatment and a nurturing environment to discover their talents and abilities, actualize their potential and become a contributing member of society. Over 50% of the people we serve have Autistic Spectrum Disorders; all of whom are dually diagnosed with developmental and or emotional psychiatric disabilities.

As a parent of a son, Muki, who has Cerebral Palsy and is also deaf, as well as an adopted son with Down Syndrome, Dr. Baum is very aware of the hardships that families go through to provide the best quality of life for their children. Recognizing the need for support and education in the field of disabilities, she committed her life's work to helping others. Dr. Baum developed the Multi-Focal Approach which is implemented in all of MukiBaum's programs. It is a person-centred, unique holistic approach that focuses on the person within on an emotional level enabling inner mobility, change and self-actualization. As a result, the people we serve are able to find fulfillment, feel accepted, loved and valued.

MukiBaum prides itself on finding out what the people we serve are passionate about and then providing the tools to ignite that passion. For example, one young man with severe autism and who is completely non-verbal came to us once many years ago. His family was aware of the fact that he had an incredible talent with paper cutting. However, before coming to MukiBaum, the people who worked with him considered it to be an obsession and therefore did not provide access to scissors. When he came to us, MukiBaum staff allowed him to explore this talent and we quickly realized that this young man had incredible abilities not only for scissor art, but painting, needle pointing and countless other crafts. Art is his passion, and more importantly, is the most valuable form of communication and expression available to him. The arts always have been and continue to be a very important form of therapy and artistic expression for the people we serve.

About a year ago, Srimathi Geetha Yogendran, who founded Narthanalaya, The Canadian Centre for South Asian Dances in

1985, approached me. There is no question that she is passionate about dance, but her true passion lies in helping children in need. She explained that many parents in the South Asian Community who have children with disabilities, tend to shy away from allowing their children to integrate into the community due to the fact that they are having a hard time dealing with the reality of their situation. Geetha said that many times over the years, parents have asked if their child, who happens to have a disability, can come and dance when no one else is around! She tried to

on the Main Stage at **The Toronto Centre for the Arts (5040 Yonge Street) on Saturday, February, 24th, 2007 from 6:30 - 9:00 pm.**

Written, choreograph by Geetha Yogendran and performed by Narthanalaya, Tree of Dreams, Branches of Hope is a dance that follows the trials and tribulations of two twins whose lives are characterized by the typical stages of life. It illustrates the hopes and dreams of the twins, who suffer hardships of separation as they reach adolescence. It is not until adulthood that the twins' paths cross again, when the actions

composing their individual lives lead them home to each other.

All proceeds from Tree of Dreams, Branches of Hope will go towards MukiBaum establishing a permanent dance program within its treatment centres. Dance and movement play a fundamental role in everyone's life. It has an especially valuable role in sensory therapy for people with complex disabilities. It provides the people we serve with a crucial vehicle through which they can express their emotions, create awareness of their bodies in space, and learn to relate to themselves and to others. The

rhythms, patterns and coordination help improve focus and develop a sense of structure when everything else in their lives seems chaotic and overwhelming. Thanks to dance, the people we serve are able to improve their self-esteem, confidence and truly learn the meaning of having "fun."

We sincerely hope that the community will come out and support this crucial cause. Tickets are available for \$30.00, \$50.00 and \$100.00. We are also looking for sponsors, donors and volunteers to come on board. Should you be interested, please contact Ashley at 416-630-2222 ext 228. Together we can make dreams come true!

To find out more about the programs and services offered by MukiBaum Treatment Centres, visit www.mukibaum.com. To find out more about Narthanalaya call Geetha at 416-824-8847 or visit www.narthanalaya.com.

Tickets are on SALE NOW at www.ticketmaster.ca, by calling 416-872-1111 or at the Toronto Centre for the Arts Box Office located at 5040 Yonge Street, Toronto.



explain to them that there is nothing to be ashamed of and that all the children, regardless of ability, should dance together. The mere thought of the isolation was heartbreaking to her.

MukiBaum and Narthanalaya decided that there is an overwhelming need for awareness within the community; awareness that help does exist, families are not alone and places like MukiBaum are here to make sure support, education and treatment are available. In late November, many of the dancers came to MukiBaum's Toronto Children's Program to give a workshop to twenty of our students who have various disabilities. In the beginning, some of the children were hesitant, since the dancers were dressed in traditional clothing and the music was different from what they were used to. However, as soon as they began to teach the children how move graciously like a deer, form a beautiful flower with their hands and flutter around brilliantly like a butterfly, the smiles on their faces were magic. Not only were they exposed to a new form of dance, they learned about the South Asian culture, were introduced to the scents and traditions of India and danced one on one with "new friends." The overwhelming positive response from the children as well as the staff clearly meant that this will be the first of many workshops to come. Soon after this workshop, MukiBaum and Narthanalaya gave one to parents from the South Asian Community and we intend on hosting many more.

We have been working with Narthanalaya for over a year to organize a large fundraiser called *Tree of Dreams, Branches of Hope*. It is a theatrical dance production featuring the classical dances of South India; Bharatha Natyam and Kuchipudi. It is taking place



Narthanalaya & MukiBaum Treatment Centres Proudly Present

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MONSOON HEALTH

Normal age-related changes sometimes hide sleep disorders.

YOUR hair turns grey, vision changes and fine lines appear on your face. Even your sleep patterns seem to change as you grow older.

As you grow older, you may find settling down to sleep more difficult; you may awaken more often and take longer to go back to sleep.

Even the slightest noise may be enough to wake you. You may find yourself dozing off more easily while watching television or reading the newspaper.

Normal age-related changes sometimes hide sleep disorders that become more common as people grow older.

Medical or psychiatric illnesses, especially those involving pain or depression go hand-in-hand with sleep disorders.

Need for sleep

It is commonly said that people need less sleep as they grow older. Actually older people need the same amount of sleep but are less likely to sleep in one stretch as they did when they

were younger.

As you age, your body becomes less skilled at maintaining sleep. Although older people spend about the same amount of time in dreaming sleep or REM as do the young people, they get less of the deeper stages of sleep that they need and awaken more often. Studies show that some people above 60 years awaken briefly about 150 times a night.

Over half the people over 65 years experience disturbed sleep. Insomnia is the most common complaint. Not only is the sleep process less complete as we get older but we are also more likely to develop medical problems that interfere with sleep.

Asthma and other respiratory disorders, heart disease and arthritis are notorious offenders.

Pain, fever, itching and coughing can disrupt sleep. Many drugs used to treat these problems can disrupt sleep.

Paying close attention to your sleep habits and using relaxation techniques before going to bed may also help.

Depression, which is common as we grow older, can cause difficulty falling asleep, sleep

A bad night?

By Dr. N.Ramakrishnan

disruption and waking up early. For some, depression begins gradually and progresses to become a way of life. Others are convinced that all they need is a decent night's sleep.

As poor sleep progresses, some people lose interest in their daily activities. Loss of a loved one often triggers insomnia and depression.

The symptoms of sleep disorders may not always be obvious. Sometimes trouble sleeping could stem from simple, easily correctable causes: use of caffeine, heavy meals or exercising late in the day.

Other causes could be result of hospitalisation or surgery or travel. Sleep disorders could flare up during times of worry or constant stress.

It would help to set aside some "worry time" to allow you to consider problems and look for a solution.

After retirement

If you lead a quiet or restricted life, you may doze more often during the day than you suspect. Surveys confirm that those active after retirement had less sleep problems than those who were less active.

A general rule is to confine your

sleep to the nights. Some people who feel extremely tired during the day don't suspect that anything is wrong with their sleep.

They might not be able to pinpoint the nature of their problem.

The tendency to be "early to bed and early to rise" increases as we grow older. Some people adapt successfully but others find their bodies are ready for bed earlier than they desire. This "Advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome (ASPS)" can disrupt a person's social life.

Some simple solutions for this condition involves exposure to bright outdoors light late in the afternoon and early in the evening. Bright light affects the timing of the sleep/wake cycle and delays the sleepy feeling in the early evening. It also postpones early morning awakening. [Courtesy: Hinduonnet.com]

[The writer is Director Nithra Institute of Sleep Sciences. E-mail: nithrasleep@gmail.com]

What is stress?

The stress response of the body is meant to protect and support us. To maintain stability or *homeostasis*, the body is constantly adjusting to its surroundings. When a physical or mental event threatens this equilibrium, we react to it. This process is often referred to as the "fight or flight response." We prepare for physical action in order to confront or flee a threat.

Our ancestors responded to stressful ordeals in this fashion. Millions of years later, when you face a situation that you perceive as challenging, your body automatically goes into overdrive, engaging the stress response. Immediately, you release the same hormones that enabled prehistoric humans to move and think faster, hit harder, see better, hear more acutely, and jump higher than they could only seconds earlier. Like theirs, your heartbeat speeds up; your blood pressure increases; your breathing quickens. Most modern stresses, however, do not call for either fight or flight. Our experience of stress is generally related to how we respond to an event, not to the event itself.

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NEWS-FEATURES



A Goan who became fully a Sri Lankan

By Fr. Alex Dassanayake

Jan 16th is the death anniversary of the Blessed Joseph Vaz.

Blessed Joseph Vaz, the Apostle of Sri Lanka came from Goa to Sri Lanka in 1687 when the Catholics in Sri Lanka were undergoing severe persecution under the Dutch, who had ousted the Portuguese in 1658 and occupied the territory held by them-who had made many converts to the Catholic faith.

During the 24 years of uninterrupted committed ministry, with the help of a small band of Oratorian Missionaries from Goa, he was able to revive the faith of the dying Church due to the absence of priests and many hardships imposed by the new rulers. Thus he is called the 'founder of the Church in Sri Lanka'.

It was therefore, a Goan priest, a missionary from a neighbouring country who saved the Church at that time. Fr.Vaz not only saved the faith, but also built it on a new foundation.

The Portuguese Church was western, but Fr. Vaz made use of the customs and culture of the people in Catholic worship and he himself adopted a very simple way of life like that of the simple Sri Lankan.

He knew both the local languages and thus he was able to travel the length and breadth of Sri Lanka, mixing with the ordinary people. He was so farsighted that he set aside his companion, a man of erudition, Fr. Gonsalves, to study and master the local languages and thus he produced a copious literature both in Sinhala and Tamil, including prayers and hymns, which merited for him the title of "Father of Catholic literature".

His works have been highly commended by the greatest local scholars. Thus Fr.Vaz was able to build a truly local church, with the help of several other Oratorian Missionaries who came to help him inspired by his example and ministry.

He made Kandy the centre of his mission as the kings of Kandy were benevolent to him and his companions, and as there was religious freedom in the Kandyan kingdom, while in the Dutch territory he had to go in disguise, often disguised as a beggar or even as a bangle seller.

After a long mission carried out under much sacrifice and dedication Fr.Vaz died in Kandy on 16 Jan.1711 and was laid to rest in the church which he had built in Kandy.

Although his companions carried on the mission after his death, in 1745, under a weak king there was a revolt led by some bitter enemies of the Church and all the missionaries were expelled from the Kandyan Kingdom and all the churches and Catholic institutions fully destroyed.

Even the church in which he was buried was fully destroyed so much so that up to date the place

has not been discovered. The missionaries who were expelled took shelter in the Vanni where the Vanniars welcomed them. They were able to come and see the Catholics only after the British came back, when religious freedom was granted.

Despite the several persecutions, the Church was able to revive because of the dedicated service of Fr.Vaz and the great work he had done by building a network of lay leaders who looked after the Christians in the absence of priests. Thus the Church we have today owes a great debt of gratitude to Fr.Vaz and his valiant companions and the lay leaders they had formed.

Goa and Sri Lanka continue to maintain the relationship built by Fr.Vaz and his companions. Fr.Vaz came from Goa to help the Catholics in Sri Lanka and today, Bishop Vianney Fernando of Kandy who is also the Sri Lankan Bishop in charge of the canonization of Blessed Joseph Vaz has been going to Goa for the last 2 years to preach the retreats of the Goan clergy, and annually groups of pilgrims from Sri Lanka visit the birth place of Fr.Vaz in Goa and the Oratorian monastery from where the Oratorian missionaries came and also other places like Mangalore where he had worked before he came to Sri Lanka.

On the other hand of late groups of pilgrims from Goa have been coming to Sri Lanka to visit the various shrines of Bl. Joseph Vaz in the different dioceses. They begin with Bolawatte Church which had been frequented by Fr.Vaz and later became a very important of the Oratorian Mission and where the great pundit Fr.Giacome Gonsalves is, buried.

From there they pass over to Weuda on the Kandy-Kurunegala road to visit the place where Fr.Vaz was taken prisoner on his first visit to Kandy. The next important place to visit is Galgamuwa where there is a very old colony of Catholics who had come from the western coast during the Dutch persecution and the king of Kandy had given them to settle down.

They are Tamil speaking and do farming. Fr.Vaz visited them and planted an ebony cross blessed by him at the entrance to the village as a safe-guard from wild elephants and poisonous snakes. They have to cross up to this day and the annual feast is celebrated by the entire Kurunegala diocese in a very grand scale there.

From there they proceed to another very ancient and important place of historical importance for the Catholics of Sri Lanka, Wahakotte, a Catholic colony from the time of the Portuguese who had staunchly safeguard Catholic faith even without the services of priests.

Fr.Vaz had visited this Catholic community several times on his way from Kandy to Puttalam and Galgamuwa. To mark his visits and the place where he had celebrated Mass, a stone cross has been planted, over which an octagonal structure as a roof. This is a very sacred spot for the Catholics of Wahakotte and their own missionary spirit has spread

the faith to the neighbouring villages so as to form a new parish.

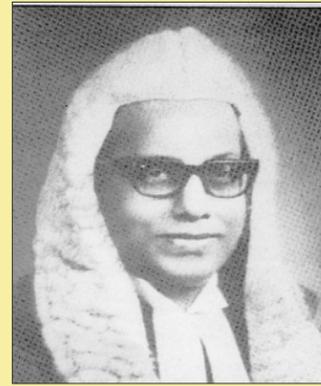
Obviously, the next important place to visit is Kandy which was the centre of his mission and the place where he worked the miracle of rain and nursed the sick who were caught in the small pox epidemic whom he served with heroic charity so as to merit the encomiums from the king who said 'If only I had more priests like Fr. Vaz in my kingdom"! Alas, today not even the place of his burial can be found in the city of Kandy.

Everything was destroyed at the 1745 revolt and by the time the British occupied no trace of it was left and the British too levelled much of the Bahirava Kanda and filled up the Bogamabara lake and with the rise of new buildings no trace of Fr.Vaz's grave can be found and the religious-political atmosphere of Kandy does not leave room for excavations.

However to remember Fr.Vas' service to Kandy, the old Seminary chapel of the Papal Seminary was converted as the Kandy diocesan shrine of Blessed Joseph Vaz, where a life size Mahogany wood statue carved by a local artist from Moratuwa is the focus of the devotion to the Apostle of Sri Lanka.

The Goan pilgrims; marvel at the tremendous service done by their countryman missionary for the church in Sri Lanka and join them in imploring God to guide the Church to declare him a Saint of the Universal Church. Thus he could be publicly honoured not only in Sri Lanka and Goa but all throughout the world. May this day be not far away.

An Appreciation Justice Sharvananda –Sri Lanka's First Tamil Chief Justice passes away in Australia



College-Kayts and later at Jaffna Hindu College. He obtained his bachelor's Degree in Arts and Law from the University of London. After passing out as a lawyer, he worked in the chambers of legal luminaries like Mr.H.V. Perera, Mr.H.W. Thambiah and K.C. Nadarajah.

Mr. Sharvananda enjoyed a large and lucrative practice on the civil appellate. He was called to serve on the bench in 1974 and was appointed as Chief Justice in October 1974.He represented Sri Lanka at the conference of Chief Justices in Malaysia in 1985.He was the ex- officio Chairman of the Board of Judges Institute of Sri Lanka.

Below is a message of condolence by Mr. Kandiah Neelakandan – Secretary of the Hindu Educational Society, Sri Lanka.

Justice Sharvananda,who was the first Sri Lankan Tamil to adorn the prestigious position of a Chief Justice, passed away in Australia last month. Justice Sharvananda was living in retirement in Australia after emigrating there.

Justice Sharvananda,who was born in Kayts, had his primary education at St. Anthony's

MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCE

We were grieved to hear of the demise of former Chief Justice S. Sharvananda in Australia.

Chief Justice Sharvananda was a member of the Hindu Educational Society for many years and he has also held the office of the President of Hindu Educational Society during the year 1994.

Justice Sharvananda was an outstanding legal luminary and he was the first Tamil to adorn the office of the Chief Justice of Sri Lanka, and the only Hindu who had the honour of holding that office in Sri Lanka.

Justice Sharvananda took an

active interest in Hindu religious affairs and he has also contributed valuable articles on religious subjects. His article on Saiva Siddantha to a World Hindu Conference was commended by everyone.

The loss of Justice Sharvananda is an irreparable loss to the Hindus.

We convey our deepest sympathies to Mrs. Sharvananda and the other family members of Justice Sharvananda.

Kandiah Neelakandan

Secretary

January 11, 2007

HES-Shar (Hindu)

Memorial Stamp issued for late V. Navaratnam, Former MP, Sri Lanka.

A set of Canadian Memorial Stamps and First Day Cover were issued at a memorial function in Toronto recently, honouring the contribution by late V. Navaratnam, a doyen of Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi (ITAK), the Federal Party. Mr. Navaratnam called upon the youth to fight for freedom, when he left the Federal Party and founded Tamil Suyadchi Kalaham, after witnessing repeated failed negotiations for power-sharing with Sri Lankan



Navaratnam memorial stamp issued in Canada on January 27, 2007

leaders for almost three decades.

Mr. Navaratnam's son, Jegan Mohan, recalling past conversations with his father, told the audience a conversation, which took place between Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike and Navaratnam, 39 years ago in the Ceylon

Parliament Cafeteria, after his father called for a Separate State for the Tamils.

Felix R. Dias Bandaranayake had approached Mr. Navaratnam and commented that the Tamils were always demanding for something, which they cannot obtain, and cited G. G. Ponnambalam's cry for fifty-fifty and S.J.V.Chelvanayakam's demand for Federal State. All of them were rejected by the Sinhalese.

"Now Navam, you are asking for a separate state. Do you really believe that you can attain it?," asked Mr. Bandaranaike. Navaratnam had responded: "Felix, I don't know whether you and I may be alive, but a day will come,



Thamil Arasu stamp issued in 1961

when Sinhalese would come forward to offer the Tamils a Federal State, and the Tamil leadership will consider the offer too little too late."

Navaratnam issued the first postage "Thamil arasu" (Tamil State) in 1961 as part of the

disobedience campaign.

Navaratnam was quoted as having had the idea of breaking the Post Office Law and running a parallel postal service as a part of a mass civil disobedience campaign, following the Trincomalee Resolution in 1956, long before the Satyagraha in 1961. He had drawn the sketch of the stamp, reflecting the concept of a Tamil State. and designed it to incorporate the symbolic features of the Tamil State's economy, agriculture, industry, shipping and trawling. It was finally released in 1961 after the B. C. Pact was nullified by the Sinhala leaders.

Late Mr Navaratnam's last advice to the Tamil diaspora, was to mobilize with a unified message to the International Community, and that the gross human rights violations of the Sri Lankan government, be documented and exposed. He also urged the Tamil Canadians to persuade the Canadian government to initiate a demand that Sri Lanka must be expelled from the Commonwealth of Nations for the human rights violations, an act Canada initiated in the Commonwealth against South Africa for its racist policies, Jegan Mohan said.

FEATURES

RAM NAMBIAR

DISTANT CONTINENTS, BUT SAME BIRDS
BIRDS OF A FEATHER

RAM NAMBIAR

Vast oceans, seas and enormous landmass separate the Indian sub-continent and North America by about 16,000km. Climates, habitats such as waterways, vegetation, trees grasses in the subcontinent and countries of the continental North America are also varied. Yet, some species of birds are common to both these regions. What we mean by the same species is that they are superficially and genetically alike and when put together, they will mate and produce healthy progeny. What are these avian species which link the two regions together?

Villagers in central and northern India call this stout night bird kwak after the throaty sound it utters. In the south, however, it is pathira kokā. Text book name is Black Crowned Night Heron. This species exists in the US, Canada and Mexico also. The adult heron is dark above white below. Two to three thread-like plumes dangle from its black crown. Male and female are similar in appearance.

Night-Crowns live in loose communal flocks. It hunts for food near water at night and rests in trees during the day. During breeding season, however, these nocturnal birds tend to come out of their day sojourn and forage both day and

between the legs of Rhinoceroses, Water Buffaloes and Elephants. Cattle Egrets are relatively a new arrival in North America. It is believed that 140 years ago during their annual migration within African ranges, some flocks of them were swept away by a powerful storm and were forced to swing westwards as far as Brazil.

Some years later, the Egrets moved northwards, via the Caribbean Islands and Florida, entered the United States in 1940 and started nesting there. Subsequently, they spread to other regions of the US in the east, keeping company of horses. By 1962, these waders reached much of the north eastern parts including the Province of Ontario in Canada. It was not much later that they were observed as far north-east of Canada as Newfoundland. This is how this Cattle-loving bird successfully invaded North American continent.

The Indian Sub-continent and North America share at least 7 species of ducks. These are the Mallards (*Nir-rug*)

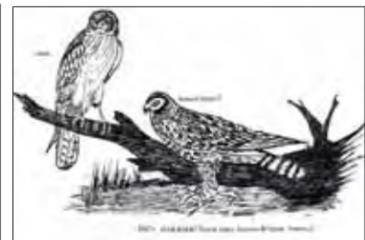
across India. Just before the spring, however, they wing their way back to central and northern Asia and Europe to raise a family. The North American Shovelers breed in many fresh water ponds in the US and Canada during summer months. Nonetheless, the winter is spent in the much warmer Costa Rica and West Indies.

The Pintails, the Common teal, the Eurasian Wigeon, the



'Pathira Kok'-Black-Crowned Night Heron

Garganey and Gadwalls are also northern ducks that swim and feed in the Indian waters during the winter months. These ducks are easy to identify at rest owing to the malās dazzling head colourations and markings.



Hen Harrier

The Pintail male (drake) has chocolate brown head with white strip starting in the middle of the head extending down. The male Teal, on the other hand, has an easily noticeable green band around the eyes which ends in the back of the dark head. The Eurasian Wigeon head is chestnut in colour with a buffy crown. A pinkish brown with a prominent white eyebrow is diagnostic feature of the Garganey duck. The Gadwall drake (male), however, has missed out on all the bright plumage, elegance and grace of other surface feeding ducks. But the white wing-patch is a useful marker in identifying the species.

Day hunting and flesh eating birds, otherwise called birds of prey or raptors, have two common representatives in India, the US and Canada. These are the Osprey and the Hen Harrier. The Osprey is an eagle-like fish hawk which has an impressive black plumage above, and the colour underneath is clear white. A dark patch on the underside of the wings while the bird is in flight, and a black patch through the eyes are true markers of this fish hawk.

The Ospreys of this western hemisphere have chosen fresh water fish such as trout, pike and perch. If necessary, the raptor will plunge dive with an explosive splash, and sub-merge fully. But it will rise up with the fish in its razor sharp taloned feet.

Slightly slimmer than Osprey is the Harrier hawk which has an owl-like face. The male and female harriers are dissimilar in size and colour, the female being larger and streaked in brown and buff, the male smaller and bluish grey. This hawk can be seen gliding and circling low over meadows and hill valleys in northern India and also part of Maharastra. In Canada and in the US, however, this bird is called marsh Hawk, mainly because it searches for food over cattail marshes. The Harrier hawk takes mainly rodents. To make the kill, it reaches the land below and then pounces on its victim.

A cosmopolitan species of shore bird related to the Sea Gull is the Caspian tern. This species can invariably be seen in the coastal waters of India and in the shore-lines of North American waters. This elegant and aerially agile bird when not plunge diving for fish, can be seen in large flocks resting at the sandy beaches of rivers and inland lake coasts in India, Sri Lanka, Australia, Newzeland, Scotland, US and Canada. A spring migrant, the



Osprey Grey Shrike

Campinas return from south to Toronto Water front beaches by April or early May.

Caspian is the largest of all Terns reaching an average length of 50cm, and with 130 cm wingspan. Its flights over water is more like that of a gull than a Tern. However, its forked wings, black cap, blood red bill and a hoarse "krr----aaa" call, remove any claim to a gull heritage. At the same time, its large size, black legs and slow wing beats distinguishes it from other terns.

Every one knows the Rock Pigeon, locally known in many parts of India as kabutar. This species occurs almost everywhere in the world including US and Canada. It is not certain whether this species has been brought into North America by early settlers or if they have been here from the days of yore. Among Perching or Song Birds not many species are common to these two distant continents.

Nevertheless, a predatory species of this group, the Northern Shrike, is common to the Indian subcontinent and North America. In India it is called Grey Shrike. This bird is of the size of a Myna but is a pale grey Shrike with black wings and tail. With its sharply hooked bill, a black mask across the eyes and general hunting behaviour, this predator may give the impression of a minute Hawk. Strangely enough, it is a song bird.

The Redwhiskered Bulbul of India has been introduced to

Florida, USA in 1960 and has been breeding successfully ever since. This songster is well established as part of the US natural bird fauna. One hardy species of Passerine, the House Sparrow (*Gauriyya*) has managed to survive the tropical weather conditions of the Indian region and the sub-zero climates of Northern US and Canada, thanks to the spread of the once British Empire. They carried this pesky sparrow in the ships to the countries they colonized.

How did some of the other species of birds happen to be in both these remote continents?

For clues, we have to step back in time, into the distant past. Zoogeographers believe that these birds were originally the inhabitants of the Old World, - Eurasia. These species of birds were very adaptive and spread widely throughout Europe and Asia including the peninsular India.

However, some of these birds from North Eastern Siberia crossed or flew over into Alaska through Bering Strait, a land bridge, which once connected Asia to North America. The temperature in the northern regions was reasonably warm then. Subsequently, about 1 million years ago, the north experienced a much colder weather, often referred to as the



Shoveller Drake

"ice age" and these birds were forced to withdraw to relatively warmer lowlands which are today's Canada and the United States.

With the passage of time and with exposure to altered conditions of life in the new land, these birds underwent gradual modification in structure and life style and evolved into new species.

Some of the parent forms that did not go through any changes were most probably at a disadvantage and in the long struggle for food and nesting space, they must have been driven to extinction by the more adventurous and newly originated species. The modified and improved descendants of the Eurasian stock are today's North American Cranes, Pigeons, Cuckoos, Owls, kingfishers, Nuthatches, Crows and Jays.

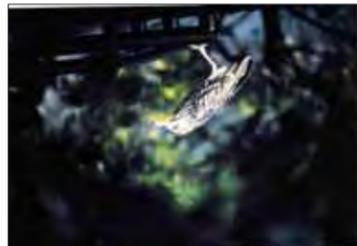
The species of birds that have crossed into North America sometimes later, however, have not had enough time to attain improvements and new species status yet. Consequently, they remain the same, with the same genetic make up as their parent populations left behind in Asia including some of the bird species encountered in the Indian sub-continent. These are the Black-crowned Night Heron, some species of Ducks, the Ospreys, Hen Harrier, Butcher bird and so on.



Gadwall (Male&Female)

night to take care of the voracious appetite of their young. Whether in the coastal lagoons of Kerala, in the Everglade marshes of southern US or along the Granadier Pond in Toronto in summer, this night heron can be seen standing patiently by the edge of water looking for a bite on frog or fish, its favourite diet.

A cousin of the night heron is the Cattle Egret, an all white common bird of India. This yellow billed Egret is found in Africa, US and Canada also. Its Hindi name is *gai bagla* and in Tamil and Malayalam, - *Kaalimundiā*. This wetland waders association with grazing cattle gave the bird its common name Cattle Egret. Often, a small band of thee Egrets can be seen walking behind cattle in the paddy field, just after the harvest season, to feed on grasshoppers and other insects disturbed by the movements of these mammals. The species has a much larger population in Africa where it habitually walks



Immature Night Heron

Gadwall (*Myle*)

Shoveller (*Tidari*)

Pintail (*Seenkh-par*)

Common Teal (*Chhhoti mughabi*)

Eurasian Wigeon (*Chhota lal-sir*)

Garganey (*Khira*)

Most of them are very colourful and are surface feeders of shallow waters. Some of these ducks can be seen in the Toronto City waters even during the grip of winter.

One of the exquisitely colored of these is the Mallard Duck. The male during courting season, has a gorgeous shiny green head and a chestnut breast with a thin white necklace. The Female Mallard, however, like most other female ducks is mottled in brown. The Mallards are common in the shallow ponds, marshes, lakes and rivers in Kashmir although they may be found sporadically in other areas of India as well, including Maharashtra. Some flocks are known to nest in Kashmir. In North America a sizable population of Mallards exists and they breed throughout US, and Canada.

An odd looking species of the ducks is the Shoveler. Once seen, a male Shoveler cannot be mistaken for any other duck. It has a shoveler-like bill which is longer than its bottle green head. The breast is white but belly and sides are bright red (Photo). Shoveler ducks are found in a varieties of water habitats all

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BLACK HISTORY

BLACK HISTORY MONTH, FEBRUARY, 2007

On the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade Reparations, rights and emancipation

The aim of this special supplement, on Black History Month and the bicentennial of the abolition of the Slave Trade, is to inform. A key theme is the development of racism and resistance. We aim to put the Black Canadian and Québécois experience in a broad historical context, avoiding a narrow interpretation. Our Timeline (see pages 2-4) is brief, but aims to convey the broad sweep of historical forces shaping the Black communities. To make this framework visible, many elements usually consigned to the background have been brought to the fore. Thus, individuals do not appear front and centre, though it is very clear that notable individuals played critical roles at critical times, leaving an indelible mark on life and history.

African Canadians have a long and glorious history of struggle to affirm their rights and the rights of everyone else. They are pioneers of Canada and Québec. From the arrival of Mathieu da Costa, a Black crewman and interpreter on Samuel de Champlain's expedition who settled in Acadia in 1605, up to the present time when the vast majority of Blacks in Canada and Québec have arrived from Africa and the Caribbean, they have contributed enormously to the building of this country. Today, with the exception of Nova Scotia, Ontario and Montréal, the Black community is geographically dispersed. There are some 662,200 Blacks, almost half of whom – some 310,000 – live in Toronto. In spite of their historical contributions to building this country, they are treated as second-class citizens and face brutal discrimination in employment, housing, education and other spheres. They make up one of the most oppressed sections of Canadian and Québécois society.

African Canadians have resisted all attempts to ghettoize and marginalize them. They are in the forefront of the struggle against state-organized racist attacks, against all forms of discrimination and attacks on the polity, and for the equality of all citizens. These contributions have been integral to the development of society, but their historic significance really stands out when the surrounding conditions are seen for what they were and are.

Celebrations or reparations?

March 2007 is the bicentennial of the Abolition by the Britain of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Major celebrations are planned. Yet Canada together with Britain, the United States, France and others all deny historical responsibility. It is noteworthy that there is no discussion of the necessity for reparations for the inhuman crimes of slavery. This behooves us not only to mark this event but to demand that the states that profited from the trafficking in human flesh and the genocide of the indigenous peoples of the Americas render accounts.

The Canadian government has worked actively to undermine the just demand for reparations, for fair compensation. It argues that slavery did not exist in Canada because it was not formally an independent country at the time. It glorifies the migration of the enslaved and free US Blacks as a flight to "freedom" in the British colonies. In December, 2000 Canada stood alone with the US in challenging African people's right to self-determination and reparations at the Regional Preparation Conference of the Americas for the UN Conference Against Racism.

The casual link between the exploitation of the African continent in the past and its impoverishment today is also denied. The exploitation of Africa and its peoples, Asia and other parts of the world, and the workers of the west, created the great river of wealth that runs through the coffers of financial oligarchs.

At the beginning of the 18th century England held 800,000 slaves in her colonies, including the Canadas; France, 250,000; Denmark, 27,000; Spain and Portugal, 600,000; Holland, 50,000; Sweden, 600; there were also about 2,000,000 slaves in Brazil, and about 900,000 in the US. The institution of slavery was the powerful base of the economy; thus, against the economic forces which



▲ "Le Negre Marron" (The Black Maroon; in Creole, "Neg Mawon"), Port-au-Prince, Haiti, often translated in English as the statue of the "Unknown Slave". The "Negre Marron" is shown with left leg extended (broken chain on his ankle); a machete in his right hand, and his left hand holding a conch shell to his lips. The conch shell was often used as a trumpet to assemble people. Created by the Haitian sculptor, Albert Mangones, the statue was commissioned to commemorate the slaves who revolted against France from 1791 to 1804.

these four and a half millions of enforced labourers represented, the battle for emancipation had to be fought.

The Act of 1807 made it illegal for British ships and citizens, including those of the Canadian colonies, to trade in this horrendous commerce of human flesh, millions of whom were ripped from their homes and lives in Africa. Millions more died on the voyages across the Atlantic Ocean. It was said that the ocean floor of the Atlantic is bleached white with the bones of dead Africans.

In Britain, the campaign for abolition involved hundreds of thousands of working people, including many Africans, some of them former slaves who played a leading role. It was one of the largest in Britain's history, one of the first in which the working class grew conscious of its own strength. It constituted an international movement. The enslaved Africans, who waged a constant war in different parts of the world, played a crucial role.

Economic and strategic interests dictated Britain's decision: advantage over its colonial rivals, and a means to dissipate the growing opposition to the government and its colonial regimes – rather than by any concern for the enslaved. Ownership of slaves was legal until 1834. Britain's economy – and that of its colonies – relied on slavery throughout the 19th century. Slave labour was widely used during the colonial period.

As part of the British Empire, Canada was and is directly implicated in the Slave Trade and slavery, and its legacy.

The Canadian government and media refuse to deal with the historical record and colonial legacy of slavery in this country – just as they refuse to acknowledge that colonial Canada is born from the dispossession and

Monsoon Journal considers it very important to highlight the key dates, events and themes that mark the people's struggle against discrimination in all its forms. Tamils know full well the old colonial "divide-and-rule" policy and the politics of marginalization, both in our homeland and in our new country. Such politics, based on disinformation and ignorance, are aimed at blocking the unity of people to solve any problem. Black History Month provides an opportunity to think about the need to fight against racism, its devastating effects on our sisters and brothers of African ancestry, and all of us. We hope that reading the following texts will help you reflect on this major issue and encourage you to discuss these issues in your family, classrooms and work place.

genocide of the First Nations and the subjugation of the nation of Québec. Canada is not a post-colonial society: 19th century colonial arrangements and conceptions still predominate in the national rubric.

Despite the narrative falsely portraying the British colonies – Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Upper and Lower Canada, Prince Edward Island – as a sanctuary of "freedom" for so many enslaved Africans from the South, the terminus of the famed Underground Railroad, the "North Star", the undeniable reality remains:

- (1) slavery legally existed in the Canadas for 200 years;
- (2) newly-arriving Africans were ruthlessly segregated;
- (3) the abolition of slavery in the colonies was due more to the struggle of working people, enslaved and free Africans, progressive politicians, and the Québec patriots than to a sudden burst of humanitarian feeling on the part of the Canadian ruling circles; and
- (4) these circles reaped enormous profits from slavery and the colonial arrangements.

This is vividly illustrated by the long suppressed history of the 10,000 Nova Scotians – fishermen, farmers, workers and artisans – those who took up arms against slavery on the side of the Union during the US Civil war, while the ruling circles lined their pockets from the British naval blockade of Union ships.

Historian Thomas Raddall notes: "By 1862 one third of the ships entering the port of Boston were windjammers from Nova Scotia ... Halifax was as prosperous as never before in all her boom and bust history. The city was glutted with money." Much of the colonial aristocracy, including descendants of Loyalist slave-owners, such as the Ritchie family, Keiths and others, actively sided with the South, providing new ships and armaments, smuggling and the new business of blockade-running, hospitality to Confederate agents, and legal support to captains of captured naval ships.

Poignantly, English dock workers refused to load and off-load ships coming from or bound for the British-backed Confederacy.

While prime minister Stephen Harper has been silent, the Governor-General of Canada visited Ghana and on 26 November 2006 called on Africa to "apologize" for its role in the Atlantic Slave Trade. Her statements blaming Africa provoked protests for absolving Europe's responsibility – by portraying the colonial powers as mere "buyers" of Africans captured or enslaved.

Two days later, Tony Blair publicly expressed "deep sorrow" over the fact "that the slave trade ever happened." His statements also provoked widespread outrage from African and Caribbean communities. Even the media felt compelled to point out that Blair's sentimental words of "deep sorrow" were an expression of pragmatism and duplicity – an attempt to present himself as a great humanitarian, not only in Britain but on the world stage, especially as Britain, the US and others are poised to commit even more crimes against humanity in the context of imposing the superiority of a mythical "western way of life" on the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The content of this drive was clearly articulated by George W Bush in his visit to Canada on 1 December 2004. Speaking in Halifax, Bush evoked the supremacist notion of an English-speaking "master race." He declared that "our two peoples are one family, and always will be" – asserting that what "unites" this "family" is "our community of values" that "reaches back centuries."

The Canadian state has embraced this "civilizing mission," for example, joining in the invasion and occupation by the US and France of Haiti, the first independent black republic in the Americas.

Black History is an important counterpoint to these dangerous developments. It informs the struggle to defend the rights of all, including the right of self-determination. It demonstrates the courageous capacity of the world's peoples to resist. People are the makers of history – not helpless, hapless spectators or victims, but the active, conscious force in fighting for a better world.

– Tony Seed & Isaac Saney, *Shunpiking Magazine*

A PEOPLE'S ODYSSEY

Long before Europeans arrived on shores of the Americas, evidence indicates that Africans had already travelled to the Americas, including Québec, and that the Mi'kmaq from the Maritimes had reached Europe and Africa.

1498-1600s: The Slave Trade

Its economic basis is the Atlantic Triangle straddling the Atlantic Ocean of human merchandise, raw materials and manufactured goods – a trade that changes in form and shape over time, but whose substance is consistent. Labour, in the form of kidnapped Africans, is transported across the Atlantic (the Middle Passage) to the Americas. There, enslaved Africans produce sugar, molasses, rum, cotton, rice, silver, gold, tobacco, tar and timber which are taken to England. These goods are traded for textiles, guns, iron, alcohol and other manufactured goods which are taken to Africa to exchange for slaves. This triangle generates huge profits, fertilizes the productive forces leading to the Industrial Revolution and the formation and consolidation of national states in Europe.

By 1870, when the commerce ends, a minimum 15m African men, women and children had been taken to the Americas. The number who died enroute is an est'd 40m. Millions of Native Americans are also enslaved, particularly in South America. In the American colonies in 1720, nearly 25% of the slaves in the Carolinas were Cherokee, Creek, or other Native Americans. From the 1500s through the early 1700s, small numbers of white people are also enslaved by kidnapping, or for crimes or debts. (In Canada, the buying and selling of human beings as "paupers" continued into the 1930s.) A constant feature of the era of slavery is repeated rebellion and revolt of slaves, playing a crucial role in its eventual abolition.

1492 – Christopher Columbus reaches Hispaniola (now shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic) where the entire native population of 8m is exterminated by torture, murder, forced labour, starvation, disease and despair. More than 100m natives across the mis-named Americas fall under European conquest and colonialism, resulting in systematic extermination. As the natives perish, they are replaced by slaves brought from Africa.

1497 – (6 Aug) Giovanni Caboto returns to England, taking three Mi'kmaq natives, thereby introducing slavery into British North America. (1534) Jacques Cartier heralds the European invasion of the Maritimes and Québec. He also takes native prisoners.

1588 – Defeat of the Spanish Armada off the coast of England. The American continent is open to all other European powers. (1600s) British free trade in human flesh begins. By the 18th century Britain is the world's leading trafficker. About half of all enslaved Africans are transported in British ships. Eighty per cent of Britain's income is connected with these activities.

1604-1762: Slavery in Québec and Maritimes

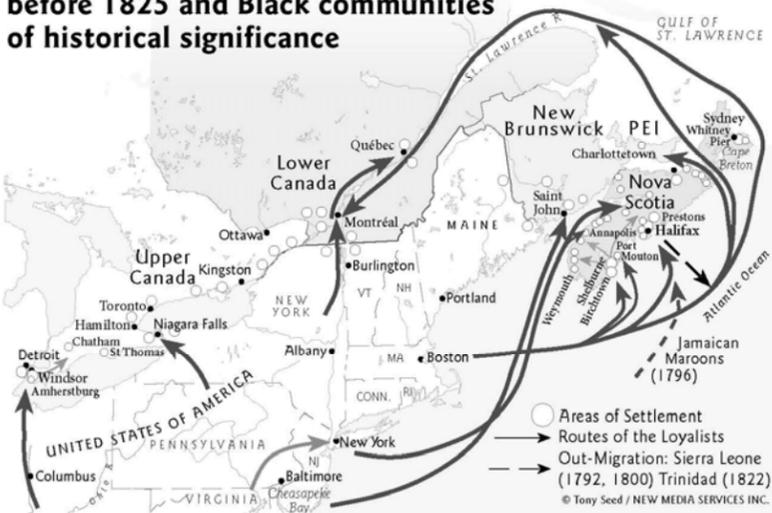
1605 – Matthieu da Costa arrives on De Monts' expedition.

1640s – American colonies legalize slavery.

1689 – The colony of New France suffers from a shortage of labour. French colonialists conclude that the solution lay in the importation of enslaved Africans. Official recognition and encouragement for slavery in Canada begins. Louis XIV issues the *Code Noir* stipulating that slaves are legal chattel, or personal goods. Wealthy French officers and settlers in Fortress Louisbourg in Cape Breton possess 266 slaves. Black fur traders also operate throughout New France. Slavery never becomes a large-scale institution, as there is no plantation system. The early Nova Scotian economy is based on mercantile trade, not production. Many slaves are abandoned in winter, left to die of exposure or starvation. In the spring, owners would recapture and re-enslave those left alive. The differences between the two forms of slavery – chattel and plantation – are a matter of degree, not kind.

c. 1600-1695 – Maroons (escaped slaves) form the first independent Black Republic of Palmares in northeastern Brazil

Major migration routes of Africans to the Canadas before 1825 and Black communities of historical significance



of 30,000 inhabitants, resisting with arms 40 Dutch and Portuguese expeditions. It is only defeated with the assassination of its great chief, Zumbi (20 Nov). The most famous of innumerable *quilombos* and *palenques* of Latin America, it draws inspiration from their African thought material. They create a new social order, including Indians and poor whites, that draws on African experience and heritage.

1749 – (June 21) British found Halifax as a base against the informal alliance of Mi'kmaq and Acadians and for naval supremacy of the Atlantic Ocean. The founding population includes some 100 African slaves. Slave owners include the first Presbyterian minister. Slaves could be beaten, chained and whipped. Gov Cornwallis offers £10 for every Mi'kmaq, living or dead, "or his scalp as is the custom of America." The British Parliament proclaims bloodhounds and scalping as "means that God and Nature had given into its hands." When those free Blacks in the population – skilled tradesmen whose services are in high demand – are no longer required, some are taken to the American colonies and sold. A 1751 notice in the *Boston Evening Post* reads:

PUBLIC AUCTION
On
MONDAY, 3rd of NOVEMBER
1760
TO BE SOLD
AS
THE ESTATE OF SAID DEFT'S
ESTD
SLAVES
VIZ.
A BOY & GIRL, ABOUT 11 YEARS OLD
HALIFAX

"Just received from Halifax, and to be sold, ten strong hearty, Negro men, mostly tradesmen, such caulkers, carpenters, sailmakers and ropemakers."

In 1755-58 Britain forcibly deports the entire Acadian people from the Maritimes. Many escape into the woods, continuing guerilla warfare with the Mi'kmaq to defend their communities. By 1759 there are an est'd 3,604 slaves in the Canadas. By 1837 all the Beothuk in Newfoundland and over 80% of the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet nations have been exterminated by the British.

1783-1862: Movement against the Slave Trade

1782-84 – Arrival of 3,548 free Black United Empire Loyalists to the Maritimes, the first wave of the migration of people of African origin, including skilled artisans and craftsmen. Alexander Howe of the colonial Assembly describes them as "the principal source of labour and improvement" for an expanding colony. Without a land-base or resources, they cannot achieve economic security and are – as a conscious political policy – reduced to a cheap labour pool. The promise of land – an average 500-600 acres per family – contains much smaller acreages and is non-arable. The colonial regime then swindles the Black Loyalists out of grants and the land. In Shelburne, only 164 of 1,521 actually receive the land grant – averaging a mere 35 acres (13.6 ha).

Rich British Loyalists, who take leading positions in the ruling circles of the colony, bring another 1,232 enslaved Blacks.

In New Brunswick, 500 of the 1,000 Loyalist Blacks are enslaved. A Quaker settlement in Beaver Harbour on the Bay of Fundy prohibits slave owners, posting the sign: "No Slave Masters Admitted."

1784 – (26 July) N America's first so-called "race riot" occurs in Birchtown/Shelburne – now the largest Black settlement outside Africa – spontaneously, yet not by accident. Black labourers are paid below scale. Employers incite disbanded British soldiers to beat up Black workers, burn their newly-built houses and drive them out of town. They resist valiantly. The incident becomes a precedent for local dusk-to-dawn curfews imposed by the colony against Black people in towns and villages across Nova Scotia, and their forcible dispersal into isolated, rural and segregated settlements throughout the province. Famine of 1787.

1789 – French Revolution: its ideas of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* galvanize slave revolts throughout the Americas. French peasants (*sans culottes*) make common cause with the Haitian revolution.

1791-1804 – Successful revolt of the enslaved Africans of Haiti, the most profitable colony in the Americas. Led by Toussaint L' Overture, and culminating in independence in 1804, the Haitian Revolution and the formation of the first Black republic in the Americas, sounds the death knell of French imperial ambitions in the Americas, becomes a beacon for enslaved Africans, and leads to the eventual demise of plantation slavery. A savage *cordon sanitaire* is applied by the European powers, aimed at economic destruction and total isolation of Haiti.

1792 – Denmark abolishes slave trade.

A bill to abolish slavery is brought before the first Legislative Council of Lower Canada (Québec) but never voted on. In 1793 Upper Canada unanimously passes bill to abolish slavery. Six years later, Joseph Papineau, the father of Louis Joseph Papineau, leader of the 1837 Rebellion, brings forward a citizen's petition demanding the abolition of slavery. Many abolitionist bills are brought before this Council. They are never voted on. People form anti-slavery societies which carry secret, independent operations deep within the US to liberate slaves.

1792 – (Jan) In one of the first Back-to-Africa movements, 1,196 Black Loyalists, in response to British duplicity (broken promises of land and freedom) set sail for Sierra Leone aboard 15 ships out of Halifax. Every obstacle is put in their path: organizer Thomas Peters is

beaten; disinformation is spread that people would be re-enslaved in Africa; proof is demanded that each emigrant is free of debt and not a slave; and documents falsified to ensure people could not leave. This reflects the concern of the British colony to retain a cheap pool of semi-skilled and skilled labour.

1796 – After waging a long guerilla war and establishing independent communes, a group of Maroons from Jamaica are tricked into surrendering. (July) Some 550 Trelawney Town Maroons are brought to Halifax, and forced to work under near starvation conditions on modifications of the Citadel military fortress. Eventually, after their protests, they force the British to transport them to Sierra Leone in 1800. Some Maroons remain behind, settling in the Prestons.

Late 1790s – Beginning of Underground Railroad as a powerful, illegal and secret organization to smuggle slaves out of the US.

1800 – Gabriel Prosser rebellion of 1000 slaves with the aim of creating a free black state in Virginia.

1807 – (Mar) British Parliament abolishes the *Slave Trade Act*, i.e., the trading of slaves. (See Page One)

1811 – Charles Deslandes Louisiana slave rebellion.

1812 – Some 2,000 Blacks migrate to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. In the Chesapeake Bay area (Maryland, Virginia), thousands of slaves courageously liberate themselves from plantation owners, and seek escape with British troops during mopping up operations in the dying days of the War of 1812. The British purchase their passage with a £250,000 payment to the US Treasury. (Sep 1814) Streams of refugees flow to Bermuda and Halifax, where they are placed under the commissioners of the poor. Nova Scotia needs a cheap labour force for shipbuilding, privateering and naval infrastructure.

In a letter to Charles Morris, the NS Surveyor-General, T. Chamberlain, a member of the Legislative Assembly, referring to the Black Refugees, says Black labourers "would afford assistance to us towards repairing the roads, but likewise furnish us with labourers of whom we stand too much in need to make any tolerable progress in our improvement." The British segregate this large group, later known as the "Black Refugees" or "Chesapeake Blacks," in the rural approaches to Halifax.

1821 – (Jan 6) NS colonial regime headed by Lord Dalhousie (the same family that Dalhousie at the base of Adam's Peak in Sri Lanka is named) launches failed policy to depopulate the Black community, *de facto* deporting 95 residents to Trinidad, in response to the general economic depression in the colony. Gov Dalhousie: "[T]hese people...slaves by habit as well as education, no longer live under the dread of the lash. Their idea of freedom is idleness and they are therefore quite incapable of industry." Blacks are made a scapegoat for the economic crisis of the Empire.

1822 – (Jun) Denmark Vesey attempted slave rebellion in South Carolina, involving thousands of Blacks.

1831 – (21 Aug) Nat Turner's Insurrection in Virginia. (27 Dec-Jan) Sam Sharpe rebellion in Jamaica, involving 60,000 slaves and 226 plantations over a 750-sq mile region.

1831 – As a direct result of this rebellion, Britain passes *Imperial Act*, prohibiting the owning of slaves in its colonies. It assigns £20 million as compensation to the slave-owning planters and provides for up to a six-year "apprentice" transition.

1848 – Democratic revolution in France. (27 Apr) Victor Schoelcher, under-secretary of state for the colonies, signs a decree abolishing slavery. To force the decision through, he warns of the danger of a general uprising if nothing is done. Resistance by the slaves is thus of capital importance in France's decision, and freedom, when it comes, is due more to Africa's own efforts.

1850 – Following the *Fugitive Slave Bill* (18 Sep), the Underground Railroad expands, featuring heroic Harriet Tubman, a fugitive slave, and an est'd 3,000 activists. (1 Jan 1851) Escaped slave Henry Bibb founds *Voice of the Fugitive* (to 1854), the first Black newspaper (a biweekly), in Sandwich and Windsor, ON. He advocates knowledge, self-reliance and organization as the weapon of fugitive slaves and Black settlements and helps found a school, church, and such antislavery societies as the pan-African American Continental and West India League to unite free Blacks.

Over 30,000 slaves escape to the Canadas in this decade alone, increasing the Black population to 60,000. Despite assistance from Canadians, the colonial regimes facilitate the movement of US bounty hunters, deny fugitives land and provisions for sustenance, forcing them to form segregated communities, especially in southwestern Ontario, for support, mutual aid and protection from the American predators.

1854 – Founding of African Baptist Association (later African United Baptist Association – AUBA), the key institution of Black Nova Scotian life. The church is the source of spiritual succour, and the focus of educational, cultural, social and political activities throughout all the Black communities.

1858 – 600 Blacks from San Francisco area migrate to Victoria.

1859 – (2 Dec) Hanging of John Brown, militant Abolitionist and organizer of the anti-slavery Harpers Ferry raid (17 Oct) of 21 men, five of whom were Black, against an armoury. His raid, launched from Chatham, is a catalyst for the Civil War (12 Apr 1861). Brown becomes a martyr of the anti-slavery cause.

(1 Jan 1863) Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, formally freeing slaves in areas of the South in rebellion, reluctantly issued two years after the War had begun. Utilizing its navy and ports such as Halifax, Britain and its colonial regimes defend the slavocracy. For the next 150 years African-Americans face the

harshest racial discrimination.

The US implements politics of assassination as its preferred weapon to destabilize a new political movement: working people (freedmen) together are engaged in rewriting constitutions, themselves electing and being elected and united in fighting for rights and new arrangements. Along with lynch laws and kangaroo courts, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), a secret US terrorist death squad, forms to block this progress and push social relations back to near-slave conditions of plantation sharecropping. An estimated 10,000 African-Americans (and Mexicans) are lynched up to WWII. People arm themselves in self-defence, with organizations and guns, boycotts and marches, and even shoot-outs.

1865 – NS Assembly authorizes separate black and white schools, thereby introducing segregated education as a matter of law. (It has already suppressed Gaelic and Acadian languages in schools.) Revolt in Jamaica and National Rebellion in India against Britain.

1867: "Keep Canada White"

1867 – Formation of Canada as a racist state on the European model, based on internal colonization and the private property system. Only two founding nations are recognized, described in the language of the colonizers as "French-speaking" and "English-speaking." All-sided genocide of First Nations follows.

The racist policy of the state extends to the Chinese; after the building of the CPR, in **1885**, a head tax of \$50, increasing to \$500 by the early 1900s, targets them. The tax is exclusionary, breaking up the families. A 1907 report by MacKenzie King, then Deputy Minister of Labour and later Prime Minister, blatantly states: "That Canada should desire to restrict immigration from the orient is regarded as natural – That Canada should remain a White man's country is believed to be not only desirable for economic and social reasons, but highly necessary on political and national grounds." Immigrants are dealt with under the Dept. of Agriculture, in effect, as animals.

1883 – With the AUBA as the major organizing force, the Black community of Halifax formally challenges segregated education. A petition is sent to the Assembly that states: "That they are coloured citizens and ratepayers of the city of Halifax, that by a minute of the Council of Public Instruction passed on December 1876 all coloured children henceforth were excluded for common school, and separate schools were established for their use, which are of an inferior grade, and in which they do not receive equal advantages with white children attending common schools, for which and other reasons as detailed in the petition; they pray that such minutes of Council be repealed." The response: the Assembly reinforces segregated education.

1884 – Berlin Conference on the division of Africa initiates a new phase of imperial colonialism among the European powers. The Scramble for Africa redraws boundaries and reduces whole peoples and nations into objects of brutal exploitation.

1886 – Slavery abolished in Cuba; (1888) in Brazil.



1880s – Railway porters play a major role in the struggle for rights. Porterage is not only the lowest paid job but, because it also depends on tipping to survive, making servility mandatory.

(Railroads are segregated.) They emerge as leaders of communities in Halifax (pictured), Truro, Montréal and other centres. Through the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the Order of Sleeping Car Porters, they gain recognition for Blacks within the labour movement. After WWII, porters made important contributions to the struggle for human rights, particularly through their struggle to end discrimination by the railways.

1898 – James Robinson Johnston graduates from Dalhousie University, the first Black Nova Scotian lawyer: actively involved in community struggles, he initiates the creation of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children. He is murdered in 1915. No other African Nova Scotians graduate from Nova Scotian universities until the 1960s.

Spanish-American War. The US seizes Hawaii, the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Cuba. This conquest provides justification for the flowering of Anglo-Saxon racialism and the new imperialism. States President Theodore Roosevelt: "We have room for but one language here and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as American, of American nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding house." Sen Albert J. Beveridge evangelically declares in 1900: "God has not been preparing the English-speaking and Teutonic peoples for a thousand years for nothing but vain and idle self-contemplation. No! He has made us the master organizers of the world to establish a system where chaos reigns... He has made us adepts in government that we may administer government among savages and senile peoples."

1901-03 & 1911 – "The Promise": Mass migration of workers from Alabama and later the Caribbean (Barbados) to work in British steel mill in Cape Breton, forming communities in Whitney Pier, Glace Bay and New Waterford. Many are skilled exemplars of the iron worker craft. Most of the US Black workers are forced to return down south, unemployed and by foot.

1909 – Migration of 1,000 former slaves and their descendants to escape Jim Crow laws imposed when Oklahoma became a state (1907) into Alberta (Amber Valley), Saskatchewan (Maidstone) and Manitoba. They create Amber (Breton), an entire Black

community of farmers, schools, businesses, churches in northern Alberta, as well as Campsie, Wildwood, and Keystone, about 100 m north of Edmonton where they face discrimination at every turn. Some settlements last into the 1960s.

1910 – (19 Dec) Baltimore introduces officially segregated neighbourhoods; civic ordinances adopted across the US.

1911 – (11 Aug) Edmonton Board of Trade protests the "serious menace to the future well-being of a large portion of Western Canada, by reason of the alarming influx of negro settlers." Ottawa orders that all African-Americans at the border be rejected for medical reasons. The KKK is floated in Alberta. This reveals a definite racist feature of federal immigration policy which is repeated to-date; first, people are encouraged to immigrate to Canada, then propaganda and repression are deliberately deployed against them to divide the society.

1913 – (11 Apr) US Wilson administration begins government-wide segregation of work places, rest rooms and lunch rooms.

1914-1918 – Canadian Navy bans Blacks. Denied equal status, Black participation in the army is restricted to menial tasks in the segregated No. 2 Negro Construction Battalion.

At the beginning of WWI, 110 million Africans are under European domination. Germany loses all its African colonies, leading to "reapportionment" of 13.5 million people between the victorious imperialist powers. This "reallocation," in the face of African aspirations for independence, reinvigorates the Pan African movement.

1917 – (Dec 6) Halifax Explosion which kills 2,000 citizens severely damages the community of Africville and wipes out Mi'kmaq reservation on the Dartmouth side of the harbour. Both are denied relief and compensation.

1917 – October Revolution in Russia reverberates amongst oppressed peoples and nationalities in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. Across Canada there is a vigorous upsurge of the working class movement. Blacks participate in the formation of industrial labour organizations and the radical labour struggles of the 1920s and 1930s. Cape Breton approaches a stage of civil war; workers stage a general strike in Amherst; and Halifax shipyard workers, building trades and the city's printers staged extended strikes in support of the 44-hour week. On 1 May 1919 workers launch a general strike against price gouging following the Halifax Explosion. Winnipeg General Strike.

In **1920** Marcus Garvey visits Nova Scotia. A proponent of Black nationalism, he formed the international United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), the largest Black organization of modern times. In 1921 the workers of Whitney Pier demonstrate under the banner, "Africa for Africans." (Photo, Page One) Residents establish a UNIA branch. In fall 1932, J.B. MacLaughlin, famous Communist leader of the coal miners, speaks to the UNIA in Glace Bay on his visit to the Soviet Union. On a return visit in 1937, Garvey speaks in both Halifax and Sydney on the conditions of the Black Communities in the province.

In the 1970s, steelworkers elect Winston Ruck secretary of their local. In 1989, he becomes director of the Black United Front. Ruck was born in Sydney and his parents are from Barbados.

1918 – NS Legislature strengthens the segregationist and discriminatory provisions of the *Education Acts* of 1865 and 1884. In 1918 all children near Annapolis and Digby had access to public schools, with the exception of Blacks in Fundy.

1919 – "Red Summer" in the USA; more than 20 riots; (19 Jul) the Washington riot is "distinguished by strong, organized and armed black resistance." (6 Jan 1921) Tulsa Riot destroys a 30-square-block area; airplanes used to bomb homes, churches and businesses in black neighbourhood; est'd 300 die. (26 Jan) Filibuster kills federal anti-lynching bill in the US Senate.

1939-1945 – WWII and historic victory over fascism. Ottawa tries to keep Blacks out of the forces, but Blacks insist, eventually joining all services. Japanese citizens are interned or displaced. A powerful trend for freedom and sovereignty develops throughout the world. The United Nations is founded.

1946 – Viola Desmond defies ordinance prohibiting Blacks from sitting anywhere but the balcony in a theatre in New Glasgow, NS. Jailed for a night, she is convicted of "disorderly conduct" and fined \$20 plus court costs, or thirty days in jail. Through *The Clarion* (later *The Negro Citizen*), writer and activist Carrie Best of New Glasgow brings the discrimination facing Blacks in Nova Scotia to the attention of Canadians.

1948 – UN *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, acts "committed with intention to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group."

1954 – After decades of protest, the Nova Scotia Legislature replaces the *Education Act*, putting an end to segregated schooling. In the same year, the US Supreme Court decision *Brown v Topeka Board of Education* formally desegregates American public education.

1955 – Some Blacks win right to work as conductors for CPR.

1959 – Cuban Revolution smashes myth of US invincibility.

1960s – Canada is short of skilled and semi-skilled labour. Immigration policy is revised, empathizing education and skills, leading to the "points system." In 1967 a "colour blind" Immigration Act claims to do away with all vestiges of racist requirements, supposedly ending the unofficial "white Canada policy." The source of immigrants change. Approximately one-third are from Europe, one-third from the Americas and the



Segregated schools – then and now

▲ A segregated school of Weymouth Falls, NS, built in the late 1800s. 70-80 students were taught in one room. Segregated schools also existed in Ontario until 1965 and throughout Canada for the Aboriginal peoples, the Chinese and others. Education in Canada was a luxury shared by the privileged, regardless of colour. In all of Nova Scotia, there were a grand total of three Black university graduates before the 1960s.

The content of the curriculum taught in our schools and with which our culture is imbued was and is Eurocentric – ignoring the contribution of Africa, of Blacks and of other peoples. The Eurocentric version of history seeks to show that Europe was the pinnacle of civilization, discoveries and progress and, by virtue of the same, that European cultures and "races" were (and are) the most advanced.

Segregation was challenged by Canadians as a component part of the struggle for genuine public education, and to end the division of Canadians on a racist basis. The end of formal segregation has not solved racial discrimination in education.

The Black Learners Advisory Committee reports that 60% of Black youth in Nova Scotia aged 20-24 do not graduate from Grade 11, and 30% do not graduate from Grade 10.

Black youth are considered three times as much at risk of dropping out of school than other students. They often have to bus to school and face criminalizing by police.

In Ontario, the media refer to many schools in Toronto as "shanty towns." The *Safe Schools Act* introduced by the Harris government in 2000 under the pretext of a "zero tolerance" policy and a "law and order" approach is particularly punitive on students of national minority backgrounds, infusing police and security guards in and around school campus. Many students wear clothing that is part of their youth identity and culture and did not belong to any gang, yet they are racially profiled. The definition of what constitutes a "gang" is totally arbitrary and used to criminalize the youths' right to be. There is a disproportionate number of Black and other national minority students suspended from the Toronto School Board.

Teachers in Peel County (Brampton) are currently initiating a campaign against the *Safe Schools Act*.

Caribbean, and another third from Asia, Africa and elsewhere.

1960-2007: Advance & Retreat

1960s – This period is a high point of national liberation struggles and the anti-imperialist movement. Many African countries achieve independence. The impact is felt far and wide. Mass marches are held on African Liberation Day (May 25) in Canada for several years. After years of heroic mass protests in the Southern US, led by Dr Martin Luther King, civil rights acts are finally passed in 1964 and 1965 formally prohibiting segregation, labour discrimination and the practice of barring Blacks from the polls. Dr King is now calling for "radical changes in the structure of our society" to redistribute wealth and power. He maintains that civil rights laws are empty without "human rights" – including economic rights. As the movement becomes more widespread and active, open state terrorism is prevalent, with police and troops treating Black ghettos as occupied zones. There are nine outbreaks in 1965, including the widely-publicized riot in Watts, the black ghetto of Los Angeles, 38 in 1966, and 128 in 1967. Many outstanding fighters are assassinated or criminalized, from Malcolm X, Dr King and Fred Hampton to Patrice Lumumba in Africa, where the neo-colonial order is extended.

In Canada, thousands of people stage sit-ins at US Consulates in solidarity against racial discrimination, the war in Vietnam, and the growth of American domination of Canada itself.

In Halifax, the Black United Front, a province-wide political organization, forms as a manifestation of discussions and activity within the community through the 1950s and 1960s.

1969 – (Jan to Feb 11) Mass protest of Sir George Williams University (Concordia) against racism. This generates broad solidarity, including demonstrations in Trinidad & Tobago, a trigger of the February, 1970 uprising. Employing gunboat diplomacy, Canada stations a naval destroyer off its coast.

1970s – A broad united front of Canadians emerges against racism and fascism, and the racialization of the polity by the state (1975 *Green Paper*, 1977 *Pitman Report*). State introduces "new" policies of "multiculturalism" and "ethnic diversity." The basic approach adopted is based on "race": such concepts as "visible minorities" become official and introduced into everyday vocabulary to divide the citizenry and prevent their unity. "White power" gangs are granted virtual impunity. Targeting of the East and West Indian and Pakistani communities. Canadians vigorously oppose the racist notions and escalate actions in



1960s – Africville: destruction & plunder

▲ Facing massive neglect and racism, this historic community located on the harbour of Halifax, Nova Scotia, survived and developed for over 150 years. Residents held title to their land and paid taxes yet, despite numerous petitions, not a single civic service such as water or sewage is provided. On the perimeter of the working class North End, it is a *de facto* officially segregated community, aimed at splitting the unity of the working people and intensifying their exploitation. Wages of Black labourers are 40% less than that of scale.

In 1947 Halifax designates it as industrial land. No reference is made to the wishes of the inhabitants. In 1964, Halifax votes for, and in 1968-70 implements, the expropriation of this community of some 80 families under the assimilationist banner of liberalism, “integration” and “urban renewal” – an ideological mask for the driving economic force: land now valued for industrial development. Africville is bulldozed into the Bedford Basin, its residents paid a pittance – less than \$500 per home. A proud, dignified community of over a century’s standing is scornfully declared an “eyesore”, placed on social assistance, and moved in large numbers into city housing projects. The wheel had come full circle: denied land promised by the British in the 1780s, the Black community is now uprooted from the very soil on which they had built new life over the succeeding generations.

In March 2004 a UN report urges Canada to pay reparations. The response: Parks Canada designates Africville a “historic site” and erects a plaque.

defence of their rights, smashing attempts in 1979-80 to refloat the KKK.

1976 – (16 Jun) Soweto uprising in South Africa signals renewed Black militant challenge to the apartheid state which introduces “Afrikaan-only” language laws. Police open fire on 10,000 students, killing 566 and wounding 4,000.

1977 – The people of North and East Preston, Cherry Brook, Lake Loon and Lake Major unite and defeat an attempt by Halifax County to seize community land around Lake Loon under the pretext of protecting the water supply of Dartmouth.

1982 – Canadian Constitution repatriated under *Constitution Act (1982)*. It fails to break with 19th century colonial concepts and arrangements, enshrining the “two founding nations” myth, refusing to recognize that Canada is comprised of more than 45 nationalities. Instead of enshrining rights with a guarantee, the Constitution reduces rights to mere privileges. They may be abrogated at any time by the government, invoking “reasonable limits” and “notwithstanding” clauses.

1987-88 – Battle of Cuito Cuanavale in Angola. The racist South African armed forces are decisively defeated by combined Angolan, Namibian and Cuban forces, a largely unknown event in the West.

1989-97 – Social contradictions amongst youth building within Cole Harbour District High School in NS explode in 1989. The media and RCMP convert this into an “attitude” and “law and order” issue. The impression is orchestrated that these events are the inevitable product of the clash of communities (with different culture and values, so-called “white” Eastern Passage versus “black” Prestons); people are polarized and a martial atmosphere is imposed in the school. This accelerates the formation of *The Black Learners’ Advisory Committee* and other initiatives. In 1997, there is another eruption.

1990s – A new racist front emerges on the basis of proclaiming eurocentric cultural “Canadian values” as the criteria of citizenship and national identity. The *modus operandi* of imposing this racist and chauvinist political culture operates on a broad level: promotion of the Reform Party; xenophobia against immigration; promotion of eugenics; revisionist history on WWII and the Holocaust; the “end of history” and “clash of civilizations”; formation of the Heritage Front (with revelations of direct involvement by police and the secret services); racial profiling by police, customs, airports and the media. On the other hand, a proliferating number of books about slavery strip away whatever is left of the romance of benign slaveholders presiding over docile slaves.

1990 – Destruction of materials relating to collections on Black History at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia.

1993 – (4 Mar) Somalia affair. Torture and murder (“execution style”) of Somalis by members of Canadian Airborne Regiment. An inquiry, eventually shut down by the government, reveals white supremacists allowed to freely organize within the elite regiment, linked with the US Special Forces at Fort Bragg, with whom this regiment regularly trained.

1999 – Government slashes funding to Black United Front, shutting it down.

1999 – (30 Aug) The Racialization of Crime in Toronto’s Print Media – a study of nearly 6,000 articles published in *The Globe*

and *Mail*, *Toronto Star*, and *Toronto Sun* between 1994-1997 on Blacks and Vietnamese by the Ryerson School of Journalism. It raises “troubling questions about the role of the media in perpetuating and exacerbating racism in this country”: “Without using overtly racist terminology or language, the media by their selective and subtle use of stereotypes and generalization nevertheless contribute to the development of a negative image of racial communities, which are then marginalized and legislated against.”

- 84% of articles mentioning “Jamaicans” dealt with sports, entertainment or social problems (crime, deportation). Only 2% mention achievement.

- Vietnamese are depicted as “problem people”; crime and social problems account for 74% of all coverage.

- Over 50% of all articles about the Just Desserts shooting in 1994 link the case to wider social problems like gun control and immigration. This results in the “racialization” of the crime by the media, and led to speedy changes in immigration laws used to centre out Jamaicans for deportation in great numbers.

2000 – A York University report reveals that Blacks in Toronto have a 20% unemployment rate compared to 8.1% for those from European backgrounds, though both groups had similar levels of education. Poverty levels among Ethiopians, Ghanians, Somalis, and those from the Caribbean living in Toronto range from 50 to 70 per cent. Many are trapped in low-wage jobs even

though most have at least a high-school education. Homelessness, hunger and poor health are a daily reality. Youth unemployment is very high, and many youth face a bleak future with few prospects.

2001 – George Elliot Clarke, a native of Nova Scotia, wins the Governor General’s Award for Poetry, the first Black Canadian writer to win this prestigious award.

Media and politicians try and blackmail Canadians into believing that immigrants and refugees are coming to Canada in droves and bringing with them diseases such as tuberculosis to “infect” Canadians, further “burden” the health and social welfare system in Canada, and to “scam” the “Canadian taxpayer” – attacks carried out to “protect” Canadians. (2003) Racialization of the SARS epidemic as modern-day yellow peril; *Toronto Sun* publishes cartoon, “SARS Made in China”; an MPP publicly blames SARS on immigration.

2000 – Racial profiling, Tamils & the media

Mass protests take place of over 1,000 people representing 55 organizations at *Toronto Sun* offices against inflammatory article (‘Propping Up Terrorism; Crime Profits from the Great White North fund insurgencies,’ David Quigley, 30.1.2000). It attacks “most Tamils” for supporting “terrorism” in Sri Lanka. Tamils are expert forgers, it asserts and alleges that Tamil men force their women into prostitution, together with war taxes, credit card frauds, welfare scams and drugs, to collect money for the Tamil Tigers. The sole source cited is the McKenzie Institute – financed by the Dept of National Defence and backed by the Business Council on National Issues.

Between April and June, 1999 *The National Post* published over 40 pieces on the Sri Lankan civil war and the activities of Tamil Canadians, portraying the community as supporting “terrorism”, which eventually gives rise to a defamation lawsuit. The vitriolic series utilizes a succession of press leaks attributed to “intelligence officials.” Other disinformation follows, based on “sources”, “internal reports” and “access to information” items reported as news without question. While *Sun Media* alleges that some 30,000 Tamils are illegally in Canada, the *Post* hysterically claims that there are “8,000 Tamil terrorists” in Toronto, *i.e.*, one out of every 20 residents!

Are we to condemn our children and our neighbours on the basis of such stereotypes? Whatever else, such racist media coverage brutalizing entire communities fans a backlash against the very minorities the Government of Canada says it is allegedly protecting, and creates the justification for restrictive legislation as well as military and other intervention into their native countries. This disinformation is then used to justify government restrictions on charitable organizations and intervention in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka. On this basis too follows the restrictive *Bill C-11, a new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* – which Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Elinor Caplan publicly admits is designed to bring only “the best and the brightest to Canada” and to prevent anyone from coming in through the “back door.”

Nova Scotian court orders Halifax lawyers Burnley “Rocky” Jones and Anne Derrick to pay \$240,000 to a Halifax police officer for defamation, alleging that they called the officer a racist when the officer strip searched three young Black girls at a local elementary school. After a costly appeal, the Supreme Court of Canada overturns the verdict in 2003.

(31 Aug-7 Sep) UN Conference Against Racism. Some 17,000 participants from over 170 countries and many African heads of state convene in Durban, South Africa, to condemn “racism, xenophobia and other related intolerances.” A principal demand is for reparations. The Bush administration, Britain and Canada use the issue of Israeli Zionism and the ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people as a pretext to avoid serious deliberations by the world community on the related issues of slavery, colonialism and reparations. Isolated politically, the US and Israel stomp out in a huff.

For the first time, the case of Africville and the residents’ demand for reparations is presented on the world stage by Canadian postal worker and Africville activist Denise Allen. It is translated into ten languages.

Not by accident, 9-11 follows four days later. Under the aegis of Bush’s “war on terror” as a pretext, the state practice of racial profiling is broadened to target those of Arabic origin and Muslim faith, the Tamil minority and other South Asians.

1998-04 – The stand of conscience by two athletes against police harassment, basketballer Dee Brown in Toronto and boxer Kirk Johnson of North Preston, leads to widespread exposure of decades of police racial profiling. The Halifax Police stop the car of Mr Johnson (pictured), an Olympian, 29 times in a 60-day period in 1998 while visiting home from his training base in Texas. He wins a lawsuit charging humiliation, stress and discrimination five years later. The Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs asserts that “driving while black” is not a key issue for his department.



(19 Oct 02) *Toronto Star* reviews more than 480,000 incidents of arrests or ticketing and nearly 800,000 cases of criminal or other charges: in cases of “simple drug possession,” statistics show that Black people arrested are released at the scene of their arrest 61.8% of the time while whites are released 76.5% of the time; that Blacks (15.5%) are twice as likely as whites (7.3%) to be held in custody overnight pending a bail hearing; that Blacks are disproportionately charged for offences that were discovered after a traffic stop – “out-of-sight offences” including failing to update the address on the license. It establishes that men between the ages of 25 and 34 received 39.3% of “out-of-sight” tickets for their age group, despite making up only 7.9% of the population of that age group. Torontonians raise the demand to guarantee rights in law, for mechanisms of redress when rights are violated, against impunity, and for control of the police force. (See page 29)

2003 – (29 Aug) Torontonians stage emergency demonstrations to protest dubious imprisonment of 19 students of South Asian origin arrested on 14 Aug by RCMP and Immigration in morning raid “Project Thread.” All students are exonerated.

2004 – (Feb) Canada militarily invades Haiti with the US and France, overthrowing elected government of Jean-Paul Aristide. Direct RCMP police and other interference in its internal affairs; condoning continuous killing of civilians and protestors by UN troops; sends officials to organize election under foreign occupation; refuses to support the return of President Aristide; criminalizes members of Lavalas.

2005 – Initiatives to organize migrant farm workers from the Caribbean and Latin America throughout Canada. (Apr) Racism, neglect and segregation of scores of Black workers at Centre Maraicher Eugène Guinois Jr., one of Canada’s largest commercial vegetable farms, located about 40 minutes SW of Montréal, is exposed: “conditions on the farm that wouldn’t seem out of place in the segregation era of the US South.” Joanne Richard, Québec Human Rights Tribunal, states it is the worst case of outright discrimination in the tribunal’s recent history.

Election of Evo Morales (2005) following Hugo Chávez’s (1998) personifies the resurgence of indigenous peoples of the Americas. Ottawa refuses to recognize Kelowna Accord with First Nations and Six Nations land reclamation at Caledonia, ON near Hamilton.

2006 – Attack on the cultural patrimony of a community: (27 Feb) firebombing of Black Cultural Centre, Dartmouth; (31 Mar) late-night arson attack destroys a building of the Black Loyalist Centre in Birchtown (Shelburne), RCMP admits to *Shunpiking* magazine they know the culprit, but no charges are laid; (16 Apr) spray painting of Catholic church in Pictou, NS with KKK slogans; (5 May) Preston community centre spraypainted with Nazi graffiti. NS provincial government and media shroud these attacks in silence – as minor “law and order” incidents.

(18 May) Over 600 police officers from Toronto, Montreal and agents from US carry out an early morning paramilitary operation in *Jamestown* in northwestern Toronto – a working class community made up of residents originally from the Caribbean, East Africa and South Asia. (See page 29)

2007 – (16 Jan) Halifax youth disrupt “lecture” by US supremacist Jared Taylor. The action is condemned as “mob violence” by the provincial and national media, reducing the issue from one of defence of human rights of all to the “right” of fascists and racists to openly organize and spread their barbaric views in Canada. ■



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The House of Slaves

A stark, silent beauty emerges from a place whose hidden past was the setting of heinous crimes against the African people.

The triangular Slave Trade flourished across the Middle Passage (Atlantic Ocean). Europe exported “cheap junk” such as textiles, alcohol, glass jewellery and munitions for African slaves to become workers in the Americas, in exchange for sugar cane, coffee, cocoa, cotton or mine products (copper, gold or salt) that was sent back to Europe.

The House of Slaves (La Maison des Esclaves) on Gorée Island off Senegal, West Africa, is one of the few surviving memorials left in existence to remind us of the inhuman slave trade which occurred over the last 400 years involving more than 10 million Africans.

Senegal, the most westerly of the countries of West Africa, is strategically located. It is less than 3200 km from South America. What is surprising is that the closest point in North America is Atlantic Canada. It is 5400 km from Halifax, but about 6100 km from New York, and 6700 km from Miami.

Gorée Island is a small island about 45 acres, located in the lee of Cap Vert, about 4 km from the city of Dakar, the largest sheltered bay of West Africa. The island was discovered by the Portuguese in 1444 and named Fia de Palma or “Palm Island”. It was later called Gorée or “Good Harbour” by the Dutch.

The island offered several strategic advantages: an excellent departure point for the slave ships, good anchorage, protection against surprise attacks and the presence of a small spring.

Gorée, the island of slavery, has become the symbol of slavery which was the disgrace of humanity at the end of the middle ages to the beginning of modern times. It is one of the most widely visited of historical sites in West Africa. Every February and March, thousands of black Americans throughout the Diaspora make pilgrimages to the tiny island.

The House of Slaves, built in 1786, was a slave warehouse which was operated by Dutch, Portuguese, French, and English slave traders. West African men, women, and children were bought, held for transfer in places like this house, and then shipped out to the slave labour markets of the Americas.

At the slave house, a beautiful structure with a double-crescent shaped staircase separates the two levels. On the upper level, rooms housed wealthy European men and their “wives” – Euro-African women known as signares. The lower level contained small rooms housing hundred and hundreds of captured slaves waiting an unwanted transportation across the Atlantic.

The tiny rooms can hold no more than eight or nine standing adults. In the 16th century, up to 75 people would lie on top of one another for weeks. There were so many because the slave catchers expected many to die.

Babies, women, and men were kept in separate, windowless

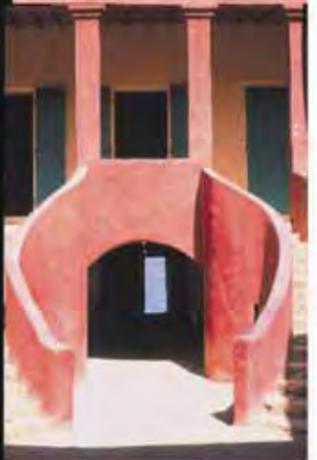
rooms. Men from tribes considered good breeders were most cherished and were separated from the others. Men who didn't meet the required weight of 160 pounds went through weeks of fattening up before they could be shipped.

An estimated 40m slaves died in transit. Poignantly, enslaved Africans staged innumerable shipboard rebellions. Only a few, such as the famous Amistad Revolt off the coast of Cuba in 1839 led by Josph Cinquuez, are known to history.



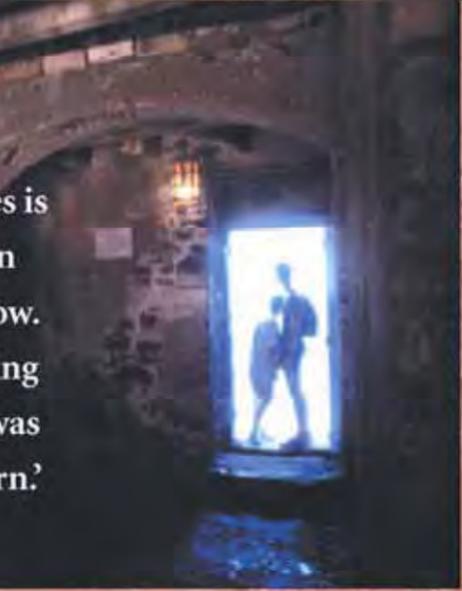
There is a sense of horror and sadness that grips a visitor when one walks through the courtyard and rooms. The beauty and tranquility of the island contrast strangely to the distant echoes of death, suffering and resistance that occurred here more than 550 years ago.

Photo Essay
by Bob Semple



The Door of No Return

At one end of the House of Slaves is a doorway overlooking the ocean and jagged rocks ten metres below. Here, captives boarded the waiting slave ships. The door (at right) was known as 'The Door of No Return.'



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The Martin Luther King You Don't See On TV

BY JEFF COHEN & NORMAN SOLOMAN

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA TO DISINFORM

It's become a TV ritual: Every year in mid-January, around the time of Martin Luther King's birthday, we get perfunctory network news reports about "the slain civil rights leader."

The remarkable thing about this annual review of King's life is that several years – his last years – are totally missing, as if lost down a memory hole.

What TV viewers see is a closed loop of familiar film footage: King battling desegregation in Birmingham (1963); reciting his dream of racial harmony at the rally in Washington (1963); marching for voting rights in Selma, Alabama (1965); and finally, lying dead on the motel balcony in Memphis (1968).

An alert viewer might notice that the chronology jumps from 1965 to 1968. Yet King didn't take a sabbatical near the end of his life. In fact, he was speaking and organizing as diligently as ever.

Almost all of those speeches were filmed or taped. But they're not shown today on TV.

Why?

It's because the US national news media have never come to terms with what Martin Luther King Jr. stood for during his final years.

In the early 1960s, when King focused his challenge on legalized racial discrimination in the South, most major media were his allies. Network TV and national publications graphically showed the police dogs and bullwhips and cattle prods used against Southern blacks who sought the right to vote or to eat at a public lunch counter.

But after passage of civil rights acts in 1964 and 1965, King began challenging the nation's fundamental priorities. He maintained that civil rights laws were empty without "human rights" – including economic rights. For people too poor to eat at a restaurant or afford a decent home, King said, anti-discrimination laws were hollow.

Noting that a majority of Americans below the poverty line were white, King developed a class perspective. He decried the huge income gaps between rich and poor, and called for "radical changes in the structure of our society" to redistribute wealth and power.

"True compassion," King declared, "is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring."

By 1967, King had also become the country's most prominent opponent of the Vietnam War, and a staunch critic of overall US foreign policy, which he deemed

militaristic. In his "Beyond Vietnam" speech delivered at New York's Riverside Church on April 4, 1967 – a year to the day before he was murdered – King called the United States "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today."

From Vietnam to South Africa to Latin America, King said, the US was "on the wrong side of a world revolution." King questioned "our alliance with the landed gentry of Latin America," and asked why the US was suppressing revolutions "of the shirtless and barefoot people" in the Third World, instead of supporting them.

In foreign policy, King also offered an economic critique, complaining about "capitalists of the West investing huge sums of money in Asia, Africa and South America, only to take the profits out with no concern for the social betterment of the countries."

You haven't heard the "Beyond Vietnam" speech on network news retrospectives, but national media heard it loud and clear back in 1967 – and loudly denounced it. *Time* magazine called it "demagogic slander that sounded like a script for Radio Hanoi." The *Washington Post* patronized that "King has diminished his usefulness to his cause, his country, his people."

In his last months, King was organizing the most militant project of his life: the Poor People's Campaign. He crisscrossed the country to assemble "a multiracial army of the poor" that would descend on Washington – engaging in nonviolent civil disobedience at the Capitol, if need be – until Congress enacted a poor people's bill of rights. *Reader's Digest* warned of an "insurrection."

King's economic bill of rights called for massive government jobs programs to rebuild America's cities. He saw a crying need to confront a Congress that had demonstrated its "hostility to the poor" – appropriating "military funds with alacrity and generosity," but providing "poverty funds with miserliness."

How familiar that sounds today, more than thirty years after King's efforts on behalf of the poor people's mobilization were cut short by an assassin's bullet.

As 1999 gets underway, in a nation of immense wealth, the White House and Congress continue to accept the perpetuation of poverty. And so do most mass media. Perhaps it's no surprise that they tell us little about the last years of Martin Luther King's life.

Reprinted from Shunpike Black History Supplement No. 24. Jeff Cohen and Norman Solomon are authors of Adventures in Medialand: Behind the News, Beyond the Pundits (Common Courage Press).

Sports: 'The Skin I'm In'

REVIEW BY CURTIS COWARD*
SHUNPIKING MAGAZINE

The Skin I'm In: Racism, Sports and Education
By Christopher M. Spence

Fernwood Publishing, Blacks Point NS, \$15.95



HE HARDLY FITS the dumb jock stereotype. Author Christopher M. Spence is a former professional football player with the B.C. Lions; he holds a doctorate in education, lectures at

York University and Humber College and is the principal at Lawrence Heights Middle School in Toronto. The Skin I'm In identifies the past and present problems of black athletes and the education system, yet he also highlights solutions to begin correcting the ongoing inequities and mistakes within the relationship.

A very valid message is delivered to students who place sports participation ahead of academic achievement, and an attempt is made to educate educators to fight against inequality, racism, and injustice in the education system and society.

It is unfortunate that most student athletes and school administrations will never read this book. Christopher Spence has told a story with the true facts – Black athletes have been exploited, misrepresented, and abused by the education system.

The Skin I'm In is very accurate and stunning as to the number of young student athletes who wish to earn millions of dollars by way of professional sports and forget to focus on the basics of education while attending school.

Christopher Spence reminds us of the odds stacked against the student of colour because of the lack of cultural information provided by the education system. It makes it difficult for a student of colour to stay interested as the information does not relate to their culture. If you can't see yourself portrayed, you lose interest.

The number of Black athletes who have received a diploma but have not received an education is unbelievable. High schools and universities are building school morale or earning thousands to millions of dollars having star athletes perform; little time and effort is put into the athletes receiving the knowledge and skills needed to get a rewarding job after graduation.

Christopher's message is greatly defined, athletes of colour should take advantage of the opportunity that sports can offer. Sports can provide educational and career opportunities, especially to the black male athletes. If the athlete uses their talents to get into a major educational program then it is essential for the athlete to leave the program with an education, and be prepared to join the work force in a reputable manner, to find a decent job. High schools and universities are turning these athletes to the outside world unprepared to handle interviews or to manage in the working environment. All it takes is for the education facility to acknowledge the student of the focus needed to succeed after sports, at any level.

Christopher is correct when he states that many schools put more emphasis on sports rather than on education; based on the athletic trophies and awards displayed in the school lobbies or hallways, it is obvious as to

which avenue the school spirit depends on. However, the academic accomplishments are absent or of little importance to the institutions. When was the last time you heard of an honour student being promoted, equal to that of the star athlete? If you are not in sports, you are not marketable to the institution.

Racism is very clear in this book. For years Blacks were not accepted in the schools, especially in the USA. Canada also had its moments: the idea of the Canadian Football League teams (Toronto Argos and Ottawa Roughriders) threatening to boycott if the Montreal Alouettes dressed the first Black player in 1946. Jackie Robinson of the Major League Baseball program was not the only struggle in professional sports. The NHL is still a problem.

I salute the content of The Skin I'm In. The message to Black athletes is long over due. It is not only the responsibility of the educational institution to ensure that the Black athlete is educated, we as a Black people, have to get involved with our youth and ensure that their education is received. We have to ensure that our youth understand that while sports teaches you social and team building skills, an education equips you with the basic fundamentals to survive in today's society. We, as a society, have to overcome the "dumb jock" syndrome. We have to stop believing that we cannot accomplish both education and sports at the same time.

A combination of both sports and education will make you the best that you can be.

As a former professional athlete in baseball, I know it is possible for young black student athletes to accomplish an education during their pursuit of athletic goals. It is acceptable



to have a dream of becoming a professional baseball player, basketball player or hockey player. I just think it is wise to have something to fall back on after sports. Knowledge is power with or without the status of professional dollars. You can lose the professional (dollars) status in the blink of an eye by way of injury or by not making the cut, but knowledge is something that can not be taken away, it is always with you.

Christopher Spence is talking through the experience of seeing many athletes fail along his travels. I agree because I have been there as well; education is the key to success.

*Curtis Coward is co-author of *The Kids' Baseball Book* (New Media Publications, Halifax, 1994) with Tony Seed. A former pitcher with the St. Louis Cardinals' baseball team, he coaches the Auburn High Girls' basketball team and the Nova Scotia Under-15 Girls' basketball team. Curtis is also an organizer of the annual Justin Coward Tournament.

The Origins of Racism

Who is to blame for racism? What is its cause and aim? Is it merely a matter of skin colour? Of genetics? Of so-called 'human nature'? Historian **Isaac Saney*** explores the futility of an ethnocentric approach.

Racism, one of the dominant features of the world, is often treated as a permanent phenomenon in human relations. Entwined with the belief that racial antipathy and ethnocentrism are primordial is the assumption that racism is a natural, inevitable, and characteristically European legacy. This perspective ignores the mass of evidence that demonstrates that racism has a definite origin in a particular historical period, linked to very specific circumstances and conditions. Discovering the origins of racism may not fully account for its persistence. However, understanding its origins casts an essential light not only on the functioning of racism but on the nature of governance.

The historical record testifies to a general absence of global and universalised racial prejudice and notions of racial superiority and inferiority before the advent of the Atlantic slave trade: while notions of "otherness" and superiority existed they were not based on the racialized worldviews. Before this horrendous traffic in human flesh, Europeans had positive attitudes and images of African and Africans. In the art of ancient Greece, Africans are often portrayed in positions of power and authority. The Greco-Roman societies did not generate or create a racist ideology to justify their extensive systems of slavery.

In *Blacks in Antiquity*, Frank Snowden, an African American historian, states that interactions between Blacks and whites "did not give rise among the Greeks and Romans to the colour prejudices of certain later Western societies. The Greeks and Romans developed no theories of white superiority." Jan Pieterse further observes that generally in the world of antiquity "differences in skin colour did not play a significant role" and that "black carried a positive meaning."

The African contribution to the treasury of world history and culture was universally acknowledged. One has only to read the works of the acclaimed Greek Herodotus – considered the father of historical study in the West – to appreciate the esteem in which the Black world and its accomplishments were held.

This ancient perspective is reflected in the Renaissance. The art of that period – Reubens and Rembrandt being prominent exemplars – treated Africans with respect and honour. Positive images of Africans predominated in Europe up until the fifteenth century. These images are starkly delineated by the emergence and production of the deluge of negative and debased images that arise in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.

The question is thus posed: What led to the destruction of this climate of mutual respect? History gives one dominating answer: the Atlantic Slave Trade.

While slavery is an ancient institution, for most of world history it was not a condition identified or linked to skin colour. What is often forgotten is that the Irish were bought and sold in English markets in the Middle Ages. The Irish were the first people sold as slaves in the Caribbean, totalling over 100,000. The Irish were white – as were the Acadian people of Maritime Canada. Racism is a weapon of exploiters to single out or target definite peoples for attack. It is not a matter of colour.

The racialization of slavery, the development of the pseudo-scientific concept of race – the division of humanity into "biologically" distinct categories where phenotypical characteristics (especially skin colour) are identifiers – is a construct created to justify African bondage, the conquest of the Americas and – later – the colonial and imperialist projects. This became an integral component of the emergent Eurocentric world-view that considered people of colour, particularly those of African descent as inferior: peoples without history, destined for servitude. Before the trans-Atlantic commerce in African humanity in the service of burgeoning European



▲ Under banner of "Africa for Africans", black and white workers of Whitney Pier, Sydney, Cape Breton Island, march in 1921 to oppose European colonial domination of Africa and racism in the province of Nova Scotia.

capitalist economies, racism as a global historical phenomenon – universalized and inhering at all levels of society – did not exist.

Early Black-White relations in N America

Early Black-white relations in North America are usually conceived as defined by the racial divide and inevitable conflict. The historical record reveals quite a different relationship: one in which both blacks – those in servitude and those who had earned and won their freedom – and poor whites – the overwhelming majority of the white population – shared weal and woe, trial and tribulation. The idea of whiteness and white people, separate and apart from blackness and black people did not as yet exist. This was to come later as a direct product of the development of racist ideology, not just to justify slavery but to drive a wedge between black and white.

Lerone Bennett sums up this relationship:

Working together in the same fields, sharing the same huts, the same situation, and the same grievances, the first black and white Americans, aristocrats excepted, developed strong bonds of sympathy and mutuality. They ran away together, played together and revolted together ... In the process, the black and white servants – the majority of the colonial population – created a racial wonderland that seems somehow un-American in its lack of obsession about race and colour. There was to be sure prejudice then, but it was largely English class prejudice which was distributed without regard to race, creed or colour.

A most powerful feature of this early era is, as Bennett notes, "the equality of oppression" between white and black. Indeed, in the first years of slavery indentured white servants were often treated as badly as enslaved Africans, with blacks and whites being held in the same contempt and assigned similar tasks. White women not only worked in the fields but were also flogged by the colonial authorities. Barbara Fields notes that indentured servants

could be bought and sold like livestock, kidnapped, stolen, put up as stakes in card games and awarded – even before their arrival in America – to victors in lawsuits.

The ruling circles and the resulting laws, at that time, did not distinguish between black and white. Why and how did this situation change? This answer is as chastening and revealing as the evidence is clear: by deliberate choice of the ruling circles. The salient feature in comprehending this fact is the observation that blacks and whites, as Bennett notes, "revolted together." This assumes vital significance when one couples the singular economic significance of slavery to the ruling classes with the continual resistance and revolt of Africans. Herbert Aptheker, the renowned historian, documented nearly 250 instances of revolts against slavery in North America. What also stands out is the frequent aid and, in many cases, militant participation of poor whites in these events.

Some examples illuminate the prevailing state of affairs. In 1663, white servants and black slaves in Gloucester Co., Virginia planned to stage a rebellion to win their freedom. Their plans were discovered and many were executed. In New York in 1741, poor whites and slaves were accused of conspiracy. After a trial 35 persons were executed. Bacon's Rebellion – led by Nathaniel Bacon – was probably the most dramatic

example. This uprising of white frontiersmen, slaves and servants in 1676 forced the English government to dispatch a thousand troops across the Atlantic in order to restore order. A group of 80 Africans and 20 English servants were among the last to surrender.

It should be emphasized that while African resistance and revolt, widespread and numerous, was the crucial factor in the struggle to abolish slavery, Black people did not stand alone: either before or after the conscious creation of the colour line. This aid – overwhelmingly from the lower socio-economic strata – persisted in the face of concerted efforts by the slaveholders to eliminate anti-slavery opponents and organizations. As Aptheker notes, joining this great struggle were white allies:

who came in the main from among the poor ...

No, it was the 'plain' man and woman, the artisan and mechanic, the factory worker, the yeoman and small farmer, the poor housewife who formed the bulk of the membership of the Abolitionist societies, despite intimidations; who contributed the largest part of the pennies and dollars with which the Abolitionist movement printed and distributed the pamphlets, petitions and papers appealing for justice and condemning oppression.

While the ruling elites were terrified of black revolt, they were thrown into panic by the prospect of continued and widespread joint white-black rebellion. This would threaten to overthrow the existing order. Edmund Morgan notes that in the wake of these uprisings, particularly Bacon's Rebellion, the plantation owners concluded that "if freemen (*i.e.*, whites – Ed.), with disappointed hopes, should make common cause with slaves of desperate hope, the results might be worse than anything Bacon had done."

Thus, the Anglo-American ruling class, by deliberate policy, drew the colour line between freedom and slavery, as Theodore Allen notes, "on race lines: any trace of African ancestry carried the presumption of slavery."

Consequently, the Virginia Assembly enacted various measures toward this end, including the slave codes that dictated discipline and punishment. Concomitantly:

Virginia's ruling class, having proclaimed that all white men were superior to black, went on to offer their social (but white) inferiors a number of benefits previously denied them. In 1705 a law was passed requiring masters to provide white servants whose indenture time was up with ten bushels of corn, thirty shillings, and a gun, while women were to get fifteen bushels of corn and forty shillings. Also, the newly freed servants were to get fifty acres of land.

In short, the racialization of slavery, the construction of racist and white supremacist ideology in North America was a direct and carefully thought-out ruling class response to the unity of working people and labour solidarity. By instituting a system of racial privileges for white workers it was possible to generate, define and establish the idea of the white race, which then operated as an instrument of social control.

The legacy of this slide from, in Bennett's phrase, "racial wonderland" to a North America where racism is endemic – ideologically and institutionally – is not an accidental outcome. As a smokescreen, it hid – and continues to hide – the real dynamics and control of productive forces and finance; used not just to justify the bondage and exploitation of Africans – and other non-white peoples – but also to deflect the struggles of white workers into the *cul-de-sac* of national chauvinism. Moreover, racism has developed beyond a method to divide and splinter workers to encompass a pervasive set of social relations deeply rooted in the functioning and material reproduction of capitalism. By polarising society it splits the body politic.

The inheritance of today is to overcome this. When we grasp what led to the creation of these social relations, ideology and negative images, when we understand why they were created, how they were created and who they were created by, then, and only then, we are better able to inform our struggles to overcome them and achieve the rights for all in the present conditions. ■

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Racial profiling — a problem that can only be solved by the people themselves

It is common knowledge among the Canadian people that racial profiling goes on everyday against not only Blacks in Toronto, Montreal, Halifax, Vancouver and other places, but First Nations peoples, people of Arab origin and Muslims, members of the Tamil community in Toronto, as well as against other South Asians who are branded as “terrorists” under the fraudulent pretext of the “war on terror,” “ensuring the safety of Canadians,” “national security,” “upholding Canadian values” and so on.

COMMENTARY BY PHILIP FERNANDEZ*

Racial profiling is the official policy of the racist Canadian state, including its police and courts, used as a means to split the movement of the Canadian people who are building their political unity as they fight for the rights of all, in the face of the most brutal anti-social offensive of the rich and their governments at all levels which is wrecking the society and forcing everyone especially the most vulnerable, to fend for themselves. Such a society has no future.

One of the chief instruments of racial profiling in Canada is the police. For the longest time in Toronto, in the face of the experience of the black and other national minority communities, the police denied racial profiling existed. Then in the fall of 2002, the *Toronto Star* ran a series of articles well-documented through statistics and anecdotal evidence that confirmed something many Torontonians had long suspected — that the Toronto police engages in racial profiling of the black community and other national minorities in the city.

The *Star* used Freedom of Information provisions to access and review the Toronto Police Services’ Criminal Information Processing System (CIPS) going back to 1996, which contained almost 500,000 incidents of arrests or ticketing and about 800,000 cases of criminal or other charges.

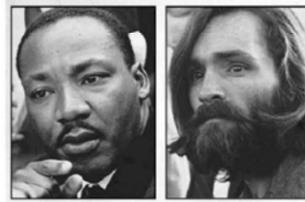
The *Star* review found that in cases of “simple drug possession” the police statistics showed that black people arrested were released at the scene of their arrest 61.8 per cent of the time while whites were released 76.5 per cent of the time. The *Star* also found that blacks (15.5 per cent) were twice as likely as whites (7.3 per cent) to be held in custody overnight pending a bail hearing. The *Star* also found that blacks were disproportionately charged for offences that were discovered after a traffic stop — so-called “out-of-sight offences” including failing to update the address on the license. It further established that men between the ages of 25 and 34 received 39.3 per cent of “out-of-sight” tickets for their age group, despite making up only 7.9 per cent of the population of that age group in Toronto.

The black community in particular, and Torontonians as a whole, appreciated the public acknowledgment of police racial profiling, indisputably showing that it was a serious problem in the city. It generated the understanding that now that the problem has been brought to the light of day, action would be taken to stop this criminal activity.

Instead, the Toronto Police Services, the Toronto Police Association, the then Toronto Police Chief, Julian Fantino, as well as the Toronto Police Services Board — a seven-member appointed body which is mandated to protect the public interest — all responded with an emphatic denial that the police were engaged in racial profiling. Chief Fantino stated at the time, “We don’t do racial profiling, we do not deal with people on the basis of their ethnicity, their race.” The Toronto Police Association which represents some 7000 police officers, went so far as to threaten the Black community by declaring that the *Star* article and accusations of police racial profiling may cause police officers to think twice before responding to calls from the black community because of the risk of being accused of racial profiling!

The Toronto Police Services Board organized a series of public consultations to hear deputations from the public at this important issue. In the first of such meetings in February 2003, the first speakers were two academic “experts” who pronounced that the *Toronto Star* articles on police racial profiling constituted “junk science.” The meeting was stacked by “friends of the police” all of whom said, in effect, that the police “were doing a great job.”

THE MAN ON THE LEFT IS 75 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE STOPPED BY THE POLICE WHILE DRIVING THAN THE MAN ON THE RIGHT.



Those who were critical of the police and their refusal to deal with racial profiling were denounced at various times by members of the Toronto Police Services Board.

For example, the representative of the People’s Front in Toronto put forward a proposal that the Toronto Police Services Board needs to be a democratically-elected body whose members are selected and then elected by the people of Toronto from among their peers whose job it would be to enforce the mandate for the police services that was discussed and endorsed by Torontonians. It was pointed out that this was essential to end police impunity and ensure accountability of the police services — a means to end racial profiling and other crimes being committed by the police.

Additionally, he argued that the democratic control of the police must be combined with increased funding to social programs to guarantee that the basic rights of all Torontonians to a livelihood, to housing, healthcare, education, recreation and other human needs be met. This proposal was dismissed as being “too political” as though the issue of policing was not a political matter!

Subsequently, a coalition of Black organizations demanded a meeting with the Police Services Board, which was convened. At that meeting, after the delegation had spoken, and once again demanded that racial profiling and other crimes being committed against the black community by the police be stopped, the entire Board got up and quietly walked out. This from a group of people who are supposed to be accountable to the public!

Toronto Police Services Board and the myth of “a few bad apples?”

Shortly after the *Star* articles appeared, the Toronto Police Services Board had created a joint working group comprised of members of the Toronto Police Services and the Toronto Police Services Board — to look into the allegations of racial profiling by the police. It too put out an interim report in November 2003 once again asserting that if racial profiling existed, it was a matter of “a few bad apples.” The report itself reviewed some 13 previous reports and studies done over some 27 years which documented the discrimination, abuse and racial profiling visited upon the Black community and other national minority communities in Toronto by the police. It concluded that 96 per cent of the recommendations made in these reports have been implemented. Yet we are still left with the question: So why does police racial profiling continue to exist?

Is it a matter of “a few bad apples” as the Toronto Police Services Board and the Chief of Police suggest? It is not. Racial profiling is nurtured and sustained by the deeper and underling reality that the Canadian state is constituted on a racist basis. It divides the citizenry on racist criteria in order to facilitate their exploitation; this division is aimed at preventing unity as the foundation upon which to construct solutions for their common problems. Historically, every attack upon the Canadian people has come from the state, whether we talk of the institution of slavery against the Black people; the racist attacks against the Chinese after the building of the CP railroad in the form of the head tax; the displacement of the Japanese people during the Second World War; or the racial profiling and attacks against Arabs and Muslims in the name of the so-called “war on terrorism.” Once this is understood the role of the police and judiciary become clear: they exist to “uphold the law” for the racist state, and therefore are racist themselves. Thus, it is not a matter of “a few bad apples.”

The Toronto experience shows that what is needed to end racial profiling by the police is for the citizens to find

mechanisms to ensure police accountability. The principle that the people must set the rules, not the police, and hold the police to account is crucial if the police are not to be a law unto themselves. Police are not like any other ordinary citizens. They are trained in the use of and legally granted the right to use deadly force in carrying out of their duties. They have the power to trample on people’s rights. In the face of this reality, to give the police the right to decide the rules and monitor their own behaviour is dangerous. Justice cannot be served in this context. It is noteworthy that the 2002 Toronto City Audit of the Police Services Complaints process found “discipline imposed against police officers are not being monitored.” Is it a surprise then, that police act with impunity?

The Harper agenda

The election of the Harper government in January 2006 created conditions for racial profiling to be carried out more broadly. One of the five main planks in the Conservative platform was to create “safe communities” by being tough on “crime” and “gun violence,” that is to implement a “law and order” agenda to solve social and political problems created by Canadian society.

This disinformation was aimed that blaming black youth, the black community and other national minority groups as the cause of “crime,” “unsafe communities,” “gun-violence” and so on. Similarly, the Harper government’s strong endorsement of the U.S.-led “war on terror” has also seen broad scale racial profiling of Muslims. Hardly a day goes by when some Canadian or resident of Muslim faith or Arab background is not “visited” by the police and questioned and called upon to spy on others by the RCMP or Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

The Jamestown operation

On May 18, 2006, over 600 police officers from Toronto, Montreal and agents from the United States carried out a well-planned early morning paramilitary operation in Jamestown in the north-west part of Toronto — a working class community made up of residents originally from the Caribbean, East Africa and South Asia. This was racial profiling and state-terror on a large scale which resulted in the arrest of over 100 “gang-leaders and their associates” who were suspected of being involved in “narcotics and gun-smuggling” between the U.S. and Canada. In the end, it was found that the vast majority of those arrested were innocent and had to be let go. The whole operation was organized as a practice for similar such attacks on the Canadian people in the future.

What conclusions are to be drawn from this and other similar experiences?

One conclusion is that the Canadian state as it is currently constituted serves the self-serving narrow interests of a tiny minority of rich who exploit and oppress the vast majority of Canadians as well as other peoples such as in Haiti and Afghanistan. Such a state is wrecking the society and cannot be the source of the solution to the problems that people are facing, be it racial profiling or anything else. It is necessary for all those who are oppressed, all those who face the violence of the state, all those who are victims of racial profiling and persecution to become politically organized to defend their own interests within the context of fighting for the interests of the society as whole. Canada needs an anti-war government which outlaws the use of force as a means to settle conflicts between nations and peoples and changes the direction of the economy so that the economic, social and cultural rights of the people are provided with a guarantee.

The black community, the Arab and Muslim communities, the South Asians and others, as members of the working class and people of Canada should put themselves in the forefront of the movement to create such a government.

Such a government would take as its starting point the recognition that all nations and peoples have rights and that these rights have to be guaranteed so that everyone can enjoy the right to safety, security and prosperity.

*Phillip Fernandez is Toronto spokesperson of the People’s Front, and the candidate for the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada in Toronto—Centre.



-Black Cuisine- The Creation of "Soul Food"

Americans.

When the emancipation came in 1863, slaves soon scattered from the confines of the plantation into other parts of the United States. Black cowboys could be found in Texas, domestics in Illinois and Michigan, porters worked the railroad stations up and down the eastern seaboard. As the railroad tracks expanded across the middle of the country, black cooks could be found working in train kitchens too. Wealthy and middle class whites and blacks in large cities hired black cooks. This brought southern black cuisine into the homes of many

So as not to lose contact with family members scattered far and wide, Sunday dinners became a common time for families to get together. It was common for a son or daughter to travel some distance just for a good home cooked meal. Aunts, uncles, cousins (both real and pretend) would converge, not to the largest home, but to the house with the best cook for a meal. Occasionally there would be a potluck where everyone brought their "best" dish, but the normal pattern was for the women to get in the kitchen and cook up a storm. Men seldom took part, unless there was 'cueing (barbecue).

In the mid 1960s, when the Civil

Rights Movement was just beginning, terms like "soul man" "soulful" and just "soul" were used in connection with blacks themselves. It caught on with mainstream America and someone coined the term "soul food" for black cuisine and it stuck.

Today when most people think of soul food, it is a table heavy with trays of watermelon, ribs, candied sweet potatoes or yams, greens and fried chicken. Each black family, however, has its own idea of what black cuisine is; Hoghead cheese sliced on saltine crackers with hot sauce and beer is one such dish, Crab cakes, Carrot and Raisin salad, Fried corn, Hush puppies, Corn pone, Red beans and rice, Greens, Liver and onions, Lima

beans with ham hocks, Stewed okra and tomatoes, Cornbread dipped in buttermilk, Fried catfish, Smothered chicken, Pickled pig's feet, Fried cabbage, Neckbones, Tongue, Chittlin's, Tripe, Gumbo, Breaded fried pork chops with a mess of greens, Black-eyed peas, and grits. Although grits is truly a southern dish, it is considered here as a part of black cuisine because black Americans eat grits for breakfast, lunch or dinner; plain, with butter, with gravy, with cheese or deep-fried.

Black owned restaurants have begun to stray from the traditional foods for health reasons. They sometimes substitute canola oil for lard, chicken for pork; oven fried chicken for deep fried and

simple fresh fruit for the sweet cobbler and bread puddings they grew up on.

The aroma of "soul food" can fill the house and let the neighbors know that a big pot is cooking. Today, many are just too busy to spend hours in the kitchen cooking up the traditional foods of black America. In the search for the best soul food restaurant, there is one piece of advice: If you walk by and the aroma does not greet you at the door, keep walking.



Flavor for Life

Contributed by
Nate V & Harish G

RECEIPES-SPECIALS FOR THIS MONTH

Any Comments to:
chef@monsoonjournal.com

Southern Fried Chicken



INGREDIENTS

3 1/2- to 4-lb. chicken, cut into 8 pieces
2 cups buttermilk
1 tsp. black pepper, divided
1/4 tsp. salt
1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 1/2 tsp. seasoned salt, such as Lawry's
1 lb. lard (or solid vegetable shortening)
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter

Step 1

Rinse the chicken pieces and blot them with paper towels. In a large bowl combine the buttermilk, 1/4 teaspoon of black pepper and the salt, and stir to combine.

Step 2

Add the chicken pieces and turn to coat evenly. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight, turning the pieces occasionally.

Step 3

Combine the flour, seasoned salt and the remaining 3/4 teaspoon of black pepper in a shallow baking dish and blend well. Line a baking sheet with three layers of paper towels and place it near the stove.

Step 4

Put the lard and butter in a large cast-iron frying pan or pot big enough to hold the chicken pieces in one layer without touching. Melt over medium-high heat. The fat should be about 1/2-inch deep.

Step 5

Heat until it registers 365 degrees on a candy thermometer or until a small cube of bread dropped in the oil browns in about 1 minute.

Step 6

Using tongs, remove the thighs from the marinade, draining well. Dredge them in the flour mixture, turning to coat evenly. Shake off any excess flour. Place them skin-side down in the center of the pan.

Step 7

Coat the remaining pieces in the same way and add them to the pan in a single layer without touching. Work in batches if necessary.

Step 8

Don't move the chicken for about 5 minutes or until the coating is set and looks firm. Check the underside by lifting with the tongs--it should be deep golden. Cook the pieces between 8 and 20 minutes (depending on size), turning them periodically until crispy brown and cooked through.

Step 9

To test, cut into the thickest part of a piece. The juices should run clear and the meat should be opaque throughout. Place on the paper-lined baking sheet to drain.

Step 10

Arrange the chicken pieces on a platter and serve hot, room temperature or cold.

Seafood Gumbo



INGREDIENTS

2 quarts beef stock or canned beef broth
1 cup smoked ham, chopped
2 bay leaves
2 tablespoons crushed red pepper -- flaked
1 tablespoon salt
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
3 cups okra, frozen or fresh
2 large onion, chopped
1 green bell pepper -- cored, seeded, and minced
2 stalks celery chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 16 - oz can whole tomatoes
1/4 cup catsup
1 tablespoon hot pepper sauce
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
1 pound shrimp
1 pound crab meat or 6 hard-shell crabs cooked and cleaned
1 bunch scallions, chopped
12 oysters, shucked with liquid
1 cup cooked rice, plus more for serving
1 tablespoon gumbo file

1. Combine the stock, ham, bay leaves, red pepper, and 2 teaspoons of the salt in a large kettle. Heat to boiling over high heat. Reduce the heat to a simmer, cover,

and cook 1 hour.

2. Meanwhile, make the roux: Heat the bacon drippings in a skillet over a medium heat. Stir in the flour until absorbed. Cook over very low heat, stirring constantly, until flour is dark brown and the roux smells nutty, about 25 minutes. Be careful not to burn the flour or the roux is ruined.

3. In a separate large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the okra, onions, green peppers, celery, and garlic. Sauté until almost tender, about 10 minutes. Add the tomatoes and cook 5 minutes longer.

4. Add the sautéed vegetables and the roux to the hot beef stock along with remaining 1 teaspoon of salt, the catsup, hot pepper sauce, Worcestershire sauce, and thyme. Reduce the heat to very low and simmer, covered, 1 hour.

5. Stir in shrimp, crabmeat, and scallions into the gumbo.

Cook 10 minutes. Add the oysters, rice, and gumbo file and cook 10 minutes. Check the seasoning and serve over rice.

Black eyed peas with ham

INGREDIENTS

2 cups Water
3/4 cup Dried black-eyed peas
1 cup Sliced okra
1 small Onion, chopped
1/2 teaspoon Salt
2 Cloves Garlic, crushed
1/4 teaspoon Red pepper sauce
1 tablespoon Vegetable oil
1 tablespoon Chopped fresh cilantro
1 small Tomato, seeded and chopped
1/3 cup Chopped fully cooked smoked ham

This makes a terrific main dish for two. Heat water and peas to boiling in 2-quart saucepan. Boil uncovered 2 minutes; reduce heat. Add ham. Cover and simmer 30 to 40 minutes, stirring



occasionally, until beans are tender (do not boil or peas will burst); drain. Cook okra, onion, salt, garlic and red pepper sauce in oil in saucepan about 5 minutes or until onion is softened. Stir in cilantro, tomato and peas. Heat until mixture is hot.

Red beans and rice



INGREDIENTS

1 Cup red kidney beans, dried
5 Cups water
1 smoked ham hocks
2 Tablespoons salt
1/2 Teaspoon red pepper flakes, crushed
1/2 Teaspoon dried thyme
2 Cups rice (Uncle Bens)

1) Soak the beans overnight in 5 cups of water in a cool place or in the refrigerator.

2) Drain the beans and place them in a 5-quart pot. Add 4 cups of water, the ham hock, salt, red pepper, and thyme. Heat to boiling, then reduce the heat to a bare simmer. Cover and cook until the beans are almost tender, about 1 hour.

3) Stir in 1 cup of water and the rice into the beans. Heat to boiling, reduce the heat to a simmer, and cook, covered, until the rice and beans are tender and the liquid is absorbed, about 25 minutes. Check the seasonings. If you like, you may remove the meat from the ham hock and mix it into the rice. Serve hot.

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FEATURES

Tropicana Community Services Organization: 27 Years of Serving the Community

Today Tropicana Community Services Organization provides counselling, youth programs, education, employment, and day care services to the Caribbean and Black community, youth and new Canadians in East Toronto. It directly benefits thousands of clients and its spillover effects - called The Tropicana Effect - are felt across the Greater Toronto Area. Founded in 1980, Tropicana is a United Way member agency and winner of the prestigious Scarborough Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Award - Business of the Year, Community Service, for 2005.

Tropicana was founded by Mr. Robert Brown who through his Master's thesis identified the need for improved culturally appropriate social services for the Black and Caribbean community in east Toronto. Mr. Brown translated his awareness of these needs into action and in 1980, Tropicana was formed. By 1984, it became the first Black member agency of the United Way and the Alternative Youth Centre for Employment (AYCE) and Children of Tomorrow Day Centres were established in 1987. In 1992, an initiative was established to support anti-racism training amongst community service providers, youth, educators, and the police.

The successes of the organization have also been a collaborative effort, including partnerships with government, the private sector and other community organizations. For instance, Tropicana in partnership with the Jamaican Canadian Association and Julliette's Place implemented the Transition Support Worker Program in 2000. Tropicana has also collaborated with the Milliken West Indian Association to implement the Black Teachers of Tomorrow in Training (BT³) initiative to encourage black youth to choose teaching as a career. In 2003, the highly successful Success Through Aggression Replacement Training (START) program was established.

Youth have been a major focus of Tropicana. The organization has established Book Clubs, a Youth Resource Centre, Camp Tropicana, and a day care.

In addition to the youth employment services provided through AYCE, Tropicana has partnered with government and the private sector to support the employment of 1450 youth. The impact on the self-esteem and future opportunities of these individuals is immeasurable.

Tropicana will have numerous activities aimed at celebrating Black History Month. Its keynote event will be "Beating the Odds" on February 24, 2007 to be held at Tropicana's Community Room. This event will feature Archie Alleyne, legendary Canadian jazz drummer and the Tropicana Pepsi Steel Orchestra and it is anticipated that many individuals will join us in exceptional event.

Today, Tropicana's programs are aimed at building community capacity, leveraging social capital, enhancing the capabilities of individuals, increasing the employability and productivities of youth, developing problem resolution mechanisms, and improving the transition of newcomers to Canadian society. In 27 years of operation, Tropicana has had many successes, but what of the future? Tropicana now hopes to further meet the needs of its clients, to enhance the beneficial program linkage, and capture economies of scale by integrating the services currently distributed across four locations into a single location. The new building would support operating cost savings and improved program delivery. The new location is aimed at extending the Tropicana Effect. To learn more about Tropicana as well as its programs and campaigns, visit the Tropicana website at: www.tropicanacommunity.org or call 416-439-9009.

Written by: **Dr. Gervan Fearon,**
President, and **Sharon Shelton,**
Executive Director

Tropicana Community Services
Organization

670 Progress Ave, Unit 14, Toronto,
Ontario, Canada, M1H 3A4.

February 1, 2007

South Africans Mourn a Figure From the Fight Against Apartheid

By Michael Wines

In banner newspaper headlines and broadcast biographies, South Africans on Thursday Feb 1st mourned the death of Adelaide Tambo, a figure in the nation's battle against apartheid and the wife of Oliver R. Tambo, an icon of the liberation struggle.

Mrs. Tambo, 77, died unexpectedly late Wednesday, Jan 31st at her home in Johannesburg. The cause of her death was not announced; she had received a clean bill of health from a doctor the previous day. Johannesburg's Star newspaper, which devoted three-fourths of its front page to her death on Thursday, noted that South Africa's president, Thabo Mbeki, was among those who went to Mrs. Tambo's home as news of her death spread shortly after midnight.

On Thursday, Mr. Mbeki said in a statement that Mrs. Tambo "contributed to the struggle immensely as an activist in her own right" apart from her husband, who was a global organizer and later president of the African National Congress, the locus of South Africa's anti-apartheid movement in the 1960s and 1970s.

Mrs. Tambo followed Mr. Tambo into exile in 1960 after South Africa's white-ruled government cracked down on black dissidents after the notorious Sharpeville massacre, in which dozens of demonstrators were killed by the South African police. While Mr. Tambo roamed Africa and Europe rallying support for the anti-apartheid cause, his wife worked as a nurse and kept a home in London that sheltered other activists in exile, including Mr. Mbeki and Nelson R. Mandela.

"She taught us to challenge everything," Mr. Mbeki said in his statement on Thursday. "She would



Adelaide Tambo, wife of
Oliver R. Tambo

tell us, 'Don't let a single phrase slip by if it is wrong.'"

Mrs. Tambo frequently said she enlisted in the anti-apartheid cause at age 10 after seeing her grandfather flogged into unconsciousness by white police officers in Vereeniging, a factory town not far from Johannesburg. By age 16, she was a courier for the African National Congress, and she became a local leader in the movement by age 18. During her years in exile, she seldom saw her husband. Mr. Tambo died of a stroke three years after the couple returned to South Africa in 1990, and a year before the nation became a democracy.

Mrs. Tambo served for five years in South Africa's first post-apartheid Parliament before retiring in 1999 to work with charities that care for older people. [Courtesy: © NYTimes.com]

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WATERLOO REGION NEWS

WATERLOO (Jan 25, 2007)

Rich countries should give more cash and less food if they really want to feed hungry people in the developing world, a University of Waterloo professor says.

Jennifer Clapp told a packed house at the Centre for International Governance Innovation last night that providing cash is less costly and more efficient than sending food.

"If you want to feed more of the 850 million people who go hungry every day reforming food aid might be a step in the right direction," Clapp said.

And while many countries, such as Canada, the European Union and Australia have moved toward a cash-based system, the biggest food-aid donor in the world -- the United States -- has not

New approach needed for food aid

TERRY PENDER

changed.

Clapp said research shows there is very often food available in developing countries, but local people are too poor to buy it.

"It costs on average 50 per cent more to provide in-kind food aid from an industrial country to a developing country than it does to buy that food locally," Clapp said.

Providing cash allows hungry people to buy culturally appropriate foods that are often produced locally. That, in turn, supports local farmers. Cash can be transferred quickly as well.

On average it takes five months for a shipment of food

aid to reach its destination. If it arrives when local farmers are bringing in crops, prices are forced down, and local farmers are pushed out of business. This can lead to a dependence on food aid.

Once the food aid arrives in a poor country, distributing it to hungry people is difficult and expensive. The work is often done by private, volunteer organizations.

Donor countries encourage these organizations to sell the food to help pay for distribution costs.

And the U.S., which provides up to 60 per cent of the food-aid worldwide every year insists that only American ships can carry food aid, Clapp

said.

This greatly reduces the number of shipping companies that can bid on the work, pushing up the cost of shipping.

"Shipping is probably the biggest problem here," Clapp said. Sixty per cent of the cost of U.S. food aid is spent in the U.S. "So this is again helping others by helping yourself, only you help yourself more than you help anybody else."

Clapp's lecture was called The (New) Politics of Food Aid and was organized by the Waterloo chapter of Engineers Without Borders.

Clapp holds the chair in international governance at the

centre and is an associated professor at the University of Waterloo's department of environment and resource studies.

Food aid has become a hot issue at the World Trade Organization. The European Union claims the U.S. policies on food aid amount to an agricultural subsidy.

A proposal will be tabled to have all donor countries move to a cash-based system by 2013.

Clapp said there are some powerful interests supporting the status quo, including grain companies, shipping firms and the private voluntary organizations that sell the food.

Courtesy: The Record
tpender@therecord.com

Celebrating Black History

Special month offers chance to unite, reflect, look to future

LIZ MONTEIRO

Waterloo Region

(Feb 2, 2007)

Black History Month is a time for black communities to unite, reflect on the past and look to the future, says the president of the Caribbean Canadian Association of Waterloo Region.

This year is the first time Caribbean and African communities are commemorating black history as one in Waterloo Region, Lauris DaCosta said.

"Unity is strength," she said. "We have the same concerns as visible minorities."

Black History Month will be marked across Canada in February. Local events begin tomorrow and continue throughout the month.

This year's activities were organized by various black organizations, including the Caribbean Canadian association, the African Canadian Association of Waterloo Region and the African Women's Alliance.

"It's important to celebrate black history and understand the importance of black heritage," said Sadia Gassim, president of the African Women's Alliance. Somalian-born Gassim and her family have lived in the region for more than 13 years.

"Black History Month is an opportunity to integrate," said Florence Juma, who was born and raised in Nairobi and came to Canada with her husband and five daughters in 1998.

February was chosen for Black History Month because



Sadia Gassin (from left), Yvonne Tagoe and Florence Juma walk in Waterloo. They are helping out with Black History Month in this region.

By: MATHEW MCCARTHY, RECORD STAFF

abolitionist Frederick Douglass and U.S. president Abraham Lincoln, who emancipated American slaves, were born that month.

It was also in February that the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, guaranteeing blacks in the United States the right to vote, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was founded.

But in Canada, black history has many layers, said 18-year-old Aminka Belvitt.

"We need to see a Canadian perspective," said the Kitchener-Waterloo

Collegiate Institute graduate.

"When people think of black history they think of slavery and the struggles to get free.

"I wasn't a slave. It doesn't relate to me. We need to look at our prominent people."

She mentioned Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean and Rosemary Brown, the first black woman elected to a Canadian legislature, as examples.

Courtesy: The Record

lmonteiro@therecord.com

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NEWS FEATURES

Indra Nooyi made Chairperson of Pepsi Company, USA

Indra Nooyi a US Citizen of Indian Origin has been elevated to the prestigious position of Chairperson-of US giant Pepsi Co.

Indra who hails from South India is already the CEO of the company which manufactures food & beverages.

With the new appointment, she will become one of the highest rank business women leaders in Corporate America.



The letter sent from Congressmen to President Bush

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 31, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

We are writing to urge you to appoint a special envoy for Sri Lanka because we are deeply troubled by the ever-worsening situation on the ground there. The renewed violence and rising death toll in Sri Lanka have overtaken the fragile peace process and threaten a return to open civil war. Further, we are troubled by the large increase in kidnappings across Sri Lanka, most of which remain unsolved.

In the wake of the deadly 2004 tsunami you wrote in a condolence book for the Sri Lankan victims that, "the American government and American people are dedicated to helping you recover." Mr. President, the people of Sri Lanka need the help of America now not only to continue their recovery, but to restore peace to their country.

As you know, the government of Sri Lanka has reported that at least 3,400 people have been killed over the course of the last year. Further, news reports indicate that recent heavy fighting has resulted in hundreds of deaths and the displacement of more than 200,000 people in Sri Lanka. We applaud your December 15, 2006, Memorandum for the Secretary of State that instructed her to make available up to \$5.215 million for "unexpected and urgent refugee and migration needs resulting from the conflicts in Somalia and Sri Lanka." You clearly understand that the situation in Sri Lanka is untenable and must be addressed.

Naming a special envoy for Sri Lanka would further emphasize our government's commitment to fostering a lasting peace. It is essential that the U.S. envoy be a high-level official with access to you and Secretary of State Rice. The envoy's mandate should be clear and must include efforts to increase monitoring of human rights violations.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights stated in September that "there is an urgent need for the international community to monitor the unfolding human rights situation." Additionally, the International Crisis Group's recent report makes clear that "Sri Lanka more than ever before needs international engagement that is critical and sustained, focusing above all on immediate human rights and humanitarian concerns but with a longer-term political view that seeks to renew a peace process taking into account the full complexity of the conflict."

It is time for the United States to provide global leadership to help advance peace for the people of Sri Lanka. The citizens of Sri Lanka have endured violence and civil war for too long. America must do everything she can to foster a lasting peace for the country. Again, we request that you appoint a special envoy for Sri Lanka to help bring peace to the country.

Sincerely,

RUSH HOLT
Member of Congress

CC: Secretary of State Rice

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NEWS FEATURES

Sri Lankan Catholic diocese, divided by gov't-rebel fighting, struggles to run ministries

Life on the embattled Jaffna peninsula is like being stuck behind the Berlin wall, locals say. The peninsula, on Sri Lanka's northern tip, is cut off by an army roadblock on highway A9, thrown up last August after intensified fighting between state troops and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

For Bishop Thomas Savundaranayagam of Jaffna, it is a return to the days of 1999-2002, when Sri Lanka's "Checkpoint Charlie" roadblock was up.

Checkpoint Charlie was an Allied checkpoint facing the Berlin Wall, the Cold War-era structure that split Berlin into East and West, and symbolized the larger division of Germany along these same lines. In Sri Lanka, a blockade of barbed wire and soldiers at Muhamalai separates the Jaffna peninsula, where the government controls Jaffna city and strategic points, from territory held by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to the south.

It also cuts Jaffna Diocese in two, making it hard for the church to function. Church services have been disrupted and clergy are overworked and worn down, according to Father Ruban Mariampillai. The Catholic newspaper editor told UCA News many pastors

spend sleepless nights in their churches, tending to the sick and to people displaced by fighting and facing starvation.

The LTTE launched an armed struggle in 1983 for a separate Tamil state in the north and east of the island, where the Tamil minority is concentrated. Ethnic Sinhalese, about 74 percent of the population, predominate elsewhere. Up to 80,000 people were killed and a million more displaced before a cease-fire was signed in 2002. The Muhamalai checkpoint, closed from 1995, opened following the cease-fire, but large-scale fighting resumed last year and the checkpoint is closed again.

Father Mariampillai counted 28 priests who now cannot attend their customary Monday meetings with Bishop Savundaranayagam.

The bishop, describing the plight of the people, has said they face nightly curfews, shortages of food, medicine, fuel and electricity, killings, robberies, and a ban on fishing. Jaffna is "starving," he said.

The Tamil prelate arrived in Colombo on Jan. 15 to appeal for the peninsula's 600,000 residents. During his weeklong stay in the capital, he held talks with government leaders as well as church

people.

On Jan. 22, he set off by land to enter LTTE territory, to open a Catholic church and to talk to LTTE leaders. As of Feb. 4 he was still there.

Before leaving Jaffna, he had written leaders in Japan, Norway, the European Union and the United States to apprise them of the situation. Ambassadors from Australia, Britain and New Zealand have met him at his house in Jaffna to discuss the people's plight.

Things are so disrupted there that only now are people receiving Christmas cards in the mail. Travel to or from the peninsula is by air, between Colombo and Jaffna, or by sea, through the eastern city of Trincomalee.

People can apply for a travel permit, but it takes time. Thousands in Jaffna with travel tickets have waited months for departure, mostly by cargo ship.

Aseervathampillai Jayakumar, a parishioner of St. Peter's Church in Mullaitivu, was in LTTE-held territory, while his wife and son were on the peninsula. "Finally, I got to see them after 171 days," he told UCA News at the airport in Colombo, holding his son tightly.

(www.ucanews.com)

Calls for witness protection

A Paris based charity has called on Sri Lanka government to establish a witness protection programme to increase the efficiency of investigations of human rights abuses.

Action Against Hunger (AAH), whose workers were killed in Muttur in August last year, says the lack of protection for witnesses is an impediment for the murder investigation.

The killing of 17 aid workers on 06 August sparked international outrage.

Calling the murder as a "war crime" the United Nations called

for an independent investigation.

In a statement issued to mark six months since the murder, the AAH says it considers "the establishment of a witness protection programme is imperative if we are to find out exactly what happened".

The charity has expressed serious concern that no suspect has been identified and brought to justice after several months of investigation.

Absence of witness protection programme in Sri Lanka is one of the main reasons for witnesses not to have spoken out, the charity says. [BBCSinhala.com]

Suffering escalates in Vaharai

By Jamila Najmuddin

The massive exodus and fighting in the Vaharai region has resulted in over 400 deaths and created untold suffering among the refugees, aid agencies said last week.

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Sri Lanka Director Fr. Vinny Joseph who visited the displaced last month said that the situation in the Vaharai area had been unbearable.

"I have no words to describe the experience of their (civilians) exodus," he said.

Reports from the Sri Lanka office of the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) described those fleeing the fight as "starving and exhausted."

The latest fighting brought the number of displaced from the Vaharai area to almost 30,000. Most of the new arrivals were settled in temporary shelters, schools and government buildings in eight sites in the district. Aid agencies continued to provide psychological support and education services, including

education materials.

Access to Vaharai has been limited since October, with only one convoy able to deliver relief aid in late November. Thousands of people fled earlier outbreaks of fighting in the Vaharai area - many of them sought refuge in the coastal strip after fleeing fighting further to the north in mid-2006.

Civilians trapped in Vaharai since last August fled the town on two occasions. In late December, more than 20,000 fled the fighting and between January 16 and 19, a further 10,000 fled. They had to contend with overflowing rivers and a full-blown military confrontation in the area.

UNHCR estimates some 465,000 people are displaced by conflict in Sri Lanka, including 204,300 people forced to flee by violence since April last year. The increased level of violence stoked up fears of a full-scale renewal of the civil war that has claimed more than 65,000 lives over two decades. [theSundayleader.lk]

UNHCR distributes aid to more than 2,000 host families in Jaffna Peninsula

By Sulakshani Perera

The UN refugee agency has distributed packages of non-food items to more than 2,000 host families in northern Sri Lanka's Jaffna Peninsula despite interruptions to this relief programme launched last November.

UNHCR has been concerned about the plight of internally displaced people - IDPs - in the peninsula since August, when thousands of people fled their homes to escape renewed fighting between government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). It also realised that host families needed help.

The agency began last November to distribute non-food items to families hosting IDPs, but the programme was suspended in mid-December because of a shortage of stocks and the inability to bring in more aid by land or sea. The

transport of aid by sea was suspended after a merchant vessel carrying food to the peninsula came under attack by the LTTE.

The host family distributions were resumed in January and UNHCR has so far distributed non-food relief items to 2,098 families, with further distributions scheduled in the weeks ahead. UNHCR efforts are part of a larger inter-agency operation that covers the entire peninsula.

Vito Trani, head of the UNHCR office in Jaffna, said the initiative was important because it helped ease the burden on host families. "On most occasions, there are multiple IDP families living with a single host family. Without additional support - like relief items, shelter, water and sanitation facilities - that pressure could lead to other

humanitarian concerns," he said.

"These people have opened their hearts and welcomed complete strangers into their homes. It is only fair that they are supported in some way," Trani added.

UNHCR has been distributing aid in Chavakachcheri, Karaveddy, Kopay and Tellippalai, areas of the peninsula which it has been assigned to take care of under the inter-agency programme. Distributions take place every Thursday with the cooperation of local authorities.

Aside from the issue of supply routes, the lack of statistical data about host families is also a problem for UNHCR. The local authorities have gathered some information and hope to have comprehensive figures by the end of June. [UNHCR.org]



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RRSPs versus Non-Registered Accounts

By: Bobby Siva

Winter is here and it is Holiday Season. Most of us will be indulged in festive moods and will be overlooking a major issue when it comes to personal finance.

In recent years, reductions in the capital gains inclusion rate have resulted in non-registered accounts becoming an attractive option for investors. Investors are now asking when they should invest in RRSPs and when they should invest in non-registered accounts. The following highlights the advantages and disadvantages of both.

The advantages of investing in RRSPs and RRIFs offer unlimited tax deferral until funds are withdrawn. When withdrawn, funds are treated as income and taxed at the full marginal rate at the time of withdrawal. In addition, any withdrawals are taxed as straight income notwithstanding the fact that they may have been the result of Canadian dividends or capital gains earned inside the registered account.

With RRSPs and RRIFs, the annuitant can choose to rebalance his or her portfolio as appropriate. If gains have been realized on some of the investments inside the registered plan, they remain tax sheltered as assets are reallocated from one asset class (e.g., equities) to another (e.g., bonds).

With a non-registered equity investment, generally, no tax is payable until the investment is sold. However, not many investors buy and hold an individual security or mutual fund in a non-registered account for 20 or 30 years. Also, an investor may be reluctant to dispose of a property that has gone up tremendously in value because of the potential for large capital gains tax on such rebalancing. This may have the added effect of discouraging a reallocation of the investment mix where such a reallocation may be the appropriate

choice for the investor as he or she approaches retirement age.

Most importantly, RRSPs offer a tax deduction in respect of contributions made. For example, a \$16,500 RRSP contribution would result in a tax savings for an individual with a marginal tax rate of 45 per cent. The tax refund received from making a contribution can be invested into a non-registered account. Let's see what happens over 15, 25 and 35 years if the investor consistently reinvests the refund into a non-registered account, assuming 8 per cent annual returns.

Over time, the combined after-tax value of the registered and non-registered accounts with reinvested tax refunds will generally surpass the after-tax value of a non-registered account alone, even though income from the registered accounts is fully taxable. Even if not reinvested, the money would at the very least contribute to a better quality of life at some level, whether the investor pays off debts or buys something new with it.

Finally, the RRSP offers many Canadians a psychological motivation to invest for their retirement on a regular basis. If someone invests the legal maximum RRSP contribution limit (18 per cent of their prior year's earned income - generally employment income, etc - up to a maximum of \$16,500 less any pension adjustment), then they will be going a long way towards a financially healthy and secure retirement.

The advantages of investing in a non-registered account

Now, let's assume that instead of contribution funds to an RRSP each year, the investor deposits the same amount in a non-registered account that holds a mix of equity investments. Upon ultimate disposition, any profits earned on

these investments will result in capital gains to the investor, taxable at only 50 per cent of the investor's marginal tax rate.

There are a few, more specific situations where ceasing to make RRSP contributions makes the most sense. This may be the case for investors who:

Have already accumulated a significant amount of assets inside their registered plans

Are approaching the age at which they will begin withdrawing from the plan

Expect to be in a higher tax bracket when withdrawing the funds than they were when the RRSP deduction was taken.

It's important that investors review their personal situations to determine how much of their assets should be in registered plans and what portion should be in non-registered accounts. The appropriate allocation will depend to a large extent on the factors discussed above.

Next Step

The preceding is a general overview of some of the issues that need to be considered when choosing between registered and non-registered accounts. All cases should be dealt with on an individual basis and investors should review their portfolio with their financial advisor and/or professional tax specialist when dealing with specific situations.

Finally Things To Remember

"RRSPs and RRIFs offer unlimited tax deferral until the funds are withdrawn"

"With RRSPs and RRIFs, the annuitant can choose to rebalance his or her portfolio as appropriate."



Bobby Siva
Financial Advisor
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MONSOON SPORTS

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CRICKET

Is Global Expansion all that it is Cracked Up to be?

A long Way from Home
Martin Williamson

It won't get many column inches in the mainstream cricket press, but the World Cricket League, which started in Nairobi yesterday and continues into next week, features the best of the rest, the six sides just under the ten Test-playing countries. For the two finalists, the rewards are bountiful - a place among the big boys in the inaugural Twenty20 World Championship in South Africa this September, along with \$250,000. For countries used to surviving on annual handouts from the ICC of less than \$200,000, that's big money.

With the exception of Bermuda, cricket is not a mainstream sport in any of the participants. And yet it survives, and in some instances thrives, despite the lack of attention and a relatively small number of enthusiasts.

The ICC, who do sterling work in supporting the game's second and third tiers, will rightly use the event to highlight that cricket is not just about the Indians and Australias of the world.

But there remains a nagging worry. The ICC boasts that the game is spreading across the world. But is that right? Is it taking root or is it surviving because more people from its hotbed - south-east Asia - are emigrating and keeping it alive for the duration of their careers?

In last year's *Wisden Almanack*, Matthew Engel raised this very issue. "Overwhelmingly, the game in non-traditional countries is played by expatriates, mostly South Asian. Journalists were kidded into believing that cricket was about to burst on China, on the basis of some warm comments by civil servants and a couple of coaching courses. I have seen not one shred of evidence to back this

up. Are the kids playing with tapeballs on the streets of Shanghai? Are they heck!"

Take Canada. Of the squad in Nairobi at the moment, only three were born in the country, and two of those are over 35. Of the rest, five come from the Caribbean, four from India and each from Pakistan and Uganda. Whereas other Associates have a smattering of expats, Canada are utterly



Kenya's Steve Tikolo and Bermuda's Irvine Romaine get the World Cricket League underway. Both countries field home-grown players ... but not all those participating can say the same © ICC

reliant on them.

Engel's comment attracted fierce criticism from those who either argued that England had more than their share of "imports" or that the game only spread in Asia, Africa, Australasia and the

Caribbean through expats playing it in the first place.

With regards to England, yes there have been quite a few non English-born players who have been picked for the side, but the game still has a massive stronghold in the country. The selection has been more about improving a solid side. And as for the ex-pats argument? Well, yes, but that's the crucial point. In the regions flagged the game was brought in but it was then embraced by the indigenous population and taken on as their own. This is exemplified no better than in CLR James's seminal work, *Beyond A Boundary*.

The worry in some countries - and again I come back to Canada - is that rather the game is not being continued by the second and third generations but is only being

maintained by a steady flow of new immigrants. Canada's cricket heritage is rich but there is little sign that it has been built on. This is best underlined by the selection of former West Indies international Anderson Cummins. Forty years old and without a major match to his name since 1995-96, he made his debut in Mombasa last week. What message does that send out about the strength in depth of cricket in Canada?

It's not just Canada. Look at the USA, whose 2004 Champions

Trophy side was a collection of ageing expats whose performances verged on the disgraceful. And the UAE, which is almost entirely dependant on its ex-pat workforce to keep the game alive.

Cricket's expansion should not be about filling teams with expats and expecting the locals to get excited about it. The only way cricket can gain a foothold in emerging countries is by actually getting the indigenous population to embrace the game, and two excellent examples where this is happening are Nepal and Uganda.

Does it matter? Yes, because as the ICC looks to develop the game in as many places as possible, that means the financial cake has to be cut in ever thinner slices. The ICC needs to concentrate on a smaller number of countries where the chances of the game taking off. It is invidious that Uganda gets the same basic allowance as Belgium.

Cricket is in trouble in its traditional homes in Africa - Zimbabwe are hell-bent on destruction and South Africa seems to be falling out of love with the game. So efforts should be made in Uganda. And in Asia, which everyone accepts is the game's stronghold, a side like Nepal should really be given the leg up. It's about targeting rather than a scattergun approach.

In fairness to the ICC, they have a tough time and a lot of countries scrambling for a share of the spoils. It's about weeding out the weak and really looking to grow the game in areas where it has the

best chance of taking root. It's an almost impossible ask. Look at the repeated failure of American Football to crack Europe ... and if football itself still battles for acceptance outside expats and schools in the USA, then the size of the ICC's task becomes clear.

Of course expats have a key role to play in expansion. But if the game is basically played by them, is it the game spreading or is it more about diehards clinging to the traditions of their homelands? In the UK there are baseball and American football sides, but they are almost all expat Americans and so few would seriously claim the games have taken hold. However, basketball and ice



Anderson Cummins of Barbados, West Indies ... and now Canada © Eddie Norfolk

hockey are widely played by locals, boosted by some imported players and expats, and, crucially, the national side can stand on its own two feet. That's the difference.

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SOCCER

Welsh Midfielder could Join Toronto FC



Mo Johnston and Toronto FC will begin training soon. (Stuart Nimmo/Toronto FC)

Veteran Welsh midfielder Carl Robinson appears to be the next piece of the Toronto FC puzzle.

The expansion MLS team has scheduled a news conference for Thursday regarding a player signing and a sponsorship deal.

Norwich City manager Peter Grant, meanwhile, told a news conference Wednesday in England that the 30-year-old Robinson had been given permission to speak to Toronto.

Robinson joined Norwich in the English Football Championship, one tier below the Premiership, from Sunderland for 50,000 pounds (\$115,670 Canadian) in January 2006 after a loan spell. He has also had stints with Sheffield Wednesday, Portsmouth, Wolves, Walsall, Sheffield United and Rotherham.

He made 48 appearances for Norwich, scoring twice. A versatile player, he slotted in at centre back recently

during a recent FA Cup game against Blackpool to fill an injury void.

Robinson made his debut for Wales in 1999 against Belarus. He has 35 caps and one goal for the Welsh.

Toronto FC coach Mo Johnston has previously talked of having his eye on a veteran international. Plus Toronto FC midfielder Jim Brennan, a Toronto native, also played at Norwich.

Toronto FC opens camp Thursday at the indoor Ontario Soccer Centre just north of the airport. The team will also train in Florida and is slated to take part in a pre-season tournament in South Carolina before kicking off the season April 7 in Carson, Calif., against Chivas USA.

Johnston has more work to do on his roster and says he has available dollars to bring in more talent.

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Canada Sri Lanka Business Council Luncheon Meeting Sponsored by TD Canada Trust



L-R: Kula Sellathurai, Chris Braney, C.S. Poolokasingham & keynote speaker Satish Rai

Investment was the theme at the Canada Sri Lanka Business Council Luncheon meeting sponsored by TD Bank and held on Thursday 25th January at Crowne Plaza Hotel. The meeting was chaired by its President **Mr. Kula Sellathurai**. In his speech Mr. Sellathurai recalled the achievements made by members of the Sri Lankan Business community in Canada and

stated that we should all be proud of this.

The keynote Speaker for the meeting was **Mr. Satish Rai**, Vice-Chairman, TD Asset Management Inc. and Senior Vice President of TD Financial Group, who has distinguished himself in the field of Investment. Mr. Rai emphasized that the Canadian Economy was strong and the fiscal position continues to grow. He

mentioned that the economic growth in China and India in recent years has been twice as that of North America, He also pin-pointed that the Chinese economy is exerting an influence on Global economies.

Others who spoke at the Meeting were Mr. Chris Braney, Regional Director, GTA and Central East Canadian Diabetes Association, Mr. Trevor Barry-

Executive Vice-President for Sales and Marketing from Gordon B. Lang & Associates, Mr. C.S. Poolokasingham, Consulate General from the Consulate office of the Sri Lanka High Commission in Canada **Mr. Ernest Fernando**, Secretary of the Council proposed a vote of thanks and thanked TD Bank for sponsoring the Luncheon meeting.



Guests and senior staff from TD Canada Trust at the luncheon meeting.

Photos by: Ken Photo



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MONSOON BUSINESS

SIVA SIVAPRAGASAM

Scotia Bank Seminar on Housing Loans



(L to R) Perrii Muthuraman, Gary Anandasangaree, Raja Mahendran, Fatima Wakefield, Audience, & Mike Connell, the Branch Manager

Scotia Bank sponsored a useful and educative seminar last month on Housing Loans outlining different options in obtaining Housing loans and at the same time saving your money. **Mr. Mike Connell**, Manager of the Cedarbrae Branch in his opening address mentioned about the need for

such seminar to educate the public and welcomed the speakers and guests who had come to participate in the seminar. **Mr. Perrii Muthuraman**, Senior Personal Banking officer of Scotia Bank who was the live-wire in organizing the Seminar kicked-off the proceedings by making

the presentation. He highlighted the monetary benefits a person would derive from consolidated mortgages by having one single repayment. He also pointed out that unlike investments on stocks and shares which faced a downward trend recently investment on property was on the upward trend. **Mr. Raja**

Mahendran, a Real Estate Broker with considerable experience provided valuable advice to prospective buyers of houses. He analyzed the various expenses buyers would face in the purchase of houses before the purchase and after the purchase. **Mr. Gary Anandasangaree**, a lawyer by

profession and specialized in Real estate law spoke about the legal procedures and processes involved in the purchase of a property. Generally speaking the Scotia Bank seminar provided useful tips and valuable advice to the prospective purchaser of house property.

Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce-Quarterly Meeting



(L to R) York University Student Centre Chair Sarvajeyan Jeyapalan, Tharan Parameshwaran, Pragash Antonipillai, Vairamuttu Sornalingam, Ashley Grant, Chandran Sornalingam & Bala Balasundaram



(L to R) Kana Gnanachandran, Shanthan Paramjothy, Ken Vivekananthavel, Senthil Chelliah, Logan Velumailum, Ken Kirupa & Raj Rajasri
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The Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce held its first quarterly meeting for 2007 on 27th January at the Embassy Banquet hall. The President of

the Chamber Mr. Logan Velumailum while welcoming the members and wishing them a prosperous New Year Year remarked that the vision of the

Chamber has to be viewed now with the changes taking place in the market. He informed the members of the calendar of events that will take place for

this year. He wanted active participation of the members, sponsors and the public in the forthcoming events and thereby help to elevate Business

Entrepreneurship.

The first major event for the year will be the Business event which will be held on 23rd March followed by the Annual Gala on April 21st. The Annual Walkathon has been fixed for June 10th. The President wanted the Awards Gala to be a big event to coincide with the Chamber's existence for 15 years and the fact that this year's Awards Gala will be the tenth one in succession. Mr. Raj Rajsri, Secretary of the Chamber updated the members of the actions taken in connection with the forthcoming Gala while Mr. Ken Kirupa who is in charge of the Business Convention outlined details of the proposed Business Convention. Mr. Bala Balasundaram will be in charge of the Walkathon and spoke about the Walkathon and the steps that are being taken to make the event a success as in the past year. A news letter was distributed to the members present and breakfast was also served.

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Market Place @ Steeles offers



Stafford Lawson from the Parallax Group honouring Miss Tamil Toronto Niroja with a bouquet, as MC Rajkumar looks on

superlative frontage on Steeles Avenue, between Markham and Tapscott Roads. It offers great value for businessmen, entrepreneurs and investors to locate their stores, restaurants or service establishment there. Unlike locating in a large shopping complex where a small store is likely to be lost, the Market Place @ Steeles gives every unit a frontage so it can stand out and be noticed.

"We're extremely pleased with the overwhelming response we've received from the South Asian business community for our Market East project," says Matthew Nutson of the Parallax Group. "That's why we're very excited to present the Market Place as another excellent opportunity for a South Asian business owner or investor. We have ensured that all infrastructure is in place for the



Miss Tamil Toronto Niroja with Scott Bellinger (left) and Matt Nutson (right) from the Parallax Group

successful launch of this project."

"The intersection of Markham Road and Steeles Avenue is one of the busiest in the entire GTA," explains Raja Mahendran, broker, HomeLife GTA Realty Inc., which is the exclusive sales agent for this project. "Market Place @ Steeles will have access to major traffic of over 80,000 cars a day and significant lunch time trade with a major industrial park located just south of the property."

The Market Place @ Steeles project was introduced to brokers exclusively on Friday, January 26, 2007.

Units opened up for sale with a special reception open to the public held at Starwalk Buffet on Silver Star Boulevard from 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 3, 2007.

Pictures taken during the public launch with special guest star Miss Tamil Toronto Niroja along with Developers.



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Wiper Blades

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Windscreen wiper liquid

While driving during snow fall or smog, your visibility of the road is poor. So, you must ensure that always your windscreen cleaning liquid is topped up and kept.

Batteries

Keep your batteries in good condition to ensure that the engine starts without faltering, specially in the morning and avoid running around searching for battery booster cables.

Idling the engine Some of us start the engines from the home to keep us warm when we get into the car. Unfortunately idling your vehicle for more than 10 minutes is bad for the engine. While idling, the engine is not running at peak efficiency, resulting in incomplete fuel consumption.

So, follow the golden rules of better car care during winter to keep your car in better shape and maintain a peace of mind.

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PRAKASHRAJ

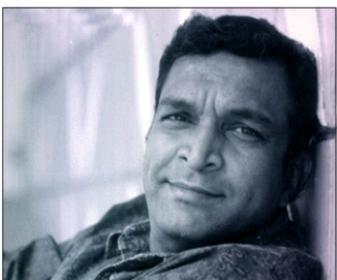
Tipped to be the number one villain and character artist of the modern age, Prakashraj received a shocking news and a very good news at the same time recently.



The shocking news was the lackluster performance of his production house movie 'POI' directed by his mentor K Balachander. One of ambitious K Balachander's project POI did not even run for two successful weeks in theatres. This bad run of POI was more shocking to Prakashraj than K Balachander himself since Prakashraj had invested a lot in the movie. On the flip side, Prakashraj has been selected for the role of RAVANA in the 100 crore Hindi film project 'RAMAYANA'. He will be sharing the screen space with Ajay Devgan and Kajol who don the roles of Rama and Sita respectively. There were rumours that the role of RAVANA was originally offered to Superstar Rajinikanth and he politely refused it. The role of Ravana for Prakashraj will suit him like a tee and it's a great honour for the tamil actor. Kudos to Prakashraj.

NASSER

Peculiar nosed Nasser is famous for his character roles in Nayagan, Bombay and Thevar Magan. He has from time to time



acted in varied roles ranging from character roles to villain roles to comedy roles. Nasser gave a terrific comedy performance alongside Kamal Hassan in the movie 'Avvai Shanmughi' which won him lots of accolades. Basically Nasser is a stage actor and he has brought lot of his stage co-actors to film industry notably Balasingh. Nasser is a favorite among top directors like Maniratnam and Shankar. He is a close friend of actor Kamal Hassan. Nasser's ambition is to play a part in the film version of the famous novel 'Ponniyin Selvan'. According to informed sources, Nasser is currently busy penning a story for his home productions which is supposedly

CINE JOURNAL



Kollywood TidBitz

Anand. J

A look at leading character actors

a story about 5 villains. Efforts are on to bring Prakashraj, Raghuvaran, Sathyaraj and Pasupathi to play the main characters along with Nasser himself. Watch this space for more updates on this project.

SUMAN

Long forgotten Suman is staging a comeback in Tamil films after nearly 20 years. He was last seen pitted against the one and only Superstar Rajinikanth in the movie 'Thee'. Suman played the role of a good cop warring



against the gangster Rajinikanth. The movie was a remake of Super hit Hindi film Deewar in which Amithab Bachchan played the role of a gangster. Although Suman earned good reviews for the movie, he was not flooded with offers. He turned his attention towards Telugu films and slowly made a place for himself in the Telugu film industry. He is now a renowned god role actor in Telugu films where he has played lots of god roles like Rama and Krishna in various God based movies. His comeback into Tamil films is marked by a gargantuan villain role pitted against none other than the same Rajinikanth in the movie 'Sivaji - The Boss'. Its ironical that actor Suman gets to play a reversal of roles in his re-entry into Tamil films. Expectations are sky high for this movie Sivaji and let us hope Suman gets to make his own mark and enthrall viewers.

RAGHUVARAN

The tall lanky actor Raghuvaran is known for his menacing acting style and has done memorable roles in movies like Anjali, Baasha, Puriyadha Pudhir and Mudhalvan. He started his career with 'Ezhavadhu Manithan' and has grown into a well deserved character artist. He has had a turbulent career over the last 20 years with his own highs and lows but has now grown into a much more dependable character artist. All the young actors like Vijay, Ajith, Vishal, Surya, Simbhu and Dhanush wants to cast Raghuvaran as their screen dad since he performs well in

that role. He is believed to be a friendly advisor for all his young co stars. Surya had a face make over upon Raghuvaran's advice since Raghuvaran felt that Surya's face had more resemblance to his father actor Sivakumar. Actor



Vishal opines that it was Raghuvaran who suggested and advised him to do more action roles since it suits Vishal the best. According go Vijay it is Raghuvaran who is his favorite screen dad. Actor Ajith says that he has learnt a lot of acting tips from Raghuvaran during the filming of 'Amarkalam' which later turned out to be one of his career best. Rumour mills has it that Raghuvaran is playing the coveted role in the magnum opus 'Sivaji - The Boss' which was earlier offered to Big B.

MANIVANNAN

Actor Manivannan started his career as Assistant director to Ace director Bharathiraja. He then grew to become a director and later turned himself into acting. He was offered the immemorable villain role by his mentor director Bharathiraja in the movie Kodi Parakkudhu opposite Superstar Rajinikanth. This role turned his career upside down when he

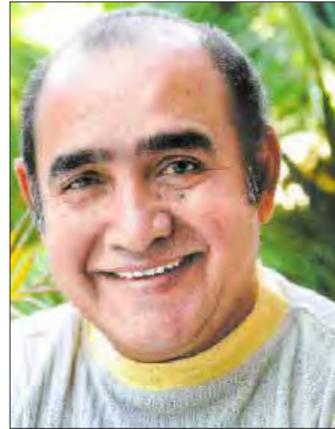


started receiving offers upon offers for villain roles. Manivannan chose to act in movies rather than wield the megaphone himself. Manivannan also played an important role in making actor Sathyaraj a huge success through his movie 'Amaidhi Padai'. Manivannan is one actor who acts in all his movies sans make-up and with his favorite 'Dhaadi' (Beard). According to his close associates, he is secretly planning on a

magnum opus big budget movie by bringing the great stalwarts Rajinikanth and Kamal Hassan together.

VIJAYAKUMAR

Actor Vijayakumar was once a contender for the Superstar throne along with Rajinikanth, Kamal Hassan and Jai Shankar. The Superstar throne which is elusive to many eluded actor Vijayakumar as well. Vijayakumar



was one of the highest paid actors at a time when Rajinikanth and Kamal Hassan were struggling to make a mark in their initial stages of their career. With the time tides, Vijayakumar lost his stranglehold and was reduced to a character artist. Thanks to Director Maniratnam for reinventing actor Vijayakumar through a powerful portrayal of a father caught in between two warring sons in the mega movie 'Agni Natchathiram'. Director Bharathiraja gave Vijayakumar his lifetime role of an emotional brother in 'Kizhaku Cheemaiyile' which won lot of awards and accolades. He followed it up with good performances in 'Seran Pandian' and 'Nattamai' both with Sarath Kumar. Vijayakumar is happily married to yester year dream girl Manjula and has three daughters and one son. It is sad to note that neither his daughters nor his son has been able to make their mark in the Silver screen although they have had a long career.

PRABHU

Star son of Thespian actor Sivaji Ganesan, Prabhu struggled in his initial stages of his career to earn good name. He had to take support of his father actor Sivaji Ganesan to get a market of his



own. Prabhu started his career playing a supportive role in the

movie 'Sangili' alongside his real life dad Sivaji Ganesan. Later he grew into a actor of substance and stepped away from his father's shadow. Prabhu had an intense competition from actor Kartik whom he considered his best friend. They both acted together in Maniratnam directed 'Agni Natchathiram' and later grew into big stars on their own. Prabhu has tried his hand in comedy and then later turned to character roles. His supporting role in the movie 'Chinna Poove Mella Pesu' is still being rated as one of his best especially for his act in the song 'A pulla karuppayi'. Prabhu has the rare distinction of acting with both stalwarts Rajinikanth and Kamal Hassan. His comic timing with Rajinikanth in the movie 'Guru Sishyan' was appreciated by one and all. Prabhu has turned his attention towards character roles recently with good performances in the movies 'Something Something Unakkum Enakkum' and 'Thamirabharani'.

BHAGYARAJ

Actor turned Director turned Actor Bhagyaraj is still considered to be one of the best screen play writers in the Indian film



industry. He has mesmerized audiences with his powerful screenplay in the movies like 'Andha Ezhu Naatkal', 'Enga Chinna Raasa', 'Idhu Namma Aalu' and Hindi Blockbuster 'Ek Hi Raasta'. Apparently Big B was so impressed with Bhagyaraj's screenplay, he requested Bhagyaraj to write stories for him to suit his image. But Bhagyaraj being Bhagyaraj wanted his foot only in Tamil film industry and stuck to it. He tried his hand in politics but it never worked for him. He returned to what he knows best and came out with an absolute winner in the form of 'Parijatham', a creative movie of his own. He introduced his daughter Saranya and extracted good performances from his lead actors. Bhagyaraj recently took to supportive roles and played a cameo in the movie 'Something Something Unakkum Enakkum'. He supposedly has an author backed role in the movie 'Parattai engira Azhagu Sundaram' alongside Dhanush. To be in the know of Kollywood, watch this space regularly.

Write your comments/ suggestions to
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Bollywood Blitz



Bachchans Vs Roshans

The Bachchans are pumping big money into Abhishek's superhero flick 'Drona', although they aren't the official producers. Is it an answer to Hrithik Roshan's Krrish? If sources are to be believed, Big B is investing a whopping amount in beta Abhishek's forthcoming film Drona. After Abhishek delivered a knock out performance in Mani Ratnam's Guru, Amitabh Bachchan obviously wants to keep no stones unturned in establishing his son as the next big superhero in Bollywood. Apart from mobilising finances, Sr. Bachchan has been taking a keen interest in the look of the film, not to mention the dexterously executed special effects. The content of the film may have been kept under wraps but those in the know reveal that it's an out-and-out superhero flick and all efforts are being made to outdo Hrithik Roshan's Krrish. A source close to the Bachchans

says, "Drona is their answer to Krrish. The budget of Krrish was approximately Rs 45 crores and Drona will be somewhere close to Rs 60 crores. The Bachchans along with director Goldie Behl are making all efforts to overshadow Krrish's superpowers." Not long ago, the Bachchans weren't overly pleased with the buzz doing the rounds that Hrithik's portrayal in the film 'Dhoom II' was far better than Abhishek's. Taking a leaf from that experience the Bachchans are now going all out in their pet project Drona. A unit member informs, "The clash is evident. It's all about 'Who is a better superhero?' Let me tell you, Krrish has a tough contender in Drona. The first schedule of the film was shot in Prague and we had the full liberty of shooting at any place we wanted. Needless to say there have been no limitations as far as the budget is concerned. In fact, one can easily say that the Bachchans are making the film. Director Goldie and producer Shrishti are family friends of the Bachchans, and they're working closely as a team. If Krrish had an aggressive marketing strategy, Drona will have a better one." The film will see Jaya Bachchan and Abhishek teaming up as a mother-son duo. The look of the characters is being closely guarded from

the media glare. Stringent security measures have been taken on the sets of the film erected in Kuchaman City, a former fort of the Rajputs on a rock cliff in Nagaur. We hear that Abhishek has been practicing pulsating stunts for the film. He dons a European look in the film with long locks et al. All those months when Abhishek was moving around town sporting a hair band was just an attempt to grow his mane. When quizzed about the Drona look, stylist Anaita Shroff (she has previously styled the cast members of Dhoom 2) refused to divulge too many details. She says, "I have not drawn any inspiration from any superhero for that matter. It's an original vision that I had for Abhishek and Priyanka in the film. All that I can say is that Goldie's treatment of the film is completely novel and we've given the actors the best possible look. Looks like 'Drona' is a film to watch out for this year.

Saif Ali Khan

Guess who is the star attraction of the two biggest releases in the coming months? None other than Saif Ali Khan! After making headlines with his lean mean act in 'Omkar', Saif would be seen in two back to back high

profile projects - 'Eklavya - The Royal Guard' and 'Tara Rum Pum'. Though former is a multistarrer with Big B, Sanjay Dutt, Jackie Shroff, Jimmy Shergill and Boman Irani filling in for the men power, with TRP Saif goes solo in a project that is produced by



none other than Yash Raj Films. Between 'Eklavya - The Royal Guard' [February 16] and 'Tara Rum Pum' [April 27], there are a dozen odd other films lined up for release but none match to their scales when it comes to budget and grandeur. In between the two movies, there is also a probability of Saif's 'Nehle Pe Dehla' arriving on March 02 though one awaits an official confirmation.

KBC Shah Rukh Khan

Amitabh Bachchan says he hasn't seen Shah Rukh Khan on *Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC)* yet, and if the Television Audience Measurement (TAM) ratings were anything to go by, then it looks like a lot of people haven't either. "I haven't seen it as yet, my apologies. But I will and I am sure Shah Rukh is doing a good job of it," says actor Amitabh Bachchan. The TAM ratings show a decline in

viewership of the latest edition of the popular quiz show meaning that Shah Rukh Khan may not exactly be doing a good job on *KBC 3*. A comparison of television viewership ratings (TVR) of Amitabh Bachchan's second stab at the show and SRK's debut as a quiz show host show a dip in eyeballs lately. While Bachchan debuted with a TVR of 19.75 in August 2005, Shah Rukh could only manage a rating of 12.33. While the Big B fell to 15 on day two, it was 10 for SRK. And Day three saw a low of 10.33 for Amitabh Bachchan while Shah Rukh's KBC dipped to 7.36. "The two ratings are actually not comparable. TAM now compares a larger geography than it covered before and therefore the footprint or the actual number of consumers who are covered by the TAM are much higher than those covered by the previous ones," reasons President of Star India (Ad Sales and Distribution) Paritosh Joshi. Shah Rukh, on his part, feels fairly pleased on his small-screen performance. "I think I am doing good and the reason I know that I am doing good is because I get to hear it from a lot of people. Though reports show that *KBC3* has boosted the channel's viewership in the 9-10 pm slot, undoubtedly, the initial interest in the show has dimmed down.



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CINE JOURNAL

FILM REVIEWS

ANAND. J



Director Maniratnam, one of the best directors of India has mostly made films in tamil including the famous Nayagan, Dhalapathi, Roja and Bombay. He did not taste success in Bollywood inspite of making quality films like Bombay, Roja and Dil Se. Being a master craftsmen, he has chosen a subject and packaged 'Guru' well that it will appeal more to International and bollywood audience than just the regional south. Everyone by now knows that the story is loosely based on the life of Indian Industrialist Dhirubhai Ambani but the treatment of the subject is unseen so far.

Mani Ratnam's *Guru* is undoubtedly a gutsy and outstanding film. He may have denied it before the release of the film but *Guru* is definitely a biopic on Dhirubhai Ambani, the Reliance industry founder. It is all about Ambani's rags-to-riches story from early 50's to mid 80's. Mani tells us about the life and times of a man who became a messiah for the middle class in the country. Mani's Gurukanth Desai brilliantly portrayed by Abhishek Bachchan dares to

dream big. To realize his dreams he crosses many hurdles, often cutting corners and is accused of making the system corrupt by using morally questionable means to achieve his goals. Lets face it. Dhirubhai, like our protagonist Gurukanth Desai was a real hero for millions of Indians as he believed in sharing his wealth with the very same people who contributed to his company initially. Mani has used this larger-than-life figure of Guru to not only glorify him but also make us feel for him when he lands in conflict with the government and its agencies along with rivals who are out to crush his spirit and company.

The film works in a similar pattern to the way that superheroes in a mass masala film beats up more than a dozen guys and wins against all odds. The tagline of the film clearly conveys the story of *Guru* - Villager, Visionary, Winner! And Mani sir the king of romance has weaved a beautiful love story with several magical moments, like the bedroom scene where the couple playfully smack each other, the scene when he presents her a swing as Guru tells her his future

dreams or the kitchen scene when he hugs her while she cooks- all stay in your mind. Aishwarya Rai has given one of her best performances on Silver screen. If



Gurunath's chase of fantasy (to make it as a businessman) puts him and those who reposed faith in him on the path of riches, then Mani's own cinematic odyssey into the pioneering story of modern-Indian business world rewards us with an unforgettable experience of artistic entertainment. A business missionary and a visionary, is what Gurunath is. For him, no rule or norm is an impediment to the path of progress that he has charted for him, his company, which for him is also the metaphor for the newly emergent India.

GURU

VEYYIL

reputation as the best production house in Tamil cinema. They make commercially viable quality films. Once again Shankar has introduced Vasantha Balan a director who understands the nuances of making a realistic film with well-etched out characters and strong screenplay.

Welcome back to real, solid film making in an era of shallow, fraudulent larger-than-life movies, here is the definitive movie with a moral framework. This one works and keeps you riveted. Veyyil is one straight from the heart. The story is told through the protagonist Murukesan (Pasupathy) who recalls his childhood in a village near Virudhanagar. His father is a butcher who works hard to bring up his four children two boys and two girls and has a happy family.

Murukesan dotes on his younger brother Kathir and his weakness, like any other adolescent is love for movies (especially MGR films) that are screened in a local theatre. But one day life changes for him when his father catches him red-handed from the theatre after he bunks school. The child is severely punished and he runs away from home after taking money and jewels. His journey is quiet exciting with its share of happiness and sorrows. He is taken under the wings of a theatre projectionist in a nearby town and slowly the theatre becomes his home. He falls in love with Thankam (Malavika, a TV actress from Malayalam) a beautiful girl who lives opposite the theatre but their love story does not have a happy ending. Murukesan is dejected after Thankam's death and the theatre is demolished. He decides to return home after 20 years. The rest of the film is all about Murukesan's mental turmoil's as he is caught between the deep love showered by his younger brother Kathir (Bharath) who runs a successful advertising agency and his guilt of not being a responsible son or elder brother.

There is parallel love story be-

tween Meenakshi (Bhavana), an innocent girl and Kathir. Then there is Pandi (Shreya Reddy) who is Murukesan's childhood sweetheart. It is actually in dealing with Murukesan's character especially his relationship with his father where Vasantha Balan's brilliant touch comes to the fore. One of the best scenes in the film is when Murukesan comes home after 20 years and his father's reaction to the situation. Hats off to all the actors- The father, mother and of course Pasapathy who performed with subtle emotions that will stay with you for long.

Quite naturally, it is Pasupathy who presides over the show magestically. His composure, dead pan expressions, happiness and tears are tangible, real and touching. Bharath as Kathir has given a knockout performance as the aggressive and responsible guy. Bhavana, Shreya and the new girl Malavika are all apt in their roles. Newcomers like the father, mother, sisters, friends are all life-like.

The music of G V Prakash is another rose in this fragrant bouquet. He has understood the situation and has come out with songs and background score with finesse. Its hard to believe that this is the same kid who sang 'Chikku Bukku Rayilu' and he is only 17 years old. Muthukumar's lyrics get an extra coat of emotion in Prakash's hands. Madhi and Azhagappan have captured the village side of Virudhanagar in their lens that specks out vital and variegated details. Vasanthalaban has not let cinematic consideration come in the way of telling a story like it is. In a sense, he has just held a mirror to the lives of Murugesan and his family.

The film's weakness lies in few bloody gory sequences and a spate of highly emotional depressing scenes. Director has tried to be too realistic and in the end it turns out to be an emotional tear jerker and becomes depressing at times.

Veyyil - Sudavillai!!!

Mani's genius lies in incorporating a cute and impish love into the broader ambit of an emotionless world of shares and supplies. Mani's other great success is in getting the best out of his team. It is Abhishek Bachchan who leads the pack with a show that is surely the best of his career so far. In a deglamourised 'bania' look, Abhishek packs all the right punches in a character that is far more complex than the dandified exterior would otherwise lead us to believe. The Abhiwarya (the newly mingled couple) on screen chemistry is superb and its once again to Director's credit that he has handled his lead actors perfectly. The sub-text of the duo's romance to the larger theme of a man with a mission keeps the film from slipping into the slipshod stream of stereotyped consciousness.

Musical Wizard A R Rahman

captivates you with lilting and lingering numbers and he is always magical whenever he combines with Maniratnam. The picturisation of the songs needs special mention. Rajeev Menon has the true 'eye' of Mani, bringing into images the ideas in the director's mind.

Director Maniratnam who has a penchant for Hi-tech item songs (remember the popular Chaiyya Chaiyya of 'Dil Se') comes with 'Maiyya Maiyya' this time superbly executed on none other than Mallika Sherawat. On the flip side, the film is too lengthy and some of the characters are not well etched out like the Aishwarya's brother character. Some of the songs mar narration but kudos to Mani for presenting a film sans gory violence. On the whole the film has classy touch with massy appeal.

Guru is a must watch for all film buffs and critics.

POKKIRI

Ilaya Thalapathi Vijay's Pongal release Pokkiri has proved all his detractors wrong who wrote him off when his previous film Aadhi turned out to be a dud in the box office. The Pokkiri team of Vijay and Director Prabhu Deva has given a masala entertainer which is watchable and enjoyable. This film is a remake of Telugu Super Hit Pokkiri which released last year and was a huge success. In spite of a thin story line, the presentation and the packaging of the film makes it more racy and entertaining.

The wafer thin story starts with Attractive heroine Asin typically falling in love with a macho man. She gets opportunity to shake her legs with Vijay for 5 songs. Though she looks naive in few scenes, she is also charming and bubbly and has done her role with ease. What stands out, probably, is her ease at dancing, considering that the steps are not usual or simple. Both Vijay and Asin share terrific on-screen chemistry. Prakash Raj as the notorious Don Alibhai does an excellent job. His mannerisms and body language would surely win applause from the film-buffs. Napoleon plays

an honest police commissioner in the hunt of criminals. Hats off to him for playing the role with utmost grace. The dialogues during the press meet deserve kudos and Napoleon has delivered them well. Vadivelu evokes laughter with his comedy donning the role of a Kung-fu instructor. Tamizh (Vijay) is a hardcore criminal, who can do anything for money and also change loyalties for currency. He meets Sruthi (Asin) and it is love at first sight between the two. The sequences that follow are interesting and arouse curiosity, as Asin is a simple woman with conventional expectations from her man whereas Vijay is a ruffian who can do anything for money. A villainous cop attracted by Sruthi threatens her mother to send her daughter with him. Enters Tamizh as a savior for Sruthi and her family. Tamizh, who works for an underworld gang soon rises in life, owing to his bravery and never-say-die attitude.

The sequences that throw light on the hooligan attitude and 'can't-care-any-less' stance of Tamizh offer a lavish treat for Vijay's fans.

This attitude, however, comes as a rude shock for Sruthi and this results in a conflict. Despite this hardcore criminal attitude of Tamizh, Sruthi cannot help falling head over heels in love with him. Tamizh's boss and an international don Alibhai (Prakash Raj) arrives from abroad and thereafter, the story takes an unexpected turn with twists, suspense and surprises, all neatly packaged and presented as an engrossing narrative. Don't expect any surprises in the plot or treatment. It is a faithful remake of Puri Jagannath's Telugu *Pokiri* for which the plot was borrowed from Hollywood gangster thriller *Dannie Brasco* (1997) featuring Johnny Depp and Al Pacino.

What makes *Pokkiri* tick is that the story uses all the characters as restless, unbelievable pawns in a do-or-die chess game. To Prabhu



Deva' credit, he keeps the tempo running besides making use of Vijay's immense screen presence and comedy timing. Watch Vadivelu mimicking Surya for the song 'Sutrum Vizhi Sudare' and shaking legs with Asin. Vijay carries the entire movie on his shoulder with aplomb and delivers punch dialogues with his usual ease.

Music Director Mani Sharma who did the music for Telugu Pokkiri has rendered the same tunes and songs in Tamil too. The opening song 'Aadungada Enna Suthi' and 'Dole dole than' are hummable. Other songs are just average. Recording is jarring at times but on the whole the background music suits Vijay's image.

On the negative side, there are a lot of violent and gory sequences that could have been lessened or avoided. Especially when Vijay has lot of young followers and fans, bloodshed and violence is one that needs to be avoided. It's a Vijay movie all the way and Director Prabhu Deva can take credit for that.

Pokkiri- Pongal Jangiri!!



Veyyil the last hit film of year 2006 and third consecutive successful movie from Director Shankar's S pictures has been directed by Shankar's assistant Vasantha Balan. Incidentally this movie released along with Director Vikraman's Chennai Kadhal on the same day and Veyyil emerged as a winner in Box office. The movie gives actor Pasupathy a life time role and he has essayed his character loyally.

Director Shankar well known for encouraging young creative minds had earlier produced super hit Kadhal followed by historical satire Imsai Arasan 23am Pulikesi. With Veyyil he delivers a hat trick and continues his successful production run. In Vasanthalaban, he has found a formidable director who is ready to push the envelop far and firm. In an era of 'punch dialogues' and massy adventures, Vasanthalaban has chosen to tell a tale of human foils, frailties and faithfulness. Tale of heart is the background of Veyyil and it definitely makes a satisfactory viewing.

Vasanthalaban's cast has given a bravura performance. Bharath is self-contained and understanding. Bhavana is petite and polished. Shriya Reddy is supportive. Pasupathy is the nerve centre of the film. In a delightful role that is at once real and reflective, Pasupathy is spot on. No emotion is beyond his gritty face. Radiating the essence of the character, Pasupathy's eyes tell the story like no screen-play can ever narrate. Those windows to the soul carry the myriad human experience with dignity and decency.

Beware Big Production houses, here comes Director Shankar's 'S Pictures' that has consolidated its

Indian cuisine is as diverse as its culture, languages and regions. South Indian cuisine has its own dishes and subtle variations of its popular dishes. Saravana Bhavan Restaurants, situated at Mississauga and Scarborough carry the legacy of good taste and quality as the main locations in Chennai. It is a food outlet to eat in, take it to go or have it catered to you.

Week end Breakfast Buffet
The week end breakfast

Saravana Bhavan Specialities



Dosa

buffet on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays is a feast to feed on. You have a variety of hot Dosas, Idly and Pongal to

choose. The main ingredients for the Dosas are rice and lentils. The dosas are enjoyed with the combination of a variety of chutneys and saambhar. There are different types of Dosas served at Saravana Bhavan-Rava, Masala, Onion, Plain etc. Uthappams and Uppuma are other favorites. Tandoori delights and Naan Roti are also favoured by the breakfast eaters.

Special Meals

Special meals served during lunch and dinner include Rice combined with a variety of curries, curd, rasam and pickles. The dessert that usually goes with the rice meal is Paayaasam.

Sweets

For those who have a sweet tooth, Saravana Bhavan serves a variety of sweet delicacies such as Jhangiri, Bhadam Halwa, Laddu and Ghulab Jhan.

Wanting to make a beeline to enjoy the original taste of South India? The locations are given below

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Nirosha's photo courtesy : Gnan Gnanendran



Branch Opening at Morningside & Milner, Scarborough

Opening Early March 2007

Interview with Ms. Lisa Gallacher

Regional Vice-President, RBC Royal Bank, Scarborough
on the opening of the RBC Royal Bank, Morningside Branch

RBC's ongoing commitment to the Scarborough area...

As part of RBC's ongoing commitment to the Scarborough area, RBC is excited to be opening the doors to our new Morningside branch. Through our newest branch, we're particularly proud to be strengthening our ties with the local South Asian community - a vibrant and important part of Canada's cultural mosaic.



also give our support to many causes and organizations in this community. Groups we've supported including the Centennial Foundation representing the Sikh community, the Multicultural Association of Pakistani Canadians, the Association of

Women of India in Canada, the South Asian Exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum, and the RBC South Asian Heritage Festival. We've also supported numerous business associations including the Canada Pakistan Business Council, the Canadian Tamil Chamber of Commerce, the Indo Canada Chamber of Commerce, Canada Sri Lanka Business Council, and the Pakistani Professional Association.

RBC strongly believes in investing in the South Asian community, one of the fastest-growing groups in Canada, by providing enhanced services. RBC thanks the South Asian community for bringing a wealth of creativity and ideas to our country. This community's role in producing jobs, driving economic growth, and strengthening our social fabric is invaluable, and we look forward to working together in financial partnerships and community initiatives.

Through our newest branch at Morningside, RBC is excited to be able to demonstrate our strong commitment to this community, both through exceptional financial services and building on our community partnerships. Our new branch, which is also conveniently located close to the University of Toronto's Scarborough campus, will offer a complete range of financial services including extended opening hours on Thursday nights and Saturdays.

To show our appreciation, RBC tailors numerous services to help our South Asian clients achieve their financial dreams. We've proactively expanded our staff to reflect the rich diversity of South Asian and other cultures. To best serve our clients, our staff provide financial advice in a variety of South Asian languages like Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Chinese and Tagalog. Many staff are active volunteers in the South Asian community.

Please come in for a visit, and let us show you how RBC puts you first.

Lisa Gallacher
Regional Vice President,
RBC Royal Bank, Scarborough

In addition to RBC's sponsorship of the "Legends of Cricket Live", we

Following are the comments made by Ms. Lisa Gallacher (Regional Vice President, RBC Royal Bank, Scarborough) in a Question and Answer interview with Mr. Siva Sivapragasam— Editorial Consultant for "Monsoon Journal", on the opening of the RBC Royal Bank branch at Morningside.

Q1. What factors influenced the bank in opening a branch office in Morningside and why did the bank select this area?

RBC is always seeking to better serve our clients and we saw a need to increase our services to the growing Morningside community.

In particular, the growth of the South Asian community in the Greater Toronto Area has meant not only opportunity for individuals and businesses, but also a competitive advantage for Canada. RBC has been struck not only by the sheer numbers and growth of the South Asian community, but also by its wonderful character and fantastic achievements. We're keenly aware of the vital contributions made by the South Asian community to our broader community, and want to continue increasing our support, whether it be through increased services or community partnerships.

We look forward to continuing to devote the people, resources and facilities to meet this community's needs and build a mutually beneficial, long-term relationship.

Q2. What are the services the branch office will offer to individuals and business sector?

RBC's new Morningside branch will provide a full range of banking services and sound, professional advice to help clients achieve financial well-being. Clients will have access to the advice and services of Financial Planners, Investment Retirement Specialists, Mortgage Specialists and Small Business Advisors.

Q3. Will the branch working hours extend beyond 4 pm on working days and will the branch be open on Saturdays?

To accommodate the diverse and growing needs of this community, our new branch will be open six days a week, including Thursdays until 8 p.m. and Saturdays until 3 p.m. The branch will be open until 4.30 pm Mondays to Wednesdays and on Fridays.

We're looking to make life as easy as possible for our clients by providing a one-stop shop for financial services, building on the reputation and track record of RBC and our exceptional staff... just come on in, and see how we can put you first.

Q4. Since the branch office is to be located close to the University of Toronto Scarborough campus, do you envisage any student programs for the undergraduate population?

RBC recognizes that getting an education can be expensive. There's tuition, books, transportation, accommodation, food... everyone has different needs. That's why RBC offers a number of easy, economical banking packages designed specifically for our student clients, including student Visa cards and two Royal Credit Lines just for students.

We also offer special loans for students accepted into certain professional programs. For example, if they've been accepted into an accredited medicine or dentistry faculty, they're eligible for an exclusive package that provides flexible financing options and convenient services.

Our personal bankers at our new Morningside & Milner location will be more than happy to sit down and help students work through their needs to find the best solution for them.



Royal Bank welcomes its customers & well-wishers on the opening of their Morningside Branch

Opening Early March 2007



Mohan Sundaramohan
Branch Manager

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