



SINGAPORE MALAYALEE ASSOCIATION

Quarterly Updates (Volume 2, Issue 2)

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Editor: Mrs. Shraddha Rajesh

Past Events

102ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SINGAPORE MALAYALEE ASSOCIATION *by Mrs. Lakshmy Iyer*

The 102nd Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Singapore Malayalee Association (SMA), was held on Sunday 26th April 2020 at 10:30 am. Due to COVID-19 Circuit Breaker restrictions, the meeting was held as a Live meeting on the Google Meet platform.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30am with a quorum of 66 members. Besides the 66 members who signed in to the meeting, there were many other members who observed the proceedings on a YouTube livestream broadcast.



The Management Committee, represented by the President, presented SMA's activities for the year from April 2019 to April 2020. These include:

- Activities to support the Malayalee community affected by COVID-19 Circuit Breaker
- Attainment of "Charity Status" for "SMA Care Limited"
- Transfer of Kerala Flood Relief Fund to the Singapore Red Cross
- Launching of the new Membership Portal and Benefit Programs
- And activities of all Sub-Committees

This was the SMA's first ever AGM conducted remotely in its 103 year history.

The Management Committee also presented the planned activities for the next year. Due to the prevailing COVID-19 situation, many of SMA's regular activities may have to be adapted to online platforms.

PIONEER WING

Pioneer Wing will deeply miss our dear member, Mdm. Vasanthi Sadasivan, who passed away peacefully on 19 May 2020. Mdm. Vasanthi's legacy, left behind in the form of a video capturing the yoga exercises that this sprightly 91 year old did each day, will continue to inspire not just the SMA Pioneer Wing members but also many others. Her dogged determination, her will to be independent, and her deep zest for life are admirable qualities we will always remember and treasure.



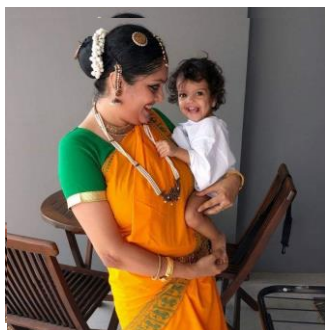
Mdm. Vasanthi Sadasivan

LADIES' WING MOTHER'S DAY CELEBRATION & PHOTO CONTEST

by Dr. Sunitha Nair

In celebration of Mother's Day, SMA Ladies' Wing organized a Zoom call for all members. A photo contest was also held. The ladies had a fun-filled session with some songs, poem recitals and lots of laughter. The ladies shared their lockdown experience and brainstormed new ideas for virtual programmes until normal activities can be resumed.

The winning entries of the photo contest are:



SMARTEST 2020 QUIZ COMPETITION

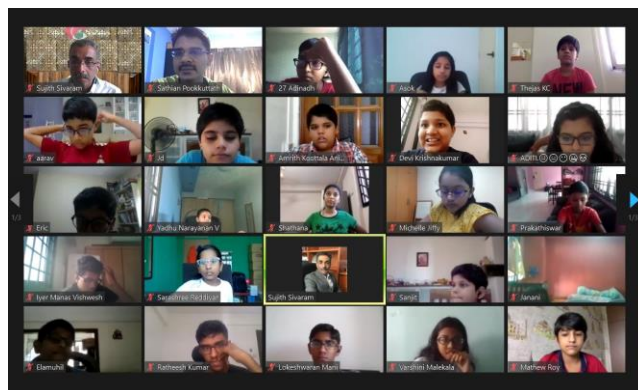
by Mr. Sathian Pookkuttath

SMA children's club 'Mayilpeeli' conducted SMARtest 2020 - Spot the Mind Sport - a knowledge quest to kindle the spirit of enthusiastic learning in young minds, on 30th May 2020. This is the third consecutive year that Mayilpeeli has conducted this event.

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, this event was conducted on an online platform. Participants included both Malayalees and non-Malayalees. A total of 55 children aged between 11 and 15 participated in this quiz competition. Mr. Sujith Sivaram, our resident quiz master, did an excellent job preparing an amazing set of questions spanning a variety of subjects including science, countries, literature, media, entertainment and history. The quiz consisted of more than 60 questions over 4 engaging, nail-biting rounds. SMA would like to express our gratitude to Mr. Sujith for his constant, invaluable support for this event.

Dhruv Manoj won the first prize, Mathew Roy Varghese came in second, Ishaan Krishnan and Bandra Paavana shared the third prize. Congratulations to all winners and all participants - keep learning!

Mayilpeeli will be organizing many more fun-filled educational events - stay tuned!



YOUTH WING UPDATES

by Dr. Vidhya Pillay

The Youth Wing organized a 'Tik Tok Challenge' that ran from the end of April to mid May 2020. There were 19 entries and the entry that had the most number of likes on both our Facebook and Instagram pages won. The winner was Pooja Haridas who won a \$20 Takashimaya voucher.

We also organized a four-week online series featuring mainly homegrown talent. The series was titled 'Life in the Time of Covid-19'. Our team members participated in the segments as well. We organized a Mollywood Zumba session every Monday by Shafiq a.k.a. Kunjali Kutty, a COVID-19 related segment on Wednesdays with Praseetha, Viknesh and I contributing to a segment on global front liners, a cooking segment on Fridays in which Sangeeta Kumar got the ball rolling and a music and dance segment on Sundays with Vinayak and Basil performing the series finale.



This series started on May 25th and was aired at 7pm. It was a fun and engaging experience. This initiative was in support of the SMA Covid-19 Support Fund. We received a large volume of viewership on both our Facebook and Instagram pages and we managed to bring in donations for the cause as well.

The Youth Wing would also like to welcome our new members, Shalina, Anand, Kaveri, Ajmal, Vinayak and Basil to the team.

SMA COVID-19 WELFARE ACTIVITIES

by Mrs. Sunu Sivadasan-Ghani

SMA has been doing everything within our means to support those who have been affected badly by the COVID-19 situation.

There were 5 major issues that were brought to our attention.

1. Urgent need to head back to Kerala or return to Singapore from Kerala

Indian tourists, work pass holders, tertiary students and some pregnant women all desperately wanted to return to Kerala. We coordinated with the Indian Ministry for External Affairs, Indian High Commission of India and NORKA Roots to arrange for repatriation flights. Salary issues with employers and need to get release papers from MOM for migrant workers in dorms to return home was an issue some faced. We took the matter to TADM (Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Management), TWC2 (Transient Workers Count too), Ministry of Manpower (MOM); we submitted relevant documents showing their urgency to return (e.g. surgery, death in family), and managed to get the papers. SMA also paid the airfare for those who could not afford it. This was made possible through SMA's COVID-19 support fund.

2. Request for food/groceries from tertiary students (Polytechnics and Private Colleges)

We provided groceries to anyone who knocked at our door, in the form of cash and grocery kits. These included students in polytechnics and private colleges. For polytechnic students, we made arrangements for their respective institutions to help them. Some polytechnics subsequently provided some basic grocery items. We helped everyone who approached us, including non-Malayalees.

The Hindu Endowment Board and well-known Rangoli expert Vijaya Mohan helped us liaise with three temples to provide some packed food. 7 volunteer drivers from other organizations and our own Management Committee members helped deliver food and groceries. We are grateful to our sponsors House Brand, HindArab Restaurant

and My Kitchen Restaurant for providing food and groceries. To prevent duplication of efforts and more efficient execution, we collaborated with other Malayalee organizations through weekly meetings.

3. Request for help with paying rent, mostly from students in polytechnic and private colleges

Our funds were not sufficient for us to fulfil the many requests that were coming in. Thus, we liaised with Project Providence (PP), a temporary Covid-19 crisis response initiative. We did the necessary due diligence; for deserving students, Project Providence and SMA worked together to pay their rent.

In one case, 16 students were given 24 hours by their landlord to vacate the flat. Through Hindu Endowment Board's support, we got the High Commission of India to arrange for these students to move to a lodge.

4. Anxiety and Stress

Many were undergoing tremendous stress during this period of great uncertainty. To address, this, we set up a professional counselling service. A trained senior counsellor, Mrs. Shobha Varghese, a member of the Singapore Association for Counsellors, volunteered to provide free tele-counselling. We also worked with Trans Family Service Centre to look into some cases involving family problems/abuse.

5. Medical Fees

SMA has assisting cash strapped students with medical bills. In one case, we supported a tertiary student who was diagnosed with TB just before the Circuit Breaker. SMA members in the medical field also offered free medical advice.

6. Legal Issues

For legal matters, SMA's legal advisor offered free legal counselling.

COVID-19 Support Fund

We are grateful to everyone who donated generously to SMA's COVID-19 support fund, to support our mission to help our community.

If you would like to donate, you may do so at member.malayalee.org.sg/donate

SMA TECH FORUM **by Mrs. Shraddha Rajesh**

SMA has started a new interest group, the SMA Tech Forum. Its objectives are to introduce interesting subjects to the wider audience, to provide a platform for speakers to share their knowledge and research and to facilitate meaningful discussion.

This will be done through an engaging and informative series of expository talks on a variety of subjects, with a focus on cutting edge technology and innovations.

SMA Digital Transformation

Singapore Malayalee Association is 102 years old. We have many processes set in place over the years, and they have proved valuable in their time. However, to succeed in this digital age, we have to let go of some legacy systems and processes, and keep up with the times. That's why we have embarked on a concerted Digital Transformation effort.

It's not just about putting everything online - digital transformation transcends traditional processes and systems. It's about how we think and how we engage with our members, about how we can deliver more value to our community. COVID-19 has provided the impetus to accelerate SMA's efforts in this regard.

1. Membership database - with events, email campaigns, automated ticketing and membership payments through payment gateway Stripe
2. E-newsletter
3. Freshdesk - an integrated customer engagement solution to respond to all queries received via email, Facebook and WhatsApp
4. Chatbot - to provide automated response to queries
5. Accounting Software & Claims Submission, for Audit
6. Website, Facebook, WhatsApp broadcasts for regular updates
7. Donation portal
8. Sign up forms online for help requests and registration and VoIP line for enquiries
9. Meetings and some events done on ZOOM, including SMLF and SMARTest

DESMYTIIFYING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The BIG QUESTIONS talks series kicked off with a session by Robin Vinod on Artificial Intelligence. Robin Vinod, a member of the SMA Tech Forum, is a JC2 student at National Junior College, interested in machine learning and mobile application development. He has worked on deep learning-based computer vision tasks on biomedical images at A*Star, with research papers submitted to conferences and for patent approval. His talk focused on Artificial Intelligence (AI), one of the hottest topics in the world right now, with billions of dollars being poured into its research every year. He gave a concise introduction to how AI works, the problems that it excels at, its shortcomings and what you need to do to keep up in a future AI dominated world.

This was followed by an interactive Q & A session in which Robin fielded multiple questions about the ethics and regulations around the usage of AI, the application of AI in the current COVID-19 situation and tips for young enthusiasts on getting started in this field. We had about 70 participants, and our youngest was an 11 year old student. Robin was appreciated by many of the older participants for providing a useful introduction to the topic for many, and for his depth of knowledge in this field even at a young age.

If you have any suggestions on topics or speakers for this series, or if you have any feedback, get in touch at TechForum@malayalee.org.sg



For SMA membership:
<https://www.malayalee.org.sg/become-a-member/>

For any feedback/queries, please write to info@malayalee.org.sg

SMLF UPDATES
by Mr. Ullas Kumar

സർക്യൂട്ട് ബ്രേക്കർ കാലയളവിൽ സിംഗപ്പൂരിൽ മലയാളിസാഹിത്യ സമിതി അതിന്റെ പരിപാടികൾ സാമൂഹിക മാധ്യമങ്ങളിലൂടെ സംഘടിപ്പിക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങി. മലയാളി അസോസിയേഷനിൽ വച്ച് നടത്തുന്ന പരിപാടികളിൽ പങ്കെടുക്കുന്നതിനേക്കാൾ കൂടുതൽ അംഗങ്ങൾ ഇത്തരത്തിലുള്ള പരിപാടികളിൽ പങ്കെടുക്കുന്നു എന്നത് തികച്ചും സ്വാഗതാർഹമാണ്. സാമൂഹിക അകല നിയന്ത്രണങ്ങൾ ഭാവിയിൽ ഒഴിവാക്കാൻ കൂടി എല്ലാ പരിപാടികളും സാമൂഹിക മാധ്യമങ്ങളിൽ കൂടി പ്രേക്ഷണം ചെയ്യുവാനുള്ള ആലോചനകൾ സജീവമാണ്.

സിംഗപ്പൂർ മലയാളി സാഹിത്യ സമിതിയുടെ ഈ വർഷത്തെ രണ്ടാമത്തെ പരിപാടി “കഥാ കാവ്യങ്ങൾ” ശ്രീ ആർ ബി പ്രമോദ് അവതരിപ്പിച്ചു. മെയ് ഒന്നാം തീയതി 7 30ന് Zoom-ലൂടെ ഏകദേശം 70 ഓളം പേർ ഈ പരിപാടിയിൽ പങ്കെടുത്തു.

സമിതിയുടെ “കവിയോടൊപ്പം” എന്ന പരിപാടിയിൽ മെയ് 23 ആം തീയതി വൈകുന്നേരം 7 മണി മുതൽ പ്രശസ്ത കവി ശ്രീ വി മധുസൂദനൻ നായർ പങ്കെടുത്തു. കവിതയുടെയും ആസ്വാദനത്തിന്റെയും വിവിധ തലങ്ങളെപ്പറ്റി സമിതിയോട് സംവദിച്ച അദ്ദേഹം തന്റെ "നാനാണത്തുദ്രാന്തൻ" എന്ന കവിത ആലപിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു.

ശ്രീ ടി സുരേഷ് കുമാർ അവതരിപ്പിച്ച "വാക്കിന്റെ കല" എന്ന പ്രഭാഷണം ജൂൺ പതിമൂന്നാം തീയതി വൈകുന്നേരം ആറുമണി മുതൽ നടത്തുകയുണ്ടായി. ഏകദേശം 70 ഓളം പേർ ഈ പരിപാടിയിൽ പങ്കെടുത്തു. വാക്കിന്റെ ഉല്പത്തിയിൽ തുടങ്ങി മനുഷ്യവംശത്തിന്റെ വികാസത്തിലൂടെ

നല്ല കവിതയുടെ പിറവിയിലും ആധുനിക കവിതയിലും എത്തിയ പ്രഭാഷണം സമിതിക്ക് വേറിട്ട ഒരു അനുഭവമായിരുന്നു. സിംഗപ്പൂരിലെ സാഹിത്യ ആസ്വാദകർക്ക് പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് കവിത സ്നേഹികൾക്ക് ഒരു നവ്യാനുഭവം ആയിരുന്നു ശ്രീ ആർ ബി പ്രമോദ് അവതരിപ്പിച്ച വൃത്ത പഠനത്തിലൂടെയുള്ള 8 പാഠങ്ങൾ. മെയ് ജൂൺ മാസങ്ങളിൽ പല ആഴ്ചകളിലായി നടത്തിയ ഈ പരിപാടി സംസ്കൃത ഭാഷാ വൃത്തങ്ങളെ കുറിച്ചുള്ള ആഴത്തിലുള്ള അറിവ് മാത്രമല്ല കാവ്യാ ആസ്വാദനത്തിലും കാവ്യ രചനയിലും താല്പര്യമുള്ള സമിതിയിലെ അംഗങ്ങൾക്ക് സമസ്യകളിലൂടെയും തർജ്ജമ കളിലൂടെയും രചനകളെ സമിതിയിൽ അവതരിപ്പിക്കുവാനുള്ള ഒരു അവസരം കൂടിയായി. ഇത്തരത്തിൽ മലയാള ഭാഷയിൽ താല്പര്യമുള്ള അംഗങ്ങൾക്കായി പ്രത്യേക വിഷയങ്ങളിൽ ചെറു പഠനസംഘങ്ങൾ സംഘടിപ്പിക്കാൻ സമിതി തീരുമാനിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്.

കൂടാതെ ഇനി വരുന്ന ആഴ്ചകളിലും മാസങ്ങളിലും സമിതി പല സാഹിത്യ പരിപാടികളും നടത്തുവാൻ പദ്ധതിയിടുന്നുണ്ട്. താല്പര്യമുള്ളവർ സമിതി ഭാരവാഹികളുമായി നേരിട്ട് ബന്ധപ്പെടാൻ അഭ്യർത്ഥിക്കുന്നു. മലയാളി അസോസിയേഷന്റെ സാമൂഹിക മാധ്യമങ്ങളിലൂടെ പരിപാടികളെ കുറിച്ചുള്ള വിവരങ്ങൾ യഥാസമയം അംഗങ്ങളെ അറിയിക്കുന്നതാണ്.

മലയാളി അസോസിയേഷനിൽ ഒരു ലൈബ്രറി പുനർനിർമ്മിക്കുക എന്നത് യാഥാർത്ഥ്യമാവുകയാണ്. ഈ സംരംഭത്തിലേക്ക് പുസ്തകങ്ങൾ സംഭാവന ചെയ്യാൻ ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നവർ ഓഗസ്റ്റ് ഒന്നാം തീയതിക്കു മുൻപായി smlf.sg@gmail.com എന്ന വിലാസത്തിൽ ബന്ധപ്പെടുവാൻ താല്പര്യപ്പെടുന്നു.