



The Dutch Burgher Union

Bulletin – August 2007

CONTENTS

- Presidents Message
- Editorial
- Condolences
- Welfare Programmes
- Membership Incentive
- Charmaine Solomon
- Reminisces of a past President – *Wilhelm Woutersz*
- Documentary on the Burghers
- From the Mail Room
- Birthday Greetings
- Sunday lunch & Bingo
- Glitter & Glamour

President's Message

Dear Member,

The first of our Sunday Crab Lunch & Bingo was a great success and a good start to our future plans for further lunches & Bingo. 68 Members and guests were present, of which I am happy to say 95% were senior Burgher members. It was fantastic to see so many familiar faces we don't see so often at the Union. Thank you for your presence.

I am now very happy with the atmosphere of pleasant camaraderie and unity that prevails in the DBU which belongs to us all. Unity is strength which will spur us on to greater achievement in every imaginable sphere.

I will appreciate your suggestions and ideas for the further progress of the DBU. Many thanks for making this event a successful one.

30 deserving old folk are now receiving a sum of Rs 1,500 each quarter. To most of them this is their only source of income.

They have all been sponsored by members and well-wishers of the DBU. Our vision is to try and help 50 less advantaged old folk on a quarterly basis and I once again appeal to you to contribute generously towards this very meaningful project. To those who have already responded I say a big "Thank-you" for your kind generosity.

We look forward to seeing you and your guests at our next function GLITTER 'n' GLAMOUR. Please book early to avoid disappointment as accommodation is limited.

With all good wishes,

Kem Martenstyn

President



Editorial

What a “showdown” it was! The DBU’s hall was packed with “Cowboys” and “Cowgirls” striding around in their jeans, hats and boots etc, dancing and singing to the best Country music provided by Darlan Perera and his band. Walking into the DBU on the 20th, one was immediately transported to the Wild West, with flaming torches



and lanterns, giant cart wheels all over the garden etc. There were even actual saddles on stands! On the walls of the hall were very authentic “WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE” posters. Everyone present was soon busy trying to decipher the names of the country songs which were jumbled up and posted all over the hall, and the prizes for the all correct entries went to Kumar de Silva’s and Kirk Abraham’s tables. The “Wanted” contest was won by Mr Bowen.

It was so hard to pick the best dressed Cowboy and Cowgirl—but eventually the judges picked Chrisangelo Hills and Ornella Gunasekera who looked as if they had just walked out of a Hollywood “Western” movie set.

By now, I think everyone who’s been to a DBU “bash” knows that if you want a good time – trust our President Kem and her entertainment committee to put on the best show of all! Everyone had such a great time that, even after the band signed off for the night, some of the young folk (and young at heart) stuck around singing all the “old favourites” in perfect 4 and 5 part harmony and though they sang “Show me the way to go home” they really did not seem to want to actually go!

St Nikolaas Home, a “home away from home” for senior Burgher ladies, celebrates its 56th

“birthday” on the 22nd of this month. The annual party is eagerly looked forward to by the residents of the Home.

The kitchen at the DBU is now being run by an independent caterer, Mr Gerreyn, whose new menu contains a large range of items from soups and snacks to Nasi Goreng and other specialities. (Do try the “Hot butter cuttlefish” when you next visit the Members’ Bar upstairs!)

It was wonderful to see many of our senior members attending the Crab Lunch on the 15th. Since we had such excellent participation, we have decided to make it a monthly item on our entertainment calendar. The menu will of course be varied, but always in keeping with true Burgher Sunday lunch tradition! We would love to see more of our senior members—all those who came had a great time playing Tombola and meeting old friends.



The July newsletter drew a wonderful and immediate response from the Burgher Association of Australia, when Doyne Caspersz emailed us stating that they wished to sponsor 25 less advantaged ladies to the Crab lunch. Due to the lack of time, another similar lunch will be held shortly for these ladies. It is generous gestures like this that bring our community together, wherever in the world we may be. Thank you, BA of Australia.

Once again, thanks also to everyone who emailed us from overseas—it appears that our e-newsletter is being passed around all over the world and we have had responses from several non-members as well who want to be put on our mailing list!

Anne-Marie Kellar
Secretary



Condolences

We offer our heartfelt condolences to Christine Wilson on the loss of her husband Alistair, Carmen Gomez on the loss of her husband Francis, Jennifer Ingleton on the loss of her mother Daphne Hawk, nee Kelaart and Terrence van Sanden on the loss of his brother Darrel. ■

Welfare Programmes

The children sponsored by the Burgher Association of Melbourne were paid their 1st and 2nd quarter allowances on Saturday 14th July. Present with Anthea Muller (Chairperson Social welfare) were Mrs. Rosemarie Outschoorn and Mr. David Van Eyck.

The Eighty Club has now increased the amounts to be paid to the children they sponsor for education as follows:

- Rs 3,000/- from 5 years to 15 years of age
- Rs 3,600/- from the 15th birthday onwards
- Rs 6,600/- A/Level grade
- Rs 13,200/- full time at University

The 3rd quarter payments to the ECOM sponsored children will be made on Saturday 4th August 2007. As always, we acknowledge with appreciation the enormous contribution by the Eighty Club of Melbourne and the BA of Melbourne towards our Welfare programme. ■

Special incentive to young Burghers

During the months of August through October 2007, Burghers between the ages of 21 and 30 will be accepted for membership in the Union at a specially reduced admission fee of Rs 1000! Please hurry and make use of this opportunity and spread the word to the other young Burghers you know!

'Order of Australia' for Charmaine Solomon!

In the Queen's Birthday Honours List for 2007, Charmaine Solomon (nee Poulier) was awarded the "Order of Australia" medal in recognition of her contribution to revolutionising the Australian culinary landscape with her speciality in Asian cooking.



Charmaine & Reuben Solomons

Charmaine's immense contribution was perhaps best described in an interview she had with George Negus of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation before millions of TV viewers in 2003. Negus, echoing the sentiments of all Australians, concluded by saying to Charmaine, "Thank you for coming to this country."

Charmaine, a Dutch Burgher, immigrated to Australia in 1959 from Sri Lanka with her husband Reuben and only then learned to cook as there were no domestics around anymore! She has since gained world recognition as a culinary expert and author having written more than 30 books. Her book, *Complete Asian Cookbook*, probably graces the shelves of every Sri Lankan kitchen around the world and has sold over a million copies globally.

Our congratulations and best wishes to Mrs Solomon – we are indeed proud of you! ■





Reminiscing...past President Wilhelm Woutersz

by Anthea Muller

Wilhelm, though reaching the top rungs in his career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sri Lanka, never ever blew his trumpet or spoke about his high ranking position, as by nature he had an affable and unassuming personality.



Wilhelm was a Public Servant for 41 years of which 38 years was spent in the Sri Lanka Foreign Service as a Diplomat. He held Diplomatic posts in Geneva, India, Pakistan, China, Italy and Bangladesh. He was

Dean of the Diplomatic Corp in Yugoslavia, Chairman of the Rome Chapter of the Group of 77 Conference and Deputy Leader of the Sri Lanka delegation to the World Food Summit in Rome in 2002. Wilhelm also functioned as Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Director General in charge of various political divisions.

Wilhelm would very often mention to me that in his youth the Dutch Burgher Union assisted him in his higher studies at the University, and was very grateful for this gesture.

While serving on the General Committee many a time he was requested to seek the position of President of the DBU, but would never want to push his way forward. Indeed it was a tremendous surprise when he eventually agreed in the year 2003 to be President, when he realized that many challenges faced our community both socially and economically and

that we needed bold leadership to develop the Burgher community.

Both Wilhelm and I were great Crossword enthusiasts and this kept our friendship very much alive.

His official residence in Bullers Road and his home where he lived after retirement always welcomed visitors and I have pleasant memories of the happy times spent with him and Desiree.

"In the midst of life we are in death", as the saying goes, and this is exactly what happened when Wilhelm who had so many plans for the DBU passed away after a brief illness, having served the DBU for a short period of time.

I am sure those of us who served on the Committee during his tenure of office will bow our heads and say "Goodbye dear friend". ■

Documentary on the Burghers

Alexa Schulz, a director and writer for film and television from Germany, was recently in Colombo meeting up with members of the Burgher community. Alexa is planning to



make a documentary film on the Burghers of Sri Lanka and this preliminary visit was to research and map out her project, after which, if she is successful in obtaining the necessary funding, she will return to Sri Lanka with a team to produce the documentary.



Explaining her motive for her choice of topic dates back ten years, which was when she read and fell in love with the book, "*Running in the Family*" by Michael Ondaatje. Her fascination with *Running in the Family* was so compelling that shortly after, she "dragged" her newly wedded husband on a visit to Sri Lanka. This visit, and with Ondaatje becoming one of her favourite authors with subsequent offerings such as *Anil's Ghost*, has kept Sri Lanka within the peripheries of her mind. In her heart she knew that some day she would produce a documentary specific to Sri Lanka.

Well, that 'some day' finally arrived for Alexa and over her five week-stay, she was a frequent visitor to the DBU and the Burgher Association as well as to homes of members of both organisations. Describing her visit, Alexa was filled with gratitude for the warmth and hospitality that she received from everyone that she met, many of whom she now counts as friends.

On the question of her objectives being met, Alexa was more than satisfied that there is sufficient material for her documentary and is excitedly looking forward to getting the project off the ground. ■ *David Colin-Thomé*

From the Mail Room

Mrs Kem Martenstyn
President
Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon
Colombo - Sri Lanka



Dear Ms Martenstyn,

I am in receipt of the two last issues of the re-vamped monthly newsletters of the DBU. I am awestruck at all the time and effort put into each production, which no doubt enhances the standing and reputation of the DBU. The

lay out and all features are finally worthy of this age-old institution.

You as President ought to be congratulated for harnessing the talents of the present committee members and any co-opted members if any. This 'breath of life' was what was long overdue. To me, the DBU seemed to be a sailing vessel that sat in 'dry docks'. And it did sit in the 'dry docks' for so long, going nowhere and of no use to anyone. To be honest I was surprised that the DBU was able to maintain its membership.

Now, thanks to your organizing capabilities, this vessel is out on the waters (where it belongs), sailing along magnificently, be the waters still or troubled. How good to see a sailing such as this on the waters.

With the re-vamped newsletter (of world standard), a new website being developed, the regular get-togethers and other 'upward' developments, I can see the DBU returning to its former days of glory and attracting new members from around the globe, whilst also keeping the old faithful members happy and contented.

Please continue to take the DBU not only to uncharted waters, but also to dizzy heights. Leave your mark as President, by continuing the present trend, so that you will be remembered like the stalwarts of old.

Now that the wheels have been set in motion and the momentum set in, thanks to you, keep going forward, which is the only sensible way to go. I pen these lines, for I would be failing in my duty if I didn't.

Congratulations, Best Wishes and Blessings for the future.

Unity is Strength.
Victor Melder



"Thank you so much for the "fantastic" new look Newsletter. Well done! Well presented and very "newsy ". I feel so proud of being a member of this "Hallowed" Association. When I read through the letter, I just feel so nostalgic and homesick, and just wish I was there to be a part of all the lovely happenings – the D.B.U hosts.

When I make my next trip to my beautiful land of birth – I will drop in and catch up with some of you.

Please convey my kindest and heartfelt regards to all of your Committee and please keep on the Good work.

May God bless you all."
Patrick Loos

"Well done. A well compiled and informative production."
Lorenz Pereira

"Well done...looking forward to becoming a member next week when I am in Colombo."
Stefan D'Silva



More pictures from the Country & Western night



Birthday Greetings!

We wish all our Members celebrating their birthday in August good health and happiness

Anne-Marie Kellar, Sheryll Jinasena, Rochelle Holsinger, Jackie Anthonisz, Diana Soris, Michelle Leembruggen, Yvonne Poulter, Shirani Amaratunga, Nimmi Harasgama, Kalpana Amalean, Patricia Mamelka, Delrene de Silva, David Foenander, Joey Caspersz, Michael Overlunde, Maurice Forster, Christopher Prins, Stuart Hatch, Warren Solomonsz, Wilhelm Brown, Adrian Anthony Loos, Victor Meurling, Howard Martenstyn, Kenneth Pendigrast, Hirantha Pereira, Joseph Pereira, Sunil de Costa, Anura Upali Seneviratne & Shammi Silva

Welcome!

We also warmly welcome the members who joined in June 2007...

Associates - Mrs Joan Maeve Perera, Mr Sunil de Costa, Mrs Oosha Saravanamuttu-Wijeyesinghe, Mrs. Eesha Speldewinde, Mr Gehan Weerakoon, Mr Deepak Hundlani & Mr Rex Victoria





Lamprais & Bingo

Sunday 19th August 2007
commencing 11.00am

All this for only Rs 300 per person

Please make your bookings before 9th August 2007
and avoid disappointment.



AUGUST EVENTS - IT'S ALL HAPPENING AT THE DBU

Glitter n Glamour Dinner Dance

With the leading dance band PEARL

Friday 24th August 2007
from 9.00pm to 2.00am

- ★ An exhibition of Latin American dancing by the Anushan School of Dancing
- ★ A prize for the lady in the most glamorous outfit!
- ★ A crazy 'racing' game!



*Come join in the fun and be a part of the
friendly atmosphere at the DBU*

Tickets are priced at Rs. 950 including
a scrumptious buffet dinner!

Book your tables early to avoid disappointment
Kem Martenstyn, Chairperson – Entertainment & Events