



COMSAA NEWSLETTER



July 2014
Volume 3: Issue 3

The Third CoMSAA Reunion - Have you booked your place?

The third COMSAA reunion, a day of fellowship and fun, will be held at The Blue Water, Wadduwa on 6-7th September 2014.



Last year's get together was a hugely successful event attended by a large number of alumni and their families, amounting to a total of 240 participants. We hope to see more alumni this year.

The tickets are priced as follows:

Adults :Rs 2500 per head
Children (Below 12 years): Rs 1000 per head

Accommodation can be arranged at the hotel for the 6th night (on bed and breakfast basis) at a subsidized rate.

Single room Rs 14,550/-
Double room Rs 15,600/-
Triple room Rs 16,750/-

*Team up
with a friend
and save on
costs!*

*Come join us again this year and
catch up with some old friends!*

Buses from Colombo will be arranged for the 7th September, leaving at 7.00 am. Return tickets are priced at Rs 500 per person. Children below 12 years can travel for free.

**The official airline for the conference is
Sri Lankan Airlines.**

**Tickets can be obtained at
concessionary rates.**

**Contact COMSAA Secretary
Dr. Sameera Gunawardane
(ino4sam@gmail.com or
President Prof Lalitha Mendis
(sirikothe@yahoo.com) for details.**

**The deadline for submitting applications
has been extended to the 17th August
2014.**

**Applications are available at the
COMSAA website at www.comsaa.org.**

Please contact our Hony. Secretary Dr. Sameera Gunawardane at comsaa2011@gmail.com for further details.

COMSAA News and Projects

Donations received



50 year get-together 1959 entrants' batch - Photo sent to COMSAA Blog by Premalatha Balasuriya

- A donation of Rs. 45,435.00 was received from the 64th batch (1959 entrants) celebrating their Golden Anniversary.

Activities carried out

Donation of stethoscopes and textbooks for 2nd /3rd year students

Applications have been received from 45 students in the 2nd and 3rd year for the donation of stethoscopes and textbooks through COMSAA.

Funding of students to attend Physiology Quiz 2014

COMSAA plans to sponsor the air fare of four medical students to attend the Physiology Quiz 2014 to be held in Malaysia this year.

New E mail address

Our new e mail address is comsaa2011@gmail.com

Spellbound to the Spelling Bee

(By Dr.Theekshana Hasalabuddhi Pathirana, Preintern,CoMSAA)

As an endeavour to emphasize the importance of spelling for medical undergraduates, an Inter-batch Spelling Bee was conducted by the Language Unit of the Colombo Medical Faculty in collaboration with CoMSAA. The preliminary rounds were held in the last week of May and the best three students from each batch were selected for the grand finals.

All five batches took the stage for the finals on the 5th of June 2014 at the Faculty Main Hall. It was an enthralling Grand Finale! Prof. Lalitha Mendis, president of CoMSAA was the chief guest of the event and the judging panel was headed by Dr. Dushyanthi Mendis Head of the Department of English, Faculty of Arts University of Colombo. Our own Prof. Sulochana Wijesundera and Dr. Angela de Silva were her fellow judges. Prof. Rohan Jayasekara, Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Colombo gave the welcome speech with his usual flare of flamboyance and fervour. His comment “My secretaries leave me *massages* all the time” left the audience giggling. Prof Lalitha Mendis in her address amused the audience by depicting confusing and ironic usage of the English language.

There were three rounds the finalists had to contend with.

The first was the “three words challenge”- a hurdle seemingly easy but in reality a struggle for some.

‘Tongue twisters’ was a crucial scoring opportunity for the competitors and words like “craniorachischisis” bamboozled most in the audience as well.

‘Rapid fire’ lived up to its name. Words were fired over 30 seconds at each finalist. The battle was intense between these spell machines and a last minute save and a missed chance to score brought up oos and ahhs all around!

After witnessing a hard fought battle between the five batches, Dr. Sameera Gunawardena, the master mind behind the competition took the stage to announce the winners. The 2011 Batch grabbed the overall champions’ trophy while Seniru Welgama of the 2010 batch became the master speller. Nipuni Abeysinghe of the 2011 batch became the runner up speller after an evenly matched contest. All the finalists were awarded valuable gifts and certificates.

This was the first ever Spelling Bee in the long history of the faculty, indeed a novel and an indelible experience for all.

The event was well received by staff and students and the thought that resonated in the minds of all present that evening was “Let’s do this again”

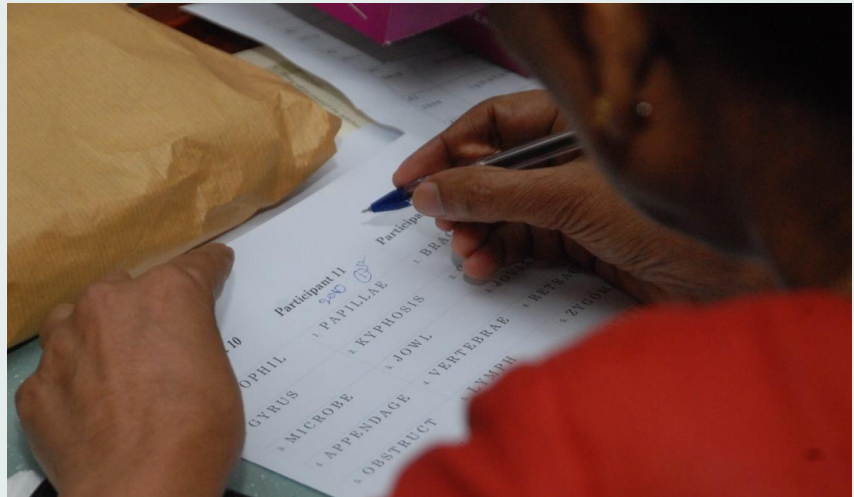
Here are a few stills from the finale.....



The finalists....



Under the spot light....



Judges under the rapid fire.....



They came ..they saw...they cheered....



Experts in the audience comparing notes....



Master Speller....



The moment of glory.....



The winners and their contingent.....

News of Alumni

Dr. Asoka Weerasinghe an alumnus of this faculty is a member of the team that has developed an innovative method to train junior doctors to insert cannulas with the aid of an ultra sound scan. This article is from the MY News Issue 8-Spring 2014, the Newsletter of the Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust.



Pictured left to right: Back row - Benjamas Brown (5th Year Medical Student based at Dewsbury), Natalie Winfield (5th Year Medical Student based at St James Hospital, Leeds), Dr Asoka Weerasinghe, and front row Jules Preston MBE.

'Third eye' training for junior doctors

Mid Yorkshire has become the first trust in Britain to train junior doctors to insert cannulas with the aid of ultrasound.

Finding a vein to pop a line into can sometimes prove problematic, particularly with elderly patients. Consequently only senior staff can perform more complex procedures meaning delays in treatment might occur at busy times.

Now thanks to more mobile ultrasound machines and the JUST (Junior doctors Ultra Sound Training) and MUST (Medical students Ultra Sound Training) programmes, that picture is changing.

The training was developed by Drs Weerasinghe, Tung, Okereke and other members of the Emergency Medicine Consultants' Team. Dr Weerasinghe said: "Ultrasound is like a third eye and it allows us to see where we can safely thread the needle and insert the cannula."

Response to the training – run at the Oakwell Centre at Dewsbury – has been wholly positive and places have already been filled for future courses. Dr Weerasinghe continued: "We have been inundated with emails particularly from east and south Yorkshire expressing interest. It doesn't matter whether it is Sheffield or London, this course should be run wherever there is need. This has never been done before and we have set a UK precedent here in Dewsbury."

Remembrance

(By Dr. Ashwini De Abrew, Lecturer, MEDARC, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo)

Prof. Walter K. Patrick, an illustrious alumnus of the Colombo Medical Faculty passed away following a brief illness in San Antonio, Texas, USA on 22nd May 2014. Prof Patrick had a distinguished career at the School of Public Health and later at the John A Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawaii where he was Associate Professor of Public Health at the time of his demise.



Prof Walter Patrick was a national and global leader in Public Health/Community Medicine. After graduating from the Colombo Medical Faculty in 1962, he served as a primary care physician, in public health directorates at provincial and regional level and later, as Deputy Director, Education and Training at the Ministry of Health. He rendered yeoman service to Sri Lanka from 1975 to 1983 as a Health Education Specialist.

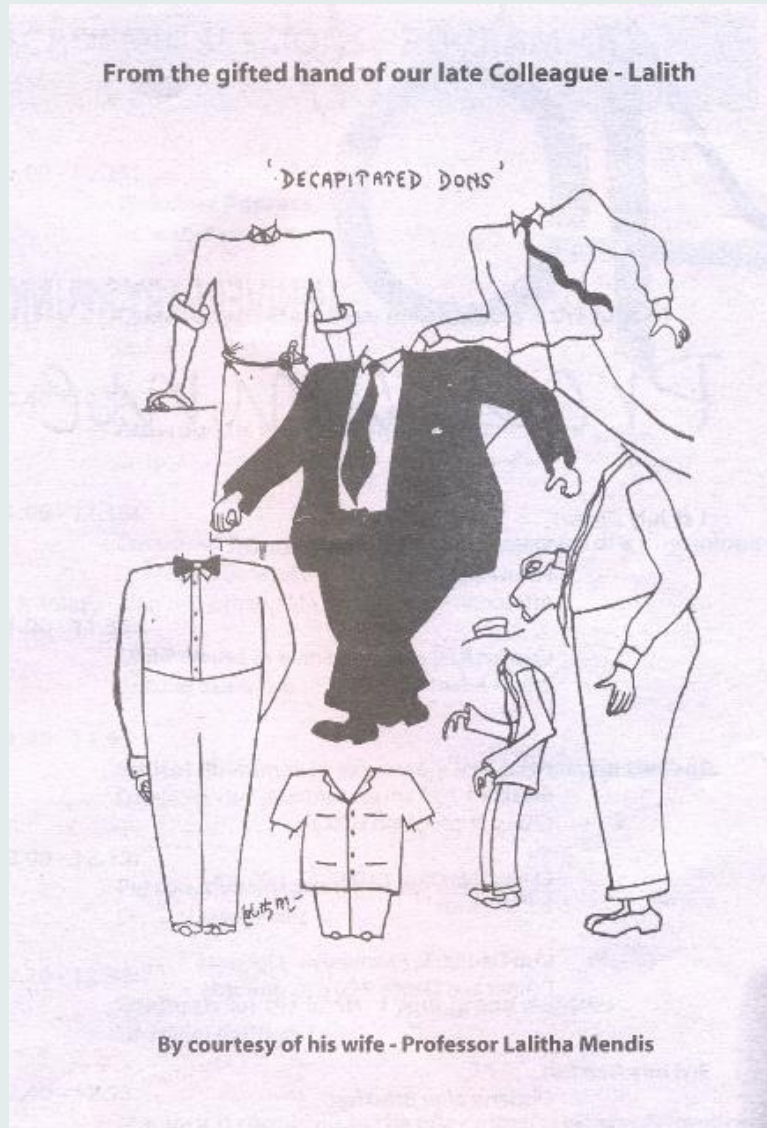
Prof Patrick provided his expertise in Public Health as a WHO staff member at several SEARO offices and at the WHO headquarters in Geneva. He was subsequently a consultant to both the WHO and the UNICEF. In January 1984, he was instrumental in establishing the Asia Pacific Academic Consortium for Public Health (APACPH), which now comprises many of the largest and most influential schools of Public Health in the Region. He was a central figure of the APACPH and the Secretary General of the organization at the time of his demise.

Prof Patrick was a dedicated academic, teacher and mentor to countless specialists in Public Health. He is remembered for his kindness and humanitarian nature with focus on those who were most marginalized in health – women, children, survivors of natural disasters and refugees of conflict. He believed in empowering those involved at hands on and grassroots level to be future leaders in Public Health, as evidenced by the establishment of the Early Career Network of APACPH and his role as the Director of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Leadership Development.

His sense of humour, passion for his chosen field and zest for life will be remembered by those who had the privilege of working with him.

Prof. Patrick is survived by his wife Viji and daughter Natasha. Our condolences go out to them.

In a lighter vein



Cartoon drawn in the 1960s – Prof Chapman (Bacteriology) in theatre gown, Prof Abheyeratna (Public Health), Dean, in dark suit, Prof Ranasinghe (Obs&Gyn.) wearing a bow-tie, Prof Hoover (Biochemistry) in bush shirt, Prof Sivalingam (Parasitology) – bent figure with hat, Prof Milroy Paul (Surgery) the figure with a trailing tie and Prof Fonseka (Surgery).

(Courtesy of COMSAA Blog – comsaa.blogspot.com)

Reminiscences of Faculty of Life

COMSAA plans to publish a souvenir comprising reminiscences of its members. We hope to launch this book in September to coincide with the 3rd COMSAA Reunion. We invite you to contribute to this publication and share your memories with us. Poems, cartoons and photographs are also welcome.

The write-up should not exceed 1500 words and should be in Times New Roman font size 12. Please email your contributions to the editor, COMSAA newsletter at karunathilake@hotmail.com

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