

SLAAS NEWS

Newsletter of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science



Vol. No. 3 Sept. – Dec. 2008

64th Annual Sessions 1st - 6th December, 2008

Ceremonial Inauguration

1st December, 2008 from 2.00 pm onwards.

Committee Room B, BMICH

Chief Guest: Hon. Minister of Science and Technology Professor Tissa Vitharana

Guests of Honour:

Prof. A Chatt, (*Adjunct Professor of Chemistry, Canada*),

Prof. J V Narlikar (*Emeritus Professor, India*) Prof. Thor Axel Stenström (*Professor, Chief Microbiologist, Sweden*)

Scientific Sessions: 3rd – 6th December 2008
University of Colombo

Inventors' Exhibition: 5th – 6th Dec 2008

Theme Seminar

'Science for Sustainable Use of Water Resources'

2nd December, 2008 from 8.30 am to 5.00 p.m.

Sri Lanka Foundation Institute

Keynote Addresses by
Prof. Thor Axel Stenstrom and Prof. A. Chatt.

Registration Fees

For Members: Rs. 1,000/-

For Non-Members: Rs. 2,000/-

To register, please contact:
Administrative Officer, 120/10, Wijerama
Mawatha, Colombo 7

MEMBERS!

DATES TO REMEMBER

Business meetings of all sections 3rd December 10.15 a.m.

Annual General Meeting 6th December at 11.00 a.m.

Prof. V K Samaranayake Auditorium, UCSC (University of Colombo)

SLAAS Annual Dinner

Open to SLAAS Members, their spouses and guests

Venue: Harbour Room, Grand Oriental Hotel

4th December 2008 from 7.30 p.m onwards

Tickets are available at the SLAAS Office Rs. 1000/=

Tickets: Rs. 1000/= per head Dress: Smart Casual

SECTIONAL ACTIVITIES: Sept. – Dec. 2008

SECTION A

Target group activities

School children: The programme on 'Healthy food habits' for school children organised by Dr. Sagarika Ekanayake was held on the 2nd October for students of the Ananda Sastralaya Vidyalaya, Kotte. Approximately 200 school children of grades 5 and participated in this programme. Mr. N.M.S. Hettigedera, Nutritionist of the Police Hospital was the resource person.

A programme on 'Oral Health Awareness' by Prof. B.G. Nanayakkara will be organised for students of girls schools in Galle district. The tentative date is 5th November.

Ayurvedic physicians: Dr. B.M. Nageeb organised a seminar on 'Life style diseases' on 16th October at the Institute of Indigenous Medicine, Colombo 08. Prof. Anura Weerasinghe and Dr. B.M. Nageeb will be the resource persons at this seminar.

Medical professionals: Prof. Anura Weerasinghe spoke at a seminar on 'Fever' and Dr. Sagarika Ekanayake delivered a lecture on 'Glycaemic Index' at the Annual Sessions of The College of General Practitioners in September.

Prof. Anura Werasinghe will deliver a lecture on 'combination vaccines' at a seminar on Immunization organized by the Galle Medical Association in October.

Prof. Anura Werasinghe will deliver a lecture on 'Immunology of sepsis' on 7th November at the Annual Sessions of the Kurunegala Clinical Society.

Joint activities: A joint seminar on "Zoonotic infections" was held during the Annual Sessions of the College of Microbiologists on 3rd September. Dr. Nalinika Obeysekara, veterinary surgeon was the resource person.

Public awareness programmes: Prof. B.G. Nanayakkara was the resource person at health awareness programme on 'oral health' broadcast through 'Ruhunu Sevaya' on 4th September.

Newsletter: The theme of the second newsletter will be on 'Towards elimination of lymphatic filariasis: the current situation'.

SECTION B

Seminar and panel discussion on Genetically Modified Organisms, Food, Feed and Processed Products was organised under science awareness programme of SLAAS and held at the Plant Genetic Resources Center (PGRC) at Gannoruwa, Peradeniya from 9.00 to 16.40 on 4th November. The seminar was chaired by Dr. D.H. Muthukudaarachchi, Director, Seed Certification and Plant Protection Center, Department of Agriculture (DOA), Gannoruwa, Peradeniya. The resource persons, Prof. A.L.T Perera, Director, PGIA, University of Peradeniya; Prof. Gamini Senanayaka, Deputy Vice-chancellor, University of Ruhuna, Matara; Dr. Y Ketiparachchi, Head, Biotechnology Division, PGRC, DOA; Mr. Ravi Samaraweera, Production Manager, Roche Pharma, Colombo; Dr. RPNP Rajapaksha, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Food Science and Technology, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya and Ms. Iresha Rajapaksha, Officer In Charge of Bio-safety Clearing House of Sri Lanka, Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Battaramulla presented many different aspects of GMO. The panel discussion was chaired by Dr. KKS Fernando, Director, Agriculture Biotechnology Center, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya.

The programme content certainly helped to increase the awareness among the participants on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs); GM crops, Feeds, Foods and Processed products; global and national status; risks and biosafety. It also emphasised the development in neighbouring countries, necessity of developing local research and importance of giving more consideration on safety. About 120 professionals in medical, healthcare, agriculture, trade, environment, education and industries related to food, feed and processed products participated in the programme.

Dr. Y. Ketipearachchi and Dr. K. S. Hemachandra, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya organised the programme with the assistance from DOA. Biodiversity Secretariat of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Battaramulla sponsored the program.

SECTION C

Organised in association with Committee for Popularization of Sciences organized a public lecture on “Towards sustainable buildings: A paradigm shift in architectural form making” by Dr. Harsha Munasinghe on 22nd October at 4.30 p.m. at SLAAS Auditorium.

School Essay Competition for 2008:

The school essay competition for 2008 was conducted in Sinhala and Tamil. The title of the essay was:

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There were 18 entries in Sinhala medium and 17 in Tamil medium. First Place in Sinhala medium was jointly won by , Subhashini S Gunawardena of Katuwana National School and L P S Navodani Herath of Central Cllege, Kuliypitiya and third place by Jinali TP Malalanayaka of

Agamathi Balika Vidyalaya, Pnadura; T Thushyanthi of St. Xaviers Girls College

Mannar, A Siva Archunawathie of St. Xaviers Girls College, Mannar and A Siva Archunawathie of St. Xaviers Girls College, Mannar and S Hamsavadani of St. Xaviers Girls College, Mannar won 1st, 2nd and 3rd places respectively.

School Oratory Competition for 2008: The contest is to be held in Sinhala and Tamil media only will be held at SLAAS headquarters in Colombo in November. Only the short listed applicants were asked to make the oration.

Events planned to be held in the remaining period of 2008: Demonstration of Structural Glass, Demonstration of Solar Panels, Public Lectures and Demonstrations on Electric Vehicles, Industrial Visit to Unichella Pvt. Ltd. Panadura

SECTION D

Awareness Programme on “Water Supply to Urban areas”

A lecture on “Water Supply to Urban areas” was conducted to school teachers and students of Pre-University classes of Buddhist Ladies and Girls’ High School, Mount Lavinia on 16th September by Ms. Nalini de Silva, former Senior Chemist of Greater Colombo, National Water Supply & Drainage Board at Girls’ High School, Mount Lavinia. The lecture was followed by an interesting Question and Answer session. There were about 250 students from Science stream as well as Commerce & Arts streams. The lecture covered topics such as Water sources, Treatment of Water with special reference to Ambatale Water Supply scheme (the largest Water scheme of the island), Pollution sources and its prevention.

SECTION E1

A workshop on E-Science for scientists desirous of applying high performance computing techniques in their work, sponsored by Dialog will be conducted on 29th October 2008 at the UCSC. Dr. D.N. Ranasinghe will organise this event.

The third Inter School Drama Competition on Scientific Themes is scheduled to be held at New Arts Theater, University of Colombo on 2nd November 2008. The two winning dramas of the previous years will be staged after the competition. This event is coordinated by Mr. Priyadarshana Dharmawardena with sponsorship by Mr Lakshman Perera, Industrialist under the advice of Dr. SRD Rosa.

A new competition on “Scientific Mnemonic Songs” which was suggested by Mr. W.G.D.M. Wathugala, Committee Member, E1 will be held as part of the annual drama competition on 2nd November 2008. The best songs are expected to be recorded and telecast through electronic media.

One day Physics seminar for A/L teachers is scheduled on 14th November at Department of Physics, University of Colombo. This will be organised by Dr. D.D.N.B. Daya as a collaborative event with the Department of Physics.

SECTION E2

Public Lecture on “Coconut Oil: Making it Super”, Resources Persons: Professor Kapila Seneviratne, Department of Chemistry, University of Kelaniya at Faculty of Science, University of Kelaniya on 16th October at 4:00 p.m. More than 90 university students and participants from other research institutes attended.

A video to help Citronella growers in Sri Lanka was filmed in September 2008 at the Audio Visual Unit, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo. The following aspects of Citronella were addressed by experts in the



Prof. H D Gunawardhana, General President SLAAS handing over the video to Mr. A N R Amarathunga, Secretary, Ministry of Science & Technology on November 14th 2008 at NASTEC

relevant areas: Introduction to Citronella by Mr. Anura Rupasinghe, Director, Department of Export Agriculture, Cultivation of Citronella by Mr. Gamini Wijesinghe, Assistant Director, Department of Export Agriculture, Extraction and quality control of citronella oil by Mr. K.R. Dayananda, Senior Scientist, Industrial Technology Institute, Market for citronella oil by Mr. Ananda Kularatne, Chairman, Citro Essential Oil (Pvt.) Ltd. and Value added products from citronella oil by Mr. Athula Fernando, Marketing Manager, Hettigoda

Industries (Pvt) Ltd. The video will be made available to farmers in relevant areas *via* the Vidatha Centres of the Ministry of Science and Technology. The activity was coordinated by Drs. D.T.U. Abeytunga and R.D. Wijesekera.

A public lecture titled “Novel Sources of Secondary Metabolites from Natural Products” is planned for November at the Department of Chemistry, University of Kelaniya. Resources person will be: Prof. Priyani Paranagama, Department of Chemistry, University of Kelaniya.

SECTION F

Public Lectures;

"Social and Ecological Factors of Community and Family Medicine" by, Prof. A. Pathmeswaran, Head, Community Medicine, Department of Community and Family Medicine, University of Kelaniya on 11th September at 5.00 p.m.at SLAAS Auditorium.

"Issues Regarding Access to Higher Education in Sri Lanka" by Mr. Sterling Perera, Former Vice-Chairman, National Education Commission (NEC) on 9th October at 5.00 p.m.at SLAAS Auditorium.

"Revisiting Employment Trends in Sri Lanka: What? Where? How?" by Prof. Upali Vidanapathirana, Professor in the Department of Social Studies (SSD), The Open University of Sri Lanka on 13th November at 5.00 p.m. at SLAAS Auditorium.

General Research Committee

Promoting postgraduate research: In order to promote conducting quality postgraduate research and the dissemination of research findings, the GRC committee revised the criteria for awarding the GRC postgraduate award in 2008. Two types of awards, namely, Merit awards and Commendation awards will be awarded based purely on dissemination of postgraduate research work in peer reviewed journals. Those who have completed their postgraduate degrees within the last two years of the date of announcement of the awards are eligible to apply for the awards. Awards will be given irrespective of the discipline of the candidates.

Workshop series to promote research at Universities: The GRC discussed the necessity of promoting and educating young researchers to conduct properly organized and well planned scientific research. It was decided that GRC should conduct a series of workshops at different Universities to promote research especially with the focus of building a 'research culture' over the next few years. The first workshop is scheduled to be held at the Colombo University on October 30, 2008. The workshop is open to all junior permanent academic staff and postgraduate students (M.Phil and Ph.D.) of the Faculty of Science, University of Colombo.

The programme of the workshop is as follows: Philosophy of Science in Research by: Prof S.W. Kotagama, Principles of Effective Research by Prof T.R. Ariyaratne, Research Tools and Analysis by Prof D.U.J. Sonnadara, How to Write a Scientific Paper by Prof W.D. Ratnasooriya, Ethics in Research by Dr Preethi Randeniya.

A subsequent workshop will be held at the Sabaragamuwa University during the early part of November 2008. This activity will be continued in the year 2009 covering two more Universities.

Establishment of a digital database on research conducted in Sri Lanka: Currently, no institution maintains comprehensive information related to research conducted in Sri Lanka. The GRC discussed the establishment of a digital database on information related to research work conducted in Sri Lanka and details of potential supervisors to promote and support local research activities. The committee believes that this will promote citations and recognition to research work carried out in Sri Lanka. It was decided to work with NSF on building the research database which can strengthen the work that has already been initiated by NSF on maintaining information related to scientists and grants. A preliminary discussion was held with the Director NSF and the committee is still continuing this work.

School Science Day programmes: Science day programme in Batticaloa district in Tamil medium was held on 20th September at Hindu College, Batticaloa. About 280 school children and some 35-science teachers participated in this programme. Rev. Prof. G F Rajendram co-ordinated the event

Lectures delivered: Mr.M.Sithamparesan on Applications of Chemistry; Mr. P. R. Fernando on Age of Information Technology in Physics; Mrs. G. G. Devadason on Science Knowledge Test; Mr.T. Mathiventhan on Importance of Biology

Nature Diaries Programmes: Nature Diaries programme was conducted in Nuwara Eliya, Badulla, Moneragala, Kandy, Kurunegala and Ratnapura districts. The programme was conducted by Prof. M J S Wijeyaratne and Prof. C P D W Mathew.

Public lecture programme: A public lecture was delivered by Dr. Harsha Munasinghe on “Towards sustainable building: A paradigm shift in architectural form making” on 22nd October at SLAAS Auditorium.

Prof. P L D Waidyasekera Memorial lecture: Prof P L D Waidyasekera passed away recently. Prof. Waidyasekera, was the Chairman of CPS in 1985. He was the founder Chairman of Nature Diaries Programme from inception until 1999 and served the CPS for twenty years. A memorial lecture is scheduled to be held on Friday 21st of November to appreciate the service of Prof. Waidyasekera for the scientific community.

Environment Committee

Presentation of School Environment Projects

The programme was conducted on September 9th 2008 at In Service Training Institute at Gannoruwa, Peradeniya. Industrial Service Bureau (ISB) who selected these schools to participate in the Stockholm Junior Water Prize, and coordinated and sponsored the programme. Inventor’s commission, patent office, private sector, universities, Government organisations and Non-Government organisations were invited to provide assistance for further development of these school projects. Invited talks were from the Patent office and by Dr Jayantha Waththevidanage.

A residential workshop on ‘Safe use of aluminium utensils and Pesticides’

Two-day workshop on safe use of aluminium utensils and pesticides was conducted for school teachers and students in Galenbindunuwewa region in the Anuradapura District on 18th & 19th September at the National Resort in Anuradapura with the assistance of the Office of Registrar of Pesticides. Students who participated in the training performed short plays incorporating what they have learned during the training and on how they are going to disseminate that knowledge. This programme was funded by the “World vision Lanka’. The resource persons were Prof Janitha A Liyanage, Dr Jayantha Waththevidanage, Mr Sumith Jayakody, Mr Chandana Kularatne, Mr Justin Perera and Mr Ransilu Watawala.



Quiz Programme and a Street Drama: A quiz programme was organised in collaboration with the 'Zoonet' of OUSL on 16th October at OUSL. Ten schools participated in the competition and

Dr Jayantha Waththevidanage coordinated the competition. A street drama on 'Solid Waste Management' practised by Mrs Nilanthi Bandara was held during the break.

A residential workshop on 'Environment and Health' for Volunteer Health Workers

A two-day programme was organised at the National Resort, Anuradhapura on 22nd & 23rd October for volunteer health workers in Galenbindunuwewa, Anuradapura to educate them on environment and health aspects. Resource persons were Prof Janitha A Liyanage, Dr JayanthaWaththevidana, Dr Sagarika Kannangara, Dr Palitha Bandara, Mr Ransilu Watawala and Mr Amaradasa. The World Vision Lanka sponsored the programme.

An awareness program for Health Promotion Officers

A training programme for Health Promotion Officers attached to the Ministry of Indigenous Medicine in Anuradapura will be conducted on 23rd November in Anuradapura. The Honorable Minister Tissa Karalliadda will participate at the inauguration and the event is sponsored by the Ministry of Indigenous Medicine.

Science Education Committee

Programme on Mushroom cultivation at Vidatha Resources Centre Bandaragama

A programme to enhance skills of entrepreneurs engaged in mushroom cultivation was held at Bandaragama Vidatha Resource Centre, on 15th October. This was co-ordinated by Dr. Seetha Wickramasinghe of NSF and Ms. Jayasamara Gunaratne of Technology Transfer Unit (TTU) of Ministry of Science & Technology. Ms. Priyanganee S&T officer and Mr. K K N Sampath, Extension Officer at Bandaragama Vidatha Resource Centre organised the programme and there were about hundred participants. The programme was sponsored by Dr. S R D Rosa, Chairman, SEC/SLAAS and by Ministry of Science & Technology and by Mt. Lavinia Hotel. Mr. P R K Fernando, Secretary, SEC/SLAAS moderated the programme. It included the following: Lecture on "Value additions on Mushrooms" by Ms. Udayani Binduhewa, Research Officer at ITI, Lecture on "Diseases at mushroom cultivation" by Mr. D P Kumara & Mr. Ananda Dasanayake, Agriculture Extension Officers, Western Province Agriculture Extension Office, Gabadawatta, Homagama, Lecture on "Packing of Mushrooms" by Mr. Indrakeerthi, Director, National Packaging Centre, EDB and a Demonstration of "Cooking of mushroom following different recipes" was done by Mr. Ajith Bandara & Mr. Hasitha Prasanna of Mt. Lavinia Hotel

A Media programme will be conducted on 7th November at SLAAS Auditorium to make aware the media on Science Education Committee activities and SLAAS activities.

Programme on "Science for youth": A series of presentations on different scientific fields is scheduled to be held on 13th & 14th of November 2008 to enhance skills of students at Advanced Level Science & Maths streams in schools from Colombo and suburbs. The programme is co-ordinates by Dr. S R D Rosa and Mr. Lakshman Hettiarachchi, Management Consultant. Sampath Bank sponsors the event. Tentative presentations Will be: Science; Where to by Dr. Chandima Gomes, Plant Sciences by Dr. Shamala Tirimanna, Physics by Prof. J.K.D.S. Jayanetti, Chemistry by Prof. Nalin de Silva, Theory of Machines by Dr. Ranjan Perera, Mathematics by Dr Jagath Wijeratne, Energy related sciences by Mr. P R K Fernando, Nuclear Physics by Dr.S.R.D. Rosa, Astronomy by Dr. K.P S.C. Jayaratne, Environmental Science by Dr. K.P S.C. Jayaratne and Information & Communications Technology by Prof. Gihan Dias

A programme for O/L teachers to enhance skills of O/L teachers is scheduled to be held at the end of November. Dr. S R D Rosa, Chairman, SEC will co-ordinates the event.

All Island School Inventors Exhibition/Competition

will be held
in cooperation with the Ministry of Education
at
Biology Lecture Theatre I and II
on
2nd - 4th December 2008 from 9.00 am to 4 .00 pm
under four levels:
Grade 6-7, 8-9. 10-11 and 12-13

*Best students will be awarded gold, silver and bronze medals under the four levels.
The six best students will have the opportunity to present their inventions at an
international exhibition to be held in China around March 2009.*

We acknowledge the SLT for being the principal sponsor for the event.

To



If undelivered, return to:
Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science
120/10 Wijerama Mawatha
Colombo 7