

SECRETARY'S REPORT

A crucial year. That is what was said at the last AGM. Certainly it was. With Mr. Jacques Huyghebaert's involvement in the administration earlier in the year and the appointment of Rev. Marc Billimoria as Headmaster in June, much was expected from the Ex-Co, towards the upliftment of the College. The Ex-Co took up the challenge and produced the Master Plan with high hopes of raising the funds needed to develop the College. The full story of what could not be done and what was done within the year are given below.

Master Plan

As explained in Newsletter No.11 (March 2007) and No.12 (October 2007) the Master Plan, dedicated to Dr. R.L. Hayman, was presented to the Board of Governors in May 2007. The main proposal was to develop the Farm using the 9 acre block for cattle, goats, fruits, vegetables and flowers and expands the existing chicken farm in the College premises, along with the vegetables, fruits and flowers and to expand the Cooperative Stores to a Supermarket level to cater to the public as well. The concept was to appeal for funds from the Old Boys, worldwide, once and for all to develop the above, based on a feasibility report and use the profits to develop the infrastructure, rather than appealing to them for funds all the time, for different projects.

It was proposed that the farm and the Cooperative Stores were managed by a Committee consisting of 3 Old Boys, Headmaster, a staff representative appointed by the Headmaster and a Member of the Board of Governors. It was a short and middle term Plan extending to only 4 years, taking into account the urgent requirement of funds.

The Board requested the Headmaster and Mr. Jacques Huyghebaert to study the Master Plan and give the recommendations. Upon their recommendations the Board approved the proposal, in September, 4 months later, subject to the following conditions.

1. Management of the College Farm and Co-op Shop shall be under the Headmaster and the School, with the Committee in place to advise.
2. The proposals of the Master Plan shall be executed with the compliance of and in consultation of the Headmaster
3. All funds required shall be raised by the OBA

In the meantime Mr. Jacques Huyghebaert and the Headmaster prepared a report on Infrastructure Rehabilitation with a total estimate of Rs.30 million, for implementation in several phases, with the farm development totally left out. The appeal for funds for this development was to be sent to the Members of the OBA. At the same time the Board was considering the leasing of the 9 acre block to a private company, Agra, for growing strawberries.

The Ex-Co decided to shelve the Master Plan, as the farm development was not feasible without the 9 acre block, which being the heart of the farm with cattle, goats, flowers and vegetables and the Co-operative Stores was part and parcel of the same Project, with a quick return. Furthermore the Headmaster's appeal for funds was to be sent to the same Membership and the Ex-Co did not wish to create a competition for collecting funds.

With Board's consideration to give the 9 acre block on a lease to a totally outside Company, to receive a sum of money, which could only be a small percentage of profits and non acceptance of the management of the Farm by a Committee as given above, with 100% investment by the Old Boys and 100% of profits to be spent on infrastructure development of the College, the Master Plan was not put into operation.

Re-Union Celebrations and AGM, 2007

The Re-Union Celebrations were held during the weekend, February 23-25, 2007, at STC Gurutalawa. The cricket match, Old Boys vs. Present Boys, won by the Old Boys, was the main feature on Saturday morning, followed by the usual dip in the pool.

A calypso band provided the music, at the required tempo, throughout the weekend, to add to the fun. Food was of a high standard and full details of the menus were given in Newsletter No.11.

AGM was held on Saturday, 24, at 6.30 pm, with the Senior Vice President Brig. Bandu Munasinghe in the chair and attended by 73 Members. Mr. Jacques Huyghebaert, who was acting as the Headmaster, was present.

The Executive Committee

The Ex-Co held a record number of Meetings, 12 in all, including two at Gurutalawa, compared to a minimum of 9 required under the Rules. It is worthy of note that the last Meeting held on February 11, 2008 was the 300th Ex-Co Meeting of the OBA. Attendance at Meetings by Ex-Co Members was disappointing as can be seen from the chart below and it is important that those who join the Ex-Co attend Meetings and show interest and support all activities of the OBA with dedication.

Name	Position	No. of Meetings Attended	Date Joined	Date Resigned
Rev. Marc Billimoria	Headmaster/President	3	June 11, 2007	
Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe	Senior Vice President	12		
Mr. Kuru Uthumpala	Vice President	10		
Mr. S. Rajmohan	Vice President	12		
Mr. Chandana De Silva	Vice President	7		
Mr. Shervon Fernando	Hony. Secretary	10		
Mr. Ranjith Lowe	Hony. Treasurer	3	Feb. 24, 2007	August 4, 2007
Mr. P. Dayabaran	Hony. Treasurer (from Aug 4, 2007)	9		
Mr. Athula Kumaranayake	Hony. Asst. Secretary	4		
Mr. Nihal Wanniarachchi	Hony. Asst. Treasurer	10		
Brig. B Munasinghe	Committee Member	5		
Mr. Anil Wickremeratne	Committee Member	1	Feb. 24, 2007	August 4, 2007
Mr. Buddhika Kurukularatne	Committee Member	8		
Mr. Hermon Fernando	Committee Member	4	March 13,2007	
Mr. A C M Rashid	Committee Member	6		
Mr. Panini Edirisinhe	Committee Member	6		
Mr. P. J. Fernando	Committee Member	0	March 13,2007	April 2, 2007
Mr. Rizvi Jalill	Committee Member	0	March 13,2007	April 2, 2007
Lt. Col Hareen Walgama	Committee Member	0	March 13,2007	
Mr. Wansapriya Gunaseela	Committee Member	3		
Mr. Suresh Kumar	Committee Member	4		
Mr. G. S. S. Perera	Committee Member	5	April 4, 2007	
Mr. Kenneth Gurusinghe	Committee Member	6		
Mr. Kalainban Kumaravel	Committee Member	1	March 13,2007	August 4, 2007
Mr. S. Kaviharana	Committee Member	4		
Mr. Pubudu Gunasekera	Committee Member	0	Feb. 24, 2007	August 4, 2007
Mr. Sachitra Perera	Committee Member	1	March 13,2007	
Mr. A.D Sandakalum	Committee Member	2	Sept. 1, 2007	
Mr.Dinesh Sivasubramaniam	Committee Member	1	Dec. 15,2007	

Bunk Beds

OBA funded the purchase of the first batch of much needed 23 bunk beds at Rs.6, 500.00 each, totaling Rs.149,500.00, when the College was struggling to find the funds for it.

Induction of the Headmaster

Over 25 Members of the Ex-Co and the OBA attended the induction of the Headmaster and a full report is given in our website.

Prize Giving

Ex-Co and Members showed their support with over 30 attending the Prize Giving and donating Rs. 62,200.00 to cover the cost of prizes. Mr. Frank Jayasinghe, a former Headmaster was the chief guest. All were treated to a good lunch at the Headmaster's bungalow, a first of its kind, in the recent past.

Fellowship Dinner

Fellowship Dinner held on August 18, 2007 at Mt. Lavinia Hotel, after a lapse of 3 years, was well attended and everyone had a good time. The Headmaster, Rev. Marc Billimoria was the chief guest. The raffle draw gave away many prizes and it was a rare occurrence that the draw for the best prize was won by the donor himself. It was of course redrawn, at the donor's request.

Membership Directory

Issue 3 of the Membership Directory, revised after 4 years was made available at the Fellowship Dinner. The special feature in this Issue was that over 70 advertisements were included, along with the names of past Headmasters of the College and past Senior Vice Presidents and Secretaries of the OBA. Nearly Rs.350,00.00 was raised through these advertisements and having it ready for sale at the Fellowship Dinner was an achievement. It is available at Rs.300 plus postage

Family Outing

Wadduwa Holiday Resort was the venue for the family outing this year too, on Sunday, October 18th. Attendance at 75 was somewhat poor, compared to last year, probably because of short notice given. The main event was a 15 over soft ball cricket match, Kenneth Gurusinghe's team against Ziad's team. Ziad's team batted first and was all out in 11 overs, scoring 128 runs. Gurusinghe's team lost early wickets and Nihal Wanniarachchi played almost a match winning inning of 56 not out and finally ran out of partners in the 12th over, losing the match by 13 runs. Several enjoyed a dip in the pool

The ladies were more interested in the food than games and the children had their own fun in the sand pits and swing etc. while several enjoyed a dip in the pool. The army calypso band provided the music with many Old Boys exercising their vocal cords to the limit.

Junior Dormitory Toilets

The Ex-Co prepared the architectural plans for completely new Junior Dormitory toilets, with good quality, strong and durable commodes, urinals, wash basins and showers. The roof was to be a concrete slab to be used as a drying area for washed clothes, as the clothes are presently laid allover the quadrangle for drying. Also it could have been a viewing platform for swimming events. The Project had to be shelved as the OBA could not afford the estimated costs of over 2 million, at this stage. Accordingly it was decided to completely refurbish the 4 night toilets of Junior Dormitories of Foster, Read, Garnier and De Saram, with commodes, bidet showers, wash basins, floor and wall tiles to a high standard, at a cost of approximately, Rs.200,000.00. The work will be completed in time for the Re-Union Celebrations, and those Old Boys who have problems of using squatting pans should be pleased. The Headmaster has assured that special care would be taken to maintain the toilets and persons damaging any items would be charged for the repairs.

Turf Wicket

Mr. Gerald De Alwis took a keen interest and worked hard to get the necessary support from the Cricket Association of Sri Lanka and several Old Boys, for reviving the turf wicket. When it was about to become a reality, changes took place in the Cricket Association and he had to shelve it.

Membership

The following 35 Old Boys and Old Girls were enrolled as Members this year.

Messrs. Botejue W G A, D. Kamal Perera, Subasinghe S A Neel, Gunasekera W A D P R, Senanayake Anura, Sheriff Mohamed Riyaz, Ranatunga Chamila Hemal, Liyanage D Wickrama, Rameshkumar Kasinathan, Nazeer Mohamed Irshaff, Rodrigo Jude Leonard, Maddage Amila Eranga, Ilanko Arunachalam, Abdul R. Mohamed Ali, Samsudeen Fashry, S A Ahamed Hananudeen, M T Mohamed Kamil, A H M Nistar, Spencer Herft, Ranatunga Chaminda Nelan, Murugiah Chandrakumar, Thomas Melroy, Milinda Hettiarachchi, Abeyawardena W Eshan B, Abeyawardena W Tharindu B, De Costa D P, Pushparajah R, Sirikumar Nalliah, Yapa Harischandra D, Ravichandran S, Tennakoon M H B, Zubair Mohamed, K.K. Perera, Miss Marasinghe Shalini and Mrs. Rajapakse Shamindri

It should be noted that the first Old Girls, Mr. J.W Marasinghe's daughters, the first girl students of the school are among the above. Many young Old Boys are expected to participate in the Re-Union Celebrations this year and a further 40 or so are expected to be enrolled as Members then. Membership forms are available in the website for anyone wishing to join.

We shall sadly miss Messrs. L.U. Jayawardena and K Wimalarajah., who passed away during the year.

All Members are once again reminded to let the Ex-Co have the email address, for cheap communication, as the cost of posting Newsletters etc. is becoming unbearable.

Website

Our website www.stcguru.com is updated regularly with the latest news and photographs of events of the OBA and the College, inclusive of the complete Master Plan and Newsletters. Mr.Muditha Dissanayake continues to maintain and update it in spite of his commitments in the UK, in studies and employment, and the OBA expresses its grateful thanks to him.

62 Group Website

The website of 62 Group, www.stcg62group.org is active again and it is fully worth visiting. It covers every event of the OBA and contains the latest photographs, articles and important information.

Computers from Australia

A consignment of 147 used computers and associated equipment sent by the Rotary Club of Yarrowonga/Mulwala of Australia, by courtesy of Mr. Ed Rowlands, an Old Boy (1950- 54) was cleared from port. The difficulties encountered in clearing will soon be in the website, for the benefit of anyone undertaking to clear such goods in future. 60 sets were donated to College while the rest were handed over to the Rotary Club of Welimada, for distribution to schools in Welimada District, with specific request to cover the schools in the villages near and around Gurutalawa, to improve public relations in the area. 2 Nos. dental chairs and an x ray unit were also included in the container and these were also given to the Rotary Club for donating to Welimada hospital.

Generosity of the Old Boys in Australia

Peter Weerakoon, former Vice President and presently Editor of the Thomiana, of the OBA Melbourne Australia, was here in Dec/Jan last and had visited the College. He donated A\$100 to the College to do up the Junior Playground. He also donated Rs.50,000.00 along with a further Rs.16,000.00 from Ms. Rowena Cooke, sister of late Mr. A.K.Chapman, Senior Master & Acting Headmaster, for the further enhancement of the Dr.R.L.Hayman Scholarship Fund. His family, including Mr.Bradman Weerakoon, will be starting a Ronnie Weerakon Memorial Fund for Sports in memory of late Ronnie Weerakon who was a very active member of our OBA and passed away 14 months ago, and they have already sent us Rs.6000.00, with more subscriptions from the family to follow to enhance it.

After his return to Melbourne, he just informed us that the OBA there has agreed to donate A\$1500.00 for Guru activities through us and we are indeed pleased about it and express our sincere gratitude.

Our Regular Donors

We are very grateful to the following, who have for the past few years contributed by Bankers order, monthly, quarterly or bi-annually – Mr.S.K.Wickremasinghe Rs 6,000.00, Mr.Falil Caffoor Rs. 3,600.00 Mr.J.O.Yatawara Rs. 4,200.00 Mr. L.G.S.Goonawardena Rs.500.00 and Mr. Sisira Nanayakkara Rs.1,500.00

Mrs. Hayman.

On Saturday 17th November 2007, we received the sad news of Mrs. Hayman's demise and her funeral was held on 27th November in UK. A Service was held at the College Chapel on the 27th November to coincide with the funeral. A Thanks Giving Service for her life and work was held at the Chapel of the Transfiguration at S. Thomas' College Mt. Lavinia, on January 12, 2008, attended by 50-60 Old Boys.

Conclusions

From the above it can be seen that we have had a very active year and it is hoped that the next Committee will continue the good work.

ESTO PERPETUA

Shervon Fernando
Hony Secretary

February 11, 2008
