

St Patrick's College Jaffna Alumni Association Ontario, Canada
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting - 2003

The above meeting was held on Sunday, October 19, 2003, at Burrows Hall Community Centre, 1081 Progress Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario, at 7:00 p.m. with a short prayer by Rev. Francis Xavier. There were 30 members present.

President Manuel Jesudasan, welcomed the members, and presided over the meeting. In his welcome address he commented that the outgoing committee had done a great job over the past year, and that the spirit of teamwork was always present. He said that the Association was able to arrange for a donation of \$1,570 to our College. He praised the committee for their unity and dedication. He also promised his support for the new committee and said that he expects the same cooperation from the other committee members as well. He made special mention of the late Angelo Wijeyakumar for his dedication and support to the Alumni Association, in the past.

The Assistant Secretary, Antony Luckshman, read the AGM minutes for the year 2002-2003 and the Annual Report. The minutes were adopted by Mr. Raymond Santiago and seconded by Mr. Albert Santiapillai.

Mr. X. R Francis suggested that it would be a good idea to include in the annual report, the names of those Patricians whose deaths occur in Canada and it was agreed that this would be done in future reporting. Mr. X. R Francis also raised a question regarding the description "Young Patricians" appearing in the annual report. He was looking for the definition of the description "Young Patricians". He was of the view that the word "young" should be removed. After a brief exchange of views, Mr. J.A.J Philips, Mr. Jeyanathan and Rev. Francis Xavier jointly opined that it was best left unchanged.

Stanley Sellakumar referred to the decision of the Association not to provide financial assistance to the young Patricians involved in sports activities. He was wondering whether there was any particular reason/s behind such a decision. Manuel Jesudasan responded by saying that in the past two years the Alumni Association had been fully supportive of all sports activities initiated by the young Patricians, by not only giving moral support through the physical presence of the committee members at such events but also assisting them financially to meet the costs involved in participating in such events. However, despite all assurances, our kind gesture has not been reciprocated to date. He further explained that there had been no tangible support from this group for any of our fund raising activities. There has been no help in the matter of either buying or selling tickets for the various social events organized by the Association. When we had our annual cultural event "Nattkona Maalai" there was absolutely no help from them with regard to the sale of the tickets. Some of the sports members are not even prepared to pay the annual subscription. Hence the decision, not to offer any support in the future. He, however, indicated that going forward, it was up to the new committee to make the appropriate decision. Anton Philip suggested a vote on the matter. While Phillip Francis was in support of giving financial assistance, Rev. Francis Xavier suggested that it should be a judgment call for the new committee.

Rev. Francis Xavier thanked the out going committee for the excellent work and for the earmarking of the funds for the St. Patrick's college Jaffna building fund. He also thanked the secretary for preparing the annual report and organizing the annual general meeting.

It was time to get on with the election of the new committee members and Manuel Jesudasan requested Mr. J.A.J Philips to be the Chairman pro-tem to manage this process. Mr. Philips thanked the out going committee for their excellent work and remarked that our Association must be about the only alumni association that holds a Senior's Day Dinner.

Mr. Antony Luckshman proposed the name of Manuel Sebastampillai for the position of the President, and Mr. R. L. Xavier seconded it. Meanwhile, Gerrard Simonpillai proposed the name of Anton Philip for the same position, seconded by Philip Francis. Hence, a vote was taken. While Anton Philip received 21 votes, Sebastampillai received 9 votes. Anton accepted the position and thanked the members for the trust and confidence placed in him.

John Edirmanasinghe proposed the name of Raymond Santiago for the position of vice president and Mr. Albert Santiapillai seconded it. Raymond accepted the position of Vice President.

Mr. R. L. Xavier proposed the name of Stanley Sellakumar for the position of General Secretary, seconded by Mr. Albert Santiapillai. Stanley accepted the position and thanked the members while promising to do his best.

For the position of Asst. Secretary, Angelo Swampillai proposed the name of Mr. R.L. Xavier, seconded by Stanley Sellakumar. Angelo Swampillai's name was proposed by J. Sathiajeevan for the position of Treasurer and it was seconded by Mr. X.R. Francis. Phillip Francis' name was proposed by John Edirmanasinghe, for the position of Asst. Treasurer and it was seconded by J. Sathiajeevan.

Additionally, the following committee members were elected:

1. Manuel Jesudasan
2. Benedict Thomas
3. X.R. Francis
4. John Edirmanasinghe
5. Antony Luckshman
6. Mervyn Mahesan
7. Stanley Jeyakumar
8. Anton Emmanuel
9. Wigna Selvanayagam
10. Gerrard Simonpillai

Mr. Augustine Jeyanathan was appointed as the Auditor.

Under any other business, Stanley Sellakumar noted that it was high time that the young Patricians took centre stage by actively involving themselves in the activities of the Association and serve on the Committee. Immediately, a hand shot up and it was none other than Kalingaretnam, who (apparently speaking on behalf of the so called young Patricians) accused the Association of ignoring the young Patricians by conducting all affairs of the Association in the English language. Apparently, the young Patricians felt intimidated, if not isolated, by the use of the English language. His allegation was that it was being done intentionally to shoo away the youngsters and therefore it was no surprise that many of these youngsters are not showing up. He was one animated speaker who demanded the use of the Tamil language instead of the English language in conducting the affairs of the Association. He suggested that all Committee meetings must be held in Tamil and the relative minutes and any other notices should also be printed in Tamil. It was Manuel Jesudasan's turn to respond. He calmed down the nerves of Kalingaretnam by assuring him that his point was well taken but unfortunately there were practical difficulties in complying with his wish. He said, perhaps, we could have the discussions in Tamil, as much as possible, at the Committee meetings but taking down minutes and publishing same in Tamil pose a lot of difficulties, if not impossible. He further said that the choice of language had no ulterior motives and that it was a pity that the youngsters felt that way. He also made it a point to note that living in Canada, one should not run away from the English language and take refuge under our beloved vernacular language because the reality is that a decent survival in Canada warrants a reasonable use of the English language. Besides, it is the livewire, for conducting any kind of business in Canada. After the comments of a few others who also spoke in support of Manuel Jesudasan, Kalingaretnam appeared to accept the reasoning. He was later invited to join the team of the newly elected committee members and in appreciation of Kalingan's willingness to serve on the committee, Antony Luckshman voluntarily stepped down, stating personal reasons, in favour of Kalingan. Given the fact that it was not the first time that Kalingan had brought up this issue at an AGM, it is comforting to note that we are making progress.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.



Stanley Sellakumar
General Secretary