

President's Message – AGM 2014



To my fellow Antonians and their families

I would like to welcome all of you to our 34th Annual General Meeting. It is really gratifying to note that we continue to get strong support from our membership every year, and our success is a credit to their contribution. The efforts of our past committee members must be recognized at every opportunity we get, to serve as an inspiration for us to continue the prosperity of the club.

Like last year, we have again been fortunate to get the participation of a number of younger Antonians at all our events.

OUR PROJECTS:

(a) Student Scholarship :

We are excited to inform that we have launched a unique scholarship program to assist students at our Alma Mater. This program aims to provide incentives to talented and hard working students who come from economically disadvantaged families, ensuring they make full use of their opportunity for a well-rounded education at St Anthony's.

Our commitment is to provide financial support to the selected students periodically (every term), and continue this funding until they complete their education at college. We have already released funds to one student this year. The value of each scholarship is approx. A\$ 2500 (SLR 300,000) to cover for a period of seven years at college.

This program wouldn't have materialized without the co-operation extended to us by Fr Principal and the efforts of our committee member Ashok Ariyaratnam. The support we have received to-date from the membership and well wishes has been fantastic, which has paved the way for us committing to a second student in 2015. We have also had two distinguished Antonian families, De Alwis and Denlow, come forward and commit to two more students.

(b) Cricket Wing:

This year, we have continued our commitment towards improving cricket at college by providing a sum of SLR 360,000 to the Cricket Wing. This was on top of last years' contribution of Rs 630,000, bringing the total to almost SLR 1.0 million.

(c) Maths Lab:

Our boys from Queensland contributed \$5000 towards the re-opening of the Maths laboratory at college. In recognition of this contribution, a plaque in memory of Mr Wright, Mr Denlow and Mr Macky was installed outside this room. This lab was originally introduced back in the mid-1970s by RNA de Silva, but was subsequently closed soon after the departure of RNA.

OUR EVENTS:

(a) Family Christmas Day

On the 15th December 2013, we had arguably one of our most vibrant events in recent times. We were blessed with perfect weather, a great venue, wonderful BBQ spread and most importantly fantastic participation.

This event was not part of our plans for 2013 and the idea was 'hatched' only at our AGM held three weeks prior. Our newly appointed Social Secretary, Ashok, should take bulk of the credit for running with this event despite the short notice. Chris played the part of Santa wonderfully well and provided the kind of entertainment that the many kids present were yearning for. The pleasant surprise of the evening was the rendition of Christmas Carols performed by the Antonians. The immense 'chorale' talent was there for everyone to see and again, I must thank Chris for organizing this and handing out lyrics to ensure that we all sang and as usual Adrian did the guitar work so expertly.

(b) Festival of Cricket:

On a beautiful warm Labour Day holiday in March 2014, the Festival of Cricket 6-a-side tournament got under way at the most impressive surroundings of Xavier College in Kew.

Our old boys, under the captaincy of Marlon, were among compatriots from 15 other Sri Lankan schools that took part in this inaugural event in Melbourne. We did well to defeat Nalanda convincingly, but unfortunately lost to eventual champions Royal and Dharmaraja.

We were extremely grateful to the guys who represented us, giving their time away for the sake of college and in the process sacrificing a long-weekend. There were a few families present to fly the Antonian flag. We had the pleasure of meeting the official host Russell Arnold, former SL coach Dave Whatmore, the founder of *Foundation of Goodness* Kushil Gunasekera among others.

(c) OBA Cricket Family Day:

The Antonian Family 'Cricket' Day took place on the 15th March amidst a good gathering of Antonians and their families. Once again, we were given a strong reminder that our community yearns for family outings of this nature. The tremendous support we received and the enjoyment all of us experienced was too obvious to go unnoticed.

It was also a little nostalgic to have the entire Peries clan at this event - Jayantha turned up with Ayoma, along with his brothers Aubrey (UK) and Prasanna (USA) and his sons Dimithri and Sriyan. Leroy came all the way from Adelaide and joined in with many of his contemporaries from college.

As for the friendly cricket games, we played two games - a softball game where Ayoma, Manel and Estelle joined in the fun followed by a hardball game. Robin and Meri captained the respective sides in both the games and was played in fantastic spirit. There were no losers as we all finished the games with a 'winning' smile.

The BBQ was great with an assortment of meat (incl sausages) provided by the club and salads brought in by the members and their families.

(d) College Day Celebrations:

A total of 52 Antonians, their friends and families were present at our College Day event on 15th June. Thanks to their presence, the day turned out to be a memorable occasion with seemingly everyone having a good time. Our special guests were past Principal, Fr. Hilarion Fernando and Cecil Amarasinghe who was visiting from Sri Lanka. Fr Hilarion conducted prayers for the sick, which included Ranjith Samarasekera, for dearly departed members of the Antonians and their families and for another former Principal, Fr. Stephen Abraham who celebrates 50 years as a priest on the 17th December. The food by Rainbow Spices and the desserts contributed by our committee were fantastic. And, "Mojo the Clown" helped to keep the kids (and some adults!) entertained which gave an added dimension to the day.

A lot of hard work went in, led by Ashok, and without the support of our members and our partners this event would never have achieved the accolades that it did.

We took home a sum of over \$1200 from the day (clear profit) which went straight into the Scholarship Fund initiated by our club.

(e) Winter Ball:

We had our mini dance "Winter Ball" on the 1st August to facilitate a greater Antonian participation, and providing a further opportunity for those who will not be able to make it for our main event on 1st November.

It turned out to be a wonderful night, with a gathering of 27 Old Antonians and their friends and families. Music by Sam de Silva, with a mixture of western and bails, kept the guests on the floor most of the time.

(f) Dinner Dance:

Our main dinner dance took place on the 1st November 2014, for the 33rd consecutive year. We managed to attract over 300 guests – a figure not achieved in recent times. This included a record 75 Antonians.

We were also able to realize a profit in excess of \$7000, again something not seen in the past decade. We were helped by a great souvenir, fantastic raffle prizes and silent auction items. Our dance co-ordinator Naomal de Alwis must be congratulated for ensuring the whole event progressed seamlessly. Our next year's dance is scheduled for 22nd August 2015 at The Grand on Princess.

Two fantastic newsletters were published this year, filled with interesting articles and photographs. Again our Editor Spencer Madhanayake deserves all credit for the publication of these.

We had our usual three committee meetings this year. A big thank you should go to Dimple & Naomal, and Vanessa & Spencer for hosting two of these meetings. Their wonderful hospitality attracted a good gathering, including Trevor Brown (Canada), Enrico Brown and Senaka Amarasinghe participating as guests. Manel and I hosted the third meeting for the year

Our financial position has improved greatly this year, thanks to the support by the membership and our sponsors. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jayantha Peries for doing a brilliant job as the treasurer, especially the work he has done in the past month to get the accounts ready for the AGM.

Lastly, on a personal note, I would like to thank the existing committee for extending their fullest support to me throughout the year. Without this teamwork, and the support of the spouses, we wouldn't have achieved what we did this year. Special thanks to Manel for her encouragement and being a source of strength to me right through the year.

I am confident that the incoming committee will be well equipped to continue the good work into year 2015.

Afzal Laphir
President

