

CHSGA hotelier

CEYLON HOTEL SCHOOL GRADUATES ASSOCIATION **MAGAZINE**

VOLUME 07 / OCTOBER 2021

MAGICAL MEMORIES

CHSGA

50



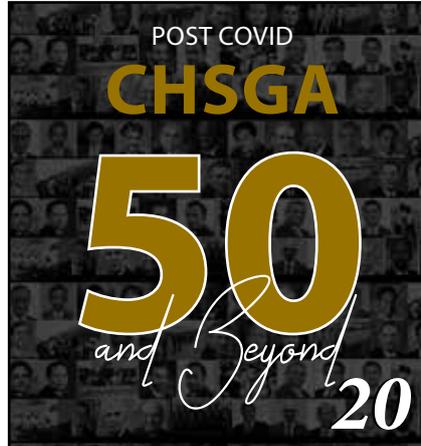
YEARS

and Beyond

ANNIVERSARY

EDITION

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EDITORIAL

CEYLON HOTEL SCHOOL GRADUATES ASSOCIATION A MILESTONE 50 YEARS!



We would like to thank our inspiring community of hoteliers for a successful journey together to reach the 50th anniversary milestone and the publishing of the 'Hotelier' anniversary issue. Thanks to the commitment and dedication of Past Presidents, Executive Committee Members, SLTDA and other State officials, Sponsors, Business Partners and Well-wishers, excellent results were realized over the years.

The Hotelier magazine serves as a platform to drive engagement among its alumni, thereby enabling graduates to leverage on the power of mentoring services that the Ceylon Hotel School provides. The technological advances that are taking place necessitated such a platform in line with CHSGA's strategic objective in keeping its members abreast with up to date news about its members and the industry as a whole.

Not only does the Hotelier magazine platform keep members updated, but it also allows graduates to re-connect with classmates (locally and abroad), receive news and event updates as well as ongoing educational opportunities and employment offerings. The platform is fully integrated with social and professional networks, and also permits graduates to expand their networks and to cultivate a culture of giving back to their alma mater in the form of mentoring assistance. We will continue to respond to developments in the hospitality industry and education in hospitality management and worldwide during the years ahead.

As the editor of the Hotelier magazine, and since this is a landmark issue, the senior members' response by contributing articles of varying interests has been very encouraging. We also hope to have more interactions with our valued readers through our social media platforms in the years ahead.

We cannot forget that the Hotel industry is still going through a crisis, but the resilience and strong will to survive is bound to pay dividends at the end.

Happy reading and stay safe! ■

Thakshila Galappaththy

THAKSHILA GALAPPATHTHY
MCHSGA
EDITOR

CHSGA hotelier

CEYLON HOTEL SCHOOL GRADUATES ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE

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**Ceylon Hotel School
Graduates Association**

Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism & Hotel Management
Galle Road, Colombo 03



PRIYAL PERERA
FCHSGA
PRESIDENT
Ceylon Hotel School Graduates
Association

“I have in the process worked side by side with many diversely vested past presidents who have been instrumental in helping me hone my experience.”

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF CHSGA

PRIYAL PERERA

Celebrating 50 years of representing our vibrant and economically important industry, the Ceylon Hotel School Graduate Association (CHSGA) is the official hospitality networking and spearheading organization of Sri Lanka’s hospitality and tourism industries.

With 2020 firmly in the rearview mirror, I speak for our entire industry when I say we are collectively grateful to have navigated the toughest period of time in our industry’s history. I am so proud of the hospitality community - You have proven how resilient, adaptive and tough you are!

Together, we weathered the COVID-19 virus and faced a complete shutdown of our industry. However, amid fear and uncertainty, we sat at the brainstorming table with the relevant Governmental agencies to find solutions for hotels and restaurants to operate through takeout and delivery services while simultaneously creating opportunities to help support our displaced workers. At the same time, we worked closely with the many hotels in the country and the Tourist Board to help source critically needed grants to help ride out the storm.

Having joined the Executive Committee of CHSGA in 2002, I was also involved in the editorial committee which became a stepping stone to further responsible involvements in CHSGA. Stepping into the role of being Treasurer and introducing different systems and budgetary procedures etc. has resulted in an increased fund building exercise from Rs. 300,000 up to Rs 80 Million. Having being also involved in several other sub committees for organizing social, public and fund-raising events together with SLITHM, my journey took me to the position of General Secretary and subsequently Vice President of CHSGA. My eventful journey of over a 20 - year career was indeed a highly challenging one, which has been instrumental in positioning me in line for the Presidency.

I have in the process worked side by side with many diversely vested past presidents who have been instrumental in helping me hone my experience. It has been an honor and pleasure working with them. The onset of the current pandemic was a huge challenge and it took all my experience and expertise in weathering the storm. Despite the raging pandemic, we conducted several non-physical virtual events.

It has also been a rewarding experience working with many executive committees, colleagues and friends at the CHSGA and SLITHM and wish to state that I pledge my continued support to these hallowed institutions in the future.

God bless you all and stay safe. ■

HALL OF FAME

CHSGA OF

PAST PRESIDENTS OF CHSGA

Not only have each of our past presidents been a reputed hospitality Professional in Sri Lanka, but they have also fuelled inspiration among the upcoming generations to make a difference.



MR. MALIN HAPUGODA
1979 - 1981 & 1971 - 1972



MR. DESMOND FERNANDO
1972 - 1976



MR. KUMAR THAMBYAH
1976 - 1979



MR. WALTER PERUMAL
1981 - 1982



MR. JAYANTHA VELAUTHANPILLAI
1982 - 1983



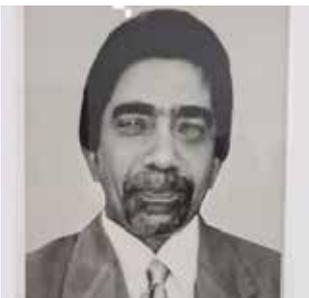
MR. MAHINDA RATNAYAKE
1983 - 1985



MR. CHANDANA JAYAWARDENA
1985 - 1986



MR. CHANDANA AMARAWARDENA
1986 - 1987



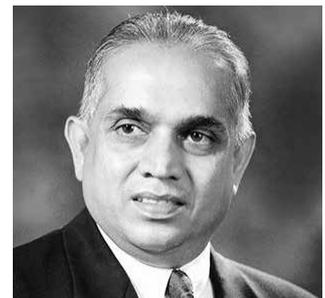
MR. ASOKA FERNANDO
1987 - 1988



MR. RANJITH SAMARANAYAKE
1988 - 1989



MR. SHAFEEK WAHAB
1989 - 1990



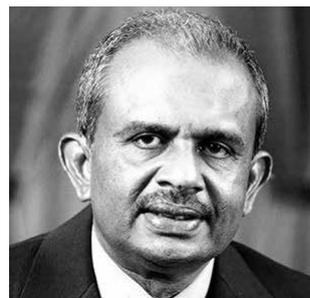
MR. ROSHAN FERNANDO
1990 - 1991



MR. P M WITHANA
1991 - 1992



MR. NIHAL PERERA
1992 - 1993



MR. U C JAYASINGHE
1993 - 1994



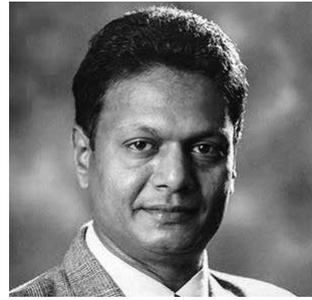
MR. AMARANATH MAHAWADUGE
1994 - 1995



MR. SUMITHRA GUNESEKERA
1995 - 1996



MR. JAN VAN TWEST
1996 - 1997



MR. UPUL GAMAGE
1997 - 1998



MR. SUNIL DISSANAYAKE
1998 - 1999



MR. KUMARA SENARATNE
1999 - 2000



MR. RAVI DIVITOTAWELA
2000 - 2001



MR. JEHAN KARUNARATNE
2001 - 2002



MR. ADRIAN KULATUNGA
2002 - 2003



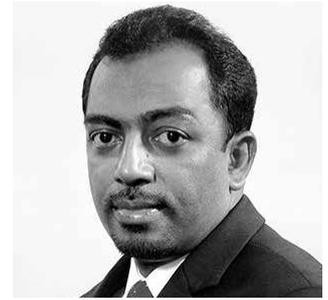
MR. PALITHA WIJEMANNE
2003 - 2004



MR. BANDULA EKANAYAKE
2004 - 2005



MR. TREVINE GOMEZ
2005 - 2006



MR. S ANANDARAJ
2006 - 2007



MR. SARATH FERNANDO
2007 - 2011



MR. B H SARIFFODEEN
2012 - 2013



MR. EKSATH WIJERATNE
2014 - 2016



MR. SANJEWA PERERA
2016 - 2017



MR. SAMANTHA GUNARATHNE
2017 - 2019





PATRICK G S PEREIRA
FCHSGA
CHAIRMAN
AGM Organizing Committee
VICE PRESIDENT
CHSGA

“ We initiated our plans to celebrate this momentous occasion many moons ago. Spearheaded by the Strategic Planning Committee, we came up with an exciting line up of activities to celebrate five decades of Camaraderie, Fellowship, Service and Leadership.”

AGM CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Not many organizations or associations in this region are professional and consistent enough to celebrate 50 years of steady existence and growth; but at Ceylon Hotel School Graduates Association, we have been professional, consistent and indeed blessed to reach this significant milestone in the year 2021.

We initiated our plans to celebrate this momentous occasion many moons ago. Spearheaded by the Strategic Planning Committee, we came up with an exciting line up of activities to celebrate five decades of Camaraderie, Fellowship, Service and Leadership. However, with the unfortunate turn of events that occurred, it has confined us to a new normal that relies greatly on using online methods to connect with one another. Hence, the 50th AGM of our hallowed association was not exempt from this reality and we were compelled to adopt to virtual reality, leading to us our first ever virtual AGM.

The AGM traditionally had been more than just a procedural event to elect a new committee; but was a great opportunity to celebrate friendships, walk down memory lane and to showcase our strength as the leading gathering of professional hoteliers in the country. Since the prevailing situation is not conducive to meeting up, let's stay hopeful and pray that we will once again be able to rejoice in our past and plan and strategize our future in moving forward as a professional association; that would shape the future of Sri Lanka's Tourism and Hospitality industry for another half a century or more.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Executive Committee of CHSGA for entrusting me with the task of heading the AGM organizing team for our 50th Celebration which is yet to materialize. I also thank all those who assisted me in many ways to make the first ever virtual AGM a success.

In conclusion, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the Past Presidents, Executive Committee Members, STDA and other State officials, Sponsors, Business Partners and Well-wishers for volunteering to assist us in organizing the several events we have held during the past 50 years.

Till we meet again, Stay Safe, Stay Connected and Stay Blessed! ■

A BLAST FROM THE PAST



MEMORIES OF CHERISHED TIMES AT THE CEYLON HOTEL SCHOOL

BY RUWAN PUNCHIHEWA

Let me walk you down 'memory lane' on a sunny Monday morning in early 1972. I was sitting in the main hall at Royal College for the weekly assembly convened by the Principal. At every assembly, we had a guest speaker to guide the senior students on vocational development and career selection. They were from varied areas of specialization – from accountants to planters and tea tasters to bankers.

On this particular morning, we had

late Mr. Nimalasiri Silva from the Ceylon Tourist Board who briefed the students on "Hoteliering as a Career". Since tourism and hotel management was at its infancy at the time, the audience learnt something hitherto unknown to a great majority of us. He also briefed us about the Ceylon Hotel School (CHS), and identified it as the best place to lay the foundation and develop to be a professional hotelier.

With that as the initial introduction, I was curious to know more about this

field. I did some research and having convinced myself, applied to join the CHS with the blessings of my parents on the condition that if I don't get selected, I have to keep trying and get into a university.

As destiny had planned, I was successful at the interviews and in November 1972, I joined the CHS as a novice to follow the 3-year diploma course.

FORMATIVE DAYS AT CHS

The first person I met when I went to hand over my acceptance letter was a handsome young gentleman with long hair who spoke to me inspiringly. He didn't introduce himself and I was too nervous to ask who he was. Later, I realized that it was Mr. Rohan de Silva, Lecturer in front office & housekeeping, who became my mentor, guru and more than anything else – my life-long friend. I still remember how on the very first

day at CHS, Mr. de Silva got all of us to polish the upper floor of the Samudra Building – first to strip it with steel wool and then polish with Mansion Polish. I began to wonder whether I had taken the right decision! After the tedious session of polishing, we all realized to our dismay that we have to undergo a 2-week rag by the seniors, and all had to report to Sefton after school. It was two weeks of agony – from singing songs and worshipping

the GFH, carrying dust bins on our heads to even going home with a half shaven head! This was definitely pushing my patience to the limit. But, finally when the ragging ended, we gradually settled down to learn 16 subjects – most of them totally new to us – from cookery to housekeeping to French and bookkeeping.

We had an excellent faculty comprising expatriate and Sri Lankan

lecturers who were specialists in their own fields, and we were so fortunate to receive extensive knowledge and guidance from them. Something that stood out was that apart from teaching their specific subjects, we also received invaluable inputs on varied topics including human psychology, challenges we have to face in the real world, the importance of ethics and so on. I also remember Mr. Rohan de Silva teaching and advising us on many areas of interest covering human behavior, understanding body

language, how to identify and handle introverts & extroverts, etc. – all of which contributed immensely to mould our character and groom us to face the corporate world.

We were a batch of 32 young boys – a great mixed pickle. We had students from all parts of Sri Lanka and had a healthy mix of all types – studious, playful, serious, carefree, mischievous and law breakers. Looking back they all contributed to make the 72–75 batch so special. We also had many

hidden talents, hobbies and interests amongst the group – the cricket lovers, musicians, vocalists, and car fanatics.

As time passed by, friendships & trust grew stronger amongst each other. Gradually, the correct names were dropped, and nicknames came in – some of which were so strongly embedded that they are known by these pseudonyms even today – after 45+ years.



NEVER A DULL MOMENT

During the 3 years, so much took place that there was never a dull moment. While it isn't possible to cover all what happened in this write up, I shall try to pick and divulge some juicy tales.

I remember that cookery practicals were always so interesting and challenging, and how poor Mrs. Gomes managed to control a bunch of 32 energetic rioters is just amazing. “Miss, how much of salt to put?” to “what are raising agents?” were amongst the array of questions thrown at her.

Then there was Mr. Bartholomeuze, who as we all know, is a strict disciplinarian. There was no fooling around with him. Once during kitchen inspection after a practical, he found a burnt saucepan stored in the new stores, and hell broke loose. He was throwing saucepans all over, went red in his face and said that “no one is going home until everything is clean. Call me when you are ready!” and went back to the staff room.

What annoyed him, I believe, is that someone hid the pan without owning up that he burnt the carrots!

On another occasion, he found some chopped parsley in a groove of a wooden chopping board, and the same stage show took place. I used to shiver in fright during such occasions. The checking was so thorough that Mr. Bartholomeuze used to remove the drain covers and send his finger along the grooves of the drain to check for dirt!

We also had some who through sympathy let loose the live crabs from their bag as they were to be cooked alive.

Practical exams in cookery was another challenge. We had to stick to the recipe, ensure that taste, presentation and flavor were all correct and complete at the given time. Once, one boy either forgot or didn't have time to prepare his Kiri Hodi. So he took coconut milk, mixed some turmeric, added some chopped

green chillies and submitted his dish. When the tasting was done by the lecturers, you could imagine the facial expressions of Mrs. Gomes!!

On the sly, there were good Samaritans who helped their friends at exams. Some made a few extra bread rolls and gave those who could never get bread rolls correctly. So the whispers from the neighbors went on while you are stressed out trying to complete on time - “Machang, mata bread roll ekak deepang.” The result was that some ended up with 4 bread rolls of different shapes and sizes. It was the same with turned carrots and chateau potatoes. I am sure the lecturers knew the reasons behind these secret recipes.

These were the moments where everyone was so tensed that they tend to forget their basics and had no patience to refer to the book. Once my neighbour asked me, “Machang, mayonnaise ekata yolk da, white da?,” and on another, one was breaking eggs and putting the egg in the bin and the shells into the bowl!!

CHERISHED MOMENTS

Food & Beverage practicals were equally interesting. We had to ensure our grooming and attire were impeccable, and the lecturers came to the briefing before the practical with a pair of scissors. Anyone with hair touching the collar, got an instant haircut. Anyone with unpolished shoes, ended up working in the wash up.

Mr. Rohan Dias Abeysinghe, who was our F&B lecturer, was a mobile encyclopedia on the subject. He was so thorough that he virtually knew the Kinton & Ceserani & Lilicrap textbooks by heart. He also taught us the history of all the dishes and

how the name was derived, which he referred to as the “story behind” – for crepe suzette, a ’la grecque, florentine, quiche lorraine or any item on the menu.

I remember vividly Mr. Bartholemeuze’s action packed mimicry of the nursery rhyme “I am a little tea pot, short and stout”....., possibly included to add some colour to a lesson on “How to make a good cup of tea”.

This was a time the country was going through a closed economy. To control resources, rice could not be served in cafeterias and hotels on two days of

the week. Therefore, we were served with alternatives for lunch. On one such day, the Samudra kitchen gave us boiled sweet potato for lunch and the batch decided to protest – all refused to eat. Mr. Eardley Edirisinghe, our Vice Principal, handled the situation beautifully. He called one mild student who also loved to eat, and ordered him to go and have his lunch. Being a student who was petrified in front of the Vice Principal, and loved his food (even sweet potatoes), he obediently had his lunch. Gradually, the others followed suit and that was the end of the demonstration.



EVERLASTING SHENANIGANS

Theory classes also had their own trials and tribulations. Once Mrs. Gomes asked one student, “What’s a club sandwich?” – who possibly was in dream land and was totally flustered with the question. He went blank and said, “Miss it’s a big one!!” – which was followed by loads of laughter from the back benchers.

Spoken French and German had hilarious moments too – one being when a student mistakenly responded, “Je suis a ventilateur” (I am a fan), as a

translation in French to “This is a fan!”

Once in Dr. Wisidagama’s class, the back benchers sang a chanting of what’s recited during cattle slaughter. Through reflex action, I looked back, and a fuming Dr. Wisidagama assumed that I was the culprit and chased me out of the class. The matter ended up with Mr. Edirisinghe and the back benchers ended owning up.

The examinations we faced were necessarily evil and unavoidable.

We had two examinations per year, totaling to six, for the 3 years. The top three students with the highest overall aggregate won scholarships to Germany. We had the serious and studious who strived to do their best, while others who were so cool and relaxed. There were those who would get up in the morning and ask “Mokadda machang ada paper eka?”, not knowing even what paper he was having to face that day.



THE SCORER

Similar to cricket, we had an ardent scorer who meticulously kept the scores when the results came in, subject by subject. He is my good friend Hemantha Subasinghe, who to date, remembers all the names in the register alphabetically. He used to call me after each result and say that I was either leading or Shafick, Rohan or Saman had overtaken me and so on. The margins were very narrow, but it was always a healthy and a friendly rivalry.

I ended up as the 4th in class, having come first in both exams in the final

year, and Mr. Thambiah told me that I was a late starter. Shafick Wahab, Rohan Goonetilleke and Saman Rajapakse came on top and proceeded to Germany.

While preparing for the exams, I also experienced car hijackers. I used to go to Sefton to do joint studies with Saman, and sometimes Saman came over to my place. One day, I drove my fathers' Wolseley 1500 and parked it at Sefton and was studying with Saman. When I got back to the car, I realized that it has been driven by somebody. Next day, I made a big

noise in class that my car had been used. The culprits first denied, but later the truth came out. To see, they had inserted a coin to switch on the ignition, where 4 or 5 of them had a joy ride, had hoppers in Bambalapitiya and returned. I was told that the driver was late Tissera and the passengers were late Karu, and Wally, amongst others. How I got to know that the car was driven was a great mystery to them, and I shall continue to keep that a secret whilst assuring that nobody sneaked the news to me.

FIRST STINTS

We had two "in service training" assignments during the tourist season. My first ever working experience was at the Pegasus Reef Hotel, at the front office. The late Mr. Colvin Abeynaike, who was an old boy of CHS was the FOM, and it was a great opportunity to work with him. Senaka Tantrige, Rohan Gunatilleke, Schani Weerasinghe, Chris Isaac, Anton and I were the six students assigned to Pegasus Reef. We were paid Rs.6/50 per day, and my first tip of \$5 was worth some Rs. 30! This was back in 1973.

My second stint was at Serendib Hotel, Bentota, where we resided – which meant a mix of work and fun – ending with great experiences. All the trainees from Bentota Beach Hotel, Lihiniya Surf and Serendib used to meet during most evenings along with some executives and keep chit chatting till late night. I realized that life in the resorts were so different to that of the city. By the way, if I remember correctly the famous Sunday Buffet at the Bentota Beach Hotel, created by legendary Executive Chef Paddevithana was Rs.50/-

“
Taking this opportunity,
I wish to bestow with
gratitude a glowing
tribute to all my lecturers
(Permanent & Visiting)
who were brilliant and
inspiring.”

MEMORIES OF A LIFETIME

Every year, the Graduation Ball – Dinner Dance was the highlight – a great sendoff given to the passing out batch. A follow up to this event was a 5-day trip for the remaining two batches which covered the hill stations, East coast and ancient cities. Space does not permit me to relate some humorous & unforgettable episodes that took place during these trips. But I must say that these tours strengthened the bonds between us and created memorable moments for life. I feel that the alcohol consumption on these trips were far in excess of the diesel consumption of the buses we travelled in, judging by the dozens of empty bottles that were collected at the far end of the bus!

Our graduation ceremony was the grand finale of a wonderful three years. I carried away three prizes – which was a pleasant surprise to

my parents at the ceremony. As a reward, I was allowed to take my father's Mitsubishi Colt and go with my friends to view the Katunayake motor races. So, some 8 of us including Saman, Wally, late Roy, Hemantha, Sumithra and I in our two cars had a great fun day at the races. Some were in high spirits in every sense, and I had to stop for several hangover breaks on the way back.

Then came the next chapter in my life when Mr. Rohan de Silva offered me to join the faculty. That opened another great vista in my career, and I enjoyed every moment of my stay with a brilliant faculty – with Mr. de Silva as a wonderful boss and late Mrs. Heenatigala (fondly known as loku missi) as the head.

That's a story for another time. Penning down these stories

were indeed a blast from a very cherished past in my life. Taking this opportunity, I wish to bestow with gratitude a glowing tribute to all my lecturers (Permanent & Visiting) who were brilliant and inspiring. Without them I would not be what I am today. I learnt so much from each one of them and they all made a great impact towards my development. I regret that limited space prevents me from writing interesting tales and admirable qualities of each one of them. Also, I wish to thank all my batch mates for the fabulous three years together and for being friends forever! ■



RUWAN PUNCHIHEWA
FCHSGA



GAMUNU SRILAL

25 YEARS OF SERVICE TO CHSGA

Gamunu, who was born in Matara and schooled at Dharmaraja College Kandy, was the sixth of eight children. He inherited his talent for the creative arts from his father who was a contractor and loved all the arts. His initial foray into art consisted of several architectural drawings on FB which brought out his creativity and passion for ink, pencil and water colours. He took a cue from famed Barbara Sansoni in her detailed sketches of Sri Lanka's diverse architecture.

He also used to draw and write short stories on culture, specially the cultural stories of the shanty village near his school. His diversity of interests included healthy discussions and debates with friends over a cup of tea, based on books and the macro issues of the country. All these experiences molded his character and has made him into the person he is today.

Gamunu, a graduate of Ceylon Hotel School, has a wide experience borne out of managing Jetwing Tropical villas and Hotel, Jetwing Hunas Falls Hotel and presently holds the position of General Manager- Jetwing Hotels and Jetwing Yala. He brings an array of skills and core competencies to the table and is extremely proficient in the fields of managing Hotels, Resorts & Safari Lodge Operations.

With exceptional leadership skills to boast of, he strongly believes that a leader is only as good as his team and he ensures his team has job satisfaction and reaches their highest potential through regular communication and strong company values. Apart from that, he also constantly evaluates local, national and international market trends in Hotel Management and Operations, Designs of Hotels, Resorts & Safari Lodges and Marketing & Revenue Management to make sure that the hotel's management remain competitive and of cutting edge.

In addition to his busy work schedule, he has served CHSGA for the past 25 years in the Executive Committee and has brought a dearth of experience to bear on the various activities organized by CHSGA. His pleasing demeanor and positive outlook in life has been contagious among his colleagues and friends at CHSGA, and has helped plan out several successful events in the past.

His passion for the outdoor and wild life has been the driving force behind Jetwing Yala's success. ■

HOTELIER

AS A

CAREER

MY JOURNEY AT CHS

BY WASULA WIJEGUNAWARDANE



All over social media, I see posts about inspirational people who started with nothing and now are some of the most influential and successful people. I also see quotes from the past and present about success, motivation, inspiration and hard work, but I could never relate to them. I was searching for a career I could relate to; and that career happened to be in the hospitality field. Eventually, I found that inspiration and motivation in my journey with the Ceylon Hotel School.

It was during a stint as a night auditor at the then Intercontinental Hotel Colombo, that I initially got a preview into the hotel industry. Pursuing my interest, I applied for a job at the Holiday Inn and was successful in being appointed as a Cost Analyst. It was during this period that I decided to pursue a course in Hotel Management to further hone my skills in this field. I joined the 'Ceylon Hotel School' a Government run Institute, riding on my qualification in Business Studies and some Hotel Management knowledge gleaned at a private institute where I also learnt basic German.

I did my first basic 107 Reception 1978 and joined Koggala Beach hotel to do Industrial Training as a Receptionist (IT). I started working in the meantime at Sunflower Beach Hotel in Negombo as a Receptionist. After shifting of the hotel school to Park Street, I applied to do my second basic in Housekeeping. This gave me an opportunity to obtain my work experience while studying at the same time. It was an advantage when applying for job positions as I had already some experience under my belt. This is the advantage of a hotel school career over any other University career; that one can earn and gain experience while studying.

I had always wanted to share my knowledge and give back to the institute that had provided me the foundation for my hotel career. As a result, I joined the Ceylon Hotel School as a Lecturer. While serving at the Hotel School, I got an opportunity to go to Germany on a scholarship in Hotel School Management and Advanced Hotel Management.

CHS and its follow-up programs were instrumental in

pushing me to raise my own personal standards, to be at my best, to stand out from the crowd and always questioning myself, "What can I do differently"?

The need to ensure that I expect nothing but the highest of standards from myself and my colleagues became an intrinsic part of my ambition, so that no matter where I worked, I would incorporate the company's standard into my own and ensure it fits in with my beliefs and standards. Providing service that raises the bar across the industry is imperative in establishing a standard that can be used for many years by hotel chains across the country. This is what will make one stand out in the industry; and this was the goal I wished to achieve.

A huge part of my hotel experience taught me that dedication and hard work towards my ambition was not because of how much I was making, or the company's name or calibre; but because it comes from within. You either have it or you don't.

It is challenging to maintain high standards in this day and age with changing trends and habits, but it can be done. CHS established standards over the years and has made a name for itself. CHS today is synonymous with high standards which has been a boon to the industry.

Indirectly, Ceylon Hotel School is the inspiration for thousands of hoteliers throughout the years. Its standards are there in every hotel across the country, and used by hoteliers near and far. ■



WASULA WIJEGUNAWARDANE

Managing Director of Seerock "The Kings Domain" and Seerock Holidays
FCHSGA, MBA, MSc (Finance)



“MANAGING PEOPLE”

BY SUNIL DISSANAYAKE

The following 30 competencies and practices are a blueprint for people management.

They represent goals for excellence to which we should commit ourselves as part of the pursuit for excellence in people management.

PERSONAL STANDARDS

- 1 Demonstrate a strong sense of values and ethics; win trust and respect
- 2 Add value to all situations he/she is involved in
- 3 Display high personal standards – courtesy, meeting commitments, punctuality, etc.
- 4 Manage personal time effectively, so that the right things get done
- 5 Practice what he/she preaches; take responsibility for his/her actions
- 6 Communicate personal energy and commitment

COACHING & DEVELOPMENT

- 7 Provide help, guidance and coaching. Available as a mentor when needed
- 8 Take a positive view of people and their potential for growth
- 9 Empower others to make decisions, think for themselves, and use initiative
- 10 Committed to making sure that others do not fail
- 11 Actively seek to develop others’ skills, competence and knowledge
- 12 Create challenges and opportunities for others to grow

LEADERSHIP

- 13 Emphasize visions, goals and strategy, rather than tasks and details
- 14 Present a positive view of the future and how it will be achieved
- 15 Consistently focus on the success of the whole, not just part of the organization
- 16 Oriented towards action and innovation – proactive rather than defensive
- 17 Keep others informed about events and changes that may affect them
- 18 Strongly committed to finding ways to achieve better results

RECOGNITION & EVALUATION

- 19 Define expectations so others know how their performance will be judged
- 20 Tell others clearly how their work and their potential are perceived
- 21 Provide frequent feedback on overall performance, so there will be few surprises
- 22 Use praise and recognition frequently to reward efforts and contributions
- 23 Encourage rather than criticize; solve problems rather than find fault
- 24 In giving feedback, focus on constructive plans for improvement

MOTIVATION & COMMITMENT

- 25 Seek to build enthusiasm and commitment, rather than depending on rank
- 26 Motivate others effectively, and work at reducing stress
- 27 Involve other in making decisions that affect them, whenever possible
- 28 Make efforts to build internal climate and morale; alert to changes
- 29 Give others credit and recognition for their ideas and contributions
- 30 Reciprocate loyalty by backing up those who deserve support



SUNIL DISSANAYAKE

Director / Chief Executive BMICH
FCHSGA
Past President of CHSGA





AN INTERVIEW WITH

KIMARLI FERNANDO

CHAIRPERSON – SRI LANKA TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

INTERVIEW BY THAKSHILA GALAPPATHTHY

WE WOULD LIKE TO GET TO KNOW YOU BETTER.

Q **TG: Can you provide some information about your job history and experience?**

Kimarli Fernando: I started my career as a lawyer after obtaining a LLB (Hons.) from the London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK, I am a Barrister-at-Law, Lincoln's Inn, UK and an Attorney-at-Law in Sri Lanka. I later pursued a career in banking prior to commencing my role at Sri Lanka Tourism. I have had the opportunity to work in different sectors and the knowledge and experience gained throughout my career, I believe has enabled me to be effective in my current role.

Q **TG: •What is your greatest accomplishment?**

KF: My achievements during my swimming career and the lessons I learnt through my experiences as a sportswoman, molded me into the person that I am today. My ability to believe in myself is one of the most valuable lessons I learnt. With determination, perseverance, and self-discipline, I learnt that one can achieve anything you set out to do. This motto has enabled me to accomplish many goals I had throughout my career, and I try my best to instill these values in my kids.

Q **TG: What are your greatest strengths?**

KF: My ability and willingness to learn from my experiences and then apply that learning successfully in new situations by acquiring the necessary skills, is my greatest strength.

Q **TG: What Motivates you?**

KF: I always want to ensure that whatever role I take on, I carry out my duties to the best of my ability, leaving a lasting positive impact on the teams I work with as well as on the Institution I represent. I am driven to always do the right thing and stand by my principles; I have experienced many stumbling blocks along the way, but I choose never to be dissuaded.

Q **TG: Being a female, how does it feel to lead a male-dominated institute?**

KF: I have a clear vision for Sri Lanka Tourism, a product full of untapped potential. One of our strategies is to build an inclusive and sustainable industry which includes the uplifting of women in the industry and giving them and their communities, the guidance required to encourage more women to flourish in the industry. In my role I hope I can be an instrument of change and inspire more women to follow their dreams and achieve whatever they set out to do. Yes, it is challenging at times having to juggle multiple roles with the drive to excel in all of them, however I believe that once you earn respect from your peers; both male and female, the role becomes a bit easier and turns into a collaborative effort.



SLITHM

Q What do you think about your new job role? How challenging is this compared to your previous stints?

KF: It's been almost two years since taking on this role as Chairperson Sri Lanka Tourism. There has been ups and downs navigating our way through this pandemic, however the ability to be agile by re-designing our strategies have helped us overcome many hurdles that we have faced. We have recognized and acknowledged that in the context of global tourism, there will continue to be a huge shift in the way we do business; which has given us room to explore new opportunities. I believe that there will always be challenges. However, the way we choose to look at it will make the difference. We remain focused on adapting to the new norms and use the challenges as opportunities to grow Sri Lanka Tourism which will no doubt have a ripple on effect on the Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management.

Q How do you see SLITHM in the next 5 years?

KF: Plans are currently underway to develop SLITHM into a world class tourism and hospitality institution positioned to attract international students from the region.

Q What is your Long-term plan for SLITHM?

KF: In order to transform SLITHM into a World class facility, several partnerships have been struck with leading experts in the field to develop applicable, innovative solutions that will help SLITHM prepare for future excellence with a commitment to academic rigor, service culture and quality assurance. A recent collaboration with EHL Advisory Services LLP, a leading Swiss Tourism & Hospitality Institute was signed to conduct a gap analysis study in Sri Lanka with the aim of improving the quality of tourism education to be on par with global tourism education standards. This reflects the promise to uplift the tourism sector as directed in the National Policy Framework Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour. The Institute is in the process of introducing a four-year certificate programme which will be equivalent to a degree and is expected to commence in 2022. This programme will also be offered to international students. SLITHM additionally plans to commence new programmes to expand its offering to include a Pastry and Bakery programme as well as an Executive-Level Diploma, offered to executives in the industry as a career development programme.

“Women in Sri Lanka’s hospitality industry are highly under-represented - with females accounting for less than 10% of the workforce, compared to the 54% globally”

Q Working with the Alumni of SLITHM (CHSGA) what support & guidance do you expect to get from them?

KF: The support we continue to receive from the CHSGA is tremendous in terms of mentorship, internship opportunities and guidance to our students. It is extremely important for students to have role models in the industry to admire and emulate.

Q With this new job role in which you have to work with the private sector, what plans do you have in order to engage with the private sector?

KF: We currently work very closely with the private sector and collaborate with them in many projects. For Sri Lanka Tourism to grow as a brand, it is vital to synergize efforts between the private and public sector and drive a sustainable and inclusive Sri Lanka Tourism brand. My vision for the sector is to position the destination by differentiating our offering, develop new markets and increase the tourist spend per day. It is also my vision to ensure that all stakeholders, including the SME sector is enabled to reap the benefits of a thriving sector.

Q How do you plan to drive quality of applicants and get more females to join SLITHM

KF: Women in Sri Lanka’s hospitality industry are highly under-represented - with females accounting for less than 10% of the workforce, compared to the 54% globally. We are committed to attract more women into the sector by carrying out awareness campaigns with active community involvement and providing education, training, and support to them. It is important for women in Sri Lanka to know the positive impact they have on the industry; woman are nurturers and service from the heart comes naturally to them, which is why so many women excel in the industry globally. Through our awareness programmes, we want to highlight to women the limitless opportunities available in the industry with tremendous room for growth.

Sri Lanka is positively positioned to welcome the post-pandemic traveller and the current strategies Sri Lanka Tourism is working on will reap rewards once the international borders start opening. We are charting a new course and are undergoing strategic re-engineering to be able to optimize resources and become the highest exchange-earner for the country; while creating jobs and transforming the sector into a sustainable industry, enabling it to finally achieve its potential. The sector will automatically start attracting more promising applicants once the potential in the industry is recognized. ■

Always “Be the woman to fix another woman’s crown”

HOW CAN WOMEN CHAMPION EACH OTHER AT WORK?

BY GITANJALI CHAKRAVARTHY HAALAND

Does a woman support another at work? Most think they don’t – But it’s not true. Women can always support and help other women, lift them and champion each other in many ways. They can celebrate each other’s achievements daily and learn to appreciate coworkers and work towards creating a happy and a levelled playing field at the work place in many ways.

So what can we women do? It’s simple.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO BE HEARD

Most times we notice women prefer to take a back seat or sit at the end of the room at meetings organized for co-workers while men try to get to the front seats. During idea sharing or in group discussions, women get less chances to voice their views and often get interrupted, receiving less credit for their ideas.

Women leaders should always sit at the front, speak up at meetings, and be role models for the others by giving them courage to step up when needed. It is important to encourage young women to share their ideas, prevent anyone from interrupting them while they talk, and appreciate a woman’s ideas while thanking her for her contribution.

Some women may be reluctant to voice their opinion with the fear of being laughed at. Women leaders should advocate their co-workers to speak up. When women speak

less or do not speak at all, it is seen as incompetency and as persons lacking ideas and knowledge. On the other hand when women voice their opinion, they are often called bossy, aggressive and over ambitious. However, when men do the same they are seen as confident and strong. This is the bitter truth. Women leaders should work towards changing this misconception.

Another way to encourage, appreciate and lift a woman is by looking for opportunities to *celebrate women’s accomplishments*, and leaving no room for women to be blamed unfairly for mistakes.

It is seen that women often credit others for their accomplishments and appreciate the help they have received from others. Yet, when accomplishments are celebrated, women are often penalised for self-promotion. It is a known fact that a successful outcome of a woman gets less credit or rather go unnoticed, but will be blamed more for failures.

Women should get together and celebrate one another’s successes whenever possible. Women leaders must take every opportunity to highlight the accomplishments of other women co-workers and give them recognition for their work.

Women sometimes lack self-confidence and are prone to more intense self-doubt, especially when working in hospitality, as society still

to a great extent does not accept a hotel as a suitable workplace for a woman.

Although much work has been done by companies and various interest groups over the years to *create equal opportunities*, to date women face an uneven playing field at work. Job segregation is a clear sign of female performance frequently being underestimated. Women always need to work harder to prove their capability. This has caused women to underestimate their own performance often eroding their level of confidence. Women leaders should entrust their women coworkers with more responsibilities, guide them and boost their confidence in achieving goals, by giving them a helping hand where needed.

Giving direct feedback always helps improves one’s performance be it a women or a man. Women generally show emotional responses to negative feedback. Nevertheless leaders should provide honest and critical feedback. Less input will slow down women, having a negative impact on their performance. Women leaders should share their feedback without hesitating to help their women co-workers to improve skills. It is also important to solicit feedback to show the women coworkers of humble leadership, and that everyone needs feedback to better their performance.

As we all know in the Sri Lankan context and societies in general, a



Natasha Josefowitz beautifully narrated Gender Inequality in her publication, *Women in the Hospitality Industry*.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The family picture is on HIS desk
Ah, a solid, responsible man ■ HE is talking with HIS co-workers
He must be discussing the latest deal ■ HE is having lunch with his boss
He is on the way up ■ HE is getting married
He'll get more settled ■ HE is having a baby
He'll need a raise ■ HE is going on a business trip
It's good for his career ■ HE is leaving for a better job
He knows how to recognize a good opportunity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The family picture is on HER desk
Umm, her family will come before her career ■ SHE is talking with HER co-workers
She must be gossiping ■ SHE is having lunch with the boss
She must be having an affair ■ SHE is getting married
She'll get pregnant and leave ■ SHE is having a baby
She'll cost the company in maternity benefits ■ SHE is going on a business trip
What will her husband say? ■ SHE is leaving for a better job
Women are not dependable |
|--|--|

Source: Women and Men in Management – Natasha Josefowitz, cited in Gary,N. Powell (1993)2nd ed. SAGE publications, Inc, Newbury Park, CA.

mother is always seen as responsible and is expected to bring up the children. Although the fact remains that women who are mothers are able to multi task, there is a false perception that mother's can't be truly invested in both work and family. This is where women in leadership roles who are mothers, who have risen to senior positions, despite the challenges they have faced, should understand and help young mothers build confidence and **support to manage their work by offering flexibility** where necessary.

Most hotel companies have developed mentorship programs for women

where senior women leaders commit time and energy to **mentor and provide guidance**.

Women as fellow superheroes need to constantly uplift and stand by each other. Always remembering that ancient fable being united we stand and divided we fall. It is important to constantly strive to uplift each other as fellow sisters, colleagues, coworkers, subordinates.

Always **“Be the woman to fix another woman’s crown”** - Engage, Encourage and Empower women to build their personality and flourish professionally, reaching the pinnacle in their field of

work. We together as one. That is one for all and all for one. This is how we succeed. There is no other way. ■



GITANJALI CHAKRAVARTHY HAALAND
General Manager – Hilton Yala FCHSGA

FEATURE

POST COVID

CHSGA

AT 50

and Beyond

BY UPUL GAMAGE

In Hotelier parlance, Covid 19 was a Scanty Baggage; a walk-In arrival without a reservation just like an imposing arrogant guest who would walk into a hotel and dictate terms, the pandemic entered and occupied the world uninvited. Little did anyone realize the fact that the kith and kin of Covid in the form of variants would also enter the scene. After a period of almost 2 years, it seems like Covid is reluctant to check out nor indicating an ETD.

It does not help the cause in evicting this unwelcome visitor by having gatherings at the 'After Party' that goes on all night resulting in a struggle for survival for both people and businesses.

PRE COVID SOCIAL EXPLOSION

World was on a roll. Anything and Everything was just a click away whether it be groceries, hardware, vehicles, even education or a holiday with travel. Humans were ruling the world and nature became subservient. Just for a Chicken burger and a drink, many a packing and unnecessary paper and plastics are used. Just to deliver one pizza, 4 Sq Ft of gauge 14 cardboard or corrugated board is used. The boxes are grease laminated to prevent food from sticking which does not make it easily degradable. People do not think of throwing away any equipment if it is not working even though a small repair would make replacement not necessary. "Use and Discard" was the norm instead

of the legendary 3R – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

Covid made the 7.9 Billion humans slow down and take stock of the situation. Animals in the nature reserves were roaming free without disturbance while the human race was confined to the four walls of a house.

However, to the credit of the hospitality industry, Environment protection was a buzz word. Institutions had an officer responsible for Sustainability and was one of the criteria for project approval and classification. Worldwide customers preferred the institutions/airlines that conformed to sustainable environment practices.

HIT TO INDUSTRY AND PERSONNEL

Tourism is a business that is more entertainment oriented. It is glorified, fun and lovely, meeting and greeting new people, cross border friendship-forming and exposure to different cultures, making the whole world one global village, realistically and not digitally. The Hospitality Industry is active 24/7 and a whole plethora of opportunities are open for people of all ages and walks of life.

Sri Lanka Tourism has experienced setbacks many a times before. It is the Industry that is the first to fall and last to get up in any crisis whether it is due to financial, global or terrorism. Stalwarts of the industry, both owners and professionals are witness to this

and are experts in Crisis management and firefighting to survive. Starting from the July 1983 riots, one can list the setbacks spreading over almost 3 decades. In all those instances barring one or two, the industry did not go to Zero. Even when it did, the government would come to help and ensure the situation became conducive to regain business. It was a matter of getting the hotels ready and ensuring the safety of guests for them to flock back again.

The Covid situation and its effects is unprecedented. Hotels can be made Covid-ready and employees vaccinated, but in this instance, customers too are affected either economically or health-wise. More significantly, health safety cannot be assured by the operators since the effects of the Virus will determine its spread and attack all around. Some

of the industries were not affected while many others have evolved to the new normal and started business. However, sadly the Tourism industry has received a knock-out punch and to make it worse, a silver lining is still not on the horizon.

History teaches us that when faced with disaster, People and Nations rose up and started afresh. Way things were done was not practical or feasible anymore. Markets change. Products become obsolete and opportunities arise through the latest needs of people. Japan after the Atom bombs is a classic example of man-made disaster. Covid is nature made.

This situation is best explained in Sinhala using the word “Mahogaya” (මහගයා). Direct translation in English is a flash flood or deluge but the use of the word in Sinhala

literature makes it very pertinent to the current scenario. A Mahogaya happens when the natural path of flow (water / earth / air) is changed over a period of time.

Such changes can happen due to man-made geographical changes. Also it can be due to millions of years of landscape evolution. World history shows us that the world has gone through such changes naturally as well. These situations will create an imbalance of the eco-system and is not naturally feasible anymore. Rectification of such is by the whole area being wiped off and new path established for greater good.

Covid 19 could be the harbinger of change that the world needed and the arrival of a NEW NORMAL.



“NEW NORMAL” WAY OF TOURISM

New Normal. These terms are coined together mostly by analysts and journalists. Whoever did it, they refer it to the new political, economic, social and technological reality after the pandemic; assuming it will be over in a hurry.

Pre Covid was the time people believed that traditional tourism, destination Management companies, tour guides will be replaced by online bookings and Google / Alexa / Siri assisted tour guiding. Pundits wished

the travel and tourism experts to vanish into thin air and replaced by artificial intelligence. It did to a certain extent and many changes took place. Every DMC started an online section as well. Many entrepreneurial IT savvy people with a computer and an internet connection became pajama-wearing home executives. Air BnB made headway with many (economically) desperate housewives becoming hoteliers even with just one room. The FIT market segment became very vulnerable in the eyes of DMCs but the Group, MICE travel remained at least part managed by the traditional travel agent.

New Normal will make Regional Tourism grow stronger. Travelers will want to be in safe and trusted environments and people. Long haul travel in airplane compartments will become least preferred. Future will give a boost to the online and non-human contact tourism in a more hurried manner. Hotel personnel will find it challenging to deliver services with minimal contact. All these segments will have to create new operating procedures to serve.

NEW NORMAL vs DAWN OF PEACE IN 2009

One wonders how long this new normal would continue. New normal procedure enforcement will become lackadaisical after a while. People are known to have short memories.

Security of hotels post 2009 eradication of Terrorism in Sri Lanka took a back seat. Managers enjoyed giving freedom to guests in moving about freely in public areas. Security Managers who were once senior department heads of hotels and in the travel industry lost their clout since security expenses became non-essential for the accountant. Security personnel were almost like guests of the same hotel they worked for and just watched the scenery. Since then, we have become familiar with the ease of operation of terrorists when they carried out the 2019 Easter bomb attack in Sri Lanka.

If one compares the Sri Lankan experience on security and the resultant Easter bomb attack, a similar scenario is evident with the New Normal health and safety protocols. With similar virus attacks in the future, one wonders if a similar fate would befall the industry due to the epidemic guidelines established for hotels.

CHSGA – THE ASSOCIATION

At 50 years, Ceylon Hotel School Graduates Association (CHSGA) can be proud of its' achievements from being an Old Boys unit to a professional set up with a voice in the industry, a fat bank account and many CSR activities. It is always a good feeling to be able to spend without restriction on anything, but in the new normal, the association needs to ensure compatibility or be replaced or perish.

If one analyses the Association, the three stages of CHSGA are: Pre 1990, 90-2009 and Post 2009. As documented by many, pre 1990 was the establishing period with camaraderie and networking given

preference. Very much like a college Old Boys Association, eligible members were small in numbers and everyone knew each other. In fact, the original constitution was an adopted duplicate of STC OBA as stated by the founder President Mr. Malin Hapugoda. This outfit and the unity of members ensured the recognition that the Sri Lankan professionals needed at the time. It resulted in the ouster of original Managers of Tourist establishments who came from Plantation or Military backgrounds, to be replaced by the products of Ceylon Hotel School (CHS).

1990 to 2009 - the CHSGA kept in line with the development of the country and was drafted in to significance by the activities the respective executive committees engaged in. Government mechanism also helped the Association to engage in decision making. Ministers in charge, especially Mr. Dharmasiri Bandaranayake and the Chairman of the Tourist Board Mr. H.M.S. Samaranayake were instrumental in giving the CHSGA prominence. AGM meetings, overnight outings and keynote addresses by prominent people were looked forward to by the membership. However, it was the activities related to Professional development that diverted the attention of the industry towards CHSGA.

As one is aware, the current building of SLITHM was constructed in the 1990s and CHSGA made a significant contribution in making it a reality. With late Mr. Ravi Divitotawela in the Exco who was also appointed as a Consultant to the President and coupled with his will to serve the CHS, the task was made easier. President Kumaratunga gave blanket approval for CHSGA and for Ravi to ensure that the project got off the ground.

During this period, the Exco's key focus was on professional development. The first major Professional development program was organized with a foreign expert on the topic of management. It was spearheaded by Past President Mr. Sumithra Gunasekara in 1995. It became an annual event focused on developing professionalism and also served as a fund raiser. All subsequent

committees carried out several quality programs on an annual basis. The Hotel Show initiated in 1998 was a significant development of the industry and a boon to Sri Lanka. Other tourism related associations were skeptical about the Hotel Show specially during the lean years for tourism. However, CHSGA bravely took the risk and went ahead with the event on Bi – Annual basis. Subsequently with the growing demand, it became an annual event benefitting CHSGA/ Stall Holders / Hoteliers. While facilitating investors, suppliers and industry stakeholders with connectivity, Hotel Show also became the main revenue generator for the CHSGA. Proceeds of the first show was used to fully equip the SLITHM library and many a project in subsequent years. The healthy balance sheet of the Association is attributed to the Hotel Show.

Post 2009, with the dawn of peace in the country, the industry was flooded with many new investors and professionals. To reap the benefits of the new found economic process, professionals who had abandoned the country also started slowly moving in. Sidelining of the industry personnel who weathered the storms for over 25 years was highlighted by a senior Government official who delivered a speech at the THASL AGM in 2010. He said that the country after the defeat of terrorism, attracted enough investors and therefore there was no need to worry about the future. Companies that took risks and didn't give up during worst years were ignored in new developments due to lack of capital. True to his word the Pasikudah development attracted a new set of hoteliers. With the exception of one or two, all were new comers with deep pockets. If one looks at the area now after 12 years, all of them have abandoned ship and many hotels are in the hands of traditional hotel companies.

“Current building of SLITHM was constructed in the 1990s and CHSGA made a significant contribution in making it a reality.”

In this light, CHSGA needs to get the acceptance of Government and Society back again with focus.
Following are the stated objectives of the association.

- Increase the sense of fellowship amongst the Members and assist in the welfare while promoting professional development.
- Render assistance to the SLITHM
- Assist in the (Professional) development of tourism

Association now need a focus on the next ten years how to achieve the goals in the new normal. Overall as in any corporation, CHSGA also must ensure the continuity of business / affairs. So where should the CHSGA be heading?



“While the whole world is going digital, its software development services are also coming at a price.”

MEMBERSHIP 50 & BEYOND

Traditional get together and training programs would be a thing of the past for the next 3 - 5 years or so. Yet, the need to identify and engage promising youngsters to run the association in future is of paramount importance. They must be allowed to participate in the affairs of CHSGA.

Primarily and essentially web-based connectivity must be improved and made functional. Web Page and social media needs to be handled by a full time official who will be available to update member engagements and news.

Secondly the Association need to be decentralized. Current Area Representative System should be

evolved to a CHSGA Cell status. These regional cells of the association must be strengthened and empowered. Such cells will produce the next generation of Leaders for the association. Lack of capable people (in the Association pipeline) have increased the President’s term to two years in the recent past. Until the early 2000s, it was just one year in which the incumbent gives the committee a goal-oriented year. There are however many positives for the two-year term and there is no harm in continuing.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 50 & BEYOND

Sri Lanka’s education system has taken the worst blow with a generation having got their learning stymied.

Same is true for Sports activities of the young. Repercussions of this will be felt in the years to come. It’s going to have a similar impact for Hospitality professionals. If one takes the last two years as experience for the employed, there was hardly any professional development or knowledge gathering.

The need of the hour would be an experience update of new knowledge and trends, especially how the industry is going to be made functional in the new normal. Without further delay, CHSGA needs to engage the professionals on a weekly basis with input on new trends and knowledge using mobile and digital connectivity. **It could be assimilation of knowledge from various forums (Cornell, Skift and many more) by the center and distribution to all members on one platform.**



SLITHM 50 & BEYOND

Personal opinion of the writer is that the government and the officials are looking outward for assistance to develop hospitality education in the country when the homegrown experts are many who would render assistance without profit seeking. While the international exposure in development strategies is needed, there is no necessity to handover the total project to outsiders.

Hospitality education is handled and done by so many outfits of the

Government such as Vocational Training Authority, National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA) and many Ministry and Provincial based institutions with considerable budgets. Sadly, these budgets are done to satisfy goals without purpose and to gain control over funds.

All these institutions have big budget allocations, as state institutions and foreign donations are diverted to Hospitality training, but we do not know how the funds are utilized and results if any. It is worthwhile to note that the SLITHM is practically funded

by the industry through the TDL fund and hardly any foreign or state funding.

CHSGA should form a Hospitality Education cell with so many former lecturers and Training Managers available to impart knowledge and experience. To sustain this outfit, training program profits can be used. While it is functioning, the main objective of this cell is to lobby and get the Sri Lankan hospitality education on one track with one focus with SLITHM being the nucleus driver.

HOTEL SHOW

50 & BEYOND

Hotel Show was born in 1998 at the time the writer was President of the Association. Idea for the SL Hotel Show was from Food & Hotel Asia of Singapore in April 1996. Writer visited the show and was assisted by Mr. E K Tan of Gemini Suppliers who was the kitchen contractor of Golden Sun Resort (Thurya Kalutara). He had a stall and was kind enough to share the details of expenditure of having the stall. Stall charges, when applied to the number of stalls (from the brochure) it was obvious that massive profits were generated by the Organizers. This idea was mooted to the best buddies of Exco namely Late Ravi Divitotawela, Jehan Karunaratne and Lakal Jayasinghe who foresaw the feasibility and value of project. Spade work for the SL Hotel Show was done at the 11D, Tower Building, Colombo 4 where the construction head office for Golden Sun Resort was located. Kumar Senarathne who was the Hotel Development Manager of Jetwing group at the time was drafted in as the Chairman of organizing committee for his access to suppliers of industry and his experience. Thus the Hotel Show 1998 was launched generating a net profit of Rs. 750,000.

At the time of launching Hotel Show, physical / personal connection was the norm of buyer seller interaction. Advertisements were the key and one can remember the Yellow pages! Telephone and personal visits were the way to conclude a business. Visiting cards was an essential tool at every table and every professional.

World has taken a totally new approach to doing business now even before Covid 19. Creating product awareness and Connectivity is mainly digital. A Google search for the product will give ample information to the user to make an informed decision. Resultantly the sellers ensured that the web site and product information was high on search. SEO, Search Engine Optimization became a buzzword.

One of the beneficiaries of the pandemic was the Online selling portals. Our Cricket Team sponsors

Daraz is a classic example. Though an international operation, it is the successor to a pioneering Sri Lankan online portal. Also available are the global brands such as Amazon, Alibaba, and EBay etc. While these are catering to retail markets for the time being, it will not be too long in the future that one can buy an industrial kitchen online or fully furnish a mock up room online.

With the situation as explained, now it is an opportune time for the Hotel Show to go digital and be a 365 day show as opposed to confining it to 3 days annually. With the sellers registered and having their pages linked to the main web page having Hotel Show dedicated pages, this should be a connector of seller and buyer. The 3-day annual affair could be real networking session of the industry where the very successful competitions at the current Hotel Show also take place. All buyers will be easily registered through the membership and THASL and linking up with BOI and SLTDB.

While the whole world is going digital, its software development services are also coming at a price. One can find many small time developers offering solutions for sellers. These will handle basic functions efficiently, even better than when it is done personally and ease the operation for the owner.

However, a complex operation such as the Hotel Show portal will need a world class developer. Good news is that many of the world's best are from Sri Lanka. Along with the Hotel Show development, other objectives of CHSGA such as membership engagement and professional development delivery too can be developed together by one company.

INVESTMENT

50 & BEYOND

It should be borne in mind that this is not going to be a small investment. To the people of Finance committees (in bio secure bubbles!) it can be justified Vis a Vis return. Considering that this is for the future of CHSGA, it is a priority expense. Those who are privy to the AGM documents will note the reserves on Balance sheet.

Therefore, what is needed is the willingness to bite the bullet. Considering the survival during and after the New Normal, it is imperative for the CHSGA to part with or more wisely, Invest 25% of the wealth on digital world.

At 50 years of CHSGA and looking back, Office bearers of each year can hold their heads high and claim their contribution as an alumni.

It is the duty of current office bearers to lay the foundation for similar sentiments to be felt by the next generation for another 50 years and to say that we have been up to the task in this Post Covid era. ■

“
One of the beneficiaries of the pandemic was the Online selling portals”
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UPUL GAMAGE
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Past President of CHSGA

MY JOURNEY THROUGH CEYLON HOTEL SCHOOL

BETWEEN 1972 AND 1975

BY SHAFEEK WAHAB



“Life is an adventure...if not it is boring”

It was in 1971, the year I sat for my GCE (AL) examination, when I decided to halt my further studies. Leaving school, I was fortunate to quickly land a job at Ceylon Paints – a subsidiary of Collette’s Ltd. (Car Dealer for Holden), as a trainee laboratory assistant attached to their facility, located at the newly opened Industrial Zone in Ekala, Jaela. The unfortunate thing was that it meant a near two-hour daily commute to / from work, – each way, involving catching three buses (Dehiwela to Pettah to Jaela to Ekala and vice versa), including a 20 minute walk to the workplace after getting off the bus. Leaving home every day, Monday to Saturday at 6.00 am to return home after work at almost 7.30 pm (Saturday at 3.00 pm) completely wrecked my work/life balance. It was a harsh introduction to the ‘real world’ – but one that taught me ‘self-control’ at an early age, and the importance of spending every precious ‘free from work’ moment to the max. Soon though, I realised that I had to get off this bus to nowhere... if I was to catch up with my true destiny.

As fate would have it, I happened to meet Nirmo Thambapillai who befriended me after a cricket match we had played, some time earlier. He excitedly informed me that he was following a hotel management course at the Ceylon Hotel School. Nirmo spoke enthusiastically about the programme and appeared thrilled to be learning the dynamics of hospitality. He advised me to consider joining the hotel field as a profession. I guess listening to him talk about it, fuelled my curiosity towards this hardly known industry, little knowing that this chance meeting with him was, but a prelude of things to come...

The following week I went to watch the film ‘The French Connection’ at the Savoy Cinema. Usually, the main film is screened after the interval. Before that, the audience is shown a preview of the ‘soon to be screened’ new movies, and a government propaganda release, titled ‘Weekly News by GFU’ (Government Film Unit). Coincidentally, what was shown that particular day, happened to be a short documentary about the Ceylon Hotel School - showing students smartly clad in uniforms, cooking in the state-of-the-art training kitchen, serving guests in an elegant restaurant and several classroom scenes. Fate or destiny it seemed was propelling me somehow towards hospitality.

By now, I had made a life-changing decision. I was somehow going to follow the management course at the hotel school.

This contradicted my earlier decision, taken after leaving college, to discontinue with further studies. However, I had no clear vision or path to the future and realised that I must take charge of my own destiny. Reaching a decision only solves half the equation. One has to act on the decision, or it is no decision at all. I had to have a plan to get myself selected for the next intake (in 1972), which I learned was four months away from when the call for applications is advertised. Learning that the principal at the school was a German and that the German government was awarding scholarships to Germany to the three students who topped-the -batch when graduating, for further training, I immediately enrolled to follow German language classes (2-hours -every Saturday).

No sooner applications were publicized; I submitted mine and was thrilled to be called for an interview. I had passed the first barrier of entry. I began preparing myself for the interview by practicing answers to as many imaginary questions I anticipated that might be thrown at me. There were three persons on the interviewing board when I went for my interview. I learnt their names later – they were Mr. Eardley Edirisinghe (Vice Principal), Mr. Desmond Fernando (Lecturer – Restaurant & Bar Services) and Mr. Napper (Instructor – Kitchen Operations), and who was an Englishman. As the interview began, that inevitable question, “why do you want to join the hotel Industry?” queried Mr. Napper. My reply, “I want to see the world and my first step towards that goal is to do well in my studies

and win a scholarship to Germany”, was met with an “Aahhh...” from a grim looking Mr. Fernando, who then shot back a question, “Sprechen Sie Deutsch?, (“Do you speak German?”), To which I replied “Guten Tag Meine Herren, Ja, aber ein bisschen, da ich noch die sprache studier“, (Good day gentlemen, Yes, but a little as I’m still learning the language”). Mr. Fernando’s grin made my confidence level soar. Mr. Edirisinghe, who had been quiet until then, asked me “Mr. Wahab, tell us what you know about the hotel industry?” This was another question I had expected. Speaking in a measured tone, I said, “I know that people get to sleep, eat, drink and work or relax in a hotel – be it on business or holiday. But, that’s the tip of the iceberg as seen by a guest. I want to dive deep into its operations and learn everything about it”. I instinctively felt I had clinched a place when I saw the vigorous nods of approval from the interviewers. Two weeks later, I was notified of my selection to join the year 1972 intake to follow the 3-year Diploma Course in Hotel and Catering Operations. Vaya

con diyos Ceylon paints...Ayurbowan Ceylon Hotel School!

The first week at Ceylon Hotel School was exciting. It was a new environment, new people and a new hope for the future. That week, there was no real study; we were talked through our course, introduced to our lecturers and generally oriented to what we can expect and were expected to do. Excitement soon turned to apprehension when in the second week we encountered the scourge of ‘ragging’ which somehow had crept into the Hotel school. Ragging is a form of teasing aimed at breaking down barriers and making new students bond with seniors. Sadly, ragging in Sri Lankan universities has become a tool of violent action and bullying – to satisfy the egos of seniors who see it as a means of humiliating the new students. Fortunately, the majority of our seniors were mature enough to prevent excesses.

Looking back, it had its moments of fun, although, there were times some batch mates found it a tad uncomfortable.



Front Row (left to right)

Sunil Dissanayake, Chandana Amarawardane, the writer and Sumithra Gunesekera.

All four went on to hold the office of President – Ceylon Hotel School Graduates Association in subsequent years.

I recall batchmate WKP coming to school on the 3rd day of ragging, with his arm in a sling and a long face - claiming that he fell off the bus and had badly bruised his elbow. Chris Isaac, a senior quickly saw that he was pretending, and he was punished - to walk around with a placard around his neck, with the words, “I tried to con my way out of the rag – please punish me”. Decent ragging develops ‘closeness’ with seniors- one that can last a lifetime. Most seniors turn into big brothers who one can count on whenever you join a new place.

Other hilarious anecdotes in my time at Hotel School, (too many to write down), include Mr. Dias Abeysinghe, asking batchmate BR during restaurant service, to recommend a sweet red wine that would complement the main meat dish. BR blurted out ‘VAT 69’. Another time Coco Siriwardene, our French language teacher asked us to come prepared for the next lesson with a sentence that began with ‘Je sui.....’. At a group study session, each of us picked up a sentence and practiced pronouncing it with the help of a few batch mates who knew some French. Came the next French class and we each rattled off our sentence fluently until it came to SG’s turn. Stuck momentarily with amnesia...he stuttered a bit and blurted out “Je sui un ventilateur” (“I am a fan”).

During our 1st year at Hotel School, (each year consisted of two semesters), we focused mainly on the operational side of hospitality, including: kitchen, service, reception and housekeeping. The 2nd and 3rd years included a two-month stint of Industrial training (IT). IT was mandatory -where students worked in a star category hotel to receive exposure in four major operational departments of the hotel, namely; - Front office, House Keeping, Food & Beverage and Catering operations. This is training, where we get to sharpen our newly acquired knowledge and skills in a ‘real world’ working environment. The IT experience helps influence career plans including deciding on areas to specialize in, when joining the industry after graduating.

Industrial training meant we received meals whilst on duty and accommodation (where needed), with no payment of any allowance. This was the understanding between the Hotel School and the hotels that agreed to provide IT. My first IT stint was at the Ceylon Intercontinental Hotel, where, together with my batch mate Rohan De Mel, we were assigned to work in the Kitchen. This was during December- January 1973/74 – a very busy period indeed. By the end of my IT period, I had decided that working in the kitchen was not in my career plan – although I had enjoyed every moment of it. To our surprise the hotel

decided to pay Rohan and myself Rs. 900/- each (50% of the two months service charge aggregate). It was a hugely unexpected bonanza and I guess recognition that we both worked really hard and did the Hotel School proud. I immediately put aside this princely sum of money to pay for my monthly school fee right until the completion of my entire course without burdening my parents. My 2nd IT stint was at the Blue Lagoon Hotel in Negombo where I chose to work at the Front Office.

The teaching staff during our time was symbolic of the best

that the Ceylon Hotel School had to offer. In particular, the six past graduates of the Ceylon Hotel School, who after following further training in Germany, returned to lecture at Ceylon Hotel School. Namely; Mr. Rohan Dias Abeysinghe, Mr. Felix Bartholomeuze, Mr. Desmond Fernando, Mr. Rohan De Silva Jayasundera, Mr. Kumar Thambiyah and the Late Sahinda Wegodapola.



Left to Right

Top Row:

Mr. Rohan Dias Abeysinghe, Mr. Felix Bartholomeuze, Mr. Desmond Fernando,

Bottom Row:

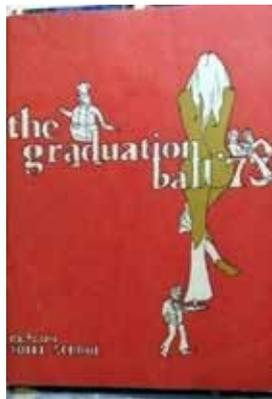
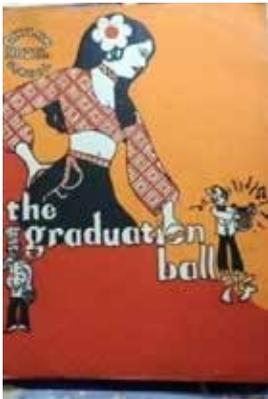
Mr. Rohan De Silva Jayasundara, Kumar Thambiyah, and Mr. Sahinda Wegodapola

Although relatively young, they demonstrated extraordinary capabilities of synergizing insights, outside of their specific disciplines with their own areas of knowledge. They instilled in us an understanding of the bigger picture and the ability to think critically, both in the local and global context. The methods of teaching they did, the way of life they exemplified and the part they played in shaping our destinies, best illustrated the central purpose of an excellent educational institution. Another was Mr. Eardley Edirisinghe, who was fond of quoting extensively from Dale Carnegie's bestseller 'How to win friends and influence people'. Mr. Edirisinghe was a master orator. Once, when seated at his table during lunch, he told me "Communicating is easily the single most important job of leaders. If leadership is mostly about influence, then, the ability to communicate a vision and motivate people to move towards that vision is the single most important characteristic a leader can have. The problem is, communication is hard. Sometimes people don't understand the message we want to communicate. Sometimes we do a really poor job of expressing what we mean" - words that stuck forever in my mind. As testament to their unique teaching pedagogy, hotel employers were consistently impressed by the quality of students nurtured by the Ceylon Hotel School - where the graduates enjoyed a consistently high rate of employment close to 100%.

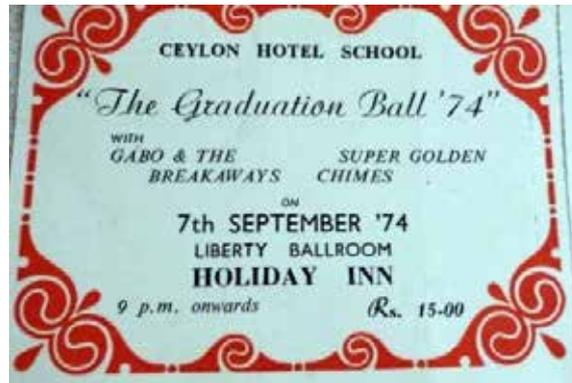
Studying at the Ceylon Hotel School opened a new horizon in front of me and the lessons I learned, did not come

only from the books we read, the classes we followed and the practical's that we underwent - both in the training kitchen and restaurant. It went far beyond. Sticking to the timetable; homework, and projects; exam revision and exams, industrial training; participating in sports, welfare and social activities including getting involved in organizing the 'Graduation Ball' (for the passing out graduates)... was all very much part of the mix. There were exciting moments and some turbulent ones. They all came together and changed me from the person I was at the start of my academic education to becoming a better human being when I completed my three years at Ceylon Hotel School.

Getting involved in extra-curricular activities ensured that we stuck a healthy balance between studying and developing our skills and knowledge in different contexts. The organizing of the 'Graduation Ball' which was the responsibility of the 1st and 2nd year students was one great opportunity. My appointment in my 2nd year as the Chairman of the 'Graduation Ball 1974 - Organizing Committee was a further opening to develop transferable skills such as communication, teamwork, organisation, problem solving, event and time management, not forgetting the associated element of fun! By then I had realised that holding a position of authority in one of the 'biggest' hospitality- related social events (as the 'Graduation Ball' was then considered in Colombo's annual social calendar- (where tickets were 'sold out' no sooner available), would enhance my resume when looking for jobs.



Cover pages; 'Graduation Ball'73' and 'Graduation Ball'74'



Graduation Ball'74 Entrance ticket priced at Rs.15/- per person inclusive of dinner and complimentary beverages



When students were asked to submit designs for the dance souvenir cover, with the winner receiving a complimentary

ticket for the Dance, my artwork was selected as the best entry for the 1973 and 1974 dance souvenirs, respectively. Artwork for the entrance ticket from yours truly was also accepted. There was no technology in those days to support digital artwork, etc. It had to be all drawn and painted by hand.

The writer receiving the 'Riches Cup' for the 'Most Outstanding Student of the 3-year Diploma Course' in 1975

Despite all that was happening around me each day, my determination to win a scholarship to Germany remained unwavering. Throughout my entire time at Ceylon Hotel School, I never allowed the events and unfolding circumstances to distract my perspective of 'always beginning with the end in mind'.

What started as an aspiration to attend the Ceylon Hotel School 49 years ago, after making a decision on a career path... culminated 3 years later with a final walk across the stage to collect my Diploma, receive the 'Riches



The writer presenting the 'Vote of Thanks' at the 1975 Graduation Ceremony

Trophy' for the Most Outstanding Student of the 3-year Diploma Course", be awarded a Scholarship to Germany and to present the 'Vote of Thanks' at my own Graduation Ceremony. My time at the Ceylon Hotel School was truly an amazing and adventurous journey. ■



SHAFEEK WAHAB
FCHSGA
Past President of CHSGA

MY MOST MEMORABLE 13 MONTHS AT **THE CEYLON HOTEL SCHOOL** BY DR. CHANDANA (CHANDI) JAYAWARDENA DPHIL

A ROUGH START

On Sunday, 10th October, 1971 I arrived at the Ceylon Hotel School (CHS) hostel located at 78 Galle Road, Colombo 3 (the current location of SLTDA and SLITHM). The next day I had my orientation and the first class as a first-year student of the three-year Diploma Program in Hotel & Catering Operations. I was in the sixth batch of this program. I had 28 batchmates between the ages of 18 and 21. At 17+ I was underage and was the youngest in my batch.

On Monday, 11th October, 1971, I did not need any help from my alarm clock, to wake up early to go from the CHS hostel to CHS for our first day orientation. All freshers were rudely awoken around 5:00 am by a handful of loud-mouthed second year students, who were the designated ragging leaders. We were lined up on the basketball court at the hostel, and were forced to do 50 push ups. When one senior heard that I was a Judo fighter, my rag harassment was doubled to keep me under control. That meant 100

push ups for me, every morning, during the ragging week. We were strictly instructed to address all senior students of CHS as Lord Veterans.

We then had a cold shower in a large bathroom with 20 shower heads, but no partitions. This was worse than what I had experienced during my annual visits to Diyatalawa army camp as a cadet. After dressing up and having breakfast, we were ordered by seniors to line up in pairs. As commanded by the ragging leaders, we marched for a few minutes from the CHS hostel to Samudra Hotel building, opposite the Galle Face Green (current location of Taj Samudra Hotel), where CHS was located. A ritual of the CHS's ragging was that the freshers f**ers (as we were called) had to stop marching briefly to salute every female we passed during our morning routine along the Galle Road.

GERMAN WELCOME AT THE HISTORIC BUILDING

We nervously entered a historic, 100-year-old colonial building which housed CHS and a 10-bedroom Samudra Hotel, both which were both managed by the Ceylon Tourist

Board. This was the original location of the famous Colombo Club built in 1871.



An aerial shot of CHS and the Hotel Samudra building in 1971.

“Guten Morgen!” We were welcomed to CHS by its German Principal, Herr Reinhold Sterner flanked by two German lecturers and a Swiss-German Maître d’hôtel. From his stern look, I knew at once that the Principal disliked my long curly hair, moustache, side burns, thick belt, and the ‘groovy’ bell bottoms. Later that day, I was compelled to shave off my

moustache and shorten my hair. We were more comfortable with the Sri Lankan faculty led by Mr. Eardley Edrisinha, Vice Principal, who impressed us during the orientation by remembering the full names of all 28 of my batchmates. Mine was the only name he did not remember. Perhaps that was owing to my poor performance at the interview.



Marching in to CHS. I am in the front row with side burns.

Later, we met four 1969 graduates from the very first batch of CHS who had undergone two years of postgraduate industrial and teacher training in West Germany on Carl Duisberg Society scholarships. They returned to join CHS as Lecturers to understudy the experienced European lecturers. They were in their mid or late 20s, fluent in German, dressed well, and were generally more friendly with the students. We were inspired by them. Among the students, we referred to these four Lecturers, affectionately as Batha, Dias Abey, Silva Sir and Desma. There were several excellent part-time teaching staff, but we were far more interested in a young and beautiful German lady with long blond hair, and often clad in fashionable miniskirts, who taught German at CHS.

CULTURE SHOCK

All communication at CHS was done in English, although we communicated mainly in Sinhala when at the hostel. One thing we were not free to do at home or high school before joining CHS was smoking. Therefore, we were shocked when a young lecturer - Mr. Rohan De Silva offered us cigarettes when we dined at his table. His table quickly become the most popular among students. We felt like adults at that point. Almost all male adults smoked at that time, and it was cool. We were also impressed with then trendy West German shirts with an embroidered Black (Schwartz) Rose worn by the Principal, as well as, most of our West German born or trained lecturers.

We were fortunate that in the style of Germanic education, CHS was a hands-on school. We had lots of practical training or lab sessions. We basically had practical labs everyday - International Cookery, Ceylonese Cookery and Restaurant Service twice a week. The fifth day we had to practice dining etiquette as customers in the training restaurant, and on alternative weeks we had to wash dirty dishes, which I hated. I also disliked spending the whole morning of many Saturdays cleaning CHS - kitchen, restaurant, classrooms, toilets etc.



My batch mates in the CHS kitchen, learning the basics.

I was told that cleaning and washing dishes at CHS was a good starting point for anyone who eventually wants to become a Hotel Manager. I did not believe it then, and got into trouble at CHS when I criticised that activity as free labour. Fifty years later, I would recommend it to any aspiring hotelier, as once one climbs the steps of the

career ladder, one never gets a second chance to gain such experiences. I also learnt during my CHS days that all jobs in hotels from Dish Washer to General Manager are equally important in ensuring customer satisfaction and successful business results.

BECOMING LORD VETERANS



A cross section of my batchmates enjoying our hostel life.

Soon after the ragging week in 1971, we gradually commenced enjoying our CHS hostel life and establishing life-long friendships. A year later, in October 1972, my batch mates surpassed that Fresher F***er (FF) stage and we all became Lord Veterans. That title has lasted for a long time.

In 1972, when CHS Principal Sterner returned from his summer vacation in West Germany, we noticed that he had cut his hair very short in keeping with then popular 'Crew Cut' style. We called it 'The Sterner Cut'. Several of my batch mates were then the ragging leaders. One evening during the ragging week in 1972, my batch mate, good friend and body builder Neil Maurice told me that during the summer break he learnt hair dressing, but needed to practice his newly acquired skill to become perfect at it. To support my friend's ambition, I lined up all 28 FFs from CHS batch # seven and told them that in consideration of their good behaviour, they will be rewarded with a free haircut by an expert Barber.

Neil did a lousy job with the first haircut. Consuming a couple of shots of Gal Arrack prior to the haircutting was not a good idea. Having cut some extra hair on one side of the first FF in line, Neil tried to balance it by cutting more hair on the other side of the head. At that point, I told Neil, "Machang, this looks like the Sterner Cut." Neil was motivated. The bottom line was that after three hours of aggressive mass hair cutting, we had 28 heads that looked like Herr Sterner's head. Next morning, FFs marched to CHS to be greeted by Herr Sterner. Baffled by seeing near bold first-year students, the Principal asked, "What happened!?" We said in unison, "Sterner Cut, Sir!". He did not comment and was not amused. At that moment we realised that we had crossed the line and overdone our ragging. Later that day, someone influential had complained to the parliament of Sri Lanka that there were human right violations by the second-year students of CHS.

FRIENDS FOR LIFE

We quickly organised the 1972 rag ending welcome booze party at the hostel and became friends with all 28 new students. I became a life-long friend with most of those colleagues in the batch junior to me, particularly because they were closer to my age than my own batch mates. Forty-nine years later all their CHS buddies still address some of these FFs by the funny nicknames we gave them during the CHS rag in 1972. These nicknames include, Arthur Aiyya, Johnny Weeraya, Boothaya, Chabba, Maw Maw, Herr Hartmann (as this FF, Saman looked like the cartoon character in our German language text book). Ragging is a bad thing and I am happy that ragging stopped at CHS in 1973.

I administer a private Facebook group I founded in 2011. It is branded as 'CHS Lord Veterans', where nearly hundred CHS colleagues who graduated with the original three-year diploma between 1969 and 1976, are connected around the world. The members of this exclusive group regularly share past, present and futuristic posts. Most are retired now and sadly over a dozen members have passed away in the recent years. Another recent initiative is a WhatsApp group branded as, 'Seftonites - 66-76' exclusively for those CHS colleagues who lived in our good old hostel – Shefton, named after an original expatriate faculty member. This WhatsApp group is very active with several general posts and comments every day. The bonding we made at CHS is very special.



'The Clean Dozen' - The team of 12 who guided my batch during our first year at CHS, taken in July 1972.

(Left to right)

Mr. Desmond Fernando - Lecturer in Restaurant and Bar Service, Mr. Rohan Dias Abeysinghe - Lecturer in Restaurant and Bar Service
Mr. Stanley Goonatilleke - Hostel Warden, Mr. Jorge Müller - ILO Expert Maître d'hôtel (Swiss), Mr. Lothar Kollmann - Expert Lecturer in Restaurant and Bar Service (West German), Mr. Eardley Edrisinha - Vice Principal, Mr. Reinhold Sterner - Principal (West German), Mrs. Carmen Gomes - Lecturer in Ceylonese Cookery, Mr. Helmut Belling - Expert Lecturer in Kitchen Operations (West German), Mr. Robert Napper - ILO Expert in Kitchen Operations (British), Mr. Felix Bartholomeusz - Lecturer in Cookery, Mr. Rohan De Silva - Lecturer in Front Office and Housekeeping

CHS NOSTALGIA LIVES ON...

A good location, modern facilities, well-established industry connections, proper student recruitment, current and relevant curriculum are all important ingredients for a good hotel school. However, it is the quality of dedicated faculty that eventually defines a great hotel school. CHS was blessed to have that. I will end this short article by listing the 12 people who guided my batch during our first year at CHS. As all of them were well-groomed and clean cut, I call them 'The Clean Dozen'.

The overall education I received at CHS provided me a strong foundation to build my career around the world

over the last 50 years. I thank Ceylon Hotel School and our dedicated members of faculty in 1971 and 1972, from the bottom of my heart! ■



DR. CHANDANA (CHANDI) JAYAWARDENA
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A hand is shown pointing towards the word 'NEW' which is spelled out on the top faces of several dice. The dice are arranged in a row on a wooden surface. The word 'NORMAL' is spelled out on the bottom faces of the dice. The background is a blurred green field.

THE

AND THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR

Sri Lanka Tourism is looking forward optimistically to the upcoming winter season. The tourism authorities have been introducing various measures to attract tourists from various destinations. In pre-COVID times, bookings would start coming in from around August/September, and although a few inquiries are coming in – there are not many finalized bookings. Many countries that opened up to tourists closed again in the summer. Countries in the Asia-Pacific region keep rescheduling their opening dates for international tourists. Yet, all the stake holders keep their hopes live, wanting the industry to bounce back sooner than later. While this has brought misery for those who love to travel, it's brought decimation for airlines, hotels, and tourism operators

Today, as much of Asia begins to emerge from lockdown, an industry that accounts for about 10% of world GDP is looking towards the new normal. And travellers, many of whom have been largely confined to their homes for months, are starting to dream again of beaches, mountains and monuments. Yet reopening travel presents its own challenges.

In keeping with guidelines recommended by world health experts, Sri Lanka as a nation is being recognized as a country that is vaccinating its population according to international standards, which bodes well for Sri Lanka's tourism industry in year 2022. Isn't this a great news for all?.

Since the first vaccine dose was administered in late 2020, more than 6.03 billion doses have been administered across 180 countries. This unprecedented effort has brought more signs of recovery than even and hope of a return to some sort of normality in a near future. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently estimated that the global recovery is progressing broadly in line with its projections of growth for 2021/22.

The latest and highly encouraging news from Denmark is that it has become the only European nation with no COVID-19 curbs, doing away with the requirement to show vaccine passports to enter nightclubs as it cautiously embraces a return to normal. New infections have eased off in Denmark as vaccine rates have climbed, reaching over 70% of the overall population. But as the

Scandinavian country looks ahead to a new post-pandemic reality, the WHO has warned that vaccines alone may not end the pandemic and that virus could be around for longer than anticipated.

While some of the countries in the Europe Union (EU) and others are welcoming tourists, some are still debating whether or not to allow tourists in. Countries deemed to be safe have seen surges. Travel restrictions are constantly fluctuating due to vaccination programmes in potential source markets. Each country has its own regulations, which can be changed at any time, so this article is written with the knowledge at the time of writing, but also with the understanding that things can change.

Clearly, the world is never going to be the same and the foremost task for the tourism industry is to find the best solutions to get back on our feet. Challenges will remain but the industry must go on, provided that we, the stakeholders, implement the right strategies and work together with a common agenda.



A SAFER ENVIRONMENT

crucial training before it can start to host guests in what will be a new era for travel.

In-house sanitation, mandatory distancing guidelines and operating the hotel inventory at a lesser capacity will help more tightly packed properties obtain similar protocols that larger properties are able to maintain with full occupancy.

Ample hygiene-related precautions need to be taken when it comes to the preparation and service of food and beverages. To ensure this, food safety departments at hotels/resorts must be proactive and ensure a stringent list of standards across all hotel and restaurant outlets.

Mandatory distancing guidelines between dining tables are easily manageable in larger properties, but they must be strictly implemented and practiced.

In general, stricter monitoring is going to be needed to ensure all staff and guests comply with official regulations and internal guidelines around health. All stakeholders must be part of this process, including staff, guests and vendors.



The slowdown all around us has given us time to take stock of what we need to do. Recently a known hotelier expressed his views and told me how's getting ready by strategizing how best he can ensure the safety and wellbeing of future visitors:

Mandatory check-in protocols which include accredited COVID-19 negative test reports, as well as infrared thermometers and sanitisations are of primary importance. The house-keeping department of every hotel requires



INVEST IN YOUR DIGITAL FUTURE

Since COVID-19 hit, digital booking has become an even bigger part of the overall volume. As we see physical travel agencies now moving towards more online options. It is easy to see that the already declining traditional ways to book hotel rooms are now doomed. Eventually, digitalization will take over the whole hotel booking market. Some key pointers for hotel owners to ensure they are not left behind by digitalization:

MAKE A DIGITAL MEDIA SCHEDULE:

Dedicate some time every day to posting content online. Use a social media scheduler to improve efficiency and save time.

ATTEND TO YOUR CUSTOMERS AND LET THEIR OPINION SHINE ONLINE:

Get listed on review websites and social media to improve your online reputation.

DIVERSIFY YOUR ONLINE DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS:

Even though Online Travel Agencies (OTAs)' conditions are less than ideal, it is still important to be present on many of them to optimize your hotel's online presence. This kind of window can be a gateway to more profitable selling platforms, particularly your own website. Indeed, almost half of the users that see your hotel on OTAs check your website for more information and possibly secure better deals.

WWW.

IMPROVE YOUR OWN WEBSITE:

Far too often, hotels neglect the importance of a visually pleasing and efficient website. Aim to have a well-organized platform with the right tools and pictures that ultimately convinces your users to stay at your hotel. The investment put into enhancing your online reputation is hardly ever wasted.

WORK ON A DIRECT BOOKING STRATEGY:

In line with the last recommendation, having good incentives for users to book directly on your website can significantly increase your margins. Make sure you have an efficient conversion funnel and let your clients know the best way to book is direct

A PEOPLE-CENTRED BUSINESS

The high turnover rate has consistently been a problem in the hospitality industry. As the labour shortage is becoming a significant problem and increasing labour cost is growing as a trend in the hospitality, restaurants and the other hospitality business should be alert to these challenges and be well prepared, find out efficient solutions or adopt new operating concepts to thrive their business in this special time. As the increasing labour cost is going to be a long-term trend in the hospitality industry, operators

and employers should come up with creative ways to maintain their current employees and attract more employees, without harming the profit of the operation.

Considering switching your current business to a new operating model, such as a ghost (virtual) kitchen or a virtual restaurant, will help save a lot of money; employing more high-tech solutions and robotics in store to take place of some of the labour



you need, to overcome the problem of labour shortage; adapting convenient and high-tech delivery concepts in your operation is also a good way to help you overcome the labour shortage and increasing labour cost problems

Amidst the uncertainty about job security, it critical to keep employee morale high. This is a great time to ramp up your people management skills by keeping the team united by regularly updating them of the

hotel's evolution and business expectations.

Empower employees with digital tools to work from home and keep motivation levels high to train your teams, whether frontline or back office. In the ultimate analysis how honest and empathetic you are with employees will determine loyalty.



BE FLEXIBLE

Considering the disruption caused by the pandemic, hotels will have to be flexible to navigate the last-minute challenges in a mutually suitable manner to accommodate guests. It might be wise to update cancellation policies, including new measures specifically for epidemics, natural disasters, and different levels of international alert. Hotels might even have to offer free cancellations against local, international restrictions or for cancellations of large events and allow modifications up to 24 hours before arrival for current and future prepaid reservations.

In the case of unexpected extended stays, it would bode well for hotels to offer comfort with more flexible upgrades that allow guests to have a better room to be able to work from and to have more space. Being flexible with check-in and check-out times will help to prevent your guests from waiting on the street or in common areas spending unnecessary time in close proximity to others due large lines.

LOOKING AHEAD

The future of travel in a post-COVID-19 world is going to be closely related to confidence. As such, it is imperative hotels provide prospective travellers with the confidence that they will be in a secure environment when they travel. It's all going to be very new for everyone concerned. Whether it becomes normal, time will tell. ■



EKSATH WIJERATNE
HEAD OF LEISURE – LOLC GROUP
FCHSGA
Past President of CHSGA

www.chsga.lk



THE SHOW OF SHOWS – HOTEL SHOW

BY KUMAR SENARATNE & TREVINE GOMEZ



It was the year 1998 that saw the 1st ever HOTEL SHOW in Sri Lanka at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall and probably the first in the world with its brand name! Whilst there have been numerous hospitality exhibitions in the world that presented themselves with their own identity such as Hospitality Asia, Food Asia, Hotel Asia, HORECA etc. but the description fitting into a brand name came to be with this particular trendsetting HOTEL SHOW owned & patented by Ceylon Hotel School Graduates Association. Hotel Show Dubai, Hotel Show Africa, Hotel Show Saudi Arabia followed suit since the ground breaking HOTEL SHOW 1998 of Sri Lanka.

Its humble beginning was the result of CHSGA's Executive Committee's (EXCO) desperate search of ways to raise funds to carry out its numerous activities. Its meagre income at the time from membership fees, few sponsorships etc. had its limitations on the role that the CHSGA wanted to play as a professional body of the Tourism industry. Among many ideas brainstormed the EXCO settled down to organize a biennial exhibition of supplies & services required by the hospitality industry of Sri Lanka as well as star studded musical events, annually. Three such musical shows were presented at the BMICH. 'Rajiv & Corrine in Concert', '5Star Explosion' & 'Chiran Jayathu' with Maestro Amaradeva were staged with

great success but HOTEL SHOW continued up to now that started initially as a biennial event and then as an annual event since 2012. It grew into a phenomenal event of the Tourism industry that all stakeholders looked forward to. It was initially planned to be held on the alternative year to Singapore's Food & Hotel Asia.

It was to be a Window of Opportunity for both the investors of the hospitality industry, developers, designers, hospitality professionals etc. as well as for numerous suppliers of goods & services, particularly to the hospitality industry, catering sectors and multitude of allied service providers. It was felt that the absence of an event of such nature was a big vacuum for a most promising industry that the country was geared for and to its economic development. Many investors travelled overseas incurring heavy expenses and time to source goods required in their developments even though they could meet only a handful of suppliers on such visits. The HOTEL SHOW opened an ideal B2B opportunity for customers to meet around 400 suppliers and service providers of most of their requirements for their projects & businesses as well as for suppliers & service providers to meet over 5000 customers with multitude of requirements in a period of just 3 days under one roof, without leaving the country.

The exhibitor profile covered a

Prior to hotel show being conceived in Sri Lanka, we hotel operators had to travel overseas to meet suppliers, learn new trends wasting our hard earned money. I am delighted Kumar & CHSGA had the courage and determination to introduce the Hotel Show to Sri Lanka which was beneficial to all, hotel operators, suppliers and to CHSGA.

Hiran Cooray

Former Chairman- Tourist Hotels Association of Sri Lanka, PATA, Jetwing Symphony PLC, The Lighthouse Hotel PLC

variety of quality, international & and local brands whilst customer profile varied from small to international large hotel chains including regular visitors from Maldives & India and buyers from allied industries.

Electrolux, Zanussi, Gaggia, Sambonnet, WMF, Lanka Porcelain, Dankotuwa, Lanlo, Mitsubishi, Lavazza, Nestle, Libbys, Slumberland, Arpico, Singer, Hayleys, MD, JVD, CIC, Nippolac, LG, Panasonic etc. were prominently present. Products ranged from Professional Kitchen & Restaurant equipment & machinery, Power generators, switchgear & safeties, Engineering & Maintenance products, Housekeeping/Hotel Linen, uniforms, Furniture, Banquet items, Interior Decoration items, numerous building products, Paints & finishes, Lock systems & ironmongery, Range of foods & beverages, Garden requirements, Computers & software systems etc. etc. making the exhibition a worthy visit to anyone.

Abdul Rahims, Singer, Pragmatic International, Suyamas International played a key contributor role at most events been Platinum, Gold or Silver sponsors while Ms. Sperrys has been a key sponsor at every single exhibition from its inception.

Despite numerous ups & down the tourism industry faced every now & then due to the civil war that lasted almost for 3 decades since 1983, that marred the industry, the country had much hope towards tourism as the best industry it has for its economic resurgence. The HOTEL SHOW over the years since its inception contributed towards developing and upgrading a hospitality plant that could match with any international competition and obviously contributing for Sri Lanka to be the best destination to visit in 2018, 2019, 2020 consecutively.

The CHSGA that started in 1971 had its beginnings as a mere old Boy's Welfare outfit of Ceylon Hotel School Graduates and held events of camaraderie for its members.

Over the years it evolved to become a fully-fledged professional body to be one of the oldest and respected associations of the Tourism Industry of the country. It is also the only tourism body that is incorporated by an Act of Parliament of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. The act no 21 of 1984 gave impetus and an enormous recognition to the association and loaded a great responsibility to remain a key player towards the betterment of this valuable industry. HOELSHOW became CHSGA's key revenue generator to strengthen its kitty for funding most of its events organized such as National Bar Tender's competition, Wine Sommelier Competition, PROPEL- Soft skills training workshop for SLITHM students, Gastronomy Voyage-a culinary training event for students to enhance professional skills as well as numerous CSR projects for the members, students at difficult times as well as to deserving social welfare bodies to name a few. Likewise it has taken care of the most of the expenses of maintaining CHSGA secretariat at SLITHM building.

For putting together an exhibition brand of high quality with all details looked into and for its continued growth the Professional Exhibition Organisers (PEOs) have contributed immensely with intricate planning. Mr Imran Hassan currently of CDC Conventions and formerly with LECS has been involved with most HOTEL SHOWS since 1998 except for two events that were organized by others.

The HOTEL SHOW logo is a design that reflects Happiness & Relaxation brought together in harmony; as much as the true sense of Hospitality. Hence it deviated from the ordinary displaying of equipment or services in its branding, but stayed with the subtlety of ultimate expectation of customers of Hospitality. Jayantha Sittampalam of Cemeron Pale & Medina was instrumental in designing of this unique brand for HOTEL SHOW. The brand logo was patented & registered in Sri Lanka

On behalf of Sperrys I take great pleasure in extending our congratulations to the CHSGA for its milestone of 50 years. Having been a participant of the HOTELSHOW since its inception, the HOTELSHOW organized by the CHSGA has created a valuable platform which showcases the growth and creativity of the hotel industry in Sri Lanka. Throughout the years, the HOTELSHOW has not only provided broader reach between businesses and clients, but also between industry professionals- helping facilitate B2B relationships through which collaborative action, and creative learning and growth has been made possible. On a more sombre note, the past 3 years have been especially difficult time for everyone, locally and world over, and its impact on the Sri Lankan Hotel industry significant. However, we continue to hope for better times ahead and wish everyone the very best; that we may all grow in strength and resilience and get through these turbulent times together.

Sunimal Pieris
Chairman Sperrys
Commercial Equipment
(Private) Limited – Golden
or Platinum sponsor of
every HOTELSHOW from its
inception.

It has been a truly intricate and a great learning experience to have been part of HOTELSHOW since 1998 which was the Inception of this key event. It has also been an honor for me personally to have been involved as the professional exhibition organizer for 12 out of the 14 HOTELSHOWs organized so far. Hotel Show today is definitely the largest business to business trade fair in Sri Lanka.

I am proud to say that my career has also grown today together with The HOTEL SHOW. In 1998 I was the project coordinator handling the event and today I am the Managing Director of the company which handles the Hotel Show Colombo for the CHSGA as well as the President of the SRI LANKA ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE, EXHIBITION AND EVENT ORGANISERS.

I am sure Hotel show will have many more successful years to come with the potential of becoming the largest event of its kind in South Asia.

and a late Past President of CHSGA Ravi Divithotawela contributed in this effort.

The exhibition normally takes place during the low season of the tourism calendar to enable more visitors to take part as well as when hotel developments & re-equipping are takes place. The event comprises of its inauguration, the exhibition proper, concurrent events that may be seminars & workshops, cooking competitions, Room stylist's competition, Barista competition etc. & a gala event of Exhibitors & the industry personnel to further cement the business connections initiated over 3 days of the exhibition. The gala event takes place at a 5star venue on the week-end following the exhibition.

The first ever HOTEL SHOW that was held at the BMICH in July 1998 drew an exhibitor participation of around 90 stalls and around 3000 visitors. By no means was it a large event but a novel experience to everyone participated and much confidence gained by the organizers as well as by the exhibitors. Whilst its contribution to CHSGA was a meagre Rs. 250,000/= yet it was a very encouraging and exiting event to look forward to for the organizers. Most exhibitors had a good word for the event and were looking forward to their participation in future. As mentioned by exhibitors some of them have had unprecedented level of orders as against trying to sell through usual channels, enquiries and new business relations built for the future.

The HOTEL SHOW'2000 the second event was held in July 2000 at the same venue with a participation



KUMAR SENARATNE
Past President of CHSGA
FCHSGA

**CHAIRMAN
HOTELSHOW COMMITTEE
1998 - 2009**

of close to 110 exhibitors & more industry personnel. It showed a sevenfold increase in revenue for CHSGA. The EXCO felt that it was most appropriate to make a contribution towards the development of its alma mater. Funds earned from this event was utilized to develop the Library of Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism & Hospitality Management (SLITHM) & the Secretariat of CHSGA at the SLITHM Building. The library was named in memory of Mrs Pearl Heenatigala, a late distinguished former principal of the Ceylon Hotel School & school of Tourism.

Since the first event, 14 HOTEL SHOWS have been successfully held including the last that was held in 2019. The HOTEL SHOW 2002 could not be held due to height of the civil war at the time. The event in 2020 had to be called off due to COVID 19. The situation was similar for HOTEL SHOW 2021 as the world pandemic continues to hamper the most such activities. Discussions were held to stage a virtual HOTEL SHOW 2021 but failures noted of similar events world around did not impress the committee to be adventurous.

HOTEL SHOW 2022 is looked at with much vigour & vitality as it is the year considered the recovery year for Tourism & Hospitality in Sri Lanka & world over. For CHSGA it will be the celebrating of its Golden Jubilee in real terms that had to be postponed due to the pandemic. Golden Jubilee celebrations & HOTEL SHOW together in the year of re-opening of the world economy could be a year to look forward to by all stakeholders of the Travel & Tourism Industry! ■



TREVINE GOMEZ
Past President of CHSGA
FCHSGA

**CHAIRMAN
HOTELSHOW COMMITTEE
2010 - TODATE**



ANIL PERERA

DEFINES THE SRI LANKAN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN A WHOLE NEW WAY!

“If you desire to be a hotelier, approach your work with dedication and passion. Be patient and persevere in your goal despite the roadblocks and at the end of the journey, you will achieve success.”

I started my journey at the Ceylon Hotel School (also referred to as CHS) in 1976 and have had a long journey with this esteemed institution throughout my career in various capacities. I recall nostalgic memories of CHS when it was initially housed at the Taj Samudra at Galle Face until its permanent location in close proximity to the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority. However, they say that first impressions count and to me, I cannot get the memory of the Taj Samudra out of my mind, and have fond recollections of entering in silently through an entrance that had a wooden flooring, so that we would not disturb the classes going on.

After graduating in 1982, I gained experience in various hotels in Sri Lanka and abroad and was also involved with CHS from 1989-1995 and 1999 -2008. Trained and guided by experts in the field, my aim was to become a lecturer at CHS in order to mentor the young aspirants. Recalling memories of my interview for the post of lecturer, I remember how the interviewer who happened to be the Chairman of the Tourist Board asked me, “why on earth would you even apply since you are having better perks and pay at the Taj Samudra,” where I was employed in the Training Department. My prompt response was that since I had gained so much knowledge from my alma mater CHS, it was my intention to give back to CHS due to my high regard for my alma mater and to show my gratitude. However, circumstances forced me to change course owing to new family commitments and also to gain more knowledge and experience in the industry. I then moved on to become the Training and Personnel Manager at LTI Pegasus Reef Hotel. CHS had in the meantime been shifting from place to place. Initially in 1979 from Taj Samudra to Park Street and from there to Palm Beach Hotel, Mt. Lavinia. In 1993, from Mt. Lavinia to Thakashi building in Nawala. The Government

then spent Rs. 365 million for a purpose-build seven- storey building in Colpetty, where finally CHS found its permanent home. It soon became a benchmark for countries like France, England, Spain etc. when their tourism academy officials visited the new premises and were impressed with its size, facilities, quality of kitchen equipment and its layout. The biggest opportunity and satisfaction I gained from my career was when I was appointed as the Placement officer to coordinate with the hospitality industry in order to organize placements for students in various hotels for their industrial training. This required maintaining an excellent rapport with various industry personnel and students in order to accomplish this task. In addition, I had to step into the role of acting principal for two years and in addition to this posting, I was also compelled to retain my position of lecturer in charge of Advance Level Front Office courses with only an administrator to assist me.

Over the period of my journey in the hospitality industry, I have had continuous success in my endeavors, especially in the highly unstable hospitality world; which is no ordinary feat. My success was due to my inherent personality which defined my attitude towards work. I am a firm believer that happiness and contentment comes from hard work, passion of commitment.

My only hope is that I have been a source of inspiration to all those I have worked with during my tenure of office in various places. In the midst of all sorts of challenges, I have managed to take whichever hotel I worked for to the pinnacles of success. ■

“Passionate teachers leave inspiring Hug Impressions on the Hearts of their past & present students.”
Ty Howard-

“SHIPS IN
HARBOUR
ARE SAFE,
BUT THATS
NOT WHAT
SHIPS ARE
BUILT FOR”



ACHIEVEMENTS OF

RENUKA JAYAMANNE
FCHSGA, FIH (UK), MISM

It never dawned on her of the wide scope of implications involved in the Hospitality industry, until she selected it as her career goal. She has been in the industry for more than 35 years now and it still poses the same challenges and yet is an exciting and pleasurable experiential career. Initially, it was a male dominated industry, yet after finishing her preliminary education, she took a leap of faith and made the choice in contradiction to the other popular conventional fields such as Law, Medicine, Architecture, Marketing and Economics etc.

At present Renuka operates a consultancy firm with her 35 years of wide experience in all aspects of tourism gained while holding many key positions in the hospitality industry. It is clear the hotel industry is evolving; quickly before our very eyes. We are witnessing the winds of change; change in ownerships, strategy, brand concepts and growth. There is an evolution taking place within the industry and she is proud to be playing a key role in it as a woman, representing many forums with many key responsibilities.

It was a proud moment when she became the first women Chairperson of the Institute of Hospitality Sri Lanka last year and unanimously elected to continue this year as well. She is also one of the Vice Presidents in the Association of Professionals, consisting of 52 members.

Other key positions she holds are:

- Vice President- Association of Small and Medium Enterprise in Tourism Sri Lanka.
- President - Bangladesh Business Cooperation Council -NCLL
- Executive Council Member of National Chamber of Commerce Sri Lanka
- Executive Committee Member of the SLChina Business Cooperation Council
- Board Member of the Association of Emerging Leaders Dialogue(The Apex body of the CSC Alumni Association of the Commonwealth)
- Member of the Commonwealth Association of Leadership Malaysia
- Member of the Institute of Service Management
- Chairperson of the Restaurant and Bar Committee of the OPA

Renuka has been instrumental in spearheading continuous efforts in assisting young professionals face the future challenges in the hospitality industry.

“We cannot expect smooth sailing all the time. Stormy weather very often hits the ship very hard, but a good captain steadies the ship and stays on course focusing all his energy and experience to somehow take it to port, saving the ship and its passengers.” ■



ACHIEVEMENTS OF

SANCHITHA UDUWAVIDANA

We are proud to recognize Sanchitha Uduwavidana, a CHSGA member; and celebrate his achievement having delivered quality service in the hospitality industry. His continuous striving for service excellence has won him the 2019 Elite Champion of the Year among contestants from 7000+ hotels in 131 countries. He was selected by the TakeCare team of Marriott International. He is a tremendous example and set the bar extremely high for other Champions to follow.

Sanchitha, the Elite Take Care

Champion considered the best Culture maker, influential in creating the best and most rewarding associate experiences. Our global TakeCare Champion community is made up of more than 13,000 culture leaders – just like Sanchitha – who are passionate about inspiring others to live well. As Champions, they bridge cultures and inspire discovery through travel. This brings Purpose to our work, every day. He is currently leading the Human Resources functions of Weligama Bay Marriott Resort & Spa and Sheraton Kosgoda Turtle Beach Resort, two

beautiful Marriot Resorts in Sri Lanka.

As the winner, he earned an expenses-paid trip to Marriott International Headquarters to attend a culture event-taking place soon after the pandemic settles.

We wish him all success in his future endeavours. ■

