



# ELDERS' VOICE

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News Bulletin of The Senior Citizens' Forum, Kottayam

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## The President's Message

### P. I. John

In their October meeting, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned that the Worldwide man-made carbon emissions must be brought to "net zero" no later than 2090. That means the amount of carbon released by burning hydrocarbon fuels must be sequestered or recycled. To keep climate change within stable limits, more carbon should be removed than emitted.

But only a handful of Carbon Sequestration plants are running anywhere in the world, and debate still rages over which, if any, technologies should be employed.

Can the CO<sub>2</sub> be recycled and converted to fuel?. If we extract CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere, convert it into fuel and burn it, we are CO<sub>2</sub> neutral. Is this a feasible idea?

Microsoft cofounder Bill Gates and Harvard physicist David Keith are pursuing this idea: decarbonize the atmosphere by extracting carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)

straight from the air and then use the gas to make clean, carbon-neutral synthetic fuel.

Carbon Engineering (CE) is the company set up in 2009 in Calgary, Canada to do this. They have set up a prototype plant, installed large fans and have been extracting around one tonne of pure CO<sub>2</sub> every day for a year. In their design, air is blown through towers in which solution of potassium hydroxide is kept. This reacts with CO<sub>2</sub> to form potassium carbonate. The final product, calcium carbonate pellets can store CO<sub>2</sub> and release it when heated.

Working with California energy company Greyrock, CE has now begun directly synthesizing a low-carbon fuel, using only CO<sub>2</sub> captured from the air and hydrogen split from water with clean electricity. This process is named Air to Fuels (A2F).

Is this cost effective? Carbon Engineering has to get the price down to \$100 a tonne from the

current \$600.

Even then, to remove just 1% of global emissions would cost hundreds of billions dollars. This will have to be continued for ever.

A study by Carbon Engineering in Calgary, Canada, concludes that the cost of pulling a tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere can range between US \$94 and \$232.

CE can produce the fuel at a cost of about \$1 per litre with CO<sub>2</sub> extraction cost down to \$94 per tonne. The next plan is to build a facility that can produce 200 barrels of fuel per day by 2021. Finally, a commercial plant will be built that can produce 2,000 barrels per day.

Global warming is a consequence of large scale industrialization., essential to keep us in wealth and comfort. Human ingenuity is finding ways to come out of its unwanted consequences.!



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**For the first time, atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide have exceeded 410 parts per million averaged across an entire month, a threshold that pushes the planet ever closer to warming beyond levels that scientists and the international community have deemed "safe."**

From the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, UC San Diego Website (9 Nov 2018)

# Editor's Musings

## Dhanya Gopinath

Hello!

We are meeting once again on the pages of the 'Elders' Voice.'

A much talked about event that happened on the 31st of October was the inauguration of the 'Statue of Unity' in Gujarat. Said to be the tallest statue in the world, it is three times the size of the Statue of Liberty in the United States of America and much taller than the Spring Buddha in China. This statue of Sardar Vallabhai Patel erected at a cost of 3000 crores has drawn a lot of flak. While I do agree, we should not waste so much of money in erecting statues; let us now take time to reflect on the greatness of the man, who left us in 1950 after doing wonders for the unity of India.

As the first Deputy Prime Minister and the first Home Minister of India, he devoted himself wholeheartedly to make sure that an al-

ready partitioned India, remained united after a bloody period of ideological conflict. With great vision, determination and statesmanship, Patel travelled the length and breadth of India in order to convince the 562 princely states to join their kingdoms with the Independent Union of India.

It is amazing that he was in a position to redraw the map of India without shedding a drop of blood. But for his convincing powers, the princely states of Travancore, Rajasthan, Junagadh and Hyderabad would have never been a part of India.

The sagacity and strategic wisdom of Sardar Patel helped bind India into a single nation.

The great visionary that he was, Sardar always supported the empowerment of communities. It is said that the roots of Amul could be traced back to his far-sighted

vision. It was he, who popularized the idea of co-operative housing societies thus ensuring dignity and shelter for many.

Farmers welcomed him as a ray of hope. Traders and industrialists preferred working with Patel as they could sense that he had a vision for India's economic and industrial growth.

The Statue of Unity, at Sadhu Bet, in Kevadia Colony, facing the Narmada Dam, may or may not become the tourist attraction that it is touted to become. It will be a great tribute to the stalwart if this statue will help make future generations understand how India became the India that it is today.



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## Welcome, New Members!



Dr. Sivasankara Pillay and his wife Dr. N. C. Santhakumari were inducted as members of the Senior Citizens' Forum on 9 November 2018.

Dr. Sivasankara Pillay is a former Director School of Environmental Studies at Cochin University of Sci & Tech. Dr. NC Santhakumari was the Principal of NSS College for Women at Trivandrum.

## A relationship between the appendix and Parkinson's disease.?

An article, published in September 2018 in the journal of Movement Disorders concluded that a history of an appendectomy did not affect the risk of developing PD.

A more recent article in the journal of Science Translational Medicine, came to a different conclusion – that the appendix may indeed play a role in the development of PD. This used a large database 1.9 million people in Sweden and also the data collected as part of the Parkinson's Progressive Marker Initiative (PPMI). They found approximately 20% decline in the rates of PD in those who had an appendectomy, even decades earlier.

How are we to explain the differences in results between these two papers? The newest journal article

used a database that was significantly larger and had the longest follow up of any of the databases analyzed previously. This may have played a role in the outcome. Further investigation of the relationship between the appendix and PD is necessary, which may help us gain a deeper understanding of how PD develops.

## Adapted from the American Parkinson Disease Association website

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**India's current growth model is not sustainable. Agriculture employing 51% of the workforce contributes only 12% of the GDP. The industry sector employs 22% and contributes 28% of the GDP. 27% employed in the service sector contribute towards 60% the GDP.**

# നാമും നമ്മുടെ നിരന്തരങ്ങളും

ഹെൽമറ്റും സീറ്റ്ബെൽടും ഒക്കെ ഉപയോഗിച്ചാൽ ഒരാൾക്ക് സ്വന്തം ജീവൻ രക്ഷിക്കാം. ഒരാൾ ഹെൽമെറ്റില്ലാതെ ബൈക്കോടിച്ചാൽ അപകടത്തിലാകുന്നത് അയാൾ തന്നെയാണ് മറ്റൊരുമല്ല. അത് തന്നെയാണ് അയാളുടെ ശിക്ഷ; പോലീസ് അയാളെ പിടിച്ചു ശിക്ഷിക്കേണ്ട കാര്യമില്ല. നിയമത്തേക്കാളും ശിക്ഷയേക്കാളും ബോധവൽക്കരണമാണ് ഇക്കാര്യത്തിൽ ആവശ്യം. എല്ലാ ജില്ലാ ആസ്ഥാനങ്ങളിലും ബോധവൽക്കരണ ക്ലാസുകൾ സംഘടിപ്പിക്കുകയും ഹെൽമറ്റും സീറ്റ്ബെൽടും ഉപയോഗിക്കാത്തവരെ അതിൽ നിർബന്ധപൂർവ്വം പങ്കെടുപ്പിക്കുകയും വേണം. പങ്കെടുക്കുന്നവരിൽ നിന്നു അതിനു വേണ്ട ചെലവ് ഈടാക്കണം. പങ്കെടുക്കാൻ വിസമ്മതിക്കുന്നവരിൽ നിന്നു കനത്ത പിഴ ഈടാക്കുകയും വേണം.

എന്നാൽ ട്രാഫിക് നിയമങ്ങൾ കർശനമായിത്തന്നെ നടപ്പാക്കേണ്ട ചില കാര്യങ്ങളുണ്ട്. മറ്റുള്ളവരെ ശല്യപ്പെടുത്തിക്കൊണ്ട് ഒരാൾ

വണ്ടിയോടിച്ചാൽ അപകടത്തിൽ പെടുന്നത് അയാളാവില്ല, മറ്റുള്ളവരായിരിക്കും. ഉദാഹരണത്തിന്, ഹൈബിം ഇടു കൊണ്ട് വണ്ടി ഓടിച്ചാൽ എതിരെ വരുന്ന ആർക്കും കണ്ണു കാണില്ല. രാത്രിയിൽ ഹൈബിം ഇടു വണ്ടി ഓടിക്കുന്നത് സർവസാധാരണയാണ് നമ്മുടെ നാട്ടിൽ. സാധാരണ ഗതിയിൽ ഹൈബിം പാടില്ല എന്നും എതിരെ വാഹനങ്ങളോടും ഇല്ലാത്തപ്പോഴും തീരെ വഴി കാണാൻ പാടില്ലാത്തപ്പോഴും മാത്രം ഉപയോഗിക്കേണ്ടതാണിത് എന്നും വണ്ടിയോടിക്കുന്നവർ മനസ്സിലാക്കണം. ഇക്കാര്യത്തിൽ പോലീസ് ഒന്നു ശ്രദ്ധിച്ചിരുന്നെങ്കിൽ നമ്മുടെ രാത്രിസഞ്ചാരം കുറേയേറെ സുരക്ഷിതമായേനെ.

എത്രതന്നെ ബോധവൽക്കരണവും നിയമങ്ങളും ഉണ്ടെങ്കിലും, നമ്മുടെ റോഡുകൾ ഗതാഗത യോഗ്യമല്ലെങ്കിൽ സ്ഥിതിഗതികൾക്ക് വലിയ മാറ്റം പ്രതീക്ഷിക്കേണ്ട. എല്ലാ മുക്കുകളിലും ട്രാഫിക് സിഗ്നലുകൾ സ്ഥാപിക്കാൻ വൈകിക്കൂട. എല്ലാ പ്രധാന നിരന്തരങ്ങളും നാലുവരി പാതയാക്കി വികസിപ്പിച്ചു കൂട്ടിയിടികൾ ഒഴിവാക്കണം. ബസ് നിർത്തുന്നതിനും



ഓട്ടോകൾ പാർക്ക് ചെയ്യുന്നതിനും ആവശ്യമായ സ്ഥലങ്ങൾ കണ്ടെത്തണം. സുഗമമായ ട്രാഫിക് നിർമ്മിക്കുന്ന കടകളും തുണുക്കളും മാറ്റി സ്ഥാപിക്കണം.

എല്ലാ വിട്ടുകാരും കടക്കാരും അവരവരുടെ സ്ഥലത്തോട് ചേർന്ന് കിടക്കുന്ന പൊതുനിരത്ത് വൃത്തിയായി സൂക്ഷിയ്ക്കുന്ന ചുമതല ഏറ്റെടുക്കണം. മാസത്തിൽ ഒരുകൂട്ടം വേണ്ട കിലും എല്ലാവരും അവരവരുടെ വീടിന്റെയും കടയുടെയും സമീപത്തുള്ള നിരത്തിലെ പുല്ലും കുപ്പയും നീക്കം ചെയ്താൽ നമ്മുടെ നാടു മുഴുവൻ വളരെ വൃത്തിയുള്ളതാകും.

അങ്ങനെ നമ്മുടെ ജനങ്ങളും ഭരണകൂടവും ഒറ്റക്കെട്ടായി പരിശ്രമിച്ചാൽ നമ്മുടെ പൊതുനിരത്തുകളെ നമുക്ക് ഉപയോഗിക്കാത്ത വിധത്തിൽ മാറ്റിയെടുക്കാം.

John D Kunnath

## October Meetings

The first meeting of the SCF was held on October 12 at the SEERI auditorium.

In connection with the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the SCF invited Adv. Joshy Jacob, a Gandhian, for the main speech. He covered the topic, "relevance of Mahatma Gandhi's teachings in the present and the future." Mr. Joshy Jacob said that many people called Gandhiji, a twentieth century wonder. According to him, Gandhiji was as relevant today as he was in the past.

The second meeting of the SCF was held on October 26. It was a

Business Meeting and members were asked to openly express their views about how the meetings of the Forum could be made more interesting and meaningful.

While some felt the need for having a Joke Session once in a while; others spoke about the need to give back to society by getting involved in voluntary activities. There was a suggestion that members could be broken into four or five groups once or twice in the month for Group Discussions. The need for getting new members involved with the activities of the Forum, by better interaction was also expressed.

The need to make members understand that there is a cost involved in conducting meetings at

the SEERI was stressed. Better planning of anticipated expenses was called for.

A detailed report of the feedback received was prepared for circulation among the members.

## Dhanya Gopinath

*God gave us the gift of life; it is up to us to give ourselves the gift of living well.*

Voltaire

## Stray Thoughts

When I look back on my teaching career spanning 28 years, I have a sense of fulfillment, especially when I recall the memorable moments, which give me great joy. I would like to share with you one such moment which I experienced recently.

On 3rd September, just before Teachers Day I got a phone call out of the blue. It was from a student called Pranjali and she quickly added that I was not likely to remember her. Pranjali said that twenty years ago I had taught her History in class 1X A. For a moment I was at a loss for words [History ...? Class 1X ...?] She must have dialed the wrong teacher.

Then suddenly it dawned on me that the regular History teacher had resigned that year and the Principal was trying hard to get a substitute. Finally she looked into the CVs of all the teachers and found that I had graduated with English Literature as the main subject and History as the subsidiary subject. The Principal requested me to help out and I agreed. My time-table was adjusted and History added on .....So Pranjali was right!

Now coming back to Pranjali, she says that she made many attempts to trace me but in vain. Finally she managed to contact my son in UK through a mutual friend and got my phone no. Pranjali is now 36 years old, an architect and was residing in U.S for 10 years.

Two years ago she returned to her home town, Raipur and was offered a teaching post in the College of Architecture. She said it was her first stint at teaching and was wondering how to go about it. She then decided to follow the same method I used in the History class.

I laughed and said, "Pranjali that method is good only for the lower classes not even for Plus two and definitely not college level".

But she was not convinced. She said she had used the same method and all her students secured high marks and that was another reason why she was so eager to contact me. She was so effusive in her gratitude that I was embarrassed. The next day she sent me on my whats app, a copy of the mark list of her students and I was happy to note that they had scored high marks.

I told her, that her hard work and commitment had paid off and she should continue with the same method though I had scoffed at it in the beginning. The best reward for the teacher is, when her students shine in their chosen fields and emerge as good human beings. Name, fame and money are only secondary.

As for the method it was very simple. After completing a unit, I would ask the students to prepare for an oral class test. To get them interested I made it a competition among the 4 rows in the class. The class monitor was instructed to

draw the columns on the board corresponding to the 4 rows in order to save time. When



I entered I would ask questions from each row at random. In the end, the marks were tallied and the winning row was given a cheer clap by the losing rows.

I did not realise how intense the competition was, until Pranjali told me that as the History period was usually after the lunch break, they would quickly gobble their lunch and start 'mugging' History.

Even the Slow Learners did their part. Once I noticed a Slow Learner looking very confident. On reading her facial expression and body language I asked her a question. She started out confidently, faltered... midway but continued bravely till the end. In the meantime I noticed that many in that row had bowed their heads on to the desk and were praying with folded hands.... I was amazed at their fervour!!!! Any way I am happy that this method which I used twenty years ago has benefited a student twenty years later and that too at college level!!!

Ann Jacob

## WISH YOU A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

**May your birthday and every day ahead be filled with the warmth of love, the joy of good health and blessings in abundance!**

Mr. Joseph Mathew 16 November

Mrs. Rajalakshmi Radhakrishnan 22 November

Eng. Oommen C. Vengal 26 November