



# ELDER'S VOICE

APRIL 2018

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News Bulletin of  
The Senior Citizen's Forum, Kottayam

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## The President's Message

*With 700 meetings held with exceptional regularity, the Senior Citizen's Forum of Kottayam has established a remarkable record of longevity. I and the other members of the new Governing Board convey our greetings and best wishes to all the members of this organization which promote intellectual and social well-being of Senior Citizens through a variety of activities.*

*The new team was sworn in in the Installation Ceremony held on 13th April at the Hotel Aida. This was made possible by the goodwill of our member Dr. C. Radhakrishnan for which we should be grateful! Prof. Sabu Thomas, the Pro-Vice Chancellor of the Mahatma Gandhi University and the Founder Director of the International and Inter-University Centre for Nano-Technology was the Chief Guest. The event showed a rare mix of solemnity and camaraderie. I am indeed thankful to all the members of the Senior Citizen's Forum, for selecting me as the new President of the Forum. I am conscious of the fact that this position has been held in the past by many personalities with outstanding qualities. To have been considered their equal is indeed very humbling. I can only assure you all that I shall strive to bring all my capabilities into the performance of my duties as the President. I am sure that all the members of the new Governing Body also share this sentiment.*

*Our team is also at a disadvantage because of the*

*inevitable comparisons that would be made with the outstanding performance of our immediate predecessors. The work done by Shri A. M. Mathew and Shri P. I. Mani in the last two years is of an exceptionally high standard. We shall keep this in mind while setting the standard for ourselves.*

*I understand that some form of a policy statement is expected of the new Governing Board. It is too early to mention anything specific. We shall need time to discuss all issues and generate a perspective. However, I would like to make a few comments now.*

*The activity which gives the Forum its sustenance is the Fortnightly meetings where all of us get together at SEERI. I have heard many people comment that we have to make this more active, more fun, more intellectually stimulating and promoting stronger fellowship. I believe that the meetings in the present form are quite good and keep a high standard. We must be careful to keep a good balance between presentation from our own members and presentation by outsiders. The Committee under Mrs. Molly Benjamin had done an excellent job of identifying topics and speakers.*

*In 2018, a Silicon Valley start-up, Moon Express proposes to land a craft on the moon. If the Mission is successful, it would be the first private company to land a craft on the moon. It will also be the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jules Verne imagining such a private trip.*



P. I. John

*In December 2018 COP24 environmental summit will start in Poland where key decisions are expected on the implementation of the Paris climate accords.*

*The UN has designated 31st of October as World Cities Day. The Day is expected to greatly promote interest in global urbanization and contribute to sustainable urban development around the world. We should have an expert exposition of our own smart cities programme.*

*Finally, we should look forward to celebrating 1 October as the International Day of Older Persons.*

*I wish all the members a very active year ahead in terms of the activities of the Senior Citizens Forum*

When an idea  
exclusively occupies the  
mind, it is transformed  
into an actual physical  
or mental state:  
**Swami Vivekananda**

## ACTING EDITOR'S MUSINGS

Dhanya Gopinath

Dear Friends,

Your Editor Pushpa Mathews will be away for two months and has requested me to ensure that our Newsletter reaches you in time.

Of course, it is a great pleasure talking to you all from the pages of the Elders' Voice.

I will begin by reminding you of the positive things that have taken place in our state and others during the recent past, other than the news of India's gold medal haul, at the recently concluded Commonwealth Games or about Kerala winning the Santosh Trophy after many years.

Ambedkar Jayanthi was recently celebrated with a lot of fanfare. I am sure the great Dalit Icon will be turning in his grave, at the way his name is being used to gain political mileage instead of following his ideals.

Amidst all the violence and horrific crimes, taking place in India, in the name of religion and caste, may I draw your attention to the poignant words of Imam Rashidi, on 30<sup>th</sup> March, when Asansol in W.Bengal was in the grip of violence. With the body of his own son lying before him the Imam pleaded for peace." In a short address that had the entire crowd in tears, he made the

unruly mob leave for their respective homes." Imam Rashidi said that he felt it was his duty to ensure that no other child died, no household torched and no family bereaved. Such show of magnanimity in the face of personal tragedy surely deserves to be commended.

The Times of India reported on Saturday, the 31<sup>st</sup> of March that, as a tribute to the shared and symbiotic history of a Krishna temple in Wayanad, food was served by the temple authorities to over a thousand Christians, who undertook the Way of the Cross to commemorate Christ's passion at Golgotha on Good Friday. What was even better was the lighting of lamps in the temple premises by the vicars from two nearby churches and an Imam of the Juma Masjid as part of the annual temple festival on April 1<sup>st</sup>, which incidentally was Easter day as well.

Another thing which touched my heart was a report about the migrant labourers at the plantations in Munnar. Here families from the tribal belts of Jharkand, Chattisgarh, Odisha and W.Bengal are said to enjoy a quality of life not available to their



counterparts in most parts of India. In these plantations there is said to be a seamless integration with the local population. By providing them with good housing, healthcare and livelihood opportunities, Kerala shows a lot of pragmatic intelligence. After all, don't we need the migrant workers more than they need us?

Such reports about individual humanism make us renew our faith in India's Secular Constitution and the society's plural values. Let us all strive to match up.

The Senior Citizens' Forum has lost one more member. This illustrious man breathed his last on the eleventh of April. I am sure you will all be remembering Mr. Thomas John Kopuzha come up to the mike many a time to sing the Prayer Song in his deep baritone voice. May his soul rest in peace.

Bye until we meet next month.

### Turn a New Leaf, Lent for a good cause

Fasting and feasting are part of every major religion. It also goes without saying that all faiths should keep up with the times and adapt their age-old practices to newer imperatives. In that context, the Church of England must be commended for utilising Lent, a traditional Christian period of frugality, for a very modern cause: abstaining from plastics. The 40 days of Lent that began last week, commemorate the time Jesus spent fasting and praying, leading up to his crucifixion, and resurrection on Easter. As such, there's no better time to do abstain from polluting single-use plastics for the greater good of mankind, rather than merely abstaining from chocolate, social media and alcohol — the top three Lenten renunciations last year. Recycled bags (instead of plastic), fresh foods (instead of packaged), boiled RO water (instead of plastic-bottled mineral water) and wearing only natural fibre clothes are easy abstentions. Best of all, once people kick the habit for 40 days, the chances of falling back on their bad old ways also reduce significantly.

Initiating an anti-plastic movement during Navratri and other religious fasting periods in India, especially by roping in the right endorsers, could potentially prove to be more effective than any Swachh Bharat campaign. What better way to clean out pernicious plastics from our lives than religiously?

## INSTALLATION OF NEW OFFICE BEARERS & NEW GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

The Installation Ceremony of the New Office Bearers & the Governing Board Members for the year April 2018-March 2019 was held at Hotel Aida on Friday, the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2018.

Prof. K. M. Varghese was the Master of Ceremonies. He introduced the New President, Vice President, the Secretary, Jt. Secretary, the Treasurer and the Editor, Elder's Voice to the audience.

Accordingly, Prof. P. I. John became the new President, Mrs. Molly Benjamin the Vice President, Dr. Joseph Cherian the Secretary, Mrs. Dhanya Gopinath the Jt. Secretary, Mr. V. G. Shyam the treasurer and Mrs. Pushpa Annie Mathew the Editor Elder's Voice.

This time, the ceremony also included the lighting of the Koothuvilakku.

The 6 Governing Board Members are as follows:

Mr. A. M. Mathew (past President)

Mr. P. I. Mani (past Secretary)

Prof. Babu Joseph

Dr. C. Radhakrishnan

Eng. Joy Jacob

Eng. Joseph Mathew

The special invitees are as follows:

Dr. Mathew Parackal

Prof. George Koshy

Mr. Gopalakrishnan Nair

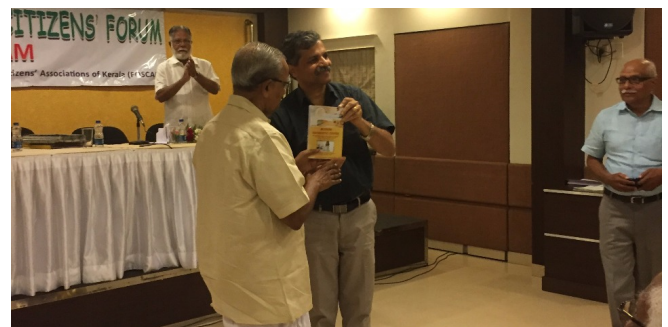
Mr. M. Gopinathan

Prof. K. M. Varghese

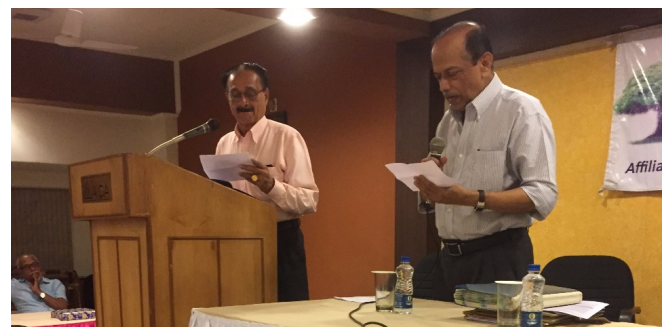
All the members listed above will be invited to all the Governing Board meetings.



The New President Dr. P. I. John



Dr. Mathew Parackal receives the first copy of the new Directory from the Chief Guest



The Secretary Dr. Joseph Cherian



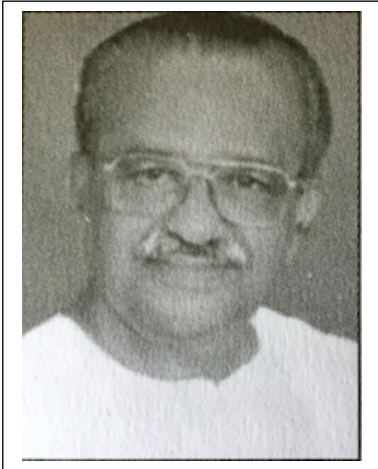
The Vice President Mrs. Molly Benjamin



Master Kevin entertains the audience



**ആദരാഞ്ജലി!**



**തോമസ് കൊപ്പുഴ**

നമ്മുടെ അസോസിയേഷന്റെ സജീവ അംഗവും കോൺഗ്രസ്സ് (എസ്) പ്രവർത്തക സമിതി അംഗവുമായിരുന്ന എസ് എച്ച് മൗണ്ട് കൊപ്പുഴയിൽ തോമസ് ജോൺ കൊപ്പുഴ നിര്യാതനായി.

മാർഗംകളിയെ സ്കൂൾ യൂത്ത് ഫെസ്റ്റിവൽ വേദയിൽ കയറ്റിയതിനു പിന്നിൽ അധ്യാപകൻ കൂടിയായ തോമസ് ജോൺ കൊപ്പുഴയുടെ പരിശ്രമം. മാർഗം കളിയുടെ പ്രസക്തിയും പാരമ്പര്യവും നഷ്ടപ്പെടാതിരിക്കാൻ ആ കല കലോത്സവങ്ങളിൽ മത്സര ഇനമാക്കണമെന്നു ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ട് അനുകൂല വിധി സമ്പാദിച്ചത് തോമസ് ജോൺ ആണ്.

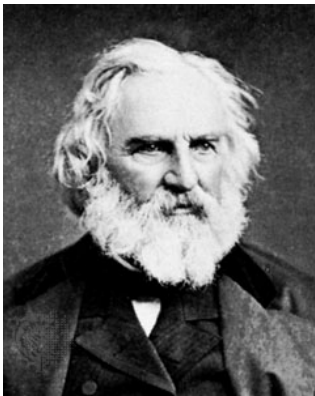
കുമാരനല്ലൂർ സർവീസ് സഹകരണ ബാങ്കിന്റെ പ്രസിഡന്റായി 12 വർഷം സേവനം അനുഷ്ഠിച്ചു. കുമാരനല്ലൂർ പഞ്ചായത്ത് അംഗവും ആയിരുന്നു. ക്നാനായ സോസ് ഫോറം പ്രസിഡന്റായും ക്നാനായ കത്തോലിക്ക കോൺഗ്രസിന്റെ അതിരൂപത ജനറൽ സെക്രട്ടറി ആയും പ്രവർത്തിച്ചു.

കേരള പ്രൈവറ്റ് സ്കൂൾ ഹെഡ്മാസ്റ്റർ അസോസിയേഷൻ സംസ്ഥാന പ്രസിഡണ്ടായിരുന്ന അദ്ദേഹം കോട്ടയം രൂപതയുടെ വിവിധ സ്കൂളുകളിൽ ഹെഡ്മാസ്റ്റർ ആയും സേവനം അനുഷ്ഠിച്ചു. എസ് എച്ച് മൗണ്ട് സ്കൂളിൽ നിന്നായിരുന്നു വിരമിച്ചത്.

കവിത നിരൂപണം (കവിതയിലെ നീരൊഴുക്കുകൾ), യാത്ര വിവരണം (ഉത്തരേന്ത്യയിലൂടെ ഒരു ഓട്ടുപ്രദീക്ഷണം), പുഴയുടെ തീരത്തു (കുടുംബചരിത്രം), ക്നാനായ സമുദായത്തിലെ 100 പ്രമുഖ വ്യക്തികൾ എന്നീ പുസ്തകങ്ങളുടെ രചയിതാവാണ്.

**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!



**HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW**

The heights by great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight, but they, while their companions slept, were toiling toward in the night.

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|----------------------|------------------------|
| George Jacob         | 1 <sup>st</sup> April  |
| Dr. T C Benjamin     | 5 <sup>th</sup> April  |
| P J Issacs           | 5 <sup>th</sup> April  |
| T C Jacob            | 5 <sup>th</sup> April  |
| M Manoharan          | 7 <sup>th</sup> April  |
| George Mathew        | 9 <sup>th</sup> April  |
| Thomas John Koppuzha | 10 <sup>th</sup> April |
| Isac Arackal         | 11 <sup>th</sup> April |
| Er. V J Jacob        | 12 <sup>th</sup> April |
| Mrs Susy Issac       | 13 <sup>th</sup> April |
| Rev Dr T M John      | 13 <sup>th</sup> April |
| Kottayam Baburaj     | 13 <sup>th</sup> April |
| Er. Y Koshy          | 14 <sup>th</sup> April |
| Prof George Koshy    | 20 <sup>th</sup> April |
| Dr Thomas Chacko     | 21 <sup>st</sup> April |
| V G Shyam            | 23 <sup>rd</sup> April |
| K I John             | 24 <sup>th</sup> April |
| George Issac         | 26 <sup>th</sup> April |