



La Fijiana, Vol 28 No 2, May 2006

Governor General Designate

The announcement of Mr. Anand Satyanand's appointment as the next Governor General has been welcomed. The Association has sent messages of congratulations and flowers to Mr. and Mrs. Satyanand, as well as public statements of gratitude to the Government over the appointment.

The Association has recalled many moments of the past with Mr. Satyanand's late father Dr Mutlaya Satyanand and his mother Mrs. Tara Satyanand.

The appointment is seen as the coming of age of Fiji residents in New Zealand. It is a matter of pride that a Fiji Indian has been named as the next representative of The Queen.

Passing of Mrs Leela Wati Rai

The Association notes with regret the recent demise of Mrs. Leela Wati Rai, a long standing and highly respected member, whose passing has robbed us of a mother figure in the community.

Mrs. Rai passed away at Mercy Hospice in Mt Roskill and her funeral took place at Waikumete Crematorium. The funeral was attended by over five hundred family and friends, including the Minister of Trade, Hon Phil Goff and Mrs. Mary Goff. In a special tribute, Mr. Goff mentioned his close personal friendship with Mr. and Mrs. Rai over many years and recalled several key events in their lives which he and Mrs. Goff have witnessed, including their golden

wedding anniversary. Mr. Goff had returned from USA the day of the funeral.

Delivering the Eulogy, Dr Satendra Singh paid tribute to Mrs. Rai and told the congregation Mrs. Rai had been a mother figure for many members and had been asked to cut a special Mothers Day cake at a function held by the Association ten years ago to celebrate the contribution made by mothers to families. Dr Singh shared other stories about Mrs. Rai, and recalled her meeting with Mother Teresa in Calcutta.

The Association carried a newspaper tribute to Mrs. Rai in the New Zealand Herald and wishes to thank Mr. Sant Raj Rai, JP and his family – former chairpersons Arvind, Veena and former committee member Ashok, and their spouses and children – for sharing Mrs. Rai with so many Association members.

Passing of former Committee Member

A former Committee Member of the Association, Mr. Alan Sada Nand, of Mangere, passed away recently. Mr. Nand was on the committee during the 1980's.

His funeral took place at Manukau Memorial Gardens and was attended by many members and friends.

Alan passed away at the South Auckland Hospice.

The Association arranged for a floral tribute and special messages to Mrs. Ann Nand and her sons, Mark and Neil, and Alan's grand daughter.



Manukau Memorial Gardens Complex

The Association congratulates the Mayor of Manukau Sir Barry Curtis and City of Manukau on the refurbishment project which has transformed the Memorial Gardens Crematorium facility into a modern, large complex with seating for up to five hundred.

Such a facility has been a desire for many years as Indian funerals tend to be large and scores of people have to stand outside at cremation services wherever these are held. But with the new crematorium complex this is obviously a thing of the past.

To mark the dedication and reopening of the Memorial Gardens the Fiji Association is pleased to donate an artifact which will be placed in the Crematorium foyer.

The gift selected is a tree trunk bench, which is over hundred years old.

This will commemorate and remember the men, women and children of India who perished in the sinking of the S S Syria, on 11 May 1884, near Nasilai, Fiji Islands and also those Fijians who went to the assistance of survivors. One hundred and twenty passengers were saved but sixty died. The S S Syria left Calcutta on 13 March 1884 with 180 passengers, bound for Fiji. This was the Syria's maiden voyage.

The gift will be handed to the Mayor of Manukau and the Crematorium Director at a ceremony in June.

The Committee deliberated on the type of artifact to donate and the idea of a centuries old tree trunk from the earth and sea, shaped into a serviceable bench, with its ship wreck imagery intact was agreed upon.

The Crematorium has also been consulted on the choice and they are very happy to accept such a meaningful gift.

An inscription will be mounted as follows-

Tree Trunk Survivor – 100 year old tree root, recovered from the sea, donated by The Fiji Association in Auckland Inc to The Mayor of Manukau, Sir Barry Curtis and the Manukau Memorial Gardens Crematorium on the occasion of the Dedication Ceremony of the refurbished Complex, on 29 June, 2006.

The artifact commemorates the S S Syria, which sank near Nasilai, Fiji Islands on 11 May 1884, with passengers from India bound for the Pacific.

Sixty lives were lost at sea. One hundred and twenty people were saved by a group of Fijians led by Dr William McGregor.

There will be a reproduction of a steamship with sails on the plaque, symbolizing the Syria

The Association will hand over this piece of art to His Worship The Mayor and the Crematorium Director at the Dedication Ceremony on 29 June, 2006.

Members are invited to assist with this very worthy cause in two ways. Firstly the Association would appreciate donations towards the cost of the magnificent gift. Secondly, anyone wishing to attend the Dedication Ceremony, please let us know so invitations can be arranged. **RSVP BY 31 MAY 2006**

Any small donation will be appreciated and will be used towards the cost

Please use the attached reply form.



Upcoming Events

Thai Dinner with the Committee

Venue: Erawan Thai Restaurant
165 Jervois Rd,
Herne Bay

Date: Friday 2 June 2006

Time: 7.30pm

Any members wishing to join a committee dinner please contact a committee member or contact the secretary on (027) 662 3900

Further details of the following events will be communicated to members asap.

June: - Committee Meeting
- Manukau Gardens Dedication Ceremony

July: Annual General Meeting

August: Committee Meeting

September: Welcoming Anand Satyanand

October: Dinner event

December: Christmas function

January / February: Summer Camp



RETURN FORM: Manukau Gardens Memorial Crematorium Gift and Dedication:



Name: _____

I/We would like to attend the Dedication Ceremony hosted by the Mayor of Manukau Sir Barry Curtis **Yes / No**

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Donation attached: _____ (optional)

Please make your cheque payable to Fiji Association in Auckland Inc.

Your assistance will be acknowledged in the annual report. We thank you for your support in this project. For years the community has withstood bad weather and insufficient seating at funerals and cremations and we have persistently pointed out this shortcoming. Now that a venue such as this has been provided, it would be a generous gesture to do something. Please consider the thought of helping.

Return form and/or cheque:

Fiji Association, PO Box 19333, Avondale, Auckland 7

