



Indian Graduates Association
UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

Newsletter

(for Members Only)

Issue 9: October 2008

IGAUPM Management Committee 2008-09

Advisors

Assoc Prof Dr A Rajan
Mr S Manokaram
Dr A Sivapragasam

President

Dr Kulanthayan KC Mani
(kulan@medic.upm.edu.my)

Vice President

Dr Siva K Balasundram
(siva@agri.upm.edu.my)

Secretary

Dr Sharmili Vidyadaran
(secretary@igaupm.org.my)

Assistant Secretary

Miss Sushmeetha Morugan
(sushmeetha@gimgoldstar.com)

Treasurer

Ms Chubashini Suntharalingam
(chubalingam@gmail.com)

Assistant Treasurer

Assoc Prof Dr Uma Rani Sinniah
(umarani@agri.upm.edu.my)

Members

Ms Jeyanny Vijayanathan
(kyzer19@yahoo.com)

Mr Thiyyagu Devarajan
(thiyagu@mardi.my)

Mr Kaviyarasu Ellapan
(ykavey@gmail.com)

Mr Ravindran Thiagarajah
(ravi_thiaga2002@yahoo.com)

Ms Jamuna Karmehen
(jamuna_karmehen@yahoo.com)

Co-opted Members

Mr Ragu Ponnusamy
(raguponnusamy@yahoo.com)

Mr Gerard Felix Louis
(gerard.felix.louis@dhl.com)

Mr Velan Suppaiah
(velansuppaiah@yahoo.com)

Mr Sri Themudu Bully Baboo
(srimilan@gmail.com)

Inside this issue:

Editorial	1
Activity Report	2
New Members	3
Upcoming Events	3
Congratulations to ...	4
Random Information	4

Editorial - Fitting square pegs into round holes

Greetings! Recently, I came across an interesting albeit idealistic perspective, which reads: "There should be somewhere on earth a place which no nation could claim as its own, where all human beings of goodwill who have a sincere aspiration, could live freely as citizens of the world and obey one single authority, that of the supreme truth; a place of peace, concord and harmony."

I'm not sure if such a place exists in this planet, but we surely can hope for one! We live today in a very complex world that's immersed in uncertainties. A world that's facing the brunt of climate change, a world that's plagued by war and terrorism (some call it 'freedom fighting'), a world that's facing depletion of energy resources, a world that's distinctly divided due to socio-economic inequity, a world that's seemingly navigated by incompetent politicians.

Here at home, we have our own circus. We went from tsunami to "tsusami." Then came all those unproductive episodes of finger-pointing in the name of rebranding, reform, and what have you! And now the nation holds its breath with regard to leadership transition. To this end, a senior politician gave a thought-provoking description when he commented on the recent turn-around (some call it flip flop!): "Two grown men playing this endless children's game of 'yours and mine' with the most important responsibility in the land, oblivious of the law, oblivious to the damage they are doing to the nation." Indeed, after more than five decades of nation building, we are still bogged down with heaps of misplaced priority and misjudgment.

This brings me back to what a friend of mine once lamented: "After years of living in another culture and speaking another language, I learned and absorbed several other viewpoints. Now, upon my return to my culture of origin, I find myself not fitting into places and groups where I once felt completely at home and comfortable." Why?

"Well, I don't have the same viewpoint I once did. I have changed, and the groups I was once part of did not change in the same ways. The groups are different from how I remember them, either because they changed or because my memory is flawed and/or idealized. We have diverged in many ways."

We inevitably spend a lot of time in the company of people we do not agree with on many points. We endlessly point out that their thinking is flawed on subjects such as ethnic relations, policy implementation, law and order, good governance, and numerous other issues, but never seem to be understood. We are then compelled to believe that they're a bunch of bigots. We end up learning that it is unhealthy to associate with bigots – our tolerance level takes a dive! But what we also come to understand is that even the person that you think is the most bigoted is capable of showing the most astounding compassion and kindness in the most unsuspected ways.

The point is how do we find a middle ground where we can all co-exist without constantly being frustrated at 'their' lack of perspective and arrogant viewpoints? Let's face it - we're never going to agree with everyone we are friends with but I think sometimes you have to consider which friendships are worth continuing and which ones put you in an untenable morale situation.

"Respect is given" it is and it should be cherished and never abused.

Cheers

Siva Balasundram
siva@agri.upm.edu.my



Editorial Team

Dr Siva K Balasundram
Ms Jeyanny Vijayanathan

A faith that cannot survive collision with the truth is not worth many regrets

-- Arthur Clarke

Activity Report

• 8th Annual General Meeting & Dinner

The AGM and Dinner was held on 22 March 2008 at Armada Hotel, PJ. The AGM commenced on time, thanks to the 32 members present. Our adviser, Dr A Rajan, made a surprise turnout (tell you why later!).

Elections for Management Committee positions went smooth. Notably, we have a new President, a couple of portfolio swaps and several new faces in the team. We take this opportunity to thank Dr A Sivapragasam, who did not seek re-election, for his four years of strong leadership and commitment. We look forward to his continued support. The newly elected Management Committee is listed on the left panel of page 1.

Dr Rajan gave us much to cheer towards the end of the AGM. He generously presented the Association with RM5,000 as a personal contribution for the setting up of IGAUPM Trust Fund. Hats off to this man with a big heart, who tirelessly motivates us to keep the Association active and relevant.

This year's dinner was a little scaled down, with a crowd less than 50. Nevertheless, we had a good time with great food and entertainment. The dinner highlight was the award of Life Membership to exemplary members for their significant contributions and service. We congratulate the pioneer recipients of IGAUPM Life Membership Award: Mr S Manokaram, Dr A Sivapragasam, Assoc Prof Dr Uma Rani Sinniah and Mr Vijandran Juva Rajah. These individuals are also the founding members of IGAUPM.



• Colloquium on Biofuel Opportunities in Malaysia

The colloquium was held on 22 March 2008 at Armada Hotel, PJ. This event, which preceded the AGM & Dinner, attracted 65 participants from varied affiliations (government agencies, private companies, non-governmental organizations, and graduate students).

Three speakers led discussions on: *An Overview of the Malaysian Biofuel Industry* (Mr K Saravana Kumar from the Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities), *Can Jatropha curcas be a Wonder Crop?* (Dr A Sivapragasam from MARDI) and *Strategies for Ensuring the Commercial Viability of Jatropha curcas* (Mr Khoo Hock Aun from International Jatropha Organization). The colloquium was moderated by Assoc Prof Dr Ahmad Husni Mohd Hanif from the Faculty of Agriculture, UPM.

It was indeed an informative and lively session. We received encouraging feedback from many attendees. We thank all of you who took time to attend the colloquium. Special thanks to the Malaysian Plant Protection Society (MAPPS) for supporting the event.



Activity Report, con't

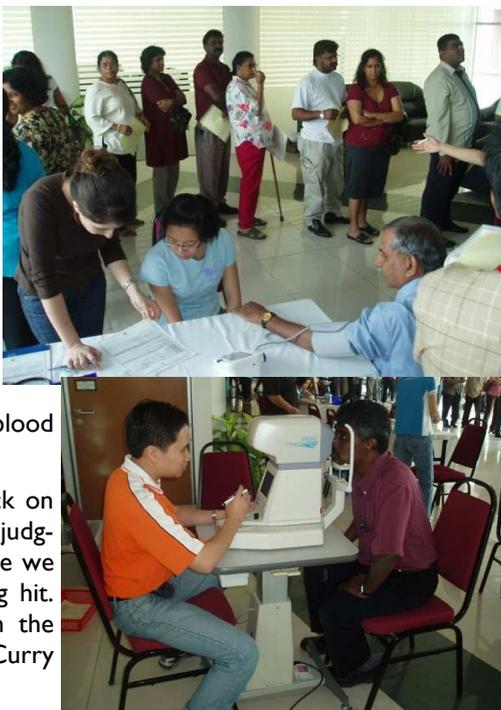
• Health Wellness Program

The program was held on 20 September 2008 at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, UPM. This event drew a crowd of 180, mostly members of the public. Our records indicate that this has been IGAUPM's biggest open event.

The program deliberated on the following topics: *Holistic Wellness and Nutrition* (presented by Assoc Prof Dr Mirmalini Kandiah from UPM), *Fitting Exercise into a Busy Schedule* (presented by Mr Mahendran Appukuttan from UiTM), *A Medical Perspective on Living Healthy* (presented by Dr Mohan Arumugam from Hospital Serdang) and *Yoga for You* (presented by Mr Paul Raj, a Yoga Master from Kajang).

The program also included a free health screening exercise, in courtesy of Pfizer (M) Sdn Bhd. The screening included tests for Body Mass Index (BMI), eyesight, and blood pressure and cholesterol.

As we write this, the participants' feedback on the program is being processed. However, judging from the electronic and verbal response we received thus far, the program was a big hit. We thank all of you who participated in the program. We also thank Kampung Curry House, Serdang for sponsoring brunch.



**Everything that
irritates us about
others can lead us
to an
understanding of
ourselves
-- Carl Jung**

New Members

We wish to welcome the following members to IGAUPM:

- **Sri Themudu Bully Baboo** (M0130)
- currently a Field Operation Executive with UMW Toyota Motor Sdn Bhd
- **Jamuna Karmehen** (M0131)
- currently an Associate Training Manager with Pfizer (M) Sdn Bhd
- **Rajen Dorairaj** (M0132)
- currently a Sales Manager with Multimedia Research Labs (MLABS) Sdn Bhd
- **Sivavenayakam** (M0133)
- currently attached to Multimedia Development Corporation (MDeC) Sdn Bhd
- **Gopikrishnan Venugopal** (M0134)
- currently a Project Manager with Sarawak Shell Bhd

Upcoming Activities

• Family Day / Deepavali Get-together

Tentative date: November 2008
Venue: -to be announced-
Itinerary: Fun & Excitement!

If you have ideas to contribute, contact:

Miss Sushmeetha Morugan
(Organizing Chairperson)
sushmeetha@glimgoldstar.com

• Education Seminar

Tentative date: January 2009
Venue: -to be announced-

If you have suggestions with regard to the seminar content, contact:

Assoc Prof Dr Uma Rani Sinniah
(Organizing Chairperson)
umarani@agri.upm.edu.my

Note

IGAUPM is now on FaceBook. At present, we have 39 members within the group. We encourage you to sign up. Here's the link: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=26348701948>

Congratulations to ...

- **Assoc Prof Dr Uma Rani Sinniah**
(currently IGAUPM Asst Treasurer)

for being promoted to Associate Professor with effect from May 2008. Dr Uma received her PhD in Seed Science and Technology from the University of Reading, UK in 1997. Her professional details can be accessed via <http://www.agri.upm.edu.my/cv/umarani.htm>



- **Dr Kulanthayan KC Mani**
(currently IGAUPM President)

for being promoted to Senior Lecturer with effect from May 2008. Dr Kulanthayan received his PhD in Road Safety from UPM in 2003. His professional details can be accessed via <http://www.medic.upm.edu.my/staf/CV/KulanthayanKCMani.pdf>



- **Dr Sharmili Vidyadaran**
(currently IGAUPM Secretary)

for being awarded a bronze medal at the Malaysian Technology Expo 2008 for her research entitled *Establishing Adult Microglia Cell Cultures for the Study of Immunosenescence*. Dr Sharmili received her PhD in Neuroscience from Imperial College, London in 2005. Her professional details can be accessed via <http://www.medic.upm.edu.my/staf/CV/SharmiliVidyadaran.pdf>



- **Mr Gerard Felix Louis & Ms Jeannette Vijayanathan**
(currently IGAUPM Committee Members)

on the occasion of their wedding which was held on 19 January 2008 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Puchong.

We wish you both a blissful life together!



- **Mr Kaveyarasu Yellapan**
(currently IGAUPM Committee Member)
& **Miss Nirmala Devi Tailan**

on the occasion of their engagement which was held on 31 August 2008 at the Sri Renganathar Temple in Jln Kajang-Puchong.

The couple will tie the knot in Penang on 6 December 2008. Best wishes, always!

Random Information

Seminar

Managing Your Ringgits Today for a Better Tomorrow (organized by TheMind Association)

- Date: 11 October 2008
- Venue: Sunway University College
- Speakers: Prof Dr Bala Shanmugam
(Director of Banking & Finance, Monash University)
Mr JR Karunanidhy
(Entrepreneur)
Mr Sekaran Muthaya
(Rockwills Corporation)

For further information, log on to: <http://www.themindassociation.org/wealth.html>

Scholarship

Maxis is giving out scholarships for undergraduate and postgraduate studies

For further information, log on to: <http://www.maxis.com.my/scholarship/>

Science2008 - Portugal

The Government of Portugal in their initiative to spur research excellence started an initiative called Science2008 (*Ciencia2008*). This program aims to recruit 1000 PhDs with at least three years of scientific experience for positions as Contract Researcher at various institution of excellence throughout Portugal. Minimum monthly salary of €3,700 (approx RM17,500).

For further information, log on to: <http://www.eracareers.pt/search/index.aspx?task=search&idc=3>

[Note: Click on *Ciencia2008*, enter your general field and hit OK with mouse, not 'Enter']



*Sometimes one
pays most for the
things one gets for
nothing
-- Albert Einstein*

Dear readers --
We wish you and your loved ones

