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NEWSLETTER

Volume IV

March, 2014

Number 1

From the Editor's Desk.....



Pit-lou - verb, intrans. [Compound word - British *Pit*, French *Lou*, as in "*Louis le premier au seizieme*"]

Pitlou is a new American word that I coined a few years ago, albeit I have not, till now, stopped to think too much about it. I want to say it was about four years ago which, come to think of it, was about the time that I became the Editor of this Newsletter. If I have to fit the word into the Parts of Speech of the English language which, lest we forget, amount to eight, I have to say it is an intransitive verb. But it is also a phrase for which the grammarians did not give any provision in the Parts of Speech, in effect forcing me to fit the word into the verb category, but I must warn you, it's not a good fit, as it is like trying to put a square peg in a round hole! But enough of the clichés; let's analyze it a little further.

It is made up of two distinctive words, if you haven't already figured it out – pit and lou. Pit, of itself, by itself, and for itself (thanks to President Abraham Lincoln of yesteryear), is a noun, although with other nouns, it would give the sense of an adjective. Famous examples – and there are many – are pit stop, pit crew and pit bull. I ought to know, I take a pit stop every two hours when I am on a long road trip, especially after I turned blankety-blank years of age. The doctor

The President's Message.....

Dear Alumni & Friends,

It is a pleasure for me to connect with all the UCC alumni friends in N. America through the medium of this first newsletter of the New Year. At the intersection of an old and a new year, it is customary to look back with satisfaction and to look ahead with much excitement and added resolve. Here we look to the past not for the sake of history, or to be judgmental, but for the courage and guidance we need right now and for future. There is always an expectation that we are better today than yesterday and will be better still tomorrow. Without being unduly subjective in my appraisal, I believe that indeed UCCAANA can look back on the past year with much satisfaction, having done a few things well. No doubt, there are more opportunities ahead of us to grow and to make a difference in alumni relationships. It is through building these relationships that we remember the stuff we are made of and through that we find our way forward. Surely we can be better through this process—that is the expectation!

UCCAANA at its General Body meeting held on February 26, 2014, elected its new Board members. The changes were the following. Dr. Pothen Varughese, for family reasons, stepped down from his position of UCCAANA Vice President. Mrs. Kuttimol Kurian was elected the new Vice President. Kuttimol, with her husband, is the founder of the multinational corporation Alpha Laboratories (Canada), engaged in health care and medical technologies. The two new members joining the

told me it has to do with my biology of which, being a nuclear engineer, I do not know much. In the absence of a better explanation and/or justification, I believe the doctor just as much as I believe Blue Cross and Blue Shield which is, very likely, the understatement of the day. OK, enough of the pit!

Now, Lou is of a different variety. It's a totally different animal altogether. It's a strange marriage if you think about it and, therefore, I suggest that you not (think, that is). Lou is basically a noun, and has stayed as such right through history. It dates back to Louis the First through Louis the Sixteenth or so, or however many there were until Louis the Last who was guillotined by the French Revolutionaries (See also: *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, by Baroness Orczy). If I have to come up with an etymology for the word, I must, of necessity, attribute it to French. But wait till you find out the less than glorified meaning that the British folks gave to the regal sounding word! Well, as it turned out, the British gave it a colloquial meaning which means the toilet which, if nothing else, expresses the real British sentiments toward the French. Famous example is: 'Go to the lou, son, instead of messing up the kitchen!' I suspect the Brits had a special interest in downplaying the noble French word, but that's part of the mutually hateful Anglo-French tradition. Parts of Speech, may be, as in Parts of English Speech?

So, there you have it, a word of partly British and partly French origin, part noun and part adjective in its history, making an intransitive verb when put together. It patiently waited until the second decade of the 21st Century for an amateur like me who is not a lexicographer by any stretch of the imagination, to give it a meaning. Needless to say, my English teacher father, the late Reverend C. V. Kurien, would have been proud of me! Inasmuch as it's spelled as pitlou, there may be a tendency to pronounce it as such, but I suggest it be pronounced as pit-love. What is its meaning, you ask? Well, it means, "Participate In The Life Of Uccaana!"

--- George P. Kurien, Editor

(President's message cont'd)

Board are Dr. Bhamini Nayar, Professor of Mathematics at Morgan State University, Maryland and Mrs. Elizabeth Pothen, a Clinical Psychologist, now retired, living in Toronto, Canada. We express our gratitude to Dr. Pothen Varughese for all his contributions as the VP. Also we are delighted that he will continue as an Advisor. May I welcome the new Board and Advisors to their new roles. It is a pleasure for me to be part of a team of extraordinarily talented people who are willing to use their collective abilities in support of UCCAANA. No doubt, the new Board will live up to the stated mission of UCCAANA.

Building relationships among the alumni in N. America will continue to be a focus in the new year. In an era when many are forced to be selfish –for career advancement or for other reasons - and in a year when *selfie* became the 'new international word of the year', a forum for 'networking and mutually emotional and intellectual enrichment' appears to be a crucial need. UCCAANA, it is hoped, can rise to fill that need for the like-minded people blessed by a UCC education.

In UCCAANA's 'missional' thrust in support of and connection to UCC, we have done exceedingly well. There is no need to brag about the many successes here. And, there appears to be no room for complacency either. Notwithstanding the sentimental notion of the unique academic standing of UCC in a time frame of many septuagenarian alumni, the reality is that the times have changed. Higher education in Kerala seems to have become highly competitive and the '*business model*' (*sic*) for the same radically altered. UCC appears to face some challenges in maintaining its vaulted position of yesteryear. At least it appears so in the eyes of the Kerala State reviewers.

In view of the brilliant academic careers that many UCC alumni have had in North America, it might be worthwhile to consider if their expertise could be leveraged to offer suggestions - not prescriptions - to differentiate UCC's standing in global higher education. If we could build relationships and harness the skills among alumni, we could help UCC and the succeeding generations. That will be a small expression of our thanksgiving. Is this idea – coming from a non-academic person- worth promoting?

Any feedback from the readers is welcome!!

Simon Thomas
President, UCCAANA
simonthomas@cox.net

Secretary's Report

Dear UCC Friends and Alumni,

In retrospection, the year 2013 was a low-keyed, but remarkably solid one for UCCAANA, considering our growth of the previous years and moving ahead with confidence and hope. We did not have any alumni gathering during this period, but were able to invest more of our time and energy to accomplish many of the goals we set for the year.

Before I outline our activities of the year, I would like to mention a few words about our Board Members and office bearers. President Dr. Simon Thomas worked selflessly and led courageously, Treasurer Dr. Thomas P. Mathew worked hard with great drive and passion, and our Editor of this Newsletter Mr. George Kurien, in spite of time constraints, used his skills, talents and drive to the utmost benefit of UCCAANA and the Newsletter. Dr. James Jacob, our former President and Dr. Pothen Varughese, our Vice President were always ready with valuable advice and leadership. All the Board Members were very diligent, and helped make UCCAANA what it is today.

It is with great sadness and a sense of tremendous loss that I am writing about the late Dr. K. C. Chacko, one of our founder members and the first President of UCCAANA. We were inspired by his love and loyalty to UC College, his generosity, vision and conviction. Even to his last days, he was actively involved in and generously contributed to many of the projects launched by UCC and UCCAANA. We all should be proud of our beloved KC who lived his blessed and long life with purpose and vision, molded by noble ideals. Condolences to his grieving family.

One major aspect of our progress this year is the close relationship that was fostered between UCCAANA and UCC. We have been able to support many UCC programs and establish close relationship with UCC on an individual as well as institutional basis. We had the opportunity to welcome Dr. Reena Philip from UCC who spent a semester at Hope College, Michigan. We were very happy to welcome her to our Board Meeting while she was in the United States. Her visit and stay at Hope College for one semester helped strengthen UCC/Hope College/UCCAANA relationship. Dr. Thomas P. Mathew, our Treasurer, represented the Principal of UCC at the installation service of the new President at Hope College on October 4, 2013. Dr. Simon Thomas, our President, visited UCC in October, and met the Faculty and Governing Body members. His visits over the years have contributed to nurture strong relationship between UCC and UCCAANA.

Mr. George P. Kurien, the Editor of our Newsletter and Mrs. Susan Kurien visited UC College twice during 2013. They met the Principal Dr. Benny Cherian, Dr. Raju K. John, Manager of UCC, Dr. Thara Simon, Dr. A. M. Chacko, and Dr. Thomas Philip, former Principal of UCC.

I visited UCC in November, and met the Principal Dr. Benny Cherian, Manager Dr. Raju K. John, Dr. Thara Simon, Dr. Reena Philip, Dr. M. I. Punnoose, Governing Body members and Dr. Thomas Philip. The importance of UCC/UCCAANA relationship and effective communication were emphasized at the meeting. I also had a chance to visit the modern, self-financed facilities for MBA and Computer Science. I visited Dr. A. M. Chacko at Aeli Hills, where he was recuperating and regaining his health from his recent illness.

Our Educational Endowment at UCC continues to grow, and we have been able to disburse the proceeds to students on a merit/need basis. We also helped two physically challenged students with financial support. As we reflect upon the accomplishments of the past, there is satisfaction, but we can't ignore the challenges which still loom ahead. We have to embark on a concerted and creative effort at membership drive. Our membership roll is only a tiny percentage of the alumni population in North America. What do we need to engage more alumni in UCCAANA? How can we inspire younger alumni to take up responsible positions in the alumni organization? Our endowment is growing at a slower pace. How do we make it grow? These are questions that beg answers.

We have come a long way, but have more work to do. Let us rejoice in our progress. I hope and pray for a very active and productive 2014 with participation by more alumni. I am very grateful to all the Board members and alumni for their encouragement, support and wishes.

Warm regards,

Thomas Mathew (NJ), Secretary, (tmathew41@yahoo.com)

The Legacy

Mrs. Aparna G. Menon

Alma Mater – the educational institution where one has graduated from plays a huge role in molding who you are. The tender formative years of one's youth are often spent in the college grounds and class rooms with one's peers and professors. The experiences from those days contribute to one's outlook, choices and decisions in the life ahead. However, how can an institute where you have never attended influence you and introduce you to several movers and shakers of the current society? How can you be so informed about that institute's various alumni activities, events and even get to write in that association's newsletter!!!? Well, it can happen if both of your parents are alumni of the same institute. Union Christian College, Alwaye is my parents' alma mater thereby making it my "Grandma Mater" if such a phrase can be coined! Once I dug deeper into history, I realized that my maternal grandfather was also a product of the same premier institute from the late 1940s!! Through these years, Union Christian College or simply UC, its culture and its vast alumni have played a crucial role in my life too!

My father R. Balakrishna Menon, who hails from North Parur was one of the last batch of students who attended "Pre-University" in UC during 1961-62. After Pre-university he spent an additional year at UC College before joining College of Engineering, Trivandrum – which happens to be my own Alma Mater as well. Although his time spent at UC was limited, I recall him reminiscing several times about the high quality of the 'intellectual' crowd in the college at that time that created an environment where reading and sharing ideas were highly valued. My dad has always been a voracious reader covering a wide array of topics ranging from painting to big-bang theory to cookbooks to human error analysis. Sure enough, learning and idea sharing have always been a core value for our family. There was even a rule of thumb that for every 1000 rupees spent on fancy apparels, a certain amount was to be kept aside for spending on books. To be honest, with all the online shopping temptations, I have not managed that apparel to books ratio very well. However the fact that learning and education take a prime spot above everything else has been a mantra that I grew up with, and it is one that I plan to share with my own children.

My mother Dr. M. S Girija, spent 7 long years in UC College. She started her rather long sojourn at UC as a 13 year old pre-degree student (yes, those days the 15 year requirement to appear for SSLC was not yet established and she being the over achiever, had gotten several double promotions!) until she graduated in 1973 with an M.Sc in Physics. She lives and breathes the spirit of UC College even to this day. I recall her early stories about the college, being how homesick she was for living in the college hostel, especially so as a pure vegetarian. I have known the college closer through her black and white photographs spanning those 7 years. They come in all shapes and forms, some of which you have to hold under a microscope and squint to see people's faces. Then there are those studio photographs, usually with a group of girls in their *mundum neryathum* or half sarees or floral printed chiffon drapes posing in front of waterfalls and flower garden back drops, holding hands and smiling coyly at the camera. There are even pictures of the various cultural events such as the folk dance group that is all decked to dance to '*hoton pe aise baat leke*' and the picnic trips to Ooty and Kodai where every other person wears an oversized black sunglasses! Then there are the cool pictures of my mom in athletic track suits winning trophy after trophy and more trophies for various varsity events with her specialty event being long jump. Apparently the long jump record she set in the year 1970 was not broken for many years to come, according to reliable sources.

Clearly my mother has had a closer bond with the college, professors and other alumni as she spent her entire college life at UC. From her innumerable stories about the college, I also realize how 'ahead of time' the culture at UC was. UC College being one of leading co-ed institutes encouraged a very healthy relationship between boys and girls. The openness and comfort that many of her friends of both genders have for each other shows the level of freedom and trust they were allowed to develop. If that led to romantic relationships, then so be it! I recall the story about a witty professor who is said to have once approached two love birds under a tree and asked them "Did you realize how many times this tree has bloomed and shed the leaves since you both started hanging out here!?"

Having both parents exposed to this level of open trust and acceptance has immensely helped me down the road. Growing up as the only daughter, one might assume that I was under countless restrictions from my parents. Quite contrary to that, I was never once restricted from making the friends I wanted or doing the things that I loved doing on account of being a girl or as the only child. Many of the opportunities I was able to pursue at my college and at other institutions such as YMCA which led to national as well as international accomplishments and exposures during my youth were attributable to the fact that I was not expected to shroud myself away from half of

the society which happens to be of a different gender.

For our society to progress, invent and innovate, it is important for every member of the young and the talented generation to work together...the operative word being “together”. In today’s world, as we hear more and more stories about restrictions on students, especially on women, and how the society as a whole is trying to protect them from the evil...one cannot help but appreciate the secure and balanced environment that once existed in colleges like UC. The greatness of a college can truly be measured by the power of its Alumni. UC has also great alumni power to boast. I am settled in Philadelphia, USA since 2005. Ever since my parents’ first visit to USA in 2007, whenever my mom is in town, a few of her UC friends are sure to come and visit us. Many of their business cards read the Who’s Who of the leading business, technical, entrepreneurial and academic domains. I am often amazed by the extent to which many of her friends travel great distances just to spend a few hours or a weekend together with their old friends. This level of camaraderie and commitment to each other and to the alma mater is hard to come by in today’s world. It is refreshing to see good old friendships, real face to face conversations and genuine catching up of old stories over a cup of coffee! Through providing a great foundation for the academic as well as the holistic development of its students, UC has contributed many generations of valuable citizens not only to India but also to several other countries around the globe! We all owe it to this great institution for what it has done directly and indirectly to shape us who we are!

(Aparna’s both parents are UCC alumni. She lives in Pennsylvania with her husband Manoj and two children. They both are IT professionals. Grandma is visiting them now).

Treasurer’s Report

I am very happy to report that we are stepping into 2014 with more active and generous participation from our alumni. We hope that we can attract more alumni to join UCCAANA in the coming days. As we shared before, UCCAANA has set a goal of raising \$100,000 from 100 alumni as a 5-year plan with a donation of \$200 per year for the Educational Endowment. Currently a small group (in relation to the alumni membership) has pledged to join in the 5-year plan, and so far we have raised a total of about \$31,000 for the Endowment. Proceeds from the Fixed Deposit were used to award scholarships at UCC in January 2012, December 2012 and November 2013 to a total of about 65 students. There are so many poor and needy students at UCC. We have a responsibility to assist these less fortunate students. If you would like, please be kind and join in the Educational Endowment Project. You can join the 5-year plan or make a one-time payment, whichever is more convenient to you. Please consider making a generous donation to UCCAANA to help these needy and less fortunate students. All donations to UCCAANA are tax deductible. We will send you a receipt for tax purposes. Please think about joining this project. “Whoever is kind to the needy honors God.”

We miss Dr. K. C. Chacko (Colorado). The last thing KC requested me to do was to send out the 2014 UCCAANA Pocket Calendars to all the alumni who are members of our Association. We were able to do that. In addition, we sent out several calendars to UCC, and they really appreciated them. Also, we sent calendars to KC’s daughter Shanti and son-in-law Craig as a keepsake.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Dr. Thomas P. Mathew (Ohio),
Treasurer**

Anatomy of A Poem

By Sarah Bhaskar & George P. Kurien

The following is a short exchange between the Editor of this Newsletter and Sarah Bhaskar, a classmate from yesteryear, UCCAANA member and Newsletter contributor. The context of this correspondence is that on October 23, 2013, the Editor called Sarah to request a poem or short story for inclusion in the Newsletter, but had to leave a message as she and her husband, Bobby, were not available that evening to answer the call. The following day, bright and early at 7:35 AM, a five-line poetry from Sarah appeared in the Editor's Inbox at his office, as follows:

*Dear GPK,
We missed your call last night,
It was too late, and time too tight.
Will wait until sun sets with every ray,
And Saturn shining above South Bay.
Meanwhile have a great Autumn Day.
Love, Sarah*

.....to which the Editor responded:

*Sarah:
This is precisely why I tried to call;
I thought last night was convenient for y'all.
I wanted to ask you if you could write
Poem for Newsletter, which would be great!*

*I am trying to publish a new one
Of UCCAANA Newsletters, it's no fun!
It would be fun if people contribute
Stories, articles, poems..., give a hoot!*

*I'm glad you too noticed Saturn in South
Soon to disappear into ocean's mouth;
But F.Y.I., Jupiter has risen,
And will be in sky when gone is the Sun!*

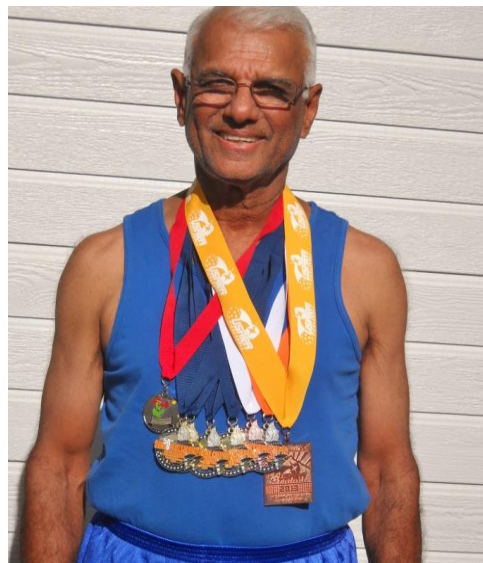
*I don't like to end this before I ask
You and Bobby if you're up to the task.
I hope both you and Bob are keeping well;
Heard grandchild is on way, it would be swell!
GPK*

The result? The poetry titled "Sundari Mavu" which Sarah wrote about her (and this Editor's) good friend and former UCC classmate, the late Usha Chandrasekhar, with the Sundari Mavu as the backdrop, which appeared in our previous Newsletter (Volume III, Number 2 of November, 2013). Thank you, Sarah, and your readers thank you! By the way, the grandchild that was mentioned in the poem is a girl; her name is Zoe Nilofer. Congratulations, Sarah and Bobby!

Dr. Pothan Varughese plays 'pickleball' with relish & hauls in gold medals at 'Olympics'

Dr. Pothan Varughese, UCC alumnus (B.Sc.1956), UCC Chemistry lecturer (1959) and former VP of UCCAANA, even in his retirement, continues with his passion for (from his UCC days) and successes in athletic competitions at State and National levels (USA). Dr. Varughese, a resident of Arizona during the winter months, participated in the Tucson Senior Olympics in tennis, 'pickleball' and track and field events. He ended up winning six gold medals in track and field, two in pickleball, and two in tennis. He competed in the National Pickleball Tournament held in Arizona and won a bronze medal in singles in his age group (75-79). He had represented the State of Pennsylvania in the 2008 National Senior Games. He has also qualified for the 2015 National Senior Olympics in Minnesota. Congratulations to Pothan on his past successes & good luck in the upcoming Nationals.

"The main reason I take part in sports and compete in such events is to keep fit and healthy in my retirement", said Dr.



Varughese. "A sedentary life in retirement (or even on the way to it) is a killer. Engage in an activity and you can keep the doctor away too" added Dr. Varughese.

PS. Pickleball is an emerging game suitable for people of all ages. The game combines elements of tennis (smaller courts, lower net), badminton and table tennis (paddle and plastic ball).



Visit <http://www.usapa.org/>

Endless Tasks

by Elsy Satheesan

Sheer hard work
Left me energy-sapped!

Like a chewed stick of cane
I lay on the mat
willing the cosmic energy
To filter into my being!

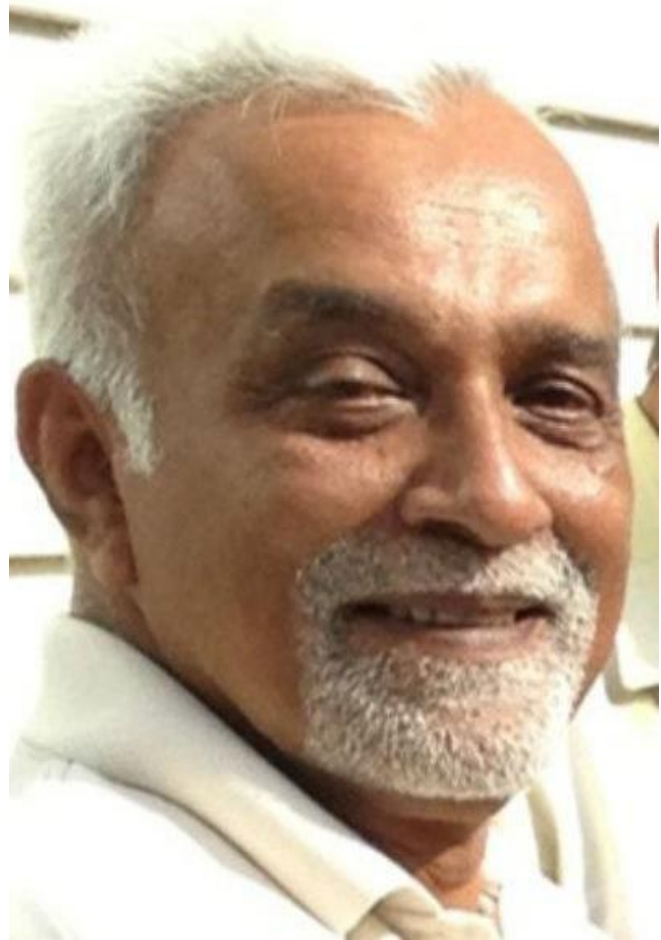
And then I felt it!
Like water oozing from springs
Into a well, dried by pumps,
Vigor came
Trickling into me.

And I got up to the next task
in the List of Endless Tasks
Which we choose to call Life!!!

(Editor's Note Prof. Elsy Satheesan, UCCAANA's poet laureate, has a reserved space in this Newsletter for poetry, We appreciate her continued contribution to this column.)*

Niagara Falls to Host UCCAANA Regional Conference

Mrs. Kuttimol Kurian, Vice President of UCCAANA, is spearheading the 2014 Regional UCCAANA Conference ("Get Together" in UCCAANA lingo) in Ontario, Canada. While final details are not fully worked out as of this publication, Mrs. Kurian says that it will be held at the Niagara on the Lake during the Labor Day weekend. This will be a great opportunity for members of UCCAANA to meet some of the friends whom they may not have seen for many years as well as to meet new friends. If history is any guide, the get together in the Summer of 2012 in the Baltimore-Washington area was a grand success which was attended by well over 75 people. Watch for more details in the pages of future publication of this as well as via email communications from our Secretary.



Death of Mr. George Verghese, a Fellow UCCAANA

Mr. George Verghese (Prasad) of Chicago, IL, has passed away on Monday, February 10, 2014. Prasad attended UC College from 1965 to 1970, and immigrated to the United States in 1972. He played a key role in organizing the UCCAANA regional get together in Chicago two years ago in the Summer of 2012. Prasad will be greatly missed by his many friends in his home town in general, and by his UCCAANA colleagues in the United States. He is survived by his wife of 36 years, Mrs. Mary George, and his two daughters, Indira and Suzanne. The members of the UCCAANA Board of Directors express their heartfelt condolences on Prasad's passing.

Belly Up

An Essay By George P. Kurien

I've been thinking..... Yes, it's known to have happened from time to time! As a matter of fact, it has come to a point that the modern society is experiencing a real predicament these days. The problem is so extensive that it can almost be considered as a "cancer growing on the presidency (Wait; that was a cancer growing on Watergate! Sorry, wrong tape!), I mean, a cancer growing on the modern society!" And you wonder what the problem is? Well, the problem, my friends, is that we always worry about how to bell the cat. We seem to be constantly preoccupied with such a dilemma. We seem to waste a lot of time worrying about such a simple and mundane activity.

So what happens as a consequence? We worry about it while we are at work, then while driving back home from work. That's why we get on our cell phones as soon as we get into our cars and call all our friends, relatives and colleagues to ask them how to accomplish this delicate task. We ponder before dinner. Then, soon after dinner, we ponder a little more. We ponder so much so that we lose a lot of sleep over it! Sometimes we even think that it may not be such a bad idea to go to the Ponderosa Restaurant (in NJ?) for our dinner, since it provides the right atmosphere for pondering. We sit near the bathtub refusing to go in, because we are 'immersed' in thought. And then finally, when someone pushes us in (mostly our spouse; that's their job!) after the water has become cold, we nonetheless take a bath with the hope that we could jump out of the tub shouting "Eureka!" or something Greek and stupid like that, and run all over the house covered only in our bathrobe. But, what really happens is usually the opposite. No eureka, no running around in the house, no Archimedes anywhere to be found, no nothing!

So what are we to do? I think it's worthwhile to spend some time thinking about it. I strongly believe it will be a smart investment. We need to have a plan. We need to plan our work and work our plan, how does that sound?! We need to ask ourselves certain questions. First of all, what kind of bell should we use? Electric Bell, Digital Bell, Analog Bell, Bicycle Bell, Church Bell, Graham Bell, Belly Graham, Belly Ocean, Bella Abzug..., what? How about bells and whistles? Or even the proverbial "Saved-by-the-Bell"? And while we are at it, let's not forget the Liberty Bell, forgetting which could be misconstrued as unpatriotic.

Let's say we decide to go digital, since it is easier to get spare parts for digital stuff these days. Plus, digital felines are easier to maintain as compared to the analog variety. Since the problem concerns a special kind of

critters such as the cats, we also need to approach the problem rather delicately. We definitely don't want to antagonize the cat-lovers amongst us. I think the first thing to do, therefore, would be to present the cat with an opportunity for excellence. The best way to achieve that would be to starve the animal (put it on a diet, for the cat-lover people) for three full days (It should also save us some Purina money!), so that on the fourth day, the cat would, albeit reluctantly, step out of its litter box and try to catch a mouse or two (mice?). That will also teach the little rascal the most important socioeconomic lesson that There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch (TANSTAAFL) in this animal kingdom. In the meantime (i.e., when the time is really mean, and the cat isn't home), we must be ready with the bell and the right length of rope for the cat. Remember, the length of the rope may vary depending upon the individual cat. Fat Cats would naturally require fat ropes and shorter lengths and/or vice-versa, while the average garden variety cats would only require medium size. We patiently wait around behind the kitchen door for the cat to arrive. When the cat finally returns home with the mouse, all we need to do is to say "surprise" in unison, and do a left click on the mouse, and that'll be the end of that! Everything will be over in a split second. Log yourself out and reboot, and everything will be like new. The dog (well, cat, if you want to be picky) won't even know that it has been belled, just like the mouse will never find out that it has been clicked.

Now we know! And all that pondering was for nothing!

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

A Word about the 'Cherry Tree' Essay from Last Edition:

Conventional wisdom has it that George Washington, the first President of the United States, is from the Commonwealth of Virginia. However, nothing could be farther from the truth. George and his family were originally from Texas, but not a lot of people knew this fact! History does not record it as such.

It is true that Washington Sr. gave young George a brand new ax as a gift on Washington's Birthday in February. One day, George came back from school, and since he did not have much homework that day, decided to try his ax on the cherry tree in his backyard. Daddy Washington returned from work at the end of the day, and was not too pleased to see his favorite tree chopped down, whereupon Senior lined up his household, Martha, slaves and all, and demanded: "Who cut down the cherry tree?!"

Young George sheepishly stepped forward and said, "Daddy, I can't tell a lie; I cut down the cherry tree. It was not the slaves."

Senior said, "OK, I've had it with you! With this attitude of telling the truth when someone asks you something, you're never going to make it in Texas politics. Pack up; we're moving to Virginia!"

---George P. Kurien

UCC and Sarah

By Sarah Bhaskar

Every year since graduation, without fail, I have been visiting UCC, meeting anyone available on the campus, always feeling quite at home and learning great things about my alma mater. UCC is the only place on earth I call "my own" after moving many times to different countries, and attending universities in different time zones. Even today, after all these years, I tread the sacred ground of UCC as if every pebble around the college knew me and every tree acknowledged my presence.

On 17th December 2013, on our college ground, I noticed a pair of beautiful butterflies -- I mean real butterflies -- fluttering about amidst the bright students clinging to their mobile phones, and weaving in and around the young, busy and energetic teachers. Suddenly I was reminded of the blossoming romance of GPK and Susy, five decades before at the very same spot.

The highlight of my visits to UCC during the past 50 visits since 1966 had been meeting my friends and family. Also, year after year, I had been doing my annual pilgrimage to the serene Aluvapuzha, humming an old movie song by A. M. Rajah and P. Susheela.

"Periyare, Periyare, parvatha nirayude panineere"
(Oh Periyar river, Periyar river, the fragrant rose water from the mountain range.....)

This year, as usual, amidst the ubiquitous loudspeakers from churches, temples and mosques vying for attention from all God's creations, I sang, in a feeble voice from a room facing the Periyar:

"Nadake thelineeru nalkenam, Nadodippattukal padenam"

(Oh river, you must distribute clean water to all people, and you should sing old folk songs.....)

Suddenly, out of nowhere, a bloated cat floated by in my beloved river, which prompted me to stop the song abruptly. Within no time, I saw a man with his arms raised to the skies in prayer, diving into the divine ripple unaware that it cradled the feline's mortal remains only moments before.

Teachers and students came and went, dearest parents and respected professors passed away, ancestral homes remodeled and sold to strangers, everyone and everything once so familiar became alien, but UCC always remained the foundation of my being.....

My eternal gratitude to the past, present and future caretakers of this Temple of Learning.

[Editor's Note: Thanks for the honorable mention that you made of yours truly and his wife! - GPK]

Hope College Faculty Visit UCC

As part of the growing collaboration between UC College and Hope College, in Holland, MI, two faculty from Hope visited UCC during Jan 10-20, 2014. The exchange visit follows a UCC faculty spending a semester in Hope College. Ms. Kelly Jacobsma, Director of Libraries and Dr. Lorna Jarvis, a Professor in Psychology at Hope were able to see firsthand the UCC environment and to explore areas for future collaboration. While at UCC, they held discussions with the leadership team and Heads of Departments and gave seminars on a variety of topics including improving research quality, bilingualism, role of the library in teaching & learning, and curriculum development. The visitors also had dialogue with Post-Graduate students on higher education in the U.S. and held discussions with librarians from a number institutes in Kochi and the surrounding areas, including Cochin University of Science & Technology.



The visitors seemed to have made time to play tourists and visited a number of local attractions and historical sites. A slide show of photos from their visit can be seen at:

http://www.hope.edu/lib/ucc_visit/UCC%20Kerala%20OPP%20Slideshow%20Post.pdf

[PS. Dr. Alfredo Gonzales, Provost of International Studies at Hope College, MI, is scheduled to make a follow up visit to UCC in early April.]

UCC Physics Department Celebrates Platinum Jubilee.

UCC Physics department celebrated the 75th anniversary of its inception. In the inaugural meeting of the platinum jubilee celebration on January 9th 2014, the College honored the retired faculty of the Physics Dept. The special തിരുവാതിര dance presented by 75 Physics students and staff in the VM Hall courtyard certainly was first of its kind on UCC campus and a magnificent visual feast. A three-day Physics technology expo (ഒരുതീര-2k14) held in connection with the jubilee included science exhibitions, physics seminars, stage show on Physics concepts and other projects by students. A Physics alumni reunion is scheduled for April 12th. A prime attraction of the expo was the exhibit by Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) on various models of rockets, space modules, communication satellites, etc. For the more than 2000 students from 15 schools who attended the exhibition, it was a rare experience that was informative as much it was entertaining.

The UCC takes pride as the first private college under Kerala University that was approved for B.Sc and M.Sc Physics courses. In its continued evolution, the department has emerged as a leading center for basic research in Physics & Materials Science in the current M.G University. A number of government agencies are funding the research projects.

Thousands of UCC alumni all over the world, including a number of UCCAANA Board members have had their careers shaped by this department and its pioneering and dedicated gurus. As we honor and pay homage to them, we pray for a continued bright future for the department and UCC.

തിരുവാതിര by 75 Physics students/staff



A few former & current Physics faculty



Inquisitive visitors to the Physics Exhibition

The inaugural address of the platinum celebration by former Head of the Dept, Prof. Govindan Kutty Menon is presented below. Reproduced with permission from ഒരുപ്പണം -- a UCC Malayalam Department journal.

സഫലം, പിന്നിട്ട വഴികൾ



പ്രൊഫ.കെ.ഗോവിന്ദകുട്ടി മേനോൻ
(1958 - 1989, HOD: 1973 - 1989)

90 കഴിഞ്ഞ കലാലയത്തിലെ "മുമ്പെ പറക്കുന്ന പക്ഷി" ഫിസിക്സ് ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റ് M.Sc 50 കടന്ന് B.Sc യുടെ 75-ാം വയസ്സിലേക്ക്. പിന്നിട്ട വഴികളുടെ മഹത്വം ആഘോഷത്തെ ന്യായീകരിക്കുന്നു. എല്ലാം ദൈവനിയോഗം. പക്ഷെ മനുഷ്യരായ നാം നിയോഗിക്കപ്പെട്ട കരങ്ങളെയും ഓർക്കണം. കോളേജിന്റെ സ്ഥാപകരായ 4 പേർക്കു പുറമെ ഇവിടെ സ്മരിക്കേണ്ടവരാണ് പ്രൊഫ.ടി.ബി.നൈനാൻ, പ്രൊഫ.ടി.ബി.തോമസ്, ഡോ.പി.എം.മത്തായി എന്നിവർ.

വളർച്ചയുടെ ഘട്ടങ്ങൾ പരിശോധിച്ചാൽ 1921-ൽ ആർട്സ് മാത്രമുള്ള ഇന്റർമീഡിയറ്റ്, 1923-ൽ മാത്തമാറ്റിക്സ് കൂടിയുള്ള 1.B. ഗ്രൂപ്പ്, 1926-ൽ ഫിസിക്സ്, കെമിസ്ട്രി, മാത്തമാറ്റിക്സ് 1st ഗ്രൂപ്പ് അങ്ങിനെ പൂർണ്ണ രണ്ടാം ഗ്രേഡ് കോളേജ്. ഇത്രയുമാകാൻ കച്ചേരിമാളികയ്ക്ക് പുറമെ സ്വന്തമായ ഒരു സയൻസ് ബ്ലോക്ക് പണികഴിപ്പിക്കേണ്ടിവന്നു. അന്നത്തെ വിഭവസമാഹരണത്തെപ്പറ്റി ഓർത്തുനോക്കുക. 1926-ൽ പ്രൊഫസർ അനന്തരാമൻ കെമിസ്ട്രിയിലും പ്രൊഫ.ടി.ബി. നൈനാൻ ഫിസിക്സിലും ചേർന്നു. 1926 - 1929 വരെ Rev. Dr. മൊഹറാണ് ഫിസിക്സ് ലാബ് ഒരുക്കിയത്. അതിൽ പങ്കാളിയായ നൈനാൻ സാറും പിന്നീട് മെക്കാനിക്സ് രാവുണ്ണിക്കൊല്ലനും ലാബിൽ തന്നെ സമയം ചിലവഴിച്ച് പഠന നിരീക്ഷണസാമഗ്രികൾ ഉണ്ടാക്കി. 1936-ൽ പ്രൊഫ.ടി.ബി.തോമസ് സാറു കൂടി ചേർന്നപ്പോൾ ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റ് B.Sc.ക്ക് സജ്ജമായെങ്കിലും മദ്രാസ് യൂണിവേഴ്സിറ്റിയിൽ അഫിലിയേഷൻ എളുപ്പമല്ലായിരുന്നു. പ്രൊഫ.എൻ. ആർ.രാമചന്ദ്രയുടെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ മഹാരാജാസ് കോളേജ് വിപുലമായ സജ്ജീകരണങ്ങളുണ്ടാക്കിയിരുന്നു. ഭാഗ്യവശാൽ 1938-39-ൽ ട്രാവൻകൂർ യൂണിവേഴ്സിറ്റി സ്ഥാപിതമായി. യൂണിവേഴ്സിറ്റി മാറുന്നതിന് ഒരു കണ്ടീഷനായി U.C.ക്കും S.B.ക്കും B.Sc.ഫിസിക്സും പ്രിൻസിപ്പൽമാർക്ക് സ്ഥിരം സിൻഡിക്കേറ്റ് മെമ്പർ സ്ഥാനവും ലഭിച്ചു. തലമുതിർന്ന C.M.S. കോളേജ് 2nd ഗ്രേഡ് കോളേജായി തുടരുകയും ചെയ്തു. 1946-ൽ ഡോ.പി.എം.മത്തായി കൂടി ചേർന്നതോടെ ഫിസിക്സ് ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റ് ഏറ്റവും പ്രശസ്തമായ ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റായി. നാശനഷ്ടങ്ങൾക്കും വികൃതിത്തരങ്ങൾക്കും വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളിൽനിന്നും ഈടാക്കിയിരുന്ന ലാബ് ഫൈൻ കോളേജ് ഓരോ ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റിന്റെയും കരുതൽയനമായി സൂക്ഷിച്ചു. M.Sc തുടങ്ങിയതിന് മാച്ചിങ്ങ് ഷെയറായ 25000 രൂപയ്ക്കു

പുറമെ ബോട്ടണി ബ്ലോക്കിന്റെ രണ്ടാം പകുതി പണിയാനും ഫിസിക്സിന്റെ പണം ഉപയോഗിച്ചു. ഇന്ത്യയിൽ യൂണിവേഴ്സിറ്റിയുടെ അദ്ധ്യാപന സഹായമില്ലാതെ രണ്ടാം പദ്ധതിയിൽ 1958 മുതൽ കോളേജുകളിൽ M.Sc.തുടങ്ങാൻ അനുമതിയും കേന്ദ്രസഹായവും വന്നു. ഇത് 1958-ൽ ആദ്യമായി ഉപയോഗിച്ച കോളേജാണ് നമ്മുടേത്. മാനദണ്ഡവും അപേക്ഷാരിതിയും മൊക്കെ കടുപ്പമായിരുന്നതുകൊണ്ട് SBയും സെന്റ് തോമസുമൊക്കെ പിന്നീടാണ് M.Sc തുടങ്ങിയത്. ഈ അവസരത്തിൽ ടി.ബി.നൈനാൻ, ടി.ബി.തോമസ്,

ഡോ.പി.എം.മത്തായി എന്നിവരെ പ്രത്യേകം സ്മരിക്കണം. കെട്ടിടനിർമ്മാണത്തിൽ പ്രതിഫലമില്ലാതെ പ്രവർത്തിച്ച ശ്രീ പോൾ പോത്തനെയും കോൺട്രാക്ടർ മാണിയേയും ഓർക്കണം. എന്റെ സഹപ്രവർത്തകരായിരുന്ന പരേതനായ കേരവൻപോറ്റി, ഡോ.ജി.കെ.നായർ ഡോ.ജോർജ്ജ് ജേക്കബ് എന്നിവരും നമ്മുടെ നന്ദി അർഹിക്കുന്നു. M.Sc ക്കുവേണ്ടി കെട്ടുകണക്കിന് ഫയലുകൾ തയ്യാറാക്കിയ ഉമ്മൻസാറുമുണ്ട്.

രാജ്യത്തിന് ഞങ്ങളെന്ത് തിരിച്ചുനൽകി എന്നു ചോദിച്ചേക്കാം. ആകാശവാണി - ദൂരദർശൻ സ്ഥാപനങ്ങളിൽ ട്രൈറെ ചീഫ് എഞ്ചിനീയർമാരെയും, DRDO, ISRO, BEL, BARC എന്നിവടങ്ങളിലേക്ക് നിരവധി വിദഗ്ദ്ധരെയും, കലാലയങ്ങളിലേക്കും സർവ്വകലാശാലകളിലേക്കും നിരവധി പ്രഗത്ഭരായ അദ്ധ്യാപക ഗവേഷകരെയും സംഭാവന ചെയ്തു എന്നതാണ് ഉത്തരം. ഇതിനുപുറമെ അമേരിക്ക, കാനഡ എന്നിവിടങ്ങളിൽ പ്രഗത്ഭരായ അദ്ധ്യാപക - ഗവേഷകരും ഉണ്ട്. M.Scയോടെ B.Sc നിലവാരം ഉയരുകയും ഇവിടത്തെ B.Sc കൊണ്ടുമാത്രം ഔന്നത്യത്തിൽ എത്തിയവരും ധാരാളമുണ്ട്. 75-ാം വർഷത്തിൽ സന്തോഷത്തോടെ തിരിഞ്ഞുനോക്കാൻ കഴിയുന്നു എന്നത് ഏറെ സംതൃപ്തി നൽകുന്നുണ്ട്. ഏവർക്കുംവേണ്ടി മുമ്പെ നയിച്ചവരെ സ്മരിക്കുകയും ഇന്ന് ജീവത്തായി പഠനഗവേഷണരംഗം മുമ്പോട്ടു കൊണ്ടുപോകുന്നവരെ അനുമോദിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന യു.സി.കോളേജിൽ എന്റെ എളിയ പങ്കാളിത്തങ്ങൾക്ക് അവസരം നൽകിയ ദൈവത്തെ നമിക്കുന്നു. ഫിസിക്സ് വിഭാഗത്തിന് എല്ലാ മംഗളങ്ങളും ആശംസിക്കുന്നു.

GADHIKA 2014 - A literary event and cultural fest in UCC

The UCC Department of Malayalam hosted GADHIKA, a three-day National seminar and cultural fest in association with the Vidhwaan P.G. Nair Trust, Aluva, that has been set up by Dr. M.G. Sarngadharan, a UCCAANA Board member. The theme of the seminar was *Eastern literary theories: Relevance and Practices*.



The seminar was inaugurated by Dr. K.G. Paulose, former vice chancellor of Kerala Kalamandalam Deemed University. A publication “*Samakalika Malayala Kavitha*” based on the research by the Malayalam department was released on this occasion. Twenty five research scholars from various colleges participated in this national seminar, presented their research papers and engaged in lively discussions.

The cultural fest bloomed during the evenings by traditional art performances and special cultural presentations by students. Music by the well-known music director Sri. Sharath as well as by the young musicians of the college captivated the audience. An art exhibition held in conjunction was a major attraction of the program.

As in previous years, the Gadhika cultural evening was most enjoyable to the community in and around Aluva. UCC and the department of Malayalam expressed their gratitude to the sponsors Vidhwaan P.G.Nair Trust, UBCHEA and UCCAANA.

TWO UCC Faculty Receive the United Board Fellowships

The United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia (UBCHEA), New York, has awarded the prestigious UB Freeman Fellowship for 2014-16 to two UCC faculty, Dr. M. I Punnoose and Dr. Mini Alice, both from the Department of Malayalam. It is the first time that United Board is giving fellowships to two candidates from the same institution from India during the same year. And in this instance, from the same Department too!! Candidates from thirty institutions in Asia were considered for the award. The UB President Nancy E. Chapman herself interviewed both Dr. Punnoose and Dr. Alice. This is indeed a unique honor to the awardees as well as to UCC.



Dr. Mini Alice

Dr. Punnoose, the Head of Malayalam Department specializes in folklore and Dr. Alice has her specialization in women's studies.

UCCAANA congratulates both Dr. Punnoose and Dr. Alice on this special honor and wishes them well in their programs.



Dr. M.I.Punnoose

My Union Christian College.

S. Ramaswamy Iyer (UCCAANA Advisor)



All of us who have studied in Union Christian College, Alwaye in any course, are always proud of our time there. There is something special about UCC! My experience is what I will share with you all. When I passed SSLC with a First class, I got the admission card from UCC asking me to appear for the interview and pay the fees. The year was 1955! I had never gone to any place alone and all I knew was the whole of North Parur, my native place and a little of Ernakulam where I used to go with my parents to visit relatives. My father was a teacher with very strict discipline. He studied in our UC College and was very proud to say that to one and all! So it is nothing but natural to see his disciplined approach. My elder brother studied for his intermediate in UCC. After 6 years of his studies, it was my turn and I studied Intermediate, B.Sc (Physics) and then M.Sc (Physics, Second Batch). I also got a chance to be a Lecturer in Physics (1961 to 1963).

My younger sister also studied in UCC for her Pre-University and B.Sc (Maths). So as a family, we are all well trained from the same college. Many people ask me why I did not go to University College, Trivandrum or Maharaja's College, Ernakulam. My answer has always been simple, I liked the UCC atmosphere, all the Professors and others. The lessons were taught by experienced teachers, including Moral Instruction. We learnt always something new other than the subject in these Moral Instruction classes. We had Prof. K. Jacob, Prof. C.P. Mathew and many others for this interesting class.

I had the good fortune of studying under the able and efficient Prof. T.B. Ninan, Prof. T.B. Thomas, Prof. T. R. Anantharaman, Prof. T.S. Venkataraman, Prof. K.P. Mathew, Prof. Narayana Menon, Prof. Fr. K.C. Joseph and Kochamma during the Intermediate. All these teachers were there during my B.Sc., and Prof. P.M Mathai came back from Toronto after his studies during my B.Sc. Many new lecturers joined at that time. One lecturer for us was Dr. Titus Mathews, who taught us Heat in B.Sc. I do remember the faces of many other Lecturers and Demonstrators. P.K. John also was our lecturer and he mainly helped us wonderfully well during the Practicals! Prof. Varadarajan was our English professor during my B.Sc. It was very nice to be in his class, especially when he took Shakespeare. Othello was our text, and he asked us to write an essay on "The part played by chance in Othello."

One of our Chemistry professors was Mr. K. G. Mathai who used to conduct the classes very well. But in spite of that I got very low marks in Chemistry! My main problem was my not understanding the arrows they put in the equations, e.g. oxygen with an upward arrow! But there were many of my friends who could repeat the formulae by heart, however long it might be! During the lunch hour, many of my friends will compete on these equations and try to imitate our Mathai sir! Some will draw pictures of Professors on the board, especially that of Prof. Ninan and Prof. T. R. Anantharaman! When I think of Chemistry classes, I think of Prof. Thomas Thomas. His last name was Mannil; so the students made his name to rhyme with his name "Mannil Mannil"! Of course there were some confidential reporters to our Principal and the management knew how the students behaved and how they attended classes etc.!

Another important point about our college system in those days was the process of "Review", immediately after the Quarterly examination. It will be on a Saturday and all the Professors, Demonstrators and Lecturers from all departments (including C.P. Andrews Sir!) will sit round a big oval table. One chair will be kept for the student, next to the Principal's seat facing the teachers. The Principal will read the name of the student, his/her marks in each subject and there will be comments from the teachers! For my first review in the Intermediate, Prof. Ninan was the Principal. When he read my marks for Chemistry 45/125, Prof. Anantharaman remarked "Ramaswamy is the brother of Mr. Venkataraman, old student of our college, and he got First Rank in chemistry for his B.Sc.(Hons.). Now he is a Lecturer in Intermediate College, Trivandrum! It is a pity that Ramaswamy has such a poor mark in Chemistry!" Prof. Ninan immediately came to my rescue with a brilliant comment with his usual smile. "But Ramaswamy has got very good marks in Maths, Physics, Hindi and English, and I am sure that he will get equally brilliant marks in Chemistry also in the next exam.!" From that time on, I was very scared of Reviews, though I faced a couple more including my B.Sc.class. So it was a great relief for me to know that there were no Reviews in the M. Sc. class!!

Well, I have written mostly on the study field only. I had excellent experience outside the college as a student and as a lecturer, which I hope to share with you all in the forthcoming Newsletters!

Pictures.....

A few photographs, taken by amateurs, I might add, are included in this issue of the Newsletter.



Mr. Thomas Mathew, UCCAANA Secretary visited UCC and had discussions with the leadership. Photo from left: Dr. Raju K. John (Manager), Mr. Thomas Mathew, Dr. Sheelakumari Issac (Bursar), Dr. P.M. Kuriachen (Botany) & Dr. Benny Cherian (Principal)



Mrs. Kuttimol Kurian (Vice President, UCCAANA) visited UCC and her old class room. Seen here with a few of the current Physics faculty



UCCANNA small get-together in Tampa, Florida.

From left:
Mr. Alex Mathew (Board member) Mrs. & Dr. James Jacob (Board Member & former President), Mrs. & Mr. Thomas Mathew (UCCAANA Secretary), Mrs. & Mr. M. Mathew

UCCAANA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Name: _____ (First) ____ (M.I) _____ (Last)
Street: _____
City: _____ State/Province _____ Zip: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____ Cell _____

U C College:

Student: _____ to _____ Pre-Degree/Intermediate Group _____
_____ to _____ Degree _____ Major _____
_____ to _____ Degree _____ Major _____
Teaching: _____ to _____ Subject _____

Other Institutions:

1. _____ Degree _____ Major _____
2. _____ Degree _____ Major _____
3. _____ Degree _____ Major _____

Employment (Optional): Employed [Y] [N] Retired [Y] [N]

Company/Institution

1. _____ # of years _____
2. _____ # of years _____
3. _____ # of years _____

Awards/Achievements:

Area(s) of Expertise:

Family (Optional):

Name of Wife/Husband _____
Number of children _____ Grand children _____
Number of Family members who attended U C College _____
Hometown _____

Please email the completed form to: Thomas Mathew; tmathew41@yahoo.com

(Hard copy applications may be returned to: UCCAANA, 120 Valencia Circle, Orange Village, OH44022)
