



The five finalists from left, Prasanna Welangoda, Ajanthan Sivathas (winner), Azrah Azar (first runner-up), Ishantha Samarasinghe and Dharshana de Silva.



The Judges - from left Atn. Haleem Ghouse (past governor) Romayne Diasz, PR Governor, Toastmasters, Christanthi Emanuel, Education and Training Toastmasters, Dharshana Welikala, Past Governor (Toastmasters) and T.M. Hussain Moosaje.



District Governor, District 82 Toastmaster Arunasalam Balraj (left) presents the Bartlett Challenge Trophy to the AIBS 2008 winner Ajanthan Sivathas.

AIBS 2008 - a big success

Young Lankan Speakers International standard

- District Governor Balraj

Text & pictures by Beverly Jansz

"Our young speakers are world standard. The Colombo Toastmasters Club needs to be congratulated for sustaining a project for the past 18 years," said District Governor, District 82, South Asia Toastmasters Inc. USA, Arumachalam Balraj.

T.M. Balraj was speaking as the chief guest at the All Island Best Speaker 2008 (AIBS 2008) contest which was held last week at the Cinnamon Grand, Colombo. The contest was organised

by the Colombo Toastmasters Club for the 18th year in succession. Members of Colombo Toastmasters Club who conceptualised this idea also need to be congratulated. This is one project which draws many young people from all parts of the country to "Discover - Learn Act" so that they are able to "Dance on the Rainbow", Balraj said.

T.M. Balraj explained the benefits of joining Toastmasters, specially on how one can transform oneself by learning communication and leadership skills taught at the typical Toastmasters Club. "The five finalists at the

All five contestants "ran neck-to-neck" making the winning decision a hard one for the seven judges.

contest demonstrated their creative ideas and their concepts to the audience in such an articulate manner that all contestants should be congratulated," Balraj said. He thanked the finalists and all those who entered the contest for sharing their ideas. The evening began with the prepared speech round where each of the five finalists spoke on a topic of their

choice for seven minutes. After the recess, each of the five finalists entertained the audience numbering over 500, with their impromptu speaking skills by delivering a speech of two minutes duration. A special feature of this year's contest was the Mini Book Store run by M.D. Gunaseena in the Oak Room

foyer of Cinnamon Grand, at the interval. Many members from the audience took the opportunity to buy books, no doubt inspired by the speeches delivered within the hall.

The first AIBS speech contest was held in 1989. The event has been presented by the Colombo Toastmasters Club and sponsored since its inception by the Bartlett Group, whose Chairman, Eraj Wijesinghe was the Guest of Honour. The winner of AIBS 2008 was Ajanthan Sivathas while Ms. Azrah Azhar emerged first runner-up. Dharshana de Silva, a

Toastmaster, placed second runner-up. The other two finalists were Prasanna Welangoda and Ishantha Samarasinghe. All five contestants "ran neck-to-neck" making the winning decision a hard one for the five judges.

The mission of the Colombo Toastmasters Club is to provide a mutually supportive and positive learning environment in which every member has the opportunity to develop 'Communication and Leadership Skills', which in turn foster self-confidence and personal growth, thus fulfilling the founder's dream.



Bartlett Group Chairman, Eraj Wijesinghe, presenting a gift voucher to the first runner-up Azrah Azar.

Kandy Rotarians blaze a pioneering trail in micro-lending

The Rotary Club of Kandy supported by the Rotary Club of Singapore and Rotary Foundation of Rotary International set up a Permanent Revolving Fund for Self-Help Type Micro Loans to assist poor persons who are unable to obtain credit facilities from banks and lending institutions.

The Project was started in 1998 with the support of a Health, Hunger & Humanity Grant - 98-11 from Rotary Foundation of US \$ 70,000. This project was preceded by a pilot project of US \$ 5,000, funded again by the Rotary Club of Singapore and Rotary Foundation through which the Rotarians of Kandy Club tested the "ground conditions" prior to launching this ambitious "Micro Lending Programme" for poor underprivileged persons who had the will and the vision but not the resources to set themselves up in small income generating programmes.

A decade later in 2008 this revolving fund has



Recipient Anoma Damayanthi - Grocery Store.



Recipient Saman Senewiratne - Record Bar.

assisted over 848 underprivileged individuals to set themselves up in income generating programmes, with a loan disbursement of Rs.31 Million. Most of the loans have been on a pay-back period of 2-3 years with a few for longer periods. The default rate has been quite low and as at today, the loan fund stands at Rs. 12.5 Million.

This is indeed an exiting and rewarding experience for us where we have grown the fund to nearly 100% over its initial value

over this decade and also helped over 848 individuals/families to be self-sufficient, Vice President of the Rotary Club of Kandy & Project Initiator, Rtn. Shamil Peiris said.

The current programme operates through an incorporated entity called Rotary Kandy Community Development Foundation (Pvt) Ltd. and has an independent & dedicated Board of Directors headed by Chairman - Rtn. Past President - Rihal Madugalle. In addition to direct lending to beneficiaries, the club also

works closely with SARVODAYA Economic Enterprise - Development Services (Guarantee) Ltd. (SEEDS) and Kandurata Development Bank. Both these organizations have extensive reach into rural communities and have good track records. We decided to work with them because we wanted to expand our reach beyond operating only in the Kandy District to a much wider area and we are delighted at the outcome of these new partnerships said

Mega projects by Galupura Metro Lions

Theja Vidyarupa Akuressa group correspondent

Galupura Metro Lions Club has extended its social, welfare and health services for the benefit of the under privileged people in and around Galle District.

The club has completed the following projects under

the guidance of President Lion P Wickramasekera and Club Secretary Lion Lalith Kariyawasam.

* Donating a ceramic wash room set for a disabled cancer patient.

* Joint medical camp at Nagoda

* Presenting dry rations to 50 resident Bhikkus at Viharagoda Pirivena.

* Donating school items to under privileged children of Medagama Kanista Vidyalaya in a rural area in Himidum Pattu.

* Medical camp at Neluwa donating stretchers, spectacles and medicine to 800 patients.

* Presenting financial assistance on the foster parents donation programme to 28 children who are unable

to attend school due to poverty on the financial aid scheme.

* Providing assistance and equipment to disabled persons at Sangamitta College organised by Lion Jagath Weerasinghe.

* Four scholarships offered to Ampara remote schoolchildren organised by Lion Lalith Kariyawasam.



Donating a stretcher walker to a disabled. Pictures by Theja Vidyarupa



Lions at a health service camp.

Lions open OPD and Eye Clinic

An OPD Clinic and an Eye Ward funded by the Lions Clubs International Founda-

tion, for the Lions Gift of Sight Hospital located at the Galgoda Sri Maha Viharaya,

Panadura was opened recently along with laying of the foundation stone for the pro-

posed new building complex, by International President Lion Mahendra Amarasingura.



Lion Mahendra Amarasingura opens the OPD clinic by cutting a ribbon while Ven. Pothupitiye Pannasekera Thera chief incumbent of Galgoda Sri Maha Viharaya Panadura looks on. (Right) Chief Prelate of Galgoda Sri Maha Viharaya, Panadura in the course of eye check up. International President Lion Mahendra Amarasingura, Project President of Eye Hospital Lion Abey Silva, Lion Lester Asperu 306 A-1 are also in the picture. Pic by Susil Ratnaweera Panadura North Group Corr.

Rotarians join LAC in tree planting



The Rotary Club of Colombo West joined the Legal Aid Commission (LAC) in an All Island School fruit tree planting program. The programme commenced with the planting of fruit trees at D.S. Senaranyaka Vidyalaya, Colombo. Here Chairman, LAC, S.S. Wieratne plants the first fruit tree to commence the islandwide schools fruit tree planting program jointly sponsored by LAC and the Rotary Club of Colombo West. Rotary Community Services Chairman, Donlat Kundanmal is also in the picture.

DG's Excellence Award



District Governor 306A2, Lion Kamal Senewiratne (right) presents the District Governor's Excellence Award for International White Cane Day to Lion IPP, M. Ashroff Hussain of the Lions Club of Colombo West. The Awards Ceremony took place at the 3rd Annual Convention of Lions District 306A2 held at BMICH recently.

Botanical Garden for Hindu College

District Governor 306 B1, Lion S. Raghavan unveiled the memorial plaque to declare open the new Botanical Garden at Hindu College premises, Ratmalana recently. The event was organised

by Lions District 306 B1 and Lions Green Team. First Lady Raghavan, College Principal N. Manmatharajah, Project Chairman Lion, V. M. Shammuganathan and Lion members participated.



District Governor 306 B1, Lion S. Raghavan unveils the memorial plaque. Picture by A. Maduraveeran