



**KCSMW Masika**

**2008 Newsletter 1**

**From your Editor,**

My dear Malayali friends,

It has been almost two months since the year 2008 dawned. Better late than never, let me wish you all, on behalf of KCSMW, a year that is filled with life's choicest blessings. It is my plan to bring this newsletter every month in addition to our souvenir publication. I intend this newsletter as a communication channel for us all to let our friends know the important events in our lives – may be a wedding, a new child born, an accomplishment or achievement in career or simply about folks from India visiting us. This could also serve as a means for letting others know about your move to a new house, change of address and a long list of things. In order for this newsletter to serve usefully its purpose, I need input from all of you that can be included. There is no deadline or due date! Just send the information to me and I will take care of the rest.



KCSMW is planning a host of events – cultural, educational and family entertainment. You will see those in future newsletters. This year's Office Bearers who are going to shoulder this year activities are listed on the last page. Since this is the first newsletter this year - you have to bear with me – I am going to write couple of my personal experiences. I hope to fill the future issues with your contributions.

Regards,  
Dr. Gabriel D. Roy  
Editor

### **Malayalam Class**

KCSMW is offering free Malayalam classes as a service to the community. Classes start in April 2008.

Malayalam Class Schedule for April:

04/12/2008 – 2:00 PM

04/26/2008 – 2:00 PM

Venue:

East County Community Center  
3310 Gateshead Manor Way  
Silver Spring, MD 20904

For further information, visit [www.kcsmw.org](http://www.kcsmw.org)  
or contact any of the committee members.



## Kalpa Vruksham – The Coconut tree

Gabriel D. Roy

There is no sweet place like home. As years pass by and when you feel tired and lonesome, you think of those days spent at home and of those incidents that linger in your mind. Though the younger generation may not appreciate – quite logically - the politics in Kerala, most of the first generation Malayalies here still feels the nostalgia of Kerala events. I have always enjoyed the visits of folks from Kerala. It does not make any difference to me whether they are politicians or entertainers; I always make it a point to meet them and spent some time with them. Good for us, now we have the Asianet channels, Amrita and other Malayalam channels to bring to us all we can see and hear if we were in Kerala. It has become a habit to my wife, to turn on to Malayalam channel as soon as she wakes up, and wakes me up too with the TV background.

This morning I was watching a show about the Coconut tree. It has scientific, historical, financial and political angle. Researchers talked about the art of growing coconut trees, coconut growers talked about the crisis they are having now, nutritionists talked about the cholesterol in coconuts – you name it every aspect was covered. Health minded people argue about the high content of cholesterol in coconuts and the consequent reduction of coconut use and the advent of palm oil. Counter argument was that generation after generation our folks used coconut tree products from a to z and still had a healthy life. We all know that coconut tree is the most popular of all the trees in Kerala and its wide variety of products for consumption and usage. It seems that substantial investment is made to convert coconut oil for fuel oil for automobiles. I do not intend to give a complete briefing of that show, but I like to share with you how that took me through time machine and made me live for a while in another world.

My father used to love coconuts. I saw him biting a piece of coconut after every meal like a dessert. My mother used coconut lavishly in puttu and other food preparations. My brother and I used to fight for the bottom portion of the puttu as it is pushed out of the puttu barrel for the large portion of coconut shavings at the bottom! We used home made coconut oil.

The day I was born, my father planted coconut plants in one of our paddy fields eventually to convert the paddy field into a coconut grove. As I was growing up, my father used to carry me to the coconut grove and show me the leaves that were sprouting. When I was about 3 or 4 years, he used to hold my hands and we both go to this particular field and he used to tell me “Son these coconut trees are as old as you are. When you grow up and go to school these trees will also grow and give coconuts”. He will pat at my back and joke, “The more you learn, the more the coconuts these trees will bear!”

Well, years passed by; we still used to together my father and I with Appu our handyman to the fields every day. Appu was a few years older than me, but we were good friends. He used to tell ghost stories to me after dark when we sit alone on the outside verandah of our old family home. Even after I went to college, I come home every week end and spend some time with Appu. He was so rugged and handsome; I used to call him Paul Newman! It is very interesting how my father got Appu as his



handyman. His grandmother was our maid, and they both lived in our house. My father then planted some more coconut plants. The juice and nut within the coconut shell becomes a very tasty, juicy and spongy cake-like eatable when the plants are young. Early morning every day my father used to take a walk around the paddy fields and coconut groves and get back home and wake me up. Every morning he found that one coconut plant was pulled from the pit, the shell was broken and the juicy content was taken out! It did not take too long for my father to find out who was behind this job. It was Appu! Everybody at home was angry and asked my father to send him away from our home. But what my father did surprised me. The next day, he took him to the nearby school and got him admitted as a full time student (there was no part time student any way). My father used to teach him every morning before he goes to school, and in the evening he took him to the fields to help him. Appu grew up to be a fine gentleman and adored by all of us in the family. He used to call me Roymon, and our friendship continued to grow. But destiny was cruel. When I was studying in the Trivandrum Engineering College, he came up with an infected appendicitis, and did not get the surgery done on time. Appu passed away. I cried and cried with no more tears left to cry.

Time and tide waits for no one. I became a faculty in my own college, married and we got four wonderful children. When the youngest was just a year old, I left Trivandrum and came to the US for my PhD studies. I left my wife and children with my father and mother. Then my father started to take my children to the paddy fields and coconut groves as he used to do decades before. He showed my daughter Chitra who regularly took the morning stroll with my father holding his hand, the coconut trees he planted on the day of my birth, and told her how he used to take me like this when I was young.

Again years passed by – so many events have happened in our lives. Chitra got sick when she was a senior at college. The only diagnosis the doctors at Vanderbilt University and Harvard University could come up with was “fever of unknown origin”. She called me from the Massachusetts General Hospital (affiliated to Harvard University) to go to her right away. I knew the urgency, but I never expected that the ultimate was going to happen. I reached Boston that night and I was talking to her till midnight. She spoke about a lot of things. Now when I look back, she probably knew what is going to happen. I asked her if she wanted any thing, any thing at all. She said, “No Dad, I only wish I could hold grandpa’s hand again and walk through the coconut grove and see the trees planted when you were born”. She did not live to do it again.

I sat down with tears from my eyes trickling down my cheeks. As all these events passed through my mind, a kind of calm filled within me, and I wondered at the roll of coconut trees in my life.

### **On the lighter side.....**

A newcomer to the village came to a tea shop and ordered a glass of tea. The server brought the tea and this customer called the server again. “Look here, there is a fly in the tea”. The server came and poured some more tea and said, “How much tea can the fly swallow?”

I had my contractor’s review meeting in the Washington DC area a few years ago. I was coming back to the hotel from a nearby restaurant at about midnight with one of the Russian scientists. We saw a man jogging at midnight. The Russian scientist exclaimed, “You see this fellow must be a Russian; because it is 8:00 AM in Moscow now!”

**Kerala Cultural Society  
of Metropolitan Washington**

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<b>Office Bearers 2008</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Email</b>	
<b>Raj Kurup</b>	<a href="mailto:rkurup@verizon.net">rkurup@verizon.net</a>	President
<b>Chacko Daniel</b>	<a href="mailto:chacko27@netzero.com">chacko27@netzero.com</a>	Vice President
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<b>Anil Kumar</b>	<a href="mailto:apkumar@yahoo.com">apkumar@yahoo.com</a>	Treasurer
<b>Anjana Sreeram</b>	<a href="mailto:anjana831@gmail.com">anjana831@gmail.com</a>	Committee Member
<b>Anisha Davis</b>	<a href="mailto:akkuchechy@yahoo.com">akkuchechy@yahoo.com</a>	Youth Coordinator
<b>Anil Nair</b>	<a href="mailto:snairanil@yahoo.com">snairanil@yahoo.com</a>	Committee Member
<b>Babu George</b>	<a href="mailto:babugeor@hotmail.com">babugeor@hotmail.com</a>	Committee Member
<b>Davis Chalissery</b>	<a href="mailto:davis13kcs@gmail.com">davis13kcs@gmail.com</a>	Committee Member
<b>Gabriel Roy</b>	<a href="mailto:roygd@aol.com">roygd@aol.com</a>	Committee Member
<b>Jayanchandran N Variyam</b>	<a href="mailto:jvariya@hotmail.com">jvariya@hotmail.com</a>	Committee Member
<b>Karthika Shajidas</b>	<a href="mailto:shadika@gmail.com">shadika@gmail.com</a>	Committee Member
<b>Manjulla Rajesh</b>	<a href="mailto:manjula1975@gmail.com">manjula1975@gmail.com</a>	Committee Member
<b>Manoj Krishnan</b>	<a href="mailto:keralakrishnan@gmail.com">keralakrishnan@gmail.com</a>	Committee Member
<b>P. Gopinathan</b>	<a href="mailto:pady.nathan@verizon.net">pady.nathan@verizon.net</a>	Committee Member
<b>Paul mathew</b>	<a href="mailto:mpaul27689@hotmail.com">mpaul27689@hotmail.com</a>	Committee Member
<b>PVR Prasad</b>	<a href="mailto:rajendrprasad@verizon.net">rajendrprasad@verizon.net</a>	Committee Member
<b>Rajesh Kumar</b>	<a href="mailto:Raj009@hotmail.com">Raj009@hotmail.com</a>	Committee Member
<b>Rejani Rajeev</b>	<a href="mailto:rrpadath@msn.com">rrpadath@msn.com</a>	Committee Member
<b>Shashi Menon</b>	<a href="mailto:sasi_20903@yahoo.com">sasi_20903@yahoo.com</a>	Committee Member
<b>Suresh Raj</b>	<a href="mailto:sraj4@yahoo.com">sraj4@yahoo.com</a>	Committee Member
<b>Swaminathan</b>	<a href="mailto:knsaminathan@gmail.com">knsaminathan@gmail.com</a>	Committee Member
<b>Teji Manalel</b>	<a href="mailto:tejiman2003@yahoo.com">tejiman2003@yahoo.com</a>	Committee Member
<b>Venugopal Unnithan</b>	<a href="mailto:punnithan@msn.com">punnithan@msn.com</a>	Committee Member
<b>Suresh Nair</b>	<a href="mailto:spnair@verizon.net">spnair@verizon.net</a>	Past President



It's time for another fun filled summer program for KCSMW on Saturday, May 10, 2008.

We are looking for talented people, age 5 and up, who are willing to participate in any cultural events.

Please contact one of the following members by March 30th for a slot to show what you are capable of !!!!!

Manjula Das:	240-381-8585
Anisha Davis:	240-620-8455
Sneha Chalissery:	240-672-2039

### **KCSMW 2008 Calendar of Events**

- ❖ **Summer Dreams 2008 - Saturday, May 10**
- ❖ **Utsav 2008 - Sunday, September 14**
- ❖ **Picnic - Saturday, October 4**
- ❖ **Jingle Bells 2008 - Sunday, December 7**

### **KCSMW Youth Activities**

Please join us on May 24 for Youth Day 2008. Activities include basket ball for all ages, booths etc.

Parents please encourage your children to participate, and support them. The Youth Meet is open to all ages!

Half the profits will go to charity.

Other Youth activities planned: Youth Car wash at Wal-Mart

Bake Sale at Summer Dreams. Other Outreach activities are planned.

More information please contact KCSMW Youth Coordinator Anisha Davis



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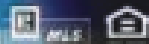
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**Realtor**

**[tejiman@gmail.com](mailto:tejiman@gmail.com)**

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### KCSMW 2008 Sponsorship Rates

#### Mega Sponsor - \$1500

1. Felicitation in one of the three KCSMW cultural programs.
2. Multiple Sponsor announcements during KCSMW events
3. Cover Page advertisement in Vartha
4. Full page Ad in all program flyers
5. Advertisement on KCSMW Website with link to sponsor website
6. Advertisement in 12 monthly E- newsletters – reaching to 850+ email addresses in DC metro area
7. Banner placement and flyer distribution at KCSMW events.
8. Family Lifetime membership to KCSMW

#### Gold Sponsor - \$750

1. Felicitation in one of the three KCSMW cultural programs.
2. Multiple Sponsor announcements during KCSMW events
3. Full page advertisement in Vartha
4. Half page Advertisement in all program Flyers
5. Advertisement on the KCSMW Website with link to sponsor website
6. Advertisement in 12 monthly E- newsletters – reaching to 850+ email addresses in DC metro area.
7. Banner placement at KCSMW events.

#### Silver Sponsor - \$500

1. Multiple Sponsor announcements during the program
2. Half page Advertisement in Vartha
3. Banner Advertisement in all program Flyers
4. Banner Advertisement on the Website with link to sponsor website
5. Advertisement in 12 monthly E- newsletters – reaching to 850+ email addresses in DC metro area