

## My Career AT S.L.B.C.

by Mr. M.A. Amarasena



During my career at SLBC, I had a wonderful time with my colleagues working at the Medium Wave Transmitting Station, Diyagama, which is at present, inoperative. Some of the colleagues that I had the privilege of working with, who I feel deserve a mention were, Pius Maladeniya, Morris Peiris, MahindaSamarakoon, SP Jayasundara, MahendraMapatuna, ULS Ratnayake, D.P.De Silva, KN Gunawardena & RAPG Perea.

I was fortunate enough to work alongside them on different projects, with many a good time had. Pius was a character who was always full of fun. He did not care for all the unnecessary issues and trivialities of life. Smooth sailing was his way; no stress, no strain. Our meals were provided by a local guy named "THEE MAMA". Looking at the name you can only imagine! When it came to our meals our choices were quite limited. And this was where Pius became our savior from whatever interesting delight. Pius always had a delightfully delectable lunch that could feed an army. Thanks to him lunch and supper became eagerly awaited, because we knew that Pius, "our savior from hunger", would always come to our rescue. It became such a norm that eventually our colleagues began to brand him as "FOOD FOR THE WORLD". Pius was an extremely courteous and kind man, who kept us well-nourished both physically, by filling our stomachs up; as well as mentally, ensuring that we always got a good dose of his humor. Sadly we lost a good friend with an amazing sense of humor.

MahindaSamarakoon was another character I associated very closely with. As everybody knows he was well connected to politics and very influential during that particular Era. One story that always comes to mind when I think of him would be the day that he went flying through a glass door while on duty in the early hours of the morning. His hand had been very badly cut with blood literally gushing out everywhere. To everyone's horror, there had been no licensed driver to drive the station vehicle and accompany him to the hospital. Fortunately a young Ernest Corea was with him at the time. With no license, but still fully capable of managing the vehicle on the road, he bravely drove Mahinda to the hospital. This became one of Mahinda's favorite stories, whenever we had a get-together, how young Erney managed to allay his fears and get him to the hospital. That was the time Mahinda was going through a Political Asylum sort of life in Diyagama because of the changes we had had in the management of SLBC. After sometime more changes occurred in Politics and Mahinda was given the opportunity and became a big shot at the Head office. Everybody knows the progress of the set up since then. Sad to say we lost him few years back.

As you know, due to the changes that affected SLBC's management there had been numerous changes in the staff, which also ultimately affected some of our good friends, who were eventually transferred to different places. We had many interesting conversations by discussing these events and how politics can brand people in such a way that it ultimately leads them to the top positions in management. We had plenty of very interesting and hilarious stories about politics in SLBC.

Another very nice Jovial character I came across was Piyasiri Fernando from Ekala who was with us for a short spell of time in Diyagama. As soon as the normal broadcasts used to end and after a quick drink in the evening he was fascinating. He used to sing and dance well into the night, making us completely forget about all the stresses of work. Luckily we had a very sensible quiet OIC Xavier at that time. Be that as it may, even Xavier too was always ready to socialize with the staff in the shift. With a nice drink in one hand and a good sing song Piyasiri would begin his special dance. It is interesting to note that Piyasiri was so lively after a 2-3 shots in the evening even though he was on duty. Besides all that, he was still an early bird, always ready to start up the transmission.

During the course of this period we really enjoyed numerous trips organized by Jayasundara and Dias Pappa (We used to call him). We all went to Kumana Birds Sanctuary organized by Dias Pappa for a few days and Jayasundaorganized a remarkable trip to the Eastern and Central Province. Those were fascinating trips which we all enjoyed thoroughly.

I also spent quite a few years of my career working in Torrington Square Colombo and it was an incredible time where I had the good opportunity to meet and associate with quite a number of colleagues who were involved in various activities technically and non-technically, programme & Music production etc. Once again new friendships were formed all of which I truly cherished at that time and still to this day remember fondly. I have always found the need to keep in touch with all the friends I have made throughout my career and I make sure that I do so whenever possible.

I take this opportunity to thank the Organizing committee of this association for the hard work they are rendering and I am certain this will go from strength to strength.

Good Luck