

# MERCARA

a memorable picnic

By Ysm George Vergese

For that matter, all picnics have been memorable. From the early picnicing days to the days when Aliyama Kochamma was carried down and rolled on her special make shift carriage, from Kodai to Kodai Road Station, by able bodied Y's men, to the recent picnic - each of them had something special. But memory being fresh on the latest one, one feels, that this has been the best of them.



Once upon a time, the Biblical Joshua led the people of Israel to the land flowing with milk and honey. On the way leading to Mercara, another Joshua, led Ys Men of Annanagar Club, to a new revelation. One may recollect the story of how two Sardarjis, travelling a very long distance in a cabin of a compartment in an express train, were engrossed in a conversation. One Sardarji asked the other "Tum kahan rahte ho? (translated from Punjabi)". The other said that he lived in Punjab. The first one said that he too lived in Punjab. Where in Punjab? This went on and on, and finally they found that they not only lived in the same apartment but also in the same

house. When one of the co-passengers, who had no choice but to over hear this strange conversation, inquisitively enquired how they live in the same house, and did not know each other, one Sardarji replied that they were actually father and son, and just to pass time, on this long journey, they made up conversations, such as the one above.

But the conversation between Joshua and Ravi George, though similar, had a different ending. Joshua, with family and friends, was travelling in a car, in the opposite direction to the bus, which carried the Members of the Y's Mens Club of Annanagar, when someone in the bus recognised someone in the car, and the bus and car stopped, passengers alighted, and many old friends and relatives met each other, in the middle of the road. (Mohan Punnen, Geetha and Koshy Thomas knew all of them, like the palm of their hands). Ravi recognising Joshua, asked him, whether Joshua could make out who he is. No, was the answer. Ravi introduced himself. Still no response. Ravi said that Joshua and he studied in the same institution, - no sign of recollection from Joshua, - same standard - still no response, same class - STILL nothing. Finally, out of frustration, Ravi used his own nickname in School. On hearing this, Joshua screamed with excitement, which echoed through the forests, for several seconds, followed by a large bear hug, between the two. Thanks are due to Joshua, for letting Ys Men into a well kept secret of Ravi George, that even I, despite thirty plus years of friendship, did not know. Thanks Joshua. Now, if you would like to

know what that nick name is, don't ask me, ask Ravi.

Married men, when forced to relapse into Bachelorhood, have strange behaviour patterns. On this picnic, there were (a record) five of them - whose Menettes, and Lings, for reasons, best known to them, decided against coming on the picnic. These Bachelor vice men made best use of the time available. They really made, sorry - used, hay while the sun shone. Any sudden increase in the population at Mercara in the coming year, therefore, should not come as a surprise. This, therefore, is a word of caution to such of those Menettes, who, the first lady included, did not accompany their husbands: - "Do not let your husbands loose, in the coming picnics - accompany them."

In spite of the presence of the five Bachelor Ys Men, it was Anto, who during the Picnic, took up the arduous task of being the Minister for Weaker Sections, with Special Emphasis of Child Care and Women Development. A he did it with a (?) BANG.



As for luggage, one should take lessons from Ysm Man Mohan George. He had a small bag thrown over his back. And from it, he extracted all types of garments - not only undher ka bath -, but also,

shirts, pants, jackets, besides towels, blankets, tents, etc etc. which even Gogia Pasha would not have dreamed of attempting to pull out of his Magician's hat. Mohan George calls it a hi-tech bag. This is made of very special material. For details, please contact Mohan George.



During some of the quiz contests held in our Club, we may have all noticed, mainly among some of the Ys Men, a particular aversion to such quizzes, especially, if these are mathematics oriented. Kochumon, particularly, does not like to deal with combinations of alphabets and numbers. So when someone told him that the S1 coach was booked for us, he told Shynu, who was boarding the train and joining the picnic group only at Bangalore, that she was to get into S2. Shynu, her mathematical abilities being better off, got into the right compartment, at Bangalore. Kochumon did not know that she got in. The rest of the group decided to play up. Everyone pretended to await the arrival of Shynu.

Seconds, which seemed liked hours for Kochumon, ticked away. Kochu, who, in spite of his association with the celluloid industry, could not hide his anxiety, and was regretting not having learnt his mathematics better. Kochu perspired in the early morning hours, in cool Bangalore.

Young John, son of his father, also well versed in the arts and tricks of the celluloid world, was pretending to console his father, and trying to calm him down. When Kochu reached break point, we decided to let him see Shynu. His years of experience in the celluloid world, could not help Kochu, hide the relief he felt. But later Kochu had his revenge on the rest of the group, with the help of an otherwise innocent looking Pramod. For details of how the planning for the "Imtihaan" was done, please contact Kochumon / Pramod.



Some of the regulars, who have been making it to most picnics, but who were conspicuous by their absence, were missed. But, we should give full credit to those couples, who were present for this picnic, and who for years have been regular at picnics, and who ensure all picnics are lively. Leading this group are Ysm V I Chacko and Jeelu, Ysm D Mathew and Kumari, Ysm Paul and Reena. But Chacko had problems with papers. V I Chacko, who, so people close to him say, cannot go through his morning chores, without reading the newspaper, almost literally brought Bangalore City Station down, searching for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct news paper. Once he got it, after a lot of effort, other Ys Men

read it. Likewise, with great difficulty, he had held onto to a paper topi, before the skit, in which he played Chacha Nehru, during the Male Vs Female cultural competition. At the appropriate moment, he let go of his topi and he was Chacha without topi during the skit. The competition, had brought out the best in all Members - their latent talents. Since it was a Male Vs Female competition, it was fiercest by all measures. The girls - Sangeetha, Chitra, Chinu, Priya, and Priyanka, brought out their best in songs, the boys - Prem, Chacko, John and Pravin, in a humorous action skit, that even the Judges' son fell off his seat, laughing.. The entire Menettes, crew had worked hard on the "Pongacha" skit, probably conceived by their President Ysmtte Kini, staged at Susy Anto's house, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all, including the Judges, Biju and his wife, and the competing Men's team. The Men were thankful, that in real life, their Menettes were diametrically opposite to what they had staged. The Men, in turn, had a series of quick succession skits, music and dance, which was a feast to the eyes and ears, especially when Babu John's short garment bounced up and down, to the music of A R Rahman's Chainya, Chainya, Chainya, Chainya.



Paul (he claims that Black & White Scotch Whisky was introduced in the International Market, after he married Reena) and Pramod conducted a dumb charade, which brought out the creative abilities of all Members. Before the dumb charade, the Lings, celebrated Gandhi Jayanthi. The Ling's perception of Gandhiji, was brought out during this time. For more information, contact Chacko and John. There were housies played on both evenings, and the bumper prize, which was given on the second evening, went to Sangeetha Punnen. Congratulations Sangeetha. She has promised to seriously consider a proposition to take all those who went on this picnic, for a star dinner. Thanks in advance.



Mercara was a green paradise when we had arrived. But, when we were returning, it was wearing the looks of a desert. The Green Peace Officials were rushed to Mercara to look into the cause of the deforestation. Several enquiries were made. It was found, that someone, under the pretext of helping the local gardeners and forest officials, and cleaning up, had in the process, cut off shrubs, plants and trees. It was very unfortunate for the Mercarites. But not so for Madrasis.

All those who went on this picnic, from the oldest member to the youngest member, Nikhil, , enjoyed it thoroughly. Seriously, this trip would not have been enjoyable, had it not been for the organisational efforts that had gone into it by Koshy Thomas, Babu John, Roy and especially Mohan Punnen, Pramod and all the others, and the tour conductor. We have to make a special mention of Kunjuchayan, alongwith Biju and family, whose hospitality and care, made the stay particularly enjoyable. A lovely spread of homely kerala food was served by Deepa for lunch at their Coffee estate, which the group enjoyed and will cherish for a long time. It was Kunjuchayan's suggestion that we spent some time on the banks of the river Cauvery. Oh, she was beautiful. A real picnic spot. Some of the Menettes showed the Men, how to cross the swirling waters on tree trunks and reach "isles", in the river.

On the return trip from Mercara to Mysore, the bus which easily climbed slopes on the way up, was found sluggish. Analysis revealed that this was because of the extra luggage by way of carry homes that Korahchayan had gifted to each and every one who went on this trip, and of course, the forest trees, plants and shrubs, that Pramod and Neetha were transplanting from Mercara to Madras.

Should any of those who did not make it to this picnic, feel bad that they really missed something, they are not to worry.

There should be one, next year, hopefully. Make your bookings in advance.