



RECCAA ANNUAL NEWSLETTER - GOLDEN JUBILEE EDITION

19-12-2010

The Golden Jubilee Year - A Milestone



NIT Calicut is completing its five long decades of imparting top notch technical education and contributing extremely competent technocrats to the world. It is but Natural that , the entire fraternity of NIT Calicut looks forward to celebrate this grand occasion in befitting manner by organizing various events from October 2010 to October 2011

The college which had started as Regional Engineering College in July 1961 in a part of the buildings of a Government Polytechnic College moved to the Chathamangalam campus in September 1962. Recognised as one of the Best in India ,with 11 departments , 3 Schools 5 centre's, and a 400 acre campus CREC ,got its status as NIT in 2002.

The Golden Jubilee year had a scintillating start with GASOTECH Tathva'10,tech fest of NIT Calicut during the month of October The Official website of the Golden Jubilee Celebration was launched in full fanfare by the Director in Charge, Dr E Gopinathan at NIT Campus on 8th November 2010. The site can be visited at www.nitgoldenjubilee.org. With various events lined up and promising initiatives such as the Golden jubilee endowment fund ,Inspire, Global Alumni meet etc the golden jubilee year promises to be a milestone in the era of our College. Its imperative that we all hear the call of our alma mater ,do our bit and use this occasion to relive those days of nostalgia and everlasting memories.

GOLDEN JUBILEE MAJOR EVENTS

- NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES
- TATHVA 2010
- INSPIRE: WINTER SCIENCE CAMP FOR 10TH AND 11TH GRADE STUDENTS ,18TH DEC-22ND DEC
- CREC-FIRST BATCH REUNION- JANUARY 9TH
- SUVARNA RAGAM—UAE EMIRATES
- ICON
- ISTE NATIONAL CONVENTION
- GOLDEN JUBILEE RAGAM-MARCH
- TECHNICAL EXHIBITION —JULY'11
- WORLD RECCAA MEET,COCHIN – AUGUST -14 ,15,16
- GOLDEN JUBILEE ANNUAL CONVENTION

A Note On the Founding Principal Of REC-M.V Kesava Rao



An associate of Indian Institute of Science (A.I.I.Sc) Dr M.V Kesava rao acquired his PhD from University of Travancore. He joined the faculty of College of Engineering Trivandrum (CET) after his Industrial Training in Metropolitan Vickers, UK .

He was the principal of the college (CET) from 1950-1961.He was also appointed as the director of technical education in early 1961. After his retirement in 1961 he was ap-

pointed as the founding principle of REC Calicut .He continued as the Principal of CREC till 1969.After which he joined National Insitute Of Engineering, Mysore as a professor in Electrical Engineering

Dr.Kesava Rao an authority in Electrical Machines. His Legacy lives on in various forms ,with one of them the "Dr Kesava Rao Endowment" for the Best outgoing Electrical Engineering Student instituted by the grateful Alumni.

Inside

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- NITC WHOSE WHO,WHOSE NEW,RETIRED
- ALUMNI INTERACTION & REUNION
- GASOTECH TATHVA 2010
- INTERVIEW- DR S UNNIKRISHNA PIILLAI
- INTERVIEW— VIJAYAN AKA CANTEEN VIJAYETTAN
- MEMOIRS OF FIRST BATCH
- OBITUARY

Messages

Message From The President

Best wishes for a happy ,prosperous and successful New Year '2011. We are a group of nearly 13000 engineers settled in different parts of the world ,holding /had held positions of importance in major areas of industrial activity. Considering this fact, we are capable of imprinting a humble foot mark in the stride of of our nation, India towards achievement of a super power status .

As of today ,our Alma Mater is 50 years old . We propose to celebrate her Golden

Jubilee during the next 10 months. This is a great occasion. There has never been a better time to get involved with the fellow alumni. Please set apart some time out of your busy schedule so that we can get in to an active and fruitful dialogue regarding future plans.

We solicit your well considered suggestions for common good. Let us all interact, come together and act to make the upcoming events the biggest and the most remembered of

this season.

G.Jayprakash



Message From the Editorial Board

We are extremely pleased to come out with this much awaited Golden Jubilee edition of the Alumni Newsletter. We really cherish this opportunity of bringing the campus news to our beloved alumni. We will be very pleased if we were able to achieve that with a certain degree of completeness.

We wish to thank all the people who were behind this Newsletter especially Dr S Unnikrishnan Pillai & 'Canteen Vijayettan "for giving us the opportunity to interview them and also

provide critical comments on the newsletter.

We extend a warm thanks to the public relations officer Mr Rama Iyer for providing us factual corrections and facilitating the research which went behind this newsletter. We would like to specially to mention the names of the alumnae such as P.Madhavan(61-66), Dr Biju T Kuzhiveli,Mr George Stanley

We also thank the students namely Hariram Shankar, Rosemary, Anusha John and Albin Prince for taking pains in making this newsletter possible .

Last but not least we also thank all the Teaching and Non Teaching staff who have co-operated with us.

We hope this edition of the newsletter will be as cherished and enjoyed by the alumni community as much as we enjoyed compiling it .

Wishing you a happy reading time.

Dr.Arun C,

Preethi,

Susmin Sethumadhavan.

(Editorial Team Alumni News)

Whose Who In NIT’C

Chairman Board Of Governors	- Dr.S.C Tripathi	H.O.D Mechanical Engineering	- Dr S.Jayaraj
Director In Charge	- Dr E. Gopinathan	H.O.D Physics	- Dr Chandrashekar .K
Dean, Academics P.G	- Dr K.Prabhakaran Nair	H.O.D School Of Biotechnology	- Dr.Anaul Kabir
Dean, Academic U.G	- Dr T.P.Somasundaram	H.O.D School Of Management Studies	- Dr Prabhakaran Paleri
Dean, Consultancy and Sponsored Research	- Dr C.Sobhan	H.O.D School Of Nano Science & Technology	- Dr Sandhya Rani
Dean, Planning and Development	- Dr.N.Ganesan	Traning & Placement Linkage	- Dr T.K. Suresh Babu
Dean , Faculty Welfare	- Dr.Lilly Kutty Jacob	Chairperson PG Admissions	- Dr A.P. Sashi Kala
Dean, Students Welfare	- Dr K.Saseendran	Chairman UG Admissions	- Dr R.Vijaya Kumar
Registrar	- Dr Abraham T Mathew	Chairman Education Technology & Library	- Dr S. Ashok
H.O.D, Architecture	- Dr Naseer M.A	TEQIP Manager	- Dr Abraham T Mathew
H.O.D, Civil Engineering	- Dr S.Chandrakaran	Chief Warden	- Dr Allesu Kanjirat-hinkal
H.O.D Chemical Engineering	- Dr V.Sivasubramanian	Advisor, Cultural	- Dr K. Saseendran
H.O.D Chemistry	- Dr G.Unnikrishnan	Advisor, Weaker & Foreign Students	- Dr T.M. Madhavan Pillai
H.O.D Computer Science & Engineering	-Dr Priya Chandran		
H.O.D Electronics & Communication Engineering	- Dr P.C Subramanian		
H.O.D Electrical Engineering	- Dr Abraham T Mathew		
H.O.D Mathematics	- Dr Revati Rajagopalan		

LAUNCH OF THE OFFICIAL GOLDEN JUBILEE WEBSITE BY DIRECTOR IN CHARGE DR E. GOPINATHAN .



Department Of Architecture

- Ms Smitha. G

Department Of Chemical Engineering

- Mr K. Hari Babu
- Dr.N Selvaraju
- Dr.Malladi V Pavan Kumar

Department Of Civil Engineering

- Dr.N.Prakash
- Sri.M.Sivakumar
- Dr.Debaraj Bhattacharya
- Dr R Balaji

Department Of Computer Science & Engineering

- Ms Pournami P N
- Mr Jayaraj P B
- Sri Gopakumar G
- Dr Sudeep K S

Department Of Electrical Engineering

- Dr Sindhu T K
- Dr Mukthi Barai

Department Of Electronics & Communication Engineering

- Mr Ameer P
- Mr Jayakumar E P
- Mr Sudish N George

Department Of Mathematics

- Dr Sunil Mathew
- Dr. Mahesh Kumar
- Dr Suresh Kumar Nadupuri

Department Of Mechanical Engineering

- Dr Sudhakar Subudhi
- Dr Arun P
- Dr Srirangacharylu
- Sri Jagadeesha T
- Sri Santhakumar M
- Mr Vinay V Panicker
- Mr Gangadhra Kiran Kumar
- Mr A Ramesh

Department Of Physics

- Dr Madhavan Unni

Department Of Chemistry

- Dr Suni Vasudevan
- Dr C Arunkumar
- Dr Parameswaran Pattiyil

School Of Management Studies

- Dr Preethi Navaneeth

AS on 29/08/2010

The Ones Who Retired

Name	Department	Designation	VRS/Retired	Date
Dr.K.K George	Humanities	Lecturer(SS0)	VRS	01.01.2009
Sri.T.K Ratnakaran	Engg Unit	Assistant .Engineer	Retired	31.01.2009
Sri.C.P.Aboobacker	Administration	S.Suptd	Retired	31.01.2009
Smt.Salomi Joseph	Hospital	Nurse	VRS	01.02.2009
Smt.Nalini	Engg Unit	Draughtsman	Retired	31.03.2002
Sri.B.Govindan	COE	Duffedar	Retired	30.04.2009
Sri,K,Velayudhan	Civil Engineering	Sr.Mech	Retired	30.04.2009
Smt.Janaky	Physics	Associate Prof	VRS	09.04.2009
Sri.N.P Haridasan	Civil Engineering	Sr.Mechanic	Retired	31.05.2009
Sri.Veerankutty	Library	Librarian IV	Retired	30.06.2009
Sri.E.Ambujakshan	Architecture	Peon	Retired	30.06.2009
Sri.N.Saseendharan	Watch & Ward	Watch & Ward	Retired	30.06.2009
Sri.Somashekaran M.D	Vehicle	Driver	Retired	30.06.2009
Sri,K.P Dasan	Library		Retired	30.06.2009
Dr.Nirmala Menon	Hospital	Doctor	Retired	31.07.2009
Sri.Sivashankaran Nair	Vehicle	Driver	Retired	31.07.2009
Dr.Jayachandran.N.M	Mechanical Engineer- ing	Draughtsman	Retired	31.08.2009
Sri.Asokan.K	Physics		Retired	31.10.2009
Sri.P.P Chandran	Administration	Peon	Retired	30.11.2009
Sri.N.P.Balakrishnan	Civil Engineering	Sr.Mechanic	Retired	31.12.2009
Sr.C.P.Ahmed	Library	Librarian IV	Retired	31.12.2009
Dr.M.P.Sebastian	COE	Professor	VRS	22.01.2010
Sri.K.Mohandas	EMU	Sr.Mechanic	Retired	31.03.2010
Sr.T.P Balan	Mechanical Engineer- ing	Supervisor	Retired	30.04.2010
Sri.A.Radhakrishnan	COE	Peon	Retired	30.04.2010
Smt.P,M Rajalakshmi	Library	Librarian GR. 1	Retired	31.05.2010
Sri.T.Balasubramanian	Vehicle	Driver	Retired	31.05.2010
Dr.K.M.Moideenkutty	Electrical Engineering Department	Professor	Retired	30.06.2010
Sri.V.V Balachandran	Administration	Jr.Suptd	Retired	30.06.2010
Sri.K.Hassan	Civil Engineering	Sr.Mechanic	Retired	30.06.2010
Smt P.P.Vasantha	Civil Engineering	CA	Retired	30.06.2010

REUNIONS And Alumni Interaction

Reunion Of the 1983-1987 (8) Batch July 30 ,31 courtesy Mr George Stanly



"COUNT YOUR AGE WITH FRIENDS NOT WITH YEARS"

1983 –1987(8) Nostalgic Snaps, Courtesy Mr George Stanly



“NOSTALGIA
IS LIKE A
GRAMMAR
LESSON YOU
FIND THE
PRESENT TENSE;
BUT
PAST PERFECT”.



Compressor Refresher Course-Mr. Prakash Shetty



The student fraternity of NIT Calicut will remain, as always grateful to Shri Prakash Shetty, MD Of Gasotech India Limited .

This time around the technocratic alumnus of the 1980-1985 batch ,spent some of his valuable time to share his insights on various types Compressors which are employed Industrially.

The Function was presided by Dr.S.Jayaraj H.O.D MED and Dr.Arun Staff In Charge MEA

Mr Prakash Shetty who was once a student of Mechanical Engineering Department returned to his classroom this time around not to learn, but to teach young eager minds.

Mr Prakash Shetty ,who is an authority on rotating Machineries was employed in Engineers India Limited for more than 20 years, before starting his own firm by the name Gasotech India PVT Limited.

He and his firm have supported various events and student initiatives including Tatha'09',Tathva'10 and Club Unwired.



Mr Prakash Shetty during the course

REUNIONS And Alumni Interaction

1980-1985 Batch Reunion ,Waynad



“IT BECOMES INCREASINGLY EASY , AS YOU GET OLDER , TO DROWN IN NOSTALGIA”



Departmental News

Department Of Architecture

Dr Kasturba A.K was awarded Netherland Fellowship Programme by Embassy of Netherlands to attend the PG Diploma in "Land Management and Settlement Regularization". She was also awarded post doctoral fellowship for women by IIT Madras 2010 with research grant.

Dr Kasturba A.K received Shisksha Ratan Puraskar 2010- awarded by International Friendship Society on 7th April 2010, at New Delhi . She also received Rotary Excel-

lency Award 2009- for the best Architecture services to community.

Mr. Jonu John Thomas of S9 B. Arch. won the prestigious "HABITAT AWARD" instituted by the Kerala State Nirmithi Kendra.

The students participated in the Annual NASA events, both at the Zone and National Levels. Amritha Krishnan and S. Gurupriya of S6, B. Arch, won the first prize for their paper on "Dreaming the Future Architecture" at NASA (National level) 2009.

Ms. Reshmi R., Ms. Meenakshi Singh and Ms. Divya Natarajan, of S9 B. Arch, won the "PIDILITE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE" for their papers presented at the National Seminar and Training Programme on Green Buildings.

Department Of Chemical Engineering

The first batch of this department passed out in May 2010 with flying colours. The Chemical Engineering Department conducted a workshop on 'Recent Trends in Experimental and Computational Techniques in Chemical Engineering' on 31st July 2010 for its faculty and students. It was coordinated by Mr. Vineesh Ravi and Dr. K Aparna.

It is organizing a national conference on 'Biological Waste Water Treatment Towards Green Environment' on January 28 and 29, 2011 under the guidance of Dr. Siva Subramanian, Mr.

Haribabu and Mr. Selvaraju as a part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Institute. Head of the Department, Dr. Siva Subramanian, has been nominated for the Rashtriya Gaurav Award along with certificate of Excellence from India International Friendship Society, New Delhi.

Final year students Mr. Abdul Shiyas, Mr. Ajay Kumar K, Mr. Sreenath H and Ms. Anusha John have been selected to present their paper for the national conference CHEMCON conducted by IChE.

Mr K.Haribabu, Dr N.Selvaraju and Dr Malladi V Pavan Kumar joined the department as faculties in the year 2010.

Department Of Chemistry

The Chemistry Department assisted to commence a rubber product development unit at Koodaranji, Calicut. It has around 21 publications and 17 invited lectures in the year 2010.

Dr. G Unnikrishnan was awarded the Best Performance Award on January 2010. Mr. Dusan Berek and Mr. Jim Guturie from UK were visiting lecturers to the Department.

It is organizing an International conference on 'Functional

Polymers' on January 28-30, 2011 as a part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of our Institute.

Dr. Suni Vasudevan, Dr. C Arun Kumar and Dr. Parameswaran Pattiyil joined the department as faculties in the year 2010.

School Of Biotechnology

This very young department of our Institute was started 3 years back.

The Department conducted a national conference on 'Emerging Concepts in Biotechnology' on December 11, 12, 2009. It was coordinated by Dr A Santhiagu.

The Department is organizing an International Conference on 'Genomics and Proteomics' on July 14th to 16th, 2011 under the guidance of Dr. A Santhiagu as a part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of our Institute.

Departmental News

Department Of Civil Engineering

Workshops Conducted

1) AICTE sponsored Faculty Development programme on "Total Station Surveying and other advanced surveying techniques" 18 – 29, May 2009, Sri Sajith S

2) AICTE sponsored Faculty Development programme on "High Performance Steel Fibre Reinforced Concrete for Seismic Resistant Structures", 18-29th May 2009; Dr N Ganesan

Total no Of Publication National/International /Conferences : 43

Research Projects and Consultation Undertaken.

1) Studies on Groundwater Pollution by Heavy Metal Discharge to Soil and its Remediation Technologies

Under KSCSTE - Dr S Chandrakaran

2) Study of Engineering Properties of Coir Geotextiles & Providing Data for Techno Marketing under Dept. of Coir Technology, Govt. of Kerala - Dr. M.VL.R.Anjaneyulu

3) Development of an Interoperable Spatial Database of Road Network for Calicut District under NRDMS, DST, Govt. of India-Dr. M.VL.R.Anjaneyulu

Golden Jubilee Events Proposed

- 1) National Conference On Geotechnology December 2010
- 2) Int. Conf. on Advances in Materials & Techniques in Civil Structures June 11

Department Of Electrical Engineering

Workshops/ Seminars

1) Faculty Development Programme (MHRD –AICTE) (2weeks) on " Micro Grid & Distributed Generation– Kumarvel S, 21 June –2 July 2010

2) Faculty Development Programme(MHRD - AICTE)(1 WEEK) on " Lab View & Application", Coordinator Dr Ashok S 13-19 June 2010

3) One week advanced training programme on " Industrial Automation" - 25 -29 Jan 2010 Co-ordinator– Dr Ashok S

4) 2 Day International Seminar on " IPR & Digital Rights", Coordinator - Dr Ashok S, 26-27 November 2010

Issues of Drivers" under KSCSTE—R&D Rs 11.04 lakhs, Investigation –Dr Ashok S

Consultancy Projects:

1) Development of a maintenance free safe earthing station –just initiated in technical collaboration with M/s Excel Industries, Trichur - Dr. Ashok S

2) Design & Lightning protection scheme for IIMK campus - Dr.Ashok S

Publications :2010

- 1) International Journal : 14
- 2) International Conference : 16
- 3) National Journal/Conference: 24

3) ISTE National Convention for Students– July 2011, Coordinator - Dr R Sreeram Kumar

4) Two day National Workshop on Power Quality issues of Smartgrid - August 2010, Coordination– Dr Ashok S

5) 3 day national Conference on Electrical System Technology, Nov 2011, Coordinator– Dr Rijil Ramachand

R&D projects.

1) Development of Centre For Power Quality and Energy Research" under DST R&D, Rs 100 lakhs –2009

2) Investigation on Power Quality

Golden Jubilee Event Proposed:

1) One week Advanced programme on Industrial Automation, 24-28 Jan 2011, Coordinator - Dr.Ashok S

2) Two day National Workshop on Bio– Signal Processing ,Feb 2011.Coordinator Subash K M

Departmental News

School Of Management Studies

School of Management Studies NIT Calicut, headed by Dr. Prabhakaran Paleri, was started two years back. It has two batches of diversified and active students from various parts of our country. It has more than 30 visiting faculties from various prestigious institutes like IIMK, IIMC, IITM, IITB etc and selected industries.

In the last academic year SOMS organized a 2-day workshop on 'Emotional Intelligence' under the guidance of Mr. Mohammed Shafi, faculty

of SOMS, on 25th Nov. and 6th Dec. for NITC students.

Students from SOMS participated in the national level B-School Fest conducted by Rajagiri College of Management Studies, Kakkannad and Mr. Shintu and team bagged 1st place in the operations games.

Mr. Romin Mathew and Mr. Suhas Anil, students of SOMS, bagged 2nd place in MBA Grand Business Challenge conducted by Kairali T.V for management schools all over Kerala

for which IIMK won the 1st place. Apart from this the students participated in the National Seminar in Retail Management conducted by DY Patel University. Four students presented their papers in this seminar.

Head of School, Dr. Prabhakaran Paleri, who is an alumnus of CREC (1968 passout), has been nominated to the Hall of Fame by National Defence University, USA.

Department Of Mechanical Engineering

Number of National Journal papers published:

5 (approx. in 2010)

Number of International Journal papers published :

10 (approx. in 2010)

Faculties retired:

Dr. George Varghese

Special lectures presented by:

Dr. A.P. Baburaj of IIT Madras

Dr. M. Atre of IIT Bombay

Er. Prakash Shetty (CREC Alumni)

FDP programmes in Summer 2010:

1.) Alternative energy options for IC

Engines

2.) Finite Element Methods

3.) Research Methodology

4.) Renewable Energy Technology

New courses:

Proposed to start MTech in Machine Design from 2011

R&D Projects & Consultancy Projects

1.) Time & motion study in collaboration with KILA (Dr. V. Madhusoodhanan Pillai): Rs 3.0 lakhs

2.) IQRAA Hospital (R & A/c system); Rs 30,000/-

3.) ICT project on Product Management System (Dr. Radharaman): Rs 8.18

lakhs

4.) Analysis of design for Rubber Sheet (Dr. Arun P.): Rs 5,000/-

Further Industrial Interaction:

MoU signed with the al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almati, Kazakhstan.

Golden Jubilee Events Proposed:

1.) International Conference on "Energy & Environment" Aug./Sep. 2011

2.) Nat. Conf. COSM July/Aug. 2011 (In collaboration with Amritha Instt., Ettimada)

3.) Annual Conference. of Combustion Society of India Oct. 2011

Departmental News

School of Nano Science and Technology

The School of Nano Science and Technology (SNST) was established in 1st April, 2009 and Dr. N. Sandhyarani, Assistant Professor, is our Head of the School. The School offers higher degree programs at the Master's and Doctoral levels in various academic streams relating to Nanoscience and Nanotechnology. At present, the SNST family has seven faculty members having background in Mechanical Engineering and Chemistry. There are also sixteen students doing M. Tech. in Nanotechnology and twelve Research Scholars performing research in various areas related to Nanoscience and Nanotechnology.

The M. Tech. Programme is designed for students with a background in Mechanical/ Production/ Chemical Engineering. Research Scholars are from science and engineering streams

Achievements

Mr. VAISHAKH NAIR - Gold Medal in Chemical Discipline in the 40th All India

Students Design Competition 2009 instituted by the National Design and Research Forum, Institution of Engineers (India) for the work entitled "*Comparative Degradation Study of Polyethylene using TiO₂ Nanoparticles and Design of a Degradation Chamber*".

Mr. SRINU GANGOLU - Best Paper Award in the International conference on Advancement of Nano Science and Technology, Alagappa university, Tamilnadu, March 1-3, NP-PP-42, 2010, p 97 for the paper "*Mass transport characteristics of hierarchical zeolite reinforced butyl rubber/poly (ethylene-co-vinyl acetate) blends*"

Events

1. Interactive session for school students on Nanotechnology by second year M. Tech. students at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kodungallur.
2. Interactive session for school students on Nanotechnology by Ph. D. Scholars and second year

M. Tech students at Dayapuram Residential School, Kozhikode.

Consultancy, Industry Sponsored Research

1. NITC-HPCL Collaborative Project "Investigation on the application of Catalytic Nanoparticles as Diesel and Bio-diesel Additives"
2. C. B. Sobhan Shijo Thomas, Hanas T. and Sajith V., TATA Steel Consultancy Project "DEVELOPMENT OF NANOFLOIDS FOR COOLING APPLICATIONS IN STEEL INDUSTRY" 2009, Rs.20 Lakhs (Ongoing)

Conferences/ Workshops Conducted

Hanas T. and Shijo Thomas, organized a FDP Programme on "*Trends and Techniques in Nanotechnology*" from 4th July 2010 to 17th July 2010

Total no Of National/International Papers Published : 14

Gasotech Tathva 2010-A Golden Jubilee Special

Tathva, the annual international techno-management festival of the National Institute of Technology Calicut, was nothing short of a spectacle in the Golden Jubilee edition. Held from October 21 to 24, Gasotech Tathva'10 emerged larger than ever with prizes worth 1.2 million rupees and with over 1200 external participants from over 300 colleges.

As a new face to Tathva, it was decided to use this platform to promote a social cause, in an attempt from the student side to give something back to the society. It was in this wake that 'Knowledge Grid', a web portal that will on completion have all the needed materials for a school student to sharpen up his intellect and fulfill his need for information at a higher level, was formed. Promotion of Robotics in south India was also taken up as an initiative, keeping in tune with the theme, 'India 2020'.

The fest kicked off this year with the inauguration of the Lecture Series on the 16th of October by Padmasri. Dr. T. Ramasami, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Science and Technology. The series also included the likes of other eminent personalities like Dr. G. Madhavan Nair, former Chairman of ISRO; Dr. Ashok Dhalwal IAS, DEPUTY Director General, UIDAI; Dr. Johannes Orphael, Director, Institute of Meteorology and Climate Research, Karlsruhe, Germany; Shri. Shasi P.M., Chairman IEEE among others.



In addition to the engineering events, the other features of 'Gasotech Tathva'10' were exhibitions, workshops, lectures and tech-shows. There was active participation in all the 55 events and 8 workshops conducted during Tathva. Exhibitions were conducted by ISRO, CWRDM, AADHAR, RSC, the nature club and by the various departments of the Institute and were well-attended. However the highlight exhibition was that from Team AcYut, the developers of the first humanoid robot in India. Their robots, including the likes of ninjas, soccer players and puppies, received immense media coverage, perhaps more so due to the then recent release of the super-hit movie, Enthiran. Workshops included these on developing a Robotic Humanoid Hand, Ethical Hacking, Automobile and Engine Design, Stock Brokering and so on.

In order to bridge down the gap between the industry and the education sector, it was decided to put up Industry Defined Problems (IDPs) as Golden Jubilee Challenges. A new concept to Tathva, an IDP is one where-in a company defines a problem it faces in the market in the form of a problem state-

ment at Tathva, and the participant with the best solution is given an internship or job-opportunity in return. The IDP Partners included L&T ECC, CDAC, Marico, IISc Bangalore, Kallos Systems among others.



The entertainment section included "Wheels", the auto-show with a variety of automobiles on display. A young and jubilant crowd was also found throughout at the Go – Karting arena. 'Blitzkrieg', the Gaming arena, once again truly lived up to its name this year. The various programmes conducted during the nights of Tathva were an emphatic success. Team AcYut showcased a dancing robot and a robot dog. There were performances by the Music Club, the Dance Team and Slingshot. There was also a Sand Art show conducted by Dr. Amar Sen, a pioneer in the field. The highlight performance however was a stunning Pyro-Show by a Czech team 'Pa-Litchi', which left the entire OAT crowd roaring in applause.

All this would not have been possible without the support of our corporate partners. In this regard, we would like to specially thank our alumni, Mr. Prakash Shetty, Managing Director, Gasotech; Mr. Shilen Sagunan, Managing Director, Arbitron India; Mr. Nirmal Jose, Ashok Leyland, Chennai; and Ms. Sheeba C Chiramel, Manager, IBM, Bangalore for their support to the event. We would also like to thank Mr. A.K. Dutta, Mr. Joseph Eapen, Mr. Haynes George and all the others for their personal invaluable contributions in helping to make Tathva'10 truly a Golden Jubilee Special.

Interview— Dr S Unnikrishna Pillai ,Retired Principal Regional Engineering Calicut (1983-1996)



Prologue: Dr S Unnikrishna Pillai was the principal of the erstwhile REC, Calicut (now NITC) from 1983-1996. He was never just an another principal, he was a visionary, a leader, and above all an ardent practitioner of discipline and merit oriented progress. He has played an iconic role in shaping the way the college has evolved over the years ,to one of the best in India.

Dr S UKP's childhood and early career.

My father was a school Teacher, my mother a house wife. I was born in 1936 in a village named Evoor near Kayamkulam. My family name was Thayyil and I did my primary schooling in the 'Thayyil' Government

“ONCE I WAS THERE ,I KNEW WE HAD VERY GOOD STUDENT,GOOD FACILITIES,BETTER FINANCIAL INPUTS AND GOOD FACULTY COMPARED TO STATE ENGINEERING COLLEGES’

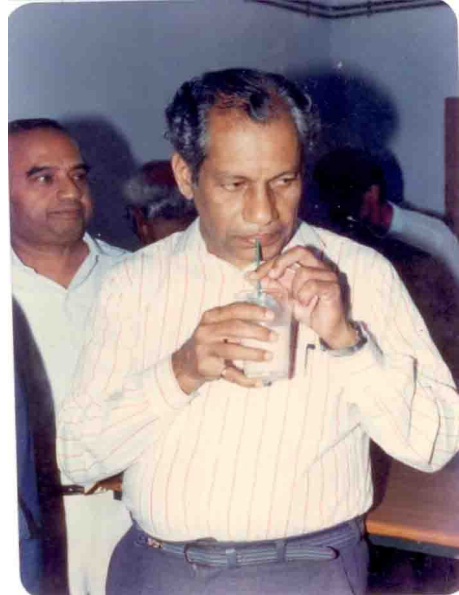
school which was next to my house. My middle school was at a place named Muthukulam which was two miles away and my high school at Kayamkulam, four miles away. Those days, we had to walk all the way to school and back. I did my “Intermediate” at Government Intermediate College, Trivandrum and Engineering degree at College of Engineering, Trivandrum (1954-1958). I was the first rank holder in the University for the first two years of my degree program and second rank holder for the last two. Leaving College, I joined PWD and worked there till 1960. After that I joined College of Engineering, Trivandrum as Lecturer. In 1963 I did my Master's Program, with 1st rank. In

1964 I got married and soon after left for Queen's University, Canada to do my Ph. D, after being awarded the Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship. After completing my Ph.D., I returned to Trivandrum in 1967.

In 1969 I was invited back to Canada to work as a Post-Doctoral Research Associate at the Royal Military College (RMC) of Canada, and was there for two years. In 1971 I returned to Trivandrum and in 1972 moved to REC as a Professor. In 1976 I got an assignment to Iraq as Professor at the University of Sulaimaniyah to assist in establishing a PG Program. In 1979 I decided to leave Iraq because there was little opportunity for academic advancement there. So I went back to Canada as Professor at the Royal Military College and stayed there for three years, published a text book and by late 1982 returned to REC Calicut. In 1983 I became the principal.

hind coming to NITC and taking up the job of Principal.

Before I moved to REC Calicut, I was in CE, Trivandrum. I had also worked at Queen's University and the RMC of Canada for over 8 years, which had influenced my outlook. As CET is a Government institution there was no opportunity for merit-based career advancement. You had to stand in line and move with the queue. Appointments to higher posts were based solely on seniority and I was not happy with such a system because I believed in promoting merit. I knew that REC followed an open merit-based selection system right from the lecturer's to the principal's post. I liked such an environment and that was the reason why I moved from CET to REC Calicut even though I hardly received any additional financial benefit.



Once I was there, I knew we had very good students, good facilities, better financial inputs and good Faculty compared with state engineering colleges. I also understood we could rank well above various institutes in the state and the region, but sadly we were not at that time. Basically REC lacked leadership and direction and

I was confident that, with my varied background, I can provide these. I am one who believes in discipline and accountability and it was the lack of these which were behind CREC's decline. I had the confidence that I could do a good job. That is why I applied for the job of Principal, got it and took it up.

Dr S UKP On the conditions then and the kind of Challenges he had to face.

Lots of them. You would not believe the condition of the institute back then. I will give you a few examples. The Mechanical Engineering Department had just one Assistant Professor and about a dozen lecturers. All the engineering departments together had only three professors. There was no discipline in the campus. The hostels were in utter chaos. The final year students used to get single rooms. Many who completed the course, but had not passed all previous examinations and hence had to keep coming back for exams (they were known as Super-Seniors) would not vacate their rooms, instead they sublet those rooms to their juniors not eligible for single rooms. As a result many of the single rooms were unavail-

Interview— Dr S Unnikrishna Pillai ,Retired Principal Regional Engineering Calicut (1983-1996)

able. Physical violence between groups was a common occurrence. I was told of one student (name not revealed) who would habitually pull out a cot leg and start beating the opposing group the moment a fight starts.

In the mess many students did not pay their bills on time although they were getting money from home. Normally if you don't pay the fees you are out of the mess. Here they had a funny system; if you don't pay the dues in time, you are "sort of" out, but you can continue to eat from the mess as your own guest ("Self-guest") but are charged at "guest" rate which is higher. There are no more check points. As a result arrears get accumulated indefinitely and at a higher rate. Most of the tube lights in the college corridors and many class rooms were missing. These were removed by some students and put up in their hostel rooms.

Stern actions were needed to bring order. We notified the super-seniors to vacate their rooms, none respond, we announced a deadline, again no response, finally we had to

"ONCE NORMS ARE LAID OUT, THEY HAVE TO BE ENFORCED. IF THERE IS NO SUCH LINE THERE IS NO LIMIT TO WHICH INDIVIDUALS MAY STRAY"

break open the rooms. By the time we opened a couple of rooms, all other such rooms were emptied and left open by their 'benami' custodians! The self-guest system was stopped. As the arrears were of the order of Rs. 6000 to 8000 (that was a lot of money in those days) defaulters were provided the opportunity to pay in installments and parents were informed. We also temporarily disallowed tube-lights in hostel rooms.

The course lag was another major issue. It was common practice for students to go on strike to get the exams postponed and the four year course was running to 5 and even 6 years.

The teaching staff was being paid at the lower "State Scales" of pay with retirement at age 55, whereas in all other RECs the higher UGC scales of pay was followed with retirement age of 60. Naturally there was discontent amongst staff. There was also acute staff shortage.

In those days, a few teachers were also not very responsible. It was OK for some to show up late to early morning classes. Cancellation of classes for trivial reasons was 'no big deal' for a few.

His methods to tackle them.

There are a couple of things regarding discipline. In every responsible organization, there are limiting lines (or norms, if you will) within which one must perform. Such limits are set based on society's values, laws of the land, goals & objectives and rules of the organization, etc. Once norms are laid out, they have to be enforced.

If there is no such line (or it is

too loose) there is no limit to which individuals may stray. In this case, there were no such lines at all. This was the case with every segment, the teaching staff, non-teaching staff, students, you and me. The conditions then existing demanded stern actions. So we decided to draw the lines first, rather strict limits compared with status-quo, and violations were not tolerated. All segments co-operated and as a result, the entire system became more disciplined and accountable. The setting of these limits and their enforcement were tough for me and also the people associated with it.

Dr S. UKP's take on the incident where the college had to resort to the aid of Police , the apparent beating up of some students inside the hostels and the shutdown of college.

There was one incident in my time when there was police action in the campus that led to closing the college for a very short period. It was the result of violent student protests against action taken in a ragging case. It took place in (as I remember) 1983, the year I took charge as Principal.

It didn't happen the exact way you said. As I mentioned, it started with a case of ragging. A few (four, I think) senior boys were reported on charges of ragging a girl student. We summoned these students, put them in different rooms and asked them to give their explanations in writing. All the explanations were completely different and none of these explanations were true. For example, one said that the girl was his cousin; another wrote that she was his friend from school days and both claims were found to be wrong. From the explanations and subsequent questioning, it emerged that there was prima-face evidence of ragging against one particular student.

So, based on the College Council decision, we suspended him, pending detailed enquiry. A group of students started an agitation with the demand that the suspension be withdrawn. They were told that the enquiry will be completed expeditiously, within a week, however, they demanded an unconditional revoking of the suspension forthwith, which was not agreed to. These students ganged up outside my room gheraoing me and we had to call the police to get the picketing students removed and get me out. The next day they declared strike and violence was expected and we had to inform the police and the S.I. of police came to the college with a few policemen. That morning, in the room of HOD (Civil) in the 1st floor of DB, I was having discussions with a few senior faculty members on the situation at hand. Meanwhile the policemen blocked entry to the first floor corridor of DB by closing the collapsible doors at the two ends and were stationed there. The striking students amassed there and started pushing to get in. One staff member wanted to get out and so slightly opened the collapsible door at the east end, when the pushing student mass broke through and ran over the few police men manning this entry. As reported to me, apparently one of the students grabbed a lathi from a fallen policeman and started beating the police with it. This

Interview— Dr S Unnikrishna Pillai ,Retired Principal Regional Engineering Calicut (1983-1996)

was more than enough provocation for the far outnumbered police force to go on the offensive for their own safety and they resorted to beating the students back with their lathis. Apparently the hapless first years who were forcibly herded to the forefront of the group, suffered most. The agitating students retreated to their hostels. The police stationed themselves in the area between the hostel office and the car park. From the hostels area some students started throwing stones and broken concrete jally pieces at the police. The policemen also threw back at the students the stones that came their way.

Police reinforcement came by the evening only. It was realized that by night time there could be more violence and damages and it would be difficult to control the situation. A

“PUTTING ALL THE STUDENTS THROUGH SUCH A SITUATION WAS UNFORTUNATE AND I FELT BAD ABOUT THAT.BUT YEARS LATER ,AND UNDERSTANDING THE REAL MOTIVE OF THE STRIKE LEADERS ,I FELT THAT TOUGH HANDLING HAD A LONG TERM POSITIVE OUTCOME “

Senior District official had come over and he assessed that vacating the hostels was necessary to control the situation. Accordingly, he ordered the evacuation of the hostels immediately and this was effected.

Some time before this, I had gone to meet the Collector (and also the press) in the city, as a result I was not in the loop when deciding to vacate the hostels. Thus the police didn't actually go into the hostels. But a “lathi charge” by a few policemen had taken place at the corridor of MB.

When the vacating students came out of the hostels with their bags to leave, the police identified and arrested a few who had thrown stones at them earlier. They took around 10 -15 students. There was even a case of mistaken identity in the case of a sardarji.

Reflecting back on the incident whether the choice of shutting down the college was a right decision?

As I said, I was not there when the police/District authorities ordered the evacuation of the Hostels. But I guess, if I were there in that situation, I would have agreed with the decision. I would not have resorted to a countdown, instead would have given the students more time and facilitated it with the help of the Faculty and watch & ward staff. It was around 5'0 Clock or so and most of them didn't have a place to go.

But during such incidents you don't have time to reflect long on decisions; things happen fast and unpredictably and you have to take decisions on the go. It all happened too fast. Immediately after the events, I felt bad. The students had to

leave at short notice. Some of them did not have enough money. In fact some of us faculty members helped some students with money for immediate needs. Putting all the students (most of whom were not responsible for the incidents) through such a situation was unfortunate and I felt bad about that. But years later, and understanding the real motives of the strike leaders, I felt that the tough handling had a long-term positive outcome. As I said earlier the idea of acceptable limits of behavior and the willingness to enforce discipline was conveyed with that incident. Thereafter I did not have that kind of problems.

Dr S UKP and his methods to tackle staff shortage.

The first thing we did relates to service conditions. The UGC/AICTE pay structure was not yet implemented although it was due from 1973. Basically the State Government was against it because they had to pay half of it. But the then Minister of Education, Sri T.M. Jacob was very helpful and with lot of persuasion we were able to get State's clearance and implement it effective from 1.1.1973. At that time we were the only college in Kerala getting AICTE pay scales. Again, after a lot of argument and persuasion with the Board and the State Government, I was also able to extend the retirement age of Faculty till 60 from 55. Further, the Central DA pattern was adopted for the Faculty. Thus straightaway there were two advantages in coming to REC, pay scale was higher and retirement age was higher.

We also implemented the “Madan Committee” staff pattern



(ratio of 1 Professors to 2 Asst. Professors to 4 Lectures), whereas earlier we had just one Professor and 2 Asst. Prof. per whole Department! All these senior posts were advertised and filled up and in most cases, qualified internal candidates got selected. In addition, Merit Promotion and Personalised Promotion Schemes were introduced. Suddenly there was an abundance of Professors and Asst. Professors. We also started several new UG and PG Programs, which created more senior posts, so much so, by 1987, all Professors except one, and all Asst. Professors in the college were appointed during my tenure.

Interview— Dr S Unnikrishna Pillai ,Retired Principal Regional Engineering Calicut (1983-1996)

The message was also loud and clear that merit alone counts. Importance was given to merit as evidenced by qualifications, publications, research funding, patents and teaching effectiveness.

As for the non-teaching staff, the pay scale remained at the state levels, but the retirement age was increased from 55 to 58.

Dr S UKP's take on his reforms and then received criticism.

Criticism came from many quarters when things were done which were new. REC Calicut was perhaps the first to get a skating rink and a swimming pool. When we were building the compound wall for the campus some ridiculed it as "The Great wall of China". Many who criticized probably had not seen the working of a very well established, secured and well maintained institution and hence this criticism; the compound wall should have been one of the very first constructions. Some lacked the vision and exposure and so felt that some of the projects I undertook were un-necessary or a waste of money. Construction of Principal's quarters was criticized in the front page of a local daily, with a photograph, as building a palace with public funds ("Sarkar chilavil oru Rajakottaram" said the headline!). Fencing around quarters was criticized as another wasted expenditure. We had to



improve and build up the infrastructure in our college which included, among others, compound walls, parking space, entrance roads (rajpath), inter-connecting passages, swimming pool, skating rink, T & P building, Administrative block, Water tanks, Infiltration gallery & intake well, new roofs over leaking roofs, and so on. We were able to garner more funds from Central Government than many other RECs at that time by producing results and by persistent follow up with the concerned officials.

When it came to placement, the only placements we had was with the Army, Navy and/or Air Force, following Government norms. To deal with people in the industry, we needed a full time senior technical officer. So the T & P cell was established headed by a Professor, again something new in the state. It was his mandate to liaise with industries and bring them over for campus recruitment, taking care of their requirements and extending them necessary hospitality services, and also providing our students with necessary help and guidance.

The way for us to grow at that time was by starting new UG and PG Programs. We analyzed general trends, needs and our areas of expertise and started new Programs were feasible. Other areas where Page 17

initiatives were taken that I remember are: introduction of extra-mural lecture series, greening of the campus, revival of Alumni Association and establishing local chapters in various places, starting Silver Jubilee Endowment Fund, establishing Product Development Cell, Entrepreneurship Development Cell, and Industry-Institute Linkage Cell, and Continuing Education Programs.

Dr S UKP take on his student interaction.

I feel that I didn't spend enough time with the students, I should have spent more. For one thing, the students' perception of me as a very strict principal and possibly my demeanor with a serious look on my face dissuaded many students from opening up to me. But the ones who did had no problem in freely interacting with me and a few of them maintain contact with me even now. The more serious problem was pressure for time. Early in my tenure, I used to take classes and also spend time with the students in the hostels. However, in later years, I was involved with many important organizations and committees at State and National levels and had to spend considerable time outside the college. Add on my work load in college, I hardly could find enough time to spend with students.

Dr S UKP on his family –work life balance.

I guess I didn't give adequate time to my family, which was based at Trivandrum. My children often complained that I treated REC as my family and not them, and I used to respond saying that here (in Trivandrum) I have only three children but there (REC) I have around 2000. It is true that my family missed my personal attention, support and guidance on a daily basis and that is something that I truly regret.

Dr S UKP & his family.

After I left REC in 1996, the Canadian International Development Agency hired me as consultant for a project in South India. In 1999, at the request of the Kerala Government, we established the Co-Operative Academy of Professional Education (CAPE) and I became its Founder-Director. The establishment, under CAPE, of 5 Engineering Colleges across Kerala and one Medical College at Cochin, within a span of two years, was a unique and immensely satisfying experience. By 2006 two batches from the Medical College and 3 batches from engineering colleges had graduated and in December 2006 I resigned so that I could spend more time with my

" SOME LACKED THE VISION AND EXPOSURE AND SO FELT THAT SOME OF THE PROJECTS I UNDERTOOK WHER UN-NECESSARY OR A WASTE OF MONEY"

Interview— Dr S Unnikrishna Pillai ,Retired Principal Regional Engineering Calicut (1983-1996)

family.

My wife, Leela, retired as Professor from Mahatma Gandhi College at Trivandrum. I have three daughters. The eldest is Geetha. She studied at REC, Surathkal and Queen's University in Canada and works with Sun Microsystems (now Oracle) in California. She is married to Rajeev Madhavan, who is the CEO of Magma Design Automation of San Jose, California. He also happens to be an REC Surathkal graduate and Queen's University Post-Graduate. They have two daughters, Meera and Maya, studying in 10th and 9th grades respectively. They are settled in Atherton, California.

Latha is my second daughter. She studied at REC Calicut and Queen's University, Canada and is currently working at Ampex Corporation in California. Her husband, Ravi Shankar Nair, is a graduate of Trivandrum Engineering College and Post-graduate of University of Arizona. He works for a company named Converge. They have two children, Nikhil who is in 9th grade and Pooja in 6th grade. They are settled in Fremont, California.

My youngest daughter is Seetha. She studied at Chengannur Engineering College and Sonoma University in California. She quit working to take care of daughter Devika who is 15 months old. She is married to Biju Krishnan, a graduate of College of Engineering, Trivandrum, now working with Tellabs in California. They are also settled in Fremont.(We have included his family photo here)

Dr S Unnikrishna Pillai now leads a fairly peaceful life with his wife in Trivandrum. Each year he spends about six months visiting his daughters who have settled abroad. Many of his students still make sure that they keep in touch with him.



Interview— Vijayettan better known as Canteen Vijayan or Mukkam Vijayan.

Hello Vijayetta as We understand, you are the one of the few who still has connections with almost 45 generations of REC students ?

V: That's correct(Laughing).I usually receive atleast two or three phone calls from your seniors, everyday . Even yesterday I received a couple of calls from 68 and 72 batch. Many of the previous students have come all the way from Bombay to invite me for both their and their children's marriage.I have had the rare opportunity of attending both such marriages.

So how did you start off here?

V: It all started as a time pass. Once during a bus journey I had an opportunity to overhear a conversation between the then English Professor Dr.Jussey and his students. From a lay mans point of view I was really mesmerize by their talk. Moreover I wanted a chance to interact with them .So later when tender for the canteen was called, I applied .Out of the 18 applicants, they shortlisted two, me and Unni Nair. Unni Naiar used to run canteen in Andhra university and a hotel in Vizag.Keshavrao, who was the principal then, interviewed us both. During the interview He asked me "What will you do if I give you the canteen". My reply was "I've got men, I have utensils and furniture, and I will only charge 10 paise for tea and 60 paise for lunch". Later I discovered that Unni Nair's had quoted much higher and he also wasn't ready to bring over his own furniture. Moreover because it was the time of India China war , the government was never interested in avoiding expenditure where ever it could. As a result I got the contract

Since.

The life here at REC?

V: Till 1969 students were very much united ,irrespective of their background .The period of 1970-1979 was an extremely notorious period for this college. It resulted as a resentment caused by the absence of job opportunities after the course. Unlike today, the course was 5 years for keralites and 6 years(1 year preparatory) for non Keralites. Nobody was interested to spend 6yrs and end jobless. All this dissent resulted in unrest in the college. I still remember the incident when a fight broke off between the medical college students and our students over a sports match. 90 REC students successfully took on 400 medical college students (laughing). They were just blindly fighting and venting their frustration over them.

The student teacher interaction was also very healthy. They went for sports and tours together. Now I sadly find it missing.

Any other ventures?

V:Actually I started a hotel named "Shalimar" during 1979-80 period, near Radha theater. I decided to fully focus on the new venture as a result I decided not to take up the new contract for the canteen . But the contractor who had under-

taken the canteen stopped it and left in 6 months. So under the request of the administration here., again I took the charge of the canteen .

Students those days had a habit of writing debt. In fact they still owe me lakhs of rupees . But I don't mind that now , it is because of that fact that I am able to travel around the world for free. In 1968 I was able to go on an all India tour for just 400 rupees which was the train fare. I was greeted like a king by students at different places, given the best food and hospitality .I

n 1987 I started F hostel mess, My son Sandeep Vijayan followed my foot steps and is now running the IIM Canteen

Any celebrity visits?

V: Mohanlal, Suresh Gopi, Soman, Janardhanan, KP Ummer, Kuthiravattom Pappu have all visited this canteen. So has I.V. Sasi , producer PKR Pillai, T Damu. It was for the movie 'Arhatha'.

Mammootty came here for shooting of 'The King'. The shooting of which took place at the senate room in Guest house. Movies like ' Sangamam,' 'Varanmare aavashyamundu,' 'Gandhari', 'Poonilamazha' etc had some of its parts shot here.

One of our students Aziz Ul Haq, a well buit fellow was given a role in a fight scene accompanies by film star Vincent . He was Gilani sir's (Dr.Ghulam Jilani sir of Mechanical dept) classmate. As pay, he was given a pair of shorts and shirt. He is now doing well in Saudi.

Sathya Sai Baba who visited the college in 1966 had dined here .Later when Swami Chinmayananda came to open the temple here he also paid a visit to the canteen.

So how did you manage to get the contracts back to back?

V: Initially Dr. Kesava Rao had told me that if I was able to setup the canteen with decent facilities, he will extend the contracts for 3 years. So I setup a circular canteen, which had music records playing in the background. Everybody including the principal and the students liked it. Later when Dr.Bahavuddeen became the principal, he decided to extended my contract because of my good relation with the faculty and students, he also was greatly impressed with my service and track record . There has been no turning back ever since.

About principals here?

V:In my opinion ,NIT as we see now was crafted by two principals Dr. Bahavuddeen and Dr. Unnikrishna Pillai. I still remember how everyone used to ridicule Dr. Unnikrishna Pillai for building such a long and a wide Rajpath. Now it seems insufficient. He was a gem of a person .His vision has always been unmatched. He was very strict in every aspect. Those who spoke against him then are now biting their tongues. He started off a lot of academic initiatives like on campus placements, administrative building, Computer centre.He en-

Interview— Vijayettan better known as Canteen Vijayan or Mukkam Vijayan.

sured discipline and progress. He was instrumental in bringing surplus funds. He now lived in San Francisco, healthy and energetic

The incidents of violence in the past..what do you say of that?

V: Fights were a common incident here. UP vs Bihar, Khalistan vs Kashmiris, locals vs student. I have seen a lot here. The 1977 fight between Kattangal locals and REC students is very infamous. What started as a misunderstanding, because of some language trouble between Kattangal shop keeper and a North Indian resulted in minor scuffles. Conditions worsened when the around 30 odd students went and started beating up locals with hockey sticks. The locals retaliated by cutting off all supplies and for days the students were stranded on top of D hostel without water or electricity. Anyone seen wearing pants were beaten up (thinking they were REC students), not just in Kattangal but from Kunnamangalam onwards. Later the college had to pay 26,000 rupees as compensation to the shopkeepers.

After which hostel secretary Chil prakash and the then chief warden Proff Jussey got after me to start the canteen. Using Kadjen leaf, a patched hut was built and mc was started. The tariff was the same as the general canteen. And it is continuing till today.

The Rajan incident has always been a Heart felt incident for the college. He was the fine arts secretary in 1976. He was at Farooq college along with 56 others for an intercollegiate art fest in february. But when they came back more people boarded the college bus. The driver said he was not ready to take more people on the bus. Then Rajan said" OK you



can go. We will walk to the campus". It was heard that he had they started walking at 11pm and reached the college at around 4 in the morning. When they reached here, intelligence police named Blue carpet with police dogs were waiting here. After which rajan as well as Joseph chaly were arrested. Though Joseph chaly Page 20

returned we never saw Rajan again .

Irrespective of the batch, how do you maintain this relation with students?

V: I never consider this as business(laughing in the background). There are hundreds of instances where I have ended up giving free food to the students. I still remember the words of a former student Paramjeet Singh Marwa. He said "don't consider this as a business, consider it as a service. I think I have always followed it to a great extent". Honda & Mankad Shankar are just a few names that I remember whom I had great relations with.

About the changes in college over the years, What is your point of view ?

V: I never dreamed this college to achieve this greatness when I came here. It is miraculous. The academic level here has increased rapidly. Now a days time management is also excellent. Between students is narrowing.

Earlier, there was only DB. Principals office used to be at the present electrical lab. Later when main building was constructed in 1966 office was shifted there. The first batch of students had to sleep in the same place (present heat engine lab) where they had classes as hostels were only coming up. By the time came I came, A & B hostels were the only one which were fully constructed, C & E hostel were still under construction. Earlier F mess was a cafeteria, which was converted to a North Indian mess in 1987.

But one cannot overlook a serious decline in sports and other activities. Earlier there was hardly anyone to challenge NITC in sports. Now it has changed a lot. NITC has produced nearly 8 ranji cricket players. This is mainly due to lack of time.

Earlier there was a time even when I used to play cards with the faculty and students here. The level of interaction was much higher than usual. Now, As a result of the advent of the computer such relationships are waning

Students were active throughout the year. Ragam always saw a burst of activities. Now it is all limited and Interaction has narrowed down.

Among the batches you have seen which batch according to you was the best?

V: I would say 1972 batch. There gang of Anil Kumar Nair, Paul Francis, Jayaprakash, Govinda Panikker was memorable indeed. They batch had a great spirit embodied in them. They conducted World RECAA association at Muscat. I was given business class tickets...they even paid for my shopping infact I came back with surplus money (laughing in his hear out). At the meeting, I said " I am writing off you people's debt" and they were laughing their head off....

Interview— Vijayettan better known as Canteen Vijayan or Mukkam Vijayan.

How about your profits?

V: You wouldn't believe me but after all these years of running the canteen my only profit is a plethora of personal relations spread across the world. Like I said money was never my agenda. I had to sell much of my ancestral land because of this venture. But the mental satisfaction that this venture gives is far more priceless than any profit I can or could reap.

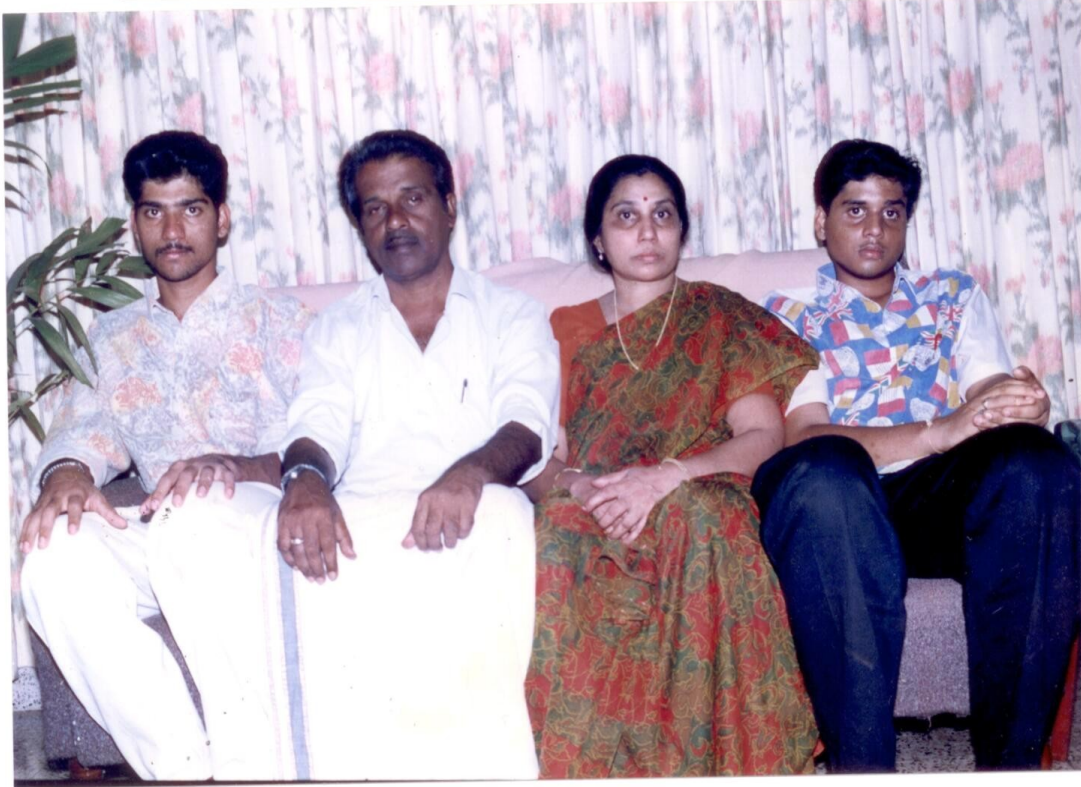
Can you quote one specific incident in the canteen, something dramatic?

V: That would be the incident when filmstar Mohanlal visited the canteen. I was overwhelmed. In fact the whole shooting crew visited.

Another one was the time when Yesudas came to campus. He had tea from the canteen. It was so good that students later ordered the tea calling it 'Yesudas Tea'. It was 20 paise when normal tea was 15 paise. Those are all good memories I cherish.

Any message to students?

V: Don't just confine to studies. Do some good to people around you, the locals. Be broadminded.



Memoirs Of the First Batch -

Birth And Growth Of NIT Calicut - Memoirs Of a First Batch Student,

Charly Chirayath M.E.E

Half-a-century ago 126 students and less than 10 professors started the Regional Engineering College (REC) in Calicut. It was part of the great theme of 'Emotional Integration Through Students'. After India's independence and the subsequent State Re-Organization, most states were drawn on the basis of language, which led to a kind of compartmentalization of India. In order to emotionally integrate the citizens of different states of India, the political leaders at that time, chartered a course of establishing one national engineering college in each state, with students from all parts of India, which would create an emotional unity among the next generation. Thus Calicut REC was established in 1961, with 50 % of students from the state of Kerala, 10% of students from the three neighbouring states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and the remaining 20% from North India. Since we started from the scratch, only 50% of the planned student population was admitted. By coincidence, the first batch was all-male and we were also the first batch of 5-year Integrated Engineering course.

Before I go on the memory lane, let me pay my respect to those classmates and professors, who have left this world and are no longer with us. My thoughts and prayers are with their families. As a first batch student, I am proud to be part of the beginning of this great institution, which we now call NIT. But, I prefer it to be mentioned as REC; because that is the name we were associated with for 50 years, that's the name which brings lots of pleasant memories and that is the name which binds us together. When I look back, many thoughts come to my mind. We experienced the growing pains of REC. We saw the baby-steps of REC. And we also saw the success of REC.

When we joined the REC, there was no college building, no hostels, no laboratories no libraries and so on. We started our classes at the Polytechnic Institute in West Hill, and stayed there for two (2) years. Students lived in different private lodges and hostels. The teachers were the cream of the crop with higher education abroad. Dr. M. V. Kesava Rao, the founding Principal and also the Professor of Electrical Engineering was British educated, Mr. P. S. Subramaniam, Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Prof. A. Achuythan, Prof. of Civil Engineering, were both US educated. Even though we were living in different places throughout the city, we felt a bond between us.

During our third year, the college along with the students and staff, moved to the present campus. The founding fathers of REC had the visionary idea of a self-contained college campus in a vast area, like the university campuses of Europe and America. We were all excited to start a new life at the new place, just like the excitement of parents and children, when they move to their own new house after living in a rented house. But, soon we were all disappointed, because the campus lacked many conveniences.

It was far-off from the city. 20 Page 22

KMs was too far in those days and it took a one-hour bus ride to go to the city. That too, there was only one bus service. There was nothing in the village of Chathamangalam - no movie houses, no restaurants, no shopping centers, no places of worship etc. We had to go the city for everything. But, the college authorities were kind enough to take us back and forth to the city on weekends, in the college bus. Not only the transportation, but many other things were also lacking when we moved to the new campus. The college buildings and hostels were not finished; many of us had to live in laboratories and workshops: no running water, water had to be brought in by truck, from the nearby river and many more to mention. Often, when we took a shower, the water would run out and we had to wait in the bath rooms for the next water truck. In spite of many other difficulties, the staff and students were growing together as a family, along with the college.

We saw the campus growing, being built, brick-by-brick-the college buildings, the hostels, the laboratories, the staff quarters etc. We saw the college community growing and the neighbourhood mushrooming. That was an unbelievable experience, to witness the birth and growth of REC, just like the birth and growth of your own child.

Even though we were small in number, we marked our presence in the city of Calicut. The local people of Calicut used to watch us when we were in the city, because we spoke many languages of India, which was unusual at that time. Our Basketball team was one of the top teams of Calicut. Our Orchestra, led by Mr. P. M. Emmanuel, was recognized as the top rated and melodious among other college orchestras. Our debate team of K.C. Mohan Rao and I, guided by Prof. Jusseau, won many prizes and awards in the Inter-Collegiate competitions. Our college elections were like the state elections. The list goes on.

After we graduated from the REC, this small number of young engineers began to imprint their footprints on the professional world. Many of them reached the loft positions of Professors and Principals of technical institutions, Managers and Executives of Indian and International companies, high ranking military and civil officers (including IAS officers), successful business entrepreneurs and government employees and even the noble life of Hindu priests or Swamijis. Today, this small number of slightly more than 100 engineers of REC first batch, really achieved high positions in India and abroad.

But, the most important thing we got from REC, is the bond between us. The staff and students were like members of the same family. It was evident when we had our re-unions in 1991 and in 2002. In 1991, we celebrated our Silver Jubilee of graduation and in 2002, we held a three-day Re-Union. For both these occasions, our classmates and professors came from all over India and even from far off places such as, Europe, the USA and the Middle East. The staff and students came with their families and some even came with their

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grandchildren. No other college re-union can boast that kind of get together. I have asked many of my friends from other professional institutions about their re-unions and no one had re-unions like we had.

I often wonder what is binding factor and the connecting link between us and what is the driving force for such a unity. I think the growing pains we suffered during the early days created a bond between us. We all say, sufferings bring people together. Another reason is that one of our classmates, Prof. P. C. Baby became a staff and later the Head of the Department of Electrical Engineering at REC. He was instrumental in bringing together our batch mates and conducting the re-unions. But, whatever the reasons are, we still feel like members of a family, even after half a century. And that is a great gift, REC gave to us.

The first batch of students were the flag-bearers of this prestigious institution. I am glad that I am part of that first batch and I will always cherish the memories of REC. Thank you REC, thank you my classmates and professors for a wonderful experience.

Golden Recollection - Flashback of REC Life from West Hill to Chathamangalam By Stephen Kuruvilla

I still remember, that was a Tuesday morning. As usual our postman stopped at our gate and delivered a post card from the Regional Engineering College (REC), Calicut. It was my admission notice from the REC to join the classes on the following Monday. I had never visited Calicut before and had no idea about that city. I had only few days to get ready for my pioneer trip to an unknown destination. I talked to some of my friends regarding my trip to Calicut. They advised me that I should get there a few days earlier to get accommodations in a hostel. The best way from my home town Kottayam to Calicut was by train. I quickly bought some clothes for my college life away from my home. Even though I was very excited to have a free life in a new place, my mother was not very happy about me going away from home. I took the evening train on a Thursday from Kottayam to Ernakulam and a night train from Ernakulam to Calicut. I got a seat next to an elderly person going to Calicut from Ernakulam. I requested him to wake me up at Calicut station in case I may be still sleeping. He sarcastically told me "I don't have to wake you up since the Kallayi bridge has been doing that job for years". First I did not get the meaning of what he implied, but later I realized when I woke up with a loud metallic grinding noise with intermittent 'kadak kadak' sound from the Kallayi steel bridge as our train was passing over. Soon I arrived at Page 23

Calicut station and the elderly friend gave me some directions to get to West hill where the REC office was located. I needed to take a bath and freshen up before going to the REC. It was convenient for me to take a room near the railway station. I dragged my suitcase and approached an auto driver waiting outside. Luckily he was a good person and he took me to an average priced hotel not far from the railway station. I took a shower and stopped for breakfast at the eating area out front. I was surprised to see that a cup of tea was served for me before I gave the order. Later I realized that it was the typical Calicut custom to serve tea before asking for the menu. I took a taxi to get to West hill. Luckily my taxi driver was quite familiar about the new REC office building inside a Polytechnic Campus. I had a brief interview with our Principal Dr. Kesava Rao and he advised me to pay the fee and join the class next day. I had a chance to meet few other class mates came for the interview.

Here comes the real problem. Since the hostel accommodation in the polytechnic was not ready and available for us we were asked to find accommodation outside the campus for ourselves. Our next task was to find a place to live. Meanwhile I got few friends to join me for Lodge hunting. We got a list of places from our office. Santha Lodge near Malabar Christian College was one of them. We made a trip to the Santha Lodge. It was a fairly new lodge with a newer two story building. I joined with P.Viswanathan and Chitrbhanu in one room. That was the beginning of our fun life with Jose Mathew, Reghunathan Nair, Thanappan Nair and our beloved Mohammed Basheer. I still remember our daily trips to the nearby hotels for our meals and waiting at the bus station near Malabar Christian College, walking on the beach in the evenings and of course sharing, rather copying, the drawing assignments. What a wonderful team spirit! We really lived as a family, eating outside together and enjoying the melodious voice of Basheer. Our Lodge was closer to the heart of the city than the college in West hill. So we could easily get to the city at any time that we liked. We had another group of classmates - Kunjipalu, Simon Joseph, John M. Mathew, Emmanuel, Kuriachen and Charly Chirayath who lived at Christurajmandiram not far from us, who often joined our activities. I cannot forget the time we spent roaming through "Mittai theruvu"- Sweet Street, watching movies at the Crown, Davison, Coronation and last but not the least at the new Pushpa Theater.

It was great fun for me studying with students from other states especially from North India and few foreign raised guys like V.L. Patel, Mohan Rao etc. Even though majority of the students were from Kerala, we soon developed a family environment among all the "first batch" students. It was common to hear students speaking in Malayalam, Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu and Gujarathi. Of course our friend Kaul lent his "Kashmiri" voice also.

It was a great experience with the combination of new sur-

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roundings, long lecture classes and labs. The memories of Dr. Lonappan's physics classes, Dr. Unni's Chemistry classes, Dr. Padmini Nair's English classes and Professor Kunjipaulo's Mathematics classes are with me even now. I still remember the voice of Professor Kunjipaulo telling us "you are not obliging me by buying my mathematics book as this is the property of McMillan London". This was in response to few of us purposely sitting in the front seat holding up the new edition of his Math book for winning his favor. We had great fun in the Chemistry and Physics labs with young demonstrators / lecturers like Mr. K.J. John and Ms. Valsala Devi. It was an adventurous task to make a single one inch diameter bolt out of a steel rod by heating and hammering with help of other class mates. It was the beginning of a joint project work.

One year passed so soon with the new life and new friends. We were very fortunate to have a new hostel ready for the REC students when we started the second year. We started intermingling with our entire "first Batch" in our new home. We soon learned all the "spicy languages" of south and north India from our class mates. It was a period of learning the cultures of various regions of India. We soon learned to live like a family in our hostel sometimes giving a little hard time to our young hostel warden Mr. Veerankutty. I really enjoyed sharing and living with P. I. Varghese, Oommen Jacob and our junior student V. J. Kurian in one room. I still remember our basketball matches with the Navy team, medical college team and our college team under the leadership of our beloved late Cyriac.

Soon new engineering staff joined the REC including Professor P.S. Subramaniam (Mechanical), Professor Bhahauddin (Civil), Professor Achuthan (Civil), Professor P. S. Srinivasan (Electrical) and others. We were very fortunate to be taught by highly qualified faculty. REC could attract many highly qualified professors and assistant professors, since it could pay salaries higher than other universities at that time. We had to select one engineering branch for further study in our second year. I was planning to take the mechanical branch. But mechanical the branch was full. Finally I managed to get it by exchanging with Madhavan Padiath. Thanks to Madhavan for his gracious help.

The real "REC first batch family life" started when we moved to Chathamangalam, our new home. It was a fun life when we started living in the Heat Engine Lab building and attending lecture classes and Labs in the Hydraulic Lab building located across our building. We were sleeping on two or three rows of beds in an open hall without any partition walls, like living in a military barrack. I am sure this experience gave some preliminary training for our few class mates like Mangath Sankar, Handa, Cyriac, Sheshan and Jacob Mathew who joined the military and Air force later. We enjoyed our vegetarian and non - vegetarian meals served in a kitchen and Mess hall constructed close to our so called Page 24

sleeping quarters and lecture hall. We cannot forget the Mess management of Mr. Vijayan for providing food for all of us. I still remember the well with a pump to provide water for taking bath in our temporary bath rooms close to our living area. Some of our class mates enjoyed the open air bath rather than using the bath rooms. Some others took this situation for orchestrating a strike to postpone the examination by secretly closing the main valve at the top of the main water storage tank. Our teachers and principal were also living close to our residences. This was very close to the "Gurukula Vidhyabhyasam", our ancient fathers enjoyed. This was the real reason of the bondage developed between the first batch students.



A Photo taken in 1962 .FROM LEFT TO RIGHT P.S.MONY,K.S.SUBRAMONIAM (CALCU), KRISHNA-RAJU, P.S.SREENIVASAN .Courtesy P.Madhavan

Chathamangalam was a beautiful village when we moved there. I cannot forget the beauty of Chathamangalam with rolling hills and valleys and ascenic mountain in the background. Many of us enjoyed the local "chicken curry and Pathiri" served in a local tiny hotel in the heart of "Kattanga" for only two rupees. Think about the price now and inflation! I really enjoyed a lot going for evening walks with P. A. Rajan, R. Prabhakaran Nair and Ramesh Nayak through the narrow winding foot paths into the interior village area of Chathamangalam.

Soon the construction of first hostel was completed and we all started living in hostel rooms. We enjoyed the luxury of living in a room shared by two people. I still remember buying an old table fan for providing some artificial ventilation in our room during the summer hot season. I am sure my roommate Varghese could not sleep for the first few days due to the roaring noise generated when the fan was running like a turbine.

Climbing on coconut trees around the hostel in the middle of the night for plucking coconuts was the hobby of some of our

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friends like Patel and Thomas John. Some others found other easy ways to get the coconut treat from the innocent local land owners. Some Civil students extended their land survey expedition beyond boundaries of college property into the local land owner's property and convinced them that they were going to acquire their land for a higher price and gladly accepted their coconut treat.

Watching movies in local theaters and also theaters in Calicut city was great fun for many of us including Prabhakaran Nair and his younger brother Madhavan Nair now Swamy Abhayanandatherthapadar. The College bus was available to make a trip to Calicut city on every Sunday morning for groups of us to attend churches and temples and others for the morning shows. What a nice way of satisfying the spiritual and worldly needs of the students. Some others left for Calicut on Saturdays and stayed overnight to watch late night movies and came back Sunday after watching few more shows. I still remember our long trip from Calicut to Coimbatore with few of our north Indian friends to watch famous Hindi movie "Sangham" and how we escaped without any major incidents after a good fight with the theater boys.

REC students were always on the top for sports and games especially our first batch students. It was really fun to watch



A Photo taken in 1966 during sports day Courtesy P Madhavan (first batch)

Javelin, and discus throwing of Paramjith Singh, Handa, P Viswanathan etc on our annual sports day. The open field near the valley was the center for all the sport fans to assemble for enjoying the Cricket, basketball, tennis and volleyball games. One can never forget the performances of Paramjith Singh, Parthasarathy, K.C. Cyriac, A.S Viswanathan, P.

M. Peter etc.

We had the privilege of watching the construction of the main college building, main library, hostel 1, 2 and 3. We always enjoyed the time we spent in the Hydraulic Lab, heat engine Lab, electrical Lab and lecture halls. Our well qualified faculty provided us good coaching and training for developing our career as good professional engineers. I found it very helpful when I started my engineering career. I still remember our IC engine project, making the Aluminum casting using the furnace in the foundry and machining the aluminum block in the machine shop under the expert guidance of Mr. Thomas Mattom.

Many of us still remember our adventurous study tour trip to Neyveli Lignite Corporation in Tamil Nadu. We were travelling in a train. As soon as we entered into the Tamilnadu region, we started practicing our slang Tamil on each other. The local people traveling along with us did not appreciate our "spicy language". In those days anti- Hindi sentiment was at its peak. They soon recognized that we had some- Hindi speaking students with us. One of our North Indian class mates picked up a fight with a local person. They took the case very seriously at the political level and stopped our train. They were not allowing us to proceed. Thanks to Parthasarathy for getting the timely help from his brother for resolving the case with his political influence. This was one of the examples of showing our closeness among our first batch students.

It was amazing how soon five years had passed. We started feeling the pain of separation from our close friends and our loving staff. Saying goodbye to our close knit first batch friends was very painful. It was like taking away your siblings from your home. Life is like that. We all have to go through this in our life, sometime or the other. We were all ready to fly into a new horizon with new wings provided by our Great institution REC. But some of our beloved friends- Suryanarayana Moorthy, Madaswamy, Jacob P. George, Jayaraman, Moosad, Vasudevan Nair, Rajasekharan, K.C. Cyriac, Gurucharan Singh and finally P. Mohammed Basheer left from this world unexpectedly. Let us pray for their soul.

Let us all be thankful to our great Regional Engineering College for molding us to serve as qualified engineers. Many of our class mates – Dr. P. K. Sivanandan, K. Mohan Kumar etc, have received commendable achievements in their professional careers, thanks to the great training from REC. I could become the Chief Engineer of an international engineering company in the USA only because of the outstanding coaching and training I received from REC. Two of our first batch mates, Dr. P.C. Baby and T.P. Kunjipalu paid it back to our institution by serving there for many years after their graduation. Let us cherish our unforgettable sweet memories of our REC life.

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REC Calicut At West Hill— Reminiscences by Arun Wahapende

It was in late August 1961 that REC Calicut invited candidates for admissions. I came a couple of days before the date of the interview. Right from the time of arrival at the Kozhikode Railway Station, it appeared to be an entry into a different world. The name Kozhikode was difficult to pronounce and its spelling for me did not confirm to the pronunciation (Actually I cannot till date figure out what the exact spelling should be). Then there was incessant rain. The houses/buildings were generally not more than two stories high and had slanting roofs (These are not common at places with moderate rain fall). Most of the people were in spotless white Loongies (half folded) and shirts. Everyone was carrying an Umbrella as an integral part of the dress. The Umbrellas when not in use were tucked on the rear of the collar of their shirt. There was greenery all around with tall coconut trees towering over a variety of trees and paddy fields. The modes of transport seen: Hand-pulled carts, cycle rickshaws and buses. There were no Tonga's, motorized three wheelers or taxis. The ride in the buses was punctuated by shouts of 'Aal Erkande' (meaning a person is getting down), it took some time to understand the meaning. Almost every one spoke only in Malayalam (I had never heard the language before) and all sign boards were in Malayalam too.

On the whole the feeling was as if we had landed in a foreign country. It was indeed an exciting feeling. The only problem was communication with people. It was possible to communicate with very few people around. I could well imagine what Vasco-De-Gama must have felt on landing at Calicut. The entire scenario was full of challenges and expectancy.

West Hill

The venue for the interview was a single row, two storeys building in the Polytechnic compound. This building with about 8 rooms was to be REC Calicut, till we moved to Chatamangalam, nearly two years later. The Polytechnic building itself though only two storey's high, was very impressive (considering contemporary standards). The Polytechnic – Mr. Koman Nair in his Buick car used to look Majestic. Our Principal Dr. MV Keshav Rao, looked dignified and humble in comparison.

The interview itself involved, only submission of documents and payment of fees. Many of the students especially from outside Kerala had come with relatives (Guardians) and it was a meeting of strangers who were likely to spend the next

five years in close association. There were students from all Southern States, Maharashtra, Bengal (No Bengali, only a Gujrati from Bengal and no one from Gujarat), Delhi, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Kashmir. Then there were the colorful Mr. Velji Lalji Patel from Kenya and Mr. KC Mohan Rao from Rome. Everything seemed to be exotic and filled with expectation.

Then we got the first shock - No hostel. This was a bolt from the blue especially for people who had thus far had no links with Kerala. We were however told that a new Polytechnic hostel was under construction and nearing completion, this would be used by REC till they are at West Hill. Till the completion of the hostel, efforts were being made to hire a building in the neighborhood. This implied that we had to find out some accommodation immediately. The local students were of some help.

Chatakutty's Bungalow

Within 15 days, the college authorities arranged to hire Mr. Chatakutty's Bungalow in the vicinity. This Bungalow was quite big with a well and coconut trees in the compound. 22 Students got admission in the hostel. Preference was given to students from far off states. Mr. Nair was the head cook with a couple of assistants, they all became very popular. Mr. Nair once invited us to his village and treated us like royalty, offering us coconut water. Mr. Somanathan, our Physics teacher was the warden who lived nearby.

Mr. Somanathan did a great job handling all of us who at times created most unexpected situations. One night some of us saw, the local contraption of a broomstick with fire at the end, which had a double purpose of serving as a torch and also to keep the snakes away (We had never imagined such a thing existed). A few were very scared and summoned Mr. Somanathan and told him that the house was haunted and fire was making rounds of the house (In the dark we could not see the bearer of the torch) . Mr. Somanathan was quite perplexed at the commotion but soon figured out what the matter was. He had a hearty laugh and you can well imagine what we felt like.

One day some of us climbed the coconut trees and ensured that not a single coconut remained on the trees. It was a whole night operation. There were also some local bricks piled up nearby for some construction work. Some of us threw the bricks and coconuts in the well and completely blocked the well. The next day the very people who had blocked the well went to Mr. Chatakutty and complained to him about how mischievous the students were and tried to sympathize with him, though he was not perturbed at all.

On reflecting back, one really wonders what crazy things we did about 50 years ago. Some of them I remember as if they happened yesterday and may be I shall never forget. To recollect just a few:

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A set of room partners took great pleasure in making life difficult for the other. One put glue in the others shoes. The other said nothing but put sugar in every pocket of the firsts coat to ensure it was full of ants.

Some of us suddenly decided to tonsure our heads and appeared all together in Crown theatre (wonder whether the cinema hall still exists) to watch a movie and next day went to the class. It must have been quite a sight with the heads resembling eggs (muttai).

Then just before we were to move into the New Polytechnic hostel, one of us put in an application to the Principal stating, property of students in the present hostel was not safe. In support he listed the loss of, toothpaste three fourths used, blade after six shaves, 15 day old soap and a total of around sixteen items with the worth of each item mentioned against each. The total loss amounted to about 12 Annas. The Principal refused to admit the applicant in the new hostel for almost a week.

New Polytechnic Hostel and shift to Chatamangalam

The new Polytechnic hostel was ready in a few months and admitted all of us (around 120 students). This was the real commencement of National integration where all of us from different parts of the country lived together and understood each other of course with the usual fights and subsequent peace processes.

By the time we settled at West Hill, it was time to move and start all afresh at Chatamangalam. There we had an unforgettable stay, seeing it grow from two workshop buildings and using a well for our bath. Our dormitory and class room was in the same workshop building to start with.

Ramblings and Reflection On my College Days– V.Ragunathan Nair CREC First Batch ,Civil Engineering.

When my friend Baby nonchalantly suggested contributing a write up of nostalgic reminiscences of my college days to the souvenir as an aide-memoire, my initial reaction was this is damn easy and unexacting! Maximum a couple of hours writing that will finish off the errand. Fifteen minutes later I find that it is incredibly arduous to sort out the jumble of thoughts, memories and feelings laced with pangs of passion and fervor that are fighting each other in the race to be the first to blot this pristine white page (melodramatic, but true!). I suppose I could take the easy way out, and write that looking back; my college life was happy, buoyant and ecstatic with carefree happy-go-lucky Page 27

days. The sun always shone. I had no real worries. Friends were plentiful and life was all about, fun and frolic, mirth and merriment. Well I could, but that would entail not being completely honest. I mean, certainly a not immodest percentage of college life, (compared with life today) was carefree but by no means all of it. Today the emotional overlay due to the added dimension of my status as the first batch student of this college turns me ruminative and contemplative making my task more complicated and compounded.

Evolving a good memoir is in every bit an act of creation to cull a compelling recital out of the chaos of yester year existence. If this work were not done well, the result would not be an involving narration, but a shapeless, rambling mess of self-aggrandizing anecdotes.

Where are all my college mates? Where are all those familiar faces now? I search wistfully through my memories to spot my bosom buddies and hark back the bawdy banter of the past, the boisterous evenings we spent together in gay abandon. We played together, fought together, talked, laughed and cried together. But alas! Most of them had gone away in search of better pastures, a couple of them to eternity, never to return, never to be seen, never to be heard again. But my friends, the mnemonics' of them locked in the strong vaults of my cherished memory lane are ever with me to brood over nostalgically in my solitude and will be carried through the last journey to my final abode. The familiar face of Vasu, one of my close friends and classmates sprang to my mind. Vasu, your unexpected death shattered me. I am really fumbling and searching for the mot just to describe you. You were a bucking bronco in the rodeo, robust, strong-minded with fastidious convictions and were always one of my well wisher, mentors, guide and sincere supporter. Wherever you are, may God bless your soul with eternal peace? Perhaps fate will be kind that I may see some of my old friends once again during the alumni meet 2011 of the first batch, but for now I must bank on my recollections only, those memories that money can't buy and time cannot erode.

My over-riding recollections of college are the memories of its start at the campus of Govt. Polytechnic at West Hill, mad rush to the nearby 'Pattar's Hotel' for lunch and the steaming sambar, hot rice and fried papads served there on plantain leaf, above all its dingy dining room redolent with peculiar spicy smell of cooking and the lingering pleasant sense of taste with a whiff of aroma of warmed up plantain leaf. The odd abodes we had put up with, in the absence of proper hostel accommodation, the morning bus rides to the college in the company of bickering and squabbling damsels on their way to schools or colleges are also gradually coming up to

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the forefront of my memory lane. As we had just entered the college our friends were limited, but were closely knitted as in a plait and shared our fantasies, cravings, aspirations and even romantic interludes pouring our heart out. Classmates having similar or compatible dispositions went into a huddle, started moving around together, in small groups, wandering the nooks and corners of the city, hanging around Cinema halls and commercial complexes (present day malls?), eve teasing, chaffing and goading (but never beyond endurance) in gay abandon. As free as a bird, away from the parental tutelage, we basked in the newfound freedom feasting our eyes on and often making eyes at the boisterous lasses with the distinct hallmark of impish and indomitable arrogance of a growing up teenager. But we held women at the highest esteem and never crossed the limits of sobriety even in the most provocative of circumstances. SM Street, 'Mithai theruvu' in vernacular language, in the heart of the City starting from Mananchira square was the main drag and the market area bustling with life and, hence, a happy hunting ground for the roadside Romeos.



Dr. Kesava Rao with the Drama team
Courtesy P.Madhavan(1961-1966)

The life was not all moonlight and roses. This was the locale where we often faced and encountered our adversaries in the form of envious and green-eyed boys from other colleges, especially from the Medical College, aggrieved and agitated by our inadvertent forays as Engineers in to their domain of elite professional status and our often productive attempts to curry favor with their beaus. We refused to give in to their bullying and threats irrespective of their superior strength in number, by sheer grit and determination. The pernicious influence of such rancor started to pervade even to the play fields as had proved during an inter-collegiate basketball match at Medical College. As we were deeply en-

grossed in cheering up our team, one of our indomitable mates who stranded in the hostile territory in search of water was surreptitiously made captive and we freed him in a commando style rear guard action without any commotion. Realizing the catastrophic outcomes of such skirmishes, we gradually struck up friendship with a ginger group among the op-



A Sports Day
Courtesy P.Madhavan(1961-1966)

posite camp for a start. This strategic move paid rich dividends in the long run finally as we could cultivate good relations with them, both girls and boys.

Being Cinema freaks, my group's favorite haunts were theatres (Crown, Coronation, Davidson...) and of course Indian Coffee house near the Railway station. Winding up the outing for the day we used to dine at Hotel Alankar or is it Ap-sara, (Is my gray cells degenerating?) relishing the scrumptious 'Biryani', for which the hotel was famous in the vicinity. Those were the days of ecstasy and euphoria. At this point, the handsome face of Bashir, a tall, lanky youngster with mellifluous voice and pleasing manners flashed in my mind as a blast from the past. He is no more. The cruel hands of Death, plucked out one more of the greatest friends of mine from among us, when I was ardently anticipating the day we meet once again at this alumni get-together to regale those halcyon days at REC. The news of his demise came as a shock to me stupefying me instantly. A mood of melancholy descended on me. As the realization of his departure to eternity sunk into me, my eyes welled up with tears and strangely I could not control myself from sobbing and weeping as the frames of our association drifted across my mind. That's life. Basheer will always be in my mind's eye, above all for his great joie de vivre.

Strolling down the memory lane, the focus moved on to the

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site location of REC, Calicut at Kattangal in Chathamangalm. Nestled atop the scenic Chathamangalam Hills, it provided the ideal ambience for the pursuit of higher education. The site is about 22 Km away from Calicut, spread over a vast area of land on both the sides of the road from Kunnamangalam to Mukkam. When the College was shifted to the new place, building construction works at site were in rapid progress and the verdant landscape of the huge area around the site was fascinating and a world apart. The beauty of the locale was highlighted by a couple of spectacular valleys and idyllic hills endowed with lush green meadows, sparkling rivulets and motley colored tropical wild flowers growing along in abundance. The panoramic rhapsodies of green carpeted paddy fields and the rolling

valleys adorned by the myriad blooms of intoxicating vernal flowers presented a breathtaking sight that enraptured us. Hillocks and streams lent, complemented and magnified each other's beauty. Hills contributed to the lure of gurgling



Courtesy P.Madhavan(1961-1966)

waters, and waters added to the life and vigor of to the rustic charm.

As the trials and tribulations of functioning a full-fledged technical college in the polytechnic's campus became more complex, especially to accommodate new admissions, the REC management righteously decided to shift the College lock, stock and barrel to its new location, though the infrastructure was yet to be ready. Some of the completed sheds were converted to dormitory. I vividly recollect the shrieks and commotions from the occupants that pierced through the calm of the mid-night and startled us out of our sleep. The sight of the 'slithery' creatures' nocturnal visit sent shivers up our spine. We slept with the niggling fear of snake and insects and habitually learnt to live in any adversities. The inevitable need coerced us to get up early at the dawn and run to the water taps provided at the construction site, for taking bath before the taps dried up. In retrospect I feel that, instead of coming down our morale, these fugitive hassles and hazards bolstered up our esprit de corps and enriched the strands of friendship and brotherhood among the students. As the selection to the REC at that time

was on quota system for each state, we had a fair mixture of students from different parts of India with distinctive traditional customs and practices. Our close association, after initial contentious conflicts and dissensions, provided us with ample opportunities for each other to perceive and appreciate the rich and diversified cultural heritage of India as a whole, fostering unity in diversity.

The flux of memories unraveled the mystics of the unabashed ethos of the simple farming folks and artisans around the new campus. It was a simple rural village nearby where one hardly feels the hour slips by and the rustics move around in leisurely lassitude. Their open and guileless lifestyles were unfamiliar to and beyond the imagination of many of us hailing from those so-called urban and fast emerging townships. We stood aghast at the sight of half-clad (or is it other way round as half-naked) bewitching bevy of village belles, irresistibly ravishing and seductive, taking bath in crystal-clear waters of the streams and rivulets diving in and swimming around in mirth and merriment oblivious of the new impediment of prying eyes of the students around. As the number of unwelcome Peeping Toms swelled inexorably, the girls smelled a rat, became conscious that they were being watched and started to cover their curvaceous assets. This incidence of indecent act fermented an outcry from the locals. Finally good senses prevailed and the animosity generated was sublimated in due course by engaging the healthy locals in the construction activities and reining the misplaced indulgence of the students. The cordial relations could, thus, be re-established.

The college authorities, principal and our teaching fraternity really looked after us as best as they could under the then prevailing conditions, exigencies and dynamics of politics. We were provided with a fleet of college buses for going to the town for shopping, seeing movies etc at nominal charges. Every week a movie was shown at the college premises, usually at rooftop of a completed building. If I am not wrong the first movie we watched snuggling together at the roof was the 'Moby Dick'- a Hollywood movie starring Gregory Peck on the role of captain Ahab. Comparatively good sports facilities were also made available. On completion of hostels, the rooms were promptly allotted, and a number of student mess to serve culinary delights suiting to the varied taste buds were made functional. We had the option to avail any mess of our choice on monthly basis. Even without chic furniture and stylish ambience, we all normally liked the gastronomic delights served.

An episode that transformed my skills of visualization, imagination and perceptual power and accuracy from

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mediocrity to superiority was happened suddenly on a Friday afternoon during the three-hour long Civil Engineering Drawing class. I was a sophomore. As new movies were released in local theatres on Fridays, it was a usual practice to wind up my drawing exercises just before 3.30 pm and skipped further class and jumped through the window playing hooky and ran to the college bus that would leave for town in a convoy by 4 pm. One day as I was about to get up and leave the hall, all of a sudden our Professor Bahaudin walked in and briskly moved towards me. He pulled a chair and sat in front of me with his customary affable smile on his face. I was quite surprised and worried about my friends waiting for me near the college bus with pre-reserved tickets for the movie. In my hurry to finish the assignment as quickly as possible, I was just copying either from the books or from my classmates around without understanding what it was. Confused and dazed on his sudden arrival I could not answer even his simple questions on the basics of engineering drawing like plan, elevation, sectional elevation etc etc. As against my anticipation of a furious scolding and reprimands from him, astonishingly he was calm and collected. He offered a glass of water and asked me to sit down and to take deep breath. Being consoled and comforted, I regained my composure and tried to respond to his queries and riddles as best as I could. Without batting an eyelid, cool and composed, as a big brother, he corrected me when I went wrong; he patiently cajoled and coaxed me to think hard and visualize how things will look in a horizontal plane when projected them



A Rare Click
Courtesy P.Madhavan(1961-1966)

from top to get its plan and similarly when projected them to a vertical plane from front to get elevation. Starting with a sharpened pencil he asked me to draw plan and elevation views of quite a number of assorted things available in the classrooms till I perfectly understood the concept well. Time flew. As I was deeply engrossed in rapt attention to his counseling and advices I lost all track of time and when the ses-

sion was finally terminated with a sermon to be attentive in the classes, it was 6 O'clock in the evening. Instead of feeling wearisome or dreariness, I was filled with a sensation of elation and unprecedented sense of containment. A newfound feeling of deep admiration and adoration for my teacher surged through me. The incident unfolded before me yet another noble dimension of his personal attributes; that is of a kind, altruist and benevolent heart behind a rough and tough exterior demeanor he normally maintained. I felt then, and feel even now, that such strong sense of concern for the student who battles or finds the subject difficult rather than for the student who finds the lessons easy or scores the highest grades is the top most quality a true teacher should possess. Patiently and persistently he strove to help me appreciate and even enjoy engineering drawing in subsequent class. Gradually I followed his instructions and nearly perfected the technique of productive visualization in due course that there was no problem later on even in dealing with more complex isometric projections, orthographic projections or section views and could score excellent marks. Years later, as a more worldly person, I realize what a gift he gave me. I extended his concepts of practical thinking and visualization to every convoluted issue I confronted in the later stage of life and the results were of far excellence and far reaching, often-bringing me laurels and accolades. I kneel in reverence and worship and salute you, Sir, for the reformation you brought in my way of lateral thinking and learning.

Recapturing some fond memories of our learning days in REC and the warmth of faculty members, the first face that popped up was, hold your breath! that of madam Ms Padmini Nair, our English teacher, in the first year. Many of you might have forgotten her. But her face with all smiles is deeply engraved in my mind, probably because of her great resemblance to my mother. She knew and taught the power, colors, precision, flights, nuances, music and delicacy that lay within the capabilities of English language. She unlocked the secrets of elegance in writing and speaking. She was one of my favorite REC teachers among several who remained vivid in my memory.

One of the spirited, young lecturers well liked by all was Mr. PS Moni. He taught us soil Mechanics. He accompanied us many a time during the academic tours and was never intrusive. He let you discover your own passions. He had the wonderful quality of patience. Yet he seemed to instinctively know when you had touched rock bottom and was there to help and pull you out of your despair. I still fondly remember some of his narration of funny incidents and jovial jokes that he effervescently cracked during the tours. Wit was never far from the surface when he was in the room and often emerged, producing laughter. His flights of fancy, always

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Courtesy P.Madhavan(1961-1966)

with a useful lesson, were frequent. Sir,

You shared what you loved, encouraged us to pursue what we loved, and, in the process, nurtured our self-esteem and self-expression. Hats off to you Sir!

In fact we had excellent faculty members, well-read academics with exceptional back ground experience. Under their tutelage, a breed of exceptionally industrious engineers with the distinctive stamp of REC Calicut was made available to the society. The college flourished to new heights and stature; finished products of engineers spread all through the length and breadth of the world permeating the fragrance of our alma mater all around the globe.

It is in no way a comprehensive narration of events in chronological order. It is just a casual anecdotal garner. The article contains unstructured collection of a very few of my reminiscence of those halcyon days of my life in REC, as it emanated one by one from the labyrinths of my cherished recollections. Looking back nostalgically stills of a number of hilarious, delightful and gratifying moments and scenes are surging up to find a place in these midget memoirs. College celebrations, music concert under Immanuel's debut music direction, Bashir's singing of old Hindi tunes in his rich melodious voice, Jose's amateur dramatics in a stellar role of an old man in the drama skit, animatedly fought friendly chess matches, roof top group studies and coconut plucking at the still of the night, rollicking episodes of comedy during the tours are a few moments high in the list of those fleeting frames.

Spurred by my jottings on the past days, those indelible moments of ecstasy from your own Page 31

experience would have now started to unfold before your eyes. It is time to leave you in the euphoria of reminiscing those moments of truth from your life and wrap up my scribbling open ended enabling you to extend it further with excerpts from your life experience at the college. Before I myself slipping in to the warmth and cozy comfort zone of my memory lane, let me sign off this slip-shod narrative with a big THANK YOU to all my friends, teachers and above all my alma mater for molding me from a precocious schoolboy into a more or less competent savant today.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS MY FRIENDBy A.Mukhya Prana Rao

The last time I visited REC Calicut for the first batch get – together, with my family, I was struck by the following notice on the notice board :“The hostel gates will be closed at 9 pm and no one will be allowed to enter after 9 pm “

I wondered why the notice wasn't there when we were studying; it then dawned on me that not only was there no gates, but also no compound walls and security back then. That was how it had started for us, way back in 1961 and today I am amazed to see the college campus and the NIT status of our college. As I proudly gaze at the college's infrastructure today, I can't help but reminisce about the good old days.

We never even had a college or hostel of our own. We had to share the Polytechnic facilities at west hill and later shifted to the college campus at Chatamangalam. In the first year we were the “unwelcome guests” at the polytechnic hostel , as each one was accommodated in a room already the 1960s and 70s.

As there were no fans in the room, we used to sleep in the verandah of the polytechnic hostel. There was one guy who always got up late every morning (after 8 am). Even the visits of the warden did not change this guy's timings. To get him out of the habit, one day at 6 am , we covered him fully with a white bed sheet and sprinkled flowers all over him; then started crying out loud “ AYYAYO MARICCHU “ . Imagine the shock he got when he got up!! That put an end to his getting up late and he also started sleeping inside the room..

Music is divine they say and our only source of music in the Polytechnic hostel was a dilapidated radio which functioned miraculously sans knobs, sans needle, sans back cover!!! We used to put our hands from the back and tune to radio Ceylon for good songs.

When we shifted to the college campus in Chatamangalam in the third year, it was as though we were shifting to a remote

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village surrounded by coconut plantations. We had an expert (Ramachandran - mechanical branch) in climbing coconut trees who used to pluck all the tender coconuts. The foundation stone of the main building (which did not come up during our tenure) was very useful in breaking the coconuts. Now every time I buy a coconut for Rs 15, my heart aches.

As there was no TV in those days, movies were the only source of entertainment. Apart from seeing some movies in a tent in Chatamangalam town and walking back 4 kms to the college after the night show, we also made best use of the college bus provided to go to "city" every Saturday afternoon. I still can't forget the day when Parthasarathy and I went for a matinee show followed by an evening show; but by the time the movie was over it was 9-30 pm and we just missed our college bus back to the campus. So instead of spending a lot of money for the taxi to Chathamangalam, we decided to see another movie (night show) and stayed in the dormitory of Arya Bhavan Hotel before returning to the college hostel on Sunday noon after seeing a morning show as well. Now when I crib to see a movie my wife sweetly reminds me of this incident and drags me mercilessly to see one.

We were accommodated in the "Heat Engines Lab" at Chatamangalam (as the hostels were not ready) which looked more like the general ward of a hospital. Every night there used to be an exchange of "CHASTE GALIS" in all languages after the lights were switched off. Looking at the positive side of it, we could learn other languages also apart from Malayalam. As there was no proper water supply, we used to get water in tankers to the hostel which was never sufficient. So we used to go to the nearby stream for a bath. It was nice fun crossing the stream by boat, jumping into the water midstream to swim to the other side. Being used to swimming pools, I found out how difficult it is to swim against the current.

Food was another problem for non-keralites as we were not used to boiled rice and coconut oil preparations. First time I went to Arya bhavan, I ordered dosa and to my surprise, I found out that it was prepared with coconut oil. I was educated to order "NAI ROAST" so that I could get dosa made with vanaspati instead of coconut oil. There was a poultry farm close to the college where we used to buy fresh eggs and take them to a small hotel at Kattang where he used to prepare omelettes for us.

April first of the first year after shifting to Chatamangalam was an unforgettable experience. The bathroom and toilet doors were only 6 ft in height (and not up to the ceiling) So one wise guy got up very early in the morning, bolted all the toilet doors from inside and got out from the top. People started forming queues in the morning as usual and after sometime, finding that there is "no movement of traffic" started shouting all kinds of "galis" in all languages. After sometime it was clear as to what had happened and it was a sight to see people climbing over the door to get in.

On another occasion (this was just after our first semester holidays) I remember being late for class. As I rushed to take my place in the class, I was almost crushed by the frantic exodus of the students followed closely by the lecturer at their heels. A snake had decided to give us all company, on that fateful day.

Normally there is a clash between engineering and medical college students, especially in games. It was no exception in Calicut, when we won the basketball game very narrowly against the medical college. The celebrations were to be seen to be believed; all of us parading the streets of Calicut with the trophy with drums and trumpets and dancing- as though we had conquered Mount Everest. We never had a tennis court in the college and we used to have friendly matches with other colleges in Calicut for practise; and with that kind of practice we won the championship in Calicut zone and went to Trivandrum for the finals.

We had our ups and downs and when I look back, it all comes back to me as an unforgettable period - 'the golden era of my life'. When I recall the wonderful five years we had at REC Calicut, I am reminded of the good old English song by Mary Hopkins which was very popular then.

"Those were the days my friend, we thought they would never end

We'd sing and dance forever end of day

We led the life we choose

We'd fight and never loose

Those were the days, oh yes those were the days

.....

Gallery



The Ones Who Left Us

	Employees Passed Away		
Name	Designation	Department	Date
Smt.O.Radha	Peon		24.02.2009
Dr.A.R Unni	Professor	Chemistry	05.02.2009
Dr.F.Gajendran	Professor	EED	06.02.2010
Sri.R.Velayudhan	Hospital	Nurse	23.05.2010