



USMAA NEWSLETTER

*The official newsletter of United Sri Lankan
Muslim Association of Australia
Vol III - 2019/2020 - June 2020*



KEEP CALM AND PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING

We hope you are taking adequate precautions during this COVID-19 crisis. Stay safe and do the right thing. In sha Allah we will overcome this.

WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION

Assalamu alaikum dear Brothers and Sisters,

Welcome to our third and final newsletter for the year 2019/2020. Unfortunately we were unable to issue one for the 3rd quarter for this financial year, but Alhamdulillah we are back on track again.

The Management Committee (MC) wishes to express their gratitude towards all members who have been showing a keen interest in the continuous improvement of USMAA and we look forward to your support in the new financial year as well.

What's in this issue?

Let's first take a look at the events during the past few months and then what's in-store in the new financial year. Afterwards we dive into some news and interesting topics. We have a fun competition with a prize up for grabs and wrap up with some final thoughts on the year that has gone by. Enjoy!

PAST EVENTS



ISLAMIC DAY COMPETITIONS (15 FEB 2020)

The Qirath, Speech and Essay competitions for kids was revived after a lapse of a few years and it turned out to be a tremendous hit. It was heart-warming to see the little ones commanding the stage. Masha Allah our future is in good hands. We had Bro Nuim Kaiyath as the Chief Guest for the event. Bro Farook Towfeek, Sheikh Abdulrahman Zyka (Former Imam of Lysterfield Mosque) and Sis Asma Azrin were kind enough to participate as judges for the competition. Awards were handed out by the Chief Guest and our Trustees.



More photographs are available on the USMAA website through the following [link](#). If you wish to purchase high-quality printed copies for a nominal fee, please let us know via email on info@usmaa.org.au. Jazakallah Bro Yusuf Zarani for your wonderful efforts in capturing the highlights of the event.



RAMADAN LECTURE (22 MAY 2020)

USMAA's very first online event was conducted this Ramadan in the form of a lecture by Dr. Zachariah Matthews on the topic "Self-reform: Managing Happiness with Ramadan." The event was held via a Zoom meeting and followed by a Q&A session. Dr. Matthews was extremely knowledgeable and eloquent. His message was a timely reminder for all of us. The event was well attended with over 40 connections and possibly at least double that number participating. Bro Imtiaz Mohamed and Bro Yusuf Zarani helped immensely in making the event a success.



Unfortunately, the COVID19 pandemic threw a spanner into our plans of hosting events such as Ladies Night, Janaza Sports Day, Ifthars, Eid Breakfast and Eid Dinner. The crisis is far from over and we need to remain patient. In sha Allah our regular events will be back on track before you know it.

UPCOMING EVENTS

USMAA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (25 JULY 2020)

As communicated via email, the USMAA AGM is around the corner and given the government restrictions in place, we are faced with a tough ask in having to organise the AGM via an online platform such as Zoom. It's going to be a challenge for both the MC as well as the audience. More details regarding the AGM will be circulated in due course in sha Allah.

Given that the COVID19 pandemic is still largely prevalent in Victoria, it is still quite unlikely that we will commence our regular events anytime soon. However, the MC is trying their best to work out possible events that can be held online, so as to keep the community engaged. In sha Allah when we receive the greenlight from the government, there will be more events to come. Keep an eye out for the email updates.



OTHER NEWS



HAVE YOU SEEN THE REVAMPED USMAA WEBSITE?

After several months of hard work, the USMAA website is now back online with a significant facelift. The site is now more mobile device friendly and new features will be added to it on an on-going basis.

Jump on the [website](#) and let us know what you think.

The website required significant time and effort to clean up, update and redesign. Our immense gratitude goes out to Bro Zafar Issadeen who was instrumental in the website upgrade project. He volunteered his time and efforts to carry out this project and he has indeed pulled a rabbit out of the hat. Special thanks also goes out to Bro Yusuf Zarani for his support in this project.

OTHER NEWS (CONTINUED)

RAMADAN APPEAL FUNDRAISER

USMAA partnered with Bridging Lanka to provide urgent aid to needy families in Mannar, Sri Lanka during Ramadan this year. Many USMAA members donated their fitra, sadaqah as well as zakat money to be channeled to this cause. Bridging Lanka worked with the Divisional Secretariat to identify the families that required urgent assistance especially since the on-going pandemic affected their livelihood. A majority of these families were led by widows and had differently abled children. May Allah reward everyone who participated in this meritorious act. More photographs of the aid distribution are available on the USMAA website.



COVID-19 ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

USMAA was quick to launch a COVID-19 Assistance Program to USMAA members and Sri Lankan students residing in Melbourne. USMAA members donated generously and we managed to collect a whopping \$2885. The USMAA Management Committee also donated an additional \$1500 towards this cause. We were able to provide urgent relief to a few families as well as many students. Jazakallah Khair to all those who took part and may Allah reward you for your actions.



VIC LANKA COVID-AID

USMAA participated in a multi-faith initiative to render assistance to needy Sri Lankans in Melbourne, especially students. A part of the donations received by members for the COVID-19 Assistance Program were directed through this initiative. In addition, USMAA also assisted the affected students by writing to their respective universities humbly requesting to defer the tuition fee or renegotiate terms with the said students. Sis Sithy Marikar played a vital role in this program and our gratitude goes out to her.



OTHER NEWS (CONTINUED)

BRO YUSUF ZARANI APPOINTED AS SECRETARY OF ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA (ICV)

We are pleased to mention that Bro Yusuf Zarani has been named the Secretary of ICV. We wish him the very best in his new role. USMAA is honoured to have two of its past presidents (Bro Ritzvi and Bro Yusuf) in the Executive Committee of ICV.

72ND SRI LANKAN INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS 2020

The Sri Lankan Consulate General's Office in Melbourne celebrated the 72nd anniversary of the Independence of Sri Lanka at the Box Hill Town Hall on Saturday 8th February 2020 with a colourful ceremony of cultural performances and other presentations. On invitation, USMAA also participated in the lighting of the oil lamp and delivered a welcome address to the audience which comprised of several distinguished dignitaries in Victoria. USMAA made a generous contribution of \$200 towards the souvenir by way of a quarter-page advertisement.

OPEN MOSQUE DAY

The ISOMER mosque in Lysterfield invited USMAA to host a table at the Open Mosque Day on Sunday 15th March 2020 to showcase the many different cultures that form the fabric of the mosque. The event was well-attended despite the impending COVID19 lockdown.

BRO NAZEEM HUSSAIN CROWNED AS MOOMBA KING

Moomba is held annually in Melbourne and it is Australia's largest free community festival. The Melbournian tradition is celebrated over four days, incorporating the Labour Day long weekend. Congratulations to Bro Nazeem Hussain who was crowned as Moomba King this year.

LETTERS TO PRESIDENT OF SRI LANKA AND VIC POLICE COMMISSIONER

USMAA, together with other Sri Lankan Muslim organisations in Australia issued a letter to the President of Sri Lanka requesting him to intervene in the matter of cremation of Muslims who had passed away as a result of COVID19. In addition, USMAA also issued a letter of condolence to the Victorian Police Commissioner following the tragic deaths of 4 officers while on duty. The Police Commissioner responded with kind words and thanked the Sri Lankan Muslim community for their support.

QURAN RECITATION WHATSAPP GROUP - SISTERS ONLY

A Quran recitation WhatsApp group was launched for sisters only to serve as a reminder to recite and reflect on the meaning of 5 Ayats a day which was posted daily by the group admin. Currently the group consists of approx. 20 members.

USMAA WHATSAPP GROUP

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, please join our USMAA Family WhatsApp group via the link below to stay up-to-date on the latest USMAA news.
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/BUdj6Fez11t1qo0Rmfi694>

Don't worry! Only the admins can post in it, so you won't get bombarded with any forwards.

OTHER NEWS (CONTINUED)

HOMELESS DRIVE DONATIONS

The Homeless Drive initiative has been going strong and our latest contribution came from the items donated by members during the Islamic Day event. Refer below the thoughts of young Talia and Zacky Shums who handed over the items.

"During the COVID-19 crisis, when all of the supermarket shelves were running low on essential food items, USMAA visited Cornerstone Contact Centre (CCC) once again to drop off the food rations that were collected at the last event, the Islamic Day celebrations.

The Homeless had been severely impacted during this pandemic and were desperately in need of assistance as there was a scarcity in finding sufficient provisions. CCC had moved to a different location in Dandenong causing a slight interruption to their services during this crucial time. At the time of our visit, several of the Homeless were already lining-up at the new CCC location to benefit from the generous donations to the Centre. COVID-19 had made the problem of Homelessness worse with the spike in the rate of unemployment.

Though USMAA's donation this time around was not as abundant, the volunteers at Cornerstone and the Homeless sincerely appreciated it. This was more so because the donation included some much-needed, in-demand items like long-life milk, tissues, cereal etc.

Jazakallah khair to everyone who donated!

Everyone looks a little awkward in the photo as we are trying to observe social distancing! 😊😊😊😊"

- Talia and Zacky Shums



FUN COMPETITIONS

FUNNY CAPTION

Caption the following image. What is our President thinking of when his son is delivering a speech? The winning caption will receive 2 free tickets to a future USMAA event of your choice in the upcoming financial year. Kindly email your captions to info@usmaa.org.au with the subject Funny Caption, along with your name and phone number.



PUZZLES TO SHARPEN YOUR MIND

Transportation

Find and circle all of the transportation words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters will reveal an additional method of transportation.

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C D E L S K T Y L E M A C M
V A N L C N A E G S K I S O
E H N U E C O A K O T E A T
W N R O H V I W E C D I B O
A T I T E R A S M A O G I R
H A R R R N C T L O O R C C
S O B A A A O B O N B Y Y Y
K B C M L M R G D R R I C C
C S K A T E B O A R D T L L
I A T E L B L U E W F N E E
R O J L L A L F S A P I H S
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| AIRPLANE | FERRY | RICKSHAW | SNOWMOBILE |
| BICYCLE | GONDOLA | ROCKET | SUBMARINE |
| BLIMP | HORSE | ROLLER BLADES | TRAIN |
| BOAT | JET | SCOOTER | TRAM |
| CAMEL | MOPED | SHIP | TRUCK |
| CANOE | MOTORCYCLE | SKATEBOARD | VAN |
| CARRIAGE | PARACHUTE | SKIS | WAGON |
| ELEVATOR | RAFT | SLED | YACHT |
| ESCALATOR | | | |

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FINAL THOUGHTS FOR THE YEAR

As the financial year draws to a close, we wrap up the time of the current Management Committee (MC). Our term started out with a bang and we managed to shake things up a bit with the USMAA 2.0 concept, the picnic in the North as well as reviving the Qirath & Speech competitions for the kids among other events. Unfortunately, the COVID19 pandemic cut short our plans to finish off the year in style. However, the online Ramadan lecture which was our first virtual event proved that our organisation can be resilient and adapt to the circumstances. As the MC, we thoroughly enjoyed our stint this year and my gratitude goes out to the team for the hard work and dedication put in. Some of the current MC members have decided to step down from their positions at the end of this financial year citing personal commitments. I wish them all the very best in their future endeavours.

As the MC, we rely heavily on the guidance of our elders and especially the 3 Trustees Sis Sithy, Bro Fahmi and Bro Eddie. They have been major pillars in our journey this year. In addition, we appreciate the work put in by them in our sub committees as well. A special mention should be made about all the members in the Janaza subcommittee and their selfless contribution to society. Bro Imtiaz and Bro Eddie have been the driving forces behind this subcommittee and words can't thank them enough for their continuous efforts.

This year we have been faced with a challenge unlike any other in our lifetimes. As we endure these tough times, we should realise and reflect on our priorities. The pandemic was an awakening to humankind as we had taken routine tasks for granted.

As we adjust to the new normal, we must be cautious over our thoughts and actions. We hope that one day soon in sha Allah, we can look back at this period and tell our future generations how we acted responsibly to overcome this crisis instead of turning this period into some of the darkest days in modern history.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to every one of you who have remained extremely patient and encouraged us during our tenure. We appreciate the constructive criticism as well. Our hope is that you continue to support the future MCs as well in order to make our beloved organisation something for all of us to cherish. In sha Allah we will be able to host our calendar of events soon. We sincerely wish everyone good health and may Allah shower His blessings upon you!

Jzk.

Rizan Abdeen (Editor)