



President's Message ▼

Friends,

Welcome to the first issue of MEANA Times our new venture with a mission to reach out to the members on a regular basis with articles and news of interest to all. As we make progress we will certainly refine and improve the quality and quantity of the content in this periodical. As always, your valued feedback with both suggestions and corrections are welcome. This is a team work.

It is also very interesting to note that MEANA is now completing 24 years since its inception. We have come a long way. The programs and activities that promoted and sustained the group is incredible. So many of you toiled and supported the activities generously all these years. We must celebrate the silver jubilee with that stride of pride.

As I write this we are preparing for the 2015 Annual Picnic. We made preparations for the event well in advance, such as making the reservation way back in January for the best Picnic spot in Chicagoland. I am always overwhelmed by the incredulous amount of passion some of the members expend for MEANA. The Annual Banquet is being organized on Saturday, October 24th. The Engineer of the Year (EOY) selection process has almost been finalized. The venue has been chosen. We look forward to that event to

get-together and honor ourselves for being the leaders and innovators of the society as Engineers, the builders of the future.

While we celebrate our successes, we also keep our hearts and efforts open to the less fortunate ones in our society through charity and other initiatives, especially the Scholarship program. We are continuing to actively pursue this good cause and count on your generous support to make use of this opportunity to help others. We also assist young engineers who migrate to North America with networking and general support in the role of a mentor.

As president of MEANA I am deeply honored to play my role in whatever little manner to serve the growth of our organization. The purpose is to provide a platform, an infrastructure to you the engineers to use, build and develop yourself and of course your family with like minded people who speak, listen and think technology.

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world." Mahatma Gandhi

With best regards
Sincerely

Abraham Joseph (Abuji), President



MEANA Men Go Fishing in Lake Michigan



On June 20th, twelve MEANA board members met in Waukegan and boarded two boats at 5:00 am. It was a bright, sunny day and the group had fun catching salmon and trout. Boat #1 with Captain Abuji won the competition for most number of fish; while, boat #2 with Captain Sabu won the biggest catch competition (pictured is Jose Thomas with his 18lb catch of the day).



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Why do IT departments continue to produce bad software products?

By Tony John



Imagine for a minute that you have some money and want to write a book. But you need help, so you go out and hire a team. You then give them a plot - something like a hero who fights bad guys, gets the girl, happy ending etc. You even take the time to write this down for them, and give each team member a title, objective etc. Say you make one of them the project manager with the objective of completing the story and publishing your book by a certain time. You make another one the lead editor, whose objective is to ensure use of proper English with correct grammar, spelling, etc. You then hire people to write the story based on what the editor tells them to write within the project manager's timeline. They will also have to write up status reports so you know how they're doing with the story and timeline on a daily basis.

This obviously will never be a story worth anything. Story writing is an intellectually intensive and creative process. No matter how good is your process or motivated is your team, it won't produce a worthy story unless it is infused with creativity.

It is my opinion, "people make the place" and why departments that are structured to be operational create bad software products. Today's IT departments are typically structured to be operational in nature. We have spent the last several years doing our best to get rid of creative capabilities in the name of productivity (inadvertently that is...). Many IT departments have eliminated terms such as "product" and "engineers" from their vocabulary.

Contrast this with companies that are known to create innovative products - they build products with their engineering teams. Organizations that recognize this will do everything to attract and retain creative people. They will attract engineers who know how to build products that stand out in the marketplace. They're the authors of your strategies and builders of your products. They don't rely on processes, but will tailor processes that will help build insanely great products. Relying on processes and vendors to create great products that will result in mediocrity at best.

Chef's Corner ▼

Grilling Salmon

By Jacob Ninan

Salmon is one of the best fish to Grill. It has great taste and color.

Marinate any fish for no more than 1 hour. The marinate acidity will destroy the fish texture, as the hours increase. A simple marinate for a ½ pound of Salmon.

(1) Lemon

1- table spoon of olive oil

Salt, pepper and thyme

Mix all the ingredients' above in a bowl or in a Ziploc bag. Add the fish and let it marinate in the fridge for 1 hour.

Grill both sides of the Salmon until the flesh flakes. Enjoy.



Dear Son,

Hope this letter finds you in the best of spirits and health.

You might be surprised to find an email from your mom. Something told me to write to you; that you need to hear from me today.

It was indeed one of the best evenings that your father and I spent when you visited us with your new wife yesterday. Rest assured, we liked her immensely. I could see that both of you are very much in love and that makes me happy. May your love grow every moment!

Now let me get to the reason for writing this letter. I don't know whether you remember, but during dinner, you cracked a joke about the shapeless rotis that Lavanya makes. We all laughed and your father laughed the loudest. There were tears of laughter in your father's eyes and there were tears in your wife's eyes too. I can assure you that her tears were not of mirth; they were tears of mortification, of shame brought about by the innocuous joke that you cracked.

I guess that joke was the reason why we heard raised voices coming from your room yesterday night and the reason why Lavanya appeared puffy eyed in the morning. Maybe she cried all night.

Son, I want to tell you something. I love shapeless rotis. They bring back many fond memories. They remind me of the shapeless rotis made by my father on certain Saturday mornings when my mother had extra duty at her office. They often lacked salt, were hard like rock and were shaped like various continents. But his love for us compensated for all that it lacked.

Shapeless rotis also bring memories of those days when your father turned into my cook. It was during those early days of pregnancy while I was carrying you. I couldn't bear the smell of spices or rice or anything cooking. Your father would churn out shapeless rotis and experimental curries, which tasted quite good because he wanted to provide home cooked food for his wife and unborn child. His care and affection made those rotis priceless.

Do you remember how you used to insist on helping me while I prepared rotis when you were around four years old? You would play with the dough and create various shapes that you wanted to be cooked and served to all. I can tell you, those were the tastiest rotis that I ever ate.

Words can create a world full of love. Yet, a thoughtless word is enough to destroy that world.

Lavanya and you are equally qualified; you both earn equally well too. You have both spent an equal number of years educating yourself to be the professionals that you are. But you expect Lavanya to become the perfect cook and homemaker from the moment you married her! How unreasonable is that?

Rahul, no new wife wants to be ridiculed in front of her in-laws. Trust me, I can tell you that. Been there, done that. She craves to be loved by them and she expects her husband's support in her effort at endearing herself to them.

Teething troubles in marriages are often capable of draining out the love you have for each other. Be there for her while she adapts herself to your world. A small token of appreciation and open support is all that she will need.

You are my beloved son and I know you have learned to see the brighter side of things. Value love more than any other thing because son, perfectly round rotis are often machine made. They lack the most essential ingredient; Love.

Wishing you a world of love,

Your loving mother.

(Obligated to Paddy for the original version)
. Paddy is A. Padmanabhan, B.Sc(Engineering) Trivandrum 1963.



All About a Kite

By Vaishali Subash

'KITE' is easy to write about in all its glory. It can fly high and low anytime on a windy day.

Happiness for you, it can bring,
When it really flies high.

Or it can make sadness wring
By flying from you far away.

That's what happened to me
On that treacherous day.

I was flying my kite, which my Grandpa brought
From Hilton Head Island where he went.

It flew high, and with much force of the wind,
Broke the thread fastened to my wrist.

It flew away and perched on a tree,
I went on trying to pull it free.

But the thread was on a breaking spree.
I and my Grandma kept trying in vain,

Much to my dismay and pain.
Our fun was blown by wind away,

On that much treacherous day.
Now in three places is my kite, half torn

and broken in flight.
The other half still might fly,

And I'm sad and want to cry.

Memory of Chacko Sir

By Ray Nair

My fellow Engineers,

I got this message from one of my classmates in April, and an explanation of what is happening. I was just thrilled to see our most respected Principal of our times, Prof. K. C. Chacko being honored in Ernakulam by so many eminent people. Memories rushed to my brain from long time ago, when I was in College of Engineering, Trivandrum.

Chacko Sir was only a professor there at that time. Dr. M. V. Kesava Rao was the principal. K.C.Chacko was also the warden of the college Hostel, which was a quadrangular building in the same campus as the college which was accommodated in the Post Master General's building in Palayam, Trivandrum. We were in the same building for two years, and in the new building at Kulathoor, which is about 10 KM north of Trivandrum City.

I was so thrilled to learn that I secured admission to the Engineering College a year before, after Pre_university class in S.D.College, Alleppey. My pre-professional course was in St. Berchman's college, Changanacherry. I clearly remember our Prof. K.S.Anthony there as a lecturer in Physics. I was only just about 16 years old, and it was the very first time that I moved away from home to stay in a hostel. It was a remarkable experience, all new place, environment and friends. It was difficult in the beginning, but I got used to it pretty quickly. The Alleppey- Changanacherry roads was being built with so many bridges over rivers and through buses were not plying for several years hence. We had to go through circuitous route from Changanacherry to Thiruvalla, Chengannur, Venmony, puliyoor, Mavelikkara, Harippad and onto Alleppey. The journey often took three hours one way.

After the pre – professional course, I was to be accommodated in the Engineering College hostel. Trivandrum is roughly a hundred miles away from home, and my parents were quite nervous to send me off to that faraway place, that also a busy and heavily populated place of all strangers .I felt fine, because of the experience that I had for one year being away from home, but was also a bit nervous.

The first day of college was coming fast. Two days before that day, I and my father set out on bus to Trivandrum. We searched with the local people and discovered Prof. K.C.Chacko's house and with permission and previous appointment , went to see him. He welcomed us and asked my father to take a seat. I was standing by politely, with humble face and expressions. My father explained to Chacko sir that his son is absolutely new to the place and please help him settle down and all that. Chacko sir said to come to the hostel that evening, when he would be there, and he will allocate a suitable room and roommates etc. We went to the hostel in the evening as told, and were easily accommodated as he mentioned. My father left and I was acclimatized by my seniors in ragging and dunking etc. that night itself. That is another story.

Next year K.C.Chacko sir became the principal upon retirement of Dr. Kesava Rao. Chacko sir did his best as a teacher, engineer, administrator, mentor and in all of his capacities helped the students to derive their full potential. All the students of those years will attest to that fact that Chacko sir was always everywhere to attend any and all activities including sports, debates, and all. WE loved our principal just like he loved us too.

In one of the engineering meetings at the University hall, which I and several other students attended, where there was only standing room, I clearly remember part of Chacko Sir's speech. It went on something like this ,” The doctor buries his mistake, the lawyer hangs his mistakes, and the engineer is buried in his mistakes”. These words reverberate in my ears all the time.

Socially Chacko sir was very active in his church and later on he was appointed as Chevalier , as can be seen from the announcement above. The memories of K.C. Chacko sir will be in my mind for many years to come, and will not fade away.



Just for Laughs...

By Jacob Ninan

Before Marriage

Guy: At Last. I can Hardly wait...

Girl: Do you want me to Leave..

Guy: I don't ever think about it...

Girl: Do you love Me..

Guy: Of course.. I Always have and always will.

Girl: Have you ever cheated on me..?

Guy: No. Why are you asking?

Girl: Will you kiss me?

Guy: Every Chance I get.

Girl: Will you hit me?

Guy: Hell No. Are you crazy?

Girl: Can I trust you?

Guy: Yes.

Girl: Darling..

After Marriage (Read the notes upward)

**Never laugh at your wife's choices.
You're one of them.**



Stock Talk

By Lalu Thachet

There are many different ways you can go about investing money. This includes putting money into stocks, bonds, mutual funds, real estate, or starting your own business. No matter which method you choose, the goal is to always put your money to work so it earns you a profit.

In this article I will discuss some general rules of investing in individual stocks. One important fact to emphasize is that investing in the stock market is not a get-rich-quick scheme which I learned the hard way. It took me two major stock market crashes (in 2000 and 2008) to learn this very point. Prior to both crashes I was invested in high risk, volatile stocks and leveraged with margin and it almost wiped out my portfolio. After 20 years of actively investing in the stock market I have learned a few things along the way, and I would like to share some rules that may help you in successful trading.

Rule 1: Diversify to Control Risk

Mix up enough different sectors in your portfolio and have some exposure to emerging markets which will help to minimize the downside risk. If you control the downside, the upside will take care of itself.

Rule 2: Buy Quality (Best-of Breed) Companies

Don't own too many volatile stocks. Investing in more expensive (top of the sector) companies is worth it because they are more stable.

Rule 3: Don't Buy All at Once

Never buy all at once. Never sell all at once. Stage your buys and try to get the best price over time.

Rule 4: Do Not Panic and Sell

When the stock get hammered, don't panic and sell. In fact, you may profit by buying more stocks at this time.

Rule 5: Take Profit

It's ok to take a profit, and stop fearing about taxes.

Rule 6: Know What You Own

Do some research on companies you invest.

Rule 7: Don't Own Low Dollar Stocks

Stay away from inexpensive stocks, there is a reason why they are cheap.

Rule 8: Don't Buy Stocks at their All-Time Highs

Wait for a pull back

Rule 9: Don't Own a Stock with a Dividend that is Twice That of Treasuries

The stock will crash if or when the company cannot sustain the high dividend payout

Rule 10: Don't Use Margin to Buy Stocks

Buying stocks using margin (borrowing from your investment broker) is dangerous in a down market, it can wipe out your account

I think there is lot of money to be made in stock market if you take your emotion out when you trade, and if you have some discipline. During the 20th century the stock market major indexes returned an average of 10.4% a year (including dividend distributions), and it has been at its best during the last 40 years. So, good luck and good trading!



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Upcoming Events

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

- September.....Onam
- October 11.....Finance Planning Workshop
- October 24.....Annual Banquet
- November.....Program for children
- December.....Christmas Party