

# FUN DAY TIMES



**Christmas at Wanathavilluwa**

Pic by Hiran Priyankara Jayasinghe

**Best Wishes  
for  
2021!**



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# New Year

## HISTORY CORNER

### Beginnings, passages and the New Year



For the Romans, New Year's Day was a very important date, but the most interesting fact is that originally the Roman year didn't start on January 1<sup>st</sup> but in March. This was mainly because March was the month dedicated to Mars, the Roman god of war, which was also believed to be the divine father of Romulus, the founder of Rome.

Due to extraordinary circumstances in wartime, in the year 153 B.C., the consul Quintus Fulvius Nobilior exceptionally moved New Year's Day to January 1<sup>st</sup> for the first time in history. However, it was Julius Caesar in 46 B.C., with his Julian Calendar, who permanently established the holiday on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

The beginning of the year was dedicated to a very peculiar Roman god: Janus. According to the mythology, Janus was the two-faced god of doors (in fact his name Janus comes from *ianua*, "door" in Latin), beginnings and passages: that is why the first month of the year, January, was named after him. On New Year's Day the Romans would go on a procession to the top of the Capitoline Hill, where the priests would sacrifice a white bull to ask protection from the gods for the new year. Moreover, the high priest, the Pontifex Maximus, would offer to Janus a pie made of flour, cereals, cheese, eggs and olive oil, to invoke the god's benevolence.

The people would then celebrate by feasting together and wearing something red, which was supposed to bring good luck, health and fertility.

## FUN QUOTE

*"We will open the book.  
Its pages are blank.  
We are going to put words  
on them ourselves.  
The book is called  
opportunity and its  
first chapter is  
New Year's Day."*



- Edith Lovejoy Pierce,  
poet.

## FUN FACTS

### New Year's Eve food traditions from around the world

#### Fact 1: Twelve grapes eaten on the 12 strokes of midnight, Spain:

If you don't manage to eat all the grapes then that's bad luck.

The flavour of the grapes is also a harbinger of fortune, with a sweet one predicting a good one and a sour a less-than-good one.



#### Fact 2: Tteokguk, South Korea:

Korean people consider themselves to grow older at New Year's rather than on their birthday. You can even discover how old a Korean person is by asking them how many tteokguk they have eaten. Made of broth, small disc-shaped rice cakes, meat and vegetables, tteokguk is believed to give eaters good luck for the year ahead.



#### Fact 3: Black-eyed peas, greens, pork and cornbread, Southern USA:

Beans or peas represent pennies, cooked greens such as collard or mustard greens represent folded money, and pork represents general prosperity as pigs root forward when searching for food through the earth. Cornbread also represents wealth due to its golden colour.

You're in for a bumper year if you eat this meal!







# An Award for the Courageous Boy

By Manoshi de Silva

Just as Tharitha stepped out of the hospital with his mother, he saw one of his classmates on the opposite side of the road. The other boy recognized Tharitha and stared at him. Tharitha's legs froze. He looked down and quickly pulled his mother towards the bus halt. "Now everyone will know..." he thought, feeling very upset.

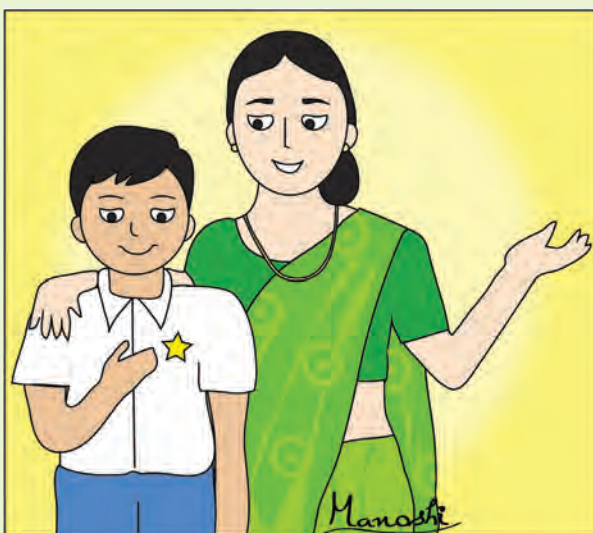
Tharitha's mother was not well. She was physically alright, but suffered from an illness that affected her mind. Tharitha lived alone with her and had to take her to the hospital twice a month to get her medicine. She was getting better; but it was not an easy experience for Tharitha.

Sometimes Tharitha's mother would behave differently and sometimes she would even forget simple things. It was difficult to watch this and also to concentrate on his school work. Tharitha somehow managed to keep up with his school work. But he kept his mother's illness a secret from everyone.

Tharitha was worried about how his friends would react, once they found out about this. He didn't want anyone to make fun of his mother's sickness or laugh at her. Tharitha intended to keep this a secret even once she fully recovered. But today one of his classmates had seen him walking out of the mental hospital with her. Tharitha wondered how he would react the next day at school.

Tharitha slowly walked into his class the next morning. Sharika, the boy who had seen him, was with a few of Tharitha's close friends. They all turned and looked at Tharitha at once. A couple of boys smirked at him, while the others stared at him. It was clear that Sharika had told them what he saw the day before.

Things changed rapidly from that day on. Tharitha was cornered by all his friends. No one talked with him or came near him. Everyone whispered whenever they saw him. Some called him names and made rude remarks about mental illnesses as if it was something to laugh about.



School intervals were the worst. Tharitha felt very lonely without anyone to talk to. The intervals that once seemed very short, now felt too long. Tharitha went to a corner and sat away from the others. He didn't feel embarrassed about his mother's condition, only a deep sense of sadness. She was all he had and he had promised that he'd do whatever he could to get her cured. Life was not easy for him and the way others at school treated him made it even worse. Tharitha hanged his head and started to cry.

A hand gently touched Tharitha's shoulders. He slowly lifted his head. It was his class teacher. "Tharitha, is everything okay?" The boy opened his mouth to say he was okay but only ended up sobbing louder. The teacher took him to an empty class and made him sit down. After he stopped crying, she asked him what was wrong.

Tharitha told his teacher about his mother's illness. About how worried he was as he had to leave her alone and come to school (although their neighbours looked after her then). "It's not easy for us, Miss. We live from the little money my uncle sends from abroad. It's not easy looking after a person with this kind of illness. In the midst of all this I have to struggle to balance my school work as well."

Tharitha looked down and said almost in a whisper, "my classmates have recently found out about this and now they make fun of me and my mother. No one even talks with me anymore. Sometimes all this is just too much to bear." The teacher looked at him with sympathy.

"It's very wrong of them to treat you that way, Tharitha. Mental illness is not something to make fun of or to laugh at. It can happen to anybody at anytime. Even the children who laugh at your mother today, can fall sick with a similar sickness tomorrow. They should realize this," said Tharitha's teacher.

"I wish they knew how difficult life is for me! Then they'd never laugh at a person with a mental illness or at someone who looks after such a person," said Tharitha wiping his tears. His teacher nodded her head in agreement.

The next morning the teacher entered the class holding up a badge which was a shiny gold star. She showed it to the whole class. Everyone got excited and stared at it curiously. "Today is a special day because I am awarding this 'badge of courage' to the most courageous student in our class!" she said. Everyone started to whisper in excitement. "Who could it be?"

"There's a student in this class who deserves everyone's respect because he is looking after his mother who is not well. She is suffering from an illness that affects the mind," she said staring around the classroom. "People who suffer from illnesses like that get laughed at and even their family members get ridiculed and cut off from society. And that is such a shameful thing to do!" Everyone looked down feeling ashamed. "No person should be laughed at because of a sickness. Anyone can fall sick at anytime and this could happen to you or me!"

The teacher held up the gold badge, "I award this gold star to the student who is carrying this big burden on his shoulders. While caring for his sick parent, he still scored the highest marks at the term test. It's none other than Tharitha! You're a shining star in this class, Putha."

Everyone clapped looking at Tharitha in admiration. The teacher pinned the badge on to his shirt and took out a small wrapped gift from her handbag and handed it to him.

From that day on Tharitha's classmate didn't treat him differently but gave him the respect that he truly deserved.





**Please send competition entries to:**

Funday Times  
C/O the Sunday Times  
P.O. Box 1136, Colombo.  
Or  
8, Hunupitiya Cross Road,  
Colombo 2.

**Please note that competition entries (except Reeves Art) are accepted by email.**

**Please write the name of the competition and the date clearly at the top of your entry and include the following details:**

Full Name (including Surname),  
Date of Birth, Address,  
Telephone No. and School.

Please underline the name most commonly used.

**All competition entries should be certified by a parent or guardian as your own work.**

Competition entries without the full details requested above, will be disqualified.

**Closing date for weekly competitions:**

**January 12, 2021**

**Telephone: 2479337/2479333**

**Email: fundaytimes1@gmail.com**



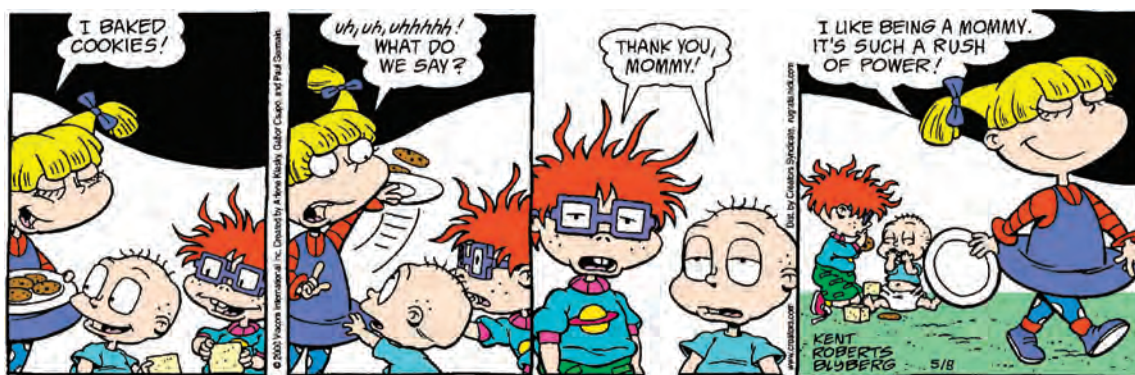
**Ranishkie Peiris**  
10 years on December 30



**Siyath Dissanayaka**  
11 years on December 22

Photographs of members and non-members between 4 – 15 years, for the birthday page, should reach us at least ten days before the birthday, along with a letter from a parent giving full details.

## Rugrats



## Tomahawk

## Quiz No.178

Questions for the Tomahawk Quiz No. 178 are based on articles appearing in the Funday Times of November 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2020. All you have to do is to find the answers to the questions given. Write the answers neatly on a postcard. Cut the strip 'Tomahawk Quiz No. 178' seen at the top of this page and paste it on your postcard. Please get your entries certified as your own work by a teacher or parent.

**Two lucky winners**  
will receive brand new  
**Tomahawk Mountain Bikes**  
with the compliments of  
**Tomahawk Bicycle Mall**

**All Funday Times readers between 8 – 15 years are eligible to participate.**

**(Those who have already won a bicycle are not eligible to participate.)**

**Closing Date: December 31, 2020**

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## QUESTIONS — Quiz No. 178

1. Name the current leader of the National League for Democracy in Myanmar.
2. Name five endangered animals.
3. Puttalam is well-known for many reasons. Name three.
4. What nationality was the famous footballer Diego Maradona?
5. Who was elected to become the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America?



Or



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