Interview with the District 51 Humorous Speech Contest Champion, Stephen Fernando

Bulletin 51: *Can you share with us briefly what was your speech "I am a Coward!" all about, i.e. the core message?*

Stephen: *The core message was that it takes all kinds of people to make the world and that includes cowards. Also, it is because of cowards that heroes are made possible. If there were no cowards, then there would be no heroes!*

Bulletin 51: *What inspired you to come out with this speech?*

Stephen: *I was faced with a snatch theft situation. My friend ran to help but I ran the opposite way!*

Bulletin 51: *How did you prepare yourself for the speech contest? Any special tips that you would like to share?*

Stephen: *My preparation was done by having a rough script and adding on materials every now and then while practicing. Tips to share: start by having either a title or a message, and then work towards a full speech. In 'I AM A COWARD!', I had a message, and with that, I built upon the materials and formatted the opening, body and closing. Number of times to rehearse...300 times with full speech!*

Bulletin 51: *What is your advice for those members who are aspiring to be a champion in the Humorous Speech Contest in future?*

Stephen: *My humble advice is to start participating and improve as one goes along. It takes time but it is worth it. I first participated in the District Humorous Speech Contest in 2001 in Kuching, and was not placed. In 2002, I participated in Singapore and was placed second. In 2003, I lost out to a better speaker in the Division Contest. Then, in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008 and 2011, I won the District Contest. What is significant for me is the times when I was not placed or did not win the Championship, but still gathered knowledge and experience from those contests!*

Stephen Fernando, second from left, holding aloft his winner's trophy.