

Insight

St. Vincent & the Grenadines Association of Toronto Incorporated Quarterly Newsletter

January 2004

A Look at the Past Year

As we start the Leap Year 2004 I wish to extend a healthy, enjoyable and productive year to all members of the Association and to those readers who follow the progress of the Association.

I use this month's column to review the events held during the past year and to make my own observations now that the life of this executive is at its end. The executive retires at the Annual General Meeting held on the last Sunday of January in each year. I invite you to attend this year's meeting on January 25 at Northwood Community Centre, 15 Clubhouse Court, Toronto.

The year started with the election of the executive at the AGM comprising: Elma Gabriel (Vice President); Marcia Farrell (Executive Secretary); Petra Hutchinson (General Secretary); Elaina Lewis (Treasurer); Dennis Bucchan (Assistant Treasurer); Ricardo Francis (Public Relations Officer) and myself, Gideon Exeter as President. Later, we appointed Cordel Telfer and Chester Searles as chairpersons of the Relief Committee and the Seniors Committee respectively. The Immediate Past President, Ken Farrell completed the slate.

Our term started with great promise. We all felt that we elected an executive of talented individuals who were committed to advancing the cause of the SVG Association in the community in which we live. Committees are usually established to assist the executive in carrying out the functions within the Association but unfortunately, our committees did not function to their potential during this term.

We lost the services of the year the Treasurer early and Dennis Bucchan, the Assistant Treasurer performed this role despite his heavy out of country travel schedule. The failure of some executive members to fully perform their duties made it impossible for us to implement a number of our plans for the year. One of the areas that continue to cause concern is the unnecessary delay in wrapping up our functions and accounting for all proceeds and presenting final reports. Until we are able to overcome this there will be continued distrust of our leaders which will hinder our progress. Despite having a record number of financial members this year we were unable to attract them to attend meetings. Without quorums at scheduled meetings it makes it difficult for the executive to function effectively.

A summary of the events held include the Membership Appreciation and Membership Drive held on Easter Sunday; the Annual Mothers' Day Dinner; the local Family Picnic in Brampton; the joint Unity Picnic held in conjunction with our sister associations in Montreal and Ottawa; the Walk-a-thon; St.

Vincent and the Grenadines Independence anniversary celebrations; the Children's Christmas Party & Youth Recognition and Christmas Hamper Program.

Very early in our term we produced, "Our Way Onwards", a document that outlined a number of matters we felt needed action and we agreed to work towards realizing them. Some were not realized during the year, so I would encourage the new executive to attempt among other things to undertake establishing a post-secondary scholarship for our young people, encourage Vincentians abroad to adopt/sponsor children in SVG, and build relationships with the many overseas Vincentian organizations, here and worldwide.

The timely publishing of *Insight* and regular updating of our website, www.vincytoronto.com allowed us to reach out to our members and supporters here in Toronto and around the world. Although this was not within her portfolio, our Vice President, Elma Gabriel undertook to liaise with the webmaster the necessary information for the website's updating. Both the newsletter and website can serve to bring some well needed advertising revenue to the Association to cover their costs. They also serve to keep our community informed of useful information. We ask those of you with email addresses to provide them to us so that we can circulate *Insight* electronically and reduce our mailing costs.

It will serve the Association well if the Membership Appreciation & Drive becomes an annual affair. This function could be used to show appreciation for the contribution of members and at the same time recruit new members. The picnic at 1000 Islands has become a "must attend event". This year's attendance far surpassed our expectation. Our annual Mothers' Day Dinner and Independence Anniversary events were not as well attended as in previous years but those who attended enjoyed themselves. During our independence celebrations the Association recognized the contributions made by Alfred Compton over the years by making him an Honorary Life Member and Elvin Pompey received the Dr. Allan Liverpool Award for community service. A complete summary of the activities will be produced for the annual report to be distributed at the Annual General Meeting.

Our sincere thanks to all who supported the Association in 2003 and past years especially the businesses that regularly advertised with us. We look forward to your continued support.

With all good wishes to the new leadership team for 2004.

Gideon L. Exeter, *President*

ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS TO VINCENTIANS

Our sincere thanks to those companies that have provided assistance to this publication by advertising with us again. Please support them.

To place your Ad, please email us at svgatoronto@vincytoronto.com, or contact any member of the Executive.

Meetings and Contacting Us

The Association meets on the last Sunday of each month at Northwood Community Centre, 15 Clubhouse Court, (Keele & Sheppard area) North York from 4:00 p.m. Business meetings are held in January, April, July and October. The other Sundays are used for educational discussions and social events. One can get in touch with the Executive either by writing to P.O. Box 392, Station F, Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 2L8, e-mail at svgatoronto@vincytoronto.com, or phone at (416) 763-9889.

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Make a contribution to the Association

You can now donate to any of the following, the Relief Fund, the Scholarship Fund, the Children's Christmas Party, the Christmas Hamper to Families In Need and/or to General Operating Funds.

Association Sub-Committees

Apart from the members elected as Executive Members a number of sub-committees are formed to assist with the work of the Association. We invite you to volunteer on one of these committees by contacting any member of the Executive. The standing committees are as follow: -

Education & Culture -
Sports & Recreation -
Finance -
Fund Raising &
Entertainment -
Seniors Enrichment -
Relief -
Public Relations -
Youth -

Remembering Alfie Roberts

The first 'small islander' to represent West Indies, Alphonso Theodore Roberts died in Montreal of gall-bladder cancer on July 24, 1997, aged 59. An innings of 74 for the Combined Islands against Trinidad in March 1955 brought the young man from St. Vincent to prominence, and at 19 he was selected for the following winter's tour of New Zealand. His solitary cap came at Auckland, where he made 28 and 0 in the match which saw NZ record their first Test victory after 26 years of trying. After the tour, on which he made only 137 runs, he moved to Trinidad, where he encountered criticism from some who objected to his selection ahead of local-born players. He soon returned to St. Vincent, leaving former West Indian captain Jeff Stollmeyer lamenting that 'Trinidad was the great loser for missing such a great talent and yet so young'.

Alfie Roberts immigrated to Canada to study in 1962. After university he worked in Montreal for many years until he retired in 1993. I had the great pleasure of batting with him in the only game he ever played in Canada, for Mount Royal against a touring New York team in 1966. He had to be talked into playing – he hadn't touched a bat for four years – but then made a marvelous fifty. He obviously enjoyed himself, but when asked to turn out again, said: 'No – I will never play cricket again.'

And he did not – although he maintained a keen interest in international cricket until the end. Another of his passions was jazz music, and he was a close friend of Everton Weekes, another jazz-lover, whom he met on that New Zealand tour.

Courtesy of Wisden Almanack 1997, Alan Weedy.

Editorial note: *Alfie Roberts was an active member of our sister association, St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Montreal up to the time of his passing.*



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Serving SVGAT Community of Toronto for 2003

Today, I take this opportunity to talk to my Community, our Community of St. Vincent and the Grenadines of Toronto. Greetings to all fellow SVG patriots and thanks for the blessings bestowed on each of us from the Almighty God.

In the last year I have had the opportunity to serve as the Vice President on the Executive Committee of the St. Vincent & the Grenadines Association of Toronto. Thanks to you all for giving me this opportunity- It was time well spent. I achieved as much as I was allowed to achieve and what was destined for me to achieve. It allowed those I worked with closely, to know me a little more and created more awareness of my competence and capabilities.

Ladies and Gentlemen I have no regrets, I have done what I was elected to do - to be honest, direct, stand up for my beliefs, speak out on behalf of the SVG community, and most of all kept the other Executive members busy with e-mails, pleased or displeased, read or deleted. Vincy Toronto Unity, Honesty and Integrity are my goals and this is only the beginning. Our Children's Legacy is our responsibility. Each of us is an individual and it is our privilege to have our opinions. The most important is that we are consistent and never lose sight of our goals or objectives as they relate to our Community. We are there to serve, not for our own glory or fame but unconditionally for our SVGAT community.

The objective of accepting a community position is not to quit, but at the same time it is an injustice to your community when one accepts a position and does nothing, holding that position hostage while flashing the title for his/her own personal glory. This in itself is a sin in the eyes of the God we serve and an exploitation to your community and country. In addition, the practise of undermining is a form of deception and only leads to stagnation of progress.

Election is near (January 25th, 2004). I would like at this point to thank all those who have supported me during 2003, and have gained and developed through it all. My colleagues have grown also. My 2003 experience in serving SVGAT is like a debutant year and I hope to be around for many years to come with God's will. I have done as much as I was allowed to do in the best way I was capable of doing it under the then circumstances. I have served my Community with a heart full of Love, sometimes impatient but true, with honesty, integrity and exhibited patriotism to my Country. Thank you for 2003 and I look forward to the New Year.

We are of many Islands but one – ***ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES, TORONTO.***

Say

Vincy

&

Then

Greet one-another

Together Now-Together always.

Elma Gabriel, VP, St. Vincent & the Grenadines Association of Toronto.

Greetings from Adonal Foyle

Happy New Year to all my dear friends. May this year unleash all you possibilities and hidden truths. I hope and pray for my return to the courts on the 10th of January. I spent Christmas and New Year with my family and it was a blast. Thank you all for the love and support you all have given me throughout the past year and look forward with great hope for some more love. Take care of yourselves and remember to love yourselves throughout the coming year.

Love, Adonal

**The Relief Committee of
St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Association of Toronto Inc.**

presents

A Valentine's Charity Ball
under the patronage of
Consul General E. Bernard John

***Saturday, February 14, 2004
8:00 p.m.***

Crystal Fountain Banquet Hall
60 McDowall Road
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Admission: \$55.00

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**NOTICE
OF
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**ST. VINCENT AND THE
GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF
TORONTO INC.**

Sunday, January 25, 2004 @ 4:00 p.m.

Northwood Community Centre
15 Clubhouse Court, (Keele & Sheppard area)
to

Review the activities of the
Association for the previous year
and

Elect a new Leadership Team
(Executive) for 2004.

ALL ARE INVITED TO ATTEND

The Annual General Meeting

(A Personal Opinion)

The Association's constitution has served us well over the years. As far as I am aware the original constitution is still in place despite several attempts to amend it. A few years ago during discussions to revise it one of our members praised the authors of that document by stating that the authors made it a point to make all of us remember when our meetings are held by designating the last Sunday of each month as the day for the monthly general meeting. As a result, for anyone who has been involved with the Association for any period of time there is no excuse for not knowing when meetings are held. The constitution also dictates that the Annual General Meeting is held on the last Sunday of January in each year.

The Annual General Meeting is held to review the activities of the Association for the previous year and to elect a new executive for the year. Many of us have raised concerns about the life of the Executive and suggest that it should be extended for at least two years. While there is good argument for that suggestion it is also felt that since the constitution provides for incumbents to be eligible for re-election, if one served well in the previous executive and wishes to continue he/she should have no problem being returned by the membership. On the other hand, some quite rightly feel that due to the performance of some of us on the executive a year is too long.

As we prepare for the 2004 AGM I would like to recommend a number of things to those who may be attending. Firstly, I would like to encourage all members be they financial or not to attempt to get a copy of the Association's constitution. To get an electronic copy of the constitution please email request to

president@vincytoronto.com or it is available from all executive members. I further invite you to attend and participate in strengthening the Association by making recommendations that you feel would serve our community well, making yourself available to be part of the leadership team and participate in electing a strong and vibrant group of individuals as the Executive. The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto is recognized as the representative organization of Vincentians in the area. It is important to note that its membership is open to all residents of Ontario whether you are Vincentian or not. The Association also recognizes other groups and organizations that are comprised of Vincentians that organize projects and events to strengthen and promote our community here and contribute to the welfare of our homeland.

One's decision to run for office should be to further the aims and objectives of the Association and assist in building our community. (S)He should be prepared to be a team member and not being there to promote him/herself or to stand in the way of those who want to meaningfully contribute. I recommend that should you get elected and during the year you feel that you cannot function along with other elected members and it appears that it is not possible to resolve things that you should step aside rather than hindering.

Listed here is my attempt at the paraphrasing of the descriptions of positions that will be available for election. I feel that some of us are unaware of what we are getting into before the elections and we should acquaint ourselves accordingly.

PRESIDENT - The Chief Executive Officer who as such shall be responsible to the membership for the conduct of all the affairs of the Association. In this capacity, he/she shall be ex-officio a member of all committees and sub-committees. This officer liaises with all committee chairs and all other executive members to ensure that the Association's work is being done. The President should be aware of all correspondence going out from the secretariat and coming to the Association as well as the contents of all information being disseminated to the public.

VICE PRESIDENT - This officer is empowered to act for the President if and when so designated by the President and if for any reason the President is unable to fulfill the duties of the office. As a senior executive member, this officer is close to the President and should be kept abreast with situations that affect the work of the Association.

SECRETARIES - There are two secretaries, a General Secretary and an Executive Secretary. These two officers shall support and compliment each other and deputize for each other in the event of an absence.

GENERAL SECRETARY - This officer is responsible for keeping the minutes of all meetings of the Association.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY - The Executive Secretary shall with the President, deal with correspondence as directed, should with the President prepare the agenda and convene meetings of the Association by notifying members accordingly.

TREASURER - The Treasurer is the Chief Financial Officer and shall be the chairperson of the Finance Committee. He/she shall with the President sign all the financial documents on behalf of the Association. The Treasurer keeps the membership informed of the financial status of the Association by providing statements at Executive and General Meetings and should inform the Executive Secretary of delinquent members.

ASSISTANT TREASURER - This officer assists the Treasurer in carrying out the duties of the office and will assume the duty of the Treasurer should the Treasurer be incapacitated. He/She shall be a member of the Building Committee, keep an up to date inventory of all assets owned by the Association and shall report on the inventory to the Executive and advise us on any required replacements.

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER - The PRO works closely with all Executive Members and Committee Chairpersons so that he/she can properly publicize the activities and events of the Association. Since our newsletter and the website serve to promote our activities to the general public the PRO is responsible for the accurate dissemination of all information in these areas. The PRO heads the Public Relations Committee.

There are several Standing Committees appointed by the Executive Committee as early as possible after the Annual General Meeting. It is customary that the chairpersons of these committees who are not elected members be appointed as Nominated Members on the Executive.

I trust that this serves to help us as we prepare for the AGM on Sunday, January 25, 2004.

Gideon Exeter

(The above are the views of the writer and not a statement from the Association).

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Help a child in your homeland to a brighter future.

An old saying reminds us that children are the future of every country. Each of us can help to build the future of St. Vincent and the Grenadines by helping the children. As little as Cdn\$1.00/day per month will give at least EC\$5.00 per month. This small amount can help to keep a young child in school and contribute to his or her development in the community. If you are interested in learning how you can go about sponsoring a child in St. Vincent, how to get such a child and how to ensure that your sponsor money is used for the development of that child, please enquire in confidence by writing to the Association either through regular mail or e-mail. You can also contact any member of the Executive.

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Want to get news and views on SVG matters on the web?

Here are some links and sites to view: -

www.nbcsvg.com

www.vincy.com

www.svgtourism.com

www.cananews.com

www.scubasvg.com

www.svgbc.com

www.windiescricket.com

www.svgottawa.com

www.embsvg.com

www.visitsvg.com

www.svg.8m.net

www.freenet.hamilton.on.ca

www.tonyoldies.homestead.com

www.vincytoronto.com

www.caribbeannetnews.com

www.crc.vc

www.svgconsulate.org

TORONTO CONSULATE OFFICE

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Consul General: Mr. E. Bernard John

website: www.svgconsulate.org

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The Office of the Consulate General in Toronto is here to attend to the needs of Vincentians. It also strives at strengthening its ties with organizations looking to do business in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

www.svgconsulate.org functions as an effective tool in assisting us to reach our goals. Visit our website.

Obituaries

Quite a number of our friends and relatives of our community have passed to the great beyond since our last publication. At the time of going to press, we have been unable to get a complete list and for the fear of unintentionally omitting anyone, we would like to state that the Executive and Members of the Association take this opportunity to express sincere condolences to all who have lost their loved ones.

The Executive is looking to reach out to Vincentian groups around the world as we feel that from time to time we may be able to work together on matters of mutual interest and on projects designed to benefit St. Vincent and the Grenadines. If you know of any of these groups in Canada, the United States or elsewhere, kindly ask them to contact us.

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Immigration News

The Permanent Residents Card

Citizenship and Immigration Canada began issuing the PRC (Permanent Residents Card) to new permanent residents of Canada as part of the immigration process. As of December 31, 2003, the card is mandatory for all permanent residents to re-enter Canada by airplane, boat, train or bus and must be shown to the carrier personnel before they are allowed to board in order to show their permanent status in Canada. This card is not applicable to Canadian Citizens as they are expected to have a Canadian passport in order to travel. This card replaces the IMM 1000 document used in the past.

In order to apply for the PRC, one must have a valid passport as this is also required for you to travel internationally. Applying early is recommended since it could take up to 12 weeks to process an application. If you are a permanent resident of Canada and are out of the country as of December 31, 2003, you should get in touch with the nearest Canadian Visa Office and apply.

According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada the PR card was introduced to:

- to increase border security;
- to improve the integrity of the immigration process; and
- to provide holders with secure proof of their permanent residence status when re-entering Canada on a commercial carrier (plane, train, boat, and bus).

The card helps ensure that Canada has the tools it needs to protect against the fraudulent use of its immigration documents.

To avoid possible travel delays and additional costs, we recommend that permanent residents obtain a PR Card **before** traveling overseas.

Permanent residents, **who do not** have a PRC, who are overseas **on** or **after** December 31, 2003, and who will be returning to Canada by commercial carrier (airplane, train, boat or bus) will need to obtain a [Travel Document](#). Note that a Travel Document is available for one-time use only, at a cost of \$50.

You should apply for a Travel Document no earlier than six months before the date you expect to return to Canada.

Permanent residents may apply for a Travel Document while they are overseas only. You cannot apply for a Travel Document from within Canada.

A Travel Document is not intended to replace the PR Card.

For more information about immigration, please visit the CIC website at "www.cic.gc.ca/english".

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Going Bananas?

As we start a New Year when many of us make resolutions that most of us never keep, you may want to make one resolution which if you keep can do you a WHOLE LOT OF GOOD. After reading THIS, you'll NEVER look at the BANANA in the same way again!!

Doctors - Home Remedy

If you want a quick fix for flagging energy levels there's no better snack than a banana. Containing three natural sugars - sucrose, fructose and glucose - combined with fiber a banana gives an instant, sustained and substantial boost of energy. Research has proven that just two bananas provide enough energy for a strenuous 90 minute workout.

No wonder the banana is the number one fruit with the world's leading athletes. But energy isn't the only way a banana can help us keep fit. It can also help overcome or prevent a substantial number of illnesses and conditions making it a must to add to our daily diet.

Depression: According to a recent survey undertaken by MIND amongst people suffering from depression, many felt much better after eating a banana. This is because bananas contain tryptophan, a type of protein that the body converts into serotonin known to make you relax, improve your mood and generally make you feel happier.

PMS: Forget the pills - eat a banana. The vitamin B6 it contains regulates blood glucose levels, which can affect your mood.

Anemia: High in iron, bananas can stimulate the production of hemoglobin in the blood and so helps in cases of anemia.

Blood Pressure: This unique tropical fruit is extremely high in potassium yet low in salt making it the perfect to beat blood pressure. So much so, the US Food and Drug Administration has just allowed the banana industry to make official claims for the fruit's ability to reduce the risk of blood pressure and stroke.

Brain Power: 200 students at a Twickenham (Middles) school were helped through their exams this year by eating bananas at breakfast, break and lunch in a bid to boost their brain power. Research has shown that the potassium packed fruit can assist learning by making pupils more alert.

Constipation: High in fiber, including bananas in the diet can help restore normal bowel action, helping to overcome the problem without resorting to laxatives.

Hangovers: One of the quickest ways of curing a hangover is to make a banana milk shake, sweetened with honey. The banana calms the stomach and, with the help of the honey, builds up depleted blood sugar levels, while the milk soothes and rehydrates your system.

Heart Burn: Bananas have a natural antacid effect in the body so if you suffer from heart burn, try eating a banana for soothing relief.

Morning Sickness: Snacking on bananas between meals helps to keep blood sugar levels up and avoid morning sickness.

Mosquito Bites: Before reaching for the insect bite cream, try rubbing the affected area with the inside of a banana skin. Many people find it amazingly successful at reducing swelling and irritation.

Nerves: Bananas are high in B vitamins that help calm the nervous system.

Overweight and at work? Studies at the Institute of Psychology in Austria found pressure at work leads to gorging on comfort food like chocolate and crisps. Looking at 5,000 hospital patients, researchers found the most obese were more likely to be in high-pressure jobs. The report concluded that, to avoid panic induced food cravings, we need to control our blood sugar levels by snacking on high carbohydrate foods every two hours to keep levels steady.

Ulcers: The banana is used as the dietary food against intestinal disorders because of its soft texture and smoothness. It is the only raw fruit that can be eaten without distress in over chronicler cases. It also neutralizes over acidity and reduces irritation by coating the lining of the stomach.

Temperature Control: Many other cultures see bananas as a 'cooling' fruit that can lower both the physical and emotional temperature of expectant mothers. In Thailand, for example, pregnant women eat bananas to ensure their baby is born with a cool temperature.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD): Bananas can help SAD sufferers because they contain the natural mood enhancer, tryptophan.

Smoking: Bananas can also help people trying to give up smoking. The B6, B12 they contain, as well as the potassium and magnesium found in them, help the body recover from the effects of nicotine withdrawal.

Stress: Potassium is a vital mineral, which helps normalize the heartbeat, sends oxygen to the brain and regulates your body's water balance. When we are stressed, our metabolic rate rises, there by reducing our potassium levels. These can be rebalanced with the help of a high potassium banana snack.

Strokes: According to research in 'The New England Journal of Medicine' eating bananas as part of a regular diet can cut the risk of death by strokes by as much as 40%!

Warts: Those keen on natural alternatives swear that, if you want to kill off a wart, take a piece of banana skin and place it on the wart, with the yellow side out. Carefully hold the skin in place with a plaster or surgical tape!

So you see a banana really is a natural remedy for many ills. When you compare it to an apple, it has four times the protein, twice the carbohydrate, three times the phosphorus, five times the vitamin A and iron, and twice the other vitamins and

minerals. It is also rich in potassium and is one of the best value foods around. So maybe its time to change that well known phrase so that we say, "A Banana a day keeps the doctor away!"

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New Year Message 2004 from the Diaspora.

By Joel G. Toney

Fellow Vincentians:

Christmas has come and gone and as we usher in the New Year, it is an honor and pleasure for me to join our many friends in these celebrations. Let these celebrations represent a beginning of a new attitude towards unity and cooperation among Vincentians at home and in the Diaspora as we pray for World Peace.

As we go about our daily lives we need to take time to remember the needy in our adopted communities and those we

left at home in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and to contribute something to make their lives more pleasant and meaningful.

As immigrants, it is incumbent upon all of us to become citizens and to exercise the right to vote. It is our vote, more than any thing else which results in good services to our communities.

It is the duty of our leaders to keep Vincentian nationals abroad informed and involved in what is taking place at home. Vincentians in the Diaspora should be seen as an integral part of the development of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Many economists attribute a large part of the growth of the economy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the remittances we send home. The building construction boom in SVG is largely attributed to Vincentians residing in the United Kingdom, the USA, Canada and other countries.

Vincentian overseas demand a Jet airport in St. Vincent. We are tired of the missing luggage situation that arises with the airlines every time we return home in numbers. We have heard the promises. We understand that there are problems. It is time for action. Let us therefore build a safe jet port once and for all in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

I salute those Vincentians who have joined the many voluntary organizations to promote Vincentian interest and culture wherever they live. I encourage each and every Vincentian to become members of an organization of their choice and to help build a better St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

There are practical measures that each of us can take to help with the development of our homeland:

1. Keep the remittances flowing to Hairouna, "Home of the Blessed". Even after our entire families have migrated, and our parents and grand parents have gone to the Great Beyond, we can still find a needy friend or relative, a youth or sports club, a school, a community group or institution that we can continue to support.

2. Become Ambassadors for our homeland. Promote St. Vincent and the Grenadines as one of the best tourist destinations for foreign visitors or returning Vincentians. It is a fact that returning Vincentians on the average spend more at home than the average visitor from the Tourist Boat. We can help travel agents around the world to become familiar with St. Vincent and the Grenadines and encourage them to send more visitors there. Plan a visit for your Church Group, Work Group or Club to the land where you or your parents were born. Let visitors see the beautiful black sand beaches of St. Vincent and white sand beaches of the Grenadines. Let them enjoy the botanical gardens at Kingstown, the oldest botanical gardens in the western hemisphere. Tell your friends about unique Vincentian culture such as "Vincy Mas" Carnival in July and "Nine Mornings" in December.

We as Vincentians must endeavor to keep the lamp of democracy burning. We should not remain silent at injustice. Criticism of bad policies should not be seen as disloyalty. We must speak out against any intrusion on our rights, and carry on the legacy of those who have preceded us like Joseph Chatoyer,

George McIntosh, Ebenezer Joshua, Milton Cato and others who so bravely fought and died.

I conclude with the following prayer. Thank You God for Your blessings on Vincentians at home and abroad and for preserving our great nation. Guide our leaders, and give them wisdom to become good stewards of the land, and servants of the people.

Happy New Year.

Joel. G Toney Jtoney466@aol.com

\$

THANK YOU

Members of the Relief Committee would like to thank all those who participated in or supported the Walk-a-thon last September. Just over \$600 was raised which will be sent to The House of Hope, an organization in St. Vincent with the goal of building a hospice for victims of HIV/AIDS.

\$

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Tentative Calendar of Events

EVENT	DATE	VENUE
Annual General Meeting	January 25, 2004	Northwood Community Centre
Valentine's Relief Ball	February 14, 2004	Crystal Fountain Banquet Hall
Monthly General Meeting	February 29, 2004	Northwood Community Centre
Membership Appreciation	TBD	TBD
Monthly General Meeting	March 28, 2004	Northwood Community Centre
Spring Games Evening	April 10, 2004	TBD
Monthly General Meeting	April 25, 2004	Northwood Community Centre
Mothers' Day Dinner	May 9, 2004	Northwood Community Centre
Monthly General Meeting	May 30, 2004	Northwood Community Centre
Cricket Team in Montreal	June 25, 27, 2004	Montreal
Monthly General Meeting	June 27, 2004	Northwood Community Centre
Canada Day Picnic	July 1, 2004	Brampton
Vincy Unity Picnic	July 17, 2004	Brown's Bay Park, 1000 Islands
Monthly General Meeting	July 25, 2004	Northwood Community Centre
Summer Games Evening	August 7, 2004	TBD
Monthly General Meeting	August 29, 2004	Northwood Community Centre
Monthly General Meeting	September 26, 2004	Northwood Community Centre
Independence Church Service	October 24, 2004	TBD
25 th Independence Banquet	October 30, 2004	TBD
Town Hall Discussions	October 31, 2004	TBD
Monthly General Meeting	November 28, 2004	Northwood Community Centre
Winter Games Evening	December 4, 2004	TBD
Children's Christmas Party	December 19, 2004	TBD
Community Sing-a-long	December 18, 2004	TBD
Christmas Hamper Distribution	December 23, 24	

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NEWS FROM ST. VINCENT

NATIONAL DRESS COMPETITION.

A National Dress Competition has been launched in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, as part of preparations to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Independence, next year.

The competition was launched by the Minister of Tourism and Culture, Rene Baptiste, during the official opening of the National Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition.

Persons are being invited to submit drawings for the competition. The conditions, which were outlined by Ms Baptiste, would be published in the printed media. There would also be public discussions and consultations on the issue.

SVG MAY HAVE HALL OF JUSTICE SOON

Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves says a new Hall of Justice could soon be a reality if members of the legal fraternity pay their fair share of taxes.

The Prime Minister was responding to concerns raised by the President of the Bar Association, Nicole Sylvester, about the deteriorating conditions in the Courts, stating that government needed to address the matter speedily.

But wrapping up debate on the budget debate, the Prime Minister stressed that government has been refurbishing the Magistrate's court, computerizing the system and training magistrates' clerks, among others.

He said while a new Hall of Justice was necessary, many lawyers were refusing to pay their fair share of taxes.

The Prime Minister in his Budget Address on December 1st stated that as part of their tax reform measures, attention would be given to implementing measures to ensure that all citizens bear their fair share of the tax burden.

He noted that a large number of professionals have been involved in extensive tax evasion practices, with some professionals simply refusing to pay any income tax whatsoever.

GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS PRAEDIAL LARCENY PROBLEM

Prime Minister, Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, has announced that government would be introducing tough measures to deal with praedial larceny in the New Year. Dr. Gonsalves made the announcement as he delivered remarks at the official opening of the National Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition, in early December.

He pointed out that theft is one of the challenges facing the Agricultural sector, and that the police will be paying particular to this problem next year.

Dr. Gonsalves also pointed out that residents in the rural communities have an important role to play in reducing and eventually eliminating praedial larceny.

MINISTER CONCERNED ABOUT DIABETES & INJURIES DUE TO ACCIDENTS

Cyclists may soon have to be geared with a helmet or face the legal consequences. This view was expressed by Minister of Health, Dr. Douglas Slater, who was addressing the opening ceremony of the first ever open day at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital.

The event was staged on Thursday December 11th by the surgical department of the hospital. Dr. Slater told hospital officials and workers that in the coming year, government would be considering legislation to make it mandatory to use helmets while riding.

He said a large percentage of the cases seen at the hospital are related to injury as a result of motor vehicle accidents. He then praised the Traffic Department in the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force for its accident preventative methods.

Dr. Slater also addressed the issue of the number of surgeries performed on diabetic patients, particularly amputation. He said, calculating EC \$13,000 per person for surgery, it would cost the tax payers of this country close to quarter of a million dollars by year end for the treatment of victims.

He commended the staff of the department for its initiative, stating that it was his hope that the exhibition would shed a positive light on the image of the hospital.

NEW TAXES

Vincentians are now paying more for Passports and Airport Service Charge, as part of the revenue measures announced by Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves during his Budget Address in December. The Prime Minister announced that the Airport Service Charge would increase from \$35 to \$40 per passenger. He said the Government plans to implement significant improvements to the E.T. Joshua and Canouan airports with planned Capital Expenditure in excess of 100 million dollars over the next three years.

The Prime Minister said this increases represent an attempt to recover a portion of this cost and to improve the viability of these projects.

The charge for regular passports has moved from \$50 to \$60. The cost of passports would also affect Vincentians in the Diaspora who are advised to check with their respective embassies or consulates etc for the new charges. The charges for other travel documents have also been increased.

Dr. Gonsalves also announced an increase to the vehicle surtax payable on all imported vehicles over four years old by one-thousand dollars. He said this charge is to help offset the cost of removing derelict vehicles from the streets of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE OECS?

1. **How many countries make up the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)?**

Answer: There are 9 members of the OECS.

2. **How many of these countries are independent nations?**

Answer: Antigua and Barbuda, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Anguilla, Montserrat and the British Virgin Islands are still British Dependent Territories.

3. **Two of the member countries are Associate Members of the OECS. Which are they?**

Answer: Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands.

4. **Which is the second most southerly of the OECS countries?**

Answer: St. Vincent and the Grenadines

5. **Where is the OECS Secretariat located?**

Answer: St. Lucia

6. **When did the OECS come into effect?**

Answer: June 18, 1981

7. **After the break-up of the West Indies Federation which two caretaker bodies preceded the OECS?**

Answer: The West Indies Associated States Council of Ministers (WISA) established in 1966; The Eastern Caribbean Common Market formed in 1968.

8. **The seven original members of the OECS signed the treaty to establish the organization in one of the twin-island nations. The treaty is named after the capital city of that country. What is the name of the treaty?**

Answer: The Treaty of Basseterre

9. **What currency is used in the member countries of the OECS?**

Answer: The Eastern Caribbean Dollar (ECD). It is tied to the US Dollar with an exchange rate of US\$1 = EC\$2.7169.

10. **Who is the Director General of the OECS?**

Answer: Dr. Len Ishmael

11. **Who is head of the OECS Mission in Canada?**

Answer: The High Commissioner of the Eastern Caribbean States, Her Excellency Mrs. Lorraine Williams (See advertisement on Page 5).

Other overseas missions

12. **Who is SVG's Ambassador to the United States?**

Answer: His Excellency Mr. Ellesworth John. The embassy is located in Washington, D.C.

13. **Who is SVG's Ambassador to the United Nations?**

Answer: Her Excellency Mr. Margaret H. Ferrari. The Permanent Mission is located in New York.

For more information about the OECS, visit their website at www.oecs.org.

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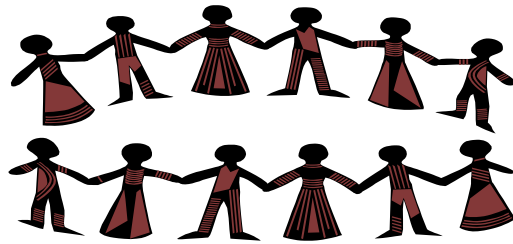
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Mission Statement

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association (SVGA) of Toronto is a non-profit community based Association. We are committed to providing assistance and support to groups, institutions in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Ontario and wherever the Association deems fit. To provide an anti bias forum for Cultural, Educational, Social and Recreational enrichment and to maintain a network of communication through information and referral.



Objectives

- To maintain a high level of volunteerism through recruitment, training and effective utilization of skills.
- To provide a forum to promote leadership and advocacy for the enrichment of Culture and Education.
- To provide an anti bias environment for the discussion of matters of general interest to its members.
- To plan, implement and participate in fundraising activities to meet urgent human needs.
- To promote social and recreational events to enrich the lives of Children, Youth, Adults and Seniors.
- To maintain a network of communication through information and referral.

Our membership meetings are held on the LAST SUNDAY IN EVERY MONTH from 4:00 p.m. at Northwood Community Centre, 15 Clubhouse Court (Keele St. & Sheppard Ave. W), North York.

We hope to see you there!

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

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