



SAINTS NEWS & VIEWS

A bi-monthly newsletter of St. Stanislaus College Alumni Association Toronto

July/August 2002

Volume 8 Number 4

From The President

Be There!

With our Annual General Meeting fast approaching (late September), it is now appropriate to detail why, as paid up members of the association, the presence of each and every one of you reading this newsletter is imperative at this meeting.

The association's revenues essentially come from two sources, your \$25.00 annual dues, and your support of our social functions. Let us examine these two sources of revenue separately.

Your annual dues of \$25.00 cover the cost of production of the newsletter, your membership cards, all other written communication throughout the course of the year and all mailing costs. This will become evident from the treasurer's report at the AGM.

The profits from our social functions enable us to support the college financially. I will not bore you with the details of the reasons for the college's needs, but rather, list the general categories where help is often requested. Among others, we are asked to repair and maintain infrastructure, (replace floors, rewire the college, replace all windows, replace the roof, paint the school, rebuild the sports ground and clubhouse), and replace desks and blackboards. We are asked to grant scholar-ships, improve security and supply teaching materials. We are asked to supply computers, printers, computer programs, lab equipment, computer supplies, printer ink and paper and computer monitors. We are requested to build a cafeteria for the students, supply clothing (ties etc.), identification badges and regular school supplies (pens, pencils, books etc.). We are asked to fund extra lessons for the students and provide photocopiers and fax machines to improve communication. We are asked...I could go on and on, but I'm sure the picture is now very clear to you.

Make no mistake, regardless of how insignificant some of the above requests may seem to you, they are all of the utmost importance to the person(s) who requested the

funds to implement them. Each is as important as the other, because each leads eventually to furthering the education of the students. Every project contributes in its own way towards ultimately protecting Guyana's most important resource, its young people and the eventual leaders of tomorrow.

You must be wondering what all of this has to do with the AGM. Firstly, it must be rather evident by now that as an organization we are not currently in a position financially to fulfil all of the requests listed above. Consequently, we chose which projects we will fund. We are allowed no options here, there is a finite amount of funds and we try to determine after careful analysis which project would benefit the students the most. Secondly, we fund these projects with your money. You support our functions, we realize profits from your patronage, and we utilize these profits to fulfil the college's requests.

Why would you not ask for details on how we spend your funds? You would not pay your mechanic's bill without first asking what he did to your car; you would never agree to surgery before you ascertain its purpose by asking questions; never agree to a buy/sell suggestion from your broker until you verify his thinking and strategy. Thus, why would you not want to question us on what we do? How do we arrive at our decisions? Why would you not wish to suggest to us better ways of doing things? Why would you not want a full financial statement from our treasurer? Why would you not want to know our plans for our future; for the projected growth of the organization; and the direction we are taking the organization in? As elected officials of the association, you have empowered us to make decisions on your behalf, but you are also mandated by your contributions to ensure we are on the right track.

The AGM is the forum that allows you to ask for a full explanation on every decision we have ever made. It allows you input on future decisions. It allows you to suggest new and different ways of doing things. It allows you to suggest new

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St. Stanislaus College Alumni Association Toronto, founded in 1993, is devoted to making St. Stanislaus College the best educational institution in Guyana. It provides financial and other aid to the College, founded by Fr. Langton S.J. in 1866. Formerly run by the Jesuit Order of Catholic priests, the school was taken over by the Government in 1976, with Government-appointed teachers replacing the Catholic clergy in 1980.

Saints News & Views publishes six issues each year. The articles published represent the opinions of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher who disclaims any liability arising from the information or advertisements herein.

Saints News & Views welcomes readers' comments
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Yesteryear at Saints

~ 1954 Dias Cup Champions ~



Photo submitted by Des Pereira

Front Row, L to R: Joe Castanheiro, John Jardim, Vibert Mahanger, Jack Edwards, Ivor Mendonca, Jimmy Thompson.

Back Row, L to R: Peter Fernandes, Jerry De Freitas, Des Pereira, Claude Henriques, Tony Clark, David Martins, Ron Schuler.

Remembering Fr. Bernard Darke

On July 14th, the 23rd anniversary of his death, we paid tribute to Fr. Darke, once revered as a priest who, as scoutmaster of his beloved Troop 25, was a mentor for many of his young students.

So, who was this man, Darke? We remember him as a Jesuit, an educator, a scoutmaster, and a devout Christian. As a priest, he attended to the spiritual needs of his parishioners. As an educator, he helped his students achieve academic excellence. As a scoutmaster, he taught his scouts to "Be Prepared". As a devout Christian, he practised his faith in both word and deed. He was simply someone who made a difference.

Some members of our Barbados Chapter have joined with the Scout Troop in Guyana in contributing 'bricks' with



the names of former scoutmasters, Fr. B. Darke, Fr. B. Parrot, and Fr. H. Wong, to be

installed in the Wall of Fame. The Barbados Chapter had also previously donated the Fr. Darke Shield to the scout troop, replicas of which have been awarded each year to the most outstanding scout. Funding was also made available to provide grills for the scout room's door and windows and to purchase a computer for the scouts.

Because of his courage, strength of character, and steadfastness in his religious beliefs, he was upfront and 'in your face' with his camera as an experienced free-lance photographer for the Catholic Standard. He was firmly committed to help build a "just society" in which all Guyanese could live in peace, and where spiritual and moral values would be their guiding principles. He lived professing these beliefs and fearlessly died because of them.

On July 14th 1979, he died an ignominious death that Saturday morning, in front of his beloved SAINTS, while taking photographs of demonstrators outside the Magistrate's Court. He was mistaken for Fr. Morrison, the magazine's editor, who, it was alleged, had a price on his head for the magazine's anti-government stance.

After being beaten to the ground by a mob, he was stabbed to death. No more fitting a tribute can be spoken about him than the immortal words of Mark Anthony at the death of Brutus, "His life was gentle, and the elements so mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up and say to all the world, *This was a man!*"

editorsaints@aol.com



Events Calendar

SAINTS/CENTRAL CRICKET MATCH

Sunday, August 11, at L'Amoreaux Cricket Ground, 2000 Mc Nicoll Avenue (west of Kennedy Road, South of Steeles Ave.) For further information contact Joe Castanheiro at 416-283-6780.

SAINTS/QUEENS CRICKET MATCH

If QUEENS can field a team, a **cricket** match will be played during the Labour Day Weekend in **September**. For further information please contact Joe Castanheiro at 416-283-6780.

CARIBJAM

Friday, August 2, at **Thornhill Community Centre, 7755 Bayview Avenue**, (North East corner of Bayview Ave. & John St.). From: **8:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.** Contribution: **\$25 per person**. Food bar available.

LAST LAP LIME

Monday, August 5, at **Tam Heather Country Club, 730 Military Trail**, Scarborough. Entrance fee: **\$5 per person** Parking is free.

FALL DANCE

Saturday, October 19, at **Thornhill Community Centre, 7755 Bayview Avenue** (Bayview Ave. & John St.). Further information to follow ▲



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SAINTS: The Untold Story

(Part 2 of 2)

Even before 1907, the former Catholic Grammar School had enhanced its status as an organized association worthy of recognition as an institution of higher learning than just that of an elementary school. Over the years, it had continually improved its curriculum to that of pre-university level. However, there were no universities in Guyana for years to come.



Saint Stanislaus College, circa 1953

Now, the Grammar School had acquired the status of a College, named for Saint Stanislaus, the Patron Saint of Youth, under the total control of its founding fathers, the Jesuit Order of Catholic priests. Until the 1960s, Catholics formed the majority of the school population. Gradually, other Christian denominations and the Hindu and Muslim religions reduced the percentage of Catholics. However, its Religious Education programme (R.E.) remained on its curriculum until the takeover of all denominational schools by the Government in 1976.

Throughout the 20th century, the College had maintained the high level of academic achievements expected of it. It also grew in size, with the additional "Scannell Wing" in 1953 and the "Hopkinson Wing" in 1972, to accommodate more laboratories and its burgeoning student population. Many interesting endeavours were introduced at different periods of its history by forward-thinking Jesuit visionaries who ran the college. As early as 1913, prior to WW I, Fr. Robinson had started the College Scout Troop. Historical documents record the courageous effort of the scouts in fighting the disastrous fire in 1913 that destroyed the Cathedral (formerly known as The Church of The Resurrection) on Brickdam.

It was Fr. Weld (later consecrated Bishop) who introduced Science to the curriculum. Not to be outdone, his successor as Principal, Fr. Marrion, improved the science laboratories, acquired a new playing field for the college and immediately started a House League with three Houses, Etheridge, Butler and Galton, for athletic competition, cricket and football (soccer). Long after his time, a fourth athletic House named for Bishop Weld was added, in the 1980s. The Marrion Forum is also named in his honour.

The College, which had enjoyed a relatively stable period between WW II and the turbulent sixties, was not content to rest on its laurels. Eventually, the political climate in the country worsened, along

with an economic downturn. Still, Fr. Kenneth Khan, the first Guyanese-born Principal continued to build on the successes of his predecessors.

Fr. Khan, who served as Principal from 1972 to 1980, started a Workshop in December, 1974 and also the College Farm in 1975. The farm was not only self-sufficient, but also generated surplus funds, contributing annually to the repairs and maintenance of the College. In 1983, a dairy production demonstration unit was added which is today used as a model for training farmers as well as University students at all levels. He also oversaw the introduction of co-education at the college in 1975. What had been a male student's domain for 109 years had finally changed, in keeping with the times, to a totally all-inclusive educational institution, with the introduction of 36 female students; 12 girls each in Forms 1A, 1B, and 1C.

Universally recognized for their great ecumenical work, the Jesuits were the only Order of Catholic priests serving in Guyana at the time. As a result of this, they had spread themselves thin, by reaching out to every community along the length and breadth of this great land, called Guyana. Their numbers dwindled slowly, until 1980 when they last taught at the College. There is hardly enough of them left in Guyana to serve their many parishes, so much so, that there are other lay missionaries filling the void by serving the poor, the homeless and the disadvantaged, whose numbers have vastly increased over the past 22 years. In the hearts of all the alumni, our beloved SAINTS will always be regarded as one of the best institutions of learning in Guyana. The only remaining symbol of its past glory as a Catholic school is the statue of the Patron Saint of Youth, still standing on its pedestal on the second-floor balcony after 95 years.

We have been left with the daunting task of keeping SAINTS' traditions alive, which we have faithfully been doing for many past years, because we believe in our Alma Mater's motto, "Aeterna Non Caduca"... "Not for this life only, but for all Eternity."

So was it written in 1907. So shall it be done! ▲

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The Birthplace Of Labass

This is an extract from a letter by the President of St. Stanislaus College Alumni Association Barbados. With fond memories, he writes of the origin of a sport we called our own. It's about a game of courage, speed, exquisite timing, physical endurance and dexterity which proved, since the '50s, that Guyana had risen to prominence in several sports throughout the Caribbean. Ed

"...Labass was definitely a SAINTS thing...invented by the Class of '51. In those days, there was only the Brickdam playground for formal and informal games. One of the popular informal games was Volleyball which the '51ers played with a tennis ball from opposite sides of the football goalposts.

Our Games Master, Fr. Lynch (better known as 'Jiggs'



Guest Column By Stanley Greaves

to the students) did not approve of this pastime which we pursued at every break and lunch period. We created some serious holes of geographical proportions in the goal area much to Jiggs' annoyance. A favourite shot was "de gurrup," our version of the slam...the ball was caught and pelted back over the crossbar at the opponents.

To get our daily games going, we would arrive early, very early at school to do the extra curricular activity of getting our homework done, by a huge Samaan tree near the Hadfield Street fence that was our regular meeting place (you see, there was no "Umana Yana" anywhere in Georgetown in our time). We had no knowledge of the Wai-Wai language then, so we called our meeting place, "The Forum Romanorum," a throwback to Roman History and its Latin language association. The Prefects all knew too well where to find us.

We were never deterred by all these obstacles to our recreational activities. Those were "tough times," so we had to do whatever was necessary to sustain our own sports

schedule. It finally happened. One day, some idiot invaded our Volleyball game and ran off with the ball and kicked it away. He was pursued and dealt with by all the players. This turned out to be so exciting...not for him of course...that it became a game to throw the ball loose and try to kick anyone attempting to kick the ball.

About the only rule that we made up was that you could kick the person attempting to kick the person attempting to kick the ball...a chain re-action thing. Of course, if the ball landed in a group of non-players anywhere on the school ground, they immediately scattered before the professionals arrived. Certain techniques were purposely worked out, like quietly rolling the ball near to an intended victim, who would suddenly find himself surrounded by a horde of kicking maniacs...not a nice seen.

The late (Dr.) **Leslie "skele" Cummings**, an eminent geographer who was internationally known for his pioneering work in the use of the computer in the field of demographics in geography, was a renowned Labass player on account of the boots he wore...army style ankle boots...the only ones in the school. His kicks were feared. Other noted full-time players were **Roy Gunby, Jerry Gouveia, Frank Small, Alexander Sue Ping** and the 'casual others' of the '51ers.

Yes folks, happy days indeed when so much fun could be generated by a simple tennis ball."▲

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Samaan And Ole Higue¹

This bit of folklore is a modified extract from the original version by Doris Harper-Wills. Ed.



with Howard Bryce

Once upon a time, there was an old tree, the last one planted by Dutch settlers in Demerara. Standing on Croal Street, and looking towards D'Urban Park, you could see this huge, protective sort of tree. Its name was Samaan. Samaan was a good friend to everybody, particularly the children whom she loved.

One hot day as Fowl Mama passed by on Vlissengen Road bearing the burden of fat arms and legs, fat mangoes, fat grapefruit...everything about Fowl Mama was fat and rounded...Samaan would invite her to sit beneath her shady branches and take a 'load off her feet.' Fowl Mama would sit right down with a loud groan, "Hmmmmmmm..." She would then complain how tired she was from walking in the hot sun, with her basket of assorted vegetables, fruits, greens and eggs balanced atop her head as she trudged along. Now, when the children from the village beyond the Park saw Fowl Mama, they would sneak up on her and chant, "Rick chick chick chick, Congo Tay, See Fowl Mama, Congo Tay, She fat like butter, Congo Tay..." Fowl Mama would scramble to her feet and look around wildly for sticks or bricks to pelt the jeering children.

Samaan did not like the way Fowl Mama over-reacted to the children, even though she understood how infuriated Fowl Mama must have felt, so Samaan would whisper to the children, "Run to the other side of my trunk, children, quick, quick," which they would do. The children grew bolder every day knowing that the motherly Samaan would protect them, but this all changed one day when Ole Man Papee passed by. When the children saw the old man with a curved back walking by with a curved stick and holding a curved calabash in one hand, they sneaked up on him shouting, "Ole Man Papee tief fowl egg, Go in de shop and buy gil bread," and they would pelt things at him. Samaan did not like this, for Ole Man Papee was humped, helpless and half-crippled. Unlike Fowl Mama, he could not pelt things at them. So, when the children ran up to her, Samaan admonished them by hissing through her trembling green fingers, "That's enough! Why must you pelt Ole Man Papee? Go home now. You must not be unkind to folks who are old and helpless. Go!"

Now, the Children got annoyed with Samaan, and started scratching away at her skin with pen-knives. They carved, "Old Dutch Jumbie tree", "You does shelter Dutch bacoo, you jumbie you," and other mean messages on Samaan's trunk and feet. They all laughed at Samaan in the most vulgar way and danced around her chanting, "Jumbie lef he pipe ya, Noka noka, Whu kinda tree dis, Stupidee tree dis." Samaan began to weep, silently wiping away her tears with her green fingers. Samaan wept often now.

One night, Samaan looked up at the sky and there travelling towards her, was Ole Higue. She was glad to see her old, best friend and anxious to hear about Ole Higue's journey into space. Ole Higue quickly changed from a ball of fire to a human being. Before Ole Higue could tell Samaan and Baku about her adventures in space, the children came up suddenly from across the Park, even though it was midnight. Samaan wondered why the children weren't asleep in their beds at home, then she remembered it was Guyana Day and the steelband trampers were passing through the city on their annual cross-country tramp from Berbice to Essequibo. As the children approached Samaan, Ole Higue turned her back on them and tried to hide behind Samaan who hissed through trembling fingers, "Limp to the other side of my trunk, Ole Higue, Quick", but it was too late. The children and adults chased Ole Higue all over Georgetown that night.

For the first time in her life, Samaan did not want to be a tree anymore. She became very sad, because of all the cruelty and unkindness she had seen in the world. She wanted to die. The following day the children came to play under Samaan's branches as they loved to do. Samaan could hardly believe her ears, when she heard the children talking among themselves, "Ole Higue dead, beaten on the head, bricked til she bled, Ole Higue dead!" "Aren't you glad?, Samaan asked them, to which they replied, "No, we sad. Now we have no one to tan'lise. Now she's gone we suddenly realize, she's the greatest witch we ever had." Samaan was so distraught from the tragic loss of her best friend that she decided to commit suicide. She set herself afire in the presence of all the children. When they saw Samaan burning, they were frightened by the fire and began crying. Samaan saw the sadness in the faces of these strange children who had always come to her to play, to rest, and to shelter from the hot tropical sun. She still loved them and felt so sad to see them crying that, before she died, she sprouted an offshoot several yards away.

Standing on Croal street and looking towards D'Urban Park, you can see this huge, protective sort of tree. This tree is Samaan's son. It is young, tall and good to look at. Young Samaan is his name. Some children are playing in its shadow. Once more the children come to play, to rest, and to shelter from the sweltering heat. Young Samaan is happy. And once again the children are happy too.▲

¹ A legendary witch that sucked children's blood

From A Saints Girl's Diary



July 1, 2002



Who Am I?

Dear Diary,

I like to think of myself as a faceless force causing effective action, in raising human consciousness, to achieving society's noblest aspirations. I like to think that!

I know that I'm not the easiest person to understand, but neither am I the most complex of personalities.

I know I'm easily disposed to anger, but neither am I the angriest person I know.

I know I enjoy the solitude of my own thoughts, and find great joy in peace and quiet, good music and the company of books.

I know I'm odd, particularly when disturbed by some distraction that at the time is profoundly annoying to me.

I know I'm emotional, and easily touched by elements of the human condition to which I can relate.

However, I ask little of anyone else.

I ask for a measure of understanding, so that I might understand.

I ask for a token of your love in return for my unconditional love.

I ask for the privacy of my own space, so that I need not infringe on yours.

I ask for freedom of thought and expression, so long as it is not offensive to you.

I ask that I might be allowed to live my life by a moral code that is compatible with others devoid of prejudice and incivility.

Be not misled by your perception of me. Be not my judge, lest you be judged in similar vein. Do not hate or despise me, lest your quest for love and acceptance be denied. Live and let live! Unless you have walked in another person's shoes, do not be too eager to revile or condemn that person. Awake to the realization that you are no better than I, nor I you together, in spite of our human differences and frailties, we can move forward toward an accommodation of understanding, respect for each other and enlightenment. Let us begin the journey together.

Society is the collective energy that empowers the individual to become larger than itself. Yet as such, I know I am dispensable, but undeniably I am that individual. As the Danish philosopher and theologian, Soren Kierkegaard once remarked, "Had I to carve an inscription on my tombstone, I would ask for none other than 'The Individual'."

Inconsequential as this epitaph might seem, it is the sum of who I am.



 Carolyn To 

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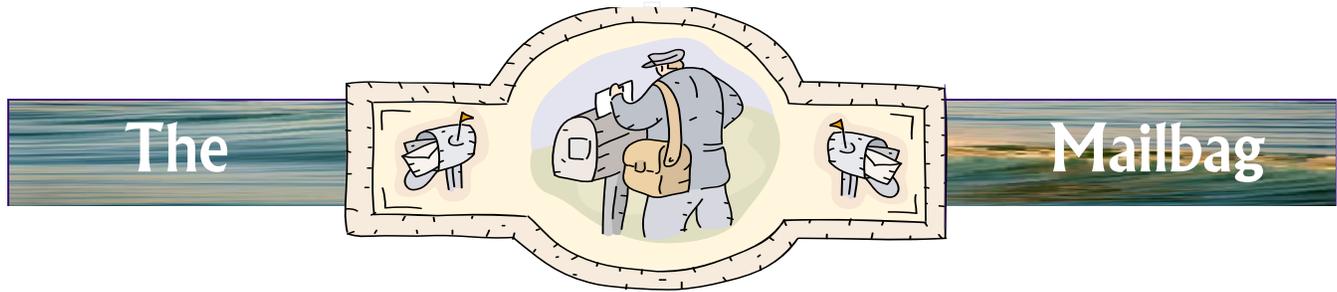
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Getting To The Source

Dear Camille de Groot,

I received a copy of Saints News & Views (Vol. 8 No.2) from a close friend in Toronto yesterday; first time I have ever seen one of these. I have tried (unsuccessfully) to find out if there are any organizations in the U.K. that may relate to SAINTS, and even e-mailed the College directly, to no avail.

Anyway, I read about this wall that is planned for unveiling in September, and I wanted to know what sort of costs would be entailed in my donating, and who should I contact, if not someone like yourself?

I do remember Paul Abdool, but there was no address for him. Apart from that, I recognized your surname.

Please let me know what would be the best way to go about this. Also, can I be put on the mailing list to receive Saints News & Views from Toronto, Georgetown or wherever?

Thank you for your help. Please forward my mail to Paul Abdool, if that is the best source.

David D'Almada
david@dalmada.co.uk

Thank you Camille, (Secretary, Saint Stanislaus College Association - Guyana) for your immediate response in this matter by e-mailing David's enquiry to the source, here in Toronto. Thank you David for your enquiry. You have been put on our mailing list. Welcome aboard! Ed.



Dear Mr. Hilary De Cambra,

Sorry about the misconception, but my husband is Dr. Peter deGroot (who is also an "Old boy"). Fortunately or unfortunately we've had this address for over six years, and coincidentally, it was in those days, here in Guyana, when you thought another chance for an e-mail address was impossible.

Anyways, I'm Camille. I am happy to know David got through with whatever he wanted.

All good wishes with the Wall of Fame project, and I'll always be willing to help in whatever way I can, to make the communication 'ting' possible.

Best Regards,

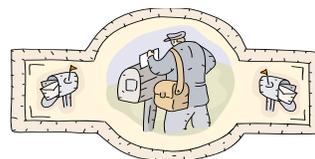
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Be There!

functions, and innovative ways of raising funds. It allows you to scrutinize, compliment and criticize. It allows you to run for office, if you so desire. Most importantly, it allows you a voice, a voice that the executive desperately wants to hear. Yet, our AGM'S are always poorly attended.

It is imperative that you attend the AGM. You will receive notification shortly, and will be asked to RSVP. If you faithfully remit your dues every year, if you attend any of our functions, then it is incumbent upon you to allocate two hours for the AGM.

Should a scheduling conflict prevent you from attending, then please write me with your questions, if you have any.



We will read and answer them at the AGM, and publish the answers in subsequent newsletters.

Nonetheless, I would appreciate seeing most of you there, and look forward to meeting all of you.

Paul Abdool
President

Volunteers Make It Happen

"Individual volunteers are an important basic in the institutional scheme of things...Adequately qualified fund raising volunteers are a precious commodity." ~ Edgar D. Powell (1922-1984)

Monday, August 5th is a civic holiday. This is also the day when we have the Last Lap Lime, an all-day, fund raising event at Tam Heather Country Club, 730 Military Trail, Scarborough. It starts at 9:00 a.m and ends at 11:00 p.m...14 fun-filled hours of nonstop entertainment for the entire family...with four different bands beginning at 10:00 a.m. and playing for two hours each until 6:00 p.m. Our DJ will then take over for the rest of the evening. We are adding to the children's activities as well. There will be a caricaturist and a few other surprises planned for the children.

Our growth throughout the years confirms our belief that the continued popularity of this function is its simplicity, affordability, safety and the family atmosphere we encourage and promote. Last year, almost 4,000 guests came through our

gates. Each year we attract new people, and each subsequent year those new people bring new people. Last year we had guests from Guyana, Trinidad, Barbados, Jamaica, Antigua, Quebec, New Orleans, California, Florida and New York. There is every reason to believe that the crowd will be larger this year.

The Toronto alumni organizations of St. Stanislaus, St. Rose's, St. Joseph's, Queen's and Bishop's work very hard to ensure that this annual event is a success. Each organization is responsible for providing 50 volunteers to assist in running the event with each paying their way. Even with a full complement of 250 volunteers, it is still an unenviable task of running a successful, family-oriented social event of this size.

There never seems to be enough volunteers to work all day without undue stress. We could always use more help! With a larger number of volunteers, each would work less hours and so be able to enjoy at least a few hours at the "Lime" with their friends. For these reasons, the Saints' Executive Committee is appealing to the general membership to volunteer, even for just a few hours, any time during the day or evening. It is not too late to do so, in spite of this last minute appeal.

All you need to do is to enquire at the Volunteers' booth how you can help, as soon as you arrive at the "Lime." More hands make light work, so come on down and help us make this year's Last Lap Lime the best ever.

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Through The Eyes Of A Child

My memory of Guyanese people is seen through the eyes of a very lonely child of a missionary father who over-protected his daughter, and was in Guyana to provide medical services at a hospital and clinic in Georgetown.

I was not allowed to go to the schools there so had no friends my age. After studying, in the afternoon I sat up on the branches of a Memosa tree to catch the cooling breezes of the tradewinds off the Caribbean.

This is where I watched and experienced a cacophony of people walking past our house carrying various bundles precariously balanced on their heads or pulling carts, and carts being pulled by donkeys or mules. The people were speaking the most melodious English I ever heard. It was a special blend of English and other languages, making it "Guyanese English".

These people were the muted colours of the rainbow...mostly East Indian and shades of black. The only people who looked like me drove cars on the 'wrong' side of the road. The people in cars never stopped to talk to me, but the people walking, well, after a while, when I started seeing some of the same faces passing by every day, they would smile, then later greet me, shyly and respectfully.

I didn't understand that, because I was very talkative. Back then I didn't know the history of the country, so I didn't understand the perceived class differences at the time. So I talked to anyone who looked up in the Memosa tree. Sometimes in the evening when people were walking back from wherever they spent the day, they would give me some fruit or sugar cane. An East Indian taught me how to chew on it to get the sweet juice. In the evening they said, "good night" when they greeted me, not "hello" or "good evening". And near Christmas, we talked about "Father Christmas" not "Santa Claus".

One day, a boy led me across the street to a drainage

ditch where he showed me the prettiest fish I ever saw. So then I spent a lot more time on the ground by the ditch ...which made my father very nervous, because he was afraid that I would get some awful disease from the drainage ditch... because there was raw sewage flowing in there, I'm told.

But I thought it was beautiful. I also liked to go on the train to New Amsterdam and I liked to ride in the country and see the sugar cane growing and the rice fields...the seawall, the palm trees, the 'big' market, the many, different kinds of fruit, the rivers, the waterfalls...oh, so much.

My father's work took us to the "hinterlands" where Guyana, Brazil and Venezuela meet at a mountain called Roraima. That is where I met Amerindian people of the Arecuna and Akiawo tribes and I heard languages that I never began to understand. The Amerindian children were great fun. Mostly we swam in the tea-coloured water of the Kamarang, Kako and Mazaruni rivers, and we told each other stories. The stories they told me mostly were about the Kaniman. We played in little corials and I learned to make cassava bread. One night a panther got under the house and killed some chickens.

I learned so many things in what was British Guiana at the time. I learned what it is like to be a minority in a country where almost everyone looked different from me. Every white person should experience this. It would change them forever. I learned that I know nothing about poverty. And I learned that Guyanese people are the most caring, sharing, kind people that I have ever met.

Supposedly, it was a dangerous country at the time. But I never saw that. Supposedly, people would rob us. But people seemed to go out of their way to see that we were safe. I remember...

~ Authoress unknown

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A lone cyclist on High Street on a Sunday, when most people rested from work