
*Naparima Alumni Association of Canada
(Toronto Unit)*



semper unum esse

30th Anniversary
COMMEMORATIVE EDITION



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NAAC

Our History – What We Stand For

The Naparima Alumni Association of Canada was founded in Toronto in 1978. Its regular membership consists of past students and staff of seven institutions established by Canadian Presbyterian missionaries who began their work in Trinidad in 1868. These institutions are Hillview College, Iere High School, Naparima College, Naparima Girls' High School, Naparima Teachers' Training College, St. Andrew's Theological College and St. Augustine Girls' High School. There is also constitutional provision for Associate memberships.



We support our alma mater schools through annual funding for student awards, bursaries and classroom and library resources and equipment. Special projects also receive financial support.

The funding for our associated Trinidad schools comes from the net proceeds of a variety of events such as dinner/dances, tea parties and concerts.

One of the aims of the Association is to provide an avenue for educational and cultural interaction with the society at large. In achieving this aim we provide financial support and expertise for various activities in Ontario. These include bursaries for graduating high school students, funding for the purchase and maintenance of steelpan instruments used in Toronto-area schools' music programmes, donations to libraries, hospitals and churches and to various charities. We also organize and run community-oriented programs such as steelpan classes and educational and topical workshops.

Naparima Alumni Association of Canada is a registered Ontario non-profit corporation. The income derived from managing licensed bingo sessions forms the basis of support for programmes in Ontario.

Birth of the NAAC

Significant Milestones

The Naparima Alumni Association was born at a meeting on April 8, 1978 at the Head Office of The United Church of Canada on St. Clair Avenue. This meeting was actually supposed to launch the Naparima College Old Boys' Association, Toronto Chapter. During discussion concerning the "form" of the organization we wished to have, a proposal was made from the floor that we create a broader based alumni association that would reflect "our Canadian reality". This suggestion was accepted and thus the NAAC was born. The following sequence of events leading up to the birth of the NAAC helps to put the age of the organization in perspective.

- October 25, 1976 – a letter was received by Steve Ramsankar from the secretary of the Naparima College Old Boys' Association granting him the authority to establish Canadian chapters.
- May 14, 1977 – 16 former students of Naparima College met to discuss the formation of a chapter of the "Old Boys" in Toronto; a motion was passed supporting this and a working committee was established to implement the motion.
- March 4, 1978 – 50 "Old Boys" attended an Inaugural Banquet at the Hotel Triumph.
- April 8, 1978 – "Old Boys" Association transformed into the "NAPARIMA ALUMNI".
- April 22, 1978 – 1st Executive Meeting of the Naparima Alumni Association.

Steve's request to the Old Boys' Association in San Fernando led to the letter of October 25, 1976. This started the chain of events leading to the formation of the NAAC.



*Naparima Teachers' Training
St. Andrew's Theological
St. Augustine Girls'
Naparima Girls'
Naparima
Hillview
Iere*

Naparima Alumni Association of Canada

2007-08 NAAC Executive

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President's Message

Since its inception in 1978, the NAAC has grown from a few “old boys” to a colourful and vibrant Association. We are recognized within our community as an organized, sophisticated and well-respected Trinidadian Association. We have withstood the test of time and that is an accomplishment in and of itself.

What the future holds for us, I cannot say for sure. All I know is that we are here today and that is also reason for celebration. While reading Eckhart Tolle's book *A New Earth: Awakening to your life's purpose*, I came upon the following ancient story, which stayed with me and which I felt was worth sharing with you.

There once was a king who was constantly vacillating between happiness and despair. He found this strange because he had everything, however, he soon became tired of his mood swings and wanted some answers. So, he sent for the wisest of men in his kingdom in order to find the secret to a good and balanced life. He told the wise man he would pay any price. The wise man advised him that the price for what he sought was greater than the value of the entire kingdom but as a loyal subject he will give the king the secret if only he would promise to honour it. The king agreed and the wise man returned with a box which he left for the king. When the king opened the box he found a ring inside with the inscription “*This too will pass*”. The wise man left instructions for the king to wear the ring at all times and whatever happens, before the king reacts he should touch the ring and read the inscription.

Eckhart Tolle states that the “words inscribed on the ring are not telling you that you should not enjoy the good in life, nor are they merely meant to provide comfort in times of suffering”. There is a deeper purpose; time is fleeting.

I retell this story because I was elated by our accomplishments- Imagine our association taking root in the idea of bringing people who went to school together, now living in a foreign land, for the purpose of social networking. Now we are 30 years old and our activities have expanded into many areas. In 2000, the Government of Trinidad & Tobago recognized our value to our larger communities and awarded us the Medal of Merit for “outstanding and meritorious service in the public service”. We are the first foreign-based organization to be so honoured! This is a group which is dedicated to giving annual awards to its Alma Maters to celebrate the successes of the children who now occupy our desks. We contributed one-quarter of a million TT dollars toward the building of the gymnasium at Naparima College. Our association has created through its steelpan classes, teachers, arrangers and composers and assisted in the production of two CDs. For many years we have raised funds for our adopted community and supported youth oriented groups such as “Youth without Shelter”.

My elation was short lived, however, as I became despondent when I reflected on how many of our dear and beloved members we have had to say our final goodbyes to this year.

And of course I started to think about the future of the association and I realized that my despair

and concerns over our future will pass.

Time is fleeting. It was only a little while ago I was attending Naparima College and now I am here sitting in this role as president of this Association.

The fact is the Association has taken on a life of its own. Along the way it benefited from all of the good works of volunteers, be it on its executive or otherwise and it has gained from their insights, dedication, inspiration and examples. I take this opportunity to thank each and every person who has contributed to the Alumni, because without your contributions we would not be here today.

I love this Association dearly and I consider it an honor and a privilege to have served as your president this year.

Congratulations!

Selwyn Baboolal



Presidents of NAAC

1977-78	Merlin Seukeran /Fred Thornhill	1993-94	Rustin Oree
1978-79	Fred Thornhill	1994-95	Rustin Oree
1979-80	Harold Naphtali	1995-96	Stanley Algoo
1980-81	Howard Sammy	1996-97	Ian Ramdial
1981-82	Milton Moonah	1997-98	Risel Maharaj
1982-83	Rawle Narayansingh	1998-99	Stanley Algoo
1983-84	Harold Naphtali	1999-00	Selwyn Baboolal
1984-85	Kelvin Shah	2000-01	Imogen Foster-Algoo
1985-86	Arthur Siblal	2001-02	Cynthia Ramdeen
1986-87	Deleisha Ali	2002-03	Ian Ramdial
1987-88	Ralph Shah	2003-04	Norma Ramsahai
1988-89	Howard Sammy	2004-05	Risel Maharaj/Merle Ramdial
1989-90	Fulton Seunarine	2005-06	Vitra Mungal
1990-91	Arthur Siblal	2006-07	Selwyn Baboolal
1991-92	Ian Ramdial	2007-08	Selwyn Baboolal
1992-93	Mohan Bissoondial		

Editor's note...

In preparation for this 30th Anniversary commemorative issue of *Broadcast* our contributing editors and I decided to retrieve the early notes and minutes of the Association from storage so we could verify dates and record some of the programs and projects that our Association supported over the years.

Along with interesting discoveries from some water-damaged boxes, emerged a family of silverfish. I live in a condominium, so after much stomping by me, I have my fingers crossed that there are no survivors, but if there are, the source shall remain our secret.

The first two decades of our existence saw vigorous growth and involvement by our members, but as we entered our third decade, and the early programs of NAAC had taken root, our members got more involved in their local, urban and suburban community activities. This is testament to the hard work of the early committees. The third decade continues to function because of a core group of NAAC members who manage and administer NAAC's programs and projects. But while we continue to have wide support for our functions, active involvement by members to run for office or commit to any long-term project has dwindled.

The contributing editorial team of Rustin Oree, Howard Sammy and Ian Ramdial felt confident that many of our members are aware of NAAC's accomplishments, but that we still needed to record and recap the three decades for this commemorative issue. Although our purpose remains constant, *to give back*, the avenues are many and varied and our hope is that new and returning members may find ways to assist us in giving back.

Howard contributed the article titled, *NAAC and Steelband* (p. 12-14) documenting the history of the partnership agreements with two Boards of Education. Rustin wrote a piece about the formation of NAAC's performance steelband (p. 37-39) and co-wrote the article on fundraising and the management of bingo sessions with Norma Ramsahai. (p. 32-33)

Ian followed through on Stanley Algoo's excellent management and documentation of the Naps 100 fund by taking it to its final disbursement in support of the building of the gymnasium at Naparima College. (p. 23-25).

I felt it was important to update the chronology that appeared in earlier issues of *Broadcast*, so that we can see at a glance how our organization continues to support our alma mater schools and our communities (p. 47-51).

To Joe Cullen, Randolph Karamath, Ronald Mahabir, Rio Maharaj, Karma Naike, Aneesa Oumarally and Norma Ramsahai, thank you for your submissions to this special issue of *Broadcast*. Thanks also to Rev. Albert Baldeo and to all our advertisers, for your messages of congratulations.

Respectfully,
Merle Ramdial

As I remember 1978---

Often when I drive past Chesswood Arena off Finch Avenue, a fleeting memory flashes and I wonder if that was really the place of the elegant affair etched in my mind. It now seems incongruous with what that occasion has meant. That event was the formal launch of the Naparima Alumni Association of Canada, a dinner dance, an 'inaugural ball' format on a beautiful spring evening. It is necessary to state that the Naparima in NAAC represents the Naparima family of schools.

The emotional/spiritual connection to that time has persisted. Most of us, the alumni, were young, coupled, successfully-achieving professionals who had not seen other schoolmates since migrating. The expectations were high, and the meetings and reunions with friends, classmates, and teachers of our youth created a buzz from laughter, embraces, conversations and dancing that energized and coalesced. We had become a community with real interpersonal links and real cause to help our respective Alma Maters.

Most of the membership at that time were graduates of the late 50's and 60's so that our school principals were expatriate Canadians, and the first local missionaries. Without doubt, the missionary/teachers were very connected to many alumni and their families since their roles included teaching, community work with youth, women, church, school board committees and home visitations in towns as well as villages. We viewed them as influential in our education and upbringing, so it was a pleasurable opportunity to meet with them again. Among those present were Miss Margaret Scrimgeour, Dr. W. Grant, Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Swann, Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Newcombe, Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Newbery, Rev. Dr. and Mrs. James Seunarine, Rev. and Mrs. Walls, and Rev. Dr. and Mrs. A.C. Dayfoot (the only surviving missionary couple, and still active in our group) and Mr.



As I remember 1978--- (continued...)

J.S. Sammy, with his 56 years of teaching generations at Naparima, came from Trinidad especially for this event. The admiration and pride expressed by all was mutual and we felt like a large grand family/community.

This event was a culmination of hard work and accommodations. I had heard that Steve Ramsankar had been in Toronto networking with many of the Naps Old Boys to form an Old Boys' Association. Many meetings were held at Dr. Unus Omarali's office and I gathered from my husband, Clinton Ramberansingh, that there was enthusiastic response from the men. Soon after, Harold Naphtali approached me to canvas the 'girls' to attend a meeting that would facilitate women membership in the Association. That meeting was held at the United Church Head Office at St. Clair and Yonge where we subsequently met in the early years



The Old Boys had had officers in place – the chair being Merlin Seukeran – when the meeting convened. Among the many women who attended I remember Pearl Seunarine, Esther Heal, Cathy Muller, Indira Poole, Imogen Foster-Algoo, Jocelyn Shah, Sushilla Mohammed and many other interested women. I brought up the idea that since women were going to be members of the Association, accommodations must be made immediately. We needed to add two female members to the Executive, and the name must be changed to that of an Alumni Association. The first idea was hotly debated but then was unanimously approved, and the name was changed to the Naparima Alumni Association of Canada. Many of the members at that meeting are still strongly involved with the Association.

Over the years, NAAC has undergone many phases in membership and activities. The establishment of the Associate Membership was an inclusive act which expanded the membership. Summer picnics were frequent features in the summer of our youthfulness and fond memories remain. So too were the dynamic Cultural Performing Arts group presentations from NGHS and SAGHS that we enthusiastically hosted and enjoyed. In return we helped sponsor visits to Naparima schools by Ontario High School students. Through the vagaries of fundraising, our finances could be volatile at times, but our involvement in bingo has alleviated our budget anxieties. The Alumni has been able to maintain its commitment to the Toronto community through the Steel Band Music Program, bursaries, and local charities, whilst keeping and strengthening its support to our Alma Maters. We have funded building projects, educational achievement recognition, and community agencies.

Over the years, the success of this Association can be attributed to many dedicated members. Some have passed away and are remembered, some used to be predominately active but are not

As I remember 1978--- (continued...)

so now, and are missed. Some keep on trucking, still giving of their time and talent; they are the lifeblood of our group. There are some who always turn and provide community strength. We are a family with diverse backgrounds but we all have friends from Naparima. We are a secular group, but one with heart and tradition.

I write this article in memory of my brother, Kamal Naike, who was moved to tears on meeting Rev. Weldon Grant at that first event, my friend Esther Heal, who always brought me along to Naparima events, to Rev. I. W. Kirkpatrick, who taught the kids in my elementary school how to tell stories and to Diane Longley who attended many Naps events even when she was seriously ill.

There is a constant attempt to attract the young who can infuse the group with energy and renewal. It is gratifying when Canadian alumni children participate. Some of the young people I miss seeing are Brendon Foster-Algoo, Julian Sammy and Allison and Peter Mohan, but I feel hopeful when I see Selwyn and Aneesa's children waiting in the sidelines at some of our events.

In conclusion, when I think of Naparima, the familiar lines of Thomas Hood's poem come to mind –

*'I remember, I remember, the place where I was born
The little window where the sun came peeping in at morn,'*

And, I add, *The big school house perched upon the hill in town
Where we learned to live and learn, but not to frown.*

The sieve that is memory can create 'Half-truths and entire lies' (Maya Angelou), but to actualize such has not been my intent.

NAAC's history is inspiring and being 30 years old, it is on the cusp of its prime as a solid community.

May we enjoy many productive and pleasant years ahead.

Cheers!

Karma Naike



Montreal Followed Toronto's Lead In Its Early Years

By Ronald Mahabir

Naparima Alumni Association of Toronto held a Dinner-Dance on Saturday July 15, 1978. About four hundred graduates and friends of the various Naparima Institutions met, greeted each other, chatted and partied for hours on end. Many Canadian Missionaries and two Trinidad-born graduates were honoured. The warm fellowship and ambience impressed and inspired me to consider forming a branch in the Montreal region.

On my return I phoned several graduates and called a meeting at my home in Chateaugay on October 6, 1978. The following members came and engaged in initial discussions.

Horace and Florence (McKenzie) Mahabir
Ronald and Gemma (Eccles) Mahabir
Errol and Marjorie (Eccles) Mullahoo
Angus and Barbara (Eccles) Tackoor
Errol and Joy (Lalla) Sitahal
Lawrence Sitahal
Joyce (Seesaran) Douglass
Marilyn Eccles
Lenore (Sagar) Hart
Joseph Nancoo
Majeed Sadeek

An interim committee was formed to establish guidelines and objectives. A dance committee was also formed and began to plan for a first dance to be held at the Riverdale High School on November 25, 1978. From all reports the dance was a success. Funds began to accumulate.

With forty seven members, Regular and Associate in our Roll, our Association was incorporated on February 6, 1980. Monetary gifts were made to various institutions in Trinidad on a regular basis.

In the winter of 1981 our first newsletter appeared. Several more followed. Contributors were members, their friends, and their children.

Some articles of historical value were as follows:

"Naparima Institutions in Review" by J.F. Seunarine: 1981 Winter Edition.

"The history of Naparima Girls' High School (1912 -1967)" by Agnes Rampersad:
1982 Spring Edition.

"A brief survey of Naparima College North" by Stephen Alisharan: 1982 Fall Edition

"A brief history of Hillview College 1960 -1980" by Stephen Seepersad: 1982 Fall Edition.

Many social and cultural activities were held at regular intervals, but the event which generated the most energy and enthusiasm was the visit of forty three girls from Naparima Girls' High School, San Fernando on the weekend of October 3, 1980. Mavis Leewah was the tour leader, accompanied by six adults. Montreal was one of the legs on their journey as they visited Guelph, Hamilton, Ottawa

and Toronto. The entire group was billeted by our members and their friends in and around Montreal. Highlights of the visit were the steel-band concert at the Dorval Hilton and the Social Gathering at the Vanier Cultural Centre, in Chateauguay. Before the Toronto organizing committee left for Ottawa they joined some of the Montreal group for a Trini style brunch of roti, baigan and tomato chokha at our home.

The following members served as President of NAAQ at one time or another:

Ronald Mahabir, Errol Mullahoo, Mervyn Philip, Cheryl McGrath, Lenny Alladin, Max Aziz and Lystra Charles.

Over the years the Association has had its growing pains, but with emphases on education, culture, charity and fellowship it continues to be a viable and worthwhile organization.

The present executive, (2007–2008) of the NAAQ, Montreal branch are as follows:

President:	Lystra Charles
Vice President:	Keith Eccles
Past President:	Errol Mullahoo
Public Relations:	Molly Australi
Treasurer:	Angie Batchasingh
Secretary:	Jenny Thompson
Membership Chair:	Frank Lutchman
Social Convener:	Marjorie Mullahoo



Front Row from left to right; Marjorie Mullahoo, Angie Batchasingh,
Jenny Thompson, Errol Mullahoo
Back Row left to right; Frank Lutchman, Kate Lutchman, Keith Eccles,
Lystra Charles, Donald Australie, Molly Australie

NAAC and Steelband

History

Until EXPO 67 in Montreal, Canadians had little exposure to the steelband. The Trinidad Tripoli Steelband led by Hugh Borde, an integral part of the cultural showcase at the T&T Pavilion, astonished thousands of visitors from around the world with the musicality of their instruments and their showmanship. So impressed was Liberace, the premier TV entertainer of his day in the USA, that he hired the band to tour with him thus introducing the steelband to millions more in North America and elsewhere.

Simultaneously, in Canada, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau convinced the provincial governments to agree to his vision of a Multicultural society thereby creating avenues of opportunity for minority groups to celebrate their diverse heritages. The fledgling Caribana celebrations for Canada's 100th birthday in 1967 resulted in the massive Caribana festival of today with the steelband playing an increasingly important role. A small, but expanding contingent of domestically based bands, began to emerge. Usually led by Trinidadian immigrants, these bands often offered Canadians the chance to become players and an informal network of bands developed across the country. Visiting bands from T&T and cultural exchanges became higher profile and NAAC participated in this trend. Both the NGHS, 1980-81 and SAGHS, 1983-84 visits had strong steelband elements with high profile conductor/arrangers as leaders. Steve Achaiba of Hatters and the legendary Jit Samaroo of Samaroo Jets accompanied NGHS and SAGHS respectively.

NAAC and the Etobicoke Board of Education

By the late 70s, steelbands were being created in several schools of the Metro Toronto Boards. They were usually taught by itinerant teachers as co-curricula lunchtime or after school programs. Where possible, the steelband programs were integrated into the schools' music program.

On December 7, 1982, Etobicoke, acting on the recommendation of its Multicultural Service Committee, asked Howard Sammy to purchase two sets of "starter instruments", one for Elmbank JMS and the other for North Albion CI. The first teacher of these classes was 'Pan Man' Pat McNeilly, a graduate of Hillview College in Tunapuna.

Broadcast (Volume XV, No 2), our newsletter of December 1991, published an invitation to members interested in learning to play pan to register with either Rustin Oree or Howard Sammy. Our goal was to create a performing band using the instruments at an Etobicoke school. Classes began in the spring of 1992 at West Humber CI. In keeping with our constitutional mandate "to provide an avenue for educational and cultural interaction with the society at large", NAAC began to explore other possibilities. By November 1, 1992 the

Etobicoke Guardian reported that a formal partnership had been arranged between WHCI and NAAC. This agreement would eventually become the model for partnerships between the NAAC and school boards with whom we created steelband programs. Without the co-operation of the Etobicoke Board of Education, the NAAC steelband program would not exist in its present form. The following people played significant roles in the development of the NAAC/Etobicoke steelband programs:

- Don Banks – Principal, Elmbank JMS encouraged the establishment of steelband in Etobicoke schools
- Fitz DuBarry – teacher NACI, sourced the first pan instruments
- Earl Wong – manufactured and supplied the first pans; continues to tune and supply pans
- “Pan Man” Pat McNeilly – first pan teacher and an inspiration to many students and staff
- Rustin Oree – NAAC member, worked tirelessly to establish all steelband programs, arranged sponsorship from Sifto Salt for Caribana
- Nicole Ayton (nee Small) – circulated a community petition that resulted in steelband credit courses being offered at WHCI
- Ian Ramdial – liaison with NAAC executive, student mentor and program planner
- Prem Ramsahai – Caribana band leader, facilitated inclusion of ESSO in parade
- Joe Cullen – head of Music at WHCI, steelband instructor and arranger, Panache teacher and supporter of partnership arrangements.
- Blake Stanfield – retired Etobicoke teacher, gave his all as our leader of community programs at WHCI and walked Panache through the making of the CD, *Simply . . . Panache*
- Al Foster – former steelband student of Pan Man Pat at WHCI, winning steelband arranger, now Panache instructor
- Francesca Zuccarelli – WHCI staff liaison and mentor for students in NAAC bands
- Margaret Sitaram and Indra Grant – mentors and den mothers for the students in the NAAC performing bands

The Evolution of NAAC Steelband Programs

From the beginning of our involvement, we saw our programs as supportive of the schools and the wider community. We identified the implementation strategies that would give us “the biggest bang for our bucks” and have the greatest long term impact. Our steelband programs all have strong cultural components. We formalized arrangements as necessary and developed an eclectic approach to making things happen. The summary of significant events in our steelband history that follows reflects this. The recognition of opportunities by our collective membership has led to the continued growth of our steelband programs.

Significant Events

- 1992 – financial support for Pantastix uniforms, mentorship program, scholarship eligibility
- 1993 – Etobicoke Schools Steel Orchestra (ESSO), pan purchase, formal partnership with Etobicoke Board of Education
- 1993 – present – continued growth in steelband classes at WHCI and CCI
- 1994 – Caribana participation, Pantastix – a touch of class CD released
- 1997 – partnership with Durham Board of Education, and with Scarborough Board of Education
- 1998 – Panache Steelband formed
- 1998 – present – increased charity gigs and paid performances
- 2004 – Panache began summer practice and gigs at Wild Water Kingdom
- 2007 – Simply . . . Panache CD released

Our steelband endeavours have metamorphosed from simply teaching a musical instrument to a more complex, multiple targeted program. Our approach has always included the cultural environment and history of the development of the steelband and we have facilitated exchange visits which emphasize these broader educational objectives.

Like the steelband itself, NAAC explores steelband opportunities wherever they lead.

Howard Sammy

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Retreat Weekends

On June 21, 1982, at the first meeting of the new executive for 1982-83, Susilla Mohamed proposed a weekend “retreat” to focus on the direction being taken by the NAAC. With the assistance of Howard Sammy who had developed similar programs for the Etobicoke Board of Education, a weekend retreat was designed.



We targeted a minimum of 40 attendees who would occupy the Claremont Education Field Centre just east of Toronto on November 19-21. Members who were unable to stay for the weekend were invited to be “Saturday guests” to participate in all activities. Quebec members were also invited. The Association’s subsidy of 50% of the cost enabled us to charge only \$15 per person!

Mr. Jamshed Mavalwala, an anthropologist of international standing, opened the discussions by speaking about “The Immigrant Experience”, its impact, its current political milieu, its opportunities and its problem areas. His well-informed discourse triggered multi-faceted, lively debate for long after the weekend was over.

The staff of the field centre was fully involved in the planning and execution of the program. They focused on the large and small indoor and outdoor group building activities, environmental sensitization, safety and food. Included in the weekend were day and night hikes, problem solving situations, fun and games, puzzles and story telling.



An unexpected outcome of the first retreat was the formation of the Children’s Executive. The kids mimicked the adults, recognized opportunity and seized the moment. Julian Sammy was elected President and Jay Moonah, VP. They asked Kathy Moonah to be their advisor and proposed to the NAAC executive that they be given status. This was accepted. A training program was initiated,



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Retreat Weekends (continued)

planned and implemented by our children, practice that was great preparation for the future.

Broadcast, Vol. 5 No. 3, reported that 100% of the participants wanted the program to continue. The retreat was held annually from 1982–89. Reduced participation and rising costs limited the viability of the program after 1989, though the objectives continued to be admirable and were achieved through other means.

When the lagahoo spoke, everyone listened!!!!



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Glimpses from the Past - The Early Years



Glimpses from the Past - The Early Years



Social Activities

One of the primary goals of the Association is to provide for social activities for its members. In the early years the “socializing” committee was separated into the prestigious “dance” committee and the “social” committee which looked after the smaller and more frequently occurring social events. The original committee members were Rustin Oree, Kanva Sammy and Esther Heal.

In the first decade of our existence, many of our members were in their thirties or forties and there were events that catered to young families. These included the annual Children’s Christmas Party, the Summer Picnic and the Retreat Weekend. There



were as well fun activities planned for both adults and older children such as Bowling, Table Tennis and All Fours Tournaments. These were well attended and served the useful purpose of bringing members together in a convivial environment. As members and their families grew older and became more assimilated into the Canadian lifestyle, these events became less appealing and attendance dwindled. They were abandoned as annual events but continued to be organized on an occasional basis up to the early 1990s. During the last 10 years the void has been filled with small group activities such as the Games Night, Niagara Wine Tour and trips to Casino Rama which have all proved to be very enjoyable for members and their friends.

The high profile events however are the yearly dinner/dances and they are the glue that keeps us



Social Activities (continued...)

together socially. For much of the first two decades the formal annual May dance (known initially as the Anniversary Banquet) was the featured social event. People from outside the Toronto area – other parts of Ontario, other provinces and quite often from outside of Canada – would converge to the designated function venue to renew acquaintances and have a good Trini time. In the meantime the small intimate gathering of members at Christmas began to bloom as a second major social event. In the early 80s the Carnival Party in February-March took root as a third big social event. It became even more successful when we added the Ole Mas segment, which was facilitated by the experienced duo of Prem and Norma Ramsahai



and their associates. This event was very well patronized by our members as well as many non-members. In fact, it was on the basis of the consistently healthy profits made from the Carnival Dances (the 1989 Dance made a profit of \$7,500) that the decision was made to add bursaries for graduating students to the annual financial support for the Naparima family of secondary schools .

As time went by, the success of the Carnival Dance led to its own demise. Several other organizations including Caribana Mas bands started putting on similar functions (complete with Ole Mas contests) and the NAAC dance wilted under the competition and eventually ceased. The Christmas Dinner/Dance however remained the most popular of our social functions and eventually



Social Activities (continued...)

replaced the Annual May Banquet as the showcase for NAAC. It was at this event, that a formal part of the programme would be devoted to presenting awards (NAAC bursaries, recognition awards) or presenting significant donations to charitable organizations or having a keynote speaker address the gathering. The May Banquet is no longer an annual event, but tends to resurface every now and then on significant occasions such as this, our 30th Anniversary. Its place has been supplanted by Sunday Brunches and other special functions.

There is no question that the objective of our Association to provide social activities for its members has been achieved in every year of its existence. In fact, because the Executive has been doing its job so diligently in this regard, the Naparima Alumni Association of Canada is widely perceived as a group whose only function is “throwing fetes”. This can be irritating at times because we know that we do so much more, as described elsewhere in this commemorative issue. Without a doubt, however, NAAC’s social functions are highly regarded and its organizers are generally praised for the quality of its events with the added assurance that personal safety is never a concern for its patrons.

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NAPS 100

Over the years there were many fund-raising projects with which our Association became involved in support of specific goals of the Naparima family of institutions. The Naps 100 Project was undoubtedly the most special of them.

In 1993 Naparima College announced that they planned to celebrate their 100 years of existence in the next year by launching a TT\$2.5-million fund-raising effort to build a gymnasium and auditorium. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago gave its blessing and promised to allocate some funds for this venture.

The Executive of the Naparima Alumni Association of Canada (NAAC) was unanimous in agreeing to lend its support. Given the nature of its own history as an association of former students and staff of the several Presbyterian institutions, NAAC chose to regard the occasion of Naparima College's centenary as symbolic of 100 years of the Presbyterian Canadian Mission's involvement in secondary and tertiary education in Trinidad.

A committee consisting of Chairman Stanley Algoo, Mohan Bissoondial, Diane Longley, Rustin Oree, Ian Ramdial and Merle Ramdial was appointed to work on this undertaking which was aptly named the Naps 100 Project. Letters of solicitation were mailed to all NAAC members inviting them to the formal launching of Naps 100 held on November 21, 1993. A target of \$100,000 (Cdn) had previously been established as the goal of the Naps 100 fundraising effort.



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Little did we know that this was only the beginning of a campaign that would last 13 years.

By the end of 1994 the fund had accumulated about \$18,400. At the NAAC General Meeting in January 1995, the House voted to keep the project going. By the end of that year, the fund total was close to \$30,000 and some of the money was invested in short term GICs. Most of the money came from donations from individual members and supporters of the Association. Some businesses and institutions with which members were affiliated also made generous donations. NAAC itself designated the proceeds from a Reunion Dinner/Dance in May 1994, at which Rev. Roy Neehall was the featured speaker, and Showcase '95, a multicultural variety show in April 1995, as well as sales from specially designed commemorative plates to the Fund. Help came from many other sources, such as, St. John's Presbyterian Church, Harold Hosein's weather calendar sales and honoraria received from his speaking engagements at several Toronto area schools.

After 1995, NAAC was prepared to transfer the funds, despite the fact that our target amount was not realized. However, the Building Project was stalled in Trinidad when the Government was unable to keep its promise of support. At this juncture, NAAC decided to keep the avenue for accepting donations open and to invest the monies in longer-term investment vehicles. NAAC kept in touch with the administration at Naparima College asking for updated information on the status of the project.

Finally, in 2005 NAAC received a letter from the Principal requesting the release and transfer of the Naps 100 Fund. A notice of the proposed disbursement of the Fund was published in the Fall 2005 issue of our newsletter, *Broadcast* and was also posted on the NAAC website. A cheque in the amount of \$45, 840 was hand-delivered in July 2006.

NAAC's original commitment to donors was to inscribe their names on a plaque to be displayed on a suitable wall of the new structure. The names of donors as they appear on the plaque follows on page 25.





Naparima Alumni Association of Canada

LIST OF DONORS TO THE NAPARIMA COLLEGE BUILDING FUND

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Richard & Ruby Atkinson	for Rev. Charles Kitney	Ron, Sita & Shanti Ramkerrysingh
Selwyn Baboolal & Aneesa	A. Bocas Lall	for Lionel & Adele Ramkerrysingh
Oumarally	Stan Lam Wat	Carl, Carol, Ralph & Joan
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Dr. Rawle Jibodh	Claude & Vilma Ramcharan	Debbie Wingson
		Letitia Yerex

NAAC's 5K Fun Run/Walk For Youth

As I write this by candlelight during the Earth Hour, I think of the number of people around the world who are participating in this worldwide event because it means something to them.

The Naparima Alumni 5K Fun Run/Walk for Youth started in a similar way.

I remember myself as an 11 year-old girl sitting in my Form 1 classroom on a wooden chair that was in dire need of repair and being distracted and very uncomfortable.

At the turn of the new century, the NAAC received a request from Iere High School to fulfill a desperate need for chairs.

Being a member of the NAAC Executive at the time and knowing the difficulties of obtaining fundraising money from a core group, I thought about the make-up of our members, the problem with our declining membership and felt if we tried to raise funds in a different way, through a form of exercise, it might work. We would be trying something new, helping some of our members stay fit, having a family-type event and possibly tapping into the pockets of people who were not affiliated with the NAAC.

This request not only meant something to me due to my experience with the broken chair, but it attracted some people who were trying to keep fit. With the Executive's permission, we formed a committee and became known as the NAAC Running Group.

These members volunteered much of their time for the 7 years that this event existed. Planning a race takes approximately 10 months of active work, including traveling all over Southern Ontario for marketing and promotion as well as attendance at monthly committee meetings.



I fondly remember these volunteers in some of their roles and feel they deserve recognition in this report for their outstanding service to the NAAC:

Rustin Oree – Race Director, marketing representative, sponsor contact, MC, Running Room coordinator, “Water” man, and original steel pan player

Ras Shreeram – Mr. Meet and Eat, flagman, trail marker, jack-of-all trades, post-event host, OPP contact

Etty Shreeram – Turn Around Point Marshall, cook, post-event hostess

Sandra Viteri – Food sponsorship, provider of furniture and additional volunteers

Nyron Singh – Responsible for recommending the Rexdale “Youth Without Shelter” organization which became a Canadian recipient of funds for the 7 year period

Kim Singh – Food sponsorship, helper

Herb Drummond – Not affiliated with Trinidad, but an avid runner and helper

Norma Ramsahai – race participant, NAAC liaison, who kept us fiscally responsible

Prem Ramsahai – Turn Around Point Marshall, “Naparima sign” responsibility, T-shirt designer who drove around in a golf cart on race day while everyone else was sweating

Milton and Kathy Moonah – Ice man, helper and participants

Peter Mohan and Alison Moonsie-Mohan – Registration responsibilities extraordinaire, newcomers to Canada who acclimatized by handing out race forms during winter runs.

As for myself, I know the committee members will remember me by the nickname “The Ayatollah”. I can only hope it is with fondness.

On a visit to Naparima College, I was disturbed by the condition of the classrooms and the furniture and saw the need to help. In the last years of this event, we channeled the proceeds towards refurbishing of NC classrooms.

There are many other people to thank for having made this event possible and successful. You know who you are and we thank you again.

This sums up my memories of an event that meant something important to me. We, the former committee, can only hope that what we did, had a positive impact on the recipients of our donations. We continue to have our “Meet and Eat” meetings which have become our tradition.

Rio Maharaj



Glimpses from the Past - The Early Years



Glimpses from the Past ~ The Middle Years



Literary Awards ... One year later

October 13, 2007 marked the date one year after the inception of the NAAC Literary Awards Committee and its formal launch at a Trini- Literary Kaleidoscope Event which received rave reviews. It was the occasion of our second event, a Trini- Tea Party and Indo- Fashion Show with food, elegance and atmosphere.

Having a traditional tea party revived our Trini-colonial heritage in having fine china, fancy sandwiches, cakes, savoury pies, good service, all enhanced by East Indian delicacies. What we now realize is that despite generous help and donations, the demands of preparation, serving and handling guests with grace require personal finesse and gut. So it is with sincerest appreciation that the Committee thanks the donors, helpers and attendees.

The Indo Fashion Show was exquisite - models clad in beautiful East Indian clothing, saris, shalwar-khameez and even the dhoti. The show was interspersed with two professionally executed East Indian dance performances – one an elegant eye-popping classical rendition that would grace any movie screen, and the other a contemporary bhangra dance that drummed up style and energy. There was also a classical Indian solo presentation of Psalm 1 and Sohanee Raat. The program was sophisticated and delightful.



In 2006 NGHS presented, the new “ Literary Award for Creative Writing”, but in 2007 the award was presented at three schools: Iere High School, Naparima Girls’ High School and St. Augustine Girls’ High Schools. We are pleased to tell you about the award recipients. At Iere High School, **Kavita Rajpath’s** work reflects excellence in creative writing as well as in leadership in the school community. She ably represented Iere when she spoke at a Youth Seminar in New York City. **Akeena Legall** of Naparima Girls’ High School, shows particular brilliance in poetry writing. Her poems reveal a mature, sensitive outlook beyond her age. Maybe the reflection on her circumstance of being an only child living with an aunt and planning to join her mother in the USA, inspires her voice and her poems. Then there is **Maria Cardinez** of St. Augustine Girls’ High School, another caring and brilliant youth. Maria was so moved by the tragic situation of her best friend’s family that she wrote and posted poems to console and comfort. This resulted in a bulletin board for poems, and subsequently a poetry club at **SAGHS**.



Such action bespeaks the hopefulness and vision of youth and the committee is proud to support such talent.

The committee and NAAC wish to thank the principals, Mr. Roy Ramlogan, Mrs. Patricia Ramgoolam, and Mrs. Kathleen Anderson and their respective staffs for their support in this endeavour.

To date, we have raised about \$2200 which includes donations. The recent function’s success owes tribute to the following: Ramabai Espinet, Myrtle Gopeesingh, Karma Naike, Ian and Merle Ramdial (NAAC liaison and committee members), Aneesa Oumarally, Darise Crevelle, (Fashion Show Coordinators), Norma and Prem Ramsahai (technical support), Pat Dookie, Aisha Perotte, Brenda Holman, Elsie and Michelle Boodoosingh, Gwen and Sarah Dimon, Winston and Myrna Ramcharan (valuable servers and kitchen helpers), Dr. Desmond Teelucksingh (photographer), and several donors. We cannot undervalue the wit and charm that our President, Selwyn Baboolal brought to the event with his chairmanship.

We look forward to future events, more good times with inspiring results.

Karma Naike

Chair, Literary Awards Committee

Ahh! Fundraising: BINGO

In the early years of the Association's existence, "Fund Raising" was not a major focus. We were happy to meet socially and, if some extra funds came out of it that was great. Our annual dinner/dance in May was the big fund raiser. As we expanded our financial help to the community at large, however, the need for focused fund raising became apparent.

In the early 80's I had been introduced to the power of fund raising through Bingo by my kids' swim team. It was not unusual at that time to show a profit of between \$4,000 and \$7,000 per bingo. I first floated the bingo idea to the executive in 1989. Maybe it was because of our Presbyterian upbringing, but this wonderful idea was turned down by the Executive



of the day. Two years later a more receptive Executive accepted the idea and we started to enjoy the fruits of our bingo labours.

A big debt of gratitude goes out to David Welch of the North York Track and Field Club. Our initial foray into the bingo arena was to piggyback on dates used by that organization. Through my son, Phillip, who was a member of the club, I met Dave and after explaining our need he agreed to help us. Once we were in, we were in.

In 1993 NAAC was granted its own Bingo License by the City of Toronto. Initially we were granted between 12 – 24 bingo sessions per year, but later on we were allotted a whopping 36 bingo sessions per year until the closure of some bingo halls in 2007. For many years revenue from bingo exceeded \$28,000 per year and bingo was our main source of revenue. It was our "cash cow". For the period 1999 to 2007 bingo revenue exceeded \$225,000 and we were looking around for worthy causes to which we could contribute. We not only contributed to the purchase and maintenance of steelband instruments in two Ontario High Schools but also awarded bursaries to high school students; funded the purchases of books to the Toronto school libraries; made large donations to hospitals, churches and other charities and supported cultural and community events.

Unfortunately the returns from bingo started its decline in the 2005-2006 fiscal year when revenue dropped to about \$21,000 that year and then to \$11,000 in 2006-2007.

Returns continued their dramatic slide to just about \$5,000 for the current fiscal year and we are still awaiting some monies promised to the charities upon the closure of our bingo hall in September 2007. It seems bingo revenue is in line with the volatility of the stock markets and economic downturn around the world. However 2008 seems brighter on the bingo revenue front since we are now relocated to a new hall, Ultimate Bingo, and we have been granted 12 bingo sessions for the period July-December 2008. We were given 6 sessions initially for the period January-June 2008 and have seen an average return of about \$450 per session to date.

We would like to recognize the following volunteers for their hard work and dedication in running the bingo sessions over the past years. Please forgive me if I inadvertently left out someone. They are in alphabetical order:

Team Leaders

Roy Bhopalsingh, Vitra Mungal, Rustin Oree, Ian Ramdial and Norma Ramsahai.

Volunteers:

Imogen & Stanley Algoo

Selwyn Baboolal

Darise Crevelle

Fred Debidin

Ashraph Khan

Diane Longley (deceased)

Risel Maharaj

Alison & Peter Mohan

Milton & Kathy Moonah

Karma Naike

Charmaine Nankisoor

Krishna Nankisoor

Aneesa Oumarally

Bobby Oumarally

Winston Ramcharan

Merle Ramdial

Glenda & Anand Ramsahai

Prem Ramsahai

Kathy Sammy

Julian Sammy

Janet Sanayhie

Sheila Satram

David & Sharlene Seemungal

Everald Seupaul

Ras Shreeram

Marlyne & Gerard Sinanansingh

Roger Singh

David Welch

By Rustin Oree & Norma Ramsahai

My Naparima Experience

On a sunny, sticky afternoon, at the top of Lord Street San Fernando, over my primary school's PA system I heard "Aneesa Oumarally 054". 054 was the code for Naparima Girls' High School in the year I wrote the common entrance exam and the thought of passing for my first choice and the elation my parents would feel at hearing the news made me brim over with happiness. I did not know on that day that Naparima - the institution, the alumni, the family - would become such an integral part of my life

My time on La Pique was short, but during my three years I learned a lot. I learned political satire as I donned my ole mas costume; I learned how to ballroom dance with the Pres boys, much to the chagrin of my father; I learned the responsibility of always being prepared, as I sat under the tamarind tree during Ms. Ali's art class for not bringing the appropriate supplies; I learned tact as I sat under the tamarind tree for telling a classmate exactly what I thought of her; learned how to mamaguy as I was the only one in Form 2 who was able to get a new duster from Ms. Rahaman, who held tight to her supplies; I learned to fundraise - when I asked my father to donate a fan to my classroom because it was so hot on afternoons after P.E. in a closed classroom. And of course demeanour classes - how can I forget? I learned to walk with a book on my head; the fine manners of dining; to speak properly and to keep my voice to a bare minimum, which Ms. Mintee Ishmael had mastered. All of these attributes I now embody!

I immigrated to Canada in 1989 without having written the 'O'Level examinations. It did not take long before I became part of the Naparima Alumni attending my first Christmas Dinner and Dance that November. Shortly thereafter I was co-opted by Franklyn Dookheran, a Naps ole boy and then treasurer of the Alumni, to start working coat checks and the front door, which I did with pleasure (of course it was nice at the time to make some extra cash...and get to party too!).

In 1992 I was one of the first recipients of the Naparima bursary. Though some have said that it was "only \$500.00", it meant a lot to me as a student who was working a part-time job earning \$6.25/hr. and needing school supplies and gas money. However, the Naparima bursary went beyond money for me, it was an early recognition of my accomplishments by people in my community, and it gave me a certain confidence that I could accomplish bigger and better things. Even though it does not seem like much, think about a young person, fresh off the boat and trying not only to be comfortable in her own skin in a foreign land, but someone who was trying to leave an indelible mark in her new home. To the Alumni, if I have never said it before, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for awarding me that bursary.

For me, the Naparima experience did not stop the day I left the hill. From the Alumni I learned that community is important and that we each have a part to play in the formation of our community. The Canadian Missionaries gave us a rich heritage to be proud of and we are now in a position to give back to both the Canadian and the community of our ancestors.

This is precisely why I have continued to contribute to my community at large by way of educating people in legal matters through free seminars; counseling young adults; mentoring

future lawyers; doing pro-bono work for persons in need of assistance and assisting in writing policy that would shape the future of young immigrant women.

However I have not forgotten my roots and those who believed in me and thus I made a conscious effort to take a greater role in the Alumni than a mere on-looker. I have had the privilege to be on the executive of the NAAC several times and I have even sat on the Board of Trustees, which was charged with deciding which of the applicants were qualified to receive the bursary. And even when I was not holding a position on the executive, I have continued to contribute by volunteering on various committees.

It has been said that Naparima creates a well-rounded person, and for me this is the truth. I have taken the spirit of Naparima with me in all aspects of life. It is only through a strong faith in God, discipline, hardwork and self-respect that I have been able to accomplish a marriage (to a Naps ole Boy), a law degree, a successful practice and two wonderful children in such a short space of time while still contributing to my community, and of course enjoying myself. My only regret is that my own children will not have the opportunity to walk in the shoes of their grandfather, uncles, aunts and parents to enjoy the Naparima experience.

Happy 30th Anniversary NAAC!

Aneesa Oumarally

Rajesh Ragbir BSc ND

Naturopathic Doctor

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caribbean...



...the beer of the caribbean

PANACHE ... *dash or flamboyance in style and action*

In my mind Panache was born in September 1993 when 9-year old Shelli Karamath played “Amazing Grace” at a Curry-Q organized by NAAC. For about a year prior to that, I was literally begging people to come out for free steelband lessons. After that fateful day I had to put the chains on the door to keep people out. With a greater number of people learning to play pan we were soon able to form a “band”. Some members started to hone their skills by playing out with WHCI’s school band, PANTASTIX.

Eventually, NAAC’s band was formed around 1995. Our first gig was at the Rexdale Alliance Church, with some help from the West Humber students. Under the expert guidance of Pat McNeilly the band’s repertoire and confidence grew. The band rolled through some difficult times and went into hiatus on two separate occasions. In 1998 it was reconstituted and named PANACHE. *Thanks to Dave Rahaman for this exotic sounding name which certainly reflects the character of some members of the band.* The band was outfitted with spiffy-looking attire and had more gigs than they could handle. By the end of that summer PANACHE had played at 19 gigs contributing much needed net income of \$1,761.

There was a rebirth in 2002 under the tutelage of Joe Cullen. Some outstanding organizational work by Anand Ramsahai and Ian Ramdial kept the band together. With the disbanding of The Teachers’ Steelband in 2003 we were fortunate to have a number of these teachers join us. We also lucked out when Blake Stansfield, the musical director/conductor of that Teachers’ steelband joined us in the same capacity and was instrumental in the production of our first CD, ***Simply... Panache***. The first run of 1,000 CDs is virtually sold out and the band is contemplating a second run.

As in the early years, the band’s repertoire and confidence is growing under the guidance of Al Foster. Everything seems to have come full circle because Al Foster along with Nicole Small were two WHCI students who helped us in the first year whenever Pat was away. As a matter of fact Al filled in as drummer that year when the steelband room was in the old “shop” room.

Once again PANACHE is wowing audiences across the GTA and making a healthy financial contribution to the NAAC from its numerous gigs.

Submitted by Rustin Oree

(Editor’s comment...Congrats Panache, we all enjoy listening to and dancing to your music here in Canada. But see the review on the following page done by a Trinidadian in a Trinidad newspaper!)

Newsday, Sunday October 21, 2007

By Angela Pidduck

I asked Alvin Daniell, this country's steelband connoisseur extraordinaire, to review Panache Steelband's CD "Simply...Panache" which was recorded at West Humber Collegiate Institute in Rexdale, Toronto late in 2006, and recently released in Toronto. Daniell found: "The playing is not the intense Panorama style performance we get at Carnival time, nor does it feature the creative roles of a Pan Ramajay, but it has clean, accurate ensemble playing. I love the choice of tunes and the entire CD makes for pleasant and enjoyable listening. There is a definite market (especially internationally) for this type of CD."

But then Ian Ramdial, secretary/steelband representative and guitar pannist Merle Carmichael-Pegus, both Trinis, were clear from the outset: "We are not ready for Pan Alive, the Caribana equivalent to Panorama."

Having listened time and again to this melodic and enjoyable CD, I think that Panache members have terribly underrated their performance, and achievement at the end of just four to five years that they have been back in operation. The band first started in 1998 but became dormant.

Panache Steelband is a community steelband sponsored by the Naparima Alumni Association of Canada, Toronto Unit (NAAC), and is a natural outcome of the community-based steelpan instruction classes that NAAC offers at West Humber C.I. Founded in Toronto in 1978, NAAC consists of past students and staff of educational institutions that were established by Canadian Presbyterian missionaries who began their work in Trinidad in 1868.

Al Foster, a Jamaican, who grew up in Toronto, recently replaced the late Blake Stansfield: "Our band leader who always sought to push us to constantly improve on our skills but he never forgot to compliment us at every turn. He had been with us from the "beginstrument" of this



project and it is because of his belief in the band that we were able to get this CD completed.” The CD is dedicated to Stansfield through whom “Panache has become a better band because of his leadership, genuine love of music, kind heart and sense of humour.

Trinidadian, “Pan Man” Pat Mc Neilly, who has taught pan in Toronto and in Trinidad is the arranger for 11 of the tunes on the tape; his arrangement of “How Great Thou Art” is indeed “great”. Joe Cullen arranged Jamaica Farewell and Hot Hot Hot. Mc Neilly’s music include Brazil, Nabucco, Rivers of Babylon, Footsteps, Lisbon Antigua, Nah Leavin’, Pan in A Minor, Power of Love, Nani Wine, and My Way.

Panache performs all over Toronto and outside of the city as well, and a fortnight ago swung into Kentucky with ten pans to play at a birthday party, a first outside of Canada, and was well received. This community group plays for free at charity gigs, and in some cases for small donations to transport the pans. If the band makes money at an engagement, expenses are taken out and the remainder goes to NAAC, to support their alma mater schools through annual funding for student awards and bursaries. And also to provide financial support for various programmes in Ontario, which include bursaries for graduating high school students, funding for the purchase and maintenance of steelpan instruments in two Toronto-area schools which offer steelpan music credit courses in their regular curriculum; and organizing and funding community oriented steelpan classes.

“We like to play, and are a group of people who always wanted to play pan and so we play just for the joy of it” said Ramdial. “The net proceeds from the sale of “Simply....Panache” CD will be used to foster the programmes that NAAC supports...Many members are teachers or retired teachers, and we think it’s a nice way to foster the spirit of Trinidad & Tobago’s culture through the steelband in the schools.” The CD is available through iramdial@hotmail.com.



Another NAAC Success Story ...

NAAC's idea to introduce the steel band program in the early nineties, for both the community and schools, was a stroke of genius. That program caught my attention after my wife Marion, religiously took our two kids, Sheldon and Shelli to the Wednesday classes tutored by Mr. Pat McNeilly at West Humber Collegiate Institute in Rexdale. My then nine-year-old daughter Shelli, played *Amazing Grace* at a Curry-Q hosted by NAAC and soon after, I started attending the Steel Band after school classes, again instructed by Mr. McNeilly, who went on to be my mentor and tutor in the art of playing the steel pan. If it weren't for the NAAC steel band program and my subsequent involvement, half of my life would have been robbed of the most gratifying, fulfilling and enjoyable episode one can expect.

Back in 1995, Pat McNeilly accompanied by Ian Ramdial and Rustin Oree visited Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute, where I taught, and after a successful meeting with the then principal, Mr. Farber, the steel band partnership program became a reality at the school. There were the Wednesday night NAAC-sponsored classes for the public, Continuing Education classes run by the TDSB, an after-school extracurricular class for school students, which paved the way for the steel band to be incorporated as a Music Credit course in Grades 10, 11 and 12. As a result, all of the above classes still exist today and NAAC still continues to provide financial support in order to purchase and tune instruments and to offer bursaries and awards to CCI students. Starting a steel band program in a high school is a very expensive and difficult task, not to mention other administrative obstacles, so our heartfelt gratitude goes out to NAAC for making it all possible by providing start-up instruments and related support.

The Adult Steel Band program at CCI has touched the lives of many in a very positive way. At least five active steel bands have been formed from players attending classes and many players have taken the art to higher levels performing with big bands at Caribana and other events. One of the reasons Shelli Karamath had successful applications to university and Teachers' College was the amount of community service rendered through the steel band.

The CCI steel band music credit course program is a success story by itself. The school band has performed with distinction and second to none at the following: annually at Panfest, at many schools in and outside of the Toronto District School Board, The Scarborough General Hospital, the Scarborough Civic Centre, George Weston Recital Hall and many other venues. Indeed, two CDs were recorded; *Just For You: A Taste of Steel* and *Pantabulous*, playing a wide selection of musical genres, which included, Soca, Calypso, Reggae, Chutney, East Indian, Folk, Latin and Pop music.

Last year the CCI steel band had a very successful tour of Trinidad visiting and performing at Naparima Girls' HS, Naparima College, Hillview College, Maple Leaf International School,

Williamsville JSS, Piparo and Riversdale Presbyterian and at the Gulf City auditorium.

Once again, on behalf of all the students, Day and Night, who have benefited from the NAAC partnership program with Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute, I wish to congratulate NAAC on their 30th Anniversary and to extend our profound gratitude for making our program here a reality and the success it has turned out to be.

Randolph Karamath

Steel Band Instructor/Teacher Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute

From the archives... 1980/81

September 29, 1980: 43 young ladies from NGHS arrive for a cultural exchange visit to Ontario & Quebec hosted by NAAC and supported by both our Provincial & Federal governments.

Headlines from the Toronto papers ...

- “High school girls from Trinidad invade Toronto”
- “Trinidad’s dancers charm high school crowd : West Indian treat: A group of 43 Trinidadian girls touring Quebec and Ontario as part of a cultural exchange program, made a lasting impression during the first stop yesterday at Keiller Mackay Secondary School in Etobicoke. Backed by the beat of a dozen steel drums, the girls treated the audience to “best thing” that ever happened, one student said.”
- “Sounds of the West Indies – A 50-piece steelband from the Naparima Girls’ High School in San Fernando, Trinidad, entertain in the lobby of Queen’s Park. The group on an exchange visit with Guelph’s Centennial High School, arrived here on Monday and will return home on October 15th. Their itinerary includes performances in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa and Hamilton before they get to meet their hosts in Guelph October 9. They will be participating in Kitchener’s Oktoberfest parade, Oct. 13 prior to returning to Toronto and flying home.”

Glimpses from the Past - The Later Years



Glimpses from the Past - The Later Years

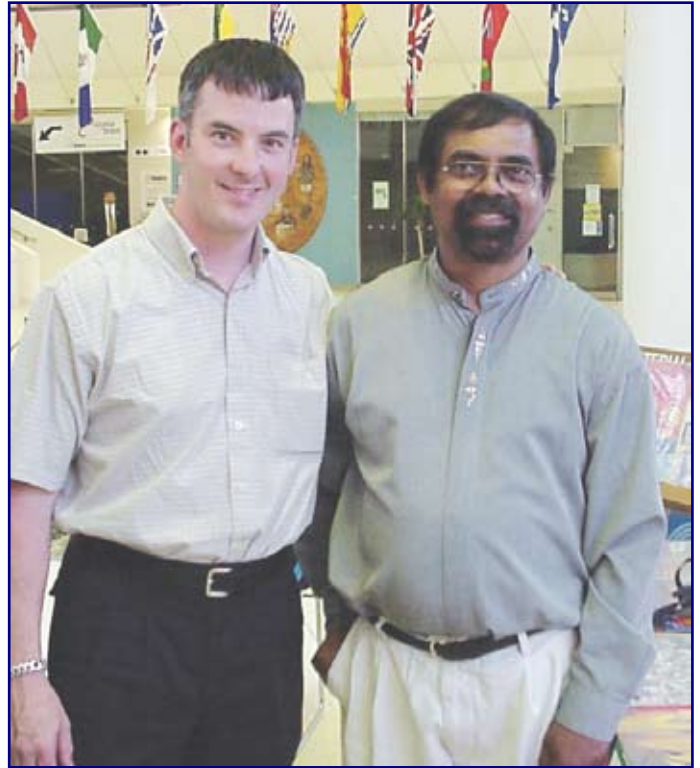


Thank you, Naparíma Alumni! from West Humber Collegiate

When Merle Ramdial asked me to write a few words for this special issue for the NAAC, I was delighted to have this opportunity. Simply put, the NAAC has been incredibly supportive of the music program at West Humber Collegiate, and without the NAAC, our program would not be as successful as it is today. Thank you!

Where do we start when thanking the NAAC? Let's start with the awards and bursaries, generously provided by the NAAC for our steel pan stars. When I first arrived at WHCI in 1996, Pat McNeilly had chosen the winners for the steel band award, and I had the honour of giving those awards to the recipients at our September Awards Ceremony. It was a tie between Andrew and Annette Gabriel, two very strong pannists who had performed with WHCI, and also with the "Pantastix", the WHCI & NACI combined group that Pat had started.

Since there was no actual "hardware" for the award, I had a plaque made up in the shape of a shield, with a pan on it. This prestigious NAAC steel pan award has been given out each year to a very deserving musician in the pan program at West Humber. It provides great incentive for our pannists to strive to greater heights in music. The NAAC bursary for graduating students also is a wonderful thing for our program as well. Every year, I invite our graduating students to write a short essay about what they learned in steel pan class, and what they contributed to better the program over the past four years. Some of these essays are very interesting to read. One thing I often read is: "In grade eleven my parents didn't want me to continue in steel pan so I could focus on my academics. I convinced them that I needed balance in my timetable, and frankly I wanted to stay in pan for grade twelve in order to have a chance at the NAAC bursary or steel pan award. I am glad I stuck with it" As a music teacher there is no denying that the awards and bursaries do provide incentive for students to not only stay in pan for four years, but to strive to be their best throughout



Joe Cullen and Randolph Karamath

Thank you, Naparíma Alumni! (continued)

all four years. This is a very generous gift by the NAAC and is very much appreciated by students, administration, teachers and students alike.

Secondly, the equipment at West Humber would not be where it is without the support of the NAAC. When I first took over the program when Pat went back to Trinidad, the program had about 60% of the pans it has now. For several years running, the NAAC either bought us one pan each year or shared the cost with the school in order for us to have enough pans to build into a large class. Once the room became too full to add any more pans, (we still have to give the students a place to sit to do their music theory!) we upgraded the bass stands (the rolling carts made by Ras Shreeram) so we can move the six-basses from trucks to auditoriums quite easily when doing concerts. We now have what may be the largest steel pan credit course in Canada. There are still some pans to replace and some stands to perhaps chrome plate, but we are in very good shape, with many thanks once again to the NAAC.

The partnership with Panache is also a wonderful thing. Although the name Panache didn't come into play until recently, I will refer to the NAAC steel band as Panache here. Over the years, I was given the special opportunity to conduct, teach, and arrange music for this group, which I really enjoyed doing. Thinking back to the earlier years with Rustin, Rio, Terry, Shirley, Rudy, Leela, Peter, Margaret, John, Jason, Ron, David, Winston, and many others....it seems so long ago! Rustin taught me to pace myself while moving pans and loading and unloading trucks...Rio was the perfect role model at Panache, full of optimism, tact, and always had a smile. Ron brought in CDs of the latest pan tunes to keep me up to date. Others brought in doubles, alloo pies, and other refreshments (!) each week. Rustin also played pan parts over and over while I transcribed them into sheet music. Of course this was followed by Terry disagreeing with how the song went, since Pat's arrangements changed on a daily basis! Every minute was a blast. It was a cultural awakening that I couldn't get enough of.

Panache has always treated our room and our equipment with great care and respect and we enjoy sharing our fine facilities with them. We have had some great music nights in the past with Panache as our guest artists and I hope that next year we will do a truly combined piece, when Al and I can get together to work something out. I also have enjoyed seeing some of our pan students go on to work with Panache and continue their love of pan, pannists like Michael, Tremaine, Dina, Darshan, Umar, Christine, and others. We are going to need a second pan room at WHCI if this keeps up!

All the members of Panache were happy to teach me the meaning of the Trini expressions. It was great to learn the meaning of "Wine Yuh Waist" and what "Parang" was. Pat gave

Thank you, Naparíma Alumni! (continued)

me a lot of support to be myself and just teach pan my way. He also introduced me to many pan tuners, pan players and others in the pan community to help me learn my way around. Howard and Kathy Sammy's trip planning and hosting us in Trinidad in 1997 was something I will never ever forget. What an experience! Playing with Exodus was absolutely incredible. So were the beaches, the food, the music, the people...it goes on and on! This Trini community is something else!

I must also mention the generous donations the NAAC gave WHCI when we made our two CDs. When the road to financing the CD seemed so steep, the NAAC was one of the first to make a donation to help us with the recording costs. That gave me the inspiration to believe it was going to become a reality, and spurred me on to *go for it*. Our students were overjoyed when we received that cheque, and the energy in the room was magical. The resulting CDs are still selling strong and in their second and third pressings. NAAC helped create an exciting tradition at WHCI! Once again, the NAAC support helped make the dreams of our program become a reality. Sounds cliché but very true!

I know I have left out some very important people in this article, but the publishing deadline awaits as does a huge list of things to do for our Music Trip to New York City! Thanks very much to all the NAAC members who have helped WHCI provide a pan program for students that helps to keep them in school, to inspire them to succeed, and to motivate them to believe in themselves due to the power and magic of music and steel pan!

*Joe Cullen,
Head of Music,
West Humber CI*

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“The Naparima Alumni Association of Canada is a secular organization open to members of all ethnic and religious backgrounds who fulfill the membership requirements and adhere to the aims and objects of the Association.”

Chronology

— NAAC MILESTONES & SUPPORT —

1978 – 79

- Founding of NAAC

1979 – 80

- New constitution was accepted and printed.
- Quebec unit formed
- Donations of \$100 each to alumnus high schools and St. Andrew’s Theological College

1980 – 81

- Donations of Collier’s Encyclopedia sets to Iere High School and Hillview College on their 25th anniversary
- Sponsored exchange visit between Naparima Girls’ High School and Centennial Collegiate Vocational Institute (Guelph)

1981 – 82

- Hosted visit by Naparima College Sea Scouts

1982 – 83

- Donations of \$100 to the Iere Home and \$200 to St. Andrew’s Theological College’s outreach program
- First Family Retreat Weekend held at Claremont Education Field Centre
- Children’s Executive formed
- Associate members granted voting rights
- Founding member of The Federation of Trinidad and Tobago Organizations in Ontario

1983 – 84

- Initiated Citizenship and book awards to each of the five high schools in Trinidad
- Sponsored St. Augustine Girls’ High School – Vincent Massey Collegiate Institute (Etobicoke) exchange visit

1984 – 85

- Sponsored conference of the “West Indian-Ontarian: Societal involvement”

Chronology: NAAC Milestones & Support continued

1985 – 86

- Incorporation of the Naparima Alumni Association of Canada (Toronto) in Ontario
- Donation of auditorium lighting to Naparima Girls' High School

1986 – 87

- Naparima Girls' High School Diamond Jubilee fundraising
- Launch of NAAC's 10th Anniversary celebrations

1987 – 1988

- Start of Tenth Anniversary Cultural Week celebrations. Sponsored San Fernando Theatre Workshop production of Willie Chen's *Freedom Road* in Canada.

1988 – 1989

- Donated 5,000 exercise books, bookmarks & balloons. Shipped to San Fernando to celebrate the formation of the new City of San Fernando, where they were distributed to all primary students.
- Last year of the annual Family Retreat Weekend

1990 – 91

- Initiated the bursary program in Trinidad
-\$500 to a graduating student from each of the five high schools.
- Donation of \$500 to Naparima College's rewiring project
- Donation of \$500 to Hillview's building fund

1991 – 92

- Sponsored St. Augustine Girls' High School Alumnae Choir visit to Ontario and its *Festivals of a Rainbow Country – Trinidad & Tobago*
- Donated \$500 to St. Andrew's Theological College's Centennial building fund
- Bingo sessions assigned through North York Athletic Club as a means of fund raising for NAAC

1992 – 93

- Initiated a partnership program with West Humber Collegiate Institute to assist in the purchase and maintenance of instruments for the school's steelband program.
- Donation to University of Toronto's Emmanuel College scholarship fund in memory of Rev. James Forbes Seunarine
- Initiated five Canadian bursary awards of \$500 each to students graduating from Ontario high schools to attend post secondary institutions.

Chronology: NAAC Milestones & Support continued

1993 – 94

- Donated 1000 books to the Carnegie Library in San Fernando. This completed NAAC's Carnegie Library 1000 Project.
- Donation of \$3,200 made to the Scarborough Board of Education for Canadian Citizenship awards at six schools
- Initiated NAPs 100 Project in support of Naparima College centenary project to build an auditorium/gymnasium
- Co-sponsored education conference *Education in the 90s: Is it working?*

1994 – 95

- Initiated Steelband Partnership program at Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute, similar to WHCI's partnership program.
- Donations to the WHCI & Cedarbrae CI total \$6,000.
- NAAC granted its own bingo license to manage sessions to raise funds for the Association
- Donation of \$1,000 made to Tarana Dance group
- Presented Showcase '95 – a variety concert reflecting the multicultural mosaic that is Trinidad and Tobago – proceeds towards the Naps 100 project

1995 - 96

- Launched the NGHS Building project – tea party, bowlathon & Showcase 96

1996 – 97

- Donation of \$6,220 made to NGHS building fund
- Donations made to Devon Hospital, Alberta and St. Andrew's Theological College, Trinidad, in memory of Rev. Roy G. Neehall

1997 – 98

- Donation of \$500 to Scarborough Public Library Board towards materials for its Black and Caribbean Heritage collection
- Entered steelband partnership program with Durham Board of Education, similar to WHCI & Cedarbrae CI

1998 – 99

- Support of \$1,000 to alumnus Rabindranath Maharaj for his new novel, *The Lagahoo's Apprentice*
- Donation of \$3,100 to Iere High School for purchase of 100 chairs
- Donation of \$500 for 28 Caribbean titles to the Toronto Public Library

Chronology: NAAC Milestones & Support continued

1999 – 2000

- Donation of \$1,200 to J.C. MacDonald House for the Aged in San Fernando in memory of NAAC two-time president, Harold Naphtali
- Partner in donation of books (est. value US \$250,000) to UWI, St. Augustine, National Library and the libraries of the five alma mater schools
- First NAAC 5K Fun Run/Walk 2000

2000 – 2001

- NAAC awarded Medal of Merit by the government of Trinidad and Tobago for outstanding and meritorious service in the public area
- NAAC's silver anniversary celebrations launched with church service
- Donation of \$1,500 made to Naparima College Old Boys' Association for refurbishment of classroom furniture at Naparima College

2001 – 2002

- Donation of \$1,000 to York University's Jagan Lecture Series
- Donation of \$500 to Youth Without Shelter
- Donation of \$300 to Knox Presbyterian Church

2002 – 2003

- Donation of \$1,000 to North Brampton United Church Outreach program
- Donation of \$1,000 to Sunnybrook Hospital
- Donation of \$1,000 to Youth Without Shelter
- Donation of \$1,000 to Caribbean Children Foundation
- Donation of \$1,000 to the University Health Network Patient's Account

2003 – 2004

- Social/Education Committee arranged a successful Wine Tour of the Niagara Wine Region
- Seminar on The Art of Feng Shui

2004 – 2005

- Donation to the Ontario March of Dimes \$2,500 for purchase and installation of a picnic table to accommodate the disabled at Huron Park in Toronto, in the name of Rev. Arthur & Mrs. Bessie Dayfoot

Chronology: NAAC Milestones & Support continued

2005 – 2006

- Launched our own website www.naactoronto.ca
- Donation of \$500 made to NGHS Alumnae Association towards an *Anthology of Past Students' Writings* in memory of Beulah Meghu
- Donation of \$350 made to Rev. J.E.W. Newbery Bursary fund
- Donation of \$500 made to fund a bursary at York University in memory of Harold Mahabir

2006 – 2007

- NAAC Trini Kaleidoscope event. Proceeds to fund literary awards for creative writing to be given to Fifth Form female students. The first award in 2006, the Meghu/Scrimgeour Literary award of \$150, was presented to a student at NGHS
- Disbursement of C\$45,840 being the total of the Naps 100 Fund, sent to Naparima College towards the completion of the gymnasium
- Donation in the amount of \$3,000 sent to Naparima College Old Boys' Trust Fund. (Proceeds from the 2005 5K Fun Run/Walk)
- Silent Auction of four of Ian Ali's original oil paintings. Proceeds to be donated to SAGHS Building Fund

2007-2008

- NAAC's Panache Steelband launched its first CD titled *Simply ... Panache* with a run of 1,000 copies
- Trini-Tea Party and Indo- Fashion Show, October 2007. Proceeds to fund additional annual Literary Writing Awards at SAGHS & Iere High School
- Donation of \$950, which represented the proceeds from the silent auction of paintings, forwarded to SAGHS Building Fund.

Note: *Since 1991 NAAC has donated an annual amount of Cdn \$5,600 to fund scholarships, book awards and educational resources at our five alma mater schools. Total funding from 1991 to 2007 is Cdn \$89,600.*

Glimpses from the Past - The Later Years



Glimpses from the Past - The Later Years



NAAC Ontario Student Member
Bursary Winners
1992 to 2005

1992

Tricia Gopaulsingh
Usha Maharaj
Aneesa Oumarally
Renee Rameshwar
Joy Sammy

1993

Praveen Bissoondial
Phillip Oree
Colin Ramdeen

1994

Pamela Ally
John Francis
Alyssa Grant
Omar Khan
Tisha Mohammed
Adele Ramcharan

1995

Kavita Maharaj
Stacey Oree
Phillip Ramcharan
Warren Ramcharan

1996

Christopher Basdeo
Kaveer Chatoorgoon
Lisa-Marie Inman
Suzette Ramcharan
Randy Shah

1997

Christopher Charles

1998

Rani Chatoorgoon
Bryan Heal
Derek Inman
Imran Khan
Nadine Ramsahai
Roxanne Roopchand

1999

Catherine Longley

2001

Kelly Longley

2002

Shelli Karamath

2003

Jivan Ramsahai
Jeremy Thomas

2004

Victoria Kuketz
Natasha Nankissoor
Stephanie Nankissoor

2005

Kristin Poon
Laura Maharaj

March 8, 2008

The NAAC Executive

Dear Friends,

It gives me great pleasure and satisfaction to

Congratulate NAAC on the 30th Anniversary of their existence.

Whenever the name Naparima is mentioned, my thoughts are flooded with one word, "GRATITUDE".

It is in this same attitude of gratitude that I salute you for your faithful, devoted and loyal commitment to serving as a link to the past and present of our cherished institutions. I even enjoy the pictures where I can see old familiar faces. (And some of them are really looking old, or shall I say mature?)

This year will be 61 years since I graduated from Naparima College and 52 years from Naparima Teachers' Training College.

I will be forever grateful to the men and women of Canada who had a vision to come to Trinidad and establish institutions of learning for 'every creed and race.'

We are the fruits of that labour of love and NAAC is an extension of that fruitfulness in Canada.

May God Bless and Strengthen You and give you the energy to continue this valuable service to which you have been called.

Gratefully Yours,

Reverend Albert Baldeo

Kelowna, B.C.

*From
NAAC Newsletter, June
1980, Vol.3, No. II,
Section
titled:
Overheard at
the Party*

When man 60, marry
girl 25 ... like buying
book for someone
else to read.

Man who gives in
when wrong, is wise
...but man who gives
in when right ...
is married.

Woman know
value of love ...
man know cost.

Better for man to
first get something
in eye and wink ...
rather than wink
and then get
something in eye!

Glimpses from the Past - The Later Years



*Congratulations to
NAAC on 30 years of service
to the community*

David D. Seemungal
D.D.S.

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