



“BROADCAST”

Newsletter of the Toronto Unit

Naparima Alumni Association of Canada

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

Vol. XXXII No. 1

Fall 2008



*Dr. Ramabai Espinet
making a presentation to the
featured speaker, Dr. Aleem Mohammed*



OUMARALLY, BABOOLAL

Barristers and Solicitors



Aneesa Oumarally, B.A., (Hons.) LL.B.
Selwyn R. Baboolal, B.A., (Hons.) LL.B.

**3351 Cedar Creek Drive
Mississauga, Ontario
L4Y 2X9**

**T: (905) 366-5400
F: (905) 366-5404
e-mail: aneesa@oblaw.ca**

Real Estate

Criminal

Personal Injury

Civil Litigation

Wills & Estates

Corporate Commercial

Family

The Naparima Alumni Association of Canada (NAAC) was founded in Toronto in 1978 and includes graduates of Naparima College, Naparima Girls' High School, St. Augustine Girls' High School, Hillview College, Iere High School, Naparima Teachers' Training College and St. Andrew's Theological College. Among other things, it supports programmes at alma mater schools as well as a steelband programme in schools in the Toronto area. All graduates coming to Ontario are invited to join the Association.

2008-09 NAAC Executive

President	Merle Ramdial	905-844-1254	mjramdial@hotmail.com
Past President	Selwyn Baboolal	905-366-5400	selwyn@oblaw.ca
Treasurer	Norma Ramsahai	416-283-0675	npramsahai@rogers.com
Secretary	Vilma Ramcharan	416-284-5198	viram@rogers.com
Assistant Secretary	Ras Shreeram	416-743-1331	rasras@rogers.com
Executive Member	Pam Rambharack	905-275-4201	prambharack@hotmail.com
Executive Member	Sheila Satram	905-812-5182	isatram@yahoo.ca

CREDITS

“Broadcast” is the newsletter of the Naparima Alumni Association of Canada, Toronto Unit and is published twice a year. The views expressed in articles published are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Executive or of the Association unless specifically stated as such.

Editor: Merle Ramdial
 Advertising: Ras Shreeram • 416-743-1331
 Layout & Printing: Bluetree Graphics Inc.
 416-878-5218

Contributions and Correspondence should be forwarded to: The Editor, “broadcast”
 NAAC,
 Bridlewood Mall Postal Outlet
 P.O. Box 92175
 2900 Warden Avenue
 Scarborough, ON M1W 3Y9

Web Site: www.naactoronto.ca

CONTENTS

President’s Message	2
Editor’s Note.....	2
Finance Report	3
Communications Report	3
Bingo Report	4
Membership Report.....	4
Naparima Girls’ High Class of 1959.....	5
Steelband Report	6
Steel Pan Comes to Sudbury	7
Consul General’s Diaspora Award for Excellence.....	8-9
Lagniappe 2008: Literary Awards Committee	10
Diane Lynette Longley.....	11
Poem: Perception.....	13
Notices	15
NAAC Celebrates 30 Years.....	16
“If Thy Right Eye Offend Thee”	19-26
Remembering Catherine Marie (Dayfoot) Muller.....	27
Caribbean-Flavoured Presbyterianism.....	28-30
Vera Baney speech at UWI Graduation	31-32

President's Message

Thanks to our members, friends and supporters for making our 30th Anniversary dinner and dance such an enjoyable occasion. As we continue the work of our association in this special year, I am extremely pleased to welcome Pam Rambharack, Vilma Ramcharan, Sheila Satram and Ras Shreeram to our Executive team for 2008-09. I count heavily on the advice and guidance of the two returning members, Selwyn Baboolal, our Past President and Norma Ramsahai, our Treasurer.

I must also thank Ian Ramdial for the many years that he served on the Executive and although his name is not on the roster, believe me when I say that he continues to actively promote and support NAAC's programs. The other outgoing members of the Executive, Vitra Mungal, Darise Crevelle and Vernon Dowlath received "thank you" letters earlier.

Our team will continue working on the initiatives that were approved during the past year, and we'll proceed with caution this year, as we watch the economies of both Canada and the US closely heading into elections. NAAC's finances are in good shape, but with so many disasters around the world and the many charities vying for donations, major fundraising for our organization will be kept to our Christmas Dinner/Dance (November 29th) and to our work at bingo sessions to support the steelband teaching programs. In addition, our Social Committee is planning smaller events that will yield small profits with a guarantee of great fun. Monies received from Panache gigs and sale of their CD have boosted our savings.

To add to this year's celebration, we were just informed that NAAC has been selected to receive the Consul General's Diaspora Award for Excellence for 2008!

I look forward to your attendance at the General Meeting on November 8th, 2008. Please feel free to call me to discuss your ideas and suggestions for the future of NAAC.

Hope your pine seedlings have taken root over the summer!

Merle Ramdial

Editor's Note

Here it is, the Fall 2008 issue of *Broadcast*, which includes a reminder to prospective bursary applicants to get their forms filled out with the requisite attachments in time to be eligible for one of NAAC's awards. The deadline for applications is November 14, 2008. There are several notices with important dates that should be highlighted on your calendars. Over the past six months, three of our life members have passed on, and although we were saddened at their passing, their lives are celebrated in three separate articles within.

NAAC received a sample of writing from a student of Iere High School, who received the NAAC Iere-Wagar literary award for 2008. We are pleased to include one of Kavita Rajpath's pieces. We look forward to receiving samples from the other schools' literary award recipients.

In the past Vince Foster's articles have been well-received by readers of *Broadcast*, and we are again able to publish a piece which he wrote over the last days of this summer. His article titled, "If thy right eye offend thee..." starts on page 19.

Starting on page 28 is a review by Dr. Brinsley Samaroo of Dr. Jerome Teelucksingh's interesting new book, *Caribbean-Flavoured Presbyterianism*.

Late-breaking news ... NAAC has been selected to receive the Consul General's Diaspora Award for 2008. The official letter of notification is reproduced on pages 8 and 9. Members of the Executive attended a gala at the Westin Harbour Castle Hotel in Toronto, on Saturday September 27th, at which time a formal presentation of the award was made by the Consul General for the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago, Mr. Michael Lashley in the presence of the High Commissioner, Her Excellency Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis. Look for further coverage in the next issue of *Broadcast*.

Note: Letters to the Editor are always welcome. You may email me at mjramdial@hotmail.com

Merle

Finance Report

This report reflects the Association's financial affairs as at August 31, 2008.

Bingo Account

Bank Account (BNS) \$1,596.87

General Account

Bank Account (BNS) \$34,860.15

TOTAL BANK ACCOUNTS \$36,457.02

NAAC Investments

Bank of Nova Scotia - Term Deposit
- Balance @ August 31, 2008 \$ 1,175.00

Edward Jones - GIC @ 4%
Maturing Dec. 31, 2008 \$10,976.00

Scotia McLeod - Inter Pipeline Fund:
1600 Units - B.V. per unit \$10.00 \$16,000.00

**Dividends earned - Apr/08-July/08 \$ 448.00

TOTAL INVESTMENTS \$28,599.00

*Market value of the Inter Pipeline Funds at July 31, 2008 was \$9.87. **The Fund continues to earn dividends at a rate of \$112 per month which gives us a return of 8.4 % per annum on that investment.

The Association will be financing its commitments to the schools in Trinidad in the amount of \$5,600.00 in September, 2008. We also made a donation to Krisendaye Ramai, a past student of Naparima Girls' High School, in the amount of \$500.00 in July 2008. Krisendaye's daughter was a patient at Sick Kids Hospital and the family was in need of financial assistance.

For the current fiscal year to date the main events that contributed to the Association's revenue pool was the 30th Anniversary Dinner & Dance held on May 24th at Holiday Inn Select, and the bingo sessions for the period April to August. Our net profit for the 30th Anniversary dinner & dance was \$2,001.00, and for the bingo sessions \$4,000.00.

Respectfully submitted
Norma Ramsahai,
Treasurer

Communications Report

The 30th Anniversary Commemorative Edition was ready in time to be handed out at the Dinner/Dance on May 24th. This was planned so as to save on mailing this particular issue, which was 56 pages, full-colour and heavier than usual. The cost of mailing a single copy within Canada is \$5.80.

The total publishing costs for 350 copies was \$5,378. We have extra copies available, so if you wish to receive additional copies, please send your cheque made out to NAAC for **\$15 + postage**.

Overall, feedback on the content was positive. However several of our younger members did not recognize the people in the photographs from the early years and suggested that captions should be added. I agree that to fully preserve the history of our Association, this should be done as soon as possible.

I am in the process of preparing an online picture album that will include all of those photographs. I will need help in identifying some of the people, but so far, I know all of the missionaries who were head table guests at the Inaugural Dinner in 1978.

For the other photos, please do not hesitate to send me a message if your picture was included in the Anniversary edition. Quote the page number along with the position of the photo on the page and the names. I would like to get most of the captions done before posting the album to NAAC's website.

Thanks again to our contributors and special thanks to our advertisers and to our printer Bluetree Graphics.

Merle Ramdial

Chair, Communications Committee

CONGRATULATIONS To ...
Winston & Myrna Ramcharan on the birth of
their first grandchild, Asia Noel King.

and to

Amar & Shamila Maharaj on
the birth of a daughter.

Bingo Report

We are now settled into running bingo sessions at our new venue, Ultimate Bingo Charity Association, 2355 Keele St, Toronto, Ontario which started January 2008. The process in conducting the bingo sessions has changed and volunteers have had hands-on experience under the direction of the team leaders. For the current fiscal period, April 1st 2008 to August 31, 2008, NAAC was responsible for 7 bingo sessions. Revenue earned for that period with an estimated projection for August/08 amounts to approximately \$4.0 K. This averaged out to about \$550.00 per session, an increase of about \$220.00 per session over the same time period last year.

The increase in revenue per bingo session is good news and we hope that this profitability will continue and that NAAC would be granted more bingo sessions in the future.

The Ultimate Bingo Charity Association has a membership of about 50 charities with NAAC being one of them.

For this fiscal year, bingo revenue was used for paying honoraria to steelband instructors at West Humber Collegiate and Cedarbrae Collegiate plus covering 50% of the cost of steelpan tuning at these two schools.

Again special thanks to all our volunteers and team leaders for their help and commitment in running bingo sessions. We look forward to your continued contribution and support.

Norma Ramsahai
Bingo Coordinator

Membership Report

This is a call to renew or become a member of the longest surviving organization of Trinbagonians outside the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago – 30 years and counting! We have 265 registered members for the 2008 year with 46 others due for renewals.

We have also changed our constitution to allow anyone who has been an active Associate member the opportunity to upgrade their status to become a Regular member after two years, instead of the previous requirement of three years.

Over the next few months someone from the membership committee will be contacting you to renew and canvass for new members, both Regular and Associate. As an added incentive all new members will qualify for a special prize to be drawn at our Christmas dinner and dance on November 29.

Annual membership is for the period January to December each year. Anyone interested in becoming a member can contact Pam Rambharack at 905 275 4201 or Ras Shreeram at 416 743 1331. Membership forms may also be downloaded from our website www.naactoronto.ca

Membership for 2008:

Honorary	26
Life	175
Annual	49
Student	15
Total	265

Ras Shreeram
Chair, Membership Committee



NOTICE of NAAC's GENERAL MEETING

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 8th, 2008

1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

at

The Montessori Teacher Training Centre
1050 McNicoll Avenue, Scarborough, ON

Naparima Girls' High Class of 1959

*Calling all Naparima girls of 1959
To a great event planned for 2009
'Twill be 50 years since we left the hill
Come and celebrate- "fete to kill"!*

*Begin to plan but let us know
So we can make it "gran for so"
Tell your classmates so they can be
Part of the fun planned for you and me.*

*It's not too early to register your intent
By sending information via internet
To all the names listed below.
Begin to collect your mementos and let us know.*

*As we wait for information coming on line
Please contact us to get more about October 2009*

Contacts:

Lynette (Albert) Boodhoo

E-mail: lcboodhoo@hotmail.com • Phone 305-246-5988 • Cell: 305-613-6419 (Florida-USA)

Judith (Ramberansingh) Rampersad

E-mail: iduj@tstt.net.tt

The Naparima Alumni Association of Canada

Christmas Dinner & Dance

— Saturday November 29th, 2008 —



**at Elite Banquet Hall
1850 Albion Road, Rexdale**

**Time: 6:00 p.m. • Dinner: 7:00 p.m.
Dress: Formal Cash Bar**



Music by: DJ Packnin & Panache Steelband

Tickets: \$50 • Members / \$55 • Non Members

Steelband Report

School Support:

For the 2008-2009 school year, expectations are that the funding of the steelband awards and bursaries to students in our two partnership schools will continue as NAAC has been given more bingo sessions for the coming six months. Whether there will be any further support beyond the tuning of pans in the classrooms will depend on the income derived from these bingo sessions.

Community Steelband Teaching Programme:

After school Community Classes at both Cedarbrae Collegiate and West Humber Collegiate have resumed for the 2008 – 2009 school year under the guidance of tutors Randolph Karamath and Al Foster respectively. Persons interested in learning to play a steelpan instrument should check the notice below and phone the appropriate contact person.

Panache Steelband:

Since the start of the calendar year, the Panache Steelband has performed on 8 occasions including NAAC's 30th Anniversary Dinner/Dance in May. The summer months were relatively quiet with two private gigs in July and a high profile exposure at the Canada Day gala at the Whitby Centrum on July 1. More recently the band was invited to the Caledon Knox United Church to perform at their annual Rally Day on September 7. Upcoming gigs to the end of the year include Howard & Kathy Sammy's Country Lime on September 21st, a charity gig at St. Clement's Church on October 24th and the NAAC Christmas Dinner/Dance on November 29th.

For your information, the original 1000 copies of the band's CD, *Simply ... Panache*, have been sold out and another 1000 copies have been duplicated.

To order copies, please contact Sheila Satram at 905-812-5182.

Sheila Satram

Steelband Liaison



**Early arrivals at the
Sammy Family Country Lime**

NOTICE - Steelband Classes

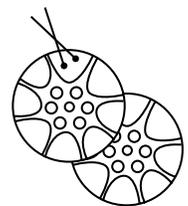
Steelband classes for the 2008/2009 season have resumed at the following two venues:

West Humber Collegiate Institute

Start Date: Wednesday Sept 10, 2008

Time: 6:30 – 9:30 pm

Instructor: Al Foster



Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute

Start Date: Monday Sept 15, 2008

Time: 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Instructor: Randolph Karamath

Steelband classes will be held weekly. Anyone interested in joining the classes can contact Sheila Satram at 905-812-5182 or Randolph Karamath at 416-283-4152

Steel Pan Comes to Sudbury in June 2008 Led by The Rev. Joseph Sahadat, President and CEO of Steel Pan Academy of Greater Sudbury

While driving in northern Ontario searching for camping grounds, I discovered CKLU 96.7 fm with steel pan music playing in the background. The radio host was calling out to his audience saying:



“Welcome to another edition of Lunch with D Trini. I am your host Joseph Sahadat taking you to the Caribbean Isles where there will be steel pan music and classics on steel for your relaxing pleasure.”

As I continued my journey I saw posters giving directions to the pan yard which read, “Come and hear the steel pan in action at the corner of Kathleen and 200 Simon Lake Road, June 14.” My love for steel pan music and my enthusiasm to learn the instrument had the better of me. I stopped and programmed my GPS to this new-found address which took me to the pan yard, where I heard the voice of an old friend and United Church of Canada Minister, the Rev. Joseph Sahadat. He was dressed in a rainbow of colours, straw hat, and pontificating to a crowd of about one hundred and fifty in these words, and I quote, ***“Steel Pan Is the Oxygen Of The Soul, It Dwells In The Heart of The True Lover of Music.”***

My wife commented to the family that Joseph



Sahadat was our minister when we were in Trinidad. We had the biggest and most active youth group. He included everyone by breaking every barrier of race and religion. He was a true friend whom we nicknamed Jersey. He loved it and we loved him. We had lots of fun. Jersey hasn't changed. He used to say people come first and was always doing something to make them laugh, keeping them happy. I remember the weekend parties he organized with all the youth groups. Jersey used to talk about organizing a Steel Band. Today, his dreams have come true.



In his closing remarks he thanked the people for attending the event. He also thanked Hon. Dianne Marleau, M.P., the President of the Sudbury Multicultural and Folk Arts Association Meho Halimich, Inspector Eugene Toffoli of the Greater Sudbury Police Service and other dignitaries who lead them to the Pan Galley for the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the residence in Naughton. It was a beautiful sunny Saturday evening. The air was filled with the sound of steel pan music and the aroma of fresh fruits, vegetables, tea, coffee and cakes. The band rendered a symphony of Canadian folk songs, East Indian music and a host of Caribbean medleys with calypsos, and classical music. The crowd soon followed the dancing steps of the few Trinidadians in their midst.

Classes are being offered and steel pans are made accessible and available on a rental basis and for sale. Please feel free to connect with him at sofiei@sympatico.ca

Article submitted by Rohan

(Joseph Sahadat attended Naparima College and is a Life member of NAAC).



**CONSULATE GENERAL
OF THE
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

TELEPHONE: (416) 495-9442/3

FAX: (416) 495-6934

Email: congen@ttconsulatetoronto.com

2005 SHEPPARD AVE E. STE. 303

TORONTO, ONTARIO, M2J 5B4

Website: www.ttconsulatetoronto.com

Entrance to the Consulate General is on Yorkland Rd)

TOR:I&C:: 1/11/3-1 Vol.5

September 15, 2008

Mrs. Merle Ramdial
President
Naparima Alumni Association of Canada
Bridlewood Mall Postal Outlet
P.O. Box 92175
2900 Warden Avenue
Scarborough, ON M1W 3Y9

Dear Mrs. Ramdial,

Congratulations!

I have the pleasure to inform you that the Naparima Alumni Association of Canada has been selected to receive the Consul General's Diaspora Award for Excellence for this year 2008 for its decades of community work and its major contribution to the seven "Naparima" schools in Trinidad and Tobago.

This award was inaugurated in 2007 and is intended to recognize and celebrate persons from the Trinidad and Tobago community who have excelled in one or more fields of endeavour, thus making major contributions to their adopted home, Canada. While the first event on September 23, 2007 focused on dance, music and the Carnival Arts in a "Celebration of Trinidad and Tobago: Cultural Gifts to the World", it is also important to acknowledge our contributions to the full range of professional and community activities, including especially education, community development, law, business urban renewal, the literary arts, architecture, medicine, health, public service, security services (Police/Military/Civil Defence) and information and communication technology.

The criteria for the selection of awards are as follows-

- Eligibility: A member of the Trinidad and Tobago community (preferably) in Ontario.

- **Achievements:** Must be extraordinary. The achievements must represent a body of work which extends over an extended period of time – a lifetime of work not a single act.
- **A most important personal characteristic:** A person of good public repute.
- The individual does not necessarily have to be a member of one of the Trinidad and Tobago associations in Ontario.
- **An exemplary individual:** A person who is outstanding in the areas of initiative, hardwork, reliability and, above all, his/her community service ought to be “beyond the call of duty”.
- There is no limitation with respect to the area of expertise or achievement of the candidate.

On that basis, I considered in 2007 a number of nominees suggested to me and in my own deliberate judgement, I conferred awards on Mr. Robert Fung (for his achievements in the fields of Business and Urban Renewal) and on Justice Selwyn Romilly (for his achievements in the field of Law). The conferral took place at the Celebration referred to earlier.

The award will be conferred on the Naparima Alumni Association of Canada on Saturday September 27, 2008 at the Charity Dinner Gala entitled “Cutting Style: A Taste of Trinidad and Tobago in Fashion and Textiles” which will be held at the Westin Harbour Castle, 1 Harbour Square (Queen’s Quay West), Toronto. The Doors open at 6.30 p.m. and Dinner will be served at 8.00 p.m.

A copy of an earlier document that provides details on this Gala is attached for your consideration.

I shall be grateful if you can attend the Gala to receive the award on behalf of your illustrious Association.

At your earliest convenience, please send an updated document on your Association which can be used for promotional purposes.

Your Association’s public recognition as a major achiever fills the Trinidad and Tobago community with national pride. Thank you for playing such a significant role in promoting “Brand Trinidad and Tobago”.

Yours very sincerely,



Michael G-A Lashley
Consul General

Lagniappe 2008

Literary Awards Committee

Fund-raising continues apace for NAAC's Literary Awards Committee. The next event planned is a gala luncheon followed by an Ole Mas Competition and dance on February 8, 2008. The venue is still to be confirmed – keep checking the NAAC website for details on this as well as registration procedures for the competition.

The tradition of *Ole Mas* in the Trini Carnival, replete with pun, wordplay, satire, political commentary and witty charades, invoking the idea of “no respecter of persons” and ranging from the scandalous to the highly moralistic, makes it particularly appropriate for this kind of fund-raising exercise. Donations of prizes – large and small; sublime and ridiculous - are now being sought.

The Literary Awards are new to the roster of prizes usually given at Speech Days in Trinidad and Tobago. The intention of these awards is to recognize and foster an awareness of the value of literary talent in young people. The committee has been careful to emphasise that *creative potential* and not simple proficiency in English studies is being rewarded here.

In 2006, the NAAC Meghu-Scrimgeour Literary Award was presented to a student at Naparima Girls' High School. In 2007, two more awards were added: The NAAC Literary Award at St. Augustine Girls' High School and the Iere-Wagar Creative Writing Award at Iere High School in Siparia.

Why a literary award, one might well ask, instead of a more pragmatically-focused prize? One might especially pose such a question in the T&T context where, for all of its over-heated economy and promise of developed country status in 2020, not a single literary prize is awarded nationally. Compare this to Guyana, where a literary prize has existed for years, to Jamaica, where Calabash, a literary Festival is held annually, or Antigua, where the Antigua/ Barbuda Literary Festival is now going into its third year. Consider too, the rebirth in Barbados of *Bim*, one of the premier literary journals in the

Caribbean, begun by Frank Collymore in the 1940s, and now functioning again with George Lamming as its Consulting Editor. Add to this the fact that the vast majority of Caribbean writers live and work outside the Region and the desolate picture in T&T becomes clearer. Notable exceptions are Merle Hodge (*Crick Crack Monkey*) and Earl Lovelace (*The Dragon Can't Dance*).

Hodge, in her essay “Challenges of the Struggle for Sovereignty” gives us this memorable quote about the importance of literature to self-knowledge and societal growth: “When fiction draws upon our world, when it recreates our reality, it helps give validity to our world...But also, in a way that is difficult to account for, *fiction gives substance to reality*...For fiction (and perhaps all art) casts a redeeming and enhancing light back upon the reality from which it springs, endowing it with meaning, credibility and authority. It allows a people not only to know its own world, but to take it seriously.”

These literary awards are important because they recognize and validate the potential of creative youth. Becoming a writer (or any artist, for that matter) is often a solitary and unrewarding business, and many promising talents are waylaid, of necessity perhaps, into more immediately lucrative professions. Few can state as categorically as V.S. Naipaul that they have “followed no other profession.”

In conferring these awards, NAAC has taken a leadership role in nurturing and recognizing the potential of our future writers at an early stage of their development. But, the venture needs the support of members and friends committed to its continuing success – mark your calendars and watch for further details of the event, which itself promises to be a grand creative product in the quintessential tradition of Trini *Ole Mas*.

Ramabai Espinet

Literary Awards Committee

Facts & Arguments: Lives Lived

Diane Lynette Longley

by **Rawle A. Kassie** (brother)
and **Barb Broadbent** (colleague and friend)
Copyright © 2008

Matriarch, wife, mother, sister, aunt, friend, caregiver, music teacher and schools concert organizer. Born September 28th 1944 in Trinidad & Tobago. Died February 23rd 2008 in Toronto of brain cancer, aged 63.

All her life, Diane gave. It was a duty she chose.

Diane Kassie grew up in the then British colony of Trinidad, in the West Indies. At age 8, this first-born had sudden responsibility thrust upon her when her mother died, leaving her father with six children, the last being just 2 hours old. Diane, the child then, became the mother.

With early piano lessons and involvement in her hometown's Curepe Presbyterian Church, her musical skills propelled her to become the church pianist, while still in her teens. Music, accommodation and her caring for others – qualities born of a difficult childhood - defined her life to the end.

Diane immigrated to Toronto in 1968, worked, took night courses and graduated from University of Toronto Teachers College. In 1972, she commenced a teaching career – primarily in music - with the Toronto Board of Education.

Diane met Doug Longley in Toronto, they married in 1978 and raised 2 children, Catherine and Kelly.

Diane was a social and sociable person with a sparkling personality and keen interest in the world around her. She was a most dedicated teacher, her laughter was wonderful, and her sense of humour always shone through. Following diagnosis, while putting her affairs in order, she arranged for her burial and laughingly exclaimed: "Well, I just bought myself some new property!"

Diane never minced words. She expressed her thoughts with passion and colour and wisdom. To

be sure, Diane's words were not always soft but her heart certainly was.

Music brought joy and peace to Diane's life. She shared her love of music through her teaching and just seemed to know what songs the children would enjoy. Students would return from music classes humming tunes and concert audiences would often be moved to tears.

In the mid 80s, she became active with her old high school alumni, served on executive committees and strongly supported the alumni's steel band, 'Panache'.

Diane's empathy was extraordinary. You could count on her when times got tough. In 1996, unemployed and broke, I decided to go back to college in England. Diane walked the walk with me, re-assuring, compassionate. Late at night after family goodbyes, I sat in the airport alone and scared. Then there was that laughter, I turned and there was Diane. She squeezed my hand and closed it around a gift of British pounds.

Diane, the mother and aunt, taught the younger generation many life lessons. She advocated cultivating strong relationships with family and friends, encouraged finding one's full potential through education and urged choosing a career that fed one's own passion. She taught the difference between a house and a home, took pride in a home that was warm and loving, and welcomed visitors frequently to a home cooked meal.

At Toronto Grace Hospital, where she lived her final days, she charmed hospital staff and visitors alike, celebrated birthdays and gathered round her children, nieces, nephews and friends to tell them witty life stories – evoking howls of laughter, so alien in a palliative setting.

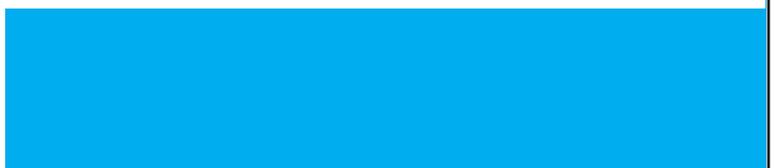
Perhaps her niece, Roshini, a trombonist, captured that aura she radiated, at her farewell:

"You will always be the music in my life, Auntie Diane and I will always play for you.

I will always remember your wonderful stories and smile – always with music in my heart ..."

Run away to.....
Las Cuevas Beach Lodge

*North Coast Road,
Las Cuevas,
Trinidad, West Indies*



Tel: 868-669-6945, 796-3145, 684-2530
Fax: 868-636-4837

PERCEPTION

What a mystery life is
when everything is just
as it was but something
changes in an unusual way.
Change can occur externally
or internally. No matter
where it takes place,
change is change and
would have some
impact on life. Whether
it be one life or
many lives the case is
such that all things are
possible once there is
faith and grasped
opportunities, the task
or goal can never fail.
But one thing remains
constant throughout life,
even if all your goals
are achieved, and that
one thing, is change.

It is like looking
up at clouds
your whole life and
then finally be able
to look down at them.

Kavita Rajpath.
11:15 a.m. 24th August 2006
On plane ride New York to Trinidad
All rights reserved

— FOR SALE —

NAAC 30th Anniversary Commemorative Golf Shirts

Men's and Women's
in sizes S, M, L & XL
Colours: White and yellow
100% combed cotton
\$22 each
Contact : selwyn@oblaw.ca



CONDOLENCES TO ...

Terry Takashima whose mother passed
away after a short illness;

Everald Seupaul on the
death of his mother;

Dr. George Fitzpatrick on
his mother's passing

and to

Angus Muller on the sudden death of
his wife Cathy Dayfoot Muller.

Lena's Roti & Doubles

416-745-0009



LUNCH COMBO SPECIALS
DOUBLES, MEAL & POP \$4.99
MONDAY TO FRIDAY 11:00AM TO 2:00PM

BAKE & SHARK	\$6.99
BAKE & FRIED FISH	\$6.99
BAKE & SALT FISH	\$4.75

WEDDING SIZE PARATHA \$11.99

JUMBO DHALPURI	\$2.50
JUMBO PARATHA	\$2.50

FEEDS TWO PEOPLE!

We Cater For All Occasions
1152 ALBION ROAD (AT ISLINGTON)

LENA'S ROTI & DOUBLES • 416-745-0009

NOTICES:

NAAC Bursary applications must be received
no later than Friday, November 14th.

Application forms and guidelines may be
downloaded from the website:

www.naactoronto.ca

Spirit of Youth: Empowering a new generation

by Roger Bissessar

is now available at Chapters online.

To read excerpts from the book go to:

www.spirit-publications.com

**NAPARIMA ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION OF QUEBEC INC.
(NAAQ)**

Naparima Alumni Association of Quebec
Inc. (NAAQ)

will be having a dinner & dance to
celebrate its 30th anniversary
on May 23rd 2009 at the Holiday Inn
Aéroport Montréal situated
at 6500 Côte de Liesse, Montreal, Québec.

For more information
please contact:
Keith Eccles at keccle@sympatico.ca.
or visit our website naaq.org.

Donkey Eye 3R Mayaro Beachfront



Upstairs Apt, fully equipped, private entrance
4 bedrooms, 2 baths, H&C water

Weekend - \$C350.00 • Week - \$C1000.00

NAAC member discounts... Life: 10% / Annual: 5%

Howard & Kathy Sammy

705-466-3480
(April - November)

868-630-8622
December - March

kathy.sammy@gmail.com



NAAC Celebrates 30 years of giving back to our communities

The Naparima Alumni Association of Canada, founded in Toronto in 1978, celebrated its phenomenal thirty years on May 24, 2008 with a dinner and dance at Holiday Inn in



Brampton, Ontario. For the 300 guests who attended, it was truly an evening of moments of reflection, sharing, pride and nostalgia. Many had come from out-of-province especially for the occasion, some from Trinidad and Tobago, others from England. In attendance were many NAAC Past Presidents – Fred Thornhill, Howard Sammy, Milton Moonah, Kelvin Shah, Ian Ramdial, Rustin Oree, Risel Maharaj, Selwyn Baboolal, Norma Ramsahai and Vitra Mungal.

Reverend Tim Dayfoot delivered Grace, following which guests were treated to a sumptuous buffet dinner. The Master of Ceremonies, Horace Bhopalsingh, kept the formal proceedings of the evening moving along smoothly as well as entertaining the group with his timely anecdotes.

NAAC President Selwyn Baboolal formally welcomed the members, friends and supporters, briefly reflecting on NAAC's 30 years of voluntary service. Consul General of Trinidad and Tobago, Michael Lashley brought Greetings. He recognized the NAAC as a consistently active and functional group, always upholding the spirit of Naparima in its goal to provide opportunities for educational and cultural interaction with the society at large, both here and among its alma mater schools. President and CEO of Toronto Hydro Corporation, David S. O'Brien congratulated NAAC on its fine achievement of reaching thirty years and the contributions it had made both to its original homeland and Canada.

Principal of Naparima College, Michael Dowlath brought Greetings from our alma mater schools -

Naparima College, Naparima Girls' High School, Hillview College, St. Augustine Girls' High School and Iere High School - shared a video from the various schools, staff and students in

action. NAAC has supported these schools through annual funding for student bursaries, awards, classroom and library resources and equipment, as well as providing financial support for special projects. Mr. Dowlath expressed appreciation for the financial support NAAC has given to the schools. He also appealed for a different form of support especially for students coming from rural areas for example, interactive computer online communication between those students and students at schools here.



Finally, Ronald Ramkerrysingh wins a prize!



(From Left to Right) Mrs. Anna Mohammed, Mrs. Vanessa Mohammed, Mrs. Lazeena Oumarally, Mr. Bobby Oumarally, Aneesa Oumarally & son Zack.

Dr. Aleem Mohammed, CEO of S.M. Jaleel and Company Limited in Trinidad, delivered the feature address. Motivational and inspiring, he outlined the best business practices that had resulted in the outstanding success and longevity of the company. The success story of the foundation, growth and sustenance of the company bears a remarkably close resemblance to that of NAAC. Dr. Mohammed felt that a strong and abiding faith in God had provided the inspiration for the company's success. S.M. Jaleel believes in the qualities of truth, honesty and fairplay and is guided by these principles. The values and standards they had as a family-owned company are the same values and standards that remain today as a multi-national entity. He attributed to the success, three qualities in staff — character, commitment and goal-oriented. As with NAAC, giving back to the community is of paramount importance to S.M. Jaleel and Co. They sponsor athletes both locally and internationally, are involved in several Children's Homes and communities and regularly make charitable donations to various groups. As well, the Company is conscious of its role and responsibility in contributing to a healthy environment, by initiating programs and activities. In closing, Dr. Mohammed urged that all companies and organizations need dynamic people willing to take on the challenge of competing in a global environment filled with challenges yet ripe

with opportunities.

Dr. Ramabai Espinet thanked Mr. Mohammed for his inspiring address.

NAAC's own Panache Steelband and DJ Packnin were definite favourites as guests later danced to familiar calypsoes, waltzes, rhumbas and other exciting dance compositions.

It was most gratifying at the end of the evening to see that the Association is promoting the greening of our Canadian environment with the evergreen

seedlings in recycling bags which guests received as an anniversary gift. Let's all watch these seedlings grow with the same vigour that the Association has exhibited in the past thirty years and plans to continue in the future.

Submitted by Angela Jutlah

(Editor's Note: The present Executive remembers Past Presidents who are no longer with us – Harold Naphtali, Rawle Narayansingh, Arthur Siblal, and Fulton Seunarine.)



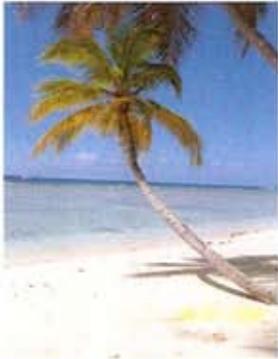
Mrs. Tisha Dowlath presents a plaque from Naparima College Old Boys' Association to Selwyn Baboolal



Villa Rose Of Sharon

Bon Accord, Tobago, West Indies

Villa Rentals



Photos: Pigeon Point Beach

Rates starting from \$300 tt per night (based on double occupancy).

\$30 for each additional guest in room.

Note: Rates may vary seasonally.

Please call for availability and rates.

Regular check in time: 2 PM

Regular check out time: 11 AM



Villa Rose of Sharon

28 Dillon Street
Bon Accord, Tobago, W.I.
Phone: 868-631-8793, 868-672-3134,
868-781-0330
E-mail: villaroseofsharon@yahoo.com
Website: www.villaroseofsharon.com

“Affordable, quality accommodations in desirable tourist area and within walking distance to beach!”

If you are looking for affordable, quality accommodations with friendly service, Villa Rose of Sharon is the place for you to stay during your visit to Tobago.

We offer air conditioned accommodations with modern appliances, cable TV, large rooms with two double beds. The villa is a six minute walk away from the beach and a three minute walk to restaurants and shopping. It is also located in a safe neighborhood of estate homes.



“Affordable, Quality Villas with Friendly Service”

“If Thy Right Eye Offend Thee ...”

By Vince Foster

Disclaimer. *The protagonist in the following narrative is a complete fabrication of my overactive and probably bizarre imagination. Old Boys who were my peers will concur that “Jags” is not representative of any actual student during the time frame indicated. Further, let me assure readers that I did not set out to be insensitive and politically incorrect. I simply wanted to develop a character whose distinctive traits would enliven familiar settings. I can only hope that the interactions I invented will serve to accentuate and embellish experiences, traditions, and collective memories, all of which comprise a unique Naparima legacy.*

My first morning at Naps was memorable. While the students waited to be summoned to their classrooms, they massed in small groups and chattered with excitement and anticipation. As I moved around, absorbing the novelty of the High School experience, I suddenly encountered a youth with the most grotesque manifestation of “cokey-eye” I had ever seen, who I was intrigued to discover was also a new student and had been assigned to my class. I was delighted at this circumstance, not because of any sterling qualities that he possessed, but because I have always been fascinated by the weird and the unusual. I befriended the optically challenged stripling, whom I shall call Jagalee or Jags, and casually engaged him in animated conversation until we were instructed to report to class, where we just as casually became seatmates.

This manipulation on my part, with the ulterior motive of being as close to the errant eyes as possible, was tempered by a concerned curiosity as to how this scholar would cope with the rigorous academic challenges that lay before us. His impediment was more striking than the typical “cokey-eye.” He suffered from estropia, his huge close-set eyes being inwardly crossed. However, when he was subjected to extreme stress, trauma or aggression, an odd occurrence would take place. His pupils would escape the force

that kept them converged on his nose, and would abruptly dart outwards in the most alarming manner, before snapping back to their aberrant state. The philosopher Guillaume du Bartas postulated that the eyes were the windows of the soul, and I could not help thinking that if this was true, then Jags was an extremely tortured individual. In spite of his handicap, he proved to be a diligent student, peering resolutely and optimistically at the blackboard, donning dense spectacles for intense perusal of his text books, while a small nervous tic troubled his face. In the old science lab, as he examined specimens through an antiquated microscope, we were curious as to what he actually saw.

School boys everywhere can be cruel and vindictive, and my classmates were no exception. They quickly learned that Jags, overly sensitive to any “fatigue” about his condition, would, when teased, fly into uncontrollable rages marked by screaming, lurid obscenities, and threats of violence. Since these classroom disruptions invariably resulted in punishment for the instigators, they fiendishly devised a brilliant strategy to taunt him, without appearing to do so. In classroom discourse they began to employ a repetitious use of the personal pronoun “I,” an obvious reference to his eye, stressing the sound while casting snide glances in Jags’s direction. With practice, this exercise in phonetic torment became more sophisticated. They deviously commented on movies such as *I, the Jury*, *The King and I*, *I Died a Thousand Times*, books such as *The Third Eye*, and sang verses of popular songs such as *I Who Have Nothing*, *I Believe*, and *The Breeze and I*. Their conversations in and out of class were padded with references to eyes, vision and looking, as per the following examples — “We can’t see eye to eye,” “look at trouble here today,” “You see what I mean.” The common colloquial expression “aie aie aie,” used interchangeably to express approval,

(continued on next page)

“If Thy Right Eye Offend Thee ...”

(continued from previous page)

pleasure, exultation and disappointment, became the most popular exclamation in class. The Biblical admonition “He who hath eyes to see, let him see” was frequently quoted. The first line of the American anthem “O say, can you see” was also a class favorite. As Jags glowered at his persecutors, they would often make the bogus complaint, “Sir, Jags looking at meh cut-eye.” During these sallies, I felt that if Jags was ever moved to tears, I would be able to test the claim of my brother Mello, who wrote of a man being so cross-eyed that when he cried the tears ran down his back.

Because of a paranoid expectation of ridicule, his wrath could be provoked by the most harmless comments, observations or directions. In a term report, Mr. Gopaul once made the very benign and helpful suggestion “Student needs to focus more.” Jags went ballistic, ranting “he want me to focus, wait till meh mudda come and cuff im dong.” One day at lunch, I innocently asked him to “keep an eye on meh food ah coming back now.” When I returned, my sandwiches had been demolished and dumped. On another occasion I was dispatched by Mr. McNeilly to deliver a folder to the office. As I turned a corner in the hall, Jags, late to class and moving with tremendous speed, collided with me and we both ended on the floor, papers flying everywhere. He immediately demanded “Why yuh doh look where yuh going?” Filled with righteous indignation, I could not stifle my retort “Why yuh doh go where yuh looking?” If a teacher had not intervened, we would definitely have come to blows.

As my classmates toiled to decipher the complexities of Algebra and Chemistry, I spent many idle moments visualizing repercussions that might ensue if he made poor career choices after graduating. Dear readers, the following is just a partial listing, please feel free to create your own scenarios. I felt strongly that under no circumstances should he be involved in the field of watch repair, since he could quite easily become seriously deranged as he tenaciously attempted to

scrutinize tiny intricate gears, levers and springs, all moving in unison. If he became a surveyor, peering through complicated instruments to determine boundaries, his rulings could provoke litigation, fisticuffs, and murder among landowners. The vocation of astronomer might also prove problematic, as he myopically scanned the heavens, and repeatedly and persistently attempted to reassign the locations and celestial paths of known planets. His pursuit of other occupations could be detrimental to others and to property. For example, in the role of driving instructor, it would be reasonable to speculate that the learner/drivers he tested would be forced to perform under a severe disadvantage. As he observed road and traffic conditions with his flawed vision, irritably yelling out various and contradictory instructions, cautions, alerts, criticisms and cries of apprehension, unskilled drivers could become unnerved, terrified and/or furious, resulting in collisions and pile-ups. I also earnestly hoped that he would not be tempted by the allure of air traffic control. I imagined him screaming frantically at blips on a radar screen representing aircraft in final approaches to the airport, his overburdened retina throbbing as he attempted to compute all the data required for meeting minimum safety standards - the number of planes on the ground, the altitude and speed of arriving planes, their distances from each other, pilots maintaining a holding position, weather and visibility, wind shear velocity and direction, runway conditions, and requests for emergency landings. All of these would make formidable demands on his defective orbs, and one miscalculation could result in chaos and carnage in the air and on the ground.

Unlike other youngsters, Jags avoided going to the cinema, because he was never able to actually enjoy a movie, since his eyes inexorably strayed and remained fixed on the illuminated exit signs to the left and right of the seats. However, during the theatrical release of DeMille’s *The Ten Commandments*, his father insisted that the entire family had a spiritual obligation to journey to the De Luxe cinema in Port-of-Spain. To

(continued on next page)

“If Thy Right Eye Offend Thee ...”

(continued from previous page)

this end, a reluctant and resentful Jags, together with his enthusiastic siblings, was unceremoniously herded into a rented van, and the journey began. Brooding silently in the back, while the others babbled with anticipation and consumed prodigious quantities of Indian delicacies prepared by the mother, Jags plotted retaliation. At first he resolved to deliberately and conspicuously fall asleep during the extravaganza. Then an alternative plan flashed into his mind — he would force himself to view the epic. On the way home he would then sabotage his family’s contented and euphoric prattle, by venting a savage and scornful criticism of the picture. In the theater he made an extraordinary effort to zero in on the travails of Moses and the children of Israel, practically glaring at the screen, placing tremendous strain on the optic nerves connecting the eyes to the brain. As his pupils contracted, his eyeballs bulged and protruded from their sockets, while copious tears flowed from the corners of his eyes. These ocular exertions triggered an excruciating migraine. On the return journey he slumped quietly in his seat, his head on the back rest, a handkerchief covering his abused peepers, mortified at the realization that no matter how hard he had squinted at the screen, he had only managed to see four of *The Ten Commandments*, hardly enough material for critical analysis.

One tedious Friday afternoon after we had completed our assignments, and the school week was winding down, “Puss” Yamin-Ali produced a pair of worn boxing gloves and declared that we needed to become conversant with the manly art. Leading us to open ground under the trees near the original office building, he proceeded to select four pairs of boys using height, weight and enthusiasm as determinants. I was surprised when he picked Jags, whom I felt should have been exempt on medical and humanitarian grounds. I was even more surprised when Jags eagerly agreed. As his seatmate/friend, I arbitrarily appointed myself cornerman/trainer/ cut man. Puss, who would officiate

as referee and timekeeper, indicated that Jags would be fighting in the final bout, in effect the main event of the afternoon. I suspected that Puss, with a gut feeling that Jags’s participation had the potential for high drama, saved the best for last. While we waited for the fairly entertaining “preliminary” matches to be completed, I sensed the impatient expectation of the students. I also discovered that Jags was itching to fight, after months of being the victim of continuous teasing, of suffering the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. He welcomed this opportunity to purge his pent-up aggression, to batter into submission an opponent who would represent all those who had humiliated him. I understood his objective but had serious doubts that his adversary would cooperate with the agenda.

The moment of truth arrived. I had been plotting strategy, and decided that Jags might be able to turn his liability into an advantage. Since each eye acted independently of the other, my final instructions were as follows “dis go be ah piece ah cake, keep yuh lef eye on he right han, an yuh right eye on he lef han, an he’ll nevah touch yuh.” He looked in my direction dubiously and suspiciously. Satisfied that my intentions were honorable, he stepped into the circle of boys who were clamoring for mayhem. My worst fears were immediately confirmed. It was obvious that Jags’s foe had been in a ring before. Lennox, an athletic youth from the deep South, began to present a boxing lesson to a mismatched competitor. Bobbing and weaving, he used a piston-like left jab to snap the head back, intermittently landing a stinging right. For his part, Jags flailed away ineptly with wild haymakers, roundhouse swings and bolo punches. Lennox could have knocked him comatose whenever he wanted, but chose to prolong Jags’s agony to showcase his impressive skills. At the end of the round, Jags was in terrible shape. His chest heaved as he panted, wheezed, and struggled to draw breath. He appeared to need emergency medical attention, but I could only provide words of comfort and encouragement “doh worry, he eh lay ah glove on yuh yet.” Jags blinked at me and gasped “den yuh bes watch Puss, because

(continued on next page)

“If Thy Right Eye Offend Thee ...”

(continued from previous page)

somebody in dey beating meh bad.” I decided to try another approach, “Yuh go get im dis round, he getting tired.” Jags’s rebuttal was realistic, despondent and heartbreaking, “He getting tired bussing meh ass.” With a solicitous pat on his shoulder, I sent him in for further punishment.

Jags now appeared more determined than before to land a blow. He made wild lunges at his elusive target, grunting and sobbing in anger and frustration. His murderous blows threatened to decapitate boys in the circle who ebbed and flowed too close to the combatants. In our class work we had recently been introduced to the eloquence of Shakespeare’s phrasing, and as Jags became more intent on hitting someone, anyone, my mind flashed to the words of the bard. In the play *Macbeth*, the protagonist is conducting a job interview of two career murderers, and the first murderer proclaims “I am one, my liege, whom the vile blows and buffets of the world hath so incensed, that I care not what I do to spite the world.” I thought that this was an accurate summary of Jags’s frame of mind. Meanwhile, to neutralize Jags’s homicidal charges, Lennox unleashed the full range of his pugilistic arsenal, landing jabs, right and left hooks, body blows and uppercuts, all in dazzling combinations. I tried to imagine the ordeal Jags was enduring. The pre-existing condition of his severely distorted vision was now probably aggravated by the syndrome of “seeing double,” which often beset boxers who take too many shots to the face.

Puss had been keeping a close watch on Jags to insure that the beating was not becoming life-threatening. When the round ended, he wandered over, and using the vernacular of the ring, inquired, “you guys want to throw in the towel?” I was quick to point out “we eh have no towel.” Puss was undecided, possibly contemplating the likelihood of liability and litigation. Jags, with a demented look in his eyes, whispered urgently to me, “see if yuh could put yuh han on a big stone fuh meh.” I was appalled at this proposed breach of the Marquis of Queensbury rules,

and sternly chastised Jags, who then informed Puss “towel or no towel, dis fight done, I eh taking no more lash. “ To the disappointment of our classmates, who had been reveling in the spectacle, Puss announced that the afternoon’s entertainment was over.

During these years at Naps, huge, hairy, and sadistic seniors were in the habit of practicing a harrowing method of initiation and hazing. They would form a gauntlet at a strategic spot, where vulnerable and terrified newcomers had no choice but to cross, and then these savage brutes would subject the powerless youngsters to “taps” or “calpets” delivered to the back of the head. On one occasion I emerged battered on the other side, and waited as Jags negotiated this valley of death. As his cranium absorbed the second blow, the pupils of Jags’s eyes flew into the normal position for the first time, and for one bright shining moment he saw clearly. Then the dysfunctional pull of the optic nerve jerked them first to the sides, and then back to their peculiar position. Mesmerized by this impressive display of rapid eye movement, I could only whisper a muted “Jeezanages”.

Eager to establish that he would not allow his myopic state to prevent him from participating in pursuits enjoyed by his schoolmates, Jags entered the Bag Race event at a Sports Day tournament at Skinner Park. With his feet tucked firmly in the far corners of an oversized crocus bag, he exhibited flawless technique, alternatively hopping and running in the bag, as if his legs were free. In the blink of an eye, if you will pardon the expression, he was leading the competition by a clear margin. Just when it seemed that he had the race “in de bag”, he began to inexplicably veer off at a forty-five degree angle, to the delight of the student spectators collapsing with laughter in the stands. Despite the shouts and signals from masters and race officials trying to get him back on track, he fixedly followed this deviant course, until he crashed into a chain link fence and tumbled to the ground. In an attempt at support, I offered the familiar Intercol mantra “We go win nex year”. Contradicting these words of assurance, my friend Danrod, noted for a dry

(continued on next page)

“If Thy Right Eye Offend Thee ...”

(continued from previous page)

and sarcastic sense of humor, calmly contended “next year he might end up on Lady Hailes Avenue”.

Our final year was eventful and lively. As previously noted, Jags was extremely sensitive to his affliction. This tended to inhibit social interaction, with one notable exception. Encouraged by others to attend a La Pique-sponsored Rangers fête, he experienced for the first time the bitter-sweet phenomenon of “love at first sight,” probably not the best expression to describe this occurrence. Nevertheless, he tentatively approached the object of his infatuation, an extremely attractive young lady. After being momentarily startled by his sinister-looking countenance, the compassionate maiden agreed to dance with our hero, to the amazement and bewilderment of her girl friends, one of whom bluntly declared “Cynthia dancing wid ah Cyclops.” As Jags gracelessly and clumsily shuffled this way and that, dragging the hapless beauty with him, his devotion and ardor increased, until he could contain himself no longer. With tenderness and passion, he whispered in her ear “wen ah look in yuh eyes ah see meh chirren who eh born yet.” Flabbergasted at this freaky declaration of commitment and intent, the lovely Cynthia recoiled and exclaimed “chirren? in meh eyes? All dis time ah tort yuh was staring at meh ears.” Then she stalked off in fury.

For weeks afterwards, Jags was preoccupied, miserable and inconsolable. Fortunately, Intercol time rolled around again. Our annual clash with Presentation College for football supremacy, and the fervor preceding this event, helped to alleviate Jags’s distress. Like every other Naps student and our supporters at La Pique, his loyalty to team and school was unconditional, avid, and on the day of the encounter, rabid and vociferous. Packed tightly into our section of the stand at Skinner Park, separated from our bitter rivals by the narrow space of the tunnel, the consciousness of each student merged into a collective hysteria. We bonded in a cacophony of shouting, chanting, cheering, the hurling of insults at

our despised enemies, singing, the blowing of trumpets and whistles, and in the front row, the swaying of the girls’ bodies to the beating of drums and iron. All the while we kept our eyes fixed on the drama being enacted on the field of play. Dear readers, as you relive those vivid moments, let us not forget the protagonist of the narrative, our esteemed Jags, experiencing this showdown in his own unique way. No one will ever be able to accurately ascertain exactly what he saw, but we do have one clue. When Pres managed to score an early goal, plunging us into shock and misery, Jags raised his arms triumphantly and released an exultant cheer. Puzzled and horrified by this act of treachery, we rained down abuses and curses on him from all sides. He seemed to be genuinely confused, befuddled and contrite, so we realized what had happened. His unstable eyes had inverted the positions of the teams. All was forgiven and a kindly youth took the time to clarify “Look, Jags, we on dis side of de field okay, dey on dat side, wen is half time we go switch, okay.” Intrigued by this development, as the match progressed I monitored his reactions. I realized that although the basic format of the game had been laid out for him, he still hesitated momentarily before cheering or jeering as the circumstances demanded, taking his cue from those around him.

During the years 1956-1961, Naps fielded excellent teams that played their hearts out, yet never seemed able to break the Pres jinx, falling short on each occasion. In my senior year we lost again, but our players made us proud in many ways. They flashed unselfish examples of teamwork. Several times our defenders made incredibly long passes that landed precisely at the feet of players for whom they were intended. A Naps forward executed a fantastic “body beat” on an opponent, twisting and turning his body in an awesome display of dexterity, creativity and deception, leaving his humiliated foe almost on his knees, clawing at the ground. In the final minutes, one of our students broke free and with blinding acceleration raced clear of the pack. With light taps of his feet he controlled the ball speeding ahead of him. He then

(continued on next page)

“If Thy Right Eye Offend Thee ...”

(continued from previous page)

faked out the goalie, making him move the wrong way, and finally, as we watched spellbound, curled the ball into the net. As pandemonium erupted, Jags delayed his elation for a split second until he was positive that celebrations were in order. He then compensated for his momentary hesitation with an exuberant display of jubilation, his eyes rotating wildly, embracing and being embraced by others. We had lost the match but retained our pride.

It was time for Jags’s appointment with an ophthalmologist whose priority was to determine if his vision was deteriorating. This experienced and unflappable professional had examined thousands of eyes during a long career. Inspecting Jags’s retina through his orthoscope, he took a sharp intake of breath and flinched. When he regained his composure, he directed the patient to gaze through the optometer and read the standard chart. He had no way of knowing that Jags, after years of harassment, had become stubborn, defiant and confrontational. Instead of following the doctor’s instructions, Jags decided to flaunt his ability to behold objects at a ninety-degree angle to his eyes. He dutifully applied his organs to the lens of the device, then totally ignored the illuminated chart. Instead, he proceeded to read aloud the diplomas and licenses adorning the walls to his right and left. An acrimonious altercation ensued and escalated, with personal critiques and loud vulgar obscenities. As Jags stormed noisily out of the office, the furious specialist, muttering to himself, inscribed the following notations on the patient’s medical record — abnormal depth perception; eccentric pupil mobility; pronounced atypical esotropia and reflexive exotropia , a challenge to medical science; standard operation to rectify condition — radial keratotomy; in this case-inoperable, hopeless; patient irrational, abusive, obscene; lunatic. After this episode, when well-meaning individuals would suggest that Jags should seek medical assistance, his response would be fatalistic and abrupt “God mek meh so, ah go stay jus

so.” He never returned to the doctor.

Just before we left Naps forever, our French class competed against the Science class in a cricket fête match. Jags pleaded to be on the team but was ignored. Our captain and his selection committee wanted the best players, since bragging rights were involved. On the day of the event, our team played well in a close exciting game, which abruptly turned disastrous for us. Batting last, four of our batsmen were dismissed in quick succession. We were now facing an insurmountable total posted by the Science boys, with limited time and two batsmen left. A few of us, maybe more visionary than the others, interceded with our captain “We done lose arready, give Jags ah lil knock, Krishna agree to let him bat.” At first he was uncertain, then grasped what we saw so clearly — inserting Jags in the batting order could provide exhilarating moments of hilarity that would enliven the boredom of a foregone conclusion. Jags, summoned for duty, was surprised, appreciative and overjoyed.

Equipped with cap, gloves, pads, and with the bat tucked smartly under his arm, he strode to the crease accompanied by thunderous applause and cheers from the bleachers. He walked with the distinctive carriage of Gary Sobers - businesslike but relaxed, moving smoothly and confidently, a man intent on doing serious and scintillating damage. Arriving at the wicket, he took his cue from professional cricketers, looking around carefully at the deployment of the fielders, planning where he was going to place his balls. Mohan, the captain of the Science class, had been observing this farce with an amused smile. Getting into the spirit of the thing, he threw the ball to his fastest bowler. Jags squinted painfully at the rapid run-up of this lanky youth, contorting his face as he attempted to detect the flight of the ball. Seeing nothing as two rapid deliveries flew harmlessly past the off stump, he made tremendous but futile swipes, to the enjoyment of the onlookers. Sensing that the next delivery would be closer to the wicket, Jags gambled boldly. As the leather sphere flew towards him, he quickly stepped out of the crease and again

(continued on next page)

“If Thy Right Eye Offend Thee ...”

(continued from previous page)

“vooped” mightily. By pure luck, the viciously-swung bat intercepted the ball before it touched the ground, connecting with a satisfying and resounding crack. We leapt to our feet shouting, because we knew that ball was gone. Jags had hit for six, and there was no need to run between wickets, but he began bounding down the pitch triumphantly and erratically, waving the bat above his head. The other batsman, going through the motions of running, kept a cautious eye on Jags’s progress and gave him a wide berth.

In this moment of glory, which he was determined to enjoy to the fullest, Jags, momentarily forgetting his retinal disadvantage, attempted to multitask. He performed all the following actions simultaneously — running down the pitch at full tilt, shouting and celebrating, brandishing the bat, glancing in the direction of the bleachers to savor the bedlam, ignoring the fielders who had collapsed on the ground convulsed with laughter, staying cognizant of the wicket he was fast approaching, hoping for the adulation of the HC girls in attendance, and most importantly, probing the skies to follow the trajectory of the ball he had dispatched. With the ability of his eyes severely tested by these visual demands, and misjudging the distance to the rapidly approaching crease, Jags bore down and crashed into the wicket. His velocity propelled him into an unprepared Henry, officiating as the umpire. This unlucky volunteer, a legendary sportsman, was now aware of danger at the very last second, and only had time to mutter a startled “What de” before he was knocked to the ground. Jags, none the worse for wear, quickly extricated himself from the tangle that was Henry, himself, bat and stumps, and made a beeline for the stand. He showed no remorse or concern for the flattened Henry, who was just beginning to stagger tentatively to his feet. Although for all practical purposes this match was now over, the show had just begun. Mohan’s crew, tears streaming down their faces, made no protest at the arbitrary ending. As they saw it, they had emerged victorious,

and the unexpected diversions were pure “lagniappe.”

What followed was one of those happenings when so many things occur at once, that no linear depiction of the episode can begin to capture its intensity. It is for the reader to visualize the turmoil as a whole. I was standing nearby with my friends, Wayne and Danrod, he of the cryptic comments, observing the following tableau. Jags had arrived at the bleachers in triumph, and was now surrounded by classmates who were shaking his hand, pounding his back, even attempting to hoist him on their shoulders. He had replaced the bat firmly under his arm, and with his adrenaline flowing, was jumping up and down, twisting his body from side to side, trying to break free of the adoring circle. He wanted to be out in the open, unrestrained, where he could “gallery” to a larger audience. His strenuous efforts caused the bat to flail dangerously, forcing his fans to take evasive action. Wayne, practical as always, suggested “dey should take de bat away.” Danrod quickly countered “Yuh want to try? Yuh eh see he gone mad? De only ting to do is to tie im dong. Anybody have rope?” Meanwhile, from the moment that Jags had started his odyssey down the pitch, pandemonium had reigned. When he collided with Henry, gales of laughter rocked the stand. It was the kind of laughter that makes speech impossible, brings tears to the eyes, constricts the rib cage, and induces gasping and choking. One unlucky youth had taken a substantial bite of a roti, just as the ball was hit. He then had joined in the laughter, and was now in the throes of asphyxiation. With his face turning purple, and tears streaming from his bulging eyes, he made incoherent sounds and frantic gesticulations. Fortunately, the lads closest to him acted heroically, delivering abundant and powerful slaps to his back, maybe more energetically than the situation warranted, until the blockage was cleared. Once it was evident that the crisis was over, Danrod, now conveniently forgetting that he had consumed two rotis, washed down by a grape soda, warned “yuh see wha does happen wen yuh lickrish.”

Not far away, one of the HC girls, over-stimulated

(continued on next page)

“If Thy Right Eye Offend Thee ...”

(continued from previous page)

by the general commotion, delicately passed out. She was instantly surrounded by a protective posse of her girl friends, who began implementing first-aid procedures. The young men around the girls were concerned and caring. One, seeking clarification of the situation, inquired “she faint or she take een?” Another fellow gallantly whipped off his shirt to expose a dark, corpulent and hairy torso, then pushed through the press and began a vigorous fanning of the patient. Wayne, influenced by Danrod’s non-stop wisecracks, predicted “wen she catch she self and see im, she go faint again.” Danrod, now having a field day, contended, “is he who go faint before dat, he blowing hard arready.” At times of crisis, emergency, or scandal, Trinidadians become instant experts, dispensing unsolicited directions, advice, criticism and commentary. Again, Naps boys were no exception. If the girls had heeded the boys’ suggestions, they would have, in no particular order, implemented the following restorative measures - wiped their friend’s face with a cold cloth, forced a hot club soda down her throat, rubbed her arms and/or temples, blown repeatedly in her face, massaged her neck, elevated her to a sitting position, raised or lowered her feet and/or head. After another benign speculation “maybe is gas”, the recommendations from the adolescents assumed a more interactive aspect. One submission, given innocently and expectantly, was to “unbutton she blouse and loosen she clothes,” at which Danrod observed, “somebody go make ah jail here today.” Ramjass offered “dey say mout to mout is de bes ting, all yuh want meh to try?” Not to be outdone, Sampath volunteered to “rub she leg to keep de circulation going.” Seconds after these generous offers were made, the young lady miraculously revived.

After some semblance of order was restored, interesting developments occurred. No one could find the ball that Jags had knocked out of the grounds into a huge patch of razor grass. A student proposed “Jags should look for de ball, is he who hit it.” Danrod had the final word “if Jags have to find de ball, I going home,

dat go take de whole weekend.” One of my classmates now began a loud chant of “loss ball win”, exuberantly taken up by the others and by those HC girls who supported us. Some explanation is required. In rural areas, a batsman on a juvenile team would sometimes manage to hit such a magnificent six, that the ball could not be found. If at that juncture his team was facing defeat, his teammates and supporters would commence a deafening litany of “loss ball win,” the absurd premise being that the team that was able to “lose” the ball had won the match. Since no such provision existed in the rule book, this desperate and pathetic distraction served only to provide bogus cheer and jubilation. A replacement ball would usually be provided and the game would continue to its foregone conclusion. However, we now shook the bleachers with this idiotic shouting, not because we realistically expected our opponents to concede defeat, but because we sensed that Jags’s glorious achievement, with all its subsequent theatrics, would be remembered long after the result of a cricket match was forgotten.

Jags eventually married an attractive woman who confessed that the first time he looked into her eyes, his gaze sent shivers up and down her spine. She also revealed that in their marriage, his piercing stare sometimes proved to be an asset. For example, when their offspring dallied and procrastinated at the dining table, one stern and disapproving glare from papa would have the desired effect. Traumatized by the ocular reprimand, the youngsters would consume their rations with the greatest alacrity, sometimes screaming for maternal reassurance.



Ruthven “Vince” Foster, in his second year of retirement, states “in the mornings I do nothing, in the evenings I rest.” On a serious note, he reads extensively, writes when the spirit moves him, and travels. During the past year he has spent time in Washington, D.C., Guadaloupe, and Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic. Contact Information: Telephone 718-282-2166.

Remembering Catherine Marie (Dayfoot) Muller

By Tim Dayfoot

It is still hard to believe that this brief tribute to my older sister, Cathy, is even necessary. How quickly life can change. Nevertheless, I am deeply honoured to have this opportunity to invite us all, through these words and through your own memories of her, to recognize how our lives have been enriched by Cathy's life.

Cathy was determined, perceptive, tireless, devoted, respectful, loving, and had a keen sense of responsibility. I remember Cathy as a gifted musician, although I did not hear her play the piano very much since our childhood together. Cathy turned me on to rock music when she introduced me to the album, Jesus Christ Superstar, around 1970. She was a good listener, although that did not mean she was hesitant to speak her mind. Frequently, she would expound on a variety of weighty topics urging you to be a good listener too. Her observations of life were always compelling.

Cathy was ten years older than me, so I do not have too many memories of her as a student at Naparima Girl's High School in the early 60's. But I have heard her talk from time to time about those years. And going by what I've heard from her about that time in her life I know that she was grateful for the friendships she made, and for the challenges that were put before her by teachers and by others who encouraged her to grow.

When the Naparima Alumni Association started in 1978, Cathy took an interest in its formation and made it one of her priorities to participate and to help the young association get started. She became a life member right away. I remember her saying back then, and again recently, that the Naparima Alumni Association was one of the best deals she made – the cost of one life membership and it was good forever.

While Cathy could not always remain as heavily involved in the NAAC as she was in the early years, I know that she enjoyed remaining in contact with the association. And when it came time for the completion of her primary family project, the publication and distribution of books written by her father and mother, Cathy was very grateful for the support she found from NAAC members and their friends. Dad and Mom, Rev. Arthur and Mrs. Bessie Dayfoot, do not hesitate to say that without Cathy's help, and more importantly, without her persistence and her dedication to the project of those writings over a period of several years, the completion of those books would not have happened as soon or as well as it did.

By the time it was confirmed by her doctors that she was fighting a particularly virulent form of cancer, Cathy did not have very much time left to her. The way she faced the shortening of her time was an inspiration to her loved ones. She faced the realities of life for what they are, good and bad, without pretence or deception. The way she dealt with the difficult news, and the way she lived and loved throughout her life continues to be a blessing to her family, Angus, Gillian, Roxana, James, and to many, many more. May our memories of Cathy be enriched by the promises of new life that God has made to Cathy and to all of us.

Wayne Brown

REAL ESTATE SALES REPRESENTATIVE

**Professional and Personal Service
with the Power to Move You**

Office: 905.338.6550
Mobile: 905.330.7644
E-mail: wayne@waynebrown.ca



Prudential
Town Centre Realty Inc.
Brokerage

An independently owned and operated member of The Prudential Real Estate Affiliates, Inc.

Review of Caribbean-Flavoured Presbyterianism by Jerome Teelucksingh.

School of Continuing Studies. U.W.I., Trinidad, 2008.

In June of 1923 the recently arrived catechist for the area of Woodbrook and St. James, on the outskirts of Port of Spain) John Neehall, father of the late well-known Rev. Dr. Roy Neehall penned a plaintive letter to the Secretary of the Canadian Mission Council in Trinidad. Writing from his home at 25 Pole Carew St in Woodbrook, Neehall recounted the good work which he had started among the population which came from barracks in Bombay St, Nipal St, Cawnpore St, Mooneram St, Benares St and many other streets whereto the Indians had brought their ancestral names and fragments of their ancient civilisation. Under Neehall's leadership there had developed a vibrant Sunday school, active Hindi and Bible classes as well as Sunday and mid-week services. The nearby Woodbrook Canadian Mission School was close to overcrowding, having already taken in just over 300 pupils and a complement of teachers. In view of this progress, Neehall saw all the "signs of a bright future". Despite this promise, however, Neehall went on to tell of the tremendous inconvenience which he and his family of ten had to face. This is how he described his catechist's residence:

The house we live in is a small, low roofed house covered with galvanize, dark and hot like an oven in the day.

When working out I often picture to find on return home, a baked wife instead of a baked roti... We have no privacy.

No bathing place. The only way for my wife and grown-up daughters to get a wash, they must get up at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning and get under the pipe. We will soon forget how to bathe.

Demonstrating a good sense of humour despite these appalling conditions Neehall wrote of "having to rough it like steerage passengers on the deck of

a miserable ship" and of experiencing what life was like in a "perfect narak" (hell). Another catechist in the Sangre Grande area told of his having to carry the Canadian missionaries on his back as they forded the streams of Cunaripo and Fishing Pond. Very few of these early pioneer Presbyterians lived to see any personal rewards in their lifetime but as the products of a high civilization, they had all been intellectually prepared to invest in the present so that future generations could prosper. And how well has that investment paid off!

This in a nutshell, is the story of which Jerome Teelucksingh has attempted to un-ravel. The book is 244 pages long and it covers a wide panoply of the work of the Canadian Missionaries in Trinidad and their further movement from here to British Guiana, Grenada, Jamaica and St. Lucia. In this sense it is the first work to deal with the Presbyterian conversion and education campaign in the circum-Caribbean area. And there are rare pictures of the early churches in Essequibo and Berbice. Let us now look briefly at some of the themes which stand out in the text. Perhaps the most important has been the fact that the Canadian Missionaries provided a bridge between the West and the East, enabling a few hundred thousands to enter the dominant Western culture into which they had come from India. Enabling this process in a relatively short space of time, was the softer Imperialism of the Canadians. Unlike the British or the French imperials, the Canadians did not attempt to wipe out the transported cultures from Asia but sought rather to learn more about these cultures and armed with this knowledge, they sought to use Orientalism as the vehicle for the transference of Western, Christian civilisation which the missionaries genuinely believed to be superior to all other cultures. The missionaries therefore kept close contact with the Scottish Presbyterians in India from whom they received regular supplies

(continued on next page)

Caribbean-Flavoured Presbyterianism

(continued)

of books and less regular supplies of Canadians who had worked in the India missions. The Canadians in Trinidad established their Hindi press at **Aram Alya** in Tunapuna where they produced **Geet Mala** (a garland of songs) and **Ratna Mala** (a garland of jewels). They learnt Hindi so that they could meet the Indians on their own terms and they encouraged the use of Hindi words to express Christian meanings. In this way the communion bread becomes **Jewan ki Roti** (the bread of life) and the Good News of Christianity became Su Samachar Presbyterian Church. The novelist V.S Naipaul makes great fun of the Presbyterian converts and this text is rich with those excerpts as well as the creative accounts of this process in the novels of Sam Selvon, Ramabai Espinet and Shani Mootoo. In its outreach to the Indo-Caribbean society the Canadian missionaries went into then uncharted territory in far-off rural areas to which the Indians, as rural people themselves, had gone after the end of their indentureship. In this way they opened forest settlements in Biche, Coromandel, Siparia Old Road and Inner Mafeking. In these areas they opened up churches and schools enabling many thousands to rise from the plantations to the professions. For those young Presbyterians who wished to join the teaching service but could not afford the expense of a secondary education, the Canadians offered the Monitor system (first tried in India) whereby young people could ascend the scale through teachers' exams and end up for final qualification at the Naparima Teachers' Training College. In this way a large cadre of very competent teachers were produced by teaching whilst they learnt to be better teachers. Today we call that on-the-job-training. Dr. Teelucksingh spent time in interviewing many such educators in an excellent demonstration of the techniques of oral history!

This book gives constant evidence of the then and present on-going dialectic regarding the purpose of the Canadian mission and later, the Trinidad Presbyterian Church. On the one hand there was the Evangel school led by John Morton, the first missionary, who was of the firm

view that the mission's purpose was conversion to Christianity and the destruction of all vestiges of Hinduism and Islam. Equally powerful was the emphasis on education rather than conversion, led by Kenneth Grant, the second missionary, who came in 1870. Whilst Morton subsequently encouraged the recruitment of the preacher types, Grant emphasized the teacher types and there was always conflict between the two schools of thought. The Indians, as eager lookers-on, were staunchly in favour of Grant and his pedagogues which explains the long tours of very eminent scholars such as Dr. Coffin, Dr. Kemp, Rev. Swann, Rev. Weldon Grant and Dr. Arthur Dayfoot. The predominance of the educational thrust was also evidenced in the founding of carefully constructed institutions like Naparima College, the Teachers' Training College, Hillview College, St. Augustine Girls High School and Iere High School. Iere was the first co-educational high-school in Trinidad (1955) and its success under Weldon Grant provided the model for the establishment of co-educational schools in Trinidad and Tobago.

In similar fashion when the Hindu and Muslim faiths were belatedly allowed to build their own schools from 1948, the majority of the educators there were people who had been trained in the Presbyterian schools. Most of these persons took with them the discipline and the love for learning which their religions enjoin, traits shared in full measure by the Scottish Canadian educators who formed the vanguard of the missionaries' educational thrust. At the same time, the book's author points out, there was the presence of the moral education advocated by Morton and his school of thought. This was the logic behind the formation of the Presbyterian Theological College in 1897, now St Andrews Theological College. Through the operation of this dialectic, moral education was made to accompany the academic so that a healthy value system, nurtured through religion, became the hall-mark of the graduate of these institutions. As Dr. Teelucksingh clearly demonstrates, this combination of academic and moral education has been exemplified in the rich harvest of academic

(continued on next page)

Caribbean-Flavoured Presbyterianism

(continued)

excellence from the Presbyterian institutions and from other denominational schools which mix moral education with reading, writing and arithmetic.

But the book is not without its faults. The author is so full of praise for the Canadians and for Presbyterians, that like most Presbyterians, he pays insufficient attention to some other aspects of the Canadian presence. There is only a passing reference to Morton's other work as agent for the Cadbury chain of chocolate producers. We need to know more about "Morton forest" in Balandra where the reverend gentleman had a large cocoa plantation. We need to know more about the manner in which the Grant family became heavily involved in acquiring lands with oil rights in South Trinidad or of the rise of firms like T. Geddes Grant as one of Trinidad's major importers/exporters, insurance brokers and bankers. These were the missionary children who brought us Canadian pianos, Brunswick sardines, smoked herrings and salt-fish. For them God was good but trade was better. Was there any truth to Rev. Scrimgeour's claim that some of the young Canadian men were setting a bad example in their ways with young East Indian women? We have also to consider the disappointment of hundreds of young Hindus or Muslims who despite their show of much academic promise had to revert to the cane-field because they refused to convert to Presbyterianism if they were to gain employment. Presbyterian history is littered with these examples and we must record these too if the story is to be complete. Jerome has done his bit, others must now take up the story. And these other studies should more fully document the work of the Hindu and Muslim organisations.

What then, can be said of this **Caribbean flavoured Presbyterianism**? Here is a good example of identity history, where a person tries to find his own and his community's place in the development of this Caribbean space. One would have expected the author to prepare for publication his Ph D thesis which traced the development of the trade union movement in Trinbago. That is a thorough piece of work. But this was more urgent; the Presbyterian

personality had to be explored firstly and all other things would be added later. The book is also contemporary history, chronicling a Church's past but equally, bringing the story right down to the present. There are educational statistics for as recently as 2005 and charts explain the Church's structure as they currently exist.

Dr. Teelucksingh has garnered information from sages who are still with us: Foster Bissessar, Stephen and Birla Seepersad, Dorinda Sampath, Zalayhar Hassanali and Canadian pioneers such as Dr. Art Dayfoot and Rev. Geraldine Reid to name a few. Others like Ralph Laltoo and Roy Mootoo he caught just in time but their testimonies remain. In the case of those who are alive, it is good that, in the evening of their fruitful service, they be reminded of the crucial roles they played. We must learn to recognise achievers whilst they are still amongst us to respond to this type of scholarship. For those of us who teach and guide research, this book is a god-send on the Presbyterian experience, filled with information culled from a wide variety of sources here and abroad as well as an accurate and exhaustive bibliography. The photographs are a rare mixture of Canadian, Guyanese and Trinidad depictions, giving flesh to the detailed narration. The conclusions to which the author frequently arrives will no doubt give rise to further contention but it is in such contention- the dialectic once again- that new ideas are created for the continuing forward movement of society. The UWI School of Continuing Studies must be congratulated for the high-quality technical production of the work and for their persistence in bringing new work to the fore; it is high time that we learn to paddle our own canoes.

Brinsley Samaroo

Curepe Presbyterian Church,
6 Sept 2008.

To order a copy of the book contact:
Heather Madhosingh
Email: cajas.international@yahoo.ca
Phone: 905-564-4900

Recipient of an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters (D.Litt)
Vera Baney made the following speech to the graduates at
UWI Graduation Ceremony on November 3, 2007

At the opening of my (1967) exhibition in San Fernando, the late President of Trinidad and Tobago, Justice Noor Hassanali said “there are three art organizations in Trinidad: there is the Trinidad Art Society, the Southern Art society and then there is Ralph and Vera Baney. Mrs. Hassanali who is in the audience will remember that.

That acclaim did not come easily. I had my fair share of hardships. My life has been, and still is, a life of challenges and adversity. I feel that the subject of adversity is what I am best qualified to speak to you about.

I was orphaned at the age of two and grew up in the household of an aunt and uncle in Duncan Village. The most outstanding thing about this experience was that I was the Cinderella in the house and watched my 6 cousins, two of them girls, attend high school without similar benefit to myself. I only heard about Naparima Girls’ High School which I so much wanted to attend.

I did very well in elementary school. I was skipped a class and wanted to take the pupil teachers’ exam which would have qualified me to go into teaching. My aunt put her foot down and said no.

As a teenager the only education I was able to get was evening classes at the YWCA in San Fernando. Here I learnt how to use my hands to make crafts. And here I met and made lifelong friends with Ena Bridgelal and Ruby Crichlow who are in the audience today. Life has its adversities but it also has its rewards.

When I was sixteen it became necessary to leave my aunt’s and uncle’s house. Among the people who helped to uplift me were Rev. and Mrs. Roy Neehall who at that time lived in Penal. They were very supportive of me during this period of transition.



They appreciated me and made me feel like a member of their family—a connection I maintain to this day with their children. Yet another of life’s compensation for earlier adversity.

Ralph and I had a friendship going on. We got engaged before he went to England on one year study leave. He came back and was off again on a five year art scholarship but this time we made plans for me to join him. We were both penniless but we had dreams

and in time we made the dreams come true. I joined him after 3 years. (Some people had been taking bets that the long distance relationship would not end in marriage). I took a job and worked by day and took crafts classes at night. On weekends we went to art shows and had a wonderful time as poor students. I remember Ralph would spend his last 60 cents to buy me flowers and would say that I was well worth it. His flowers are a little bit more expensive nowadays. We returned to Trinidad penniless. Ralph had a job to go back to and I was a stay at home housewife.

At that time my biggest challenge was to create a job for myself. Ralph taught pottery at the Southern Art Society. I saw an opportunity to try something new. Pottery took over the kitchen table and I got input from Ralph when he came home from work. Soon we were digging clay from different parts of the island and carrying out tests. Then I was experimenting with local materials for making glazes. I found all this to be totally absorbing and absolutely fascinating. I was using humble materials from the ground that we walked on as my raw material and transforming them into unique and useful objects. I had to learn from books. I made it a point to invest about four hundred dollars a year in ceramics books so that I could look at the best and latest work being

Vera Baney speech at UWI Graduation ***November 3, 2007***

done by the best clay artists in the world. I found ceramics to be challenging, frustrating, satisfying and rewarding.

I realized that the reason why nobody else was doing ceramics in Trinidad was because of the numerous problems involved. In order to solve some of these problems Ralph and I attended a summer school at the college of Ceramics at Alfred University in upstate New York. It marked the turning point in my creative work. On our return Ralph built a new kiln and wheel which allowed me to move forward with my work. I followed ceramics with a passion. The more I worked the more the ideas flowed.

But I still yearned for a high school education, even at a more mature age. Ralph was accepted to the University of Maryland to study for the Master of Fine Arts Degree. I did the GED or High School Equivalent. So finally I got the education that I missed when I was younger. I then signed up at the University of Maryland from where I graduated with a Bachelors degree with a major in studio art. I paid my tuition fees from the sale of my pots. I never gave up hope that some day I would be able to get an education. And life balanced the past yet again.

In 1999 we were poised for producing art and having shows when I had a stroke. When I regained consciousness in the hospital, the first thing that came to my mind was our son, Clarence and that I had to stay alive for him. Clarence was the gift that made me fight for my life. It was a severe stroke which meant a lot of readjustment in our lives. I did everything that the doctors told me to do. I tried to find ways of continuing to work with clay. I was left handed and now my left side was paralysed. Consequently, I started training myself to use my

right hand. I made it a point to go to the studio five days a week for about forty five minutes each time. When I gained mastery of controlling the clay again,

I challenged myself to make bigger pots or to do sculpture. Of course I needed the help of my caregiver to hand me clay and tools. I have now amassed over three hundred pots, some of them sixteen to eighteen inches tall.

The stroke has been the most difficult adversity I have had to overcome but I am still working at it and I live a fulfilling life.

As young women and young men you will certainly be confronted with adversity and challenges in many aspects of your lives. You cannot say that they are too difficult when you face them. As educated people you owe it to yourself to try your utmost to overcome these difficulties. You have been prepared with the basics to go out into the world and make your mark. To do anything well will not be easy. Whatever you

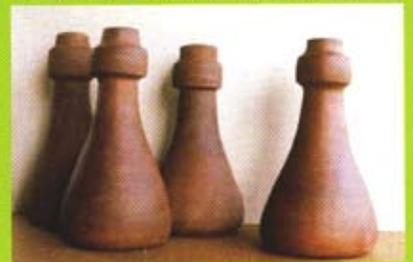
attempt, do it to the best of your ability and pursue it with a passion. You live in an exciting age and you are a select group of people. Quite unlike my situation, you have opportunities. Many of you are privileged. Your education empowers you to explore, and to go much further. Your journey is now beginning and the sky is the limit. Only one thing I would ask of you. Don't try to do it all in one year. Having risen from being a housemaid, to an outstanding clay artist and now to a Doctor of Letters, I know that every one of you is capable of distinguishing yourself with something outstanding and special. Your parents and this University will be proud of each and every one of you. Go for it and God be with you.

(Editor's note: Vera Baney passed away soon after receiving this honorary degree. Our condolences go out to Ralph and his family).

Blue Platter, stoneware (1973)



Group of Lamp Bases, terra cotta (1968)



Group of Pots, stoneware (1970)



Proud Supporter of
Naparima Alumni Association of Canada

David D. Seemungal

“Your Financial Advisor™”

- **Guaranteed Investments**
 - **Investment Funds**
 - **RRSPs & RRIFs • RESPs**
- **Life Insurance • Disability Insurance**
 - **Critical Illness Insurance**
 - **Long Term Care Insurance**
 - **Estate Planning**
- **Company Group Benefit Packages**
- **Individual Health & Dental Packages**
 - **Travel Insurance**
- **Loans, Mortgages & Leveraged Investments**



2100 Ellesmere Road, Suite 330, Toronto

Tel: (416) 445-1233 / (416) 716-4675

E-mail: davids@moneytrends.ca

www.moneytrends.ca



Panache played and Naparima members and guests celebrated 30 years!



Cover Photos courtesy of Dr. G. Desmond Teelucksingh