



LOVE SVG 'UNCONDITIONALLY'

P rime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves has called on Vincentians to love their country "unconditionally".

He made the call on Sunday, Oct. 27 -- Independence Day -- as he delivered his Independence Address to the nation.

"My brothers and sisters, my fellow Vincentians, we have done fairly well, all of us together. We know that things are not perfect but perfection is not attainable in this earthly city," he said during the address delivered at the Military Parade at Victoria Park in Kingstown.

"What we have to do is to set standards and benchmarks to which to aspire, and to achieve," he further told the large crowd of spectators -- many of whom wore the national colours -- and media audiences.

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More photos: <http://tinyurl.com/lsees2p>



Proud Vincies: Children posing in SVG's colours at the Independence Parade on Sunday.



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Editor's Note:**Dear Reader,**

We at I-Witness News (www.iwnsvg.com) are pleased to present to you our first ever e-magazine, a publication that celebrates the nation's 34th anniversary of Independence. Much time and effort have been invested to present you with a quality product that we hope you will enjoy reading and willingly share with and recommend to your relatives, friends and associates. Since our genesis in 2009, I-Witness News has grown into the leading online source of news and current affairs information in and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Today, we are taking that a step further.

This publication, like I-Witness News, is genuinely Vincentians, both in terms of its contributors and production team. We are happy that corporate St. Vincent and the Grenadines is beginning to see us as the attractive but equally efficient alternative or complement for the placements of their Independence and other messages to their clientele. We express sincere gratitude to the persons who agreed to contribute, whether they wrote a commentary, agreed to be featured, contributed photographs or made some other contribution. This magazine is a demonstration of what media can be. It is also intended to be juxtaposed against what is being offered by traditional media as it relates to special Independence publications. We do hope you enjoy and invite you to subscribe to our website for our daily updates of news and current affairs.

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'Avoid this attitude of negativism'

■ Continued from Page 1

"We have to build our society on hard work and smart work. We have to make sure each of us make a special effort in his or her personal life, his or her family, community and nation," Gonsalves said in the 36-minute address.

"We have endured many challenges and obstacles in our history and our lives. We have survived and thrived. We are not daunted or overwhelmed by any of the current difficulties and those which may lay ahead.

"We are on the right developmental tract, but, as always, we need to do better and can better together as one people under God, in solidarity with our neighbours," he further stated as he called on citizens to be more loving and caring to each other.

"Let us be more human and walk well with our God. If we commit to him, our saviour, our plans will succeed. I didn't say that, Proverbs chapter 16, verse 3 tell us that," the Prime Minister further said.

"There are many of those among us who love our country in the abstract but they slight it or even hate it in fact," he further stated as he moved to the conclusion of the speech, which spoke of the challenges and triumphs of an independent St. Vincent and the Gren-

adines.

"All of our compatriots must avoid this attitude of negativism. We cannot love our country on the one hand and refuse to lift it up," he said to cheers.

"We cannot love it and at the same time daily be on the radio tearing it down, running it down. We cannot claim to embrace as a land of our citizenship, SVG, and, at the same time, despise it. Let us resolve at this Independence Day 2013 that we must love St. Vincent and the Grenadines unconditionally always," Gonsalves further said and wished the nation happy Independence.

The event saw representatives of the various units of the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force, the Cadet Force, Scouts, Guides, and other uniformed bodies, including the SDA Pathfinder on parade.

There was also a unit from the HMS Lanchester, which included a Vincentian.

Governor General Sir Frederick Ballantyne inspected the ranks.

Among the spectators were State officials and members of the diplomatic corps.

After the events at Victoria Park, the parade made its way up town and concluded with the Prime Minister being saluted outside the Financial Complex on Bay Street.



Governor General Sir Frederick Ballantyne inspects the troop.



Government MPs and House Speaker at the Parade.



Opposition MP, St. Clair Leacock (forefront), and his wife, Margaret Leacock.



Ambassador Weber Shih of Taiwan (left) and Michael Lin of the Taiwan Embassy



Businessman Leon "Bigger Biggs" Samuel took his on-going protest to the Parade. He was joined by his daughters.



These women created a stir when they "marched pass" as PM Gonsalves took the salute uptown.

Tax-free payment

Public servants will not be taxed when they are paid this week the 1.5 per cent salary increase owed to them for almost three years.

The money is half of the 3 per cent salary increase owed to them since January 2011.

Half of the amount was paid last year, and Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves confirmed on Sunday, Oct. 27 – Independence Day – that the money will be paid this week.

“As our government has demonstrated repeatedly, we keep our promises solemnly which we make to our people, even though sometimes, now and again, infrequently, circumstances may conspire to cause delays in the delivery of a specific promise,” Gonsalves said as he delivered his Independence Day address.

“Accordingly, in their October pay check next week, all categories of public servants, including daily-paid employees will receive backdated to January the 1st, 2011, a one-and-a-half per cent increase in salary, the balance to the

heretofore-agreed salary increase,” he said as he addressed the Military Parade at Victoria Park, in Kingstown.

“Our government has had to find an additional sum in excess of \$9 million to effect this payment, a worthy accomplishment in these challenging times,” he further said to cheers.

“And I want you to hear this. This retroactive salary increase is being granted, being made, being delivered tax-free,” he said to even louder cheers from the large crowd.

“By this gesture, the value of the package for the public servants is being increased by a further \$1 million. I feel sure that all public servants, teachers, nurses, police officers and the other relevant categories of public employees, including the daily paid will appreciate the especial effort of our government in delivering on this solemn promise,” said Gonsalves, who is also Minister of Finance.

“When De Comrade tells you



A section of the crowd at the Parade.

something, you must believe it,” he said, referring to himself by the name that he is commonly referred to with affection.

He said payments to public servants and some daily-paid workers will be made on Wednesday.

The other daily-paid workers will be paid on Friday, Gonsalves said, and explained that this is so, because all the necessary calculations have not been made.

“So, those daily-paid who may

not get their money on Wednesday, yo’ don’t need to come up by my office. Wait until Friday,” he said.

Gonsalves also announced that for the 13th consecutive year, his government is providing tax-free concession on Christmas barrels. This year, the programme runs from Nov. 18 to Dec. 31.

“This concession brings the Christmas cheer to thousands of Vincentians,” he said, adding that 18,000 barrels were imported under the initiative last year.



The Government on Friday, Oct. 25, launched the National Economic and Social Development Plan 2013-2015 with Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves saying that it will be a roadmap for any administration here over the next 12 years.

The Plan offers a vision for improving the quality of life for all Vincentians and is anchored in the achievement of eight “super-arching goals,” the Government says.

The goals are:

1. High and sustained levels of economic growth;

2. Reduced unemployment and poverty levels
3. Improved physical infrastructure and environmental sustainability
4. High levels of human and social development
5. A peaceful, safe and secure nation
6. A technologically advanced workforce
7. A deep sense of national pride and cultural renaissance
8. Regional integration

“We are seeking to do something in the socio-economic sphere to build a home-grown

12-year development plan launched

consensus as to where we should be going,” Gonsalves said as he delivered the feature address at the launch of the Plan in Kingstown.

He said the Plan seeks to improve on previous Plans -- from 1947 to 1995.

“We, as a people have put down our marker in consensus,” he said, adding that there has been wide-ranging discussion, and that the Government has brought in foreign experts to suggest “a body of ideas which we may be able to incorporate in it” and also drew local experiences and the local condition.

He said that if he were to assess the Plan critically, he would have “a series of critical comments about it.”

He however, called on citizens to treat the plan as “a serious effort, home-grown, where we are engaged, as a civilised people, in an act of self-mastery.”

Gonsalves acknowledged the possibility that there might be “another perspective, another set

of ideas, different to these.

“But I will wager that whatever happens in the political sphere over the next 12 years, that anybody who comes to the crease has to take guard with this. ...

“This is a consensus for socio-economic development. I am not telling you it is a blueprint. But when you go to the next election and you see the manifestos of the two major political parties, if you don’t find the ideas here reflected in both of them, then you know one of them [is] wrong,” said Gonsalves

“And I will wager too that both manifestos will be reflecting what is in here because they constitute a consensus,” he further said.

Also addressing the launching ceremony were Director of Planning, Laura Anthony-Browne; Wayne Mitchell, the International Monetary Fund Resident Representative for Eastern Caribbean Currency Union countries; Sir K. Dwight Venner, governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank; and consultant Claremont Kirton.

“What use will you make of your independence?”

What will you transmit to your children?”

Those were the two questions that Eric Williams asked Trinidadians on their first independence day -- Aug. 31, 1962.

And, half a century later, leading Caribbean intellectual, Professor Verene Shepherd, told Vincentians that these questions, which can be posed to the people of any Caribbean nation, invite self-reflection and thoughtful responses.

She said at the nation’s Independence Lecture last Tuesday, Oct. 22 -- organised by the University of the West Indies Open Campus -- that it would be interesting to know citizens’ answers to the second question: what will you transmit to your children?

“Even more relevant, based on contemporary realities is the question that I will pose to you this evening: what will you transmit to your children who are of African descent -- arguably among the most rootless and vulnerable group in our society?”

Shepherd is a professor at UWI in Jamaica, where she is Chair of that nation’s Reparations Commission.

She is also Chair of the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, which was formed in 2002 and charged with studying the situation of people of African descent worldwide.

She said that this year, the Group is hoping that the United Nations will declare a Decade of People of African descent and agree to a set of strategies designed to address some of the major problems faced by people of African descent, including those within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Shepherd criticised CARICOM for taking little action to help to drum up support for the Decade and little awareness in the region

about it.

“... I do not want to hear anyone ask, why the focus on people of African descent,” said Shepherd who spoke on the topic “CARICOM and the Decade for People of African Descent: A Post-Independence Imperative.”

Shepherd noted that people of African descent form the majority of Caribbean populations.

She however observed that racism and structural and institutional discrimination against people of African descent, rooted in slavery, the slave trade and colonialism, and reinforced by globalisation, are evident in the situations of inequality, marginalisation, and stigmatisation affecting them.

“It is right that we talk about these issues despite our tendency to sweep them under the carpet. Indeed, in our anxiety to maintain our ideal of multiracial and multicultural Caribbean societies, we often make the culture and values of minority those of the majority, thereby fostering unnecessary inter-ethnic discord.”

Shepherd asked the listeners -- which included radio, television and Internet audiences -- to consider the question, “What will you transmit to your children who are of African descent?”

“I wonder if among the answers are: knowledge of, and pride in their region, history and heritage; positive self image; self love; respect for diversity; indigenous knowledge; a love for liberty; impatience with injustice; and a belief that, as Errol Barrow said in his 1986 speech at the Miami Conference on the Caribbean, ‘Caribbean societies are viable, functioning societies with the intellectual and institutional resources and grapple with our problems?’”

The lecture was organised by the University of the West Indies Open Campus.



Best wishes to

St Vincent and the Grenadines

on the occasion of its

34th

Anniversary of Independence

From: Grant Connell Chambers

Independence Message 2013

**H. E. Sir Frederick N. Ballantyne, G.C.M.G., MD, DSc
Governor-General of St. Vincent and the Grenadines**

My fellow Vincentians as we celebrate the 34th year of our Independence it is not only a time for festivities but a time for serious reflection as we prepare to do battle with the forces which confront us daily.

We need as a people to be proud of our accomplishments and pay homage to all of our forefathers who battled against adverse forces to guarantee our freedom and set the foundation for our development as proud Caribbean peoples.

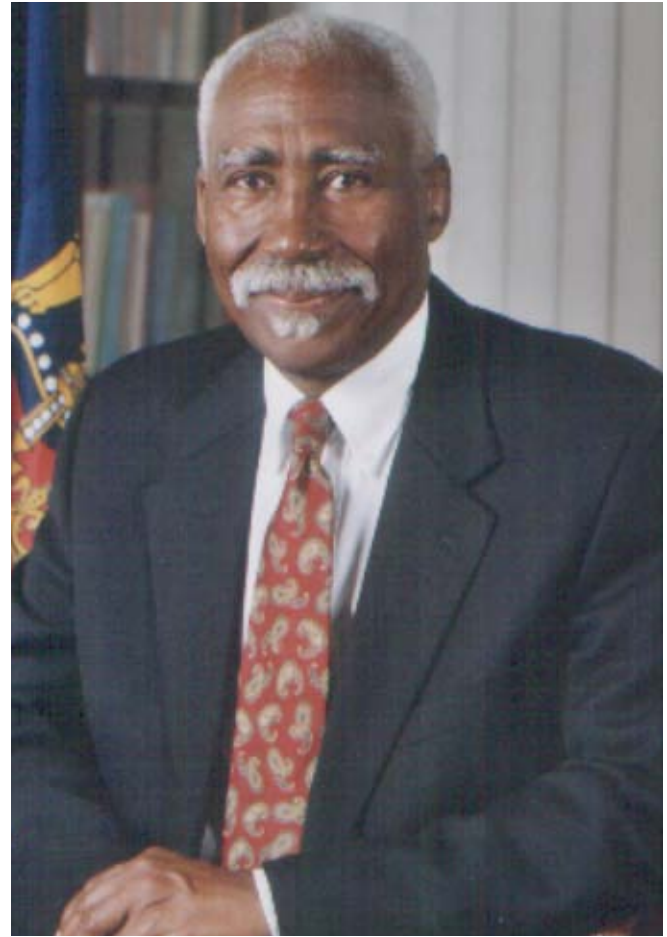
Today our greatest challenge is the serious economic crisis facing our small nation. Although this situation is not of our making we must admit that almost every household feels its adverse effect and already we are faced with loss of basic income and shortages of jobs.

More than ever, we need to be acutely aware that these ill effects are harsher for the poor, the aged, the handicapped and

all those marginalized in the society. I continue to be of the opinion that major issues like these can only be adequately addressed through co-operation between all sections of the society and although the way forward is difficult and full of obstacles, we have the resolve to overcome all these difficulties and forge a better, more productive society for all Vincentians.

It is my fervent hope that at this time, we can find it within ourselves to overlook the minor differences which tend to separate us and come together for the common good.

My family and I wish all Vincentians a safe and blessed Anniversary of Independence filled with God's richest blessings.



ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES CELEBRATING 34 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

HEALTH SOLUTIONS INC.
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Faith and deeds sustain our nation

by Dr The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines

On October 27, 2013, St Vincent and the Grenadines celebrates its 34th anniversary of nationhood. By most measurements our nation has made remarkable socio-economic strides over these last 34 years.

A compelling factual story of improved standards of material living is available to be told in the central areas of enhanced income levels, education and health, housing and sanitation, water and electricity, telecommunications and car ownership, road transportation and airport infrastructure, travel by air and sea, social equality and poverty reduction, culture and the arts, sports and recreation, science and technology, broadcasting and information.

In some other spheres there have been disappointments and even regression, as manifested in: Increased criminal conduct, especially crimes of violence; a disturbing coarseness in public and private discourse; a weakening of citizen security, despite improved levels of policing and the strengthening of security apparatuses; unhealthy behavioural habits which lead to chronic non-communicable diseases (diabetes and hypertension) and widespread sexually-transmitted diseases (mainly HIV/AIDS); an apparent decline in spirituality, despite the huge expansion of churches and religious denominations; and an amplification of political divisiveness through the modern means of communication.

Our nation's outstanding accomplishments have been initiated and sustained by our faith and deeds: Self-mastery achieved through belief in the supremacy of God, the freedom and dignity of man and woman, accompanied by action.

The twinning of faith and deeds has seen us through difficult challenges, and has brought us success. James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, in his writings to the twelve tribes scattered among nations about sixty years after the birth of Christ, addressed this very question:

"You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made

complete by what he did". [James, Chapter 2, verses 20 - 22].

It was rightly emphasised that "faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action is dead". Likewise, "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead".

Faith and deeds enable us as a nation to enhance our possibilities and reduce our limitations. From faith and deeds spring a positive outlook on life and are, conjointly, the antithesis to the learned helplessness of the unthinking chatterati among us. A sense of self-mastery under God is vital to the fulfillment of our individual and collective obligations; a redemptive grace which leads inexorably to social progress.

I reiterate yet again that the centre-piece of a progressive society is hard and smart work. No progressive nation has ever been built upon a surfeit of leisure, pleasure, and "nice time"; progress is dependent upon productive and disciplined labour which society must reward appropriately.

These are eternal verities which we ignore at our peril. In a small, vulnerable, resource-challenged country like St. Vincent and the Grenadines with its compounding legacy of underdevelopment arising from native genocide, slavery, colonialism and imperialism, it is incumbent upon us all to deliver optimally in accordance with our strength and ability. There is not much room for slackness and error. We must get it right, even though as human beings we acknowledge that we would from time-to-time get it wrong. When in error, we must admit it and correct it swiftly and sensibly.

Since the unfolding of the global economic crisis in 2008, and continuing, the economic challenges facing St. Vincent and the Grenadines have intensified. Further economic pain was inflicted from other events not of our own making, namely, the melt-down of two regional insurance companies (CLICO and BAICO) and a succession of natural disasters occasioned substantially by climate change. As a consequence, St Vincent and the Grenadines, endured three years (2008 – 2010, inclusive) of negative economic growth followed by two years of slow, hesitant recovery in 2011 and 2012.

Despite all these awesome difficulties, our nation has survived and thrived. We have not reduced governmental expenditure in critical areas of education, health, social



safety nets, and citizen security. Indeed, we have increased spending in several of these programmatic areas. We have not laid off workers in the public sector, and we have ramped up capital spending in several vital projects. Even in this challenging economic environment, the government embarked upon the construction of the largest capital project ever, the Argyle International Airport, which is due for completion at this time next year. Moreover, we have further reduced poverty, indigence and under-nourishment to such a marked degree that we have launched the very ambitious "Zero Hunger Project".

On the immediate horizon several important, public sector capital projects are about to start up in earnest, including: the South Leeward Highway Reconstruction (Hospital Road to Layou) at a cost of EC \$44 million; several components of the post-Hurricane Tomas rehabilitation exercise, costing in excess of EC \$75 million; the Disaster Recovery Project of in excess of EC \$50 million; the Banana Accompanying Measures (BAM) of EC \$34 million financed by a grant from the European Union; the 10th EDF Health Sector Modernisation Project of EC \$33 million from EU grant funding; and the further expansion of the Green Hill and Clare Valley Housing Projects.

Meanwhile, huge sums are being invested by the private sector in hotel and tourism developments especially in Canouan, Bequia, Mustique, and St Vincent. The actual scheduled

commencement later this year of a multi-million middle-income housing project at Peter's Hope financed and managed by the National Insurance Services and GECCU will alter, for the better, the socio-economic landscape in Central Leeward. Private investment in agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing, construction, telecommunications, financial and medical education is increasing.

In the area of renewable energy, the partnership between the Clinton Climate Initiative, Emera, Reykjavik Geothermal, and the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines in a geothermal project centred in North Leeward and North Windward, is likely to herald a game-changing framework for the delivery of competitively-priced electricity to all consumers in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

This Geothermal Project in tandem with the relocation and expansion of Port Kingstown and the construction of a modern city at the Arnos Vale site of the E.T. Joshua Airport are undoubted manifestations of the twinning of faith and deeds.

We thank Almighty God for his amazing grace and blessings. We are most hopeful about the future of our country, especially our talented young people who represent the best of our Caribbean civilisation. We are grateful to our friends and allies overseas.

Happy 34th Independence Anniversary to all Vincentians, including those in the diaspora!

We can accomplish what we will!

Independence Message by Hon. Arnhim U. Eustace, Leader of the Opposition and President of the NDP

As I write this message today, Monday 21st October 2013, a good friend of mine is sitting in the departure lounge at ET Joshua Airport. For more than 20 years, he has run a small business here, in addition to farming. He was not himself when I spoke to him this morning. He does not want to leave his young family, but he must. He has secured a job on a ship because his small business is floundering; aboard ship, he will be able to meet his mortgage and other family expenses. It is paramount that he should stand on his own feet; that he should maintain his independence.

My son, Ajene was born in 1979, about six months before St. Vincent and the Grenadines attained Independence. He, like Independent SVG, turned 34 this year. He lives in New Jersey in the USA with his wife, Ijeoma, and their children.

Ajene is a civil engineer and Ijeoma is a secondary school history teacher. As young middle class professionals, they are directly impacted by the US economic recession. Two years ago, Ajene's firm cut its workweek to four days, in other words a firm-wide 20 per cent salary reduction. Last year, Ijeoma was one of literally thousands of teachers laid off in New Jersey. Ajene and Ijeoma are repaying their university student loans and mortgage while meeting the staggering costs of child care and property tax.

Thankfully, they have both returned to full employment. In the interim, they never once failed to service their main obligations. They did so by prioritising -- rational folk do this. Ajene and Ijeoma are by no means unique. They did what many in St. Vincent are doing (thousands of our unemployed youth, however, simply cannot make do). Ajene and Ijeoma cut costs by eliminating extras like cable TV and dining out. They cut down on travel and other discretionary spending. In

this way, the mortgage never went unpaid, and they still ate healthy organic foods. Likewise none of their education expenses went unpaid.

I expected as much of my country at 34: that we would soberly decide what was most important and eliminate and/or cut down on the rest. Frankly, if we don't we shall lose our independence. I expected that we would control our government expenditure, by stepping up efforts to cut out waste and corruption and improve efficiency, with a view to operating on a current account surplus. To so manage our overall deficit as to keep it in line with accepted international norms. To foster an environment that encourages private sector growth by among other things, repaying our Government's debt to the private sector, thereby stemming the haemorrhage of private sector layoffs and creating new employment for our thousands of jobless young people.

Instead, the airport project at Argyle is treated with all impor-



tance while necessities like quality healthcare and support for agriculture and other productive sectors are ignored. Now, it is habit to thrust our cupped hands toward certain foreign powers that dangle trinkets.

If we do not make an about turn immediately we shall march inexorably to colonization. We shall

become an economic colony -- selling the primary good and buying the finished product; our very labour shall be our biggest export; foreign entities shall own our indigenous enterprises.

Let's stand once more on our own feet. We can accomplish what we will.



Leader of the Democratic Republican Party, Anesia Baptiste, writes as PM Gonsalves delivers his address at the Independence Parade on Sunday.



Leader of SVG Green Party, Ivan O'Neal, a retired Royal Air Force Warrant Officer, wears his medals at the Parade.

Independence Address 2013

Commissioner of Police (Ag.), Michael Charles

Greetings and Salutations

My fellow citizens here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and in the Diaspora, as we celebrate our thirty-fourth (34th) Anniversary of Independence, I bring you warmest greetings on behalf of the men and women of the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force, the organization which I am very humbled to lead at this time, albeit in an acting capacity.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines has made tremendous strides economically, socially, culturally and in the area of national security since attaining Independence in 1979. As citizens, we have much to be justly proud of, such as:

1. The natural beauty of our island
2. The resilient nature of our peoples; and
3. The physical, educational, spiritual and general development of our country over the years.

Transition in the Police Force

The Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force is currently going through a period of transition. Commissioner of Police, Mr. Keith G. Miller, who has been at the helm of the organization for the past eight (8) years, is demitting office on October 31st, 2013, after serving this country as a Police Officer for over thirty-four (34) years. We thank him for his service to the country and wish him success in his future endeavours.

Recently, there have been some new appointments in the Police Force. These appointments have brought fresh faces to the "Police High Command". Mr. Carlos Sampson, Superintendent of Police, is now an Assistant Commissioner of Police in charge of Administration, and Mr. Christopher Benjamin, also a former Superintendent of Police, is now an Assistant Commissioner of Police (Ag.) in charge of Operations. There are two (2) new Superintendents, one new acting Superintendent, two (2) new Assistant Superintendents, one (1) new Acting Assistant Superintendents, one (1) new Inspector, seven (7) new Station Sergeants, four (4) new confirmed Sergeants and four (4) acting Sergeants, eight (8) new confirmed Corporals and four (4) acting Corporals.

At the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Coast Guard Service, there is one (1) new acting Commander, one (1) new acting Lieutenant Commander, one (1) new acting Lieutenant, one (1) new Sub-Lieutenant, one (1) new acting Sub-Lieutenant and (1) one new acting Chief Petty Officer.

With these new appointments and promotions, coupled with other members of this noble organization, I am confident that the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force will endeavour to transform itself into a more productive, effective, sensitive and caring Institution, as we continue to serve all the people of this Blessed Nation.

Crime Trends and Analysis

While our crime situation remains stable, our Nation has been experiencing an upsurge in certain categories of crimes, namely robberies and burglaries. The criminals have become more brazen and are attacking citizens' person and property, utilizing new tactics. The Police nonetheless remain resolved to vigorously carry out its mission, which, in part, is "to protect life and property; detect and prevent crimes and prosecute perpetrators of crimes".

The criminals are not only attacking ordinary citizens, but officers of the law as well. So far, two (2) Police Officers were cowardly shot by criminals; one (1) of them was executing his sworn duty, while the other was resting at a Police compound, after concluding his tour of duty. I again publicly empathize with these Officers, their families and every other victim of crime in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I give the assurance that the Police will be resolute in their efforts to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice.

Police/Public Partnership

The Police cannot and will never be able to solve crimes alone. We need the full support of the general public to bolster our efforts to do so. That is why we have forged a partnership with members of the general public in this regard. To those citizens who have been assisting the Police to fight crimes, I say thank you; and to those who have not been so inclined as yet, as Commissioner of Police (Ag.), I urge you to join us in doing your civic duty as citizens.

The Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force has been instrumental in assisting to form several Neighbourhood Watch Groups and other initiatives throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines and we will continue in that vain for the foreseeable future. We have to try and be our "brother's keeper" once more. The criminals are networking, therefore, every law-abiding citizen must also work together with the Police to disrupt the criminals and bring them to justice.



Training and Development

Fellow citizens, over the last decade, there has been a visible paradigm shift in the Police Force with regards to education and training. Police Officers, with assistance from the Government and other financial Institutions, have taken the initiative to pursue higher levels of education from O'Levels right up to master's degrees in various field of expertise. To date, there are over twenty-seven (27) university graduates in the Police Force and several others are currently pursuing studies locally, regionally and internationally. I commend these Officers highly. I want to also encourage those Officers who have not taken up the opportunity for higher education and training, to do so soonest as the Organization continues to modernize itself.

The Organisation continues to provide the highest quality of training to its personnel. Training and development remains very critical to the effectiveness of the Police Force. Therefore, every viable opportunity offered for same must be grasped.

New Initiatives

The Police Force is on a quest to provide better service to the citizens of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Our goal, as always, must be "to protect and serve" the general public. To this end, the Organization has in recent past, introduced some new initiatives/programmes in the Force, with a view to maximizing efficiency and professionalism in the Organization. I am pleased to announce the formation of the Sexual Offences Unit (SOU). This new Unit will deal with all the reported sex crimes throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Plans are also in the advanced stage, to form another specialized unit call the "Crime Scene Investigations Unit" (CSIU). There are presently two (2)

certified crime scene investigators who were trained and certified at the National Security Training Academy and two (2) more will soon receive Certification in this field.

My fellow citizens, the Old Montrose Police Training School is now better equipped to train new Police Recruits. This is due to the development of a revised Police Recruit Training Syllabus for Member States of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and Barbados. The initiative, which was commissioned by the Council of Ministers of National Security of the OECS, mandated the Training Institute of the Regional Security System (RSS) to synchronize Police Recruit Training in the OECS region. Consequently, every Police Recruit in the OECS will receive the same level and type of training when they enter Training School. The Project was funded by the Canadian Government.

Conclusion

As I conclude, I want to thank the men and women of the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force for performing their duties, sometimes in very difficult situations and I also want to thank their families for supporting them. Finally, to the general public, thank you once again for partnering with us to combat crimes. I give you the assurance that this partnership will continue to blossom and with the help of Almighty God and your constant assistance, the men and women under my command will endeavour to protect every citizen and visitor from crime, protect life and property, prevent and detect crimes and bring the perpetrators to justice. Happy Independence to all!

Thank you.



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34th

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Reflections on challenges of an independent SVG

by Maxwell Haywood

Living in an independent, small island developing state comes with profound challenges, possibilities, and constraints. This is applicable to St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), a country situated in the Caribbean, and one of the smallest and financially poorer nations within the Americas. Despite this, it possesses a population with a rich historical legacy.

SVG faces daunting challenges as an independent country. Independence came in 1979 and the nation was expected to meet daunting challenges using its own decisions while still being constitutionally accountable to the British Monarchy.

The challenges were enough to give the leaders many sleepless nights. For instance, in 1979, after such a long time in colonialism, SVG had one major public hospital, located in capital Kingstown. Many of the existing schools were in a deplorable and shameful state. The housing stock was also not desirable for a proud people who made up the nation. The means of communication and transportation were not up to standard. And the political system was severely lacking responsiveness.

So the governments after Independence had their work cut out for them. National or social transformation was a pressing need to be met. They went about fulfilling that need with varying degrees of success. Though not sufficient, there have been positive changes in the education system, housing, health, communication, transportation, and political or governance sectors. These positive changes have resulted in improvements in the living conditions of the people. Nevertheless, numerous negatives still haunt the nation 34 years after independence.

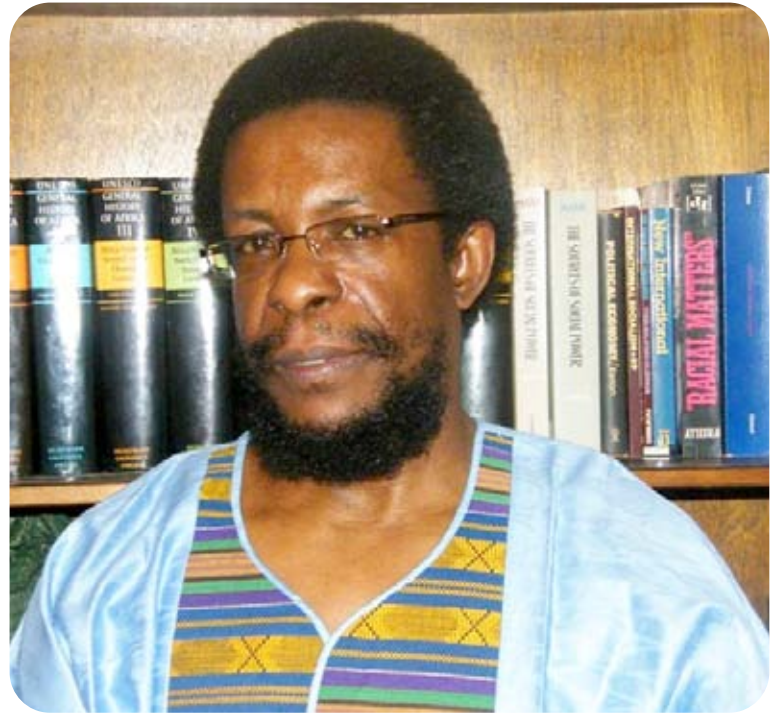
In SVG, much work needs to be done to meet the needs of the people for decent and productive

jobs, education, housing, participation in development processes, freedom from crime and violence, and opportunities for enjoying high quality leisure and cultural arts. These needs are popular needs of the vast majority of Vincentians.

An independent nation should be able to provide dignified shelter or housing for all of its people, be able to educate them, keep them productively employed in decent work and ensure they are healthy.

I strongly assert that these daunting needs could only be met by full mobilization of the people in their villages, towns, constituencies and parishes. And within these locations, people must be mobilized within their work places, within their community organizations, places of worship, farms, sports or playing fields, entertainment centres, schools, families, shops or stores, and political party groups and organizations.

Who is going to do this mobilization? Citizens with the capacity to carry out this task should feel obligated to rise to the challenge of mobilizing the people. Furthermore, the socio-political system (political parties, Parliament, public sector, unions, civil society organizations) has a responsibility to do so and must facilitate this approach. It means that the political actors must abandon the notion that the public administration bureaucracy, the political parties and the private business sector are the only ones to meet those needs. Only a vigilant people, organized in their resident communities, their organizations, and primary groups, could make the public bureaucracy, political parties, the private business sector, and the civil society sector respond effectively to the needs of the people. Too often what takes priority are the needs and desires of the political party and the parasitic profit impulses of the private business sector. The needs of the people come last on the list



of priorities in too many instances.

Relatively new independent nations such as SVG must ensure that it is fundamentally committed to human development rather than becoming subjected to the dictates and nature of bureaucracy, parasitic private profit making, and a tribalistic political system. As it stands now, human development is too often held hostage by political parties and the public bureaucracy.

Human development must become the goal served by the three major institutions namely public administration, economic enterprises and NGOs or civil society organizations. In turn, human development will have a positive impact on these three institutions. Investments in human development will spur on higher levels of development of people, governance, and economic enterprise.

A country with no major set of natural resources such as oil and minerals from which to build wealth must recognize that its people is its major resource. This reality means that social consciousness is the key factor in transformative processes. A deep consciousness of the interdependent nature of human beings must be promoted and developed. Each citizen must be empowered with a social consciousness that enables them to create, build, and sustain a resilient and prosperous society based on solidarity, justice, peace and compassion.

Only a full-fledged participatory

system would provide space for human development to bloom. Colonial rule was commandist, authoritarian, repressive, and oppressive. It was this governance framework that SVG inherited at the time of independence. The struggle for decolonization has been a major challenge facing the Vincentian nation.

No development policy could be sustained if this commandist and authoritarian legacy of colonialism is allowed to continue without making a complete break with it and putting in its place a full-fledged participatory democratic way of life.

About the author
Maxwell Haywood in an international civil servant, working especially in the field of social development. He has worked at the international level in areas such as poverty eradication, NGO relations, racism, youth development, higher education, social integration, and cooperative development. He presently works on issues related to the social and solidarity economy. He has degrees in public administration and education, human resources development and public policy, and business management. He has also done studies in other areas such as mass communication, international political economy, international social development policy, international leadership, negotiations, project management, elections monitoring, and globalization.

We must own ourselves

by Marlon Bute

The great Haitian writer Jacques Roumain, in his novel "Gouverneurs de la Rosée" or "Masters of the Dew", once caused the main character, Emmanuel, to explore his farming comrades to rise up and organize themselves so that they could benefit fully from the fruits of their labour.

"What are we? Since that's your question, I'm going to answer you. We're this country, and it wouldn't be a thing without us, nothing at all. Who does the planting? Who does the watering? Who does the harvesting? Coffee, cotton, rice, sugar cane, cocoa, corn, bananas, vegetables, and all the fruits, who's going to grow them if we don't? Yet with all that, we're poor, that's true. We're out of luck, that's true. We're miserable, that's true. But do you know why, brother? Because of our ignorance. We don't know yet what a force we are, what a single force -- all the peasants, all the Negroes of the plain and hill, all united. Someday, when we get wise to that, we'll rise up from one end of the country to the other. Then we'll call a General Assembly of the Masters of the Dew, a great big coumbite of farmers and we'll clear out poverty and plant a new life". ("Masters of the Dew", p. 106).

This imploration, this plea, could have been easily echoed to our local farmers in the pre-Independence era when bananas, coconuts, arrowroot, yams, dasheens, sweet potatoes and vegetables flourished in our land and when we were yet as a people still living in poverty and faring badly when it came to social justice, healthcare, education and other social services.

Even in the years preceding Independence, agriculture in St. Vincent and the Grenadines continued to do well with banana remaining the island's main economic stay. Thousands of homes had backyard gardens from which tomatoes, pigeon peas, okras, string beans, sweet peppers, lettuce and other vegetables could be harvested to supplement servings of roasted breadfruit, jack fish or a chicken that would have been earlier that day caught, plucked and left to marinate in chives, thymes, ginger and other seasonings from that same backyard, or from a neighbour's.

Now, we have farmers who are on social welfare while their farms only push forth weed and shrubs. They cannot feed the nation as they once did. They cannot feed

themselves as they once did. Some try. Some remain resilient. But, the cries of most of our producers of food resound across the land. They lack capital; the roads are impassable; they no longer have a credit facility to allow them to buy seeds and fertilizer. And the Ministry of Agriculture seems unable to establish a framework that would revive and sustain agriculture.

Vincentians, for the most part, no longer have backyard gardens, home-grown chickens, sheep, goats or livestock that traditionally supplemented their income or took pride of place on the dinner table.

The reality is that as we celebrate and boast of 34 years of Independence, we are worse off since Independence. Vincentians are now more dependent than any other time in our history on foreign aid and on hand-outs from families and friends, at home and abroad. Where are the farms? Where are the backyard gardens? Where is the spirit of self-help, self-reliance that characterized pre-Independence days?

We really can't complain that we produce and that we do not consume. The problem is that we consume all that comes from outside -- mostly inferior meats and fruits, and we hardly produce. We need to start producing. We

need to plant seeds in our backyards. We need to plant some chive, thyme, lettuce, tomatoes, and cabbage, and feed ourselves. We need to help our children to help themselves.

We need to recommence rearing a few chickens and rabbits. We need to wean ourselves of government assistance and rid ourselves of this dependency syndrome that has taken hold.

At every chance we get, we ought to be preparing a healthy and delicious meal at home.

Some estimates indicate that we import as much as 400 million dollars of food. Yet, we have high unemployment, thousands of acres of idle arable lands, a feeds mill, and good water and electricity supplies. What are we missing? Why import 30-plus million in chicken products? Why import tomatoes, carrots, lettuce, cabbage and cucumbers?

We need to get up and get. We need to plant that seed in the ground and in our minds and in our children's minds. We need to reflect that we come predominantly from a people, and indeed peoples, who throughout history always strove to sustain themselves.

From this Independence onward, I really hope that my brothers and sisters at home and abroad, in the



urban areas and the rural areas, in the big cities and the small towns, in the hills and the valleys and in every nook and cranny will plant a seed. We must own ourselves. We must wipe out dependency, despair and poverty. We must rise up. We must rise up and plant a seed. We must own ourselves.

Marlon Bute is a Toronto-based Vincentian writer and storyteller. He holds a bachelor's degree in history and french. He studied at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad and Barbados and l' Université des Antilles et de la Guyane in Guadeloupe.

Smiling faces at Independence Parade



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Facing a tough job market, college grad returns to the land

by KENTON X. CHANCE

Producer

Like most 23-year-old Vincen-
tians, Elroy Boucher has a
smartphone. However, unless
he is expecting an important
business call, he often leaves it at
home when he goes to work, since
he is tempted to check it whenever
it gives a notification.

This graduate of the Technical
Division of the St. Vincent and the
Grenadines Community College,
who is trained in mechanical
technology, is a farmer.

And since the work is labour
intensive, he avoids mobile device
distractions such as unimportant
messages and contacts just trying
to chitchat.

Foster says he has been in
agriculture all his life but took up
full-time farming only four years
ago, after graduating from the
post-secondary institution.

"I am a fourth generation farmer --
my great grandfather, my grandfa-
ther, my father and now me," he
explains as he walks on his family's
15-acre farm in the interior area of
Belair.

On "Debique Acres," as it called,
Foster and his father grow root
crops and fruits and vegetables. As
well, they raise cattle, sheep, goats,
pigs and chickens.

"We've farmed for many years. So
as a young boy growing up, you had
your little sheep and goat and so
on. Eventually, you grow into it and
you realise this is something that
you actually love and you continue
doing it while making a living for
yourself," Foster says.

After graduating from college,
Foster applied for jobs at several
companies, while continuing to
farm part-time.

However, he said, the job market
was "really, really tough" and he
decided to go back to the land full
time.

"Why fight up with a job when I
can be self-employed and even
employ some others?" he asked
rhetorically, beads of sweat running
down his face on a humid
mid-October morning.

Three of his employees -- two
women and one man -- work
diligently under the cloudy sky,
pulling weeds from a bed of chives.

Foster says he employs between
three and four persons, intermit-

tently.

Although unemployment is a
major problem in St. Vincent and
the Grenadines, it is not easy to find
persons who are willing to work on
the farm, he says.

Foster has decided to go into
agriculture at a time when experts
in the Caribbean are expressing
concerns about the future of the
sector, in light of the fact that the
average farmer in the region is over
50 years old.

The young entrepreneur has had
to cope with derision by some of his
peers over his decision to continue
his family's farming tradition.

"...they will say, 'You went to
secondary school; you went to
college.' They look at it as a dirty
job," Foster says.

Many young people see farming
as hard work but Foster thinks all
work requires effort.

"Nothing is easy," he says. "I like the
hard work because it makes me feel
a sense of worth -- working for your
own money and doing it honestly."

But not everyone in St. Vincent
and the Grenadines shares Foster's
respect for the values of hard work
and honesty.

In 2009, seven goats, worth about

EC\$2,000, were stolen from his farm
while he was overseas.

Praedial larceny is a real challenge
for the nation's farmers, although
Foster says that theft of produce is
not a problem on his farm.

Other challenges include the price
of fertilizer, which "keeps going up,"
Foster says.

Pests and diseases are not a major
problem, he says. The most
common issues are grubs eating
potato tubers, the armadillo -- a
non-native mammal that was
introduced into the country some
decades ago -- that burrows into
the earth and eats root crops, and
diseases such as leaf spot and black
sigatoka that affect plantains, he
explains.

Farmers in the region are also
susceptible to losses from natural
disasters such as Hurricane Tomas,
which destroyed most of country's
banana cultivation in 2010.

The storm wrecked Foster's sheep
pens and pigsty and damaged
some of his fruit trees.

Notwithstanding the challenges,
Foster says, he will continue
farming.

■ Continued on next page



Youth confident of bright future in agriculture

■ Continued from previous page

"It is something that I have grown into. Yes, there will be challenges in it, but I have decided to farm. I will always be a farmer."

He sees his efforts as an important contribution to the development of the country.

"I am helping with the economic growth of the country in terms of producing food, and some of the food gets exported, so I am a part of helping to develop the country as a whole."

The Ministry of Agriculture has been holding workshops and trying to enlighten farmers about the importance of their role in food security, he says.

"We need to produce more," he says, mentioning also a need to practice good farming habits, comply with the rules, and reduce the use of chemicals.

Another dimension of farming that inspires Foster is the land to table concept.

"I try to eat mostly what I grow. And it helps to save money, in terms of buying a lot of stuff by the shop. And then, sometimes, you don't even know what you are eating because a lot of that stuff is produced using a lot of chemicals. When I grow my stuff, I know what I produce, so I feel more comfortable eating what I

produce."

Like most businesspeople, Foster is tight-lipped about how much money he makes from his enterprise, but is confident that he has a financially secure future as a farmer.

He thinks that in the next five years, he will be well on his way to success.

"I see myself cultivating more lands and achieving certain things, like a house and family and these things. It is quite possible, if I work hard enough," he says.

He also sees farming as a worthwhile pursuit for other young people in the country and a means of earning some quick cash.

"There is a lot of waste (idle) land in the country. So youths who are unemployed, start to do something; grow some vegetables. You don't have to do the root crops. Vegetables [take] only six weeks [to mature], so you can make some money instead of being on the block (roadside) not making anything," he says.

While many youths may see farming as hard, unattractive work, Foster has some encouraging words for them.

"Farming is like this: whatever you put in is what you get out. So, it can be quite rewarding at times."



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'The heights of great men...'

Office attendant.
What was the first impression that came to your mind?

Chances are, it was not of a person with a university degree.

Well, Sylvannus Horne, a 47-year-old resident of Arnos Vale – originally from Calliaqua -- is an office attendant with a degree from the University of the West Indies (UWI), where he has been working for the past 15 years.

But why work for a university and not try to get a university education?

Horne told I-Witness News Independence Magazine that he joined staff of UWI on April 15, 1998.

"Being around her, I got the encouragement and the interest to go about my studies. I started my Certificate in Public Administration programme in 2001," he said.

He took exemptions by pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in management, begun in 2007, completed in 2011, and graduated in 2012.

Horne explained that his job is "not like the regular office attendant in the government service".

"It involves multiple tasks I have to carry out each day," he told I-Witness News Independence Magazine.

"I have to be in the office at certain times to relieve others and to assist with clerical work duties. I interact with all departments on the site -- the library, the main offices, the IT lab, and I assist marketing as well. It is multifunctional."

Horne, a former national cricketer -- also known as Sylvannus Morgan -- graduated from St. Vincent Grammar School in 1978 and had wanted to pursue a university education.

"On the verge of leaving school, that was the initial intention, but as to how I was gonna do it, I wasn't too sure and I think that this opportunity has opened up for me which paved the way, because I don't think that back then my parents were in a position to afford me a university education. But it was always there in the back of mind that I want to further my education at a higher level."

Horne's first job after leaving school was a short stint as a teacher in Mustique.

He then worked as a clerk at a department store.

"The company I was working for



Achiever

was downscaling at the time and I was one of the employees who had to leave, so I was, sort of, out in the wilderness --or job hunting then," he said, adding that he worked briefly on the production line at the St. Vincent Brewery Ltd.

Then he saw an advertisement in the newspaper for an office attendant at UWI.

"I said, 'Here is a place where there is upward mobility. I thought even though the job is saying office attendant, which most people may look at as one of the lowest paying jobs, I said just to be at UWI should be some sort of motivation, hence I decided to give it a shot.'"

Horne said that balancing work, and studies, while being a husband and a father was "very, very challenging indeed."

"At times, you have to make a lot of sacrifices, give up certain things -- the opportunity cost, studying on afternoons," he explained.

"You find yourself very burnt out at times, but you know you have work to do, you have assignments to submit and you have to muster that energy to go again," he said.

His main motivation, Horne said, was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's famous and inspiring quote, "The heights by great men

reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight, but they, while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night."

"That was always in my mind.

When I see people achieve, particularly under strenuous conditions like myself, it was always resounding in my mind. And I always maintained in my mind, in order to reach the highest scale of employment, to achieve success, you have to sacrifice, you have to work hard, you have to be disciplined," Horne said.

"And this is what this programme has taught me -- to be disciplined, to be able to manage my time.

"Yes, it is challenging and all of those things factor in. Challenging when you have a family, and, because I have a family, of two girls -- 21 and 15 --and a wife, it takes a toll on you," Horne said, adding that he is actively involved in the Arnos Vale Methodist Church, where he sings in the choir.

Horne said his achievement has been an inspiration to his daughters.

"The elder one, who is 21 now, I was able to guide her in her studies as well and share some of my experiences with her and give her encouraging remarks sometimes when I see she is finding it difficult with different subject areas.

"Similar to what I had in the back of my mind, that success doesn't come easy, she has to toil hard. ... I

told her, 'Your father and mother weren't born with a gold spoon in their mouths. Education is the way out of poverty and the best a parent can give a child is to educate them,'" Horne told I-Witness News Independence Magazine.

His elder daughter completed her A' Level studies at the Community College and is now a teacher.

He is using some of the same tactics to inspire his 15-year-old daughter.

Now that Horne has a degree, he sees himself as more marketable.

In the meanwhile, he is using the skills he acquired within the degree programme in the church mainly, assisting in any strategic plans they have.

"And I am still encouraging youth who are still going to school to take their education seriously and see where I can help them if they come to me for any assistance."

And for those persons who see themselves low down on the pecking order, Horne has some advice:

"I would say to them, it is not where you start. You can start at the lowest end of the government level but with ambition, with discipline, hard work and dedication, you can reach the stars and even beyond that. And you just have to set your goals, work towards achieving them, tell yourself that you can and work hard towards achieving your goal."



In Celebration of the

34th



Anniversary of Independence

St. Vincent and the Grenadines

October 27th, 2013



The Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan)

Basketball takes Bequia youths to new frontier

Pioneers

As the summer of 2009 began, Cregg Friday, then 20 years old, and a student of psychology, physical education, and communications studies, left the Community College -- and never returned.

That same summer, Craiglee Sam, two years Friday's senior, was employed with a firm that owns a real estate company on the Grenadines island of Bequia, where they both lived.

Today, both men have completed undergraduate degrees in Taiwan and have been accepted to read master's degrees in the Asian nation, where they were the first international players to play in First Division there.

The story of the "Bequia boys" -- as some members of the Vincentian community in Taiwan sometimes call them -- is a reflection of the outward

gaze and readiness of Vincentians to take advantage of opportunities -- often distant lands, sometimes culturally opposite to their own.

It is also a metaphor for the ability of the people of Bequia to take to the high seas, weather the storm, and sail back to safe havens.

Community College was but a temporary mooring after Friday had completed the first year of his programme there for he was already eyeing the horizon.

He was merely "occupying" himself, while he waited for his father to complete the necessary applications for him to migrate to the United States.

Sam, for his part wanted to pursue a tertiary education but was not sure how he might be able to do so.

Both young men were members of Bequia Tech Rising Stars basketball team, and when Ming Chuan University (MCU) in Taiwan decided that it wanted to recruit international players under a scholarship programme, Vincentian Jamali Jack, who was a student at the university, recommended that Sabrina Mitchell, long-standing president of the Bequia Basketball Association, be contacted.

The Association produced a video showcasing the skills of its various players, and MCU became interested in Friday and Sam.

"I was at the Community College but it was like I was 'spinning top in mud'. So I decided to take the opportunity," Friday told I-Witness News of the four-year basketball scholarship he was offered in 2009.

He said that while he had completed the first year of the two-year programme at the Community College, he was studying the "waste of time" subjects simply because he wanted to "occupy" himself.

"So I just wanted a piece of paper or something to say I went to college so that when I got up [to the U.S.], it would have been easier for me to get into a school," he said of his time at the Community College, where he was pursuing advanced level courses.

Friday was scheduled to write that year the exam for P.E. -- a one-year course, and has already completed the communications

studies programme.

"I never went back to collect anything at all," he told I-Witness News.

While the athletes were heading to Taiwan, they knew very little of the Asian nation.

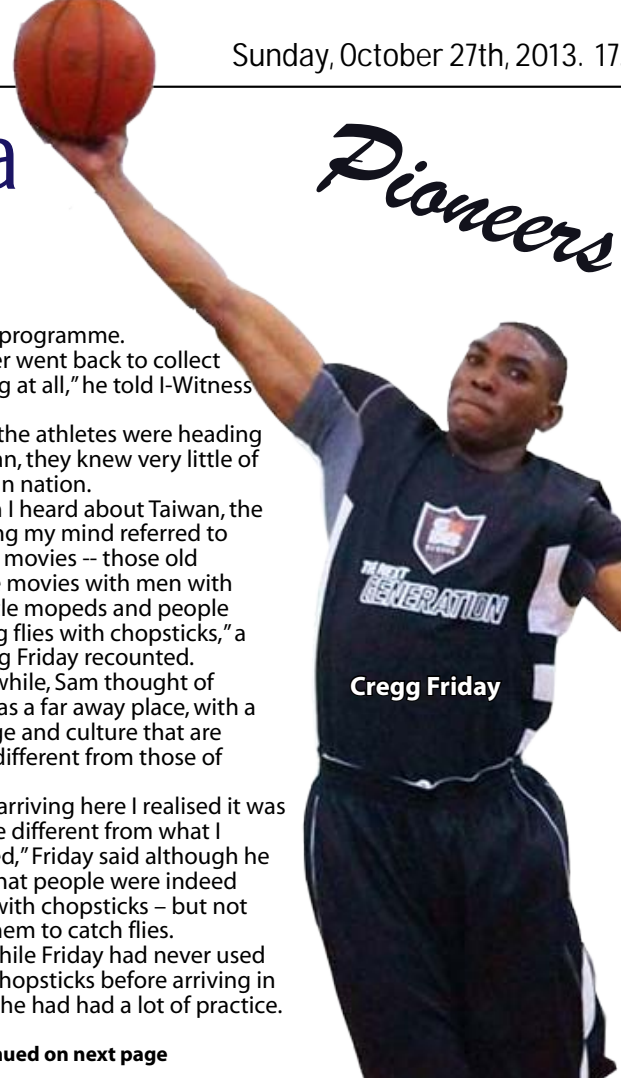
"When I heard about Taiwan, the first thing my mind referred to was the movies -- those old Chinese movies with men with their little mopeds and people catching flies with chopsticks," a laughing Friday recounted.

Meanwhile, Sam thought of Taiwan as a far away place, with a language and culture that are starkly different from those of SVG.

"After arriving here I realised it was far more different from what I expected," Friday said although he noted that people were indeed eating with chopsticks -- but not using them to catch flies.

And while Friday had never used actual chopsticks before arriving in Taiwan, he had had a lot of practice.

■ Continued on next page



Cregg Friday



Craiglee Sam

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Continued from previous Page

“When I first learnt that I was going to Taiwan, people home were making fun of me and saying that I am going to Taiwan so I have to learn to use chopsticks.

“So I used to go in the bush and cut two pieces of stick and try to pick up things. When I came here, people were impressed that I already knew how to use chopsticks,” he recounted.

In terms of its physical appearance, Taiwan did not live up to what Friday had expected.

“I was expecting to see some old buildings and shacks and stuff. I didn’t know that Taiwan was that developed.”

Sam had a similar experience. “The reality was much higher and better than my expectation. The people showed me lots of love and respect – warm hospitality,” he told I-Witness News.

In addition to the pleasant surprise of Taiwan’s infrastructural development, Friday said he was not expecting the status that they took on at the university.

“For the first semester, people were passing by the classroom, waiting outside to see us.”

However, Friday quickly learnt that stardom is fleeting.

“The first year, ... people gravitate to you because you are famous; but after a certain time, it just faded,” he said.

“It was like having been nurtured by your parents then sent off on your own. And that’s exactly what happened to us.”

And it was on their inner selves that the Vincentian athletes drew during the toughest moments of their time in Taiwan.

“The greatest challenges were in communicating with the locals verbally,” said Sam, who added that the situation improved along with their ability to speak Mandarin Chinese.

Friday recounts how they spent their first month in Taiwan sleeping on a wooden bed without a mattress “because we weren’t familiar with things”.

“We didn’t know where we could buy mattresses, we didn’t know any Vincies here as yet; so it was kind of tough. The bed wasn’t the correct

size for us,” said Friday who is 6 foot ... inches.

Sam is 6 feet ... inches, and Friday said that before the beds were lengthened to suit their height, they had to sleep in the foetal position.

“And then waking up early in the morning to go to practise after you slept on board,” Cregg further told I-Witness News.

He also mentioned the challenges of training before and after class.

“That was one of the moments when we started rethinking our opportunities -- thinking about going back home. But the two of us just tried to motivate each other,” he said.

The two athletes last June graduated with undergraduate degrees in tourism management. However, their education in Taiwan has not been limited to the academic.

“I think seeing the way people cooperate, the way people treat each other, the friendliness, we don’t really have this back home,” Friday said.

“I have learnt to care for people a little bit more and stuff like that. If you are a foreigner here, you have



Craiglee Sam

Cregg Friday

certain privileges, people allow you certain privileges and it makes you feel special,” he further stated.

He is also happy that Vincentians were the first to play basketball in Taiwan at that level.

“It is a good feeling. I don’t brag about it or anything but it is a good accomplishment for us representing St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the Bequia Basketball Federation.”

And, like most young people, Friday appreciates having fun. However, he appreciates even more the value of education.

“I have always been one for education. I have younger brothers and sisters. I always

push them. It is good to have fun doing the things you like but it is not all about fun. For me, education is key.

“Let us put it like this: if I had broken my leg broken while playing basketball, what would have become of my athletics? So, for me, education is number one,” he said.

And, notwithstanding the athletes’ journey to the far side of the world, St. Vincent and the Grenadines still remains home.

“My plan for the future is to return to my country and contribute to my country with what I have learnt in Taiwan and elsewhere in basketball and in tourism,” Sam told I-Witness News.



CARLOS JAMES LAW CHAMBERS

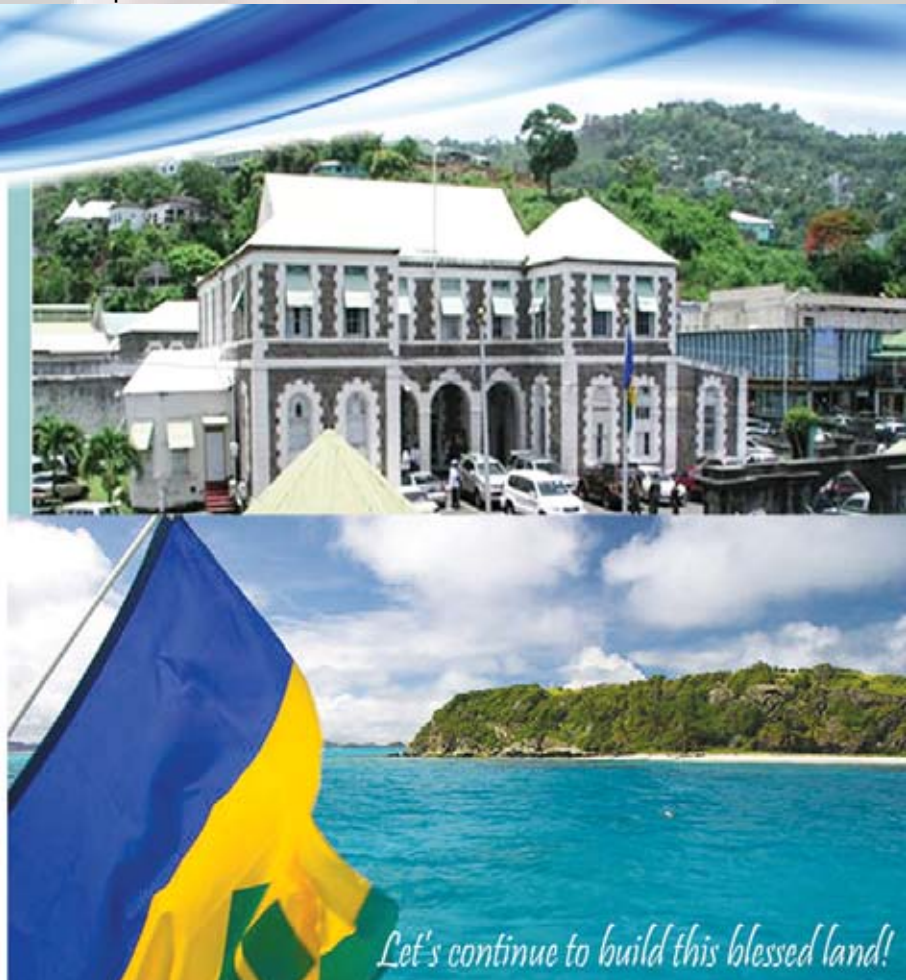
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*Happy 34th Independence
to the Government
and People of SVG.*



Let's continue to build this blessed land!

Scarce resources turn law hopeful into an economist

Analyst

"You and I come by road or rail, but economists travel on infrastructure."

That cheeky quote, attributed to the "Iron Lady," late former prime minister of United Kingdom, Margaret Thatcher, shows the untoward attitude that some people, especially politicians, have towards economists.

Here's another quote, attributed to George Bernard Shaw: "If all the economists were laid end to end, they'd never reach a conclusion."

And, arguably, there is no set of economists that gets a more untoward reaction than those from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), where Vincentian economist Jehann Jack works.

Jack, who is originally from New Montrose, is based at the regional office of the IMF in Antigua and Barbuda.

Jack's study of the production, consumption, and transfer of wealth -- economics -- did not result from a desire to become an economist, but because of a set of economic circumstances.

She had wanted to study law, but limited financial resources were a problem.

Think opportunity cost.

In the late 1990s, Jack was accepted at the University of the West Indies (UWI) Cave Hill Campus in Barbados on two consecutive years but did not have the funds to attend.

The following year, she decided to apply to the St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad also, she told I-Witness News Independence Magazine, noting that she factored into the equation the fact that, while Barbados has a currency that is higher than St. Vincent's, Trinidad's dollar was "more favourable."

"It is funny because even though I had never studied economics, I think I always had that mind-set of saving," said Jack who had worked at a department store and later at a pharmacy in Kingstown on Saturdays and during school vacation during her teenage years.

"When I was choosing what programme [to pursue], ... I recognised that economics was the only course that did not ask for a [specific] subject. All it asked for was two A' levels. So I said, 'It has to be that economics is easy.'"

And so Jack, a Girls' High School alumna who was in the arts stream then and later at A' Level, was on her way to becoming an economist.

She now holds a Master of Arts in economics, from Fordham University, a Master of Philosophy in development studies, from the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom, and a Bachelor of Science in economics and management studies from UWI.

But despite the pessimism of the likes of Thatcher and Shaw, what is economics good for anyway?

"I think it is important because everybody has to face these questions about how to allocate resources. That is the main subject matter, the main objective of the study of economics," Jack said.

She expounded saying that while people make these choices subconsciously, economists do so more explicitly, and, in her job, policy advice is mainly directed to governments.

Jack's job includes monitoring, analyzing, and reporting to the IMF's headquarters in Washington DC on economic, financial, political and social developments in the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union, of which St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) is a member.

The Unity Labour Party government has made it clear that the nation is "not a colony of the IMF." Because of IMF policy, Jack is not



directly responsible for analysing the Vincentian economy, although she maintains a keen eye on what is taking place here, in light of her ties to the country.

But when an IMF economist is analysing a country, do they factor into their consideration that country's government's view of the IMF?

"I would like to think so but I ... tend to think that most countries have a love-hate relationship with the IMF," she said, adding, "Maybe it is political expediency."

The IMF sometimes prescribes large and bitter pills that can be particularly difficult for governments -- who often have their eyes on the next elections -- to swallow.

"... you know even if they themselves want to do it, my impression is that they tend to say that the IMF suggested that we do

it," Jack said of the unpopular decisions that governments are sometimes forced to take to preserve their countries' economies.

And while the IMF can only advise on the course of action that should be taken, do IMF economists, consider how their proposed policies might affect, say, a van driver in Kingstown or a single parent in Chateaubelair?

"I think broadly, yes," Jack said. "Most of the time, especially now, most countries are going through the global economic crisis and even in the design of IMF programmes, I know for sure for Antigua, because I was involved from the beginning, there was the concern of maintaining government expenditure on social safety nets to protect the poor and vulnerable..." Jack said.

Lumberjacks and joiners process a log in the South Leeward community of Francois. They too contribute to the economy.



Whither SVG's economy over the next decade?

Vincentian economist Jehann Jack in September celebrated her 10th year since becoming an economist.

Looking at the Vincentian economy through her "regional lens," she says St. Vincent and the Grenadines is "doing well."

The debt relief that the Unity Labour Party government secured for the Ottley Hall Marina Project, when it initially happened, saw SVG having the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU).

The debt has since inched back up to about 70 per cent -- still among the lowest in the region, although the countries themselves have set a 2020 deadline for reaching a 60 per cent ratio, Jack observed.

"Some countries will not reach there. I think St. Vincent is one that should reach there and it should reach there ahead of time."

However, once the loans for the EC\$652 million Argyle international airport, which is under construction, are fully disbursed, the debt-to-GDP ratio will start to increase again, Jack said.

And, as far as skilfully sailing throughout the global economic crisis, Jack thinks that SVG "is probably, if it is not one of two, it is the one that basically fared the best among the ECCU economies."

Antigua lost about 25 per cent of GDP over the period of the crisis. Anguilla in one year (2009) had a decline that was in the double digits, she said.

However, having fared well throughout the economic crisis, where should the Vincentian economy go over the next ten years?

While Jack said that the evolution of

economic systems in most developed countries went from agricultural to manufacturing to services, she thinks that SVG can skip through manufacturing.

She said that with a manufacturing sector, economies of scale are important. She further noted that SVG has one of the highest electricity rates in the region -- "and that is one of the impediments".

Finance is also an impediment, Jack said, adding that there is an argument that the region has too many banks, and hence there is not enough pooling of resources that could see the granting of loans of the size that can help to finance manufacturing endeavours.

"Specific to St. Vincent, because the Government has embarked on the airport project, I would like that in 10 years time we are in a position to see the benefits of this project.

"There is always the fear that even though we have that infrastructure it may not necessarily -- it may not immediately lead to increased arrivals.

"I think that would be really unfortunate if it were to happen, because, obviously, you are going to have to repay these loans and you have to maintain the facility. So I would like to see us have these wide-body aircraft coming in, tourism booming in the country.

"... I would hope that these are things that the Government is thinking about right now -- deciding what is the mix we want to have. How many large hotels we want to have? Are we going to keep a lot of the boutique hotels?

"There are advantages and disadvantages to everything but because of the project, I would like to think that we would have to get into

some type of mass tourism otherwise we would probably not need to get the airport," she said.

In light of her view that SVG should skip over the manufacturing phase and head straight to services -- which Jack said seems to be the case anyway -- she is proposing emphasis on information communication technology, and getting people into thinking how they can change a situation, and add value.

"One of the things about entrepreneurship and ventures is usually you might have 10 ideas and even if nine fail, the one that succeeds would bring so much benefit that it is okay that nine failed. So, you just need to get this generation of ideas," she said.

And regarding the question of agriculture or tourism, Jack said:

"It is important to look ahead and see where the opportunities lie, although it is sometimes difficult to see that."

One of the difficulties in agriculture is that the price is not always guaranteed, she noted.

"If you are flexible and nimble enough to keep switching as the trends change, then fine. Otherwise, you kind of have to go with it. If you decide that agriculture is the thing, you will have to know that there are times when the price is going to drop and you are just going to have to deal with it," she said.

She however noted that people do not like swings -- where they are in a favourable economic situation one day and an untoward one another day.

"They prefer to maintain a standard," she said.

Building paper bricks

Every day, in the absence of recycling, a large amount of paper ends up in the nation's landfills.

And, a group of Girls' High School students, noting the amount of paper around them, decided to put them to put it to alternative use.

They did so under the inaugural Sagicor Visionaries Challenge competition.

That project was the national winner of the challenge competition. Student, Raeisa Byron-Cox and teacher, Lenski Adams joined teachers and student team leaders from the 12 competing countries for a five-day tour of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)-related attractions in Florida.

The Sagicor Visionaries Challenge required students to work with a teacher at their institution to identify a problem facing their school or community, and using S.T.E.M., develop a solution to the problem identified. The aim of the Challenge was to ignite an interest in innovation among youth and through S.T.E.M., to help develop the skills and

Visionaries

knowledge needed to build and integrate sustainable communities throughout the Caribbean.

"The project that we did is entitled 'Paper Bricks,'" Byron-Cox told I-Witness News.

"It was a group project among some persons in my class and my teacher, Mr. Lenski Adams. It was a project that we did because we realised there was an excess of paper in our school and these paper bricks can be used as an alternative fuel -- as opposed to coal," she further explained.

She said the trip to Florida was "basically like a summer programme."

"We went and we experienced scientific things. We went to museums, we went to Kennedy Space Center and Disney World and we got a behind-the-scenes tour of how Disney runs and the science involved.

"It really opened my eyes to science," Byron-Cox further said.



"I have to say, before the trip, I wasn't particularly the most interested person in science subjects. After the trip, I am open to science and I am even looking into careers in science now."

The Caribbean Examinations Council and Caribbean Science Foundation partnered with Sagicor Life Inc. to develop and execute the Challenge.

Byron-Cox, who studies physics and biology, says that the challenge is a beneficial one.

"... based on the CXC results, in my opinion, a lot of people don't take science as seriously as they should. And if this project were to be seriously implemented in St. Vincent and in the region,



we can produce a lot more Caribbean scientists to work on a world stage."

She also thinks that the project can be inspirational for other students, in light of its positive impact on her.

"Science was not always my forte. If they realise that I can

do it, anybody can do it, if they really apply themselves and be creative. Science is not as literal as it would seem and anybody can be a scientist. So, I think it will encourage people to innovate and just try new things," she said.

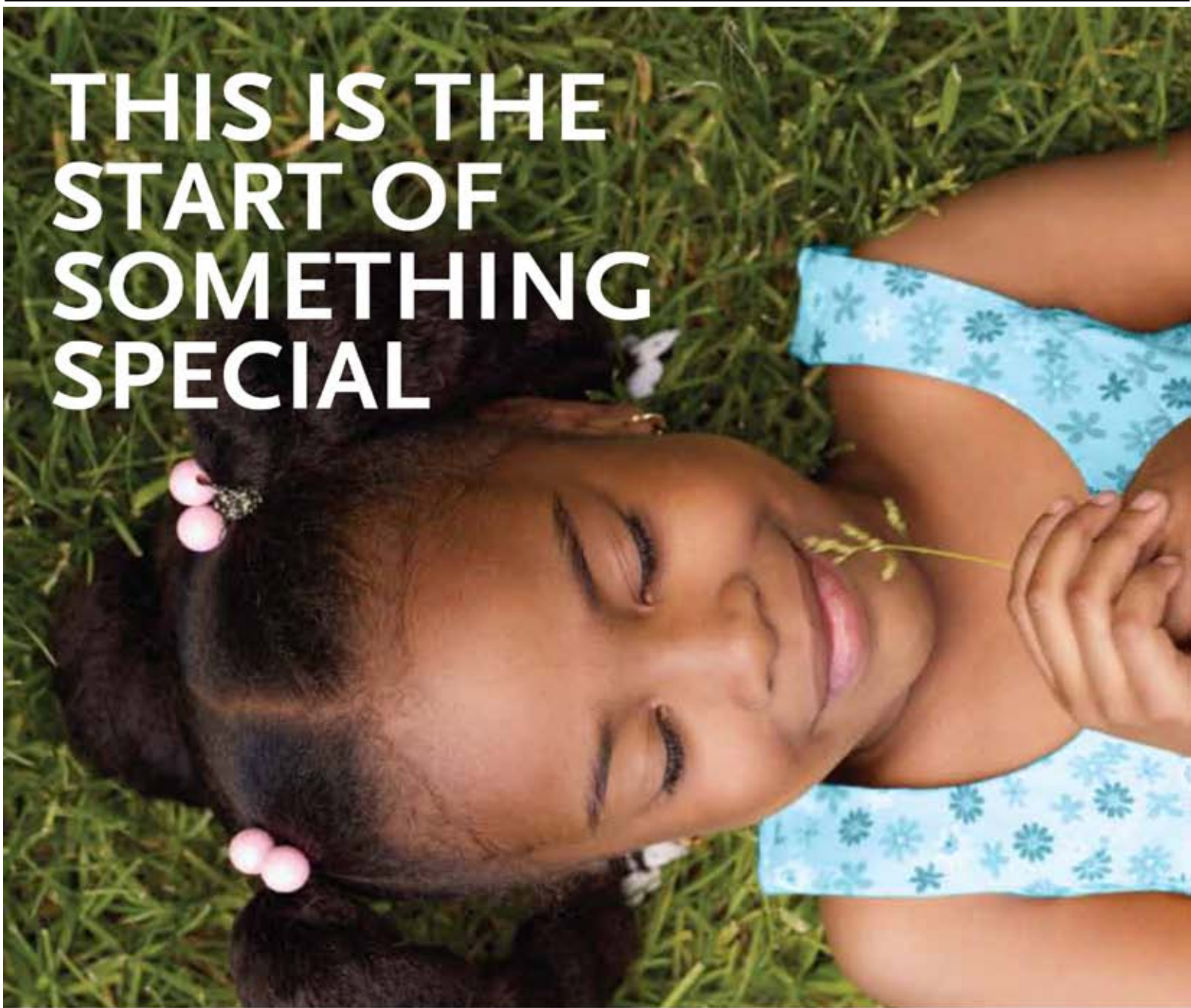
'Haunted' tour climaxes at Peace Mo



Photo: Kenton X. Chance

See 'A mini...' on next Page

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A mini folk musical with a dramatic twist

■ From “Haunted” previous page

Urban Expression Theatre's first ever community drama tour, which began on Aug. 31, ended Independence weekend with two stagings of the play “Haunted” at the Peace Memorial Hall in Kingstown.

“Haunted”, written by David “Darkie” Williams, is a mini folk musical with a dramatic twist.

The play is centred on the spooky haunted house of the Somilita of the Bongo man who will stop at nothing to hear the rhythm of the drums, see the creativity in the dance, and the expounding of the

poetic utterances, by the 25-member cast of the Urban Expression Theatre

The tour saw the group performing at several locations on the Leeward and Windward sides of St. Vincent, in an attempt to encourage groups to incorporate drama into their programmes.



Transition

From: The Remedy. 5 works of short fiction by Joshua Williams

landmarks and familiar buildings; stinging reminders of the familiar faces he was about to trade in for ‘bigger and better things’.

Is bigger really better? He pondered in the back seat, tunnelling into his jean pocket for his pack of skittles. Over there, the cities were enormous with dazzling lights and streets overflowing with all sorts of people, mostly white. To them, he knew he would sound strange. Others wouldn't understand him at all. Will I learn? Maybe, but right then, command over another language seemed years in the distance. Right then, he was scared, locked away in a padded room of black leather with nothing but second thoughts and a half finished bag of skittles.

The vehicle came to a stop. “I'll go sort out the paperwork. Dennis, after you find a spot to park, you and James bring the luggage to Liat. Ok?” said James' mother, before shooting out of the passenger seat door. Dennis grunted his compliance and swung around to the parking lot. They finally set down. Dennis shut down the engine, and opened his door. “Come out.”

So James got out. They slammed the doors shut. Dennis did the locking. It was nearly twelve o'clock. The parking lot was slightly uphill from the airport. Looking down, James could see about three planes

on the runway. The cracks in the concrete of the lot were home to weeds and wild grass. The trunk was ajar but Dennis hadn't moved yet. He was using a match to light his cigarette. His dark face looked menacing in the light of the flame. He took a drag, exhaled gracefully and retired the lit cigarette to his side. The smell was awful. James had never seen him smoke before, but somehow it seemed appropriate.

“So...you excited to go?” he asked, looking James straight in the eye. “Yeah. But I'm a little nervous too,” James replied in an unintentional whisper. “What?” squeaked Dennis, exhaling a shotgun blast of tobacco smoke at the same time. Jason repeated himself, but this time louder. “A little? Chhh. Do you know why your Mom's movin' you guys out?”

James nodded sideways while Dennis took another puff of his cigarette. “It's because she trusts you. It's a bigger, wider world out there, with lots of good. And she trusts you to work hard enough to get it. There's lots of bad over there too. But remember where you're from. Doh mek ovah dere corrup' yuh mind. See meh?” And up went the cigarette smoke. James was a little confused, but felt honoured at the one-on-one Dennis had taken the opportunity to engage him in. Dennis took another piercing glance

into James' face and tossed his cigarette. “Let's get down to the airport. Sharon prolly wonderin' what we doin' takin' so damn long!”..

Later on that night, James was back in the padded room with the same dark feelings but in a different location. This time he was in a plane, window seat, surrounded by sleeping passengers. The plane started to move down the runway. James' ears began to pop from the pressure. He pressed his face to the window. The airport buildings were getting further away. They were off the ground. Jason saw hills with tiny lights coming from tiny houses. He saw palm trees, beaches and stars. Then he saw all of his friends, his memories and the only world he ever knew reduced to a shining speck in the water.

About Joshua Williams:
Born Montreal, Canada in November 1992 to Vincentian parents. Lived in SVG from age of 3 months up until age 13. Graduated from Windsor Primary in 2004. Took 3rd place overall at Common Entrance 2004; 1st place among boys. Attended BGS up to Form 2. Migrated in 2006. Graduated high school in Montreal in 2009. (This is when the stories were written). Entered Dawson College Pre-University Program in Creative Arts and Literature 2009.

Switched to General Studies 2010. Earned a scholarship in January 2011 to complete Pre-University.

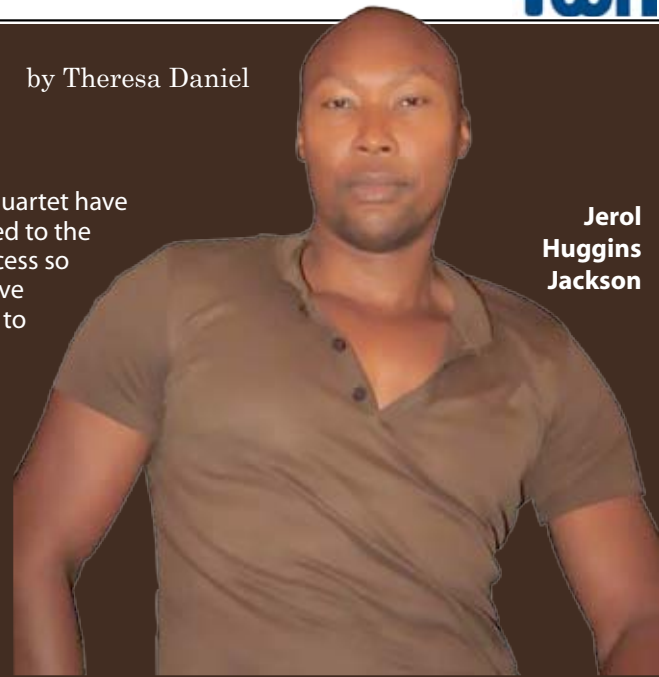
Died March 2011.

It was late. James' blood went cold as he sat back against the black leather of his cousin's back seat. The interior was huge with windows tinted black. The luggage was all in the trunk and the glowing switches and meters up front were soothing to his eyes. James' mother hopped into the passenger seat, left of Dennis. Excitement and fear were mingling unpleasantly, hot in the pit of his stomach. He wanted the car to go and, with a blessed sigh of relief, his prayers were answered. In that car, speeding to the airport, the epic travelling time ahead was difficult to fathom, but James braced himself as best he could.

The SUV took off into the night like a shuttle through the depths of space. The sound of the engine swallowed his heart's violent pounding. He dared not look out through the tinted windows. To him, there didn't seem to be much point. Just familiar streets, familiar

Truth Be Told...

by Theresa Daniel



Jerol Huggins Jackson

This country's leading theatre company, JEMS Theater, continues to make history as it takes its highly acclaimed production "Truth Be Told" around the globe. Fresh off Broadway from six showings, the play is the first Vincentian production to be performed off Broadway and in the British Virgin Islands.

Truth Be Told was selected from among hundreds of new plays submitted to be featured off Broadway by new playwrights from the Caribbean and North America.

The play, penned by local playwright Jerol Huggins Jackson, it's a skillful combination of comedy, drama, tragedy and music that drew inspiration from a female audience member.

It's Huggins Jackson's second major production. The first, "Tables Will Turn" opened at the famous Paul Robeson Theater in Brooklyn, New York in 2006. It was featured at several locations around the world and ended in 2012 with a final staging at the Peace Memorial Hall in Kingstown.

"My inspiration comes from real

everyday life events. Events that society can relate to. Real life dramatic experiences that take place during my daily chores. The world we live in is full of real life drama. Therefore, I spare no time to document these dramatic moments and bring them to life on the stage," Huggins Jackson says.

Huggins Jackson's latest effort is as historic, as it is successful. Truth Be Told, has already played four times in St. Vincent. So far, its run has also included Washington, DC and if all goes according to plan, St. Thomas, US, Virgin Islands and Grenada will have their chance to experience this Vincentian masterpiece before year end. Other showings are being planned for Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts/Nevis, Barbados, Canada and the UK, early next year.

Truth Be Told continues to chalk up numerous accolades and positive reviews at home and abroad. The cast which comprises Lafayette Johnson James, Sylvia Gould Williams, JP Schwmon and Stanley Johnson, have been attracting the attention of theatre and movie goers. No doubt the

talented quartet have contributed to the play's success so far and have been able to bring the playwrights' creativity to life.

For his part, Jackson Huggins has a mission and a vision he intends to fulfill: "My vision is to continue to take Caribbean theatre to the world with the ultimate destination being Broadway. I also want in some form to use my work to inspire, educate and most importantly to entertain, to bring smiles to sad faces and to encour-

age young playwrights that their dreams are possible."

Truth Be Told, at this rate, there's no stopping him. Indications are, he and his cast will get their way in fulfilling all of these dreams and take Vincentian theatre to higher heights.



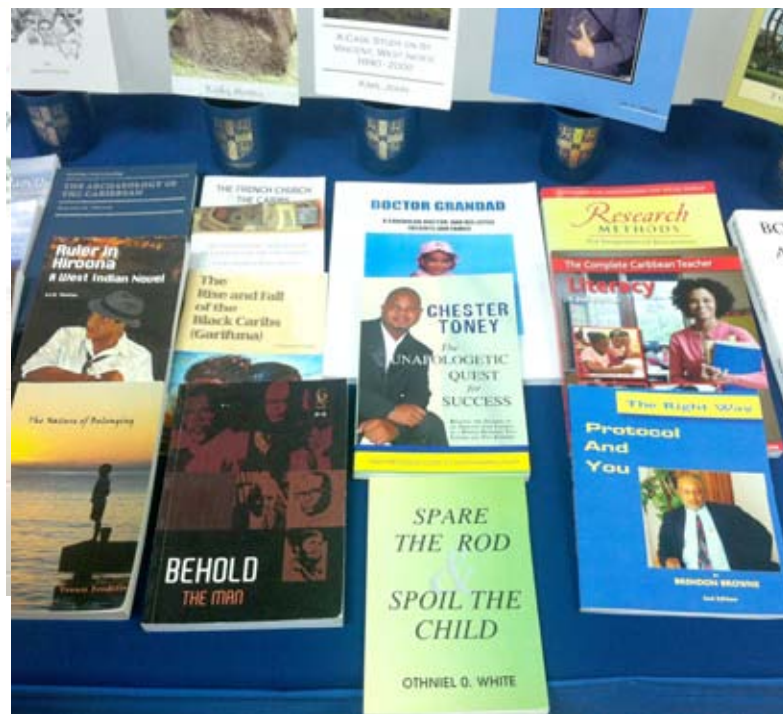
The coming of grief

"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you." ~ Maya Angelou.

Everyone said that no mother should ever live long enough to lay a child to rest. Not just any child, but a mother's own child. Maybe not, but that's exactly what Ruth and so many others had done. Ruth couldn't decide whether the pain was that of losing her child, losing her future, of never again being able to grieve so intensely over any life event or was it the pain of all three. No one or nothing would ever matter as much. The random thought of a person bemoaning the loss of a future opportunity to grieve was amusing, funny and ridiculous, yet Ruth the mother, Ruth the childless is laughing and laughing out loud. Her laughter is raucous, even guttural in parts and at the same time, it emerges in huge, wracking sobs. She laughs as tears stream down her cheeks. Blinded by her own tears, she rocks herself forwards and backwards in a sitting position with both arms tightly wrapped around her belly and hands gripping her nightdress at its side seams.

Is anyone listening? Perhaps not, but surely, they are hearing the inappropriate sounds of wild laughter. They are hearing because they are walking quickly and apprehensively towards the disturbance, not knowing quite what to expect. Ruth looks up towards the doorway in which they appear and acknowledges, with fading mirth, that they are standing there. With eyes wild, red and tired, she issues assurances by her smile and by the right words, that it was an old joke that had come to mind. Some nod knowingly. They all smile back, make loving gestures and after a reassuring pause, reluctantly turn to go in the directions whence they had come. Nowadays, Ruth lives everything as it comes: without warning. Knowing anything in advance, anything at all, is a luxury for which she is grateful.

Editor's note: This work of fiction is dedicated to the families, whose 34th Independence celebrations are interrupted by the loss of 25 loved ones to violence in St. Vincent and the Grenadines this year.



Books, arts & craft open on campus

The University of the West Indies Open Campus held its 2nd annual Literary Fair from Oct. 17 to 20 under the theme "READ! THINK! GROW!"

The Open Campus started this event last year as part of the nation's Independence celebration.

At that time, the thinking was that Open Campus needed to demonstrate, in a most practical way, the importance of all the Arts.

Also, the educational institution wanted to bring to the fore -- and some might say rescue -- Vincentian art and the artists from obscurity, hence the theme last year, "Celebrating our Own".

"This year we thought that 'READ! THINK! GROW!' was fitting because of the challenges and low levels of reading in our country," Ronnie Daniel, marketing officer at the Open Campus told I-Witness News Independence Magazine.

"And so, we thought to ourselves that reading ought to be done for pleasure, but also for the promotion of critical thinking and national consciousness," he further stated.

About 10 art exhibitors and 10 book exhibitors, including some booksellers, participated in the event.

The arts and craft exhibition included paintings, accessories, photography display, sculpture, and banana art.



Lateefa crowned Miss Heritage

The Girls' High School delegate, Lateefa Noel, won each of the judged categories in the Scotia Bank National Secondary Schools' Miss Heritage Pageant on Oct. 19 and retained the crown for her school.

The 15-year-old, fifth form student won the Best Interview, Best Ambassadorial Speech, Best Talent and Best Cultural Wear segments of the show at Victoria Park in Kingstown.

The more than 22,000 votes that Noel's photos amassed, won her the Digicel Viewers' Choice Photo Competition.

Noel took the crown ahead of Sharikah Rodney of the St. Joseph's Convent Kingstown, whom she told reporters she considered her closest rival.

"I feel overjoyed. So much work and energy was put into this. It is just — you do not want to believe the amount of work, but I came out successful with the crown on my head, I took every category, I am so proud of that and this night could not have gone better," Noel told reporters after the show.

2nd Runner-up was Terreka Nero of the Buccament Bay Secondary School, while 3rd Runner-up was Mililone Edwards of the West St. George Secondary School, who also took the prize for being most community oriented.

Kia May of the Sandy Bay High School was adjudged Miss Congeniality and took the winning promotional video.

Other contestants were Crystel-Lyn Browne of the Bequia Community High School and Nia Grecia of the Intermediate High School.

The competition was organised by the Girls' High School.

(Go to <http://wp.me/p3zlRc-3eG> for our review and photos of the show)

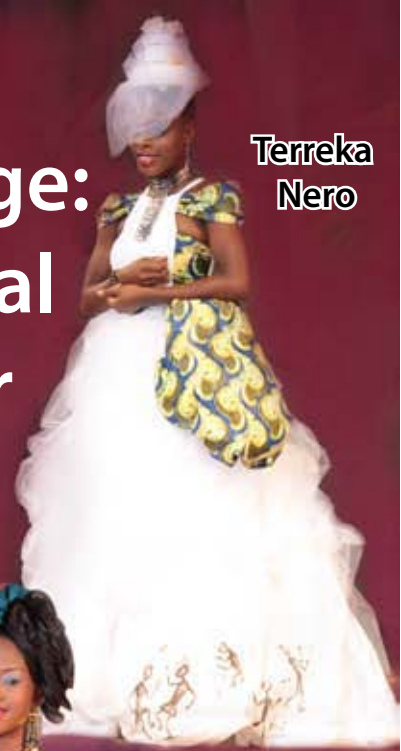


Photo: Kenton X. Chance

Miss Heritage: Cultural Wear

Sharikah Rodney

Terreka Nero



Mililone Edwards



Lateefa Noel



Crystel-Lyn Browne



Kia May



Nia Grecia

Heritage *on Parade*



Elements of Vincentian heritage, some of which are fast fading in this increasingly technologically advanced age, were displayed on parade through Kingstown on Oct. 15 as the Girls' High School held its Annual Heritage Parade. Here are a few scenes from that event.





Several Consuls General from the Caribbean joined their Vincentian counterpart, Fitzgerald Huggins, (in multi-coloured tie) at the Flag Raising Ceremony in Canada last weekend.

Below: Vincentians and their guests mark SVG's Independence at a luncheon in Taiwan on Sunday, Oct. 27 – Independence Day. Guests included former Taiwan ambassador to SVG, Elizabeth Chu. (Photos courtesy Kenny Sylvester and Vashti Carr)

Celebrations overseas



A DAY TO FROLIC

Vincentians have an extra day -- Monday -- to celebrate the nation's 34th anniversary of Independence.

With Independence Day falling on a Sunday this year, Monday, Oct. 28, has also been declared a holiday.

And with the formalities of the Military Parade and the Prime Minister's address out of the way, persons are expected to take to various picnic spots across the country on Monday.

However, a major event slated for Monday is the continuation of the SVG Bikers Extravaganza.

On Monday, the bikers will take to Pembroke in South Leeward of the Motocross and FMX Stunts.

On Saturday at Arnos Vales, bikers display street bike stunts much to the delight of spectators



Photo © Oris Robinson

Layou Coconut Fest

The fifth annual Coconut Fest in Layou took place on the beachfront on Saturday afternoon.

The event forms part of activities across the nation to celebrate the 34th anniversary of Independence.

The products on display were mainly food items and craft

made from coconut.

The dishes on display included oil-down, tarts, doughboy, cinnamon, coconut loaves, and coconut bread.

Craft items included earrings, and bangles. Some non-coconut items were also on display.

