

St Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc

Independence Banquet

Celebrating Yesterday, Embracing Tomorrow

Renaissance Parqué Banquet Hall

Saturday, October 27, 2007

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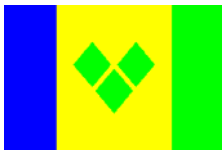
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NATIONAL ANTHEMS



O Canada! Our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With growing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North, strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee!



St. Vincent Land so beautiful
With joyful hearts we pledge to thee
Our loyalty and love and vow
To keep you ever free.

*Whate'er the future brings
Our faith will see us through.
May peace reign from shore to shore
And God bless and keep us true.*

Hairoun! Our fair and blessed Isle
Your mountains high, so clear and green;
Are home to me though I may stray;
A haven calm serene.

Our little sister islands are
Those gems the lovely Grenadines,
Upon their seas and golden sands
The sunshine ever beams.

OUR APPRECIATION

The Organizing Committee, on behalf of the Executive and membership of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. herewith express sincere thanks to all those who in one way or the other assisted in making the celebrations of our activities to commemorate the 28th anniversary of the independence of our country possible.

We thank our sponsors and advertisers in this Souvenir Brochure; those who donated in kind and coin for the other events, those artistes who donated their time; those who assisted in the sale of tickets and encouraged others to attend our events.

We also thank all those who were able to attend our events. We trust that as we celebrate the accomplishments of yesterday we are encouraged to embrace the future with the hope that God will guide us to be a nation of blessed people.

Special thanks to the management and staff of Riviera Parque Banquet Hall and Convention Centre for their hospitality.

We join all St. Vincent and the Grenadines nationals at home and in the Diaspora in celebrating this anniversary.

*Members of the Organizing Committee, 2007
Independence Anniversary Celebrations*

*Our cover, the picture of the Soufriere Tree, *Spachea Perforata*, was photographed at The Botanic Gardens, St. Vincent and the Grenadines by Mr. Carlos Charles and designed by Eagle Press of Hamilton, Ontario.*



Governor General
of Canada

Gouverneur général
du Canada

RIDEAU HALL
OTTAWA



It is a pleasure to send greetings to all those gathered to celebrate the anniversary of the independence of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Canadians take great pride in their cultural diversity and delight in being able to explore the rich traditions and customs of individual heritages. All of you who chose Canada did so seeking new opportunities for yourselves and your families. And though Canada has become home, it is important to remember the past and celebrate your homeland, passing on the knowledge of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and keeping that connection alive for future generations.

It is always a pleasure to see people reaffirming their heritage and I comment the organizers for bringing native Vincentians together to share their traditions with all Canadians. I hope everyone has an enjoyable evening.



Michaëlle Jean

October 2007



PRIME MINISTER - PREMIER MINISTRE



Hon. Stephen Harper

It gives me great pleasure to extend my warmest greetings to everyone marking the 28th anniversary of the independence of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

This milestone offers a wonderful opportunity to highlight the significant contributions your community has made to the Canadian social and economic fabric. This year's events, planned around "Celebrating Yesterday, Embracing Tomorrow," and including the address of the Town Hall's keynote speaker, Dr. Melanie Kirby-Allen, will I am sure, prove inspiring to everyone involved.

I would like to recognize the volunteers and members of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto for their efforts in organizing these celebrations, and for their civic involvement. From your scholarship and bursary programs to your sponsorship of children and your financial support of H.O.P.E. International, you are to be commended for your dedication to the values of inclusiveness and community.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, Please accept my best wishes for a memorable anniversary and continued success in the years to come.

The Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.

OTTAWA
2007



THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF ONTARIO
LE LIEUTENANT GOUVERNEUR DE L'ONTARIO



27 October 2007

I am delighted to extend greetings to the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto, as you celebrate the anniversary of your country's independence from Great Britain.

Since 1969, this organization has ably maintained a communication network and referral service, developed community activities and youth programs, promoted well-being for senior citizens, as well as contributing assistance in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and within Ontario.

I commend you for your scholarship program for post-secondary education and for your work with other associations in supporting hospitals, schools, Homes for the Aged and emergency relief.

As the Queen's representative in Ontario, I send best wishes for a happy celebration and an enjoyable banquet.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David C. Onley".

David C. Onley



Mayor
DAVID MILLER

A Message from the Mayor

It is my pleasure to extend greetings and a warm welcome to everyone attending St. Vincent and the Grenadines Independence Day celebration.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines independence is a day to acknowledge the achievements, pride, traditions and culture of your great nation. Today, as you gather with family and friends to celebrate this significant anniversary, it provides an opportunity to appreciate the values we all treasure - peace, freedom and democracy.

One of the strengths that set Toronto apart is its multicultural make-up. People from around the world have made our city their home and have created a mosaic of rich customs and traditions that we all share. Today, we join you in celebrating one of the most important days in your nation's history.

On behalf of Toronto City Council, I congratulate and thank the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto for making this event possible, and offer my best wishes to everyone for a memorable celebration.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "David Miller".

Mayor David Miller



City Hall • 100 Queen Street West • 2nd Floor • Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2
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the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States*



St. Vincent
and the Grenadines



**CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE FROM
H.E. BRENDON C. BROWNE
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE COUNTRIES OF THE
ORGANISATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES**

On October 27, our beloved Saint Vincent and the Grenadines celebrates its Twenty-Eighth Anniversary as an independent nation. Independence celebration is an important national activity as our entire country marks a momentous occasion in its history. It is a time for collective reflection on the challenges Vincentians, as a people, had to overcome, and the sacrifices we made along the way to achieve nationhood.

As we commemorate this 28th Anniversary of Independence, we can feel proud that our country is on the move. The education revolution is already producing results. We have more Vincentian students enrolled in universities now than anytime in our country's history. Advances have been made in Health, Housing and Social Services. Poverty has been significantly reduced. We have gained international recognition in sports and music.

On this auspicious occasion, Vincentians in the Diaspora have an opportunity to renew their commitment to the further growth and development of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. I therefore urge you to use your skills and knowledge to further the development activities that are on-going at home.

As High Commissioner for the Countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States in Canada, it gives me great pleasure to extend warmest congratulations to the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto, and all nationals of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in Canada, on the occasion of the country's 28th Anniversary of Independence.

I commend your past achievements and your diligence in assuming your roles in keeping alive and fostering in the Toronto community such pride of being Vincentians. Such patriotism compels every one of you to stand up and be counted as proud sons and daughters of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, whenever the occasion arises and wherever you may be. I wish you every success in the activities planned to mark this year's anniversary. I also wish the Almighty's blessings for the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and I look forward to enhanced collaboration between the Association and the High Commission.

**Brendon C. Browne
HIGH COMMISSIONER**

130 Albert Street, Suite 700
Ottawa, ON, Canada K1P 5G4

Tel: 613-236-8952/Fax: 613-236-3042

Email: echcc@travel-net.com
Website: www.oecs.org/ottawa

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES CONSUL GENERAL TO TORONTO



MR. STEVE O. PHILLIPS

Fellow nationals and friends of St. Vincent and the Grenadines,

I am delighted to greet you on this the occasion of the 28th anniversary of our nation's Independence.

Anticipation of that which is good and imminent usually generates anxiety of some sort. It is rather unfortunate to live without any anticipation of that which is rewarding.

Patriots generally look forward to those dates that mark significant historical events in their country's development. Since October 27th 1979, Vincentians at home and abroad have paused to engage in thanksgiving and festivities of various kinds in recognition of our nation's achievements. A recounting of those milestones helps our optimism of the future.

As we go into retrospection at this time, we must not overlook where we have come from and the tremendous strides that we have made during the last twenty-eight years. Though there is an admission of what could have been, we must with gratitude also conclude that much has been accomplished and hitherto has the good Lord brought us.

Despite the fact that all goals may not have materialized and progress has not been as projected, our nation has not been altogether stagnant. Recently, there have been rapid progressive moves under a dynamic and robust political leadership, and our resilient and optimistic populace now possesses an eager anticipation of a brighter future for this advancing small nation in the Southern Caribbean.

We must not allow this optimism to be crushed, our enlightened vision to be darkened or our enthusiasm to be dampened. We must all, under God, with buoyant spirits, noble ideals and consistent collaboration for the good of everyone contribute to the building of the new St Vincent and the Grenadines that is economically, socially and educationally sound.

Given one the positive developments taking place in our beloved SVG and with God's untiring interventions and blessings, our best days are yet to come, and they are just ahead.

Happy Anniversary!

TORONTO CONSULATE OFFICE

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Toronto, Ontario, M3H 1T2*

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website: www.svgconsulate.org
Email: consulategeneral@rogers.com

HIGH COMMISSION FOR ORGANIZATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES

*130 Albert Street, Suite 700
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5G4*

Tel: (613) 236-8952 Fax: (613) 236-3042
echcc@travel-net.com

MESSAGE FROM

PRESIDENT, ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC.



Gideon L. Exeter

Dear Friends:

I bring you greetings on behalf of the executive and members of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto as nationals of our homeland celebrate the 28th anniversary of independence.

The theme for this year's celebrations - "Celebrating Yesterday, Embracing Tomorrow", is intended to inspire us to reflect on advances we have made and to focus on what lies ahead for us. There continues to be debate in some quarters as to whether St. Vincent and the Grenadines and some of the smaller Caribbean countries were ready for self-governance. My response to this is, if we were not ready, then when would we be ready?

Today, more than before, young adults are remaining at "home" much longer than previous generations. Quite often it is not that the "children" do not want to leave but they are encouraged to remain home by parents. Some parents do not allow their children to grow up. Britain, like many of the other colonial masters had been eager to get rid of their colonies since these colonies no longer had the value to the masters as they had in earlier days. It was therefore inevitable that the time would come for countries like ours to be on their own.

There are lots of things that our country accomplished since 1979 so there is a great deal to celebrate. We ought to accept that our future lies in our hands and therefore we ought to embrace it, take on the challenges and responsibilities and work towards making conditions better for ourselves. We no longer have that parent to take us back home – we are forever on our own.

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto is nearly 40 years old. We owe whatever accomplishments we have to our early leaders for the pathway they paved for us. At this time of reflecting, therefore, we celebrate the work of the founders who had the foresight to lay the foundation for us to build on and the committees and membership who continue to support. We continue to live up to the principles of the objectives defined back in 1969.

As we look towards the future, our responsibility is to prepare the leaders of tomorrow to embrace what lies ahead for them. The scholarships, adoption programs and assistance to our youth would be in vain if we do not encourage and allow them to be involved now in order to gain the experience with the aging generation.

We welcome all those who have joined in our celebrations and have contributed in one way or another to make them successful and memorable. We herewith express our gratitude for your support.

Happy Independence Anniversary to each of you and thanks for your contributions throughout the year.

May God continue to bless us all.

HOMEGROWN A Joyful Sound



Saturday, December 1st, 2007, 7:00 P.M

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INDEPENDENCE BANQUET COMMITTEE

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Shelley John
Kenney Coombs
Yolande Lewis
Fred Williams
Marcia Farrell
Gideon Exeter*

INDEPENDENCE THANKSGIVING CHURCH SERVICE COMMITTEE

*Grace Browne, Coordinator
Audrey Lewis
Grafton Bibby*

2007 INDEPENDENCE TOWN HALL MEETING COMMITTEE

*Fred Williams Fred Prescod
Co-Chairs*

Our sincere thanks to all members of the
Committees for the contribution of their time,
talent and efforts.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines
attained Independence from Great
Britain on October 27, 1979.

Happy Independence Anniversary
Greetings to all St. Vincent and the
Grenadines Nationals at home and
in the Diaspora. May God truly
bless our country, its leaders and
people.

ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS TO SVG NATIONALS IN THE DIASPORA

Our sincere thanks to those companies and
individuals that provided assistance to this
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To place our Ad, please email us at
svgatoronto@vincytoronto.com or contact any
member of the Executive.

A Note of Thanks

*The Executive Members of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto herewith
express thanks to all those who participated in and contributed in one way or the other to the
Independence Thanksgiving Church Service on Sunday, October 21 at Rosewood Church of
the Nazarene, Scarborough.*

Program

Cocktail Hour

Welcome

Emcees: Mr. Kenney Coombs & Ms Melba Da Silva

National Anthem of Canada

National Anthem of St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Invocation

Mr. Henry Stephens

DINNER

Musical Interlude

Remarks &

Presentation to Scholarship Recipient

Mr. Gideon L. Exeter

President, St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc.

Greetings

Mr. Steve O. Phillips

St. Vincent and the Grenadines Consul General to Toronto

Remarks

High Commissioner for the Countries of the OECS

His Excellency Mr. Brendon C. Browne

Keynote Address

Mr. Errol Mounsey

Former Magistrate in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Special Entertainment

Vote of Thanks

Mr. Jim Lewis

Public Relations Officer, St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto

Dancing to the music of The Julian McIntosh Band & DJ Fusion

MENU

Hors D'ouvres

Bread & Rolls

Appetizer

Vegetarian Spring Roll on a bed of greens topped with
Sliced Mango and Mango Chutney

Main Course

Chicken Supreme in a Cognac & Mushroom Sauce
Sea Bass in a Lemon Herb Sauce
Mini Red Roasted Potatoes
Stir Fried Vegetables
Platter of Risotto with Peas & Carrots per table

Dessert

Mango, Raspberry & Pistachio Sorbet topped with Berries

Coffee, Tea, Espresso

Pastry Platter



Where: Northwood Community Centre, 15
Clubhouse Court, (off Sheppard at Arleta between
Keele & Jane Streets)

When: Sunday, Nov 25th, 2007 between: 4 – 7 p.m.

What: All Reading Material

How: In person or contact Marcia Farrell at
Treasurer@vincytoronto.com



The reading material collected will be sent directly to St. Vincent and the Grenadines through the Literacy for Leadership Program, which is a non-denominational Evangelical Christian Organization promoting literacy in St. Vincent. Since 1999, Literacy for Leadership has been reaching out with God's compassion to share the joy of reading to all people marginalized by low literacy skills.

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St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto Scholarship Program

2007 Scholarship Recipient of SVGAT Bursary Miss Vanessa Browne



I am 18 years of age and was born in Oakville, Ontario. My father was born in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and my mother is Canadian of Ukrainian decent. In June 2007, I graduated with honours from the St. Benedict Catholic Secondary High School in Cambridge, Ontario. In September 2007, I commenced my studies at the University of Guelph-Humber in Toronto, Ontario in the pursuit of a degree in Business Administration with the goal to continue my studies and further my education to its fullest.

I have been involved in high school activities such as United Cultures, badminton and the High School Graduation Committee. I intend to continue these activities while at the same time, a lively involvement in the University community and as I gain experience, pass on that knowledge to new arrivals at the University as well as members of the community.

My West Indian heritage has always been an important part of my life; as well as the fight against racism and discrimination on West Indian descendants and other minorities within my community. Joining such committees as United Cultures, my intentions are to spread awareness with activities such as “Stop Racism Week” and “Foods of the World”, where, for a day or a week, students, youth and other members of my community can work together, learn from each other and have a better understanding, which in turn will optimistically, assist in eliminating prejudices and biases directed at minorities.

During the last five years, I have participated in volunteer work for charitable organizations such as The Canadian National Institute for the Blind and the Epilepsy Waterloo Wellington. I also volunteered at the Queen’s Square Library and the Galt Little Theatre and completed over 60 hours of volunteer work at the Cambridge Memorial Hospital. Through volunteering at these organizations, I have aided individuals in need personally and contributed to research that will enhance the abilities of the disadvantaged for coping and living better lives while at the same time, giving back to the community.

Note: The Scholarship Committee on behalf of the Executive and members of the Association extend congratulations to Vanessa on her being selected for this bursary. We wish her every good in her studies and future endeavours.

THE GRENADA
ASSOCIATION
(TORONTO)



The Executive and Membership of
The Grenada Association (Toronto)
extend greetings and best wishes to
**St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association
of Toronto Inc.**
and nationals of their country on the occasion
of the **28th** Anniversary of Independence of
St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

May God Bless You All!

The Montserrat Association (Toronto)

extends best wishes and continued success to

**St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of
Toronto Inc.**

**on the 28th Anniversary of Your Nation’s
Independence.**

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MEMORIES OF 1979

APRIL 13TH, 1979

..... Cammier Bernard

I did not hear the noise initially; my eyes were so drawn to the spectacle in the sky. It was the deepest darkest shade of crimson and completely black around the edges, not a hint of blue anywhere – in a word there was a fire where there should have been sunrise. In the natural order, light travels faster than sound, and so it was that morning. I had no idea what was happening, but my body's initial response was fear, pure and simple, because by then I heard the sound and my senses were being assailed by something that I could not identify.

Half an hour later, radio 705's official broadcast had informed those of us who were listening, that La Soufriere had erupted, and what many of us had been witness to on that Good Friday morning was a combination of sulfuric steam, ash, larva and rock being spewed from that giant crater and the accompanying rumble were earthquakes caused by the seismic activity.

During the next 72 hours, there was a mass exodus – people being evacuated from their homes in north-eastern end of the island to Kingstown, and those who were desperate to leave the island; destination, anywhere but here. After the initial shock, we started thinking about the more basic, practical things that would sustain us in the event things got worse – like filling every available receptacle with clean water, checking flashlights to make sure the batteries worked, ensuring that there was gas for cooking and kerosene for lamps.

This was also the year that St. Vincent and the Grenadines, had declared its intention to become an independent nation, and plans were well on the way for the October celebration. The long engagement with Britain was almost over, the guests had been invited, the invitations sent, and the venue was being decorated, and now the house was a mess. How would we perform as a 'nation in waiting' during our first national emergency? There are still people who will refer to themselves, even today twenty eight years later, as Soufriere refugees.

What I do know is that on October 27th, 1979, St. Vincent and the Grenadines became an independent nation, that historical accounts will record that La Soufriere erupted violently in 1718, 1812 and in 1902 with 2000 fatalities. In the eruption of 1979, which began on Good Friday, April 13th, there were no casualties!



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SVGAT EXECUTIVE

Here is a list of the executive members just in case you would like to contact any of them:

President – Gideon Exeter – Tel: 647-724-0645
gexeter@yahoo.com; or president@vincytoronto.com

Vice President – Melba Da Silva – Tel: 905-919-9693
vicepres@vincytoronto.com

Executive Secretary - Petra Hutchinson; Tel: 416-652-5207
execsec@vincytoronto.com

General Secretary - Nichole Edwards; Tel: 416-256-4328
gensecretary@vincytoronto.com

Treasurer – Marcia Farrell; Tel: 416-762-3357
Treasurer@vincytoronto.com

Assistant Treasurer – Yolande Lewis; Tel: 416-809-9820
AssistTreas@vincytoronto.com

Public Relations Officer – Jim Lewis; Tel: 416-459-2492
pro@vincytoronto.com

Immediate Past President – Jason Jones; Tel: 905-999-1771
jonesjason@rogers.com

Ass'n General Email address: svga@vincytoronto.com

St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association Toronto
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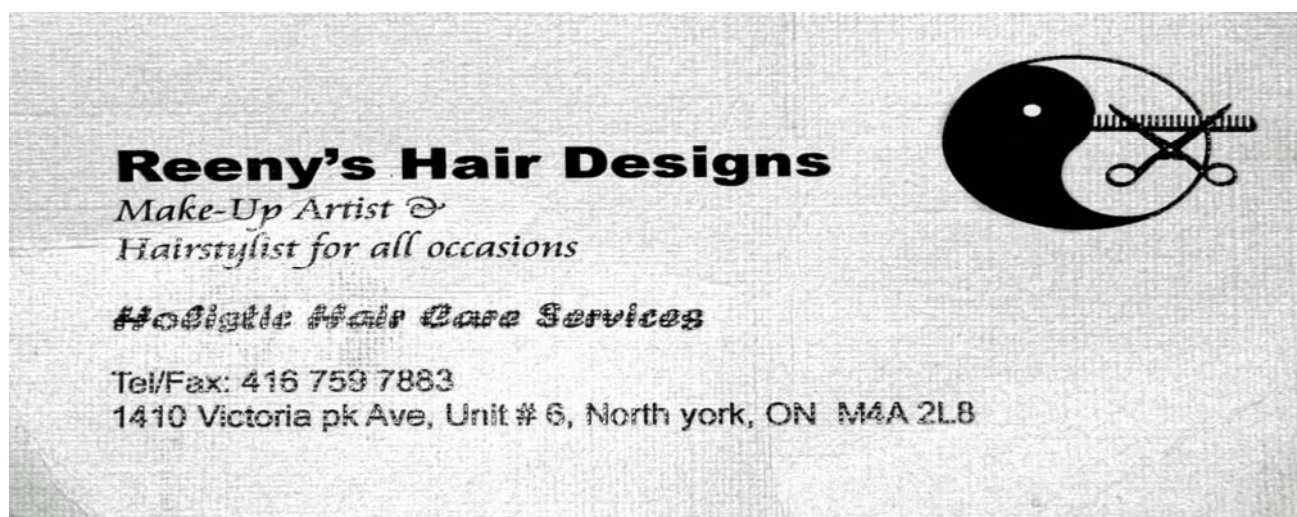
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HIGHLIGHTS 1979-2007

1. 13 April 1979 – Eruption of La Soufriere Volcano
2. St. Vincent became a member of the United Nations on September 16, 1980
3. Mr. Joel Toney served as Ambassador to the United Nations from 1981-1984, the first resident Ambassador from St. Vincent.
4. June 1981 -Signing of the Treaty of Basseterre that gave rise to the OECS
5. 21 October 1985 - The new SVG flag came into use officially
6. September 1987- SVG elected to one of the Vice-Presidencies of the United Nations General Assembly. (The first English speaking Caribbean country to have attained that honor)
7. March 14, 1991- Death of Ebenezer Theodore Joshua, First Chief Minister
8. February 10, 1997 – Death of Robert Milton Cato (Father of the nation- 1st Premier and Prime Minister)
9. March 14, 2002- Joseph Chatoyer declared first national hero of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
10. March 28, 2007 – Opening of the Yurumein Taiwan Bridge



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HAPPY 28TH INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY TO ALL SVG NATIONALS



Independence Town Hall Youth Forum



Leaders of Today for Tomorrow

Presented by
***St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of
Toronto
Education Committee***

Date: Sunday, October 28, 2007 **Time:** 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Venue: York Civic Centre, 2700 Eglinton Ave. West, Toronto
(1 block west of Keele Street, north side)

Admission: Free

Keynote address by:

Dr. Melanie Kirby

Pediatrician
Haematologist

Feature address by:

Duane Browne
B.Com. (Mktg), Dip.
Recording Arts
Management
Co-Winner of Youth
Debate

Moderated by:

Kathleen James,
B.A., B.Ed., M.A.
Educator



Feature appearances
by:

Tanya Charles,
B.Mus. Perf.
Violinist

R. Chantelle Grant,
B.Mus. Perf., Artist
Diploma
Lyric Mezzo-soprano

Panel Discussion with Featured Presenters

Recognition of recent High School Graduates

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC.

Sunday, October 28	Town Hall Discussions	York Civic Centre, 2700 Eglinton Ave. W
Saturday, November 24	Calypso Competition	CAW Union Hall, 15 Tangiers Road
Sunday, November 25	Monthly General Meeting	Northwood Community Centre
Sunday, December 9	Children's Christmas Party	TBA
Saturday, December 22	Christmas Hamper Outreach	
Sunday, January 27	Annual General Meeting	Northwood Community Centre

Addresses & Directions:

Northwood Community Centre, 15 Clubhouse Court, (off Arleta between Keele & Jane Streets)
Rosewood Church of the Nazarene – 657 Milner Avenue, Scarborough (Morningside & Milner)
Renaissance Parquet Banquet Hall, 2800 Hwy7 West at Jane Street, Concord
CAW Union Hall, 15 Tangiers Road, Toronto (Keele & Finch)
York Civic Centre, 2700 Eglinton Ave West at Keele, Toronto

*The island of St. Vincent was formerly known as Hairouna before Christopher Columbus and his crew visited there in 1498.
At independence, along with its 32 islands and cays the country became known as St. Vincent and the Grenadines.*

THE JOURNEY HERE

By: Sandra Sutherland

How did we, as a Caribbean people, journey here? What trials and processes did we go through? How were you helped? Who rendered the help? The answers to these questions serves as a means of support that you, as a Citizen or permanent resident of Canada can offer to someone who is trying to acquire their status here.

Sometime ago I wrote and contributed an article to the *Insight*, a quarterly newsletter produced by the St. Vincent & the Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. (SVGAT), entitled The Plight of Undocumented Immigrants. As the title suggests, this article dealt with hardships faced by these people and expressed a message to those who have resources to reach out and assist or support those in need. I'm conveying this message again with a reminder that we are faced with a revolving door scenario. The journey here for others who came after us and for prospective immigrants has not and will not automatically change overnight.

Many Vincentian immigrants come to Canada with many hopes. Whether it may be to seek better education, employment, or career, to pave the way for their generations, to escape hardship in their homeland, or whatever, they are very valid reasons. Over the past 20 to 30 years, the majority of our relatives and friends came here with similar hopes but was faced with major roadblocks and was unjustly exploited. They overcame these obstacles and secured their claim to Canada as legal immigrants.

The current influxes of immigrants (documented and undocumented) are going through similar passages with the ultimate goal of achieving permanent resident status. In my career as an Immigration Practitioner, I regularly hear of situations whereby people are being exploited by various and unexpected sources. Most undocumented immigrants are uninformed of their options or are faced to struggle with limited or weak options. These are revolting phenomena. Do any of us have the power to curtail this? Sure we do.

A while back I attended a Building Bridges Summit that was held by the SVG Consulate office (under leadership of then Consul General, Mr. E.B John), in conjunction with the SVGAT. A list of problems facing the Vincentian Community was compiled. A couple of the problems identified were lack of unity and lack of trust. These are vital problems to be reckoned with because we need to stand united before we can build trust.

Recently a gentleman expressed to me that most of the young ladies he meets are usually not landed and are looking to get their papers. He states that this scares him off. He fears that he may be duped into marriage for immigration purposes and so; because of distrust, he avoids such individuals whom he suspects are undocumented. Who's to say that true love cannot be found with an undocumented individual?

We need to make efforts to live harmoniously with our fellow Vincentians. Our Vincy community needs to don a more supportive armour and lend a helping hand to the less fortunate. Many have adopted an aloof mentality of avoiding "illegals", as they call them. Others are ashamed and are quick to deny any associations with them, and do so with scorn. This should not be happening. Everyone is human and possesses certain shortcomings. We all deserve to be treated humanely if not equally, regardless of our individual circumstances.

How are we to build bridges if we maintain such an air about ourselves? We all possess the answers to the questions posed. Action is needed to implement these answers and make a positive difference. Whatever you went through to obtain your permanent resident status you are now called upon to reciprocate to your fellow nationals.

Let's also make the journey here, for those yet to come, a bit less labouring. I commend those who rise to these opportunities to help and encourage others to follow suit.

Sandra Sutherland is a Certified Canadian Immigration Consultant (CCIC) in good standing with the Canadian Society of Immigration Consultants (CSIC). Ms. Sutherland may be contacted at (416) 431-2829, at her office address, via e-mail at ssutherland@suthernimmigration.com or visit her company's website at www.suthernimmigration.com.

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Congratulations

to

Duane Browne and Najla Edwards who represented the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association and won the Caribbean Associations Debate in May. They join us as our special guests.

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**ST. VINCENT AND THE
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ADOPT A CHILD PROGRAM

The Association has decided to adopt a child in St. Vincent and the Grenadines starting in 2008. The child will be selected from one of the 66 Government Primary Schools and Special Needs Schools throughout the country.



This program is coordinated by the Relief Committee. Please support this cause by making a special donation to it.

Please call Emergene Sam, Relief Committee Chair at 416-537-3269 or email svgatoronto@vincytoronto.com

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