



Quarterly Newsletter

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY INFORMED

12th Anniversary Issue

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I give God thanks for this opportunity to serve my community as President of The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. (SVGAT). My intention, with the help of the Executive Committee and general membership to forge ahead and continue to promote and implement the positive work which our Past Presidents have established during their tenure. On that premise, I would like to single out one of our Past Presidents, Earla Labban-Dalzine.

During Earla's presidency, she concentrated her efforts on the youth and on charitable givings. She encouraged and celebrated the participation of young people in leadership positions within the Association under the banner of volunteerism. Today, the Association continues to reap the benefits from the seeds Earla planted in 2001. Unfortunately, Earla Labban-Dalzine departed this life to be with her Saviour Jesus Christ on February 28, 2012. We express our condolences to her family, especially to her two young daughters, and pray God's protective blessing upon them. May her soul rest in peace!

Like Earla's contributions, many of our past executive members continue to demonstrate true patriotism and professionalism during and after their terms of office have ended. This indicates to the current administration that there are no alternatives but to continue this legacy with efficiency, consistency, transparency, positive attitude and accountability as a means to maintain and keep our credibility high amongst our

membership (registered members, financial members, honorary life members and associate members) and the public at large.

One of our primary objectives is and always has been to "Provide any form of assistance, financial or otherwise to groups or institutions in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Ontario, or wherever the Association deems fit" (SVGAT Constitution). To meet this objective, we must attract and use the skills of volunteers from within and without our community to serve on the various Standing Committees. The Standing Committees are Finance, Entertainment and Fund Raising, Cultural and Education, Sports and Recreation, Publicity and Membership and Building.

Volunteerism provides many spin-off benefits for individuals who work on one or more committees, for example, networking, leadership development, and a sense of accomplishment. With this in mind, we can conclude that with your participation, there will be a rejuvenated effort to move the association forward and promote the causes of our community. We value our volunteers and we intend to acknowledge and recognize them for giving freely of their time, resources, and money so the Association can maintain a presence in our Toronto Community and be effective at meeting its objectives.

Marcia Farrell, President

ASSOCIATION'S NEWS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Association held its Annual General Meeting on Sunday, January 29, 2012 at Northwood Community Centre. The outgoing Interim Committee presented reports of the previous year to members. Due to time constraints, the meeting continued on Sunday, February 29th where the audited financial report was presented and the Interim Committee was officially dissolved. The members elected Marcia Farrell as president and Cornetta Mason as public relations officer. On March 25th, members added two other members to the executive committee, Garnet Samuel Harry as executive secretary and Bernadette Ryan-Phillips as general secretary.

MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH

Our Annual Mother's Day Brunch will take place at The Elite Banquet Hall on Sunday, May 13, 2012. The event will take place from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Tickets are currently on sale; adult tickets are \$35.00 and children from ages 6 to 12 are \$25.00. Visit our website, www.vincytoronto.com for more details.

INDEPENDENCE BANQUET

The Annual Independence Banquet will return to the popular Riviera Parque Dining, Banquet & Convention Centre at 2800 Highway 7 West. This year's event will take place on Saturday, October 27th. Further details will be posted on our website as they develop.



VINCY UNITY PICNIC 2012 THOUSAND ISLAND, ON

**Saturday, July 21, 2012
Brown's Bay Provincial Park**



Start dusting off your picnic baskets and begin making your list of everything you'll be filling it with. The summer event you have been waiting for is almost here. It's the Vincy Unity Picnic, where you will catch up with friends and family from as far away as Montreal, Ottawa, SVG and the US, over a hot barbecue grill.

MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES

The much coveted parking tickets will be offered to all of our financial members before they become available to the general public. It pays to be a member.

All bus pick up will take place in Toronto and Scarborough. There will be no pick up in Hamilton this year.

CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY TO THE ASSOCIATION THIS YEAR!

Your generous donation will assist the Association meet its objectives to assist and support individuals and groups in Ontario and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. All of our programs depend on you. Support our Scholarship Fund, the Adopt-A-Child Program, Children's Christmas Party and the Annual Christmas Hamper Outreach Program to those less fortunate at Christmas.

STAFF SERGEANT EZRA ANTHONY “TONY” BROWNE HONOURED



Vincentian Tony Browne, Staff Sergeant with the York Regional Police, was honoured at the Annual Toronto Police 13 Division and British Methodist Episcopal Church, Black History Month Community Awards Ceremony that took place in Toronto on Sunday, February 26, 2012, at The British Methodist Episcopal Church, 1828 Eglinton Avenue West, with an award for making a difference in the community. The award was accompanied by congratulatory letters from Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty and Mayor Rob Ford of Toronto. Tony stated that he proudly received the award not only for himself, but for so many people who give to make the community a better and a safer place in which to live, work and play. Tony would like to thank the many Vincentians along with the congregation at the British Methodist Episcopal Church for their support in so many different ways.

Staff Sergeant Ezra Anthony “Tony” Browne is a 30 year veteran of the York Regional Police Service who commenced his employment in 1981. He achieved the rank of Staff Sergeant in October 2009 and is presently assigned as Officer-in-Charge of the Property Evidence Records and Retention Bureau. Tony Browne’s first assignment was a Patrol Constable. He was then assigned to the Drugs and Vice Unit where he served in enforcement and undercover work. He received training in the CIB and worked as a Crime Analyst identifying suspects in criminal activities (e.g.. Homicide arrests and conviction). Tony also worked as a Detective for many years in the CIB investigating crimes and criminal activities.

S/Sgt Browne takes extreme pride and delight in his profession. Apart from his Twenty Year Service Medal, Tony is the proud recipient of the Prestigious Ontario Medal for Police Bravery, the Human Rights and Race Relations Gold Medal for Outstanding Contribution to the Promotion of Race Relations, the St. John Life Saving Award and the Chief of Police Award for Dedication to the Chief’s Staff.

Tony holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Justice Studies from the University of Guelph, a Diploma in Police Foundations from Humber College and in 2011, has been recognized and awarded the designation of a “Certified Municipal Manager (CMM) III” with a Police Professional Designation, by the Ontario Chiefs of Police and the Ontario Municipal Management Institute.

History of Insight

The Quarterly Newsletter of the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto, Inc., INSIGHT, was first published in April 2000. INSIGHT replaced a newsletter that was published intermittently throughout the Association’s history. The first editor of Insight was the PRO of that year, Ms. Audrey Lewis. The publication received its name from the President of that year, Mr. Cordel Telfer.



Contact Info:

Mr. Alston Davy
(905) 887-9561
cofm@rogers.com

Mr. Alston Davy, a Minister at Large with the Christian Missionary Alliance Canada, is founder and President of the Christian Outreach Ministries, a ministry that provides consultation services to churches on an individual and corporate level. Prior to taking on the leadership role of the Ministry, Mr. Davy was an Elementary School Vice-Principal with the Toronto District School Board; a teacher and an Instructor at Seneca College. He conducts marriage enrichment seminars and does itinerant preaching within the GTA. He holds a M. Ed. in Applied Psychology; a combined B.A. Hon. in Psychology and Sociology; and a Specialist Certificate in Special Education. He is currently pursuing a M. Div. on a part time basis at Tyndale Seminary. Mr. Davy is available to carry out the following services for members of the SVGA community in Toronto: ***spiritual counselling, marriages, baby dedication and funerals.***



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Calendar

May 13, 2012

Annual Mother's Day Brunch

July 15, 2012

CCAC Scholarship Application Deadline

July 21, 2012

Vincy Unity Picnic, Browns Bay, 1000 Islands

August 31, 2012

SVGAT Scholarship Application Deadline

October 21, 2012

Thanksgiving Church Service

October 27, 2012

Independence Banquet

October 28, 2012

Community Discussion

December 16, 2012

Children's Christmas party

December 20 - 23, 2012

Christmas Hamper Delivery

IMMIGRATION MATTERS:

WHAT'S AFOOT WITH IMMIGRATION

Contributed by: Sandra Sutherland, RCIC

Over the past months much has been occurring in the immigration department of our government. Now that we have a majority government, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Jason Kenney, has been exercising his powers by tabling and passing legislature after legislature which appears to be limiting the inflow of immigrants - especially in the family class, refugee, and humanitarian and compassionate categories. Citizens and permanent residents of Canada as well as many undocumented immigrants will be affected by the squeezes. The family unification objective stated in subsection 3 (1) (d) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act appears to be downplayed. More emphasis is being placed on bringing in economic immigrants to fill the shortfalls in the various provinces' labour markets. The following is a brief synopsis of where Canadian immigration stands and where it appears to be heading.

The in-Canada and Family class (outside Canada) Spousal and

common-law sponsorship categories have already been curtailed to restrict sponsors who were convicted of an offence of a sexual nature, a violent criminal offence, an offence against a relative that results in bodily harm or an attempt or threat to commit any such offence and to bar sponsored spouses from sponsoring a subsequent spouse within five years after becoming a permanent resident. As of November 2011 a 2-year halt was placed on the sponsorship of parents and grandparents. More changes to these two classes and other categories have been announced while other changes are still pending.

The Refugee Reform, expected to come into effect around June/July 2012, threatens to restrict the volume and success rate of refugee claimants and place limitations on refused claimants. Claimants can expect to have their cases heard within 30 to 90 to complete their claims and be subjected to hasty removal from Canada if their claim is unsuccessful. The Minister shall have the sole authority to compose a safe country list. Claimants from those countries will not have access to appealing the refusal of their cases, face a 1-year bar from applying for permanent resident status under humanitarian and compassionate grounds, and will likely be removed from Canada before that 1-year period is up.

Applicants applying under the Humanitarian and Compassionate category will likely face heavier scrutiny in determining whether their case meets the threshold that determines if they will face hardship in filing their application for permanent residence while residing outside Canada.

The above mentioned categories are the main categories under which many Vincentians and nationals of other Caribbean countries generally apply under. The volume of successful applicants from the Caribbean is likely to shrink unless they are able to qualify as a business or economic immigrant.

Business and economic immigrants (i.e.; those applying under the Canadian Experience Class, Investors, Entrepreneurs, and Self-employed classes, as well as the Provincial Nominee Programs) and candidates in the International Experience Canada program (also known as the Working Holiday Visa) are have a better chance of successfully immigrating to Canada and obtaining permanent resident status, however; changes to the Investor class shall curtail the volume of successful applicants.

(Continue on page 6)

WHAT'S AFOOT WITH IMMIGRATION CONTINUES

The International Experience Canada (IEC) program is a special program which allows young people aged 18 to 35 to come to Canada to work temporarily on a work permit. In order to qualify under the IEC program applicants must be a citizen of an eligible country such as; Austria, Australia, Belgium, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and USA.

Instead of clearing up the huge backlog of permanent resident applications the government vows to wipe out close to 300,000 pending applicants (presumably from the federal skilled workers program) who have been in the queue

for many years by closing their applications and returning them to the applicants thus unexpectedly crushing their dreams after several years of aspiring to eventually immigrate to Canada. Some applications are being turned over the provinces for their handpicked selection to fill their labour shortage. This move is supposed to clear the huge backlog of unprocessed applications and allow immigration officials to focus on newer applications filed after February 2008.

Sandra Sutherland is a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC) with the new regulatory and governing body of immigration consultants, the Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council (ICCRC) . She can be reached at (416) 431-2829 or via e-mail at ssutherland@suthernimmigration.com. View her advertisement in this copy of the *Insight for more information*.

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Sandra Sutherland, RCIC

Immigration Law Practitioner (Honours Certification)
Commissioner of Oaths & Member of ICCRC

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Mr. Steve O. Phillips
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Membership Has Its Rewards



Through the Arbor Alliance Program offered by Memorial Gardens Canada **financial members** of St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. (SVGAT) and their families are eligible for preferential pricing on cemetery and funeral services and products. **Financial members** and their immediate family are eligible for a 10% discount on products and services when pre-purchased, and a 5% discount when purchased at the time of need at any of the company's funeral homes or cemeteries.

Planning ahead allows you to enhance your family's security, spare them unnecessary emotional strain, and potentially save them hundreds, even thousands of dollars.

To find out more about the Arbor Alliance Program please contact any member of the SVGAT executive or Gideon Exeter of Pine Ridge Memorial Gardens by email at gexeter@arbormemorial.com or phone 416-992-4253.

SHARE YOUR ARTICLES IN INSIGHT

If you have an article or story you would like to share with other readers in Insight, we ask that you contact members of the Executive Committee by email to svgat@vincytoronto.com.

The next issue of Insight is due out in early April so your article should be submitted by the middle of March.

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES TOURISM OFFICES

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Consulate of St. Vincent and the Grenadines
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THANK YOU

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto acknowledges the contributions of those businesses and individuals who support the production of Insight by promoting their businesses and services through advertisement in our newsletter.

**SUSPENSION OF A MEMBER OF THE
ST.VINCENT AND GRENADINES
ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO (SVGAT)**

It is the painful duty of the Leadership of the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto to inform you, its Members and Supporters, that the Association has reluctantly suspended one of its members. The decision was agonizing to the membership, since the prevailing objective of our organization is to support and accommodate all members of the St.Vincent and Grenadines community.

On January 29, 2012 a majority of financial members present at a duly constituted meeting voted by secret ballot to suspend Ms. Elma Gabriel's membership in the SVGAT for a period of three years. At the end of the period of suspension, Ms.Gabriel has the option of applying to the Executive of the day for reinstatement. The Executive would consider the application and recommend acceptance or denial to the membership who will have the final say. Let us hope that Ms. Gabriel will use this period to reflect on her past actions and return with a determination to influence the organization positively.



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The next **General Meeting of the Association** will take place at Northwood Community Center
Date: Sunday, April 29, 2012
Time: 4:30 P.M

Address & Direction:
Northwood Community Centre, 15 Clubhouse Court, (off Arleta between Keele & Jane Streets)

Membership Dues:
New Members: \$22.00
(\$2.00 registration and \$20.00 membership fee)
Renewal of Membership: \$20.00

BECOME A FINANCIAL MEMBER NOW!

MY JOURNEY WITH EPILEPSY:

*A personal story by:
Wendy Morris*

My name is Wendy Morris and I am living with Epilepsy. It is a huge accomplishment for me just to stand before you. Believe me; it took a lot of courage. Not because of my overwhelming shyness; but the paralyzing fear that grips me when I think that I could very well have a seizure right before your eyes.

It is thoughts like these that limit so many of us living with epilepsy today. I am here because I choose not to be silenced by this fear. I choose to speak even though a seizure can disrupt my presentation. I smile even though I see the fear in my children eyes, I laugh every moment I can because I have learnt to treasure life regardless of the challenges passed and yet to come.

Although more people suffer today from epilepsy than some of the other major chronic medical conditions, epilepsy remains among the least understood conditions. So, I am doing this to help educate those who are unaware of the impact of epilepsy and to encourage those who have just started this journey or who is still struggling with accepting it.

My earliest glimpses of Epilepsy came through my Dad. I still remember how terrifying it was for my family and me when my Dad started to experience these traumatic seizures. I was paralyzed with the fear that I could lose him at any moment. I never thought I would ever have to witness the same fear in my children every time I regained consciousness in their arms from another seizure. It has been a difficult journey for me. But I am happy to say that my Dad did not allow Epilepsy to impede his life. He held a job for over 30 years and lived a very full life.

I experienced my first seizure almost 11 years ago when pregnant with my second child. I was officially diagnosed about three months after my son's birth. I was distraught with the news and hated everything that came along with Epilepsy. As the seizures persisted, I lost many of the friends that I usually socialized with after work. Some found excuses not to be in my company and claimed they were afraid I will have an episode during one of our outings which would embarrass them publicly. My safety was always a concern. From making a simple trip to a grocery store, taking a long anticipated family vacation or just preparing a meal for my family...epilepsy threatened to rob me of the simple joys of life that others take for granted. I

became angry, hurt and depressed. I wondered how I was going to cope with all the changes I would have to make in my life. As you would imagine, taking care of my children was a major concern.

A major breakthrough came when my doctor referred me to Epilepsy Toronto. I still remember her calling me at home and insisting that I contact this agency. I was very reluctant as I did not want anyone to know that I was connected to such a place. After all, it would mean fully acknowledging that I had epilepsy and my life had changed. It took me about 6 months before I finally decided to pay a visit to Epilepsy Toronto.

Once I took that step I realized that I had found a place where I did not have to feel embarrassed or worried if I had a seizure. They were able to provide a safe environment for me where I could freely express my feelings and concerns without being judged.

(Continue on page 11)

Epilepsy Canada

2255B Queen St E, Suite 336 Tel:
1-877-734-0873
Toronto, ON, M4E 1G3 Fax:
905-764-1231
Charity Registration Number : 13117
6042 RR0001
email: epilepsy@epilepsy.ca

(My Journey with Epilepsy continues from page 10)

Over the years I have benefitted from a number of the services offered by Epilepsy Toronto such as Adults With epilepsy Support Group, Friday Recreation Group, Family Retreat amongst others. Fortunate for me, I met the most understanding, compassionate, empathic and great listeners in three counselors within the Foundation. Their names are, Julia, Theo, and Rosie. They counseled and trained my family members and friends on how to help me cope with this new chapter in my life; advocated for me and provided me with opportunities to volunteer and be involved in the community of the agency. Their unrelenting encouragement and advocacy for the rights, dignity and wellbeing of every person with epilepsy in the GTA living is second to none.

Although, I finally accepted the fact that I had Epilepsy, I hit many road blocks along the way. I began to experience *side effects from some of the medications, such as, allergic reactions and deep depression*. Even transitions from one medication to another had some harsh side effects. At some points, I was unable to recognize my children. I experienced memory loss, upset stomach, weakness in the legs and hands. It was difficult for my children to witness my many seizures. Sometimes I had 6 per day. At times I was unable to conduct a proper conversation with them and to go to the different places they enjoy because I feared I might have seizures while outdoors. They both reacted differently to me having Epilepsy. Chanice, my eldest, kept a lot of her feelings inside while Tyrese, my youngest got so frustrated that it affected his performance in school. They have come a far way and I love them for just who they are. They inspire me to

keep fighting. There are many who cannot believe that I have raised these kids while living with epilepsy BUT I HAVE!

After numerous hospital admissions and trying over nine (9) different medications my seizures were still there. I was referred to Toronto Western Hospital and admitted to the Epilepsy Monitoring Unit but unfortunately I am not a candidate for epilepsy surgery. However I received excellent care from the neurology team, in particular, Dr. Peter Tai and Dr. Sherese Ali. The challenges have been many but I have been very fortunate to have an amazing network of support and a strong faith in God that keeps me going. I have learnt to pick myself up and dust myself off and carry on.

Today, many people will ask me what caused my smile to return. I will answer with an even broader smile, acceptance! I stand here, not in denial but instead with a determination and resolve to live life to its fullest despite the ups and downs of living with Epilepsy. I realized that I am not alone on this journey. I am happy and thankful for the friends that left when I started this journey but even happier for the new friends that I gained. They are keepsakes. Thanks guys for your overwhelming support!

I am here to let you know that Epilepsy will never define who I am. I am a mother, sister, aunt, friend and lover; I am strong, compassionate, kind, loving and very determined. Thank you Epilepsy Toronto for being our champion and beacon of hope.

*A personal story written by Wendy Morris
Epilepsy Toronto 2012 Media Representative*

SHARE YOUR ARTICLES IN INSIGHT

We encourage you to use our publication to share your interests with our readers. You can submit, articles, personal stories, a recipes, a poems or anything you would like to share.

SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLE TO: svgat@vincytoronto.com

CCAC Launches Scholarship Program

The Council of Caribbean Associations - Canada of which St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto is a founding member has launched a Scholarship Program to assist students of member associations with their pursuit of

post secondary education. Bursaries in the amount of \$1,000.00 each will be made available to successful applicants. The closing date for accepting applications is July 15, 2012. For further information including the program outline and the application form please visit www.vincytoronto.com or www.caribbeancouncilcanada.org.

Green Pigeon Peas Soup

INGREDIENTS:

2 cups shelled green pigeon peas
1 oz margarine
½ lb. soup meat
1 large onion
6 cups water
2 sprigs celery
salt and pepper to taste
6 ozs pumpkin
1 lb. tannias
1 green plantain
dumplings (see recipe below)
3 tbsp. Oil
1 large carrot (sliced)

Dumplings:

INGREDIENTS:

½ lb. flour
¾ tsp. salt
¼ cup cornmeal (optional)
1 tbsp. sugar
½ tsp. baking powder
pinch of spice or nutmeg (optional)
water

METHOD (Dumplings):

Combine flour, salt, sugar, baking powder and cornmeal. Add enough water to make a fairly stiff dough. Shape dough into either round, oblong or flat bite size portions. Drop in boiling soup.

METHOD (Soup):

Chop seasoning and pumpkin, cut up meat into small pieces. Heat oil, sauté seasoning and pumpkin, add meat and fry till slightly brown. Add peas and cook till peas burst and are soft, adding a little hot water occasionally. Add water enough for soup. Meanwhile, peel and cut up carrots, peel plantain and tannias and cut into bite-sized pieces. Add to soup with salt and pepper to taste. Mix dumplings and shape into balls or small logs. When soup is almost done add dumplings and butter for the last 10 minutes. Check taste. Serve hot as a lunch or dinner main course.

Past Presidents of SVGAT

Test your skills and find them all!

P	L	K	V	Z	M	P	F	F	A	R	R	E	L	L
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MCINTOSH

CARMICHAEL

GARRAWAY

PAYNE

LABBAN

FARRELL

EXETER

TELFER

GEORGE

GABRIEL

LEWIS

Membership Registration Form

Become a Member!
Join with us in achieving our goals.

Mission Statement

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. (SVGAT) is a non-profit community-based Association. We are committed to providing assistance and support to groups and institutions in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Ontario, and wherever the Association deems fit. We are also committed to provide an anti bias forum for Cultural, Educational, Social and Recreational enrichment and to maintain a network of communication through information and referral.



Objectives

- To maintain a high level of volunteerism through recruitment, training and effective utilization of skills
- To provide a forum to promote leadership and advocacy for the enrichment of Culture and Education
- To provide an anti bias environment for the discussion of matters of general interest to its members
- To plan, implement and participate in fundraising activities to meet urgent human needs.
- To promote social and recreational events to enrich the lives of Children, Youth, Adults and Seniors
- To maintain a network of communication through information and referral

Our membership meetings are held on the LAST SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH from 4:00 p.m. at Northwood Community Centre, 15 Clubhouse Court, (Keele St. & Sheppard Ave. W. area), North York

We hope to see you there!

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ **E-MAIL:** _____

FAMILY MEMBERS: _____

NEW MEMBER OR RENEWAL: _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____ (\$2.00 for new membership registration, \$20.00 annual subscription)

Please make cheques payable to THE ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC. and mail to:
P.O. BOX 392, STATION F, TORONTO, ONTARIO, M4Y 2L8