

THE ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC. (SVGAT)

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY INFORMED THROUGH COMMUNICATION

Quarterly Newsletter

April. 2014

From the President's desk ...

Now that we have come through one of the most devastating winters in recent memory and Spring is in the air, it is also time for us to turn our minds to new beginnings, new growth and a renewed focus. Over the next several months, the Association will create an environment for our young people so that they can become more involved in the activities of the Association. We will also create a platform for youth initiatives and community projects.

To accomplish this goal, the monthly meetings of the association will have a new dynamic – the first hour will be devoted to the business of the Association and the remaining time will have a social approach. We aim to create opportunities for youths to express themselves through games evenings, skill sharing and Information sessions, cultural evenings and interactive educational sessions. There will be lots of opportunities for youths to express themselves whether it be through poetry or debates or just simply saying what's on their minds. To start this new focus off, the April 27, 2014 meeting time will be a

young entrepreneurs evening. Ms Marsha Baynes and her team of young professionals will present an information session on acquiring real estate, how to arrange a mortgage and the benefits that are available for first time home buyers.

To get us into the spirit of spring and summer, there will be lots of vegetable seeds for those who would like to start an indoor or outdoor vegetable garden. All "green thumbs" and "not so green thumbs" are invited to share in this interactive session.

All of the sessions will take place on the last Sunday of every month at the Northwood Community Centre 15 Clubhouse Court, North York at 4:00 p.m. We also invite ideas and suggestions for these sessions. Please call Marcia Farrell at 647-716-0181 or email: president@vincytoronto.com

UPDATE on the Flooding in SVG HOMES BEGIN

Relocation for December flood victims one step closer

Excerpt from Searchlight Newspaper March 4th 2014

HOME CONSTRUCTION WORK has started as the country moves into the relocation phase of the recovery from last December's devastating floods.

Close to 20 houses are to be built in South and North Leeward communities, during the first phase of the relocation exercise. And, during his visit to the North Leeward area last Saturday, Prime Minister Dr Ralph Gonsalves made a stop in Fitz-Hughes, at the site where construction has already begun on six of the eight houses to be built there.

The Prime Minister pointed out that six of the houses to be built on the site would be for persons directly affected by the floods, either because of the loss of a home, or because the residents had to be moved from an area that is not suitable for habitation.



TWO OF THE six foundations at Fitz-Hughes, where persons affected by the December floods will be relocated. Eight homes will be built at the site, including one for Sweet-I Robertson and one for a Hurricane Tomas victim.



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Historian Not Optimistic About Reparations Successful Outcome

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent CMC - Historian and retired head of the University of the West Indies Open Campus, Dr. Adrian Fraser says the region must pursue reparations from Europe but he does not think much will come of the effort. "I think it is something which we really should do; it is something that we are, more or less, forced to do," he told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) on the sidelines of the National Garifuna Conference over the weekend. "I am not sure that there is going to be any success down the road, because it is a question of power. We don't have the power, and they (Europe) will simply neglect us and they probably feel that once they do that (pay reparations), it is going to open a can of worms," said Fraser, who delivered the featured address during the opening ceremony of the conference.

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) heads of government have reported "good progress" on reparations after their meeting here last week and have set up a commission that will report back to them during their summit in July. But Fraser said he does not expect, "at least in the short run" that the region will get "much" from its efforts to get Europe to pay compensation for African slavery and native genocide.

"... but I feel it is something which we need to do, because of the way our history is bastardised and the way our people



suffered over that period of time," Fraser told CMC.

"So, we are compelled to do it. As part of trying to reclaim our history and recognising what has happened in the past and also bringing before the international public the fact that Britain, and the Europeans generally, benefitted tremendously from us.

"We provided the springboard for their entry into industrialisation. That was not the only thing, but we played a very important role in it. So, we need to make that statement and we need to let the world understand what happened with us," Fraser told CMC.

During his lecture, Fraser said there must be a consensus on what the region needs from the reparations.

"Not to do this is to admit that we are not serious," he said. He said that a large part of the reparations effort should focus on the indigenous people.

"We should have some understanding, particularly where indigenous people are concerned, what we want out of reparation, what we would do with whatever is offered us through reparation...Unless we do that, it will show that we are not serious about it," he told CMC.

Reprinted from PRIDE News Magazine, March 19, 2014

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Relief Committee

Let us build our Community together ... Come and participate in one or more of the Committees.

Email: <u>Secretary@vincytoronto.com</u> to indicate your interest.

Stefan Charles, son of Vincentian Thelma Charles signs with the Buffalo Bills

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. – Stefan Charles grew up a fan of the Buffalo Bills, Sunday he played for them

BY JOHN KRYK, QMI AGENCY

The backup defensive tackle, signed just last Tuesday off the Tennessee Titans' practice squad, took a few snaps in Buffalo's 23-13 loss to the Kansas City Chiefs.

Charles tackled Charles – that is, Chiefs running back Jamaal Charles – on consecutive plays in the second quarter. By comparison, Bills defensive end Mario Williams had half as many tackles and he played most of the game.

The 25-year-old Charles grew up in the Toronto area – specifically, east-end Scarborough through grade school, then in Oshawa for high school. The Bills were his favourite NFL team.

"Yeah, that was the first football jersey I had – Willis McGahee. I've got it in my closet today still," Charles said in the Bills locker room.

"This is the first game I ever watched here, ever. I never saw a game as a fan. It is a blessing that I'm here. I wouldn't be happier anywhere else."

McGahee wore his No. 21 jersey with the Bills from 2003-06 and now starts for the Cleveland Browns.

Charles is a mammoth D-tackle: 6-foot-5, 323 pounds. His biceps and thighs are about as big as you'll see in an NFLer.

After starring with the Eastdale Collegiate & Vocational Institute Eagles in Oshawa, he played junior-varsity football with the Metro Toronto Wildcats while he helped to raise his newborn daughter, Quimerah, then played a year of junior ball in British Columbia with the Surrey (now Langley) Rams.

From 2010-12 he played on the defensive line of the University of Regina Rams. Akiem Hicks, a D-line teammate at Regina in 2011, was drafted by the New Orleans Saints last year.

The CFL Scouting Bureau ranked him No. 2 overall, but Charles said his dream was to land in the NFL. After he went undrafted in April, the Titans signed him. They cut Charles after training camp, then re-signed him to their practice squad, where he'd been for eight weeks, hoping that either the Titans would call him up, or another NFL team would sign him to its 53-man roster.





The Bills did the latter on Tuesday morning.

"My agent called me at 7:30," Charles said. "I missed his first call. Then he got me and said, 'It's time to go.' I said, 'Where?' And he said, 'Buffalo.' And I said right away, 'Let's go.'

"This defence is a great group of guys, and coaches are nice. It's just a good fit right now." Charles hopes he stays on with the Bills.

"This right here is my dream. I'm not saying I wouldn't like to play CFL, but I'm shooting for the stars. I'm here and I'm just going to try to stay here as long as I can."

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STEFAN CHARLES IS THE SON OF MS. THELMA CHARLES. FROM ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES



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THE EFFECTS OF REMOVAL ORDERS

Contributed by: Sandra Sutherland, RCIC

An officer of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) or a member of the Immigration Division may issue a removal order to foreign nationals and permanent residents of Canada who breach the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. Depending on the nature of the violation a Departure Order, Exclusion Order or a Deportation Order may be issued. In certain cases the CBSA may assign an escort officer or a medical officer, in cases where there is health concerns, to facilitate the removal of an individual from Canada.

Primarily, a removal order may be stayed or temporarily halted if such action is granted by the Minister, if an appeal has been filed with the Immigration Appeal Division (IAD), if a judicial review is being sought at the Federal Court or if enforcement actions or completion of conditions or outcomes of certain legal proceedings are pending. Certain situations and circumstances such as the inability to confirm the individual's identity and/or citizenship, lack of a proper travel document, the likelihood of imposed risks to the individual's safe return to his/her country of origin due to dangerous conditions in their country may validate delay or suspension of an individual's removal.

When a removal order becomes enforceable the CBSA will seek to effect the removal of the individual as soon as possible. Permanent residents, permanent resident visa holders and protected persons may file an appeal with the IAD and foreign nationals may apply for judicial review. Individuals who are security threats, war criminals, or has been convicted of a serious crime in Canada that may be punishable by at least 10 years in prison and for which a sentence of at least two years is given loses their right to appeal.

Each removal order has its own consequences which must be satisfied prior to the individual being able to obtain authorization to return to Canada temporarily or permanently. When a departure order is issued the individual must leave Canada within 30 days after the order becomes enforceable and must remain outside Canada for a minimum period of 30 days prior to seeking reentry. If an exclusion order is issued, s/he must remain outside Canada for 1 year unless written permission from CBSA has been obtained. If the reason for issuance of the exclusion order was due to misrepresentation this period is extended to 2 years. A deportation order bars the individual permanently unless written approval is obtained from

the CBSA. In some cases persons may pose a security risk and may be issued a security certificate, in this case written approval must also be obtained from the CBSA prior to reentry into Canada. All removal orders require individuals to confirm their departure from Canada by obtaining a certificate of Departure.

Written approval may be obtained via the submission of an authority to return to Canada (ARC) application. Immigration officials would assess the applicant's compelling reasons and exceptional circumstances for the request and may also consider other pertinent factors such as the severity of the violation that precipitated the removal order, any safety and security risks that may be posed to Canadians, the degree of rehabilitation or deemed rehabilitation, prior immigration history (including any cooperation and non-compliance issues), the length of time that has elapsed since the removal, outstanding removal costs, whether an escort was required, the best interests of children, the bona fides of the visa application, as well other tangible and intangible benefits to Canada, the applicant, and/or the applicants family in Canada.

Whether an ARC is required or not individuals seeking reentry, temporarily or permanently, to Canada must still meet the eligibility requirements for the appropriate visa being sought to enter Canada. The likelihood of being granted approval for temporary residency to visit, work, or study in Canada is generally much more difficult if an individual left Canada on account of a removal order or security certificate than it would generally be for a person without any removal issues. If permanent residency is being sought via spousal sponsorship the bona fides of the marital relationship and the purpose of the application would be assessed in similar fashion as a "normal" application would. The granting of an ARC does not necessarily mean that the visa application would also be approved.

Removal orders and other immigration history remains in a person's file permanently and could be accessed by immigration officials when assessing any future visa application and even at the port of entry when coming into Canada. The ramifications of having a removal order issued against an individual can be quite harsh and pose grave hindrances in the prospects of returning to Canada on a short term or long term basis.

Sandra Sutherland is a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC) and immigration counsel. She is licensed 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 <u>ssutherland@suthernimmigration.com</u>.

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Suthern Immigration & Paralegal Services Inc. in this copy of Insight for more information.



The following article was printed from PRIDE News Magazine, March 2014

Keep Your Child Safe On-Line

NC - Children grow up fast. Sometimes it feels like yester-day when junior just learned to crawl, and today he or she is going online to check out the latest homework assignment or chat with a friend through a new app. While parents and caregivers may not be as tech savvy as young people today, there are certain things that we do know about how to stay safe in real life - and those same rules apply to life online. You don't have to know how to video-call, send a text, or chat online to know how to keep your children safe in our digital world. Follow these tips:

• Talk about safety and the unknown: Inform your child about the risks of opening emails or texts from senders they don't know, or what to do if a stranger contacts them. Discuss different scenarios and possible reactions. For example, if they get a text saying they should follow a link to collect a prize, tell your child to simply delete the message.

- Make password protection a priority. Children need to understand that their online information will be better protected if they use passwords. They should use different passwords for different sites and they should change them regularly. Make passwords strong (eight characters or more and a variety of letters, numbers and special characters), and never share them with anyone.
- Choose usernames for games and accounts that don't reveal personal details about your child such as their location, what school they go to, their age or their full name.
- Check your anti-spy and anti-virus software. Make sure your computer is fully loaded and up to date with this protection. New laptops often come with anti-virus software on a trial basis. Be sure to renew it or install new software when the trial period ends.
- Make sure files and apps from the Internet are from a trusted source.
- Emphasize the importance of protecting mobile devices. The first thing anyone should do with a new mobile device is

activate a passcode. Talk to your kids about this, and the importance of protecting the device itself. A device that gets into the wrong hands could result in videos or pictures being posted online by someone else in your child's name.

- Remind kids that what they post on the Internet is not always private. Once something is posted online, you no longer have control over it. It can be forwarded, copied and pasted, manipulated, printed out or saved - it can remain online, in some form, potentially forever.
- Teach your kids to think before they click. It can take only seconds to snap a photo and post it to the Internet, or to post a comment. But it can be nearly impossible to permanently delete that comment or photo once it's posted.

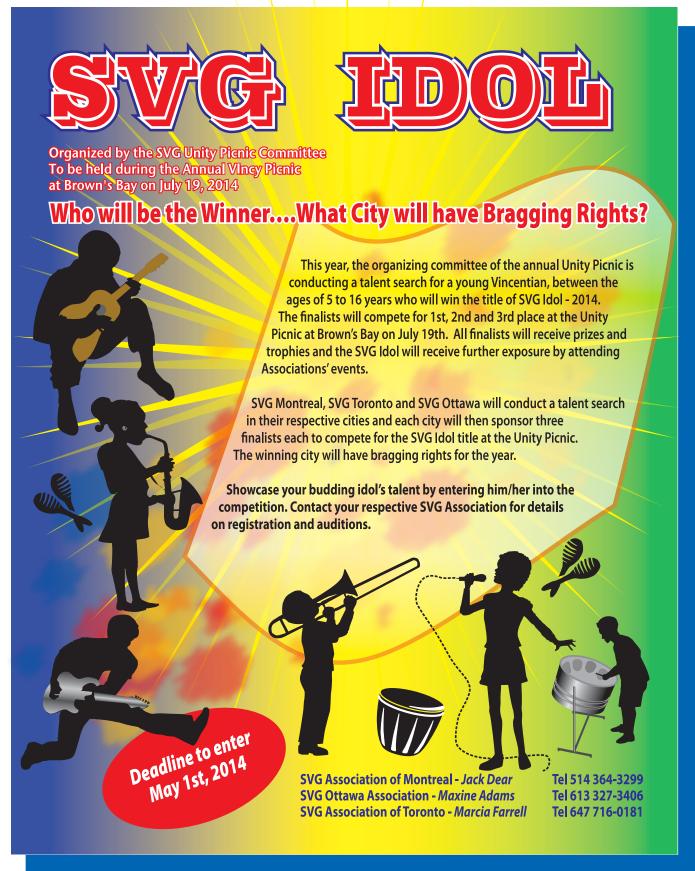
They should only post things that they would be comfortable with the whole world seeing.

Protect while you connect. More information is available online at

GetCyberSafe.ca



Does your child have what it takes to be the SVG Idol?





Jerol Huggins - Jackson

Jerol Huggins - Jackson is an internationally acclaimed Caribbean playwright. He is the founder and Managing Director of Jems Theater which is headquartered in Miami Florida. Its membership spreads throughout the Caribbean including Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, Jamaica, Antigua, Dominica and Grenada. Jems Theater has been commended as one of the leading Theater Companies in the Caribbean by theater goers locally and internationally.

As a playwright Jerol has consistently used his work to promote Caribbean culture on the international scene, and most importantly to bridge the gap that has for too long segregated Caribbean culture. Before his contribution to Caribbean culture, his writing was featured in small scripts on various black television networks in the United States.

Jerol is among one of the first Caribbean playwrights to open a major theatrical production in a major theater in the United Sates. His production 'Tables WillTurn' opened at the famous Paul Robeson Theater in New York in 2006, and ended in July of 2012 with several sold out performances in the Caribbean as well as in Montreal, Toronto, Miami, New York and Washington DC .

In addition to the famous Paul Robeson Theater, his work has been performed at the prestigious Isabel Bader Theater at the University of Toronto, the Segal Centre for the Performing Arts in Montreal, and at the historical Peace Memorial Hall in Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Part proceeds from these productions were distributed to various non Governmental community-based organizations locally and internationally. Organizations such as the SVG HIV Care, Various Caribbean based organizations in the Diaspora, and, most notably, in 2006, Jerol teamed up with the Rotary Club of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to raise funds towards the construction of a children's hospital to be built on the island of St. Vincent.

'Tables Will Turn' has been dubbed one of the most out standing theatrical production of our generation by the Susan Cummings of the Miami Herald.

Jerol's long awaited and anticipated new melo comedy drama 'Truth Be Told' opened in the Caribbean on March 31, 2013 - April 01, 2013. The play has its setting on a lush Caribbean island with birds, bees, radiant sun and sandy beaches, where a tragic story unfolds: a father rapes his teenage daughter who becomes the mother of his child.

In an act of desperation the baby is declared dead by the girl's mother but in reality the baby is sold to a foreign couple sailing the turquoise waters of the tranquil Caribbean.

To avoid shame, the mother forcefully ships her daughter off to the United States to begin a new life. Then in an act of redemption the mother poisons her husband and for decades she seeks refuge as a nun; hidden behind the walls of a convent. Despite the best intentions of the mother, her daughter suffers in her new life in the United States.

To escape deportation, her daughter is forced to marry a man with a checkered past and a riveting secret, a secret that takes her on a tumultuous journey - a journey from her once luxurious lifestyle in an affluent New York City neighborhood to the footholds of the underworld; a journey which eventually leads to a tragic reunification with her son.

As the story unfolds you'll be the judge of who is wrong or who is right, who is good or who is bad or simply to the real meaning of 'never look down on a man unless you're picking him up'. This is a story of shame, betrayal, and of the real meaning of 'Never judge a book by its cover'.

The production features some of the Caribbean's most celebrated actors and actresses featuring La Fayette Johnson, Stanley Johnson, JP Schwmon and Sylvia Gould.

JEMS Theatre Company - Press Release

Truth Be Told Premieres In Washington D.C.

Just five months after the Easter Weekend premier of its 2013 production, JEMS Theatre made its Off Broadway debut with its brand new hit play **Truth Be Told** staged at the 777 Theatre in Manhattan, New York on Friday 30th August.

Following six nights of stellar performances the Vincentian cast is due to premier the Caribbean tale of greed, woe and deceit at the Howard University Cramton Auditorium right here in Washington D.C.

With reviews like "TRUTH BE TOLD is an emotional yet humorous drama, depicting true Caribbean life experiences. It evoked laughter, tears and joy and was well-crafted and written... The cast was excellent! Hats off to Jerol, Lafayette, Sylvia and others... great job guys ,vou did it again. Beautiful, a must see!" by Marslyn Lewis, one evidently satisfied patron: as well as from former Vincentian Culture Minister Rene Baptiste who wrote ".... a good play with strong themes such as good and evil, the secrets in a family, echoing themes of tragedy, comedy and drama. The acting was very good and timing was fair with believable characters, especially the husband of Sandra even the attempts at singing!!!!! A good night of theatre. I wish we were heavier in the pocket to produce works like these for a monthly theatre weekend, to build this art form... Good luck on tour"- it is no wonder that JEMS Theatre is "proud to partner with the Howard University Caribbean Students Association for the Washington D.C premier of this much praised comedy-drama."

Internationally acclaimed playwright and producer Jerol Huggins Jackson is best known for his comedic work Tables Will Turn which enjoyed quite a run since it opened at the prestigious Paul Robeson Theatre in New York seven years ago. Now the Trinidadian born thespian has set his sights on new frontiers – a musical drama that tackles several taboo subjects that plague our Caribbean civilization.

Inspired by true events Truth Be Told is set in New York where the past, as personified by Sylvia Gould's portrayal of Mother Browne, has traversed oceans and time to 'catch up' with the story's conflicted lead character Sandra Jones (Lafayette Johnson). "It was based on the life of one of my audience members who had come to see my previous play. At the end she was so inspired she walked over to me and said 'would you please write a play on my life?' Of course there is some element of creative license at work in this piece" Jerol shared with the audience on opening night.

As the tale unfolds dark secrets which play on a range of human emotions and sensitive topics are brought to the fore, forcing each of the four characters to come to terms with their individual choices.

The audience is to be treated to more than the usual fare of slapstick comedy that has pervaded Caribbean Theatre for decades as this tale of human trafficking, greed, incest, sexuality and murder is brought to life by the collaborative efforts of some of SVG's finest.

Award winning actress Lafayette Johnson acknowledges that her character is buffeted with unresolved issues that hark back to her childhood "which is reflected in her adult life... you would notice that in the Caribbean we have a tendency to think that things are better overseas so whenever there is a problem particularly involving incest those families that could afford it almost always opt for shipping the abused child or children out of the country instead of dealing with the core issues and that is Sandra's story. She is unskilled and selfish so what you'll see is that she has become dependent on others to provide for her - which in itself is the crux of her problem."

Sharing the stage with Johnson as her character's husband, Raymond, is home-grown Vincentian actor JP Schwmon. He brings to Truth Be Told over a decade of onstage and television experience. "It is always an exciting experience getting ready for a new play and this one even more so. This role is definitely pushing the envelope; you see Raymond is a former attorney turn drag queen. He finds himself regressing into a lifestyle that he'd shunned just so he could provide the quality of life to which his wife has grown accustomed... It was testing getting prepped but Raymond is unique that way and I'm working with a wonderful cast so I'm confident that the audience would be utterly flabbergasted come show night."

Sylvia Gould, whose versatile talents have been featured in Hairoun Theatre Company's productions locally, regionally and internationally over the past two decades, contributes much of the comic relief in this JEMS Theatre comedy drama in her role as Mother Browne. According to her "... the part is a challenging one in terms of the range of emotions involved – after all here is a mother traveling for miles trying to reach out to her daughter in search of forgiveness that she never gets. The play uncovers a lot of issues that are kept under wraps across the region and I know everyone's going to enjoy the story if only because of the climax... the end is far from predictable."

Back onstage for a second JEMS Theatre production is Stanley Johnson. Best known for his work with Urban Expression, Johnson surfaced on JEMS radar early last year whe he auditioned for the most recent run of Tables Will Turn in SVG. Having satisfied the producers and fellow cast members with the "excellent calibre of his performance" he has netted the supporting role of Sandra's long lost son. He says "my role is small but I'm just happy to be a part of the show... I love to act and am trying to make the best of whatever role I get because I've learnt that it's not the size of the role in a play that makes the actor but the power an actor can give to his role."

No venture would be successful without support from our local, regional and international communities, therefore JEMS Theatre Company is proud to have partnered with Friends of Crown Heights, Standard Shipping Inc., Square Deal Shipping, LIAT, LIME SVG, The Searchlight Newspaper, The Vincentian Newspaper, Facey Trading (SVG) Ltd, One Caribbean Printing, St. Vincent Co-operative Bank, The Searchlight Newspaper, Gibson Building Supplies, Courts SVG Ltd, Mahogany Square and Global Highlights with Luzette King in the making of this 2013 production of Truth Be Told .

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, and 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, Youths, 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 4:30 p.m. at Northwood Community Centre, 15 Clubhouse Court, (Keele St. & Sheppard Ave. W. area), North York.

We hope to see you there!

NAME:		
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