

INSIGHT

THE ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC. (SVGAT)
KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY INFORMED THROUGH COMMUNICATION

Quarterly Newsletter

April 2017

Argyle International Airport Opens

On February 14, 2017 the first commercial flights began landing at our country's newly constructed international airport, the Argyle International Airport. This was welcomed news for the people of our country as it will open and provide for numerous opportunities for all Vincentians and those who travel to St. Vincent and the Grenadines. To mark the occasion special chartered flights were arranged to take those who wanted to be part of the historic event to be among the first to travel from Toronto and New York non-stop to St. Vincent and the Grenadines.



The airport was constructed over a nine-year period at a cost of over US\$700,000,000.00. The project was managed by the International Argyle Development Company Limited, a private limited liability company wholly owned by the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The site of the old airport, the E.T. Joshua Airport at Arnos Vale will be developed into some commercial entity in the coming years.

For more news on the new Argyle International Airport, visit the IADC's website at www.svgiadc.com.



ASSOCIATION NEWS

New Board of Directors & Officers

The Association held its annual general meeting on January 29 and elected Gideon Exeter as president as well as 6 other members to complete its roster of 9 directors. Following the first meeting of the new board officers were named from among the directors.

The full list includes:

President - Gideon L. Exeter

Secretary - Sandra Bobb

Assistant Secretary - Prudence Morton

Treasurer - Dennis Bucchan

Board Member - Kenneth Farrell

Board Member - Erline Granderson

Board Member - Odel "Ewan" Lewis

Board Member - Winston Woodley

Board Member - Zakiya Hutchinson

The by-laws of the Association allow for directors to be elected for one, two and three terms at its AGM to provide some form of continuity on the Board. Ms. Bobb and Ms. Hutchinson had another one year left from their previous term so all other directors were elected for new terms.

Committees and/or Chairs of Committees:

Independence Planning Committee Chair – Sandra Bobb
Unity Picnic Reps - Dennis Bucchan, Ewan Lewis & Claudius Samuel

Local Picnic & Walk-a-Thon Coordinator - Ken Farrell

Bus Trip to 1000 Islands Coordinator - Erline Granderson

Boat Cruise Coordinator - Gideon L. Exeter

Other committee chairs and coordinators will be named in due course.

Members of the Board of Directors herewith express their gratitude to the membership who elected them to serve in their respective capacities and we pledge to do our best to further the causes of the Association

Upcoming Events

Dates for the following events have been determined:

Vincy Unity Picnic @ 1000 Islands – July 15

SVGAT & TSVGSG Toronto Harbour Cruise - Aug. 11

Independence Thanksgiving Church Service – October 22

Independence Gala – October 28

Independence Town Hall Meeting – October 29

The Board is attempting to resume a local picnic sometime in either July or August. Details will be released soon.

Scholarship Program

The board of directors has agreed to continue providing two (2) bursaries of \$1,000.00 each to two students who are attending colleges or universities through the annual scholarship program. Details of the program and the application form could be found on the Association's website www.vincytoronto.com.

Adopt-A-Child Program

In 2008 the Association began supporting two children in St. Vincent and the Grenadines by financially assisting them with expenses for 5 years to see them through primary school. A second set of two children were selected from the Tourama Government School and the Fairhall Primary School. This is the final year of sponsorship for these two children and two others will be selected from the 2018 school year. HELP US TO SUPPORT CHILDREN IN OUR HOMELAND. Persons who are interested in assisting a child or contributing to the cost are asked to contact any member of the Board.

Membership Has It Benefits

The Board of Directors is pursuing efforts with certain companies to provide members with benefits as incentives in return for their membership. It is hoped that an announcement will be made soon about the companies that would come on board with the idea.

Council of Caribbean Associations Canada (CCAC)

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto is a founding member of the Council of Caribbean Associations – Canada, an umbrella organization comprising of 14 of the national associations of 13 Caribbean countries. The organizations include the Alliance of Guyanese Canadian Organizations, Antigua & Barbuda Association of Toronto, Association of Bahamians in Canada & Friends of the Bahamas (Toronto), Barbados Overseas Community Canada, Commonwealth of Dominica Ontario Association, Grenada Association (Toronto), Maison d'Haiti du Grand Toronto, Jamaica Diaspora Canada Foundation, Montserrat Association (Toronto) NevCan Cultural Association, St. Kitts & Nevis Association of Toronto, St. Lucia Toronto Association, St. Vincent and Grenadines Association. of Toronto, Trinidad & Tobago Association of Ontario.

Each member association of CCAC is entitled to three representatives on the Council. At this time, the SVGAT is represented on the Council by Gideon Exeter, Bernadine Phillips-Ryan and Erlene Granderson.

WORKING WITH & SUPPORTING OUR FRIENDS

The Board of Directors of the SVGAT has decided not to host a Mothers' Day Event this year. Since members of our community like going out as families, the Board is encouraging that you choose to attend one of the events sponsored either by the Commonwealth of Dominica Ontario Association or the St. Kitts & Nevis Association of Toronto. The details of those events are as follows:

The St. Kitts & Nevis Association of Toronto invites you to attend its Annual Mother's Day Luncheon, Sunday May 8th, 2017, 12:00 noon- 4:00 p.m. at The Toronto Don Valley Hotel, 175 Wynford Dr., Toronto, Ontario. Adults: \$40.00 - Children: 12 & Under: \$10.00

For Tickets Call: Loudanski (647) 933-6101; Joan 905-824-0651; Hillary (416) 922-9170 Keish (647) 205-5713; Wendy (647) 278-2353

Members of The Commonwealth of Dominica Ontario Association invite you to join them to celebrate Mothers' Day at their Brunch on Sunday, May 8, 2017 from 12:30 p.m. at St. Clement of Ohrid Macedonian Orthodox Church, 76 Overlea Blvd., Toronto (Don Mills & Overlea). Adults - \$45.00; Children under 12 - \$20.00 For tickets Call: CDOA (647) 693-1231; Hetty (647) 702-6831; Zisker (416) 447-5886

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT OF SVGAT

On behalf of the new Board of Directors please accept our sincere thanks and gratitude for allowing us the opportunity to serve our community and the Association as we strive to fulfill our Organization's goals and objectives.

We commend the members of the former Board for their contributions in keeping the Association alive and afloat during the past year.

As we forge forward, much of our focus will be on building bridges and relationships so as to bring cohesiveness in our community. We are making efforts to get some former members back in the fold as well as attract new ones and especially those who would want to see our Association move forward. There are numerous organizations and groups in our community and it is felt that from time to time we can and should do things that are of mutual interest together. We have begun communicating with and meeting with some organizations and look forward to these relationships bearing fruits in the very near future.

One of my personal goals is for our Caribbean community to acquire at least one other community facility that we can call our own and our home within the next 5 to 10 years. This is achievable only if we pool our resources instead of trying to do it as individual communities. Using the words of a prominent business person, Harvie Brooker, "If you could have done it by yourself you would have done it already." It is time that we realize that our community is being left behind simply because we are not doing things together.

The valued and cherished programs of the Association like the Adopt-A-Child Program, the Scholarship Program and the Christmas Hamper Project will be continued and the Board hopes to look into other meaningful areas to serve our people. It is my hope that we would endorse the idea of collecting unwanted prescription eye glasses and shipping them

to St. Vincent and the Grenadines to one of the service organizations there which will be able to work with professionals to match them up with persons in need. Many of us have these items in our homes without knowing that they could be of use to some less fortunate persons.

I look forward for your support in doing the things that you would like to have done. With all good wishes as we look forward to our upcoming activities.

Gideon L. Exeter

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN 2016

On behalf of the 2016 Board of Directors we hereby express thanks for all the support that was given by members of the Association and the general public to make the events and programs held in 2016 possible.

Thanks to all who supported and contributed to the annual Vincy Unity Picnic at 1000 Islands. Vincentians in large numbers continue to gather there for fun and frolic.

The second Toronto Boat Cruise jointly coordinated by the Association and the Toronto SVG Support Group was such a success that it has been determined that it will be an annual event. Over 375 persons attended and part of the proceeds were used to support projects in SVG and part to support the Association's scholarship program.

Independence Anniversary celebrations were also successful. Special thanks for the BME Christ Church for hosting our Thanksgiving Church service and to the Hon. Camillo Gonsalves who journeyed here to represent the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Association also hosted the annual Children's Christmas party where over 45 children attended and 4 individuals or families benefitted from the Christmas Hamper project.

NEWS FROM SVG

(Courtesy of Searchlight, The Vincentian, Caribbean News Now)

PACE Developments Building Resort at Mt. Wynne

PACE Developments, a Canadian owned company begun construction of a 200 room hotel with 5 villas in January. Mt. Wynne is located on the leeward side of mainland St. Vincent and is between the towns of Layou and Barrouallie.

It is expected that the project which will be constructed on 36 acres of land will cost about \$60 million. When completed, the facility will provide jobs for a number of nationals in various fields in the hospitality industry.

SVG TORONTO CONSULATE OFFICE

Consulate of St. Vincent and the Grenadines
55 Town Centre Drive, Suite 403
Toronto, Ontario, M3H 1T2

Mr. Fitzgerald Huggins

Consul General

Tel: (416) 398-4277 Fax (416) 398-4199

Email: consulategeneral@rogers.com

Following the general elections held on December 9, 2015, when the then ruling party, the United Labour Party (ULP) was declared the winner with 8 of the 15 seats to 7 for the main opposition party, the New Democratic Party (NDP), the NDP complained and challenged the results in two of the constituencies. The matter has been in and out of courts since then. In the latest development, on February 7, 2017, the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court of Appeal ruled that the petitions which were filed by the NDP and thrown out by a lower court citing that they were improperly filed, were to be reinstated and put before the Court again to be held expeditiously by another judge.

It is rare that the court overturns decisions that result in the change of a government in power so amidst all speculations, Vincentians and people around the world are eagerly paying attention to this matter. More details on this story can be found by visiting numerous websites on the internet.

VINCENTIAN FARMERS SECURE US MARKET

(Courtesy 784 News)

Farmers in St. Vincent and the Grenadines have received an order to supply four 40 foot containers of quality Vincentian dasheen to the United States every two weeks.

Minister for Agriculture and Representative for South Central Windward, Hon. Saboto Caesar says "there is a huge demand and our farmers are working with the Ministry of Agriculture to ensure our supplies are increased".

The first container of dasheen was to be shipped to Seasons Farms Fresh in Miami by the middle of March for distribution to all major supermarkets in and around Miami.

In early March, a trial shipment sent to the participating supermarkets for assessment included breadfruit and turmeric among other produce.

Speaking to News784 Minister Caesar noted that the Agri-export strategy initiative is in full effect and thousands of farmers will benefit from the opportunity to expose to these markets in such large volumes.

"Before the end of March the Ministry will be executing a program geared at ensure that all farmers have layouts and plans for their farm plots in order to maximize their profits and profitability".

The Agriculture Minister said that the combined supply from the dasheen farmers around the country is expected to meet the demand for the tuber in 2018.

According to Season Farms Fresh website, what began as a roadside stand selling lychees in South Florida has blossomed into a global network of farms with operations in eight countries spanning across two continents.

BURSARIES FOR STUDENTS

Students currently colleges or universities are eligible for bursaries provided through programs of the SVGAT and CCAC. Check out www.vincytoronto.com to apply before the due dates.

Buccament Bay Resort Temporarily Closed

St. Vincent and the Grenadines' largest holiday resort, Buccament Bay Resorts, a 5-Star facility located near to Cane Grove and Pembroke on the leeward side of mainland St. Vincent is closed while its management team is trying to deal with some financial and court challenges. The resort closed in late 2016 and has since been placed into receivership leaving a number of people unemployed and unpaid for some period of time. It is not known when the resort might be re-opened or whether it would open under a new management team.

PRESCRIPTION EYE GLASSES PROJECT

The Association is collecting unwanted prescription eye glasses to send to St. Vincent and the Grenadines for the benefit of persons there who need them. The project will be done in conjunction with the Lions Club South in St. Vincent and the Grenadines through the SVG Toronto Consulate Office. Please bring your unwanted eye glasses to a meeting, contact any member of the Board of Directors or drop them off at the **SVG Consulate Office** at 55 Town Centre Court, Scarborough.

There are people in our homeland that could make good use of your unwanted glasses.

Cuba Extends Preferential Tariffs To CARICOM

HAVANA, Cuba (ACN) – Cuba's Foreign Trade and Investment Minister Rodrigo Malmierca has given Collin Granderson, Assistant to the Secretary General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), an agreement that extends the number of products with preferential tariffs.

In an exclusive interview with Cuban News Agency, José Chaple, Director of Commercial Policy for Latin America and the Caribbean at the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Investment (MINCEX), said Cuba included 340 new products to those approved in 2000, while CARICOM granted the same to 80 Cuban products.

Chaple explained the inclusion of more products answers to the fact that Cuba's is a bigger economy, and it has a special treatment to the Caribbean, and highlighted this allows a greater access to the market and favours bilateral cooperation, foreign investment among other things.

The first time Cuba granted special concessions on products was in 2000 when it signed a cooperation and trade agreement with 12 countries in the region. Ever since, Cuba has extended preferential treatment to the Eastern Caribbean countries, with full access to the Cuban market.

Regarding doing business with the Caribbean, Chaple said Cuba needs to continue creating working relations with entrepreneurs in the area for them to attend the trade fairs in order to create stronger bonds.

“We have to pair our fraternal and political relations with the commercial ones, especially due to the geographical proximity,” he said.

(Courtesy of Caribbean News Now)

IMMIGRATION MATTERS

DOES CANADA HAVE ANY IMMIGRATION BANS?

Contributed by Sandra Sutherland, RCIC

Unlike the United States of America, Canada does not have any immigration bans against foreign nationals or non-citizens. Canada's immigration policies and procedures have certain bars in place that could restrict, prevent, or deter foreign nationals and permanent residents from entering, re-entering or remaining in Canada.

Canada's immigration programs and categories have their own unique eligibility criteria which applicants and sponsors should meet and subscribe to. If the eligibility criteria are not met or if a sponsor or applicant is found to have contravened the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, the consequence could result in a finding of inadmissibility which could then result in an immigration bar, **not an immigration ban**.

A foreign national could be rendered as inadmissible if he/she has been convicted of a crime; has ties to organized crime (i.e: people smuggling, money laundering); committed human or international rights violations; found to be a security risk (i.e: terrorism); has a serious health problem (if it is expected to cause excessive demand on health or social services); has a serious financial problem (if unable or unwilling to support self and applicable family members); omitted relevant information or provided false documentation or information in an application or at an interview (misrepresentation); or failed to meet his/her predetermined conditions. In certain instances, if a family member is found to be inadmissible to Canada this could impact the other applicants (his/her family members) from gaining the immigration status being sought as they too would be rendered as inadmissible.

Permanent residents may be subjected to inadmissibility issues which could cause them to lose their status and consequently deny them re-entry into Canada or have them removed from Canada. Some specific issues include not meeting the residency obligation, misrepresenting (i.e: not declaring dependent children), being convicted of a serious crime, or not fulfilling conditions of permanent resident status.

Naturalized Canadian citizens and citizens with dual citizenship are not immune to losing their citizenship. Citizenship may be revoked if it is found that it was obtained via misrepresentation. Naturalized citizens as well as Canadian born citizens who have dual citizenship can have their citizenship revoked if convicted of a crime that is considered to be a threat to Canada's national security and have served a lengthy prison sentence (i.e: terrorism, espionage, treason, or demonstrations of disloyalty to Canada). Once citizenship has been revoked the individual would be **barred** from re-entering Canada.

Some permanent residents who were found to be inadmissible and was issued a removal order may have a right to appeal the removal. Some forms of inadmissibility, like criminal convictions, can be overcome via rehabilitation, obtaining a record of suspension (pardon) or discharge. Generally, if a person is inadmissible and have a justifiable reason to remain in or enter Canada he/she may submit an application for a temporary resident permit.

Bars and inadmissibility issues are serious matters and should be dealt with by competent authorized immigration representatives such as myself. As cold as Canada may be, one should not risk being barred and left out of the cold.

Sandra Sutherland is a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC) and immigration counsel and is licensed with the Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council (ICCRC) . She can be reached at (416) 431-2829 or via e-mail at ssutherland@suthernimmigration.com.

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Join Us as We Celebrate Our 27th Anniversary!!
Enjoy a weekend of laughter and fun with friends and family while relaxing, browsing or shopping till you drop!!

****PLEASE CONTACT AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR MORE INFORMATION****

Prime Minister Announces Fiscal Measures For 2017

Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Hon. Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, in his budget address on Monday, 6th February, announced several fiscal measures to be implemented in 2017. These included an increase in the airport service charge, and disaster and telecommunication levies.

According to Dr. Gonsalves, the airport service charge will increase for departing passengers "by aircraft from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to EC\$100.00 (US \$40.00). This measure will be implemented from 15th February 2017 and will yield approximately 5 million dollars per annum". Dr. Gonsalves pointed out that this increased service charge is still lower than the airport service charge in several CARICOM countries.

Secondly, the Prime Minister has proposed to introduce a disaster levy of 1% in consumption within the state, which will offset costs to rehabilitate in the aftermath of natural disasters. The funds will be used to capitalise the Contingencies Fund, which is being established pursuant to Section 72 of the Constitution, the Prime Minister explained.

According to the Minister of Finance, the most efficient way to give effect to this measure is to increase the standard rate of the VAT from 15% to 16%, and the rate of accommodation and other tourism-related activities from 10% to 11%. The VAT increase will take effect from 1st May, 2017 in order to give businesses the time necessary to make the required alterations to their systems. The revenue yield from this measure is estimated at 10 million dollars per annum. Within three years, the Government undertakes to review this measure, Dr. Gonsalves stated.

Thirdly, in 2016, Prime Minister Gonsalves introduced the telecommunication levy of 2% on telephone calls originating from SVG. Dr. Gonsalves disclosed that these funds are allocated to the Zero Hunger Trust Fund to assist the Government in its fight to eradicate hunger in our country". As of 1st March, 2107, this levy will be applied to incoming calls and data.

Value added tax (VAT), professional licence fees, stamp duties, alien's landholding licences, and traders' licences, are among fiscal measures for 2017. Prime Minister Gonsalves has maintained that these are measures aimed at increasing revenue to finance our ambitious plans for growth and development.

You are invited to attend a Town Hall Meeting on Sunday, April 2, 2017 from 2:30 p.m. at the Toronto Plaza Hotel, 1677 Wilson Ave., Toronto. A visiting delegation consisting of Hon. Cecil McKie - Minister of Tourism, Sports & Culture; Glen Beach - CEO, SVG Tourism Authority; Maxwell Charles; Deputy Director, Regional Integration and Diaspora Unit (RIDU); Ricardo Adams; Chairman of Carnival Development Corporation will represent the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The delegation will focus on the SVG Economy, the marketing of SVG through our new airport, how the Toronto SVG Diaspora can be involved in SVG and the preparations to mark 40 years of Vincy Mas.

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for the Next
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Friday August 11th, 2017

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2017 MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE NOW DUE
In order to maintain your status as a member of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto we encourage you to pay your annual membership dues of \$20.00 now. Contact any board member or mail it in.

**ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC.
TENTATIVE CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2017**

Sunday, March 26	Town Hall Community Meeting	Grandravine Community Centre
Sunday, April 30	Monthly General Meeting	Northwood Community Centre
Sunday, May 28	Monthly General Meeting	Northwood Community Centre
Sunday, June 25	Monthly General Meeting	Northwood Community Centre
Saturday, July 15	Vincy Unity Picnic	Brown's Bay Provincial Park, 1000 Islands
Sunday, July 30	Monthly General Meeting	Northwood Community Centre
Friday, August 11	Toronto Harbour Boat Cruise	Toronto Harbour
Sunday, August 27	Monthly General Meeting	Northwood Community Centre
Sunday, September 24	Monthly General Meeting	Northwood Community Centre
Sunday, October 22	Thanksgiving Church Service	TBA
Saturday, October 28	Independence Banquet	Woodbine Banquet & Convention Centre
Sunday, October 29	Community Discussions	TBA
Sunday, November 26	Monthly General Meeting	Northwood Community Centre
Sunday, December 17	Children's Christmas Party	Northwood Community Centre
December 20 – 23	Christmas Hamper Outreach	Distribution of Hampers to the Less Fortunate

Addresses & Directions:

Northwood Community Centre, 15 Clubhouse Court, (off Arleta between Keele & Jane Streets)
Grandravine Community Centre, 23 Grandravine Drive, off Keele Street north of Sheppard

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entitled to special membership discounts at any of Arbor's
cemeteries or funeral homes in Ontario.

Through the **Arbor Foundation** the Association also
receives funds for its special activities/programs.

For further information, please visit any of the websites
listed below, or contact Gideon Exeter (416) 992-4253 or
by email gexeter@arbormemorial.com for more details.





**UNION ISLAND CULTURAL
ASSOCIATION
INVITES YOU TO ATTEND ITS EVENTS**

GAMES EVENING
Sunday, May 21, 2017 – 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
CRAWFORD SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST ACADEMY
531 Finch Avenue West (between Dufferin & Bathurst)
Bring a Donation
Contact:
Yvonne @ 905-626-3690 or Maureen @ 905-673-8949

ANNUAL FAMILY PICNIC
Monday, August 2017
L'Amoreaux Park,
1900 McNicoll Avenue, Scarborough
Bring Your Picnic Baskets, Ice Boxes

**20TH ANNIVERSARY BRUNCH
CELEBRATION**
Monday, October 9, 2017 from 12:30 p.m.
PETER & PAUL BANQUET HALL
241 Milner Ave., Scarborough

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION, JOIN A COMMITTEE, HELP TO ADVANCE THE ASSOCIATION'S CAUSES.

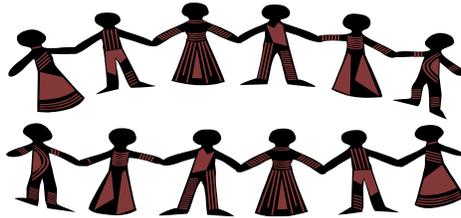
The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc.

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: \$ _____ (\$20:00 annual subscription); (Student: \$10.00)

Please make cheques payable to THE ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC. and mail to:

THE ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC.
P.O. BOX 392, STATION F, TORONTO, ONTARIO, M4Y 2L8
Website: www.vincytoronto.com email: svgatoronto@vincytoronto.com