

St Stanislaus College (Guyana) Alumni Society

Annual general Meeting September 25, 2022

President's Report

The past year has seen the Society continuing to cope with the fallout from the Coronavirus Pandemic here and in Guyana.

In Toronto, as a result of ongoing restrictions imposed by the Ontario and Canadian Governments, we were forced to cancel our New Year's Eve Gala on December 31, 2021. Fortunately, the owners of the booked hall agreed to transfer our deposits to 2022.

We held our annual Spring Dance in April 2022 but attendance was considerably reduced from previous years as a result of the ongoing Pandemic. Nonetheless, in spite of suffering a loss on the event, it gave us an opportunity to renew our contacts with our supporters. Once again, Neville Devonish played a big part in establishing our bar, obtaining our liquor permit, getting the bar supplies and hiring the bartenders. We are now looking forward to holding our New Year's Eve Gala on December 31, 2022. I trust that those on this call will support that event.

The Golf Committee, Des Jardine and Paul Hazlewood, once again arranged yet another successful golf tournament on July 9, 2022 at the Lebovic Golf Course. The tournament raised approximately \$40,000, in spite of having only one tournament day this year. We had raised the price per player to \$300 but players still felt that this was a bargain, given that they were entitled to play three rounds of golf, with meals and drinks available free to each player. We are looking forward to next year's tournament which we expect will once again be sold out.

Thanks to the efforts of Jimmy Fung, we had successful and enjoyable bus trips to the Casinos. These trips not only provide an opportunity for members and their friends to have an enjoyable outing but they raise funds that go towards the support of the College.

Membership held steady at last year's level, thanks to the efforts of the Membership Committee. The Committee, Malcolm Barrington, Hugh Hazlewood, Stephen Budhu and Art Veerasammy, was successful in recruiting some new members from the USA and some of them attended our Spring Dance. One

member is now a Director and has made a significant contribution as part of a committee developing a long term expenditure plan.

With respect to support of the College in Guyana, we found it necessary to continue to provide assistance to the teachers and students to continue with on line learning in the face of the ongoing Pandemic. This assistance included funding of technology to facilitate delivery of lessons, and Christmas bonuses to recognise the outstanding efforts of teachers. While the Guyana Ministry of Education technically remains responsible for funding the requirements of the school, their efforts often fall short of what is actually required. To the extent that we can, working with the Board of Governors and the Alumni Association in Guyana, we try to fill the gaps in the College's needs. This is why our fund raising is absolutely required to be able to continue to support the College adequately.

We established the Bobby Fernandes Scholarship to honour Bobby Fernandes. Bobby in his capacity as President of the Association in Guyana in the nineties was instrumental in helping to form the Toronto Saints Alumni Association with the assistance of friends and alumni in Canada. The scholarship will provide funding for a student in financial need of support to attend the University of Guyana for a 4-year degree program in Communications or Environmental Studies, the main interests of Bobby prior to his death in 2022. The first award was made by the Board of Governors and the Association in Guyana earlier in the year, after selection of a student by a committee led by one of Bobby's sons. Some members donated to this cause but we welcome any further donations.

We have attempted to rebuild the TorontoSaints.com website but this remains a challenge. As usual in any democratic organization, we have debated what the content should be on the website, how it should be hosted and where it should be hosted, what the look and feel should be and so on. I remain hopeful that we can get this accomplished this coming year, with the efforts and goodwill of the new executive and other volunteers.

Similarly, we established a committee to help develop a long term expenditure plan. This Toronto committee has been working with a committee of teachers and the Alumni Association in Guyana to set out the priorities. One of those priorities is to foster sport activities in the College. Unlike the situation when some of us old timers attended school and sports were regularly played, today's students are under so much pressure to excel academically that sports are secondary to academics. To change this mindset, the College will require new infrastructure, equipment and support of the teachers and students to make this happen.

Completion of the long term development plan will be one of the goals for the Board of Directors here in Toronto in 2022/2023.

Other achievements of note included the implementation of a Code of Ethics for the Society. The former Association, which was dissolved in 2022, had implemented a Code of Ethics in 2017. The Society adopted this same code in 2022 and added a section outlining the response should the Code be breached.

Lastly, we decided that the Constitution needs to be updated to reflect the changes in legislation outlined in the Ontario Not for Profit Act, ONCA, which was promulgated in October 2021. This Act is applicable to not for profit corporations, incorporated in Ontario. We also need to recognise the manner in which we operate in that we do not have separate Executive Committee meetings and Board of Director meetings. We operate with a Board of Directors. The suggested changes to the Constitution will be discussed later in this meeting.

In closing my report, I thank all the members of the Executive who have so diligently fulfilled their commitments. I also thank the other volunteers, who even though they were not members of the Executive, nonetheless stepped up time and time again to provide advice, support as needed, and in every way possible worked to ensure that we gave the College the best support possible. At the same time, I must recognise the support, the advice and the tireless efforts of Chris Fernandes, the Chair of the Board of Governors in Guyana. Chris has been the guiding hand, the motivator and the person more responsible than any other person for the continuing success of the College in turning out outstanding students and citizens of Guyana.