



“BROADCAST”

Newsletter of the Toronto Unit

Naparima Alumni Association of Canada

*Naparima Teachers' Training
St. Andrew's Theological
St. Augustine Girls'
Naparima Girls'
Naparima
Hillview
Iere*

Vol. XLIII No. 1

Fall 2019

October in Ontario



...a swatch of colour”

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The Naparima Alumni Association of Canada (NAAC) was founded in Toronto in 1978 and includes graduates of Naparima College, Naparima Girls' High School, St. Augustine Girls' High School, Hillview College, Iere High School, Naparima Teachers' Training College and St. Andrew's Theological College. Among other things, it supports programmes at alma mater schools as well as a steelband programme in schools in the Toronto area.

All graduates coming to Ontario are invited to join the Association.

2019 – 2020 NAAC Executive

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CREDITS

“Broadcast” is the newsletter of the Naparima Alumni Association of Canada, Toronto Unit and is published twice a year. The views expressed in articles published are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Executive or of the Association unless specifically stated as such.

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President's Message

The NAAC year starts at the end of May following the Annual General Meeting when the newly elected Executive Members start planning for the 2019-2020 year.

I am serving as your President and Broadcast Editor for another term and I appreciate that the other members of last year's Executive all volunteered to continue serving this year as well. The Association will be in good hands since we are all familiar with the duties and can easily step in to assist each other when needed.

Life was good for me as I was looking forward to the summer and good weather. I was even able to extract a promise from my other half, to be my caddy for 9-holes, twice a week. Then ... I slipped and fell while doing one of my Pilates exercises, one that I have

been doing for years, but this one time I fell face down and was unable to get up without help, actually I had to get a lot of help. Since mid-June, I have been hurting.

The diagnosis is *Ischial bursitis, an inflammation of the fluid-filled sac, or bursa that lies between the ischial tuberosity (the lower part of the V-shaped bone that helps form the pelvis) and the tendon that attaches the hamstring muscle to the bone.* Ischial bursitis causes pain at the center of the buttock that may radiate down the back of the leg and be felt during walking, sitting, or even flexing the hip at rest.

So, here I am, three months later and still needing to take anti-inflammatory drugs to help alleviate the pain. There is a lesson to be learned here, I think. Exercise can be a *real pain in the butt.*

Merle Ramdial

From the Editor's Desk...

We, at NAAC, wish to express our gratitude to Dr. Ramabai Espinet for writing the chapter on the *Evolution and Growth of the Naparima Alumni Association of Canada* (NAAC) for inclusion in the book *The Missionary's Right Hand*. This book will be launched in Trinidad on October 26th, 2019 at the Aramalya Presbyterian Church in Tunapuna (page 24).

There are some things that make it to your inbox, that you open and get a chuckle from and although you know many, many others have seen it already, you feel the need to share just in case. Two such items were sent to me "Mahal – The Walking Legend" and

"Remember When Trinidad Was Like This..." They appear at p.14 and p.22.

In response to an article that was republished in the Spring issue of Broadcast from the Trinidad Newsday, titled, "Shurland was the Best" written by graduates of Bishop Anstey High School, Indrani Gleave felt compelled to fill in an important phase of Miss Shurland's career, that is, at Naparima Girls' High School. Indrani was profoundly influenced by her Literature teacher (see page 17).

The novel, *The Old Songs* written by Trinidad-born writer, Madeline Coopsammy is reviewed at page 10 by Ramabai Espinet. Madeline lives in Manitoba. Her book is being sold on Amazon.ca.

Merle Ramdial

Finance Report

This report reflects the Association's financial information as at August 2019. Annual Financial Statements for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020 will be presented at the Annual General Meeting scheduled for May, 2020.

GENERAL ACCOUNT

Bank of Nova Scotia	\$19,402.00
---------------------	-------------

NAAC INVESTMENTS

IPC portfolio:

*** Inter Pipeline Fund**

*1600 Units – B.V. per unit \$10.00 (M.V. \$39,968.00)	\$16,000.00
---	-------------

*Dividends earned – Apr/19/ to Aug/19	\$1,140.00
---------------------------------------	------------

**Riocan Real Estate Inv T/U (M.V. \$21,402.00)	\$21,785.00
---	-------------

820 units - B.V. per unit \$26.56

Dividends earned – Apr/19 to Aug/19	\$492.00
-------------------------------------	----------

TOTAL INVESTMENTS	<u>\$ 39,317.00</u>
--------------------------	----------------------------

*Market value of the Inter Pipeline Fund as at August 2019 was \$24.98 per unit. This reflects an increase of 150 % over book value. The fund continues to earn dividends at the

rate of \$228 per month which translates to a return of 17.1% per annum on that investment.

**Market value of Riocan REIT as at August 2019 was \$26.10 per unit, a decrease of 1.7% over book value. Dividends from Riocan REIT are approx. \$98.40 per month, a return of 5.42% per annum.

The Association met its financial commitments to the schools in Trinidad in the amount of \$3,760 which was remitted in September, 2019. This is the sum of the following amounts to each of the five schools: NGHS, Iere, & SAGHS in the amount of \$820 each, Naparima College in the amount of \$620 and Hillview College in the amount of \$680.

We held one event so far for this fiscal year. A Brunch & Theatre event at Herongate Barn Theatre at Altona Rd. in Pickering, Ontario. It was a fun and relaxing event that was enjoyed by all. This event was not a fundraiser and the accounting involved was nil since everyone prepaid for their ticket before the event.

We look forward to our Annual Christmas Dinner & Dance which is a fundraiser and helps us to meet our commitments to the schools in Trinidad and to fund our programs here.

Submitted by
Norma Ramsahai
Treasurer

ADVERTISEMENTS

*If you wish to place an ad in the next issue of Broadcast,
Contact: Ras Shreeram
at rasras@rogers.com or Tel: 416-743-1331*

Social Report

Our NAAC social committee facilitates the gathering of our members and sharing of information; reflecting on the past, pausing for the present and looking towards the future. Unfortunately, this year has taken away many friends, from both our native home and here in Canada.

This year we are down to just two gatherings, the first one was held on May 26th at the Herongate Barn Dinner Theater in Pickering, and our second will be our Annual Dinner and Dance, to be held at Elite Banquet Hall, on November 23rd.

Our spring event got off to a great start with an almost perfect day, at a very pleasant 22 degrees Celsius and sunshine. Our group of 44 members and friends started off with a fabulous buffet at noon. During the lunch, a friend asked me if they forgot the curry, and my response was, not today, November.

The four-act play, “The Last of the Red-Hot Lovers”, began at 2:00pm and concluded at approximately 4:30pm. From all accounts, everyone had a great time. I vowed to return later in the year when the new plays are announced. The day ended as it began, with good people enjoying good entertainment, and sharing a laugh.

Please remember our upcoming Dinner and Dance at Elite Banquet Hall on November 23rd with seating at 6:30pm and commencing at 7:00pm sharp. This year we have DJ Kevin back with us and Ms. Wendy Rostant will be looking for you to spend some of that Christmas money at the event’s Raffle.

I look forward to seeing you on Saturday, November 23rd.

Submitted by
Richard C. Jaikaran
Chair, Social Committee

Communications Report

A request was made by more than one member, to make the font that we use for *Broadcast* larger. We have listened and obliged. I look forward to getting feedback on this.

You should have received an email with details of our 2019 Christmas Dinner & Dance. Tickets are available from any member of the Executive, so order yours soon. If you did not receive this email, it may be because you changed your address and forgot to inform us. You can do so by emailing me at merle.ramdial@gmail.com.

The Membership file on the website has

been updated as well as web versions of the last 15 years of *Broadcast*.

N.B.: The deadline for Applications for NAAC Bursaries for 2019 is Friday, November 1st.

Application Forms and Guidelines are posted on our website at <http://naactoronto.ca/documents/NAACBursaryApplication.pdf>

Would you like to place an advertisement in the next issue of *Broadcast*? Contact Ras Shreeram @ rasras@rogers.com for pricing.

Submitted by
Merle Ramdial
Chair, Communications Committee

Membership Report

TOTAL Membership	273
HONORARY MEMBERS	15
LIFE MEMBERS	195
ANNUAL /REGULAR MEMBERS	41
ASSOCIATE/STUDENT MEMBERS	22

The membership reads 273, although not many are actively engaged in the life of the Association. On the membership list there are Alumni residing all across Canada, with the majority residing in Ontario. However, many of our Life members live outside the Greater Toronto Area, so it is not possible for them to attend our annual events.

Forty years later, we realize that it has not been an easy task trying to get new members to form the Executive Committee, so the few that are managing to carry on must be praised for their devotion to the Association.

The NAAC Annual Dinner and Dance is the only event that helps us to pay for the bursaries that are awarded and to continue the financial commitments to the five schools in Trinidad. Your attendance at this social

event can be considered as your contribution and means of 'giving back' to the schools. We are so blessed to have very supportive friends and family who attend this dance every year and help us to make this event a great success.

Those of you who are not able to attend our meetings because of distance or other commitments, your suggestions for the continuity of the NAAC would be greatly appreciated. Your feedback will also be welcomed.

Submitted by

Cynthia Ramdeen

Chair, Membership Committee

REMINDER TO RENEW YOUR NAAC MEMBERSHIP

*Please remember to
renew your
NAAC Membership.
The membership
year runs from
January to December.*



NOTICE OF NAAC GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, November 9, 2019 • 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Knox Presbyterian Church

4156 Sheppard Avenue East, Scarborough, ON

Refreshments will be served at Noon • Meeting will commence at 1:00 pm

Steelband Report

Due to changes to the Toronto District School Board's Use of the Schools Guidelines, NAAC's after-school program was thought to be in jeopardy. Our application was submitted mid-June and we did not hear from the TDSB until August 29th. However, we are very, very pleased that we received approval for a permit under the TDSB's Local Neighbourhood Support Program for Non-Profit Organizations, which meant that the hourly rental fee for the Music Room was waived. NAAC paid for liability insurance.

The first steelband class was held on Wednesday September 18, 2019. Winston Poon has again volunteered to teach the Beginner Class with help from senior

Panache players.

Before the end of last semester, some players from the Beginner class together with players from Panache performed at West Humber Collegiate's Arts Night. From all reports, the beginners fared well.

Panache has already played one gig on September 15th at Christ the King Church. There are two other church gigs booked for October, one on October 19th at Grace United Church in Brampton and the other on October 20th at Islington United Church.

Panache will be practicing hard for NAAC's Christmas Dinner & Dance on November 23rd.

Submitted by

Merle Ramdial, Steelband Liaison



CONGRATS!

*Congrats to
Al "Allos"
Foster &
Pan Fantasy
on their 9th
straight win as
"Steelband of
the Year" at
the Pan Alive
Competition
in Toronto.*

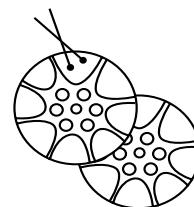
Panache & Friends 15 years ago ?

NOTICE: Steelband Classes 2019/2020 Season

At the Music Room at West Humber Collegiate Institute

• ***Beginners: 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.*** • ***Advanced: 7:45 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.***

Contact: Winston Poon • Tel: 905-824-3589 • email: wpoon354@rogers.com



Music Notes from West Humber Collegiate Institute

www.whcimusic.com

Joe Cullen, ACL The Arts

September 2019

Things are off to a solid start at West Humber CI! Dates for our **Arts Night** will be Thursday December 12, 2019 for **Holiday Arts Night** and **Spring Arts Night** will be on Thursday May 14, 2020. We hope that Panache will be able to be our guest artists for one or both of these shows if their schedules allow. Our students love seeing and hearing Panache every time they come. Returning to teach pan this year is Mrs. Cindy Mashinter, who was off for a two-year maternity leave, joining Mr. Joe Cullen and Mrs. Sonia Adams, who joined us in 2018. The WHCI music program now has three teachers and is steadily growing.

Our music trip to Chicago in April 2019 to play the year-end concert with amazing *Paganini of Pan*, **Virtuoso Liam Teague** and the **Northern Illinois University (NIU) Steel Band** was amazing. Students called it the trip of a lifetime, which indeed it was. Our next trip will in Spring 2020, likely returning to New York City or to Cleveland Ohio, which includes Panyard, Inc., and a combined concert with Ravenna High School. Chocolate almond sales have started already, which really helps to offset student costs. We are already booking the steel bands to do concerts at local schools, Black History assemblies, feeder schools, awards assemblies and more.

The winners from last year's pan program were the following: The NAAC Bursary

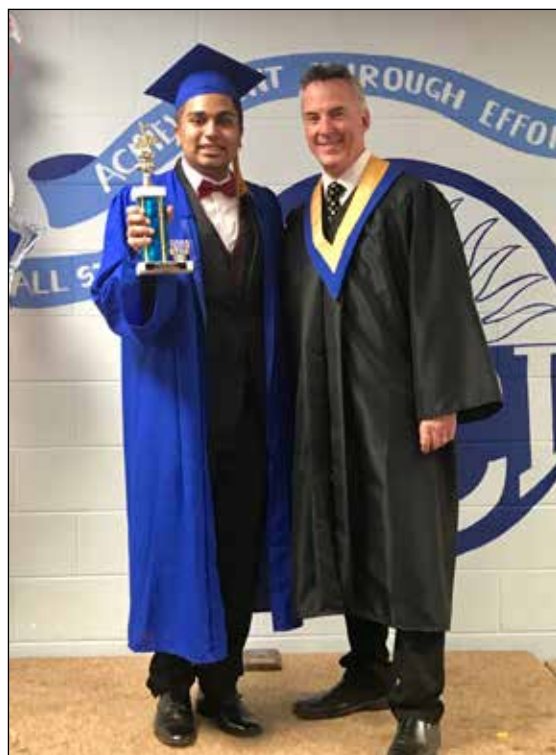
was awarded to Chiddhanya Alagesan, the NAAC Millennium Scholarship was awarded to Riya Malhotra. The NAAC Steel Pan award was given out to Bhisham Harripersad, and the WHCI Music Award was given to Kayla Baig, who was awarded the NAAC Steel Pan award when she was in grade 11. Kayla is studying music psychotherapy at Laurier University, where she has her own steel pan and will be using it with her degree program! Bhisham and Kayla also played steel pan with the University of Toronto Steel Pan Ensemble in April for their Spring Showcase. All of these students were involved in many music and school activities too numerous to mention here, vital members of music council, and they all achieved a very high level of musicianship on the steel pan.

In the meantime, we look forward to continuing to play new music arrangements, make great steel pan music, and we are very thankful to the NAAC community for their financial support. We are able to have our pans tuned regularly by the amazing Earle Wong and the NAAC support is vital for this. The student awards and scholarships that are donated each year are very much appreciated and it really does motivate our students to strive for continued success! Thank you so much, NAAC!

(Continued on next page)



Riya Malhotra, recipient of the NAAC Millennium Scholarship with Mr. Joe Cullen, Head of Arts, WHCI



Bhisham Harripersad, recipient of the NAAC Steel Pan Award with Mr. Joe Cullen



Chiddhanya Alagesan, recipient of the NAAC Bursary with Mr. Joe Cullen



Kayla Baig, recipient of the WHCI Music Award, who is studying Music Psychotherapy using steel pan at Laurier University!

Presbyterian Church moderator gets support from south elders

by Richardson Dhalai, Newsday, September 9, 2019

Chairman of the JC McDonald Home for the Aged Dr Allan McKenzie praised recently elected Presbyterian Church moderator Reverend Joy Evelyn Abdul-Mohan saying the Church would benefit from her humility and “persuasive oratory talents.”

McKenzie was speaking at the Home’s tea party & fashion show at Naparima College, Paradise Pasture, San Fernando yesterday.

A former Naparima College principal known for his outspoken views, he said the Presbyterian Church has always been at the forefront on the ecumenical movement in TT and Abdul-Mohan would get it moving in the right direction.

“She has taken over the mantle of leadership in the history of our church, permit me to speak the truth, I think we have been through a period of slight paralysis of inertia and lack of movement and growth and I was very happy when she was chosen to be the moderator of our church.

“She is vested with the talents of humility and persuasive oratory which she can get things moving in the right direction by which perhaps we can have a revival of the kind of spirit of innovation, integrity and character and a sincere effort to focus on the needs of society.”

Abdul-Mohan was unanimously elected as



Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of TT, centre, with Dr. Allan McKenzie, left, and former Justice Anthony Lucky.

moderator in April 2019.

Meanwhile, McKenzie said he had chaired the home’s committee for the past 25 years and felt a special attachment to it as it was not far from Naparima College.

For her part, Abdul-Mohan, a former independent senator, said her wish was to be remembered as a “servant leader.”

She also praised the work at the Home saying it was especially needed as the elderly were being neglected in society.

“We all know what is happening in the world today, where the elderly is being neglected and the JC McDonald home has been doing a fantastic job.”

Madeline Coopsammy. The Old Songs.

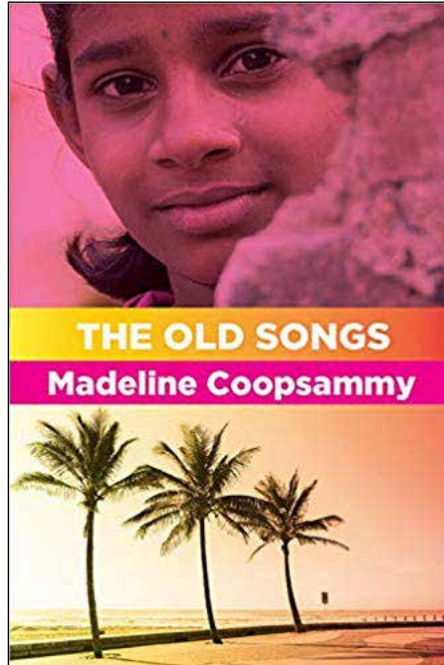
A Bildungsroman

Reviewed by Ramabai Espinet

The Old Songs.
Toronto:Inanna,
2018.

Madeline Coopsammy is known in the Caribbean literary world as a poet: frequently anthologized and with one poetry collection, *Prairie Journey: In the Dungeon of my Skin* (2004), to her credit. This year, she added a debut novel, *The Old Songs*, to her output. The novel provides an entertaining and insightful romp through the Trinidad of the 1950s and early 60s through the guileless eyes of a young Indian girl resident in a growing suburb of Port-of-Spain, and though some place names are fictionalized, enough recognizable elements are present to provide the flash of recognition to many readers and vivid details of the environment to others.

At the heart of the novel is the Joseph family, a tightly woven unit of four – the recently widowed mother, Lucille, older brother Clyde, sister Sylvia and the youngest child, Tessa, who provides the lens of the storytelling exercise. We encounter them at a moment of turmoil when they are forced to move from the relatively middle-class area of Meadowbrook to a less settled locale, that



of the small town of San Juan de la Pina, on the periphery of Port-of-Spain. The sudden death of Tessa's father is the cause for this downturn in their everyday circumstances; and all of the action flows from this unexpected event. One of the strengths of the novel is the deft characterization achieved by Coopsammy. Each of these characters is precisely drawn and shares a commitment to family values while asserting his/her separate personality.

Lucille is a model of strategic interventions whenever crises occur, as of course they do in daily life, and her children remain duly chastened by her reasonableness but only up to a point. We observe them beginning to cultivate a critical distance from the positions that served her well in her time, as they start to formulate their own opinions and attitudes. A charming old-fashioned air of gentility pervades the novel, emanating from Lucille and her large extended family who, in spite of the tribulations they endure, are determined to hold their heads high.

This is a coming-of-age novel, really a *bildungsroman*, a genre which follows the protagonist through early life into the realm of young adulthood through the processes

(Continued on next page)

The Old Songs

(Continued from previous page)

of growth and change. One of the earliest of these in Caribbean fiction is Merle Hodge's *Crick, Crack, Monkey* (1970) set in a Trinidad milieu saturated with class consciousness. Here a rambunctious lower-class freedom experienced through country life is contrasted with the hypocrisy and stiffness of a middle-class "town" life when the young heroine is forced to relocate to Port of Spain for the sake of her education. *The Old Songs* is also acutely conscious of class but the experience of coming down in the world is inflected by race, and the difference is striking. Other notable coming-of-age novels are *Beka Lamb* (1982) written by Zee Edgell, and Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John*. Hodge's novel in 1970 was a signal publication, asserting a female voice and interrogating the subjectivity of a young girl as well as utilizing the speech patterns of Trinidad Creole. In fact all three of these writers are from the African Caribbean sector, as are their protagonists. What Coopsammy does here breaks the silence surrounding the emerging into consciousness of a young girl located within the Indian population group, characterized by her as East Indian. (There is a degree of contestation about the naming of this population group [East Indian, Indo-Caribbean, Indo-Trinidadian, Indian] which I feel obliged to mention.)

Coopsammy shows great care in defining the exact lineaments of the Port of Spain class structures at the time, when skin colour and the aesthetics of "whiteness" reigned

supreme. The young Tessa is fortunate to be given a place at the prestigious Convent school in Port of Spain, but the intricate ways in which racial and class boundaries are maintained by the very Christian nuns whose task it is to guide their students toward wisdom and moral virtue are stunningly portrayed. So too is the family's response to these insults when they occur, especially on the part of the mother, Lucille. Here the author cleverly utilizes the device of the interior monologue to illustrate Tessa's questioning spirit as she cannot help but note the contradictions in the preferential treatment afforded the white girls in her class. Her mother is cognizant of the pain Tessa feels at these setbacks, but her own attitude is set firmly against being a troublemaker, and she judges that in the end a fine education is the ultimate prize.

The novel is part of Inanna's "Young Feminist Series" and perhaps this is why Coopsammy feels the need to explain expressions that "the islanders use" or to practically give recipes for some of the foods that might be alien to projected readers. For example, "Her mother and aunt also cooked the locally invented soup called *sancoche*. It was a thick hearty soup containing pig's feet or pig's tail and ground provisions such as sweet potatoes, *eddoes*, *dasheen*, *tannia*, and dumplings complemented with various island herbs and spices." (39) The linguistic register employed also invites comment, since a subtle class demarcation is present among the Joseph family themselves, who

(Continued on next page)

The Old Songs

(Continued from previous page)

largely converse in Standard English, and their rural relatives who are at home in Trinidadian Creole. Interesting discussions crop up throughout the text about caste, affirming that far from abandoning such hierarchical divisions in the western world that Indians now inhabit, caste is very present and has assumed newer and more varied forms.

An awareness of the complicated social history of this small Caribbean island is seldom absent from the page, especially in terms of the mixing of races and cultures, evident in the array of different festivities such as Carnival and Hoosay, and religious practices such as Hindu pujas and the fasting by Moslems in the month of Ramadan. Indians are not seen as a homogenous group and the differences between their various communities are marked. The characters Tessa and Clyde constantly lament that they belong to that tiny minority of Indian Catholics instead of the much larger group of converts, the Presbyterians. They agonize over their own lack of such a vibrant group with shared social and religious values where individuals take each other for granted and which they are aware, flourishes in the southern part of the island. Hurtful racialized acts occur throughout the novel in nuanced ways among the polite classes, but Coopsammy does not hesitate to dramatize an attack in the public arena on the two girls, Tessa and Sylvia, by two much bigger African boys. Later in her young adult life,

as the politics of the island begin to change, Tessa also feels the sting of racism from two African colleagues in the school where she teaches.

This is a serious novel, confronting many of the important social issues and conflicts still in flux in the Trinidadian context. But there is an underlying joyousness about the spirit of the text that rises above these imperfections and celebrates the beauty and vitality of the place itself. For those who know Trinidad, it is this indefinable quality that enables life to continue at a relatively untroubled pace, *malgre tout*.

As Tessa matures and realizes that she needs to spread her wings and experience a wider world, she chooses the opportunity to study in Delhi over the prospect of embracing the Canadian domestic scheme and the promise of higher education after a few years of servitude. Vigorous discussion attends this part of the text as her friends who make up “the lime” express their strong opinions on these possibilities. They are mostly negative about India, “a backward place” that could offer little from their perspectives. Nonetheless they hold a “slate of parties” for her and accept the fact that she is India-bound. The bond with Tessa draws the reader into the text and one says *Godspeed* to her with the same emotion that she feels on leaving her “beloved island.”

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Condolences to

*Marilyn White, on the passing of her brother, **Erwin Ramasra**, in July 2019.*

Irwin lived and worked in England before retiring in Spain.

In loving memory of Mrs. Rachael Ramlal

by NGHS Editor

Naparima Girls' High School extends condolences

to the Ramlal family on the passing of Mrs.

Rachael Ramlal. She served Naparima Girls' High School as a teacher during the period 1956-1980.

She is fondly remembered as a caring, thoughtful and well-respected member of the Naparima Girls' High School sisterhood. Our thoughts and sincerest sympathy go out to her relatives and friends.



Mahal – the walking legend

How did he ever escape the Guinness Book of World Records, is yet to be known. There is little doubt that no other man, outside of the stone-age, had ever walked a total mileage comparable to the legendary Mahal of Trinidad.

To most old timers recalling the period of the 1930s through to the early 1960s, the name Mahal was enough to conjure up pictures of a lone “pedestrian-motorist”, if there is such a term to describe one who mimes or pretends to drive a car, while he, in fact, walks, trots or runs.

For miles and miles, the man Mahal walked bare-footed and untiring, from village to village, small towns and through the city of Port-of-Spain.

The Creole-Spanish man, or ‘cocoa pahyorl’, wore an old, weather-beaten police cap on his head, long pants with legs rolled up to just under his knees unveiling sinuous calves. Around his waist he wore a thick, broad leather belt like that of the cocoa workers of that period, and across his shoulders hung a ham sack with a hand-stick or baton and other unknown objects.

With one hand clutched to an imaginary steering wheel, the man was ready to begin his long journey.

The free hand played the gear lever into the first gear position. He released the hand brake and jerked off to a start. “Beep! Beep!” he voiced the warning horn.

Again the free hand geared up to the second and third gears. Mahal was on his way, to where, no one could predict. So

precise and true his act appeared, that to him, there was no doubt that he was in fact, driving a car.

He was viewed with suspicion, as the most unusual and questionable character in this country.

Long before World War II, people stared curiously out of windows from little houses, big houses and barracks throughout the country to see Mahal as he “drove” past, along the roads.

Schoolchildren gaped with curiosity and fear as the “driver” went by, making appropriate hand signals and blowing horns as a true motorist.

It was early in the 20th century, when dirt roads cut through forests, dark cocoa and coffee plantations and open sugarcane fields; the period when motorcars were few, monstrous curiosities, and when children hid under beds and sugar bags at the noisy approach of a car.

It was a time when drivers were hailed as heroes and masters of the moving machines or horseless buggies. There was at that time a little boy called Hose Gonzales of humble parentage in Siparia.

He was passionate with the dream of becoming a car or bus driver, and so, he often shied away from school, intent on fulfilling his ambition. He frequently wandered around a bus garage, whiling away his time in daydreaming; seeing himself as a bus driver. In those far-off days

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the bus owners gave their buses names. One of the buses in that garage was named, "Taj Mahal," after which, he was supposedly nicknamed.

He played car, as he went on errands for his mother. Up and down George Street in Siparia, he babbled his lips to the sound of the engine, as he trotted along, tugging at his imagined steering wheel and changing gears while on his errand to the parlour and back home.

At the early age of ten years, he started "driving" away from home. As he grew up, he expanded his route out to De Gannes Village, then further away to Syne Village, Charlo Village and Penal in one direction.

And gaining confidence, he later "drove" through villages in the opposite direction as far South as Erin.

As a young man he added more miles exploring new destinations beyond the then borough of San Fernando.

For many days and nights he stayed away from home until the time came when being at home, was unusual. His mother missed Hose, who was by that time, well known as Mahal the driver.

From then on, there was no stopping, as he drove along roads and tracks to scattered places across the island. He was seen driving in places as far apart as Port-of-Spain, Arima, Sangre Grande, Manzanilla, Mayaro, Guayaguayare, Rio Claro Princes Town, Tamana, Cumuto, Blanchisseuse, La Brea and Cedros. A woman of Sangre Grande claimed to have seen Mahal driving through the streets of

Caracas in Venezuela.

Some folks from south Trinidad related how Mahal was encouraged to enter a walking race from Charlie King Junction in Fyzabad to San Fernando, one Easter Sunday. He recalled:

"Dat morning wen Mahal line up foh de walking race in Fyzabad, well dat was de best ting foh ah long time. We fool him an' tell him dat it was ah car race. Man Ah tell yuh! Fellahs betting big, big money orn de great Mahal, because dey know dat he is de best walker in de whole island. Wen dey buss de pistol so, Mahal screech out like de bullet from de pistol. By de time de odder fellahs mek t'ree corners, de ole Mahal done goin' up Tito Hill in Oropouche, bat-outa-hell!

"Ah fellah who bet orn he, t'row ah bucket ah water to cool dong Mahal. Well Mahal mash he brakes one time. He watch de fellah cross-eye and bawl, 'why de hell yuh t'row water orn mih car foh! Yuh want to flood mih cabaratah o' wha!' He put he mout' one side so, and start to chug chug like he goin to shut dong. Soon after, he pick-up speed again."

A crowd of supporters followed on foot and on bicycles urging the man to the winning post. On reaching the middle of the Mosquito Creek, Mahal began to limp and bounce, soon coming to an abrupt stop. He scooped the sweat off his forehead. He pulled up his hand brake, opened the car door and walked out; and throwing up his hands in despair, he said,

"Oh shucks fellahs! Is like ah get ah flat

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tyre! It go tek about two hours to patch up de chube!” Of course, that was a regrettable loss; not only to Mahal, but to the scores of angry men who had so faithfully placed their bets on him as their winner.

In another interesting incident, an old, bearded fish vendor from Princes Town related,

“Mahal drive into Princes Town cool, cool, one day. He park up he car near mih fish cyart and buy ah long king fish from me. He open de trunk orf his car and pelt de fish inside, den he close de trunk and drive off. Buh he really leave de fish orn de road, because he ent really have no darm car atorl! As he bend de corner, Ah tek back mih fish and sell it. I wish he come and buy fish from me every day!”

The continuing drama occurred in far-off Sangre Grande, when Mahal steamed into Cunapo. An old timer recalled with a broad grin,

“Mahal drive he imaginary car an’ park it up in front ah Marlay shop in Cunapo. Everybody crowd rount to see Mahal open he car door an’ come out. He gone in de back ah de shop in Marlay sweet drink factory to drink ah sweet. W’en he come back, he see ah mash-and-leggo Ford car park up on top ah he good car. Boy, well hell roll dat day! Mahal tek out he big stick

from he hamsack, an, start to beat up de man car an’ cuss! Man, Ah nevah see ah mash-and-leggo tek off so fas’ yet!”

There is, however, yet, another intriguing slant to the Mahal story which

stands as a challenge to the international world, and the question of believing or not. If the legendary Mahal had carried an odometer to record the total mileage of his driving (walking) career, it would have registered a mileage of approximately 163,800 miles. If it were possible for a person to travel around the earth on a continuous road along the circumference, which is approximately, 24,902 miles, Mahal’s mileage would have been the equivalent of a conservative six and a half trips around. Or if a path were stretched out in a straight road to the moon, (238,857 miles) he would have travelled more than half the journey to that planet.

The humble Mahal, however, had never won a medal for his country, or a reward for himself. He never heard the thundering applause for his feat; singular and unparallel in the history of walking. Instead, he departed silently, and as a pauper, was laid to rest without a verse or an inscribed headstone. But maybe someday, our values will change and his neglected grave may be sought and written as an historical monument, Mahal the Walking Legend of Trinidad and Tobago.

(Editor’s Note: This article appeared in the Trinidad Newsday of March 2nd, 2015. Our Heritage with Al Ramsawak.)

In response to “Shurland was the best”

published in the Spring 2019 issue of Broadcast

I was very touched to read the moving account of Stephanie Shurland’s influence on students at Bishop Anstey’s School and of her recent death which was published in the recent edition of “Broadcast”. On me too her English teaching early in her career at Naparima Girls High School had a profound and lasting effect.

It was the beginning of a new term in Form Four and my classmates and I felt very grown-up as we started a new English class which would lead to the School Certificate Exams the following year.

Our classroom was on the ground floor where the building at that point had been hollowed out of the hillside and we could see the slope rising up to where it became San Fernando Hill. I remember the room being somewhat dark with little natural light which the upper floors enjoyed. That is my memory, anyway.

That morning it rained steadily. In came our newly appointed English teacher. She was neatly dressed, petite, smart, and she entered without the usual “Good Morning, girls” but greeted us with

“Sounds of vernal showers

On the twinkling grass

Rain awakened flowers

All that ever was joyous and clear and fresh

Thy music does surpass”

We were stunned. No English lesson had ever begun like this. I was entranced by the words, her soft but clear voice conveying to us vividly the very sounds from a distant country while outside the rain pattered on our coconut branches.

The poem was Shelley’s “Ode to a Skylark” and I fell in love with poetry that day and with the Romantic Poets who showed me that poetry was not bounded by geography. There were no boundaries to the imagination. That teacher was Stephanie Shurland and I wish I could tell her now that my career as an English Teacher of children and adults in England over forty years started with that experience.

We had several gifted and inspired English Literature teachers both at La Pique and Naparima College where Higher School Certificate education continued. Now retired, I look back on a career in which I hope that I was able to pass on the same enthusiasm and love for English Literature that Stephanie Shurland inspired in me on that day when it rained heavily on the wooded slopes of San Fernando Hill and she started our lesson with “Ode to a Skylark”.

Submitted by Indrani Gleave

Love Without Boundaries, by Carolyn Gupte

Book Review By Martin Chandler

Love Without Boundaries

Martin Chandler | 09 June 2019

Published: 2018

Pages: 92

Author: Gupte, Carolyn

Publisher: Gupte, Carolyn

Rating: 4 stars



*Love Without Boundaries** has many of the hallmarks of a cricket book. The title itself is, of course, a play on a cricketing term. There is an image on the cover of a cricket ball colliding with a set of stumps. Inside the book there are many photographs of an international cricketer. Admittedly in almost all of them he is 'off duty', but there are several shots of newspaper cuttings relating to his on field achievements, and others of items of memorabilia.

There is however no discussion of cricket matches, of cricketing technique or of other players and there are no contributions from former teammates or opponents. Accordingly whilst *Love Without Boundaries* is a book about the life of the man Garry Sobers still asserts is the greatest leg spinner he has seen, for those whose only interest in Subhash 'Fergie' Gupte concerns his deeds on the field this one is probably not the book for you.

The book is written by Gupte's daughter, but is not simply an emotional tribute to her parents. That it is written from the heart is a given, but amongst her many talents Carolyn Gupte is a trained journalist and her prose is beautifully written, as befits what amounts to

a love story. It is just as well the book is not expressly billed as such though, as if it was I would probably never have opened it, and that would have been my loss.

The story begins in Trinidad in 1953. Gupte was a member of the first Indian side to tour West Indies, and

spent what cannot have been more than a month on the island. He met Carol Goberdhan there, a teacher from San Fernando. There followed a whirlwind romance, 1950s style with chaperones, before Gupte left with his teammates. The relationship continued by letter for four years before, via that medium, Gupte proposed marriage in 1957.

The proposal accepted, Carol flew out to Bombay, as it then was, to live as a guest in the Gupte family home for a short time before the couple married. The Gupte family was not a wealthy one, although his was a similar sort of 'upper middle class' background to that of his bride. The trip must have been a daunting prospect for the future Mrs Gupte, and it speaks volumes for her strength of character and the impact that Gupte had had on her that she embarked on the journey.

In those days Gupte was a full time professional cricketer, playing in India in the southern hemisphere summer before travelling half way round the world to the

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Lancashire League in England, where he was a great success. His wife, of course, accompanied him. The marriage seems to have been an extremely happy one throughout, and there were two children of whom author Carolyn is the younger.

Eventually, in 1962, Gupte fell out of love with cricket and turned his back on India after he was dropped from the Test team against England as a result of his roommate, AG Kripal Singh, having the temerity to ask a hotel receptionist out. Whatever the standards of behaviour expected of international sportsmen in those days it was still baffling that a man who had nothing to do with that particular 'crime', should suffer for it, the more remarkably because whatever cursory investigation was carried out the Board never bothered to even speak to Gupte, one of their senior players, about what had happened.

The result of his cricket career ending was that Gupte took his family to Trinidad, where he spent the rest of his days. He did not enjoy the best of health latterly, the effects of an accident combined with diabetes meaning that in his final years (he died in 2002)

Carolyn played a significant caring role. At least Gupte lived long enough for the rift with his homeland to begin to heal and to see his family grow up. Carol died twelve years after he did.

I have to say I much enjoyed reading this book. The social history and the ever-present cricketing context make a story that might otherwise have passed me by a fascinating one. It is well written, nicely produced and superbly illustrated. It also hints at more to come by referring to a collection of scrapbooks put together by Carol after Gupte's death, something that sounds to me to be just the kind of material that an experienced Indian sportswriter who is steeped in the history of the game could fashion into the sort of cricketing biography that would be the perfect complement to *Love Without Boundaries*.

*Anyone wishing to buy a copy of the book can contact the author via her facebook page, 'Love Without Boundaries'.

(Editor's Note: UK-based Martin Chandler is a well-respected cricket journalist who heads the book review team at www.cricketweb.net).

We are thinking of you, Julian

Four years ago, in August 2015, Julian Sammy was diagnosed with laryngeal cancer. Many of us followed his posts on his FB account, There Are No Words, where he described his treatments following the removal of his larynx and his progress as he learnt to speak.

This August Julian was diagnosed with a new cancer in his left lung. He began radiation and chemotherapy at the end of September.

Anyone not on FB who wishes to follow his posts can do so at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ThereAreNoWords/> but cannot comment.

Backyard Creations

Submitted by Gillian Hook

As a first-generation Canadian kid, I grew up enjoying foods from both my West Indian background and the Canadian culture. I remember being equally excited to eat fresh paratha roti from the tawa as I was cutting through garlic bread from the oven. Admittedly, I dreaded the nights my mother would cook curry, not because of the taste, but for the smell. I hated going to school the next day for fear I reeked of it and worried that kids at school would tease me. Growing up in a small town and the anxiety of standing out as “the foreigner” is a typical story told by many children from immigrant homes. However, curried shrimp, macaroni pie and corn soup are some of the favourite dishes that I make for my own family now. My kids are surprisingly open to eating foods from around the world and it seems that more and more students in their classes come from newly emigrated families or mixed marriages. My children traipse their friends through our kitchen and rummage for snacks regularly and they aren’t opposed to trying dishes unknown to them.

Not long ago, we had the good fortune of receiving a gift from a neighbor who started a wood-fired pizza oven business. He offered us a backyard pizza oven prototype in exchange for posting on social media anything we cooked in the oven. We went to work mastering the art of pizza dough. We imported the specific double-zero fine flour from Italy so that the dough can be pulled

flat and create those sought after light air bubbles when cooking. We bought all kinds of different mozzarella cheeses to find which melts the best and even tested out various tomato sauces to find the best pasatta for our dough. Finding the right base ingredients has helped so that my husband can make the dough to the precise measurements of the recipe the night before we actually cook the pizzas. The next day, I pull the dough and add all the toppings.

Every Friday night for almost a year, we would create all kinds of pizza topping combinations and show our dinners on Instagram. We invited kids from all around to share in the experience. Cheese and pepperoni pies became too plain for us. We advanced beyond the Hawaiian and Canadian toppings. We branched out and

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included chorizo, prosciutto, arugula, capers and zucchini in our selections. We thought we were gourmet pizza makers making pizza lovers expand their palettes. A particular favourite in our house is the pesto, asparagus and feta pizza, when asparagus is in season. Birthday parties, work functions and team dinners were often held at our house so guests could create their custom meals. We made so many pizzas that we had a rhythm to our production line. The kids would run pizzas to and from the kitchen to the oven in the backyard and then to the guests. People would put in their orders and have their pizzas within 4 minutes! We had this effortless system to pizza-making that we even took the oven on the road with our assortment of toppings and made pizzas at schools, at cottages and weddings.

And then we heard about salt-fish pizza.....

My mother sent me an article about this shop in La Brea that sold salt-fish pizza and had long line-ups. I was floored. Why didn't I think of that?! Anyone who knows me knows my favourite breakfast is buljol with eggs and avocado (and sada roti if I can get it!). I needed to try it. I asked my parents to come and help me cook and taste-test the creation. So, we set to work this Labour Day Weekend on the mission to make the weirdest pizza in our repertoire.

From start to finish, we boiled the fish, made our own tomato sauce, diced onions, cilantro, tomatoes and carrots. We added mushrooms and peppers and then started pulling the dough.

See the results at right.

What's next? Since we've tried roasting eggplants in the pizza, why not Baigan Chokha pizza!!



Remember when Trinidad and Tobago was like this . . .

(Editor's Note: We've all seen versions of this "Trip down memory lane" but it's worth a second read.)

Remember when Trinidad and Tobago was like this . . .

Close your eyes, and go back . . .
Before the Internet or the Mac,
Before guns and crack.
Before Nike and Reebok, before Maxi Taxi.
Before the Priority Bus route
Before burglar proofing and KFC.
Before soca, dub and chutney
Before children's rights and women's lib.

Ah takin yuh Way back...

I'm talking about hide and seek at dusk.
Looking through the window, sitting in the gallery, Licking your lips over hops and condensed milk. Drinking cocoa tea green tea, lime bud and orange peel tea and don't forget fever grass, worm grass and shining bush tea, when you didn't feel well. Carrying bake and butter in a brown paper bag to school. Eating chilibibi and press with yellow and red syrup, with or without milk. Bathing in cold water from a barrel with a calabash, or going by the river to bathe and filling the bucket with water for Mammy to wash wares. When we used to hammer the edge of an orange juice can to make a tin-cup that would make rain water taste cold because we didn't have a fridge. When you used to iron your clothes

with a heater on the cold pot and wash your clothes on a river stone with your partners from the neighbourhood. Yuh remember hopping de train. and putting sweetdrink cover on the track for the train to run over dem for yuh to make yoyo. What about Hopscotch, butterscotch, hoop, Jacks, Police and Thief, Rounders ! Hundred hole for bokey and Rings, and when you fats you have to go back to bonks. Remember bumpaling and hallay cord and three line jig. Playing cricket in the road with a lime. Lying on the floor reading Mandrake and Katzenjammer Kids, Mutt and Jeff and The Phantom on a Sunday morning. Finishing your homework Sunday evening because you could get licks on Monday for not doing it. And you want to beat the boy who cut the guava whip for Sir. Hula Hoop and ice block, kazer ball and paradise plum, biscuit cake, fudge and sugar cake.. Buying tooloom for a cent and you could not put the whole thing in your mouth. Bathing in the rain as it runs off the galvanize roof and filling the barrel to save having to carry water. Going for walks on Sunday afternoon. School concerts for ten cents admission and we thought it was too dare. Your class treat at the end of the term where every student gave five cents and you got sponge cake and ice cream and that was really a treat. Wearing old pants to the beach and collecting sea shells and pretty stones. Catching mamataytor in the river.

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Wait. . .

The excitement of catching candle flies in a jar and batimamselles. Putting ti-marie to sleep. Hunting birds with a sling shot, cooking and eating them. Pitching marbles, running jockey in the canal. When a calypso on the radio in Lent would have caused a scandal. When going to town was a major outing, requiring serious preparation. Spending holidays by your grandmother and aunts. Castor oil, Epsom salts and senna pods at the end of August to clean you out! Eating caimite, mammy seepote and pomme cethere, sapodilla and sugar apple and tying up your mouth with half ripe cashew. Climbing trees, and skipping rope and eating a bucket of long mango. Gru Gru Bef or Gri Gri. Making a Christmas tree from a guava branch with cotton for snow. You thought apples and grapes only grew at Christmas time. Cowboys and Indians, keeping an eye out for soucouyant and la diablesse. Not going in the bush alone because you are afraid of Douen. Sliding down the bannister, jumping on the bed. Pillow fights. Saving match boxes to make a train. Having a pet chicken, duck, rabbit or goat and crying when it became a meal. Being tickled to death. Running till you were out of breath. Laughing so hard that your cheeks and stomach hurt! Stooping down to sip water straight from the river. Being tired from playing....remember that? Going to the parlour for Trebor and a penny sweet biscuit, mauby and a rock cake. On Saturday morning you had to cut the broom to sweep the yard.

There's more . . .

Scratching your mother's head and pulling out grey hair. Fighting for the bowl when your mother made a cake. Churning coconut or sour-sop ice cream on Sunday and licking the palette. Peeling cane with your teeth and climbing the pomerac tree to pick pomerac. Mango chow and home-made bread.

Remember when . . .

When there were no sneakers, only watchekongs and you washed them every Saturday and whitened them. When you knew nothing of Rottweilers or pit bulls, only pot hounds and rich people had Alsatians. When a penny for recess was plenty, and another penny a huge bonus. When you'd reach into a muddy gutter for a penny. When fashionable young ladies wore white socks and shoes and their dress fell under their knees. When your mother wore stockings that came in two pieces and had garters. When all of your male teachers wore ties and female teachers had buns. When you had to be rich to have a car or a radio. When there was no TV and you went to sleep at seven o'clock. When there was no designer water. When laundry detergent had free glasses, or toys inside the box. When any parent could discipline any kid, or feed him or use him to carry groceries, and nobody, not even the kid, thought a thing of it. When every kitchen had a safe with wire mesh where you kept the good wares. Milk came in rum bottles. When they threatened to keep kids "down"

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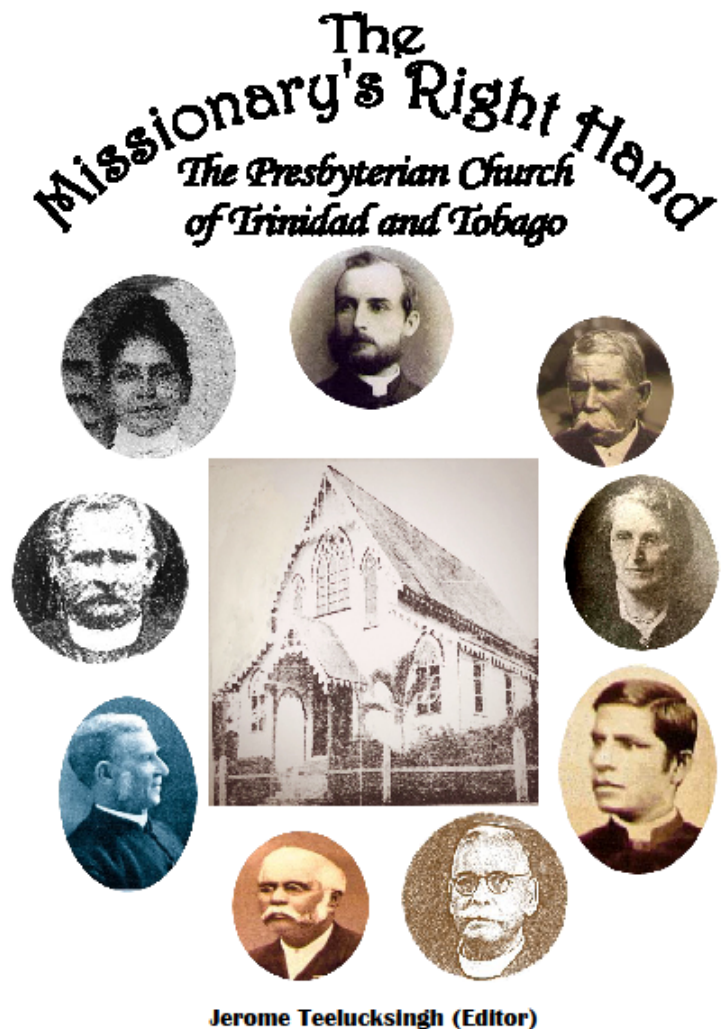
if they failed...and they did! When your mother used to say that your licks hurt her more than it hurt you. When adults spoke in code so “little ears” wouldn’t hear. Basically, we were in fear for our lives but it wasn’t because of drive-by shootings, drugs, or gangs. Disapproval of parents and

grandparents, godparents, tanties... was a much bigger threat!

If you can remember any or most of these things, Hear nah man...yuh old!

The Missionary’s Right Hand: The Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago

The Missionary’s Right Hand: The Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago is a collection of 7 original essays that will highlight the Presbyterian Church’s rich historical legacy. There are selected illustrations, placing in perspective the invaluable efforts of the local or native laity working in tandem with overseas personnel, and standing tall with its distinctive shadow among the pillars and prime movers in the Church’s evangelistic and educational pursuits. The research from writers in Canada, United States and Trinidad and Tobago include the evolution and growth of The Naparima Alumni Association of Canada (NAAC) and the Tobago Presbyterian Church. Among the contributors are Dr. Ramabai Espinet, Dr. Gelien Matthews, Mr. Irwin Alexander, Rev. Dr. Daniel Teelucksingh, Mr. Larry Delochan and Professor Brinsley Samaroo.



(Editor’s Note: Book Launching to take place on Saturday, October 26th, 2019 at the Aramalya Presbyterian Church in Tunapuna at 5:00 pm. NAAC Members are invited.)

NAAC Members & Friends at Lunch at Herongate Barn Theatre



Photos by Garvin Teelucksingh

NAAC Members & Friends at Lunch at Herongate Barn Theatre



Photos by Garvin Teelucksingh

The Naparima Alumni Association of Canada



41st Annual Christmas Dinner & Dance

Saturday, November 23rd, 2019

at Elite Banquet Hall, 1850 Albion Road, Rexdale

Time: 6:00 p.m. • Dinner: 7:00 p.m.

Dress: Formal • Cash Bar

Music by: DJ Kevin & Panache Steelband

Tickets: \$55 • Members / \$60 • Non Members

