



The Scribbler

THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE OF GUYANA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (TORONTO) INC. NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2007

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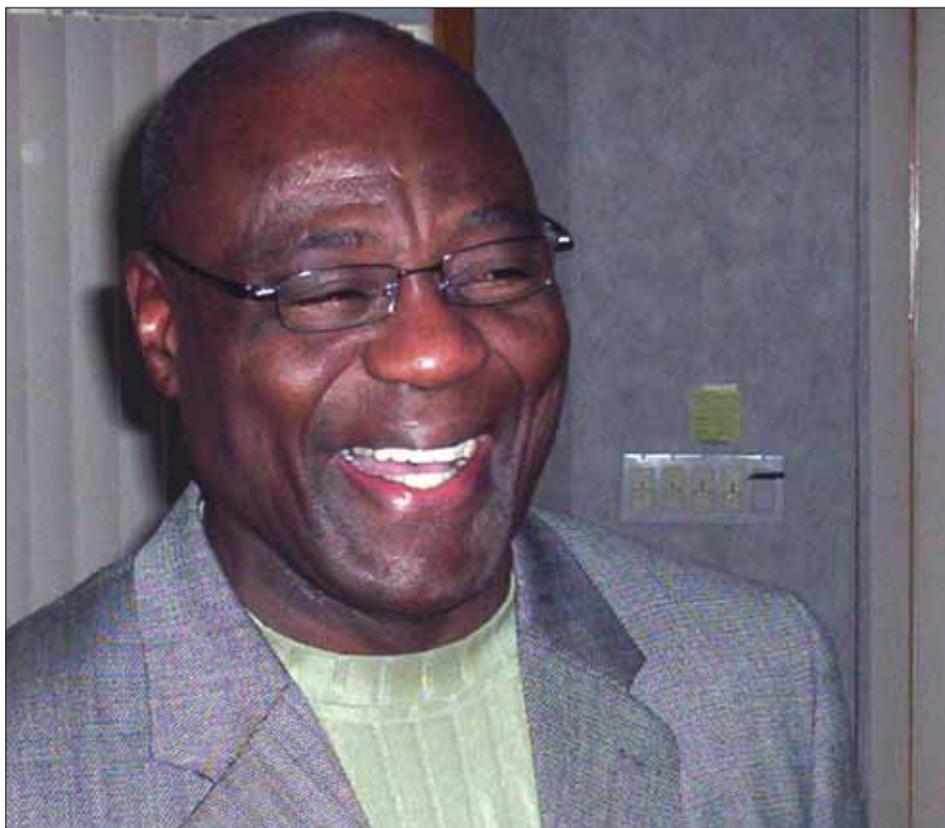
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Deputy Chief of Police Keith Forde, Human Resources Command of the Toronto Police Service was the keynote speaker at the Appreciation Awards event held on March 25. For all the details, see page 14.



The traditions carry on with a new generation of Queen's College students.



President Lionel Mann

President's Challenge

Any serious analysis of the Canadian population over the last 20 years points to the growing ratio of retirees to the workforce and all the inherent dangers it poses to the rest of society. Problems such as decline in national income and in per capita savings pressure on the cost of pensions and health care. These are real dangers facing the country and it has taken steps to mitigate the effects. Its main strategy is an infusion of younger people through immigration. Canada has one of the highest inflow of immigrants relative to its population. The other is to encourage the existing workforce to continue working past the accepted retirement age through changes to rules governing age of retirement, CPP and RRSP.

Our association, which is a sub-set of our society, has not escaped the impact of aging. Since our inception in 1991, our group has not attracted any significant amount of younger members to replace those that passed on or simply "retired". Our retirement rate seems to be increasing rapidly as most of our members are of an age when health issues play a central role in their lives. This in turn limits their ability to participate more actively. The challenges faced by the executive are declining participation in our events,

difficulty in making our quotas for volunteers in joint ventures, and increased pressures on everyone as the "hardy few" year after year plug the gaps and keep the ball rolling.

We need our own mitigating strategy that will attract younger members and encourage more of our existing membership to participate on the Executive Committee.

Our current Executive is open-minded and willing to listen to new ideas. Our present format may not be ideal or attractive to our younger generation, but unless we hear from you, the status quo remains. Every organization goes through a period of renewal to keep itself relevant and we should be no different. What we have today is a sound core on which to build. Let's take it further. I challenge the alumni out there.

Come to our AGM on April 29th (see web page:

<http://www.qcalumnitoronto.com/> for details). Bring your vision and willingness to put it in place. We are open to your ideas.

Lionel Mann
President
Q.C. 1964-1973
Wooley "H" House



QCAA EXECUTIVE 2006 - 2007

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TREASURER

Haroon Gafur

ASST. SECRETARY/TREASURER

Ataur Bacchus

DIRECTORS

Stanley Chan Choong
Jamohl Rutherford
Vivian Wong

E-Mail Address

info@qcalumnitoronto.com

Website

<http://www.qcalumnitoronto.com>

Webmaster

Colin Rowe

The Scribbler

**Official Publication of the
Queen's College Alumni Association
(Toronto)**

P.O. Box 312
Westhill, ON M1E 4R8
Canada

Editorial Committee

Kemahl (ARK) Khan - Editor
Ataur Bacchus
Albert Ramprasad

Layout & Design

Colin Rowe

Phone Number.....(416) 267-7227

Editorial



It is a little over a year that our Alumni Chapter's website (qcalumniatoronto.com) was launched. From simple beginnings it has become a website of which our alumni can be truly proud. Very professionally laid-out and colourful, its use has been maximized over the last twelve months as an effective medium of communication among our fellow alumni, both local and overseas, and for disseminating information about our activities. In addition, we highlight from time to time those alumni who have distinguished themselves in various fields. We utilize our Message Center to record the names of our alumni who have passed away and to offer our con-

dolences to the bereaved families. Our site, inter alia, has served also as a repository of valuable historical data of our Alma Mater, preserving its rich legacy and providing a source of pride and inspiration to the present and future students of the School.

On this occasion of our April 2007 "Scribbler", the website affords us for the first time the ability to distribute by e-mail only our newsletter to our members, obviating the need for the printing and regular mailing of hard copies and thus reducing substantially our costs of production and the effort required. In our Editorial of our Spring 2006 edition of the "Scribbler" the promise to do so was made. Today it has been fulfilled.

No doubt our readers will notice some changes in the design and layout

of this issue, giving it a more professional look. However, the innovation comes with a cost, as we have secured the services of our webmaster who has the experience in producing newsletters for other organizations and who has devoted the time and energy to the preparation of the present publication.

To ensure the production of future issues of the "Scribbler", we take this opportunity not only to encourage our members to contribute articles, stories, poems, anecdotes and any other relevant material, but also to appeal to those alumni who have not yet updated their status as paid-up members. Updating your membership is facilitated by our website, another of its useful features.

*Kemahl (ARK) Khan
Editor*

MY FIRST DAY AT QUEEN'S

It was raining cats and dogs that morning. It was Wednesday the 24th of September, 1952, and it was an event I had long anticipated. It was going to be my first morning as a student at Queen's College. I was one of the Government County Scholarship winners from Berbice, and I was boarding at a family in Laluni Street, Queenstown.

It rained so heavily that morning that my father, who had accompanied me to Georgetown, decided to send me to the school by hire car. I had envisaged riding to Queen's on my new BSA bicycle, but circumstances conspired to make me arrive by car that morning.

That morning will forever be etched in my memory. I stood by the verandah leading to the auditorium, watching the students enter by the Camp Road entrance. Students and some parents were mingling in the auditorium. At the back of the auditorium were photographs of various distinguished Q.C.

alumni. One of them was Admiral John Cunningham who had served in the Mediterranean during the War.

As I gazed from the verandah watching the cars entering, I saw one which (if I remember correctly) bore the name-plate "HA 96". That year vehicles had been issued the new style name-plates bearing the letters "HA" for hire cars and "PA" for private cars.

The first friend I encountered was one Samuel Walker and we have remained close over the years. Terry Edwards' elder brother came up to us and enquired if we were the scholarship winners and, when we replied in the affirmative, he showed us our classroom, IIA.

I recall Mr. Beckles presiding over Assembly that morning, at the end of which the older pupils belted out a song in a strange language. Afterwards, the Scholarship winners were led to their classroom, IIA, by Mr. Taitt (Popeye).

One of the first things that struck us boys coming from the countryside was the electric clock on the wall. We noticed that every half-a-minute it made a sudden jump to its new position.

Of course we all wanted to know who among us was Neville Moonsammy. He had topped the list of Government County winners that year. It so happened that Moonsammy was not present in class that morning. He showed up later in the week.

Later in the afternoon my father came riding my new BSA bike and took me home to Laluni Street.

Next door to us in that street lived the Bernards, and at the other end of the street lived a certain East Indian dentist who also hailed from the Corentyne. He came from Port Mourant – the plantation adjacent to my village Rose Hall. This dentist, who dabbled in politics, had a big ugly car which he used to park outside his home on Laluni Street. But that is another story.

Tell us about your first day at Queen's, or any other day which you remember during your stay there.

*Seville A. Farley
Q.C. 1952 -1959
Austin "C" House
Cunningham "K" House*

OBITUARIES

We say VALETE to the following Q.C. alumni and to the relatives of alumni who passed away during the last year:

ALUMNI

E.H.E. (Sonny) Barrow in the U.K. on March 9, 2006 at age 96. Attended from 1922-24. Was a career public servant in Guyana who retired in 1963.

Maurice (Juice) Yong in Georgetown, Guyana in March 2006. Best remembered for representing Guyana on many occasions as a rifleman at the Bisley competitions in the U.K. Attended circa 1951 – 1956.

Oswald “Ossie” Henry in Regina, Canada on April 3, 2006 at age 52. Attended from 1963-1971. Member of Nobbs “L” House.

Errol “Chubby” Lee in Georgetown, Guyana on April 21, 2006. Attended circa 1950 – 1956. Member of Pilgrim “E” House.

Dr. Vasil Persaud in Pickering, Ontario in April 2006. Entered Queen’s from Central High.

Allan John (A.J.) Lewis in Georgetown, Guyana on May 11, 2006. Attended from 1953-1960. Member of Percival “A” House.

Dr. Lloyd Kerry in Ontario, Canada on June 5, 2006. Attended from 1944-1952. Was head of Raleigh “B” House.

Dr. Carl Aubrey Nimrod in Ottawa, Canada on July 24, 2006 at age 56. Entered Queen’s from Central High in 1965.

Frank Drayton (brother of “Puck” Drayton) in Montreal, Canada on July 16, 2006 at age 83. Attended in the 1940’s. Member of Raleigh “B” House.

Rainer Patrick Wylde Carter (brother of Martin Carter) in Toronto, Canada on August 21, 2006 at age 83. Attended from 1935-1940.

Geoffrey R. Chung in the U.K. on September 23, 2006. Attended from 1949-1956.

Lawrence “Laurie” Taitt in the U.K. on October 19, 2006. Attended from 1943-52. Was U.K. champion hurdler who participated in 1964 Olympics.

George Persaud in Georgetown, Guyana on October 31, 2006. Attended circa 1955- 1962. Taught French at Queen’s.

Dr. Loris King on January 7, 2007 in Florida.

Oliver Mortimer Valz, Q.C. in Georgetown, Guyana on April 8, 2007 at age 83. Attended in early 1940’s. He was the oldest practising lawyer in Guyana at the time of his death.

RELATIVES

Mrs. Irene Veronica Chunnillall in the U.K. on March 26, 2006 at age 90. Mother of Christopher of the U.K. Chapter and wife of the late Chunnillall, former master at Queen’s.

Mrs. Mooneran Gafur in Toronto, Canada on March 31, 2006. Mother of Haroon Gafur, treasurer of the Toronto Chapter.

Mr. Ramdenni Singh in Toronto, Canada on May 27, 2006 at age 74. Father of Harry Singh, VP (fund-raising) of the Toronto Chapter.

Mrs. Agnes Judith Chang-Sang in Toronto, Canada on June 20, 2006. Wife of Des Chang-Sang, former treasurer of the Toronto Chapter.

Mrs. Shamyoon Rayman, aunt of Syed Rayman and cousin of Eden Gajraj of the Toronto Chapter. She passed away in Toronto, Canada on July 23, 2006.

Marjorie, last surviving sister of Aggrey King of the Toronto Chapter. She passed away in Georgetown, Guyana on August 13, 2006.

Mrs. Evelyn Ramprasad in Toronto, Canada on September 28, 2006 at age 84. Mother of Albert Ramprasad, past president (2004-2006) of the Toronto Chapter.

Mrs. Irene (“Sarge”) Gordon, mother of John Gordon of the Toronto Chapter. She passed away in Toronto, Canada on October 28, 2006.

Mr. David Dudistil Singh, Snr in New Jersey, U.S.A., on February 8, 2007 at age 92. Father of David “Dudi” Singh of the Toronto Chapter.

Note: More details of some of the above-listed deceased can be found in the “Message Center” of our website. Please let us know if we have omitted any names from our list and we will certainly remember them in our next issue of the “Scribbler”. Let us know also if there are any errors in the information given.....ARK

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

The Toronto Chapter congratulates the following Q.C. alumni who have achieved notable distinction in their various fields of endeavour: -



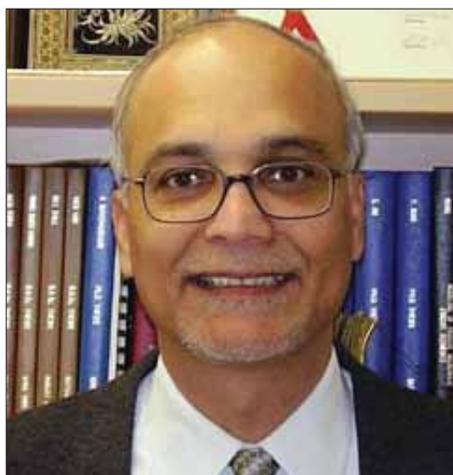
Professor Eon Nigel Harris

Professor Eon Nigel Harris was elected Chairman of the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) at a special meeting of the Council held in Jamaica on September 22, 2006. He is also Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies to which position he brings a wealth of experience as an administrator, academician and researcher.

He was awarded the Doctor of Medicine (DM) post-graduate degree after completing his residency in internal medicine at U.W.I. (Mona). He is internationally known for his work as a Rheumatologist.

Professor Harris attended Queen's from 1955 to 1964 and was a member of Weston "F" House. While at Queen's, he was president of both the Junior and Senior debating societies. After leaving school, he teamed up with two of his contemporaries, David Granger and Desmond Roberts, to win the Patrick Dargan Shield awarded to the best debating team.

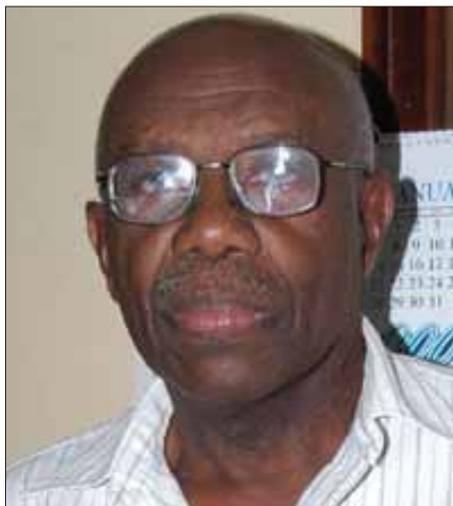
Dr. Jamal Deen was elected a Fellow to the Royal Society of Canada (RSC) in the division of applied sciences and engineering and was inducted at a ceremony held on November 19, 2006.



Dr. Jamal Deen

Election to RSC is the highest honour that can be attained by scholars, artists and scientists in Canada. Dr. Deen is Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at McMaster University and is Senior Canadian Research Chair in Information Technology.

Dr. Deen attended Queen's from 1967 to 1973 and was a member of Cunningham "K" House.



Clarence Trotz

Clarence Trotz, veteran Physics teacher and former Headteacher of Q.C., and Alex Farley, one of his former students at Queen's during the 1960's, collaborated to produce "CXC Physics", the first text book of that subject matter to be written by Guyanese.

Alex Farley resides in the Bahamas and teaches at St. John's College there. The book, which was started in 2001 and completed in 2004, is published by Mcmillan and is expected to be in bookstores in April of this year. The book will be used in Guyana and throughout the Caribbean.



Dr. Frank Douglas

Dr. Frank Douglas, Professor of the Practice at the Harvard-MIT Division of Health Sciences and Technology and Executive Director, MIT Centre of Biomedical Innovation, received the distinguished Black History Maker Award at a ceremony held on April 11, 2007 at the New York Marriott Marquis Hotel. Previous recipients of this prestigious Award included Kofi Anan and Colin Powell.

Dr. Douglas is a world-renowned innovator in pharmaceutical research and development. He is associated with the development and market introduction of Allegra, among other drugs.

Dr. Douglas entered Queen's in Fifth Remove in 1959 and graduated in 1962. He was a member of Cunningham "K" House and was a prominent athlete in the 220, 440 and 880 yards events. He participated in other School activities and was the Major General in Sanger's production of Gilbert and Sullivan's "Pirates of Penzance".

....ARK

OUT OF THE ASHES

The building at Thomas Lands in Georgetown which currently houses our iconic Queen's College presents a very different, though not totally different, appearance to those who were privileged to be its students in the glory days of the past and to those who were in attendance up to November 16, 1997, this change being the result of a rebuilding program that is in progress.

For it was on that infamous night of that day in the annals of our beloved Alma Mater that the original structure, a cradle of academic excellence and an architectural landmark which had so proudly stood for so many years since 1951, was, by a wicked and malicious act, insanely contrived, severely gutted by fire.

The bowels of the building – its auditorium with its stage and balcony, the headteacher's office, the staff room, and the tuck shop which together held so many nostalgic memories, sometimes joyful and pleasant, at other times not so, for our alumni, both old and young - were left in smouldering ruins. In addition to the physical damage inflicted, academic records, priceless memorabilia and valuable assets were lost such as the modern Computer Learning and Resource Centre which was not even one year old, having been established in January 1997 at a cost of G\$6.5m and which housed 25 computers and 8 printers, essential aids to students, teachers, and office staff in the increasingly technologically-oriented world of today.

The conflagration not only took out a physical landmark with almost all of its facilities, but also wiped out 153 years of a tradition, rich in history and culture.

Almost equally painful to behold, like sentinels guarding what remained of a treasured past stood the East and



Queen's College Thomas Lands - 1951

West wings, the mere outer shells, with their extensively ruptured interconnecting corridors – corridors of educational power where trod many feet towards academic distinction.

We survived, however, the shock, dismay and pain that followed our tragic loss. Then, driven by resolve and commitment, qualities, inter alia, instilled in us by the rigid discipline of our teaching at Queen's, we regrouped to tackle the daunting, but not insurmountable, task of rebuilding and replacing, if not in its original form, that which had been taken away from us so suddenly, without warning and stealthily, like a thief in the night.

The initiative to meet this challenge was taken by the QCOSA who set up a Fire Fund, which soon received contributions from the other chapters of QCAA. Together, with an undertaking and inputs from the Guyana Government, we have slowly, but steadily, restored most of what the students had been deprived.

Today, rising out of the ashes like the legendary Phoenix, the School now boasts a new auditorium, though not in its original layout (this writer has been informed that students at Assembly now face the Camp Road direction), a headteacher's office, a staff room, and a library. Full restoration of amenities will undoubtedly take time. An update of September last issued by QCOSA speaks of continuing work on the ceiling, the foyer, and the stage for the

auditorium, constituting Phase 1 of the Rehabilitation Program. Phase 2 is a proposal to erect a building to house a "Student Forum" that will provide for a great hall with a stage, a dining area with food outlets (concessionaires), a games and equipment room, offices, bathrooms and showers. This is expected to be located at the eastern end of the compound – south of the school building and leading onto the playing field. The need for a Language Laboratory also has been discussed and it is felt that it should be considered for inclusion in the development program.

The realization of such an ambitious plan requires the collective and concerted efforts of all those who are committed to ensuring the continued

The realization of such an ambitious plan requires the collective and concerted efforts of all those who are committed to ensuring the continued



The school building following the fire in 1997

existence of the School and preserving its legacy of academic excellence. Our Toronto Chapter must necessarily be a part of this process. However, our input can be effective only if our alumni, both young and old, strive to be more proactive in supporting their Chapter by seeking positions on its Executive Committee and by attending in greater numbers both fundraising as well as non-fundraising events.

ARK

Q.C. 1951-1958

Weston "F" House

ENTERTAINMENT



The Last Of The Red Men

A very humorous , very funny play but with very serious undertones

Our Alumni Association in collaboration with the BHS Alumni Association is close to finalising plans to bring Michael Gilkes' "The Last of the Red Men" to Toronto for a solo performance later this year. This production is a two-act, one-man play written by and starring Michael Gilkes.

An irascible, articulate old man sitting in a wheelchair in an Almshouse becomes the focal point of a "post mortem" enquiry into colonial Caribbean society and the role of the middle-class. Eighty-year-old Mr.

Redman, "the last of the Redmen", is the only surviving member of the Redman family of Guyanese/ Barbadian stock (drawn from the biographical records of a real family) once famous for its contribution to the arts, culture and social life of the country.

As he records his memoirs, sound, projected images, music and the skill of the lone actor (who plays six different roles) people the stage with characters from the past when the world was a place of wonder and discovery to the mind of a colonial, Caribbean child. A whole 'lost' era is conjured up

on stage and finally examined in a bizarre mock trial (in which the audience becomes the jury) to find out "who killed the middle class".

Humour, wit and word play are used to transform the frustrated, lonely life of the elderly protagonist into a creative experience aimed at presenting a case for the support and survival of the Arts.

Dr. Michael Gilkes, from a well known Guyanese family, is a former Reader in English and Head of the English Department at the UWI Cave Hill campus; founding member and first Artistic Director of the successful Barbados-based theatre company Stage One, and has been involved in theatre for over 40 years as actor, director, playwright and dramaturge.

Michael's performance in "The Last of the Red Men" has been described as "A tour de force of controlled acting. Remarkable theatre of the highest standard" by our own Ken Corsbie, one of Guyana's most accomplished theatrical personalities.

This should be a "MUST SEE" performance that you just cannot afford to miss!! Further information will be posted on our Web-Site at: www.qcalumnitoronto.com

as it becomes available.

Vivian Wong
Q.C. 1942-1949
Percival "A" House
Weston "F" House



The previously destroyed Queen's College structure viewed from another angle.



Sonnet to A.P.

by Abbas Edun
Q.C. 1949 - 1957
Houses - Austin "C" and Wooley "H".

Dearest, to me thou art what Aphrodit'
Was to Assyrian king Adonis.
Thine eyes emit with such cautionary vis
Messages affectionate which give light
To thine intention innocent and bright.
Thy rosy cheeks e'er wear a smile of bliss
Which makes an extraordinary sight
Of thee, an inspiring lass and a sis.
Thou, en cuerpo, causeth e'en the deities
From the lofty Olympian Mountain
To look down, scanning the earth intently,
Searching for others in many cities
Who have drunk of the lost Youthful Fountain
And who, like thee, carry themselves gently.

Reprinted from page 83 of the 1956-1957 Q.C. magazine with Abbas' kind permission

Circular References and Darwinism

After years of hibernation I recently spoke to a QCAA colleague about the state of affairs of the Toronto chapter and the school itself. I lost enthusiasm the year the school was damaged by fire. Alumni associations in Toronto, New York and London are withering.

Here is my theory: Alumni associations can only grow if new alumni join and contribute energy and vitality but this is not happening. New graduates are not as enthusiastic about alumni affairs as are we who graduated before the 1970's because QC and Guyana changed around the time that the government declared itself a 'Marxist Democracy'. When we pre-M.D. alumni went to school, Guyana was an exciting, stimulating place and Queen's College was one of the incubators of future politicians and academics who were anxious to change Guyana and the world. Grads joined the fight against the Nazi quest for world domination, wrestled independence away from Britain, then turned to the task of setting up new political systems and choosing national leaders. Others rose in the ranks of commerce, academia and entertainment.

Today Guyana is apparently slowly sinking into the muddy Atlantic while being overrun by criminals exported from North America and rampant inflation caused by poor decisions made by a succession of governments. In the midst of this despondency and decline, QC is one of the places where students go in order to get a good enough education to be able to emigrate.

Darwin's theory of natural selection (formulated in 1838), applied to the Guyana situation, would work this way:

If over several generations, a significant proportion of the brightest high school graduates emigrated from a country, the remaining national brain pool would be weakened. The next set of leaders would have to be chosen from a group comprising a smaller number of talented persons and would have a less talented constituency to draw from for bureaucrats and educators. The resulting policy decisions regarding such things as banking, law, diplomacy, business and education would suffer.

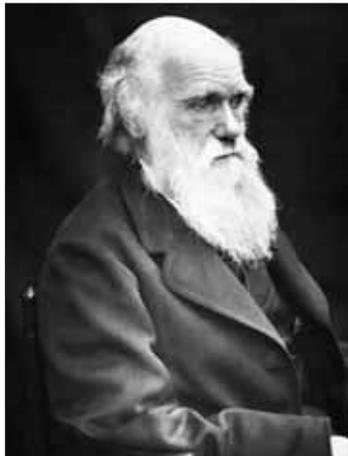
High school students in that society would be educated to a lower standard in schools run at lower standards. They would have little to reminisce about, no allegiance to their alma mater and no enthusiasm for supporting it.

Brighter students would be highly motivated to leave the country as soon as possible. The cycle would be complete.

We who left Guyana in the 50's to 70' started this cycle of devolution. So, fellow alumni, indirectly, but inescapably, the blame for the demise of QC and Guyana must rest on our shoulders.

Sorry guys...

*Andrew Knight
Q.C. 1960 - 1966
Cunningham "K" House*



**Charles Darwin
(1809–1882)**

ALUMNI RESEARCH

Quantifying Medication Use And Environmental Factors Of Community-Dwelling Elderly Guyanese At Risk For Falls (synopsis of a recent Research in Guyana)

by Ronald G Wharton Ph.D.

Purpose: The purpose of his study was to assess the prevalence of falls, and the association with the use of medication and environmental factors, among the elderly in Guyana.



The study revealed that the prevalence of falls in elderly Guyanese was 18.2%, whereas it is 30% in North American elderly. It would appear that Guyanese fall less often than their North American counterparts due to warmer climates and increased activity level and fitness. A significant part of the study was the examination of the relationship between individual, household, community- characteristics and health perceptions of old age.

Multiple medications were associated with falls; this is similar to North America. It was concluded that falls are still prevalent in Guyana and can be further decreased with attention to risk factors such as polypharmacy.

It is hoped that these results will encourage additional research on this emerging public health problem in the Caribbean including Guyana, and foremost, the study may also help to design specific health policies. For example, the finding that heart attacks, diabetes and hypertension are risk factors for falls among the elderly Guyanese suggests the need for interventions targeting people with these conditions.

The Road to Canada from Queen's College

During the past year I have been reflecting more than ever on aspects of my life in Guyana before migrating to Canada and, just like many of us in the Diaspora, I lapse into dreams of seizing the “perfect” opportunity to become a catalyst in mobilizing the brilliant minds and vast experiences of Guyanese both at home and abroad towards the development of a prosperous and just society in our homeland.

But then I snap out of these dreams, reality takes over again and I experience immensely frustrating moments that are rooted in the realization that such a massive undertaking would take a lifelong sacrifice for a large number of people, most of whom are not in a position to make such a sacrifice.

A professional politician is born when someone is in a position to make that sacrifice and moves

beyond contemplation. It sounds like I've considered politics. No, far from it. My circumstances will certainly not allow such a “luxury.”

So, given my situation, I am left to contemplate these wonderful possibilities for Guyana and I end up asking myself the question. How did I end up in Canada instead of the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia or New Zealand?

Of course, I did not make the move to Canada during a haze. The decision to move here was well thought out on the surface, but over the years I have come to realize that my choice of Canada over the other countries men-

tioned had a lot to do with the Geography syllabus we studied in third form at Queen's College.

Long before I ever thought of making Canada my home, I learnt of the importance of the St. Lawrence river and the Hudson Bay to Canadians for trade, the Prairies and wheat production in Saskatchewan, the lumberjacks and the logging industry in British Columbia. But perhaps more significantly, I learnt about Canada's vast land mass with an abundance of natural resources that provided opportunities for a new way of life.

Pitted against sleep-inducing British history (the Tudors and Stuarts among others), Canadian geography was refreshing and presented a new,

different and appealing way of life to me as a youngster who grew up on the Essequibo Coast. Even though I had learnt about the severe

Canadian winters, their effect on residents did not hit home until I arrived. But that's another story.

As I constantly reflect these days on my origins and what I've become, it is clear to me that third form Geography played a huge role in my decision to move to Canada.

And I'll leave this thought with you. I would venture to say that we received at Queen's College the educational foundation that prepared us well for work internationally.

*Lindsay Davidson
Q.C. circa 1967/1968
Nobbs "L" House"*



'Bas, Doe and Kiskadee

by Abbas Edun.



One day, 'Bas and Doe were walking down the corridor near to the assembly hall when a certain French teacher approached. Doe said “Look he deh. I bet you don't call him off”.

Who tell Doe to dare 'Bas – he shouted “Kiskadee“. The teacher said “Doe, come here. Doe de chicken said “boy 'Bas, you better join me”. We were advised to go to the principal at 3:00 p.m. and repeat what was just said. Doe was sure that both of them would get a few strokes of the cane or, at least, a detention. 'Bas had other ideas - he had an Ace up his sleeve.

Shortly after 3:00 o'clock, Doe knocked on the door of the Chief. He asked what happened. 'Bas at once said: “Sir, Doe and I were doing a bit of oral French”. He repeated something which a 3rd person had said and I exclaimed, “qu'est-ce qu'il dit.” The explanation was sufficient. The Chief merely remarked that the teacher was aware of his false name and that a new one should be given to him. Doe was relieved when 'Bas gave his version, as he was torn between honouring the QC code of not squealing, while at the same time trying to protect his rear end. Doe turned to 'Bas and said, “the next time I get into trouble I hope you are there to defend me”.

N.B. This was written in March 2007, about 53 years after the event. 'Bas and Doe are still close friends. They and the teacher are all living in Ontario.

TALKING, THROUGH THE QC YEARS

by *Ataur Bacchus*

I.

“Mr. K. Latif
Field 6, Bed 9, Punt Trench Dam
Hague Backdam, West Coast
Demerara”

A wave of laughter broke over Form 3C and spread to all corners of the room, broke just after I stood up and spoke my father’s name. Mr. London leaned forward, cocked his rear slightly and held up a forefinger – admonishing the class, or declaring me clean bowled for now, which? Virtuoso performance. Timing and Ambiguity spot on. I had to wait for little gaps in the laughing to get the whole thing out. Timing right – he held the pose only to the point when I had finally unburdened myself and the more disperse rivulets of merriment were spent. The ambiguity - one of those rarified tensions in language such as when a poem’s line breaks work against the sense, or when the two sides of a caesura are just short of the balance that, in contrast, King James’s Psalmist could always pull off.

I looked around for a place to look. I could see inside and under the wooden desks most of what Mr. London couldn’t see from the front of the class. Pieces of half-eaten roti uglified by yellow stains, not too competently covered up with oil-stained paper. Two-celled carriers with their enamel pitted in patches became from my angle of vision inane grins with dark gaps. Spoons stuck in the side struts of the carrier assembly, licked clean, but not totally, of the grainy emulsion around the plantain and salt fish that had been spiritedly assaulted and put down an hour ago.

I took hasty note of the laughs. Sweeping past the incompetent rotihiders and the inane two-cell carriers, I drew a beam on my new neighbour and

confidante. He had told me of his social enterprise. He spent Saturday nights in the tidal pools at the edge of his East Bank village, trawling for sexual provender, and some mid-week evenings at the local dispenser’s getting some residue of love broken up and purged.. ‘Head-to’s with Dr. Mallet’, was what I came to call these fleshly tribulations.

And he who shared such confidences would laugh at my heritage too? – “Et tu Brute?”

II.

I knew it in my bones that in Bookers Universal the social currency was different from that in Hague. “Morning, Mr. Viera, me mudder send me for a pound of sugar” would not work in these opulent surroundings.

My tutelary demon on this particular afternoon was Yodha who must know the ropes, have at his fingertips the finesse and form I lacked, because he was in Lower Fourth.

“You go up to the young lady and what you say is ‘Madam I would like to purchase a pair of socks’”,

Before I could get it all out, Madam was overcome by laughter. She dropped her chin on her collarbone and shook her head from side to side, lifted it, spoke a little, but collapsed in convulsions again. Her fellow saleslady had heard the whole miserable thing and did not need it retold, but Madam had constructed an agenda beyond the merely informational.

“Iris, look! This college boy would like to purchase. You know how you does do da?”

“No Miss.” I answered before Iris could, thereby heading off more grief. Improvisation under duress.

“Never mind, college boy . . .”

I got my socks and rejoined Yodha who, since the first few beats of the

exchange with Madam, had tactfully withdrawn far enough to have lost eye and ear contact.

III.

It was a house party and the person with whom I was smitten for all of the current eternity was going to be there – let us call her Liz.

I got to talking with her but really already knew a lot because I had used every subtle and oblique resource to find out what she was doing in A Levels; what sports she played; even encouraged someone who knew her to describe her and her family’s robustly bourgeois manner of making their late entrance at Theatre Guild parties. I even attended the QC-BHS debate in which she was the second speaker. Gods be praised, I had had the muted joy of conversation with her on two occasions, those occasions being visits, partially contrived, paid to her brother. As interesting a part of my newfound Georgetown milieu as he was, I also wanted to be, undercover, in the same room as she was just to watch her speak in her family’s generally quick-witted dialect which rose to greater heights in her speech. In our current century my behaviour would qualify as “stalking, kind-of, with high-minded intentions”.

By then my take on and my standing in the city had evolved quite a bit since Hague days. I had been getting many sentences out without occasioning laughter. I had by then, as she had, a UWI scholarship in the bag. The only calamity was that we were going to be stranded on two different islands. The only joy was that she would be separated from her boyfriend who was, shall we say condescendingly, not university bound. Boorish Boyfriend in question and her family were coming to meet her, but for two hours there was at least

the dazzling potential to be mutually charmed.

We indulged in tolerably obscure riffs on the human condition, minus the demonic mannerisms of poets who read at the Carnegie Library or Itabo. We remarked on the meagerness of content and the elaborate histrionics of form of these readings. In a literary-geographic sweep we touched on themes of the city from Lombard Street to Kingston, themes when faced at the end of the day, of failure, most keenly felt at the end of the day.

Warmed by the literary draught we were sharing generously, we courted greater conversational risk. We played scenes around the line “Madam, I never eat Muscatel grapes” from both Dumas and Joyce, and speaking of Joyce, touched on “silence, exile and cunning” as part of a worthy arsenal of social strategies. For contrast we picked up on local news. We improvised several styles of magnanimity in

which Mrs.Gaskin might offer her “hankies” to her defeated opponent in the elections. I was impressed that Liz was impressed and vice versa.

With mock nationalistic fervour I identified our conversation as among the happiest of examples of intercultural fusion, as a tentative and reverential mixing of national colours, in our case, of brown and red. But in my mind, and far, far, from the back of it, I thought she spoke in a fresh non-sloganeering speech, so refreshing in those politics-soaked times, and that such speech was perched on her specific hockey-honed legs that would get my vote into first place if ever the vote were benevolently extended. As some provisional summing up of our exchange, we wondered whether Art and Speech could remould the cultural differences among people, or the brute stubbornness of events. I recalled that that no metaphor could lighten my mother’s agony when my sister drowned and lay for an hour on

one of the sharp-shelled estuaries at the mouth of the village canal. In the long run it was images of her god as she prayed that reduced that agony to a manageable lifelong ache.

I had confided that my dancing, as a matter of ethnic legacy, lacked polish, and that any advice would stand me in good stead at my final Prefects’ Ball. In the hour we had left she volunteered to tutor me in points of style. At one point after I thought we were quite enjoying the music, she scolded “If we’re going to achieve something here, you’ve got to hold me a lot closer”. “There is a God”, I volunteered, not caring that she heard and smiled.

And there loomed the delightful possibility of writing to bridge the gap between the islands we were going to live on.

Ataur Bacchus
Q..C. 1954 - 1962
Nobbs "L" House



By
Seville A. Farley

1. The first Guyanese, the Amerindians, were hunters and fishermen. What was their chief drink called?
2. What is the name of the poison which the Amerindians throw into a river to catch fish?
3. Name two Amerindian tribes.
4. One of the first explorers to see the Essequibo coast was a man after whom America was named. Who was the explorer?
5. His name means “The Golden One” and he was said to have lived in Colombia. His existence caused many European explorers to search for him. What do we know him as today?
6. Sir Walter Raleigh landed on what he described as “The Wild Coast”. Very likely this is the part of Guyana we know today as _____?
7. When his servant saw Sir Walter Raleigh doing this, she reportedly threw a bucket of water on him. What was Raleigh doing at the time? (No, he was not with his mistress).
8. Who succeeded in making the first permanent settlement in Guyana – the Spanish, the English or the Dutch?
9. In 1648, Spain signed a treaty in which Essequibo and Berbice were recognized as Dutch colonies. What is the name of this treaty?
10. In 1665, how many European settlements were there in Guyana? (More than three)

For answers, go to page 13.

Remembering Pryor

In my fantasies about going back to visit Guyana, Pryor is one of the people in my past that I would have checked out. I remember him tall, with his old fashioned glasses magnifying the little outgrowths of flesh around his eyes, always in grey pants, which were slightly short, exposing white socks and leaning to one side as he walked or rode his bicycle.

It was striking that, although he stood out from the other masters to be considered weird, no one had figured out an oddity that could be summed up in a false name. The Spartan image that he projected created a distance between him and the students. He wore the same outfit, a pair of grey dress pants and a white shirt every day in the week, his back pocket would bulge with the handkerchief that he used to vigorously blow his nose. In the mornings, with unflinching regularity, he would ride thru the main gate, dismount and in one smooth motion remove the riding clips from his pants. In one of his classes, when he seemed to be coming down with a cold, he made the remark that he would have to start running in the mornings again; where most would have been self indulgent, Pryor opted for physical discipline. Even his methods of administering discipline were unusual; some masters would ask for the detention book and a few like Eddie London would collectively punish us by going into a rage. Pryor would quietly call the person aside and subject him to a question/answer session asking the same question until the "correct" answer was given.

In my time Pryor came back on his second stint, as a teacher of Latin, French and Comparative Religion in the lower forms. He was part of that procession that made its way three times a week to the raised stage to participate in the general school assembly,

but he and a handful of masters stood out because of their lack of academic gowns for they were men without academic degrees. In the school pictures, where the names of the teachers were followed by the degrees and the school from which they obtained their degrees, nothing followed the names of Pryor and the other acting masters. The last time he taught at Queen's he left after he had a mental breakdown during a school assembly. He interrupted the assembly by leaving his seat and serially making prayerful gestures to the masters who were seated behind the podium. When it was apparent that he could not be restrained by appealing to authority or by force, Yango, who must have been his teacher at Queen's, stepped forward, quietly whispered in his ear and led him away as he was he was gesturing before Miss Dolphin the music teacher.

He taught me Comparative Religion in the first form. He bored us in the way he taught the subject having reduced it to a set of definitions that were regurgitated at a drill he devised sometimes at the start of class. I remember one of them: What is Religion? - Religion is that which binds man to God. In obeying the rules of the school, we stood up when a master entered the room and sat down when the master gave us permission to do so. Pryor, in contrarian fashion, insisted that we sit down when he entered; those who automatically stood up were rebuked and put in detention after a number of recurrences. He justified this as a measure of teaching us to be in control of our actions. In the plastic pouch in his shirt pocket he kept three fountain pens that had green, red and blue ink; our detention was written up in green, home work was marked in

red and blue ink was used for everything else.

The cricket practice that Pryor held in the Phys Ed period excited us that we could not focus in the preceding period and impatiently waited for it to end, to rush to the lockers and then on to the field. It was an opportunity to play with real bats, pads and leather balls. At the practice Pryor introduced a rule where we lost our turn after three illegal deliveries. Few boys made it through an over, excitement quickly turned into disappointment as we were dismissed to fielding positions, to make way for others to try.

Pryor had a stiff and formal relationship with the groundsmen. In a Phys Ed class that we had on the cricket ground Mr. Das had not set up the nets as instructed by Pryor. When Pryor came on the field he and Mr. Das were engaged in a verbal roundabout that went like this:

Pryor: "Mr. Das what did I tell you to do..."

Mr. Das: "But Sir ... (Pryor interrupting) "

Pryor: "Mr. Das what did I tell you to do..."

Mr. Das: "But Sir..."

We waited for the cricket practice to begin, pretending not to notice the exchange between Mr. Das and Pryor. The uncomprehending Mr. Das suffered yet another set back to be popular with the pre-adolescent students. He was employed at a menial job tending the cricket grounds, he was taunted because of his short and rotund appearance and now he was engaged in a quixotic roundabout with the tall and austere Mr. Jonas.

Mr. Das lived on the East Coast in



the area where the displaced people fled after the race riots. He had no schooling and he tried to disguise this by adopting a twang over the broken English he spoke. He rode a BSA motorcycle to work on which he would perform acrobatic stunts to amuse the students. At a house match waiting for my turn to bat, Mr. Das made the remark about the privileged lives we led. I felt guilty over the accusation but I was at a loss for a reply. Not wanting to engage Mr. Das in further conversation, I did not respond and pretended to focus on the game.

Pryor left Queen's again and reappeared when I was in the 6th form. Unlike Chinapen, the other acting master, who got his degree and left the school, Pryor came back with his degree from an English university. I was struck how he had changed from a perceived authoritarian to an engaging person. He looked relaxed and freely talked about himself. I learnt he was from Berbice and his father was a policeman. In his final year at Queen's he had won the math award and it was expected that he would have continued his studies abroad. But his father had an early death and, being the eldest, he stayed on to look after the others. His brothers and sisters all went to university and with them well on their way, it was time for him to go back to school.

I was struck by his humility, his lack of personal vanity and his readiness to expose his failings but he still remained an enigma to me. The currency of fame or wealth did not appeal to him and I attributed his asceticism and gentleness as springing from a spiritual longing. I was surprised, given his rigid outlook and his piety, that he quit teaching to work in the Prime Minister's office because I could not see him thriving in the give and take in the murky political arena. He must have served without any political allegiance since he ended up working for governments under the PNC and PPP.

My last glimpse of the Pryor was from a column he wrote on the cricketing genius of Lara, Kanhai, Sobers and

Richards. The inclusion of Kanhai was surprising since he has now disappeared from the pantheon of cricketing heroes but Pryor, in his own contrarian way, had put him back. Elsewhere it was mentioned that he kept Bible studies on Saturday evenings at his home. To the end he was focused where he thought it mattered most.

I imagined our goodbye to end the following way: we would have chatted about his interest in cricket, reminding him of the cricket quizzes he gave us in the Phys. Ed classes and then I would have posed two questions to him. I would have asked why he had to go back so many times to Queen's. He would have pointed out that it was the place where success, for him, was first defined and celebrated. Like the others, he was seeking to be vindicated by success and each failure created a greater need for that success. Although the image of the school had waned in the post colonial days, its outstanding past created the need to return to exorcise the demons created by past failures. And why did he remain in the country when most of his colleagues left? As in school, he was so focused on the tasks that he was given, that he never thought about leaving. Each task well done had its own rewards, to marshal his energies, to painstakingly master new skills and to finish with the desired results. Sometimes it was hard to focus in the surrounding chaos created by people enriching themselves, abusing their power and killing whoever stood in their way.

I would have been baffled by his answers, but he would have interrupted my attempt to ask for clarifications. He would have let out a hearty chuckle, the kind of chuckle that the Christian fellowship people allowed themselves when telling one of their harmless Jesus jokes: to dismiss my bafflement and to tell me that it was time to go.

*Peter Bhola
Q.C. 1965-1972
Durban "D" House*

QUIZ

Answers

By

Seville A. Farley

1. Cassiri
2. Curare
3. Caribs, Arawaks, Warrows, Akawois
4. Amerigo Vespucci
5. El Dorado
6. Plantation Albion on the Corentyne Coast
7. Smoking a pipe with tobacco
8. The Dutch
9. The Treaty of Munster
10. Seven



The newly renovated Queen's College following the 1997 fire.

*Annual
Father's Day Brunch*

**Sunday
June 10, 2007
12:30 P.M.**

Cedar Brook Community Centre

**91 Eastpark Blvd
Markham Rd. & Lawrence Ave.
Scarborough**



Several persons, alumni as well as friends, were honoured in recognition of their valuable contribution to

the work of our Chapter at our Awards ceremony held at the Tall Pines Community Center, Scarborough on March 25, 2007.

The Leadership Award was presented to Albert Ramprasad who led us admirably while serving unselfishly during his term as President during the period 2004-2006.

For their dedicated service performed in support of the efforts of our Chapter, Joseph Permaul, Seville Farley and Kemahl Khan were given Service Awards.

Colin Rowe, our webmaster, and Inspector Brown on behalf of 42 Division, Toronto Police, where our monthly Executive meetings are held, received Appreciation Awards for their continued support of our organization.

Lionel Mann, our current President,

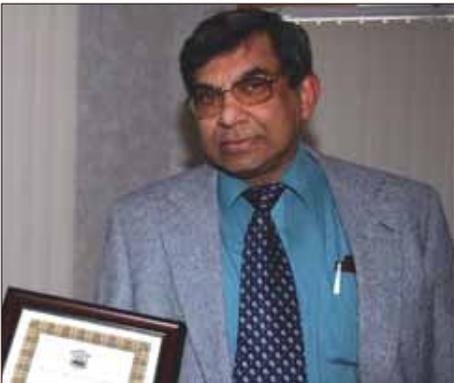
presented the Awards.

Guest speaker for the event was Mr. Keith Forde, Deputy Chief, Toronto Police Service, whose address focused on the sensitive issue of “Racial Profiling”. His frank discourse on this subject was followed by some very lively discussion during which Mr. Forde replied to many searching questions from several members of the audience.

The day’s proceedings culminated with our members and guests partaking of the solid and liquid refreshments that were provided.

The previous event of this nature was held in June 2005.

ARK



Past President, Albert Ramprasad, was the recipient of the Leadership Award.



Seville Farley, recipient of the Service Award for his support of the efforts of our Chapter.



Scribbler Editor, Kemahl Khan, received the Service Award for his dedicated service to the Chapter.



Joseph Permaul, one of the three recipients of the Service Award for dedicated service.

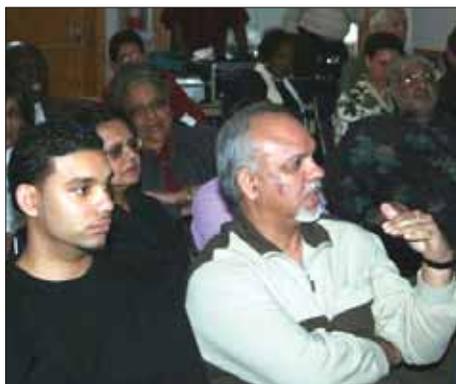
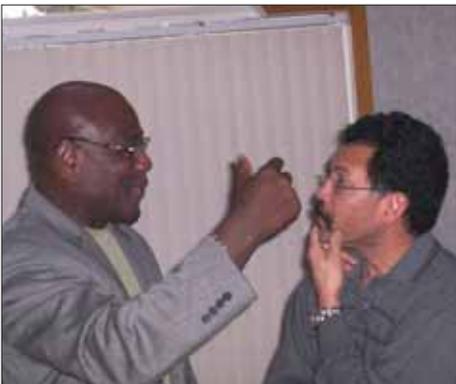
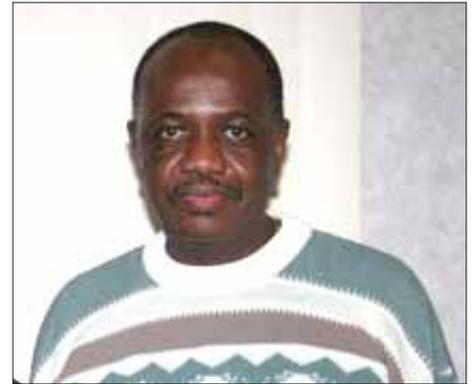


Inspector Brown received an Appreciation Award on behalf of 42 Division, Toronto Police, where our monthly Executive meetings are held.



Colin Rowe, our Webmaster, received an Appreciation Award for his ongoing support of our organization.

AWARDS CEREMONY.....





The most important event of the Toronto Chapter's 2006 program was the hosting of the Annual Business Meeting of the International Committee of QCAA (ICQC), an umbrella association whose President and Executive members are elected by the various chapters. The Meeting was held on August 6 at the Howard Johnson hotel in Scarborough and was well attended by both overseas and local delegates and members of the Chapters.

After the opening remarks, each chapter presented its annual report, followed by discussion of several matters, including the outstanding issue of the ratification of the ICQC Constitution. After much, sometimes heated, debate, there were some important changes made to the draft document which the Guyana Chapter (QCOSA) readily accepted. Thereafter, the Constitution was finally ratified.

Lengthy accounts of the unsatisfactory state of affairs that existed at the School were provided by John "Fishy" Yates and Laurie "Trinculo" Lewis of the Guyana Chapter. Recommendations for improving the situation were made with particular emphasis on the running of the School and the latter's relationship with its Board of Governors.

Of great concern to those present

was the problem of inadequate or declining member participation and/or support facing most of the Chapters. Various reasons for the lethargy were identified and suggestions, including more aggressive membership drives, were proffered.

Among other matters discussed was the "History" project initiated by Patrick Chan of the Toronto Chapter. He provided an update on the progress achieved, pointing out that the completion of the project depended on obtaining legal approval for reprinting N.E. Cameron's "History of Queen's College" to which would be attached the Appendix which he had prepared that included a post -1951 history of the School, supplemented by an article from the Illustrated London News of July 6, 1963. Sample copies of what he had put together to date were distributed to the other Chapters for their comments and any inputs they might wish to make.

Halfway through the proceedings, everyone partook of a sumptuous buffet luncheon at the nearby China Buffet King restaurant. To wrap up the Meeting, Roland Carryl of the Toronto Chapter treated members to a slide show of photographs of the School, its staff and students that he had taken during a recent visit to Guyana. At the

conclusion of the Meeting attendees had a group photograph taken outside the hotel.

Prior to and after the Meeting, socializing activities for the overseas and local delegates and members and friends included a cruise on Lake Ontario aboard the yacht "Yankee Lady III" on August 4 and the Last Lap Lime on August 7. The cruise was a resounding success where our guests mingled in a capacity crowd, and the Lime, which was held at its new home (the Woodbridge Fair Grounds), allowed them even greater socializing among the thousands who participated in the festivities.

Plans are afoot for the next ICQC Business Meeting to be hosted by the Guyana Chapter during the latter part of this year. All alumni are eligible to attend this event. For more information, please visit our website – qcalumni-toronto.com/.

*A.R.K. Khan
Albert Ramprasad
Q.C. 1958-1965
Wooley "H" House*

The opinions expressed in various articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of The Scribbler.