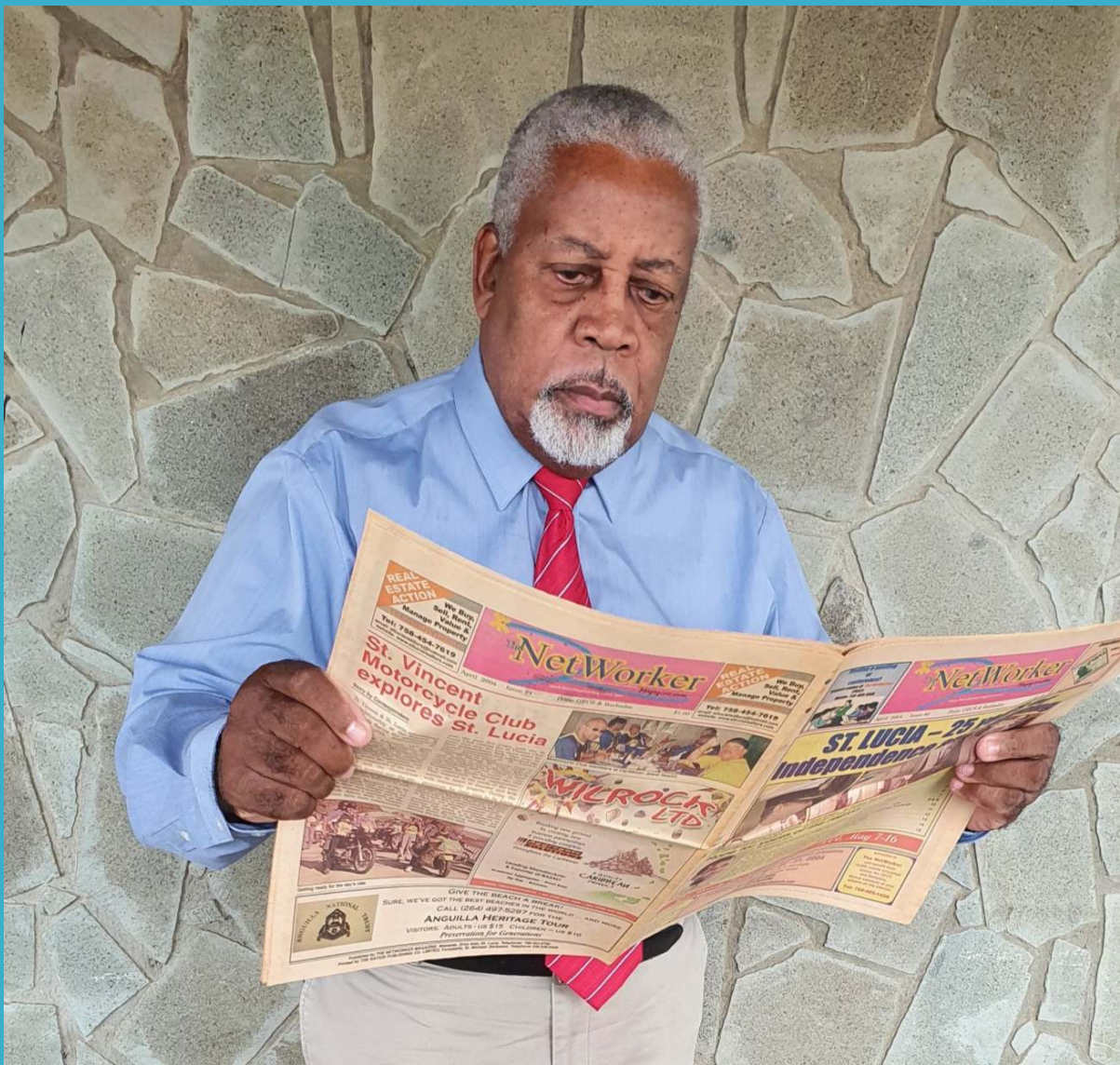


HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST LUCIA'S RECENT PAST

BOOK 3



Articles written by
Edward Alphonso Harris
QBE; Sm; SM, MR & A Dips., London

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING SAINT LUCIA'S RECENT PAST

Book 3 of The 3-part Series

Articles written by

Edward Alphonso Harris

QBE; Sm; SM, MR & A Dips., London

Dedicated to Seekers of Knowledge at home and abroad!

How Saint Lucia progressed post the recession of 2006-2017.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

DISCLAIMER

This e-book is designed to provide general information in regard to the subject matters covered in articles that were written by the Author and published in several newspapers, locally and internationally. A few websites listed in this e-book may not be current and where available are used only as reference or information relevant to the specific topic. It should be further noted that this e-book is intended to share the experiences of the author and offers no guarantee for the success of its readers.

Printed by: Edward A. Harris

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Edward Alphonso Harris is Guyanese by birth, and a Nationalized Saint Lucian who has travelled extensively. He lived and worked in several countries outside of his homeland – Guyana; these include St. Lucia, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Sierra Leone and Tanzania.

He is tireless in his quest to share the **Principles of Affirmation** and to set alight the power of the **Entrepreneurial Spirit** as a means of assisting in alleviating poverty around the world.

Edward Harris began working at the tender age of fourteen and worked in his adult life almost entirely in the private sector in areas of manufacturing, distribution and services. He is not about to retire and is currently actively engaged in the areas of **Business Consulting and Real Estate**.

He has dedicated his life to sharing his experiences in the areas of business and human development.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

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This milestone was made possible because of the encouragement I received from my family, friends, and well-wishers in Saint Lucia and beyond.

I will never forget those persons in the various media houses, including Denis Dabreo, Victor Marquis and Edgar Henry who gave me the opportunity to share my writings in St. Lucia and the rest of the world.

My gratitude is also extended to all those whom I have not mentioned specifically, but have contributed in various ways to my achievement in writing and publishing this e-book.

Edward A. Harris

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HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

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HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

INTRODUCTION

Today, at the tender age of 77, I am very active on Social Media and am forging ahead in sharing my experiences in investment, business and entrepreneurial development. In my final years I have been most frustrated and restless, especially during this period of the COVID 19 pandemic. What is even more worrying is the fact that no one knows when this state of affairs will end.

In an effort to maintain my sanity, I have in recent times, established the following initiatives:

1. A real estate website – <https://stluciagreatpropertydeals.com> which offers two e-books a) Winning Strategies for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises and b) Investing in Real Estate in St. Lucia.

2. Castries Real Estate Referral Meetup Group - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/688324532065871> which offers opportunity for persons interested in the Real Estate Industry to network with professionals and learn about the industry.

3. MLM/Network Marketing Information - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/mlmfinder> Great resource for getting information on the MLM industry Free Training available to make a difference in your MLM business.

4. Weekly current affairs CARICOM & USA – www.facebook.com/eaharrisdestiny Facebook Live programme – Harris At Large on Sunday at 10.00 am every Sunday.

This e-book covers the period 2006 to 2017 detailing the peak of St. Lucia transition to a tourism economy. It is a reflection of the way it was, pre and post the Financial Crisis in the USA which rapidly spread into a Global Financial Crisis. The collection of articles will give us confidence that if we came back then, we can do it again and again. This pandemic too shall pass. In the meantime, I shall endeavor to share my knowledge.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#1 ST. LUCIA HEADS FOR A BYE ELECTION IN THE CASTRIES CENTRAL CONSTITUENCY

January 25, 2006

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE

ST. LUCIA HEADS FOR A BYE ELECTION IN THE CASTRIES CONSTITUENCY

Mrs. Sarah Flood-Beaubrun was a successful candidate in the Castries Constituency which is the Capital of Saint Lucia in the May, 1997 elections that brought the St. Lucia Labour Party to power and again in December, 2001. She resigned as a member of the Government and Cabinet in 2005 and remained in Parliament as an Independent member until January, 2006 when she resigned as a Member of Parliament and created an environment which necessitates a Bye Election within 90 days.

The Castries Constituency has been a hotly contested constituency ever since Dr. Vaughan Lewis took over candidacy and won the seat in a Bye Election in 1995 and was appointed Prime Minister. The Bye Election was brought about when Hon. George Mallet resigned as a Cabinet Minister in the United Workers Party (UWP) Government and became Governor General. Hon. George Mallet served as Minister of Trade and Industry prior to his appointment as Governor General, during which term he was knighted by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth 2nd.

Unfortunately, Dr. Lewis' stint as Prime Minister was short lived when two years later in 1997 he lost to Miss. Sarah Flood who represented the St. Lucia Labour Party and became Minister of Health and a Member of the Cabinet of Ministers in the St. Lucia Labour Party Government, 1997-2001 during which time she got married. In the second term of the SLP Administration Hon. Sarah Flood Beaubrun served as Minister of Gender Relations.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

For some weeks now the fate of Dr. Lewis was a secret in spite of rumours and speculations as to his political future. He was given a deadline by the Executive of the United Workers Party, a party which he led until Sir John Compton took over the reign of the party he led until passing on the Leadership to Dr. Lewis in 1995. Finally, Dr. Lewis spoke in time to meet his deadline and announced to the UWP and the Nation that he is not interested in contesting the upcoming Bye Election not the General Elections. He did not however in his letter declining the offer to run for the UWP, what is his position regarding his membership.

Both major political parties, the SLP and the UWP have not yet decided on their candidates but in the case of the former, a run off among 5 candidates is expected before the end of the month.

The Commissioner of elections has made the ruling that the current list of voters would be used in the Bye Elections while the new list would be used for the upcoming general elections expected in March, 2007. I will definitely not take that long. My prediction is that it will come in the last quarter of 2006.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#2 ST. LUCIA CURRENTLY IN AN ELECTION MODE

February 11, 2006

ST. LUCIA CURRENTLY IN AN ELECTION MODE
BUT IT IS BUSINESS AS USUAL!!!

St. Lucia is currently in an election mode, however somewhat low keyed since it would be firstly a Bye Election before the General Elections become due sometime before the end of March, 2007.

The St. Lucia Labour Party (S.L.P.) is heading for a Run Off on Sunday 12th February, 2006 among the following persons, Messrs Peter Lansiquot, Senator Victor Phillip La Corbiniere and Mrs. Petra Nelson. seeking to represent Central Castries in the Capital. There were five persons originally who showed interest to battle for the nomination but two have dropped out, namely, Peterson Francis and Claude Paul, former Comptroller of Customs. The United Workers Party (U.W.P.) is yet to name a candidate to contest the Bye Election and the National Development Movement (N.D.M.) is silent while Mrs. Sarah Flood-Beaubrun of Organization for National Empowerment (O.N.E.) is ahead of the pack being confident of if nothing else but that she will contest.

It is not smooth sailing at all for the major parties, the SLP is looking for two candidates for the General Elections in the constituencies of Micoud North where former SLP Senator Patrick Joseph is seeking to represent the constituency and Soufriere is vacant as Hon. Walter Francois has stated his intention not to contest the upcoming elections. The United Workers Party (U.W.P.) has been having to deal with Mrs. Sarah Flood-Beaubrun of O.N.E. and Mr. Ausbert D'Auvergne of N.D.M. in attempting to merge into one party without success to date. Had it not been promised by the incumbent party to go to the polls with a new voters' list, a snap election would have found most if not all of the parties in disarray. Fortunately, there are a few months to go before general elections could be called.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Unlike the pattern at election time in the More Developed Countries of CARICOM, where investments are put on hold, St. Lucia is moving ahead at great pace. It is very likely that given the state of political development in the country that the incumbent party will be returned. It is business as usual on island, the planned projects are coming on stream and even Air Jamaica (the Love Bird) returns to St. Lucia on February 23, 2006. Airlifts are improving, hotel rooms are increasing daily and Bed and Breakfast accommodation is moving apace.

A new and interesting development will emerge beyond Cricket World Cup 2007 with B&B accommodation when this new mode of accommodate will help to make St. Lucia a more affordable destination. There is a vital role for B&B in the accommodation sector and it creates a price balance in the offering.

In the meantime, the Government of St. Lucia has signaled its intention to move forward with the CARICOM Single Market (C.S.M.). Things are moving apace, there is no immediate evidence that the flood gates are opened and it is understandably so as the regulations to facilitate such movement is not quite in place. Although while the Government is moving ahead with the CARICOM Single Market (C.S.M.), many of the citizens are still skeptical about the prospects for real development. The effects will take some time to be felt but I am still convinced they can only be positive. My only concern is that it has come too late and I lament the fact that most of our trained people have exited to North America and Europe.

While there is still sometime before the CARICOM Single Market (C.S.M.) comes into effect within the O.E.C.S., no effort should be spared to inform and educate the citizens about the challenges that face all citizens. The Development Fund is still struggling along and hopeful the support for the Fund will gain momentum. I am willing to predict that all those individuals and organizations that oppose or doubt the efficacy of this initiative will come to realize its benefits in due course.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#3 POLITICAL CAMPAIGN HEATS UP IN ST. LUCIA - DR. VAUGHAN LEWIS JOINS SLP!!!

September 25, 2006

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE

POLITICAL CAMPAIGN HEATS UP IN ST. LUCIA - DR. VAUGHAN LEWIS JOINS SLP!!!

The speculation is over. Dr. Vaughn Lewis, former Leader of the United Workers Party (UWP) and Prime Minister joined the St. Lucia Labour Party (SLP) boldly stating that things are better on the SLP side than on the UWP. Only time will tell but it seems he has earned the wrath of many. One thing is certain in St. Lucia is that elections will be free and fair and most important free from fear. So, in the end everyone would have been free to exercise their franchise or withhold it. That is the choice everyone makes. I believe that every citizen should utilize the right to vote or not to vote but the overriding fact remains that it is only by voting that you at least indicate the direction you wish your country to go. It is against this background that I am convinced that a serious BRING OUT THE VOTE campaign should be mounted.

Both major political parties have showed off their muscles with massive motorcades in recent weeks, SLP 12/9/06 and UWP16/9/06 and the trend will continue. The UWP Motorcade and Rally in Vieux Fort saw one of the biggest crowds assembled at a political Rally in St. Lucia. That is the constituency of Hon. Dr. Kenny D. Anthony, Leader of the SLP and current Prime Minister, and everyone is looking forward to the response from the SLP. However, the circumstances will be different as unlike the UWP which launched its opposing Candidate - Dr. Ulric Mondesir in the Vieux Fort South Constituency, the SLP will not be launching candidates when it holds its Rally in Vieux Fort as Dr. Anthony will be contesting the seat for the third consecutive time.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

This is a very interesting period in the political development of St. Lucia as both major parties have brought on board several new faces, the SLP has done an almost complete remake with some very outstanding young men joining the ranks. The SLP is consistent in ensuring a strong presence of professional, community minded, youthful candidates while the UWP seems to be going after experience, in many instances bringing back into the equation experienced politicians.

What is at stake in this general election? Although things on the surface have never been better in St. Lucia there seems to be a state of restlessness and dissatisfaction, enough is not filtering down to the masses. However, the country is still in transition from an agricultural dependent economy to a services-based economy. Although TRANSITION is no longer a buzz word, it is very applicable in today's situation, as the process continues. Many farmers are now construction workers while many housewives are hotel workers. The UWP is hoping that the current level of dissatisfaction will create a ground swell of support that will catapult them to victory at the upcoming elections. In the final analysis, it all boils down to which party can be trusted to deliver on their campaign promises and ensure economic prosperity for the next five years.

The mood on the ground which echoes that of a vocally dissatisfied electorate cannot be taken for granted that it would be translated into a win for the UWP. There are some very interesting constituencies where some could be considered safe but it seems that a toss-up is possible in quite a few and as usual everybody's candidate is a winner until the ballots are counted. The next few weeks are going to be very interesting, especially when the date is announced for elections and the gates are opened and the race truly commences.

I cannot over emphasize the point that the candidates that are able to get out their voters will be the victors as it is very clear from the last poll in 2001, there were very low turnout in many constituencies, a situation which must be reversed if the electorate is to have a real say in the final results of the polls. The same could be said of the Central Castries Bye – Elections in 2006. Voter apathy should be worked on, so as to get the electorate to vote. So, it is very important that the actors in civil society get to work in all earnest to bring out the vote.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

During my stint in the Guyana elections, I was told that the party with the most money and dominance in advertising wins the elections. It was true in Guyana, could the same scenario play out in the St. Lucia elections? Only time will tell, stay tuned.

Remember always, God is in charge, just keep the Faith!!!

#4 AN EARLY DECEMBER, 2006 DATE POSSIBLE FOR ST. LUCIA ELECTIONS!!!

October 25, 2006

Edward Harris At Large

An Early December, 2006 Date Possible for St. Lucia Elections!!!

There has never been a livelier political campaign than this time around when for months now, candidates were being launched and there are still more to come. Maybe at the end, this could also be the most expensive of campaigns to be mounted in St. Lucia. The launching of candidates is intensifying as the announcement of election date looms. An early December date could well be on the cards. On the last occasion it was the 3rd of December, 2001.

It is interesting to note that while there is a hive of political activity in the country, it is still business as usual due to the heavy demands placed upon the private sector, not only to provide accommodation but also goods and services. Everyone is racing against the clock to be ready to deliver on the promise of the region's leaders to make CWC 2007 the best Cricket World Cup ever. It is truly an exciting period to be in St. Lucia and I would like to encourage St. Lucians and friends of St. Lucia to visit the week of elections and experience democracy in action. Democracy's principal objective should be to deliver a Government that reflects the will of the people – every time.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The build up to Elections in the Caribbean is all about supporters having great fun and traveling into the various areas of the country meeting old friends and sharing their views on how the campaign is headed and who should be a candidate and who shouldn't. But the interesting part is when two persons on opposing sides meet to discuss the politics of the day. Some claim that it is too close to call and some claim it will be 12-5 but when it is declared in favour of the SLP, the opposing side claims that it will be in the reverse.

Bro. George Odlum used to say, you have to keep your ears to the ground. I try to keep my ears to the ground and it is amazing how some people have declared the winning party already. Many people genuinely feel that the United Workers Party (UWP) could win this election but the incumbent is confident of a victory for a third term. The incumbent St. Lucia Labour Party (SLP) has a formidable team of young professionals. Agriculture is at the heart of the debate and it should be noted that it is on the front burner of the only Independent Candidate – Mr. Patrick H. Joseph's campaign. If agriculture is to be given any prominence or put another way, if the electorate buy into the proposition that Agriculture is still a viable sector, the UWP has credible candidates who are directly involved in Agriculture to make their case. But if on the other hand, the electorate buys into the gains of the tourism sector in recent years and that agriculture is on a downward slide, then the SLP is well ahead.

Looking at the constituencies, the toss ups seem to be between Dr. Vaughan Lewis – SLP and Hon. Richard Frederick – UWP for the Castries Central seat and His Excellency Julian R. Hunte – SLP and Senator Leonard Montoute – UWP for Gros Islet. There are seventeen constituencies. The SLP has won the last two elections, 1997 when they came into office with a 16-1 majority and in 2001 with a 14-3 majority. A win for the UWP will demand a minimum of 6 additional seats.

It is also interesting to note that Hon. Damian Greaves has moved from Dennerly South to Dennerly North leaving behind what is considered a safe seat to do battle with Hon. Marcus Nicholas who currently holds the seat and is the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The battle for the hearts and minds of St. Lucians though it has already begun, will be fast forwarded upon the announcement of the Election Date. The final furlong will be fast, especially in the closing moments as they head to the polls. Whatever the combination, the forecast must be accurate with a WIN ONLY bet.

Until the winner is at the finishing line when all the ballots are counted and duly declared anyone who ventures to suggest a winner will have to be given a word from the Lord.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge! It will all be known in due course.

#5 ST.LUCIA HAS A NEW GOVERNMENT – THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN!!!

December 14, 2006

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!!!

ST. LUCIA HAS A NEW GOVERNMENT – THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN!!!

Congratulations are in order for the United Workers Party (UWP) on their convincing victory at the polls on December 11, 2006 with an 11-6 majority. The team comprising of experienced and young politicians have defied the pollsters and created history with the 82-year-old Sir John at the helm.

Now that the campaigns and elections are behind us, it is time to get down to business to ensure that the investment flows being currently experienced is further enhanced for the prosperity of the nation. The people have spoken and it is clear that the people are demanding that they have a say in the development of the nation and that accountability and transparency must be preached and practiced.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

St. Lucia is geared for great achievements in the short term and with effective management could be on a growth path for several years. The future is bright. Over the years in my writings, I have always been optimistic about St. Lucia's economic future. I was vindicated at least two years ago. I continue to stress the need for certain actions that will give us a real stake in the global economy. More attention must be given to Information Technology and Internet generated businesses as a whole. Everything should be done to get the leaders in the industry to identify market niches for St. Lucia's entry into the global market place. Internet marketing is a low cost, high yield business. Maybe, it is time for a Ministry of Technology.

Keeping up with my rounds, I attended a meeting of the National Association of Realtors at the Lantana Room, Bay Gardens Hotel on December 7, 2006 where Realtors/Agents met to move the process forward based on a decision which was taken at an earlier meeting to resuscitate the activities of the Association. A Steering Committee was elected comprising of the following persons: Mary Foster, Zenna Leopold, Callum De Myers, Curtis Francis, Zephyryn Descartes, Winston Etienne and Edward Harris. Advisors - Karleen Greenidge, Martha Phillips and Lorraine Glace. Based on the sentiments expressed at the meeting, it was very clear that the time has come for the industry to be organized so that a uniformed approach could be applied by Realtors/Agents. The Association is receiving support from St. Lucia Coalition of Service Industries Inc. and Barbados Estate Agents & Valuers Association Inc.

The Ministry of Commerce, Investment and Consumer Affairs in collaboration with Caribbean Export hosted a Presentation of the Diagnostic Analysis of the Professional Services Sub-sector in St. Lucia at the Bay Gardens Inn on Friday, December 8, 2006. Mr. Sunil Sinha, Technical Director of Emerging Market Economics Limited of the U.K. was the Presenter. The session was very informative and covered areas of Health & Wellness, Education, ICT, Business Development Services, Engineering and Construction Services and Production Services for the Entertainment Industry.

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In the tourism sector, new opportunities were identified, namely Sheltered Care, Medical and Educational Tourism such as special packages for visitors to learn English and other foreign Languages and Wellness/Health Care. Health Care is a big driver and St. Lucia should be promoted as a Brand – Flagship destination. Sheltered Care in the USA is billed at US\$200.00 per day and by 2020 the cost per day is expected to rise to US\$480.00. Surely, we can be competitive and being an English-speaking nation should be an advantage for us to demand some of that business that is already going offshore to Spanish speaking countries.

ICT is a very attractive area, especially as Data is moved over the Internet which has opened up a number of possibilities. Health Insurance Companies are not only looking for Sheltered and other Medical Care from less costly destinations, they are seeking other related data services. Call Centres, Legal, Architectural, Engineering and many other services can be offered from anywhere in the world. Human Resource services are very much in demand. While India is especially attractive for offshore contracts, there is a problem of distance, hence the need for near-shore operations and that is where destinations like St. Lucia have an advantage.

The next few days are going to be very interesting as the Cabinet emerges and the movers and shakers get down to business.

Let us get to work – young and old, put our differences aside and get St. Lucia moving.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#6 THERE IS MAGIC IN THINKING SMALL IN BUSINESS OR IN LIFE!!!

February 16, 2005

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE

THERE IS MAGIC IN THINKING SMALL IN BUSINESS OR IN LIFE!!!

Few people have dared to dream as I have done. I have read all the motivational books that I laid hands upon during my younger days. I still continue to read all the motivational and inspirational books I can lay hands on and I must say that many of my friends ensure that I am kept up to date by sending me those books they feel I should read. I guess many people are like me in that they have bought numerous motivational and inspirational books and have not been able to apply what they have read in ways that will transform their lives, but for some strange reason they keep at it and one day like a flash of lightning, they read a line or paragraph that gives the answer to the missing link in all that they have read.

I am about to share one such experience with you where I relied on achieving my big dream and was totally oblivious of the fact that the magic is in thinking small. I need to emphasize that you should Never, Never give up on your Dream. Many persons follow the advice of the Gurus who say 'THINK BIG' and get high on thinking big neglecting the fact that the journey of a thousand miles begin with the first step. When you get high on BIG DREAMS, you lose sight of the fundamental principle, to start small and grow. While taking aim at your dream, think small and achieve successes that will catapult you to your big dream. That is the system that will work for you. There's MAGIC IN THINKING SMALL. If you're earning \$2,000 a month, make \$3,000-\$4,000 your goal, not \$20,000. Here's how you can revolutionize your income. Set yourself an achievable goal and momentum will come. That is where the forces over which you have no control will cause you to gain momentum and increase your sales and improve your general wellbeing.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Many of us lack discipline. The way to succeed is to stay the course, taking the necessary small steps. Thinking big in itself will never make you any money. It is good to be ambitious, it is good to Dream but you must also move towards your goal with small steps that are guaranteed to lead you to the prize. There is magic in thinking small but never forgetting your dream.

Let us take the first step. The majority of dreams is based on the realization of cash flow. The flow of money into your business or life is the basis for most dreams to be fulfilled. Many of us dream to help the world, every step of the way will take money and if you can have the desire plus the money your goal will be achieved.

Personal Life Coaches charge a lot of money to coach individuals to be successful. Success is based on scientific evidence which Personal Coaches have developed the skill to transform lives in tangible ways. Unfortunately for us in this region, we are yet to get to that level of sophistication. We have to move in the direction of what is expected of dynamic business people. There are certain things we need to be doing, not today or tomorrow, but many years ago. We have to equip ourselves to move towards the trends that will pay dividends.

I lament the fact that too many persons are simply copy cats, just waiting until someone starts something to copy it and flood the market, spoiling it for everyone. New ideas and projects on a regional or global scale will make the difference which we are seeking to find. We have to be imaginative and creative and adapt an offensive mode. CSM is here. What are we going to do? Wait to be invaded by dynamic businesspersons from other territories or are we going to take the fight to them on their own front yard? Our strategy must be to get to them before they get to us, and rather than them coming to take all, we would be able to partner with them in their home territory and in ours. Thus, affording us the opportunity to operate on multiple fronts. In many instances, this can be achieved, especially in the Services Sector.

Keep the faith, God is in charge!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#7 LET US LOOK AT SOME BUSINESS OPTIONS

March 3, 2006

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE

LET US LOOK AT SOME BUSINESS OPTIONS

There are several business models available in the world today and creative minds are constantly at work to implement others. A lot of emphasis is being placed on changing from a cash economy to a non cash means of financial settlements.

Today, we find major businesses getting involved in barter exchange. We hear about alternative currency which is being promoted by major corporations, visit www.creditz.com and see what Fortune 500 companies are doing in collaboration with Creditz Digital Currency System in transforming reward points, frequent flyer miles, loyalty points and other non-cash currencies into a digital currency, which will be used as cash at participating national retailers, merchants, vendors and manufacturers. It is time for businesspersons, especially those who travel frequently to consider establishing a USA address so that participation would be possible in several of the programmes being offered in the developed world.

Even Donald Trump leverages his name and expertise in projects. It is amazing what investing your time and expertise in fledgling business could yield. Too many of us are caught up with the "money now" syndrome. Depending upon your contribution, though its non-cash, you can demand reasonably as much as thirty-three (33) percent stake in a company. In the consulting business I learned very early not to think short term, but think long term, based on the performance of your recommendations. I know this method works.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

There is a continuing trend in North America, where small businesses are consolidating. While there are the big business mergers taking place, quietly there is a parallel development where creative entrepreneurs are rolling up dozens of small companies into larger entities to provide greater efficiencies and wield marketing power. What is needed is a cadre of consolidators – ambitious aggregators whose objective must be to bring professionalism to businesses where management is lacking.

As CSM looms, businesspersons must know when to quit doing the same things over and over expecting different results. Unless a new approach is applied and in some cases mergers/consolidations are created, many of our small business people will move from being self-employed to joining the long lines of persons seeking employment. In many instances small manufacturers should come together and consolidate production, and distribute their own private labels. The results of such initiatives could only bring about sustainable and viable outcomes. I made this point a few years ago when in my capacity as President of the Association of Eastern Caribbean Exporters (AECE), I supported the merits of Article 56 regarding industry allocation and drew attention to the Pasta industry where there are so many plants in the region, when one in the Leeward and one in the Windward would have sufficed. It is time for businesspersons to come together and rationalize the state of their businesses and be prepared to adapt to the changing business and social environment.

It has been some time now since I have been laboring the point that Barter as means of settling payments, exchanging services and expanding sales is a system that needs to be revisited. Barter is considered the greatest all-time method of trading.

Here is an idea for a private sector association to co-ordinate a unique programme and earn revenue by promoting coupons that are printable by customers. Visit www.coccoupons.com This is yet another system that helps promote a cashless market place. It is happening too often that simple projects are left to others to introduce to our shores. The most recent is Cariblist, a real estate project, an internet driven business that is a big success. You can visit their site at www.cariblist.com This proves the point that if we don't do it for ourselves, someone else will and that is what CSM is all about.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

An interesting thought came to my mind as I was writing this article and it could be a starting point. There are several businesses that have the potential to go regional. If a private sector association could get a consultant to establish the companies in the various islands and provide the business owners with a manual as to how they should approach their particular business and also arrange advertisements to promote the interests of the companies in the region.

I am very passionate about giving back. The time to look for opportunities to help others in life and in business is now! Those persons who have the desire to be change agents in a world that cries out for such persons could Volunteer and offer their time and skills in a structured manner. You can visit www.GlobalVolunteers.org and have a look at how you can have a vacation while serving various communities around the world. Success has been recorded in the local Volunteer Programme. It would be interesting to see how this group advances beyond CWC 2007. I feel that this grouping has a great opportunity for involvement in several areas of human development in St. Lucia and beyond.

I am hopeful that through the websites that I have introduced to you that you will get ideas and form alliances where possible or duplicate ideas that fit our situation. Any initiative that will bring our people together will prove beneficial in the end.

Keep the faith, remember always that God is in charge!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#8 DON'T GET SUCKED INTO ANY FREE MONEY BUSINESS DEAL - IF IT IS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, THEN IT IS.

March 11, 2006

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!!!

DON'T GET SUCKED INTO ANY FREE MONEY BUSINESS DEAL - IF IT IS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, THEN IT IS.

We are living in very difficult times when most people seem to thrive on dishonesty and due to the financial pressures of the moment, many are sucked into shady deals especially those that offer a share in multi-million dollar inheritances stashed away in foreign banks, with most of the grandiose deals originating from African countries.

I took the decision to bring to your attention a persistent trend whereby I receive generous offers to share in other people's ill-gotten fortunes and inheritances if I would be a facilitator. It is my feeling that many other persons receive this type of invitation. The frequency also suggests to me that they are getting through too many people. In our midst there are some sad stories and it is very clear that the perpetrators of this type of fraud thrive on desperation when someone is approaching the edge and there is no financial solution in sight. They are persistent with variations to their offers and they are definitely operating on a system that delivers. They are very persistence which makes the offers appear to be real and as a result innocent, trusting persons end up getting involved. Persistence pays.

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Unfortunately, it only makes a bad thing worse. There are few questions that persons should attempt to answer for themselves before jumping into the free money schemes, example:

1. How did this person get my contact information? 2. How can they want to do business with me and not their family, friends or business associates? 3. Why is the money not in their control, since the person is the natural heir? How can the person trust me when he or she doesn't know me? You can go on and on coming up with other questions that are sure to make you skeptical about the proposal.

The Scammers/swindlers are finding creative ways to perpetuate their schemes and I feel compelled to share these two recent ones I received with you.

YOUR KIND ATTENTION PLEASE,

I AM MRSFROM BO FREETOWN SIERRA LEONE. WE ARE WRITTING TO SEEK YOUR HIGHLY ESTEMMED HELP/ CONSENT IN A LASTING BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP OF MUTUAL BENEFIT INVOLVING (\$21 MILLION USD) TWEENTY ONE MILLION USD FOR INVESTMENT IN YOUR COMPANY/COUNTRY UNDER A JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP.

CONTACT MY SON IMMEDIATELY FOR DETAILS OF THE TRANSACTION AND SOURCE OF FUND FOR MY HEALTH IS NOT GOOD FOR NOW.

WAITING FOR YOUR EARLIEST RESPONSE.

MRS

Here is another one which was sent to me through sourcing my contact from a West Indian Friendship Club.

HELLO MY DEAREST,

THANKS YOU FOR YOUR MESSAGE I AM REALLY HAPPY TO HEAR FROM YOU AND ALSO HAPPY THAT YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ME. ACTUALLY I NEVER KNOW HOW YOU WILL FEEL IF THIS IS TOO EARLY TO TELL YOU BUT JUST BECAUSE I AM NOT SETTLED WHERE I AM DUE TO THE PROBLEM I AM FACING SO I HAVE TO LET YOU KNOW IF YOU WILL BE ASSISTANCE TO ME. HERE IS LITTLE OF ME.

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I AM FROM SIERRA LEONE 23 YRS OLD WITH TEARS AND SORROW I EXPLAIN MY SELF IN A HUMBLE MANNER AFTER THE DEATH OF MY FATHER MRWHO WAS BECAUSE OF THE PROBLEMS IN MY COUNTRY WHICH TAKE A LOT OF LIVES AND RENDER MANY HOME HOMELESS BECAUSE LIFE IS MORE PRECCIOUS THAN GOLD NOTHING WE USE TO REPAIR LIFE IF IS LOST SO WE DICIDED TO RUN FROM MY COUNTRY WITH MY MOTHER, TWO BROTHERS AND SISTERS ALL A SUDDEN MY TWO BROTHERS AND SISTER WERE KIILLD BY REBELS AND MY MOTHER LATER DIED BECAUSE OF THE PAINS OF HER CHILDREN. AFTER THE DEATH OF MY MOTHER MY FATHERS UNCLE STARTED TO PERSECUTE ME ABOUT MY FATHERS PROPERTIES WHICH HE LATER SNATCHED FROM ME UNDER TREATH BY THE HELP OF A RELATIVE FATHER I CAME TO DAKAR SENEGAL UNDER REFUGEE, INPART THE MORE I EXPLAIN MY SELF AND SITUATION I SHED TEARS WHEN I REMEMBER PAST, I AM ONLY ONE REMAIN IN OUR FAMILY. NOW I AM IN A CRITICAL SITUATION THINGS ARE VERY BAD WITH ME BUT I CAN'T JOIN PROSTITUTION, OVER MY DEAD BODY BECAUSE OF THE WAY I WAS BROUGHT UP BY MY LATE PARENTS I AM POURING ALL MY HEART TO YOU IN HOPE THAT GOD WILL USE YOU TO SAVE ME.

NOW I DECIDED TO GET MARRIED BY MY AGE WHEN I SUPPOSE TO BE IN SCHOOL BY NOW BUT THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO, INFACT YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE I AM LOOKING FOR IN MY LIFE WHICH I KNOW THAT YOU WILL NOT DISAPOINT ME. I AM SEEING HELL HERE BUT THE ONLY THINGS THAT MAKE ME HAPPY AT TIMES IS THAT MY FATHER LEFT THE SOME OF 5.5 000.000 US DOLLARS IN A FORIGN BANK WHICH I AM THE ONLY PERSON HE TOLD ABOUT IT BEFORE HIS DEATH AND EVERY THINGS IS WITH ME HERE ,THE NEXT OF KIN AND THE DOCUMENT AND THE WHOLE CONTACT IS WITH ME BECAUSE MY FATHER LOVES ME VERY MUCH THAT WAS THE REASON

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WHY HE GAVE ME THIS INFORMATION ABOUT THE MONEY,NOW I HAVE CALLED THE COMPANY AND THEY TOLD ME THAT UNLESS I HAVE SOME BODY WHO WILL REPRESENT ME WITH THE DOCUMENTS THAT IS REQUIRED THAT THEY ARE NOT GOING TO RELIASE THE MONEY,SO THIS IS WHY I AM LOOKING FOR YOU TO GO FOR IT WHO IS MY BODY AND MY FLESH SO IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ME FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ME. HOPING FOR YOUR REPLY SOONEST.

YOURS

The foregoing letter was badly written to give the impression that the person is desperate and confused to render a state of urgency. Please do not reply to any of these letters as it is a trap to lure you into the web and rob you of your hard-earned money. Don't be like the dog and the bone. Neither become a prey because of being sorry for someone. There is no free money. Be warned.

On Monday evening, 6/3/06, I made a plea on the IPI programme on Radio St. Lucia for the station to introduce a call in Business programme that will expose businesspersons to new ideas and seek to bring them together in an effort to respond to the challenges that will confront them under the CARICOM Single Market (CSM).

The private sector associations will have to do more and this journalist will stay on course to ensure that businesspersons are informed and kept up to date on developments that will affect them either positively or negatively. It is time for a Private Sector Council in St. Lucia.

Keep the faith, it is good to know that God is in charge!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#09 NATIONAL BUDGET 2006-2007 HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!

May 5, 2006

Edward Harris At Large!

National Budget 2006-2007 Has Something for Everyone!

Everyone gathered at the table walked away with something. The young and the old, the youth and the pensioner got a piece of the pie. This is not a Budget that can be easily bashed. Depends on whom you speak with the response to the Budget would vary but even if it is waiver of consumption tax on essential food supplies or diesel fuel, something was there that will benefit the little man and the big man.

The talk show hosts are making their rounds and Mr. Jeff Stewart has emerged as the teacher to the nation. He explained the budget in simple terms and the News Maker Live audience learned a lot about the national budget and how it is made up in terms of revenue and expenditure.

I had the pleasure of attending a recent Management Committee Meeting of the St. Lucia Industrial and Small Business Association where the budget allocation of EC\$100,000.00 was discussed along with plans to effectively utilize the funds. This assistance would give the association the shot in the arm it badly needs. President Patrick H. Joseph and his team assisted by recently appointed Executive Director – Mr. Ian Simon will shortly roll out a series of programmes that will empower the small business sector, reaching out to micro, small and medium enterprises. This is a real investment in a sector that will lead in employment generation well beyond 2007.

HARRIS AT LARGE

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The car rental companies' owners are on a high. I have been privileged to meet with a number of owners who have expressed confidence in the future. Some have spoken about selling out their existing fleet and buying new vehicles. That is good news. I see the need for an entrepreneur to seriously organize himself/herself to enter the used car market concentrating on the sale of locally used cars. This is one instance where the budget is driving an industry and that is the power of incentives. We need more of such initiatives from the Government.

Entrepreneurs are being challenged on every front to take their rightful place in the community and advance their businesses. Banks will have to be more flexible, working capital advances would have to be made to performing customers. If Entrepreneurs are to expand their market, money is a key ingredient. This is not a time to sit on the fence, this is a time to get into action.

It is time that investors begin to put money into the local music industry. We have some fantastic talents and we should not allow this crop of young entertainers to miss an opportunity. The entertainment business is really catching on in St. Lucia but it is too basic. The supporting businesses such as fashion shops with quality garments at affordable prices are needed. There is an opportunity for a garment factory specializing in gents' shirts and ladies' tops. There are niches in the garment sector and I like what I have been seeing where a lot of uniforms are done locally. There is need for more frequent fashion and beauty shows. People need to care more about themselves, especially the males. A well-dressed person adds life to the environment in which they operate.

All work and no play cause a clogged mind and the week of Jazz could be a great time to step out and meet with friends, and have some fun. You deserve it. Let the Rev. Al Green preach a sermon of love to you. See you there.

Keep the faith, God is in charge!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#10 SAINT LUCIA IN A JUMP AND WAVE MOOD BUT NOT NEGLECTING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE POLITICAL SEASON!!!

June 27, 2006

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE

SAINT LUCIA IN A JUMP AND WAVE MOOD BUT NOT NEGLECTING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE POLITICAL SILLY SEASON!!!

Saint Lucia is alive and well in spite of the crime situation that the entire nation is grappling with as we are all conscious of the consequences, especially as it relates to our lead and growth industry – Tourism.

The calypso season is moving forward smoothly, quarter finals completed and moving onward with everyone looking forward to an enjoyable carnival leading right up to the holiday Monday and Tuesday, July 16 & 17, 2006 when the curtain comes down on Carnival 2006. In the meantime, there are lots of action including the Queen Show, Panorama, Semi Finals and Finals of the Calypso and Soca Monarch Competitions, King and Queen of the Bands and the several fetes in between. It is constant jamming all through from here on.

This year, the calypso tents are not holding the sway as in times past. The Soca Jump and Wave craze is digging deep into the roots of calypso, a development which started a few years ago in Trinidad when the Barbadians almost took over the tents with soca music. It is definitely the kind of music for today's energy driven generation. Generally speaking, calypso is being pushed aside and Soca is gaining momentum to the point of almost taking over Carnival. The emergence of New Generation Soca Tent (NG Soca Tent) is the buzz in tent circles here in St. Lucia, with Alpha and crew mashing up the place with a large following. Today's Calypsonians will have to be versatile as Crazy claims, it is the only reason why he is still in the equation in Trinidad and Tobago.

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However, it is not all doom and gloom, as a young generation of Calypsonians is emerging. A youngster to watch although he is still at school is Floopsy. He will definitely be in the finals. This is a youngster with a future in Calypso and if groomed properly could be a major contender in the calypso and soca arena, and in time to come could be a double winner of the Calypso and Soca crowns here in St. Lucia. It is interesting to note that this year even the politicians are let off the hook. That is a reflection of where the calypso is heading. The political and social commentaries are vital aspects of the lyrics of calypsos.

The politics of the nation is holding its own in spite of the obvious diversions. Last Sunday, the St. Lucia Labour Party (SLP) launched its candidate for Choiseul, Dr. Tennyson Joseph, a former Political Attaché in the office of the Prime Minister. It was the first time the residents of Choiseul witnessed a display of fireworks in their district. The United Workers Party (UWP) candidate for that constituency is Mr. Rufus Bousquet who has so far lost both elections since 1997 to the SLP candidate Mr. Ferguson John. Mr. John has passed on the baton to Dr. Tennyson Joseph.

Both parties have to date endorsed fourteen (14) candidates each out of the possible seventeen (17) constituencies on the island. The SLP is yet to name candidates in Dennery North, Dennery South and Babonneau constituencies and the UWP in Micoud North, Castries South and Dennery South. Rumor has it that there could be changes of endorsed candidates along the way in at least one of the parties. The million-dollar question is – when will be elections in St. Lucia. There is no sign of urgency coming from the SLP camp to indicate a possible election date before December, 2006 but constitutionally, the government has until March 2007 to call general elections.

What is the state of play? While the UWP is failing to take advantage of the new kid on the block Mr. Richard Frederick, a prominent attorney at law who successfully contested the Central Castries seat recently, the SLP is positioning itself to be a formidable contestant in the next general elections whenever that day comes. The recent endorsement of His Excellency Julian R. Hunte who is the current Ambassador to the United Nations is one such move in the process of producing viable candidates to the electorate.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

As I move around the country and discuss the present status of the political parties as they get set to parade in preparation to enter the starting gates, I ask the question which party do you think will win the next general elections? Those who want to play it safe will respond that it is too close to call. I say it is not too close to call.

#11 EDWARD HARRIS IS BACK!

September 10, 2006

Edward Harris is back!

After an absence of two months from St. Lucia, I am back and am very pleased to update my readers on my mission to Guyana where I was a part of the Alliance For Change – 2006 Elections Campaign Team.

In 1997 when I managed the Guyana Democratic Party (GDP) Asgar Ali Campaign, the circumstances and the results were very different to my recent assignment when I was a part of the Campaign Management Team in the capacity of Campaign Operations Manager for the Alliance For Change. When I returned to St. Lucia in December of 1997, I announced to my friends that I was cheated but not defeated. We were white washed. The ensuing months told the story. Although voters were given photo IDs that did not guarantee fair elections. This time however, things were very different and the checks and balances were in place theoretically but varied somewhat in application. In spite of the problems that arose on Election Day, the observers were loud in their praises for GECOM and the Guyanese people who were finally able to participate in an election free of violent incidents. It must be noted that no observer team could have covered all the polling stations across the country. Sir John Compton, former Prime Minister of Saint Lucia led the Commonwealth Observer Team to Guyana for the 2006 General Elections.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The AFC in just nine months of its existence decided to participate in the 2006 General Elections of Guyana with less than one month to campaign. For the first time in the history of Guyana, a new political party caused the two major parties, the People's Progressive Party / Civic (PPP/C) and the People's National Congress / Reform – One Guyana (PNC/R) so much concern. The AFC's principal objective to hold the balance of power was almost certain when in the final days of the campaign, the PPP/C and the PNC/R – One Guyana unleashed their artillery to demolish the gains of the AFC, when apart from subtle threats to their former supporters and intensifying their house to house campaign preaching to the people that the AFC will split the vote and more importantly the PPP/C was telling their supporters that a vote for the AFC is a vote for the PNC/R which was keeping a line that their supporters must not split the vote. It all boiled down to a return to racial voting. The East Indians voted for the PPP/C and the Blacks for the PNC/R. The racial overtones got so bad that the PPP/C was requested by the Media Monitoring Committee to withdraw their "great pretender advert" which highlighted the burning down of certain parts of Georgetown and aligning Mr. Raphael Trotman, AFC Presidential Candidate with that state of affairs as it was alleged that while he was a part of the PNC/R it was their supporters that were involved in the hooliganism that resulted. That was very unfair and if there was one chilling effect, it was that advert and the Indian population reverted to their safety net in the protective arms of the PPP/C.

In spite of the many negatives of the campaign and the elections, unlike what you might have heard and in some cases believe, the rumors about Election Day activities paint a different picture. Let the officials of GECOM explain why the presiding officers locked out Polling Agents from polling places demanding letters certifying their appointment in spite they had identification cards which were provided by GECOM? Let them further explain why Region 10 results were declared without all the statements of poll being reported? After the morning fiasco the said situation developed at the close of poll with the counting agents, they were again asked for letters and this was not an isolated matter, it happened across the country.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

I have a personal problem with the votes being tabulated by computers. I believe that is too advanced for Guyana unless the entire process was electronically processed and removed the input of individuals. There were over 1,900 polling stations across the country and again that presented a logistical nightmare to find supporters to man all the stations. The maximum number of voters listed at anyone polling station did not exceed 450 which could have been substantially greater and thus reducing the amount of polling stations required. GECOM as we knew it is no more, yet another important building and its contents were lost to a fire that took it all. What will ever happen to the uncounted boxes from Region 10?

In the end, the supporters of the AFC romped home with 5 seats in the house of parliament and 21 seats in Regional Democratic Councils across the country. In one instance it achieved its goal of being the balance of power which was achieved with 3 seats in the Regional Democratic Council in Region 4.

The final count of parliamentary seats is PPP/C 36, PNC/R-One Guyana 22, AFC 5, GAP/ROAR 1 and TUF 1. Looking toward the future there is an urgent need for Municipal and Local Government Elections but given the loss of GECOM's headquarters, this may not be possible for some months.

I continue to take care of my broken leg and hope to be out of the cast within a few days so that I can move around to catch up on the St. Lucia election campaign. Only if the political conditions could be in Guyana as there are here in St. Lucia – what a country it would be? I pray that St. Lucians will cherish their democratic freedoms and exercise their vote on Elections' Day.

Remember always, that God is in Charge!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#12 HOW MUCH BUSIER COULD BUSINESS EXECUTIVES GET????

October 18, 2006

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!!!

HOW MUCH BUSIER COULD BUSINESS EXECUTIVES GET????

St. Lucia is really buzzing. The challenges of business are more complex than they ever were, and then there are the demands on the time of Executives to be spent away from their offices attending meetings and conferences.

Today's Business Executives have to be up long hours, when not at their desks, networking at conferences, luncheons, dinners and cocktails. The average Executive works 16 hours a day while awake and the subconscious mind, the other 8 making a full 24 hours a day. With such hectic lifestyle, I hasten to caution Executives and generally leaders in society to pay attention to their health and pamper themselves. Today, there are choices of medical services and all types of therapists. Regular medical checkups and frequent massages to help with the stress conditions under which Executives operate are very necessary. The fast pace is not helping many Executives as they fail to take care of themselves claiming to be too busy to stop and smell the roses.

What about that long-promised holiday with family and I believe going on holidays with close friends add to the enjoyment, especially on a cruise. Going abroad on a holiday is a sure way to take you away from the business demands and it also gives Executives an opportunity to see how efficient their middle management is.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

During the past week there has been some interesting programmes, it began last Thursday with the four-day CMEx Conference which engaged media practitioners of the CARICOM region, USA, Canada and England. With every passing year this conference is increasing in value. Every year participants get an opportunity to hear from the youth of the region and influential Business Executives and Professionals. This year while the emphasis continued on providing media professionals with information, they can use to sensitize their communities, Business Executives got a first-hand look at developments in media technology and other aspects of business.

The idea of Speed Networking was discussed and the need to freely establish contact with other persons is vital to broadening business relations. Village Tourism was widely discussed and programmes are well advanced for the Rodney Bay Village to take off. Mr. Kondo Norihiko, President of Kaiho Sangyo Co. Ltd a Japanese Company involved in recycling of motor vehicles and the sales of parts and used vehicles made a presentation in which he noted that only 5% of a vehicle goes to waste and that he is seeking to establish a recycling plant in the region. Information on this operation is available at www.kaiho.co.jp

I believe the time has come for the CMEx conference to be expanded to include observers from the private and public sectors. The more persons exposed to the debate the better. You can catch up on the various presentations at www.caribbeanmediaexchange.com The conference was a success and it will definitely expand with sponsors like Mr. Allen Chastanet who will be making available one of their properties – Coco Creole to host 30 youths whenever the Conference is held in St. Lucia. He said the offer is good for as long as CMEx continues.

The St. Lucia Industrial and Small Business Association (SLISBA) in collaboration with Caribbean Association of Small & Medium Enterprises (CASME) hosted a Workshop on October 16 & 17 at the Cara Suites Hotel on “Export Preparedness”. A holistic approach to doing business in the 21st century was presented by the Facilitator, Hon. Senator, Sandra Husbands, President of CASME which is headquartered in Barbados. The Workshop was well attended and small businesspersons have benefited tremendously from the experiences shared by their Barbadian counterparts.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

A Representative of Hilton Grand Vacations Company spent a few days in St. Lucia and kicked off his visit with a Cocktail Reception at the Bay Gardens Conference Centre on October 16, 2006. The programme is all about buying vacations in advance, prepaid vacations that are transferable to family members. You can purchase a 30-year plan affording you one week per annum in a two-bedroom accommodation at any of their properties or any of the eight other options. The purchase is by Deed and with a deposit of 25%, flexible payment terms of the remainder over a period of 5 years could be arranged. The proposition is very attractive and those persons who look forward to annual vacation could be in for a deal. Check it out at www.hgvc.com or Email amitchel@hgvc.com

The business class in St. Lucia is leaving no stone unturned as Government seeks to conclude negotiations on the Labour Code prior to general elections which is expected before the end of 2006. The Chamber held a Luncheon at the Sandals Grande on 18/10/06 and the business community turned out in their numbers to listen to the Consultant engaged by the St. Lucia Private Sector Council and ask questions about the effects of the Labour Code on their businesses. It is generally felt that Government will not implement a Labour Code that will hinder the economy. However, it is very clear that there is a lot of negotiating to be done as it appears that special attention would have to be given to the tourism sector, especially as it relates to hours of work and the split shift system. Other areas of concern included the cost of implementation at the firm level and the penalties.

There is never a dull moment in the life of an Entrepreneur. As you take risks, enjoy the rewards.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#13 LET US DEDICATE 2007 AS THE YEAR OF INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY!!!

January 4, 2007

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

LET US DEDICATE 2007 AS THE YEAR OF INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY!!!

Now that we have had a well-earned respite, I am quite certain that we are refreshed and ready to face the challenges of the New Year. Let us go forward with an open mind relying on God to work His purpose in our lives. Before commencing this article, I checked my emails and to my surprise there was an email about a company inviting ideas for product invention. After contemplating on the headline for several days, I thought that the email was timely and synonymous with my thoughts, and should be shared with my readers.

Since my return to the columns of the Voice Newspapers, it has been a lonely road but never daunting. I felt alone except for those times when I met someone and they remarked I have been reading your articles, keep up the good work. It would be so nice if you will share with me some of your thoughts and your successes especially in the areas of innovation and technology so that I can share with my readers. In the end we will all benefit.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

I know many people are making money on the Internet. Because of my interest in Internet Marketing, I meet with persons from time to time who update me on what they are doing on the Internet. Some are making money on the Stock Market, Currency Trading, Casino Gaming and E-Lotteries (all these are high risk areas which need professional guidance) but there is no serious effort being made to share the information. I am dedicated to making information on Internet Businesses available to my readers and to establish a formal grouping of persons who are interested in developing and participating in internet related businesses, targeting the global village. Please contact me at eaharrisdestiny@gmail.com indicating your interest so that we can move to the next step of getting together and sharing ideas and successes.

As we look into the possibilities of doing business on the Internet, we have to move away from skepticism and be open to new ideas. I will be first to caution you to hold on to your wallets and do not invest on emotions but put it to the test. If you are not given enough information upon which to make a decision, then don't. And it is in this regard that sharing of knowledge and information become critical. Innovation does not only relate to starting from scratch but also in making existing ideas and inventions better. I am convinced that we in the Caribbean are not necessarily short of ideas but we are simply not trusting of each other. It is in ventilating our ideas that clarity emerges and confidence is gained. Dr. Basil Springer introduced the High Impact Growth Strategy (HIGHS) Workshops a few years ago and the amount of innovative ideas that emerged from around the region was staggering.

In any business, information is key, and in the Internet business it is most critical. You need to get breaking news in the industry to position yourself. Here are a few hot tips for 2007:

1. In December 2006, a FREE programme was introduced to me at the launch stage by StormPay. This programme circulates information on Internet Marketing Companies through direct advertising to its Associates who get credits for reading them. I have found this programme to be very informative as to providing information on pre-launch and existing businesses.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

2. You should be aware of the role of search engines in relation to Internet Technology. MSN, Yahoo, Google and thousands of others help us to find our way around the Internet. I referred to the big three and now SearchBigDaddy is about to take them on. This is a very interesting development and it could be very good investment to purchase Key Words and Phrases. Already people who have moved early to acquire Key Words are offering them for sale. What is new is that when you acquire a Key Word or Phrase, every time the word or phrase is typed into the search box of SearchBigDaddy.com, your website comes up at the top. That is promotional value for your website. You can earn enough credits to pay for your Key Words/Phrases. Test drive this programme at: <http://www.SearchBigDaddy.com> and type in the Search Box – St. Lucia and click on Search. Then you can join for FREE at <http://www.BigDaddyPays.com/edharas>

3. You always wanted a website but can't find a webmaster who has the time or just can't afford the cost. Now you can, go check mine out at <http://www.edwardharris.ws> It may not have all the bells and whistles but it gets the message across and you will have the joy of participating in the outcome. This programme is being offered by a very successful company who challenged the .com, .net, .org and .biz and introduced .ws using the network marketing system to promote their business. Get your site at <http://www.website.ws/caribstar>

4. It is just days away from pre-launch of a very interesting company, check it out at <http://www.allnetworker.com/edharas> Take a tour. It is cutting edge with lots of free programmes including access to: <http://www.dizzler.com> offering music, video, radio and games.

I must forewarn you that the Internet Business calls for patience, lots of reading and repetition of information. Some promoters wear you down, they pressure you into taking out your credit/debit card. They are always expressing the urgency to take action. It is not easy but once you learn the game there is serious money to be made. However, if we are to succeed, we must come together and share information on the industry. There is a lot of duplication of programmes being offered in the market and as a result it is necessary to know what is available before jumping in.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

It is a wonderful world in Internet Land. It is my hope that my readers will share this article with their relatives, friends and business associates, and let us begin to explore the opportunities of the Global Village, not only to follow but to innovate and lead. Let us take the first step to build a platform from which to launch our ideas and programmes.

Keep the Faith, God is in charge!

#14 SAINT LUCIA NOW HAS A FEMALE GOVERNOR GENERAL, PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE!!!

January 13, 2007

Edward Harris At Large!

SAINT LUCIA NOW HAS A FEMALE GOVERNOR GENERAL, PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE!!!

To my readers, as we get down to meeting the challenges of the New Year head on, this is my wish to all my readers and their families. The Third Epistle of John, Chapter 1, Verse 2: Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

Keeping the focus on St. Lucia, I am pleased to report that after the most expensive political campaign in the history of St. Lucia, and the celebrations that ensued, the new government of the United Workers Party headed by Sir John Compton has settled down to managing the business of State. History was created at the sitting of joint parliament of the House and the Senate when two females were sworn in to the positions of Speaker of the House, Hon. Sarah-Lucy Flood-Beaubrun, and President of the Senate, Senator The Honourable Dr. Hilda Rose Marie Husbands-Mathurin, joining the Queen's Representative, Dame Pearlette Louisy who continues as Governor General. It is rumored that yet another female is tipped to be Attorney General.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The most urgent business of the new government is to ensure that Cricket World 2007 is a success and that locals benefit from the event. Sir John Compton has already signaled that he wants to see more participation of locals in the programme, especially artistes and musicians. I feel that there are opportunities for small operators in the areas of restaurant catering, entertainment and many specialized services. However, guidance is needed from the promoters of the local CWC 2007 management. Too often we see locals left to fend for themselves without benefiting from the expertise of those who are instrumental in formulating the overall programme.

Interest in Real Estate continues to be high and the building boom continues, especially in the hotel sector. The 500-acre development on the East Coast in the Praslin area is about to take off in a positive way and it should be interesting to keep an eye on this project as it is re-introduced to the market. I look forward to doing a story on this project as it could be a very good investment opportunity.

There are two interesting appointments as Senators who are members of Cabinet with responsibility for Tourism and Civil Aviation – Mr. Allen Chastanet and Trade, Industry and Commerce – Mr. Guy Mayers. In the last government these two portfolios were held by one Minister – Hon. P.J. Pierre. I welcome the separation of the two ministries as Tourism and Commerce are the life blood of our economy and need focused attention. Senator Hon. Allen Chastanet has a wealth of experience in the tourism sector while Senator Hon. Guy Mayers has served as President of the St. Lucia Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture on several occasions and is well versed with matters of international trade. Most important these two gentlemen know what it is to meet a payroll. I expect great things from these two Ministers. Generally, the often-expressed fear that the UWP government will have a problem in putting together a Cabinet has been proven otherwise and we now have a Cabinet that can make us proud.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The drum is sounding off on the Economic Union of CARICOM States which will complete the implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) by 2008. The CSME was only partially implemented in 2005 and actually took effect in 2006 in the smaller islands as their governments refused to sign on unless the US\$100 million-dollar Development Fund was in place. The position at this juncture is that we now have in place a CARICOM Single Market (CSM) with the hope of adding the Economy in 2008 when all the currencies will be unified. It is always a matter of politicians attempting to satisfy their constituents, losing sight of the big picture. It is time that politicians let the people speak for themselves after providing them with the information in a manner that they can understand. It is time for more referenda in our region. Have a hard decision to make as a government, let the people decide. I believe this mechanism could get us ahead much faster than we have traveled so far.

It is my hope that many of my readers will grace St. Lucia with their presence sometime during the course of 2007, either for CWC2007, 14/3/07 – 24/3/07 and 24/4/07, or Jazz, May 3-14/5/07. There is never a dull moment in St. Lucia. It is an ideal destination for Business and Pleasure. It is time you consider owning a piece of the rock.

I invite you to visit my new website at <http://www.edwardharris.ws> and should you wish to catch up on my previous articles, you can visit <http://www.stluciasimplybeautiful.com> Here is my Internet Marketing opportunity for this issue <http://www.agloco.com/r/BBBM1300> It is said if it sounds too good to be true, then it is but I will rather jump in on this one than be left out in the cold if it is true. It is FREE to join.

It is my sincere hope that you have seen a light at the end of the tunnel and you are poised to make 2007 your best year ever!

God is in charge – Keep the Faith – Miracles are in your future!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#15 WILL VISAS REQUIREMENT AFFECT VISITOR ARRIVALS FOR CRICKET WORLD CUP 2007?

January 17, 2007

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE

WILL VISAS REQUIREMENT AFFECT VISITOR ARRIVALS FOR CRICKET WORLD CUP 2007?

Dr. Basil Springer writing in the Barbados Advocate Business Monday, dateline 8/1/07 was very critical about the impact of the Visa requirement for visitors from certain countries seeking to attend the ICC CWC 2007 games and he noted: "I recall that one of the major arguments used in defending the large expenditure by Caribbean Governments in mounting ICC CWC 2007 was the "legacy" benefit. There would be significant TV exposure during the 51 matches, following the 16 warm-up matches, and this would provide a major promotional foundation on which to sell the Caribbean in the future and enhance the tourism arrivals to the Caribbean in a sustained manner. Unfortunately, before the matches have begun there has been instant (information age) world-wide negative publicity which has not subsided since the release that "visitors to the Caribbean from a number of countries participating in the World Cup - in particular India, Pakistan, Australia and New Zealand - will need to obtain a new US\$100 visa".

There are 10 CARICOM States that have placed this restriction and 9 will actually host matches. In recent days our hoteliers are complaining about cancellations and the international tour operators are diverting tourists to Scandinavian countries. Visit <http://www.caricomimpacs.org> to check on countries that are exempted from the CARICOM Special Visa Requirement which comes into effect on February 1 and continues to May 15, 2007.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

I looked at the matches schedule and discovered that 6 Group matches and 1 Semi-Final will be played in St. Lucia between the period March 13-25 and on April 25, 2007. You can view the schedule of matches at <http://www.cricketworldcup.com> By now anyone with interest in ICC CWC 2007 would have heard about the number of matches to be played in St. Lucia, but I am not sure that not everyone has taken a quiet moment to evaluate what would be the likely outcome of the events. We have heard about the world-wide visibility and the legacy that will redound to the hosting nations beyond the overall event. We are expected to be on our best behaviour and to deliver services beyond expectation beginning with easy access to the host countries. I am certain that those charged with the responsibilities to ensure the security of all persons attending the matches must have had good reasons for the decisions that they arrived at in this regard, though it is unfortunate that the Visa issue had to be an integral part. The decision has been taken and we will have to live with it.

Looking on the brighter side, we must be proud of the consistent rating that St. Lucia has been receiving at every stage as we continue to prepare for the event. I believe as the opening date approaches, everything will be in place and we would all say "Let the matches begin!" This is our moment to shine and shine we will!

The Real Estate sub sector is very likely to benefit from ICC CWC 2007 exposure as many visitors are likely to fall in love with our Simply Beautiful St. Lucia and take the decision to own a piece of the rock. This is the time to begin to open up the lands beyond the developed areas in the North of the island. With the opening up of new lands, the construction boom could be sustained. It is time that a financial institution come to the assistance of land owners/developers and put some finances into this area of business endeavour. Should such assistance be put in place, my lives could be transformed as there are lots of families with substantial land holdings but cannot find the money to develop the land.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Here is my Internet pick of the week. Everyone is interested to know how long he/she will live. Longevity is a serious issue. Everyone wants to go to heaven but no one wants to die. We all hope that we will live healthy lives until the rapture and be caught up to meet Jesus in the air. A system to assist you in finding out how long you are likely to occupy your space on this planet, using information on how you live your life and your parent's health history can be viewed at <http://www.eons.com> and interestingly, it is for free. A USA address will be needed to access the report.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge and expect a Miracle in 2007!

#16 CWC 2007 HAS GIVEN CARIBBEAN PEOPLE A BOOST OF FAITH IN THEMSELVES!!!

March 15, 2007

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

CWC 2007 HAS GIVEN CARIBBEAN PEOPLE A BOOST OF FAITH IN THEMSELVES!!!

There was a time when I saw the stars rather than darkness when it was dark. People who read my articles refer to me as a perpetual optimist and some even asked me if I was writing about St. Lucia. I am convinced with every passing day that one of the greatest quotes is by Napoleon Hill, the Author of Think and Grow Rich, "whatever your mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve" It all begins with the mind. Think positively, think not about the negatives of today but the good fortunes of tomorrow and in that statement lies my faith in the principle of positive thinking.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

We need to take positive steps everyday even when the environment in which we exist may indicate otherwise. Many wonderful things have happened in St. Lucia in recent years. Even with so many blessings which have brought with them opportunities, many in our midst continue to doubt themselves. Who would have imagined that the West Indies could have risen to the occasion to host Cricket World Cup 2007? It is a current reality and so far, I have heard nothing to give me cause for concern. Our success brings home a very important point that where there is a will, there is a way. When our political leaders put their minds together to execute a project, it happens. I am obliged to share the words of the Chief Executive Officer of ICC CWC 2007, Chris Dehring, who said that it was an “unprecedented demonstration of unity and togetherness” that came together to forge a single powerful force to get the job done.

I am very pleased that permission has been given to reproduce the motivational gem hereunder and I further take the privilege of sharing with you a source for your daily motivation which I subscribed to for several months. Visit <http://www.yourdailymotivation.com> and register to receive a daily email that will enhance your ability to cope with the challenges of life.

THERE IS ALWAYS A GOOD SIDE.

Everything depends on the way you look at things.
View every problem you encounter as an opportunity.
There is always a good side to every situation.

The optimist sees an opportunity in every misfortune.
The pessimist sees misfortune in every opportunity.
The optimist sees the doughnut,
the pessimist sees the hole.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

You can develop success from every failure.
Discouragement and failure are two stepping stones to success.
No other elements can do so much for you
if you're willing to study them and make them work for you.

When it is dark enough, you can see the stars.

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There are so many wonderful things happening in our midst. Just look around, give thanks and commit to greater things and as in the Jabez Prayer found in 1st Chronicles, Chapter 4, Verse 10, Jabez called on the Heavenly Father to bless him and enlarge his territory. St. Lucia is no longer in transition; it is in expansion mode. We must be motivated by what we see, and from our current base see the possibilities of an even brighter future. There are numerous developments taking place around us that should motivate us, but many times what we see and hear are totally different from the reality at hand.

CWC 2007 has given us faith in ourselves, we are now convinced that we can achieve what we set out to do and there are those in our midst who are committed to regional progress as any other group of people in the world. This is our moment to shine and I am confident that we will shine. What should be our next project? My priority would be the CSME Development Fund which is taking too long to be capitalized. Then there is the need to put mechanism in place for disbursing the funds so that we can get on with the task at hand - to make our industries and businesses competitive so that we can meet the global challenges in trade, industry and commerce head on.

Continue to enjoy CWC 2007 and remember that you read it in this column, "the best is yet to come!" I have a gift (The Power of Affirmation) for you at:
<http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/edalharris>
Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, and Expect Miracles in 2007!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#17 IT'S CRICKET LOVELY CRICKET AROUND THE CARIBBEAN AND ST. LUCIA IS NO EXCEPTION!!!

March 12, 2007

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

IT'S CRICKET LOVELY CRICKET AROUND THE CARIBBEAN AND ST. LUCIA IS NO EXCEPTION!!!

It will be excitement like never seen throughout the Caribbean. ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 kicked off to a fantastic start on Sunday, March 11, 2007 at the Trelawny Multi-Purpose Stadium, Florence Hall, Trelawny, Jamaica. Many of us in the other islands were content with looking at the Extravaganza on our televisions. What a spectacle it was. The stars came out to shine as the best of the best artistes from around the region and beyond graced the stage. The performers were from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Jamaica, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Ireland, and South Africa included: Alison Hinds, Arrow, Beres Hammond, Boogsie Sharp, Buju Banton, David Rudder, Dean Frazer, The Duffy Brothers (Ireland), Fay-Ann Lyons, Gregory Isaacs, Half Pint, The I Threes, Jimmy Cliff, Kevin Lyttle, Lucky Dube (South Africa), Machel Montano, Rupee, Sean Paul, Shaggy, Sly & Robbie.

It was a glorious night for which Caribbean people wherever they are should be justly proud. It seems definite that we will live up to our promise of producing the Best Cricket World Cup ever. Chris Dehring, CEO of ICC CWC 2007 described the coming together of the Caribbean people and their leaders as “unprecedented demonstration of unity and togetherness”.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The debate on the cost of hosting the tournament has not subsided but most of us are ready to conclude it is worth the effort. The true excellence of our Caribbean people will be seen around the world and the level of respect for our people wherever they find themselves will be enhanced.

This is our big break when the world will get to know us and experience our culture and our capabilities. It is going to be Hot! Hot! Hot!!! There could not have been a better time for such an event in the Caribbean, technology is on our side, we are going to be seen throughout the time zones of the world. There can be no greater exposure at this juncture and I am convinced that the legacy as it relates to tourism is secured. The world will want to experience our unique Caribbean Culture where there is never a dull moment even if the rain falls.

As I write this article the teams are arriving at their hotels and I rushed out to see the luxury buses and cars, being escorted by police outriders on spanking new motorcycles, even an ambulance was included in the escort party. With the arrival of the teams the momentum is building. The Division "C" teams from England, Canada, New Zealand and Kenya are based in St. Lucia.

There is going to be lots of fun. Every night there will be free entertainment at several venues in the North and other communities around the island. We are well prepared to ensure that our visitors receive such hospitality that will engender memories for a lifetime.

When the first round comes to an end on March 25, 2007, the next game will be the Semi Final on April 25, 2007, a break of one month. This gives us an opportunity to assess our performance and produce our best efforts in ensuring that we keep our promise as our capabilities will be truly tested at that time.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Cricket has an exciting future and a win for the West at this tournament will create a real legacy for the game as it will be a long time before another Cricket World Cup will grace our shores again. It important to note the recent success of 20/20 Cricket which was introduced by Sir Allen Stanford in the region has become internationally accepted and is poised to be adopted by non-cricketing countries like the USA. At the end of the ICC CWC 2007 matches, I envisage the establishment of a Cricket Academy in every CARICOM State. We must take a new approach to the business of cricket. There is too much at stake to continue to ignore such a powerful economic entity. Our young, promising cricketers must no longer be left on their own to chance. They must be nurtured with Discipline as the watch word.

Let us wish all the teams well but pray and Rally Round the West Indies so that they can be victorious and we can all conclude that the GLORY IS TRULY OURS!

As usual – Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Expect Miracles in 2007!

#18 ARE WE ACHIEVING OUR EXPECTATIONS FROM CWC 2007???

March 22, 2007

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!!!

ARE WE ACHIEVING OUR EXPECTATIONS FROM CWC 2007???

Has Cricket World Cup 2007 delivered on the expectations of the business community? I guess it is early days yet and those who are optimistic will eagerly look forward to the semifinal a month away. However, up to this point, many businesspersons are not optimistic about the outcome. The hotel sector has been voicing some concerns but again it is early days and patience could bring some comfort in the end.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

I expect to be in a better position to assess the situation when members of SLISBA meet on Sunday, March 25, 2007 at 4.00pm at the Central Library at the corner of Bourbon and Micoud Streets, Castries and the Realtors Association on Wednesday, March 28, 2007 at 6.00pm at the Bay Gardens Conference, Rodney Bay. I will share some of their comments with you in next article. I am hoping that the feedback will be overwhelmingly positive as we have spent a lot of time planning for the CWC 2007 event and many persons are expecting a well-deserved PAY DAY. Our expectations in this part of the world overlooked a significant aspect of the income generating strategy and that simply is that all of the previous Cricket World Cup events took place in one land mass. Because of that simple fact, there was something for everyone. It is very clear that Vieux Fort, Soufriere and the outlying districts will not benefit from this event. The restaurants and bars in those areas are likely to lose business as many of their patrons journey to the North to attend matches.

The post mortem on the performance of CWC 2007 should be interesting on the business side as well as the game. No West Indian will take it too serious as to die from a heart attack. That is just not our style. Cricket is a game in the Caribbean, it is a fun thing, but for many of the other nations, it is a war. It is all about supremacy at the game. Jamaica is a serious country, everyone is quite aware 'them Jamaicans nah mek joke'. It is good that the West Indies were based in Jamaica so that they could have made good of their continuance in the game and advanced to the next round. I have a suspicion that a few of them bad boys whispered in the players ears after their humiliation in the warm up match, and they heard them. I will continue to look on at how they continue to perform in the next round. Are you ready to predict a win for the West Indies? That will be the real legacy!

In spite of all of the happenings around us, everyone is anxious to know when is Budget Day? It seems as though, like the call for a specific date to be legislated for calling Parliamentary Elections so it should be with the National Budget. Too many anxious moments are recorded in the lives of our people. Stress is a killer; even good stress could be overwhelmed and allow bad stress to dominate and hasten citizens to their graves. We are truly living up to the slogan – there is never a dull moment in the Caribbean!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The English Vice Cricket Captain couldn't wait to party, he mixed business with pleasure, that's how luring St. Lucia can be. He could be a great Ambassador to lead a crusade of fun-loving English tourists to our island. It is Irresistible Fun in St. Lucia. Usually in my blogging, I promote St. Lucia as an ideal destination for Business and Pleasure and in recent months I added Retirement. It is a great combination.

This is a very difficult period for many of our brothers and sisters who normally give up on certain cravings during lent, alcohol being chief among them. I guess many of them gave up on the idea this year and promised faithfully to return to their commitment next year. I can understand that kind of behaviour because I know of someone who makes a deal with God for a weekend off. I will settle for the promise of abundant living, knowing that my Saviour paid the price so that I may be free. I guess many of you will say – Amen!

I had a very important story for this week on some breaking news that businesspersons need to know and take action but I decided to enjoy the fun with friends until this period where almost everyone is preoccupied with CWC 2007 is over.

In the meantime, Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Expect Miracles in 2007!

#19 THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO BE IN ST. LUCIA!!!

March 28, 2007

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE

THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO BE IN ST. LUCIA!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Cricket World Cup 2007 Group 1 matches in St. Lucia ended last Saturday with a win for England and now St. Lucians are eagerly awaiting the Semi Final scheduled for 25th April, 2007. If we are to be guided by the number of non-cricket events that were held in several parts of the country during period 13-25/3/07 you can imagine what a partying time it will be to welcome and entertain the thousands of visitors during period of the Semi Final.

The major activities will take place between 24-26/4/07. It is going to be 3 days of nonstop partying. It is this period that most of us who reside in St. Lucia are eagerly awaiting. It is going to be Hot like Fire! St. Lucia will be turned into an entertainment venue hard to be matched even by the more developed countries in the region. It is for some unexplainable reason that St. Lucia is just different. It is Simply Beautiful, it is Nice, its people are friendly and they love to fete! I keep imagining twenty thousand people in the Beausejour Cricket Ground, eleven Cruise Ships anchored along the Northern Coast Line, the airports with aircrafts bursting at their seams, etc... This Semi Final event will test our capabilities on several fronts. I expect our nation to perform, so when doubts try to disrupt my positive thoughts of a happy ending, I console myself by remembering this too will pass. We all have to be the best we can in whatever area we are called to serve, and as a consequence, the results can only be rewarding for everyone and our legacy be assured.

After the capital outlay of over a billion US dollars by the public and private sectors throughout the 9 participating countries, the debate is emerging as to the real benefits that will be derived from the investment. We continue to hear about the Legacy in terms of the countries' exposure to the world and as a result visitor' arrivals will be increased; tourism will prosper and investment flows will substantially improve. Those areas could begin to yield results within 3-6 months and be sustained between 3-5 years. The immediate benefit however, is that we have proven that St. Lucians have the ability to rise to the occasion and deliver on their promises. We promised to deliver the best World Cup ever and we are about to prove it. Over the past two weeks there has been no negative reporting on the behaviour of our people and I expect that situation to continue.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

I am very involved in the Real Estate Services Sector and the Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation is on record as citing the Real Estate Sector as a major beneficiary of CWC 2007. From my vantage point the prices for properties listed on <http://www.stluciarealtors.com> have not moved upward but there is no guarantee that such a development will not occur. My advice to Caribbean people, especially overseas based St. Lucians is to seize the moment and own a piece of the rock that is St. Lucia which continues to be an idea destination for Business, Pleasure and Retirement.

St. Lucians are anxiously awaiting the 2007/2008 Budget which is scheduled to be presented in the Parliament during the month of April, 2007. The Prime Minister has given a signal that it has to be a Budget that will generate savings to be ploughed into development. The Opposition Leader continues to argue that if savings are going to be achieved, there must be job cuts in the Civil Service. The debate on the Budget this year is going to be very interesting and will be worth following in the media and on the Government website <http://www.stlucia.gov.lc> which will carry the entire budget presentation. You know the party with the majority in the House has the vote, so after all the debate, what is written in the Budget document stands. There is one expectation shared by the majority of St. Lucians is that there will be no new taxes in the presentation but should the need arise, there is always the possibility of a supplementary budget.

There are very exciting times ahead in St. Lucia and during the next six weeks in spite of whatever else is happening, there will be no stopping the party. If you miss out on the cricket, there is always St. Lucia Jazz, May 4-13, 2007. I don't need to tell you what you are missing, you can check out the English Cricket Vice Captain couldn't wait to party, he mixed business with pleasure, that's how luring St. Lucia can be. He could be a great Ambassador to lead a crusade of fun-loving English tourists to our island. It is Irresistibly Fun in St. Lucia.

As usual Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Expect Miracles in 2007!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#20 GUYANA – ST. LUCIA ASSOCIATION CELEBRATED THE 41ST INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY IN GRAND STYLE!

May 29, 2007

Edward Harris At Large!

GUYANA – ST. LUCIA ASSOCIATION CELEBRATED THE 41ST INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY IN GRAND STYLE!

The evening of May 26, 2007 will long be remembered by Guyanese and their friends living in St. Lucia as they celebrated the 41st Independence Anniversary of Guyana. The evening brought together members of sister Associations from Antigua and Barbuda, St. Martin and members of the Jamaica – St. Lucia Association.

The celebration took place at the Spinners' Entertainment Centre, Union, Castries. Mr. Horace Fraser, popular Guyanese Attorney at Law was the Master of Ceremonies. The evening began on a high note with the Invocation by Immediate Past President Edward Harris who prayed for unity among Guyanese everywhere, good governance at home and for the ailing Prime Minister of St. Lucia, Hon. Sir John Compton. Most of all that the evening's occasion be dedicated to the honour and glory of God. The President of the Association Mr. Nial Beaton and the Honorary Consul for Guyana to St. Lucia addressed the gathering. The feature address was given by Eldon Mathurin, a St. Lucian with a long association with Guyana and Guyanese. Technology was used to the fullest to feature highlights of the Awardees and present a video on Guyana and its peoples.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The Independence Anniversary Celebration for the past six years was marked with a gathering of Guyanese and well-wishers which attracted up to 400 persons. The celebration this year marked the 7th time and the organizers decided upon a different approach and made it a grand affair of a Dinner and Dance. To crown things off the Love Connection, a one-man band from Georgetown, Guyana was on hand to provide the music. The highlight of the occasion is usually the AWARDS CEREMONY where citizens of Guyanese descent are honoured for their outstanding contributions to the St. Lucian Society. Past honourees included such names as Madhoo Beepat, Ronald Ramjattan, Henry Hinds, Joseph Reds Perriera, Ron Savoury, Edward Harris, to name a few. This year there were three Awardees namely: Mrs. Margaret Clavier, Messrs Shamsundar Jarbandon and Tony Austin. The Awardees were well received by the audience.

There were 25 door prizes ranging from weekends at top resorts on the island to airline tickets. Mr. David Singh, although he was not present at the function, gave 2 airline return tickets to Guyana.

During the week, May 20-26, 2007 St. Lucia was graced with the presence of Guyanese born David Singh, Chairman & CEO of the Destiny Group of Companies based in Canada and a team of his top Executives and their families. Mr. Singh donated to the Medical Services in St. Lucia over EC\$5 million comprising of electric hospital beds, a building to house a cafeteria, fully equipped with a gym for members of staff at the Victoria Hospital, medical equipment and supplies.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

There were a number of important persons on the tour with Mr. Singh including Mr. Joe Fontana, a former Minister of Labour in Canada and who is the trustee of a new initiative in collaboration with Mr. Singh called "One World Humanitarian Bank" where professionals will deposit their expertise and volunteer their services as the needs arise from time to time. Also accompanying Mr. Singh was Mr. Adrion Smith, an ex-footballer who played with the Toronto Argonauts Football Team until his retirement. He is the Founder of R.A.R.E acronym for Responsibility, Attitude, Respect and Education. Special programmes are targeted to students 9 - 13 years in groups of 300. In collaboration with Mr. Singh, they did 100 such sessions in 2006. While in St. Lucia they introduced the programme to students of the Gros islet Primary School. If there is ever a time that there is a need for young people to dare to be RARE, it is now!

Apart from the humanitarian outreach programmes being promoted by Mr. Singh, he has his eyes on two important areas in the Financial Services sector, namely: - Offshore Banking and the Money Transfer businesses. The next few months could see the Group well established in these vital areas of financial services. His investment in real estate on the island sets the stage for a major tourism project in the Pigeon Island area and given the network of Investors, Tax and Financial Consultants on his team, putting together the financial requirement of the project should not be a problem. The Destiny Village project is already receiving attention from locals and visitors and in the months ahead the project will be unveiled.

The Prime Minister of St. Lucia, Hon. Sir John Compton continues to recuperate at home after a few mini strokes. The nation and well-wishers are asked to remember him and his family in their prayers at this time.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Expect Miracles in 2007!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#21 THE TOURIST BOARD HAS DONE SOMETHING TO ATTRACT VISITORS – WHAT IS LIAT, THE STAR OF THE CARIBBEAN DOING???????

June 13, 2007

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

THE TOURIST BOARD HAS DONE SOMETHING TO ATTRACT VISITORS – WHAT IS LIAT, THE STAR OF THE CARIBBEAN DOING???????

There are a few developments taking place in St. Lucia that are worthy of note. The St. Lucia Tourist Board is wooing visitors to St. Lucia with its Super Summer Savings promotion during the Summer months, ending November 30, 2007. This is a very good effort and should earn the island substantial goodwill as satisfied visitors spread the word to family and friends.

The past few weeks have seen a number of Conferences being hosted in St. Lucia. For a moment I was beginning to think that the high airfares are deterring organizers from using St. Lucia as their destination of choice.

A number of articles have been written on the subject of increased fares without any indication of a reduction in sight. I am not one to give up easily on worrying issues and I feel that if Liat, Star of the Caribbean Airline was established to serve the citizens of the sub region then it cannot do what it pleases in spite of the cries of the people. The fares are definitely affecting businesses and individuals who need to travel around the region. Can we see some relief in the Summer? I firmly believe that something will have to be done.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

It is not easy to invite competition in the airline industry as recent attempts in the region were not successful. The memories of Carib Star, Helen Air and EC Express are all fresh in our minds. The question is: are the fares currently charged by our Airline realistic or is there some kind of price gouging going on? There must be some answers to our questions or are the Directors oblivious to the problems of their customers? Why are the simple things so difficult to be solved? There is always talk about foreign monopoly but when our own monopoly acts so harshly with its own, who do we appeal to? It is said the voice of the people is the voice of God, so I expect to be treated fairly or Miracles will have to be performed.

There is talk about the introduction of high-speed boats to challenge the cost of air transportation. However, this is not the first time I heard about such a project. But the current ferry services operated to Martinique and Dominica from St. Lucia does prove that such a service is viable at least in area that it currently operates. The recent promotional blitz of Wave Riders with Bill Boards of all sizes around the island offering passenger trips to Martinique is an indication of the possibilities of sea transportation.

Do we wait to see if Liat, Star of the Caribbean Airline will launch a Summer promotion in the first instance and then seriously look into the possibility of restructuring their airfares in the future to be affordable to the traveling public? Or do we invite competition from another airline? It is only fair that our Governments seek to ascertain whether the airfares charged by Caribbean Airline are fair. If the fares are fair, a decision will have to be taken as to how we deal with declining travel in the region which seriously affects our tourist arrivals and reduces St. Lucia's favourable position as a preferred conference destination.

In situations like these when things are not what they should be in spite they can be what we expect them to be, there is only one thing to do is to enjoy the party. It is Carnival time and the season has just begun so I am off to the tents. The Ambassador Tent is celebrating 25 years in the business. Their season opened Wednesday last and it was great, the old and young boys shone in their glory. Youth and experience is still a combination to beat. My calypsonian for the opening night at the Cultural Centre was Pelay! Keep abreast of Carnival 2007 at <http://www.luciancarnival.com>

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

My internet marketing pick for the week is Evolution. Check it out at <http://www.evolutioniscoming.com/EVO155882EH>

Work Hard!

For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat. 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 NIV

HAPPY FATHERS DAY!

Have a great weekend! Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Expect Miracles in 2007!

#22 ST. LUCIA INDUSTRIAL & SMALL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (SLISBA) THE PAST, THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE!!!

August 2, 2007

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE:

ST. LUCIA INDUSTRIAL & SMALL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (SLISBA) THE PAST, THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE!!!

Twenty-five continuous years in the life of any organization is commendable. SLISBA celebrates twenty-five years of service to the business community in St. Lucia. In recognition of this significant milestone the Directors of SLISBA designated the month of August, 2007 as "SMALL BUSINESS MONTH". This initiative was endorsed by the Ministry of Trade, Industry & Commerce and Senator, Hon. Guy Mayers officially launched the month of activities at a simple ceremony held at the Auberge Seraphine, Pt. Seraphine on Thursday, July 26, 2007.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The beginning – Looking back:

It is said that those who fail to remember the past are condemned to repeat it. I believe that the past instructs the future. It is against this background that I seek to draw to the attention of my readers, the struggles of SLISBA over the years. Looking at the business landscape 25 years ago when there was no representation of small businesses on the island, a group of small businesspersons got together and formed the Small Business Association in 1982. Mr. Steve Annius became its first President. Just around the same time operators in the fledging manufacturing sector organized representation through the St. Lucia Manufacturers Association under the leadership of Mr. Leo Clarke.

The Merger:

The two organizations struggled along for the first seven years at which point a strategic decision was taken to merge the two organizations and present a uniformed platform to represent small businesses in St. Lucia. The new organization was named St. Lucia Industrial & Small Business Association with the acronym SLISBA. The office was located in the Monplaisir Building on Brazil Street, Castries. Earlier Executive Directors include Ms. Claudia Jn Baptiste and Dr. Urban Seraphin.

The high and low periods of the Association:

As financial fortunes changed over time and the level of assistance varied, the Association delivery of service to its members was curtailed. The Association moved office several times. Sometimes members assisted by maintaining the office, meeting all expenses, others housed the association within their businesses but the core objective of the Association – ADVOCACY which continues up to this day was always maintained.

The withdrawal of USAID support from the Eastern Caribbean greatly affected the operations of SLISBA until 2005 when the Government granted the Association a subvention of one hundred thousand EC dollars (EC\$100,000.00). This support was repeated in 2006.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Mr. Steve Annius recalled at the launching of Small Business Month, the enviable position SLISBA held as a private sector Association. Most Representatives from international agencies who visited St. Lucia called at the Secretariat to be briefed on developments in the small business sector. During the past twelve years there were a few companies that stood out in their support to the Association, namely: Roserie Group of Companies, Unique Printers and Speed Printing Services. The Managing Director of Speed Printing Services is a current member of SLISBA's Board of Directors.

One thing that stands out over the years is the will of small businesspersons to maintain the presence of SLISBA. SLISBA has always maintained a presence and have been there for the business community in general. The records will attest to that fact. Members will come and go and return but two members have kept the faith over the years and have been active from the inception of SLISBA. They are Priestley Louison and Tedburt Theobalds who are members of the current Board of Directors. The longest affiliated member in the manufacturing sector is Mr. Peter Charles whose membership dates back to the merger.

SLISBA's membership at its peak was in excess of 150. It has been noted that when there are challenges to the operations of business, membership is at its highest but when things are quiet, interest tends to be low. However, SLISBA has always been the fire engine ready to respond to fires whenever called upon.

SLISBA – A VITAL ENTITY IN PRIVATE SECTOR ADVOCACY:

SLISBA has continued over the years whenever called upon to participate fully in all initiatives promoted by the government and those in collaboration between the Government and international/regional agencies.

It was SLISBA, given its strong base of members in the manufacturing sector that moved to get Hon. Walter Francois, the then Minister of Commerce to resist Dominica's position to do away with Article 56 and as a result the regime was extended for several years thereafter. The Chamber was fully supportive of the initiative.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

SLISBA used its membership base of manufacturers to push for a St. Lucia Manufacturers Association as it was felt that the time had come for Manufacturers to stand on their own once again. The SMA made substantial gains in recent years and their members have benefited from many interventions and concessions by the Government. Many Manufacturers still maintain their membership in SLISBA.

Directors and members of SLISBA have served and chaired numerous Boards over the years and have contributed substantially to the economic development of the country.

Through the support of SLISBA many small businesses have grown substantially.

Apart from the Advocacy, SLISBA has always offered a platform for networking among its members.

The Present Term 2005- 2007:

SLISBA under the leadership of the current Board of Directors headed by Mr. Patrick H. Joseph since 2003 has overcome many challenges. After suffering a number of setbacks in acquiring office space, including after equipping an office offered by FICS at no cost to the Association for 2 years, the building was completely destroyed by fire. Finally, in 2005 a Secretariat was established in the American Drywall Building, Vide Boutielle, Castries. The current Board of Directors comprises of the following persons:

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS - 2005/2007, Patrick H. Joseph - President, Hilton Jn. Baptiste - 1st Vice President, John Honora - 2nd Vice President, Callista Mc. Lawrence - Secretary, Priestley Louison - Treasurer, Vincent Doxerie - Member, Tedburt Theobalds - Member, Eldridge Stephens - Member.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Since the establishment of the Secretariat with a subvention from Government, a number of positive developments have occurred, namely:

a) SLISBA became a founding member of the Caribbean Association of Small & Medium Enterprises (CASME) based in Barbados. This is the umbrella organization of Small Business Associations in the region and is headquartered in Barbados. The current President is Senator Sandra Husbands and the Executive Director is Ms. Lynette Holder.

The Small Business Association of Barbados and CASME continue to share their experiences with SLISBA and have met with Government Officials in the Ministry of Commerce.

b) Through CASME's support SLISBA received assistance from Caribbean Export Development Agency (CEDA) for a Strategic Plan which was implemented in the first quarter of 2007.

c) The paid up Membership of the Association is at its highest in recent years. Quarterly Meetings for 2007 were held in Castries and Vieux Fort.

d) Relationships are being forged with Embassies, Regional and International Agencies and support is continuing from OPSR.

e) The Association has a new website which was funded by OPSR. Visit <http://www.slisbastlucia.com>

f) Advocacy and Networking continue to be the main platform of the Association.

g) With the support of VIP Consultants, SLISBA members participated in a Trade and Cultural Exhibition in Cayenne in 2006. A MOU was signed by the Mayor of Matoury and the President of SLISBA.

h) Mr. Edward Harris, former Secretary and President of SLISBA was recruited as Management Consultant in February, 2007.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The future:

The activities planned for the month of August – 2007 will expose the work of SLISBA to the nation. The 18th Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held on the 19th of August, 2007 and a new Board of Directors will be elected.

- a) SLISBA is poised for a major thrust in improved collaboration with Government and other agencies, local, regional and international serving the SME sector.
- b) Relationship with SEDU and OPSR will be strengthened.
- c) SLISBA's services to its membership will be substantially improved in the months ahead.
- d) Training will be undertaken to equip members in the use of Computer programmes and the Internet.
- e) Overseas trips to Trade Exhibitions and participation in Trade Fairs will be encouraged.
- f) SLISBA will continue to actively participate in the Private Sector Council of St. Lucia.

The activities for the month of August – Small Business Month include the following:

August 5, 2007: Sunday 10.00 am Church Service – Catholic Church, La Clery.

13, 2007: Monday 6.00 pm Town Hall Meeting – Vieux Fort

15, 2007: Wednesday 6.00 pm Town Hall Meeting – Soufriere

19, 2007: Sunday 2.30 pm SLISBA 18th Annual General Meeting –

Fox Grove Inn, Mon Repos

25, 2007: Saturday 8.00 pm 25th Anniversary Dance – Nashville Palace,
Castries

25, 2007: Saturday 10.00pm 25th Anniversary Raffle Draw

August 30 – September 1, 2007: Thursday, Friday & Saturday 10.00 am – 6.00 pm – Small
Business Expo, City Hall, Castries

It is going to take the cooperation of all stakeholders to ensure that the month of activities is a success, and their continued support to ensure future successes of the Association. If you can sponsor or contribute to the programmes scheduled for the month of activities, please contact the Secretariat – Tel: 452-7616, Fax 453-1023 Email: slisbaslu@gmail.com Small businesspersons are invited to participate fully in all the activities including the 3-day Small Business Expo. Make SMALL BUSINESS EXPO 2007 succeed.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

You are invited to join SLISBA. Request an Application Form and the Flier – 25 REASONS FOR JOINING SLISBA! Be a part of a dynamic organization that ensures your representation in the private and public sectors. It is a great investment – Membership is only EC\$160.00 per annum.

See you in church on Sunday. In the meantime, Keep the Faith, God is in Charge and Expect Miracles in 2007!

#23 ANOTHER STANDARD IS COMING!

September 13, 2007

ANOTHER STANDARD IS COMING!

I had the opportunity to attend a Regional Seminar held in Trinidad, September 10-12, 2007 on the theme “Promoting Social Responsibility in Small and Medium Sized Businesses in the Caribbean”. The Seminar was organized by the Organization of American States (OAS), Young Americas Business Trust (YATB), the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development of the Organization of American States (SEDI/OAS) with the support of Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean UN-ECLAC and the Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce (CAIC). The importance of the Seminar could be noted from the organizations that supported the initiative.

On the second day of the Seminar, the Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza of the OAS addressed participants. He drew attention to poverty and crime and lamented on the ills of society. He noted that one out of every four young persons in Latin America and the Caribbean not going to school or not working. Young people between the ages of 15 – 29 who went overseas at tender ages and become first time offenders are being deported back to the countries of their birth for simple misdemeanors after being incarcerated with hardened criminals. The UN and the OAS are committed to CSR.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

St. Lucia was represented by five persons drawn from the private and public sectors. Other participants were drawn from Guyana, Trinidad, Barbados and Jamaica. There were some concerns by participants as to why the Seminar targeted Small and Medium Enterprises but two positions were advanced. 1. That large businesses are already practicing CSR and 2. That SMEs are the largest group of employers, employing over 60 percent of the work force.

It was noted that CSR gives businesses a social conscience and improves corporate image. Generally, CSR when effectively applied will make a significant difference to the bottom line. CSR is seen as one standard that every business can apply some aspect of it to its core business.

It is recommended that Businesspersons begin the process of learning and applying CSR by visiting <http://www.compact.org> and become a part of this transforming standard that promotes giving back to your community. Businesses can change the world while increasing their bottom line with the effective application of CSR. A regional seminar will be held in Barbados in November as the process of informing and training persons that are committed to the life changing effects of CSR so that they can become ambassadors to spread the CSR doctrine.

The standard is about Corporate Social Responsibility (CRS) and will be available to the business sector within months. It will be guided by ISO 26000 which comes into effect by 2009. What is CSR? A definition provided by the promoters is "Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a business approach that views respect for ethics, people, communities and the environment, as an integral strategy that increases value added and thus improves the competitive position of a firm".

Already some large and small companies are practicing some form of CSR especially in the area of philanthropy. Until now there is no measurement of what benefits are being derived from the ad hoc philanthropic support that is given to communities in the region. CSR as a standard will measure the impact of all aspects of Corporate Social Responsible endeavors.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

This is one standard that seems to be a natural. You will discover that many of the areas of activity you identify to undertake you should have been doing them a long time ago. The shocker is you would have been so much more advanced in your business. Remember it is in giving that you receive and the interesting part is that in many instances, organization/effective management takes the place of money. I am committed to pursuing CSR and ask that you join the St. Lucia CSR team as they collaborate with the St. Lucia Bureau of Standards to introduce CSR to businesses in St. Lucia.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Expect Miracles in 2007.

#24 THERE WAS A MAN SENT FROM GOD WHOSE NAME WAS JOHN!!!

September 26, 2007

Edward Harris at Large!

THERE WAS A MAN SENT FROM GOD WHOSE NAME WAS JOHN!!!

My first order of business in this article is to extend condolences to Lady Janice Compton on the passing of her husband, The Right Honourable Sir John Compton, Prime Minister. These sentiments are also expressed to the members of his family. May his soul rest in peace.

They came from far and near to pay their final respects to Sir John Compton. It is like the old saying you never miss the water until the well runs dry. It is in dying that he lives. The tributes poured in, many who had so much negative things to say, all worshipped at his feet singing praises.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The monuments we cause to be erected, the legacy of our actions – was it worthwhile? That is the question that will be asked of each of us as we cross over the other side to eternity. I watched our deceased Prime Minister deliver his 2007/2008 Budget Address and it was nothing short of an anointed delivery that clearly defined the vision of a man sent by God whose name was John. Then I watched the funeral service where the life of this great Caribbean Man was shared with the world. St. Lucia stood tall in his life and in his death. To God be the glory!

Only a blind person will not be able to see the economic and social advancements of St. Lucia through the years. The vision of one man can change the world for good or for evil. Sir John Compton changed St. Lucia for the better. The challenge is ours to carry on the task of continuing on the high road of continued progress which he charted so clearly for us. It will take years of intense developmental work to complete the journey of the vision in the 2007/2008 Budget.

The sense of peace and stability which St. Lucia enjoys is due to the vision which was implemented by Sir John Compton. Of course, the state of well-being of the nation is allowed because of the fact that democracy is at work in St. Lucia. The opposition parties in spite of their dissatisfaction from time to time have not made any serious attempt at destabilizing the Government of the day, be it SLP or UWP.

A perfect vision must be built on a platform of giving back – caring and sharing. Sir John Compton affectionately referred to as the Father of the Nation cared for the people of St. Lucia. He shared his life with the nation, always seeking out ways to improve living conditions. He placed service above self. As we go forward, we will need to change the way we think and act to a large extent. It cannot be business as usual. The wind is beneath our wings, let us soar to new heights. Let the out pouring of love for our deceased Prime Minister be translated into action.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

In relation to the private sector, I recall the days under the UWP administration led by Sir John Compton when local manufacturers were protected and given approved industry status that guaranteed that the local market demand would first be met by the locally produced products. Those years will never return unless we decide to isolate ourselves from the WTO regulations. The ongoing negotiations with the EU will necessitate putting country before self and the legacy of Sir John Compton in this regard should be the guiding principle.

The work of his successor, Honourable Stephenson King, newly appointed Prime Minister is cut out for him and his task could be made easy if the level of respect given to Sir John Compton at his passing could be translated into working to achieve his dreams for a better St. Lucia.

Sir John Compton was named Man of the Century in the St. Lucia context by one of our local publication and it was fitting that he got the Funeral of the Century.

Let us all look to the future with hope and do everything to ensure that the life and work of The Right Honourable Sir John George Melvin Compton was not in vain.

Remember always to Keep the Faith, God is in Charge and expect Miracles in 2007!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#25 INCREDIBLE INDIA! ARE YOU DOING BUSINESS WITH INDIA???

October 4, 2007

Edward Harris At Large!

INCREDIBLE INDIA! ARE YOU DOING BUSINESS WITH INDIA???

India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Its cultural diversity is so rich that it caused the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to take note and in recent months have been featuring aspects of life in India. Incredible India! The Spirituality, Food, Dance, Customs and much more that make India the incredible nation that it is. Visit <http://www.indianembassy.org/indiainfo> and get an appreciation for India and its people.

It is important to note that the cultural aspects of this nation drive its economy. Their weddings are out of this world and the affluence of families is pushed to the limit. It is all about the tradition. The richness of the culture was seen in a recent five-day wedding celebration by an Indian family in St. Lucia. There is no limit to what is spent in ensuring that happiness is engendered in the lives of the newly wed. The Dowry in many instances is a starting point in the financial foundation of the couple. The wedding ceremony draws on life's experiences and teaches lessons in marital and family relationship. The Hindu culture has many values that the world can learn from.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

India's impact on the global technology business is the direct result of a well-planned strategy to exploit a growth sector and gain dominance in the market place. The Indian public and private sectors trained their people to provide the type of service that will be in demand at competitive prices. Services exports generally have come of age and India is providing services to the world. Their technology, nursing and other professional services are in demand around the world. This did not happen by accident and because English is widely spoken in India, they are able to provide services to the major English speaking developed economies around the world.

In recent times, India has become a major supplier of competitively priced industrial machinery and equipment to the world. It can be a source for small businesspersons to get into small scale manufacturing. Indian technology has taken its place in the world market. A St. Lucian manufacturer is already taking advantage of the Indian technology. The time has come for our business people to look to India as a source for all types of goods and services.

The best approach is to find a company that is prepared to work with you to provide sources for your supplies at internationally competitive prices. Individuals with large construction projects can also benefit from a relationship with a Buying House in India. It has been a while since I have shared with you a real business opportunity and this could be one. If India has it, this company can source it. Just request it and they will respond to you. It is a Multi-Product General Trading Company with a team of young, professionally qualified personnel from India, dealing in wide varieties of industrial and consumer products. The Company has emerged as a reliable supply source for various products and seeks to work with companies/individuals as their India associates. Here is a listing of some of the products they are already providing:

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Industry and products: *Pet Bottles Making Plant (1 liter to 20 liters bottle) with or without complete bottling plant *Injection Molding Machines with molds for making any plastic products from small PVC straps of 1" to chairs (any plastic products) * Extruders to make plastic pipes, gutters, etc. *Construction Machinery *Steel Products *Granite, Marble and ceramic products *Plastic Products *Tools *Pharmaceuticals *Electrical appliances *Power appliance like Inverters, UPS & Cables *Home Appliances *Kitchen Appliances including Stainless Steel Sinks *Educational toys, board games etc. *Herbal cosmetic products *Material handling equipment *Solar products – Solar water heaters, Solar Power plants *Furnaces *Wooden Doors *Hand Tools and Machine Tools *Molds & Dyes.

Shipments from India take approximately 60 days. The company will ship break bulk and container loads.

They will be pleased to locate suppliers and provide quote for any product produced in India for Export. Direct your enquiries to: K.VERMA, DIRECTOR – KANNU IMPEX INDIA PVT. LTD. 316, 3rd Floor, "BEST ARCADE" Plot No.-3, Sector-12, Dwarka, New Delhi – 110075 Tel : +91 11 28032944/45 Fax : +91 11 45537997 EMAIL: verma@kannu-impex.com

This is an opportunity for persons whether directly involved in a business enterprise or seeking to establish a business to work with a company that can assist in ensuring that they source products at competitive prices that will give them an edge in the market place. This also presents an opportunity for business persons to come together and consolidate shipments for freight advantage.

Congratulations to Mr. Roston Taylor and the new executive of the St. Lucia Manufacturers Association. Mr. Taylor was elected President of the Association at its 6th Annual General Meeting at the Bay Gardens Inn Conference Room, Rodney Bay, Gros Islet.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Expect Miracles in 2007!

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#26 ST. LUCIANS HEADING TO THE POLL EARLY DECEMBER, 2007!!!

OCTOBER 11, 2007

ST. LUCIANS HEADING TO THE POLL EARLY DECEMBER, 2007!!!

The Bye Election is due early December in the Micoud Constituency and five potential candidates have thrown their hats in the ring. Among them the Speaker of the House, Hon. Sarah Flood-Beaubrun and the young, dynamic daughter of the late Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Sir John Compton – Mrs. Jeannine Rambally.

I had my bets out after listening to Lady Janice Compton address to those gathered at the funeral service for her deceased husband that she was very likely to step up to represent the Micoud South Constituency which her husband never lost at the polls. However when the moment arose last Sunday for declaration of intentions Mrs. Jeannine Rambally was right there to keep the torch burning on behalf of her family.

The political analysts are having a field day and one of them is on record as recommending that all the persons interested in offering themselves up to represent the constituency should go up as UWP Independents, alluding to the fact that Sir John Compton contested the seat as an Independent when he won the seat the first time. There is no chance for any sane political grouping to accept such a suggestion. That would leave the door wide open for the SLP to take the seat. Even two prominent persons within the UWP contesting as UWP Independents could cause the SLP to win.

The meeting called last Sunday was to rally supporters who will now activate a constituency group to elect the candidate of their choice to represent them. In the meantime, the SLP headed by Hon. Dr. Kenny D. Anthony is waiting in the wings to make a decision whether to contest the seat which will be a no contest if a single candidate representing the UWP emerges at the next meeting of the constituency group.

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If the love demonstrated by the people at the passing of the Father of the Nation and the outpouring of sympathy to the family, then it should be easy sailing for Mrs. Jeannine Rambally as she enters the initial and ultimate race to enter the House of Parliament.

In the meantime, the new Prime Minister, Hon. Stephenson King is settling down to the business of governing the nation and his Cabinet Ministers are getting on with the job. The streets of Castries are resurfaced and the multi storied building formerly owned by J Q Charles Ltd. is showing signs of nearing completion, possibly before the Christmas Season to give the much-needed boost to shopping in the city centre. The entire ground floor should be restaurants opening up to midnight and the Boulevard should be a beautifully lit place to sit and relax. The city should be a place to visit day and night and not get away from in the evening. Tourism will be given a boost with the opening up of Castries as a shopping and entertainment destination. Concert in the Boulevard!

St. Lucians prayed for a good opposition and the SLP is surely keeping the Government on its toes. They are definitely maintaining the pressure on the Government even with demonstration against alleged victimization. Elected members of the SLP are quite visible in the media and generally doing what is expected of them. At a recently held meeting, it was made abundantly clear that there would be no challenge to the leader of the party Hon. Dr. Kenny D. Anthony at the upcoming convention.

It is up to St. Lucians to watch and pray that St. Lucia remains a country that is the envy of the rest of the region and a model small island developing State to the rest of the world.

St. Lucia is still a great place to call home and as always, my advice to the Diaspora is to own a Piece of the Rock. If you already own a piece, add value to it.

As always, Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Expect Miracles in 2007!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#27 JEANNINE COMPTON – RAMBALLY WINS MICOUD NORTH BY – ELECTION A SOLID VICTORY FOR THE UNITED WORKERS PARTY (UWP)

November 27, 2007

JEANNINE COMPTON – RAMBALLY WINS MICOUD NORTH BYE – ELECTION A SOLID VICTORY FOR THE UNITED WORKERS PARTY (UWP)

I am in Barbados attending a Workshop on Corporate Social responsibility for Small and Medium Enterprises and as a result I missed the opportunity to observe the by-election which was held on Monday, November 26, 2007. However, as soon as the results were known I received a phone call which revealed that supporters of the UWP closed ranks to deliver the constituency to their Candidate who was chosen at the run off. The SLP failed to prove its point that the Government was not living up to expectations. A win for the SLP would have confirmed that position. I did mention in my last article that I could not see how the level respect shown to the late Sir John Compton at his passing would have been washed away in three short months. The outpouring of sympathy for the family and grief at the loss of the Father of the Nation could have only guaranteed an election victory for his daughter.

Jeannine Compton-Rambally is a formidable young professional. As a Marine Biologist, she is no ordinary woman. That profession calls for a degree of bravery and determination. Most important she had to learn to deal with the ordinary people including fishermen. It is not simply a desk job; it carries risk as the need arises from time to time to brave the waters of the sea and investigate what is happening to the various species of fishes and mammals under the sea. The first time I met her was at a Whaling Conference and she was very confident in her contributions.

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REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

A loss for the UWP would have shaken the UWP and invite all kinds of speculations but once again it was not to be. By – Elections in UWP strongholds have not favored the SLP and they will have to rethink their strategy. Once again, it might have been better to sit out the election and continue to carry on their campaign of being the voice of the Opposition.

That's enough for politics, life goes on and it is important to note that Tourism is doing well. There haven't been so many cruise ships in our harbours for a long time. While I don't have the figures, I feel that given the size of the vessels, a record number of cruise passengers will grace our shores. The taxi drivers are in for a great season. Senator, Hon. Allen Chastanet, Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation is getting a hold on the airlift problem. Stay over visitors from the USA and other contributing markets is also be expected to be high.

The City of Castries is being given a face lift and beginning to look like a city. The City Council needs to keep at it and give Castries the attention it needs. A number of buildings are going up in the city. A City renewal programme should be initiated. Investment Conferences are a new feature in promoting St. Lucia. There is a quiet storm and while there is claim that nothing is happening, a few projects are emerging. There is to be an upgrade to the Rodney Bay Marina to the tune of fifty million US dollars.

The negative publicity that plagued the administration in the early months have subsided and it is now for the parliamentarians on the government side to do what they were elected to do. It would be interesting to read the Prime Minister's report to the nation on the first year of the UWP administration in office. The year 2008 holds great promise for St. Lucia and it is time for all parliamentarians to come together and work for the good of the country.

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The only way to make life comfortable for the working class is to attract investments into the country that will create jobs. At least two persons in every household with persons of working age should be working. At the rate cost of living is rising, the emphasis will have to move from increased wages to additional jobs being made available. Persons in the lower- and middle-income brackets will have to begin to do at home what they do in the USA and Canada, and work at two or more jobs. A few days ago, I got a call from a young lady who lives in the USA and in our discussion, she mentioned that she has five jobs. I am still working out in my mind if she has to report daily to places of work, how many hours per day, how many days per week, etc... I was speechless when I heard the number of jobs she has.

St. Lucia is now ready to take the step to the next level where we will have to move away from the old ways of doing things and take decisions to modernize the country, especially the City of Castries. Shopping must be extended to 6.00pm and businesses must be opened on weekends.

The Diaspora must find ways of getting involved in the development at home. I have alluded to this in previous articles and I will dedicate my next article to how the Diaspora can contribute.

In the meantime, Keep the Faith, God is Charge, Dream Big and Expect Miracles in 2007.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#28 LIAT MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO RETARD THE ECONOMIC PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN THE REGION

November 29, 2007

Edward Harris At Large

LIAT MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO RETARD THE ECONOMIC PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN THE REGION

LIAT is taking CARICOM Nationals and by extension their business associates and friends from outside of the region for granted. Already the high fares have slowed down travel. To add insult to injury, the irregular schedules and down times are causing serious problems in scheduling business and other meetings. What is even more disgusting is the fact that to be sure of getting to a destination for an important meeting, it might be necessary to get there days in advance and not knowing for sure when you will get back to your base. This will definitely increase cost. Already we have increased airfares, now we have additional accommodation and other expenses. The decision has already been taken by many that they will only travel if they must, in cases of last resort. Already I am beginning to hear about telephone and video conferencing. If the latter innovation is taken seriously LIAT could be in serious problems and hotels will suffer. Business travel is a vital contributor to the tourism sector. It cannot be over emphasized that LIAT's operation is vital to the survival to businesses as a whole in the region.

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REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The management of LIAT has already sent out a signal that the season will be turbulent in relation to their operations. What a time for such an announcement. This is the peak season for tourism. Something must be done without any further delay. A month ago, an associate of mine was going to Toronto to see his family and after heading to the airport to make a connection in Barbados, the flight never operated, he had to return the following day. My own experience last Sunday was very frustrating. As usual I was instructed to get to the airport two hours before the flight and recognizing the unpredictability of LIAT, I arrived ninety minutes before the departure time. The monitor in the departure lounge does not keep up with the changes and prefers to maintain on time update regardless. However, after an announcement that the flight was delayed, we soon discovered that that flight was cancelled. We were booked on another flight which was expected to pick up the passengers in about two hours. When that flight landed and parked in its ramp position, it was discovered that there was a problem with the radar and the flight had to be grounded. Approximately seven hours after my arrival at the airport, I was finally put on a plane which was diverted from Antigua. However only about 50% of the passengers were lucky to get on the flight. The others had to overnight in St. Lucia. I hope they were able to get on a flight the following day.

While I was having my own problems in getting to Barbados, other persons headed to the conference were having their own. The Trinidad participants had to overnight in St. Vincent and the flight that the Guyanese were on, had to turn back to Guyana after almost 50% of the journey. They had to overnight and were fortunate to get to the conference after the opening ceremony. I must admit that I am getting a bit concerned about the safety of passengers. LIAT must do better. What about leasing a few aircrafts to operate the routes until the situation could be brought under control?

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I decided to spend an additional day in Barbados after the conference to meet with the management of the Barbados Small Business Association. After visiting one of the Branches in the company of the Field Officer, we went to the head office where we picked up the Financial Controller who joined us for lunch. The two ladies were gracious and they took me to the Hilton where I was treated to a sumptuous Buffet Lunch. We were having a great time when suddenly I began to feel a movement under me as if I was riding a wave. We looked at each other in amazement and I concluded it was an earthquake. My experiences with similar situations in the past were that they were swift. This time it was prolonged and it looked like the end of the world was at hand.

Upon entering the Hilton which is a multi-storied building, I enquired from one of the workers as to the amount of rooms. She said it was about 350. As I walk to the dining area, I looked at the massive structure and debated in my mind about the possibility of a fire or disaster and concluded that I would not like to stay in room that is not close to the ground floor. I was thinking about evacuation. However, a few minutes to three o'clock disaster struck the Caribbean with a massive earthquake first reported at 7.3 magnitude. I estimated the magnitude of the earthquake to be over 7 and I was correct. It was definitely a frightening experience for many persons of which I am one. We went back to the office to share experiences about the dreadful moment. One of the ladies had a napkin on her chest when we dashed out of the building. We placed our signature on it and she promised to keep it in memory of the day that Barbadians got an end of the world experience.

A number of short comings were noted. There is no evacuation plan for exiting Bridgetown, I took too long. I was surprised that no one alerted the patrons in the dining area at the hotel as to what was going on. We discovered that the kitchen staff members were out of the building before the patrons. It could have been worse. It is fair therefore to conclude that God is in Charge, we can trust in Him and Expect Miracles in 2007. Let's give THANKS.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#29 LEADERSHIP IS VITAL FOR MSMEs TO SUCCEED AND PROSPER!!!

December 13, 2007

Edward Harris At Large!

LEADERSHIP IS VITAL FOR MSMEs TO SUCCEED AND PROSPER!!!

I take pleasure in introducing a new acronym MSME (Micro, Small & Medium Size Enterprise). Micro businesses have been the starting point for many Big Businesses. It takes commitment and being focused to achieve success while establishing Leadership qualities in individuals.

An understanding of Leadership is of great importance if those who are called to lead will deliver on the expectations of those who depend upon their actions. I find the quote hereunder to be very timely and interesting as I am fully convinced that there must be a change of mind set for leaders to meet the challenges of the people who depend upon them. It is no difference in business or in any other aspect of life.

LEADERSHIP IS ACTION NOT POSITION

All successful people became successful because they gave some talent or ability in the service of others.

You can contribute in some way to others no matter how small your talent.

You too, can become successful.

No one achieves success without being of service.

The essence of success is service.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Successful people don't use others, other people use the successful, for above all success is of service.

Everyone has to be someone to someone to be anyone.
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The private sector is the driver of the economies of the free world. MSMEs are a vital part of the private sector and produces between 60-80% of the jobs. As a result, governments rely heavily on MSMEs to generate employment and as a result improve the livelihood of citizens. Everyone recites this fact but many are far from it in their actions.

The signs of global growth are all around us, China, India and don't be fooled, America will always be America - #1. What stands between MSMEs and Big Businesses is the Mind Set of their leaders. If you think you are small and without hope, then you are and will remain that way until you come to the realization that you have the greatest potential to be BIG!

I know what it takes to grow companies from zero and make them into multi-million-dollar companies. Most of the ingredients to make small businesses large are missing in the Mind Set. It is a strange phenomenon, when most people acquire a business, they feel that they know it all. Humility is removed from their vocabulary and their actions. Businesspersons must keep close to the word of the Almighty. Their actions should be guided by the principles of their Holy Word. Too often businesspersons act as though they have replaced their Creator. He that humbles himself shall be exalted. What every businessperson need is the support of a Master Mind Group and a Personal Business Coach or Life Coach. Depending on the experiences of the Coach, it is possible to engage one Coach for both tasks.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

During the past month, I had the pleasure of traveling extensively and looking around at business opportunities and methods of doing business. During my 10-day trip to Trinidad where I attended the 3rd Annual Caribbean Unity Trade Fair I San Fernando I was blessed with the opportunity of listening to the Mayor of San Fernando who delivered the feature address at a Dinner Business Meeting. He spoke passionately about the GOD FACTOR in his business and he ascribes his successes to the Creator. He grew his company from 10 to 450 personnel in 10 years.

This is the time of year when people of goodwill everywhere get together to share love at Christmas, in many instances failing to grasp the deeper meaning. Love must not only be for a season it must be for a lifetime. We must be passionate about caring and sharing as a part of our daily lives. Not just for a day or a brief season but always! It is for this reason that I am so excited about my association with the group of persons responsible for introducing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the region. I am on a crusade to share the good news that CSR will improve the image of businesspersons who will adopt the voluntary standard as it evolves in the region. It will be possible to identify the true Leaders of the private sector and civil society. Social Responsibility is everybody's business but the driver will always be the private sector.

At the close of my article, I usually conclude with the statement "Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Expect Miracles in 2007. In recent months, I added Dream Big! I truly believe in this statement and it is delivering for me as it has been for many of my readers. Many of us have received many miracles in 2007. I introduced to you a few years ago the Jabez Prayer. 1. Chronicles, Chapter 4, Verse 10. I am certain those of you who practice the simple system have seen your borders expanded. You no longer worry about many of the things as you did in previous times. It is a great life, little things mean a lot. Believe, Ask and Receive. This is the key to the kingdom. There are two miracle working power words - THANK YOU!!! Words have Power. Visit this website and learn from the masters: <http://www.theseecret.tv>

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

During the past four weeks, I traveled extensively, from Trinidad & Tobago to Phoenix, Arizona. I experienced thunder storms in Trinidad, earthquake in Barbados, Snow storms in the USA and experienced the horrors of air travel. I had the pleasure and scare of being aboard many types of aircrafts including Dash 8, Super 80, 737, 757, 777, and the EMB which is finally assembled and completed in Brazil. The EMB twin engine jet aircraft is used by American Eagle as its Regional Jet in the USA. Its capacity is 44 passengers. Maybe LIAT can use a few of these aircrafts.

My experiences in relation to customer service during my trips have made me proud of the service that is being offered in St. Lucia. No wonder most visitors have fond memories of their holiday experience. I will be first to admit that we can do much more but what passes for customer service at some airports and hotels in the USA leaves a lot to be desired. Most of the short comings seem to stem from inadequate level of staffing. It is only so much that any individual can handle in any given situation. Beyond that point, it is chaos.

I feel privileged to validate many of the recommendations I have made over the years in my column - Edward Harris at Large! Going to visit persons with whom you do business with in their country and place of business can do a lot in laying the foundation for lasting, mutually beneficial relationship. My 12-hour trip to Phoenix, Arizona was richly rewarding. During the one-hour interview with the President and National Sales Director of Search Big Daddy, we discussed plans for a launch in the Caribbean in the 1st quarter of 2008. The programme will benefit businesspersons in the region tremendously as they seek to establish a presence on the World Wide Web. I now have a Business Coach who will guide me in achieving my business goals. It is interesting that I have his permission to share my new knowledge with persons interested in applying the system.

It is a Great Life, never be tired of doing good, it comes back to you from unexpected sources. In the meantime, Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Miracles in 2007.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#30 MAJOR CHALLENGES AWAIT SAINT LUCIA AND THE REST OF THE REGION IN 2008!!!

DECEMBER 19, 2007

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

MAJOR CHALLENGES AWAIT SAINT LUCIA AND THE REST OF THE REGION IN 2008!!!

It is that time of year when people of goodwill from across the globe, come together to give love at Christmas and bring cheer to all those who look forward to a New Year of Peace and Joy!!! I almost missed the deadline due to the many urgent matters including overseas travel that occupied my attention in recent weeks. However, it is proper that I wish you God's Blessings as you celebrate the Holidays and may prosperity attend you throughout the New Year.

Looking back at the year 2007, November 29, 2007 was the day that characterized the happenings in many aspects of existence in the island states of the region. There were many wake up calls with many lessons to be learnt. Political elections upset, death of a political icon, challenges of the European Economic Agreement, the restlessness of the youth and the crime epidemic sweeping across the region fueled by the deportees. The politicians need help and as the year comes to a close, the challenge for those citizens who find themselves in a more fortunate positions in the developed world to seek out opportunities to bring hope to the less fortunate at home.

Apart from the many challenges, the year 2007 has been an exciting year for the people of the Caribbean and St. Lucia was not spared of the challenges. I am happy that I was able to update my readers on the political, social and economic developments in this beautiful island State. My political predictions have all been on target. My bullish position on investments has been validated and St. Lucia is on a consistent path of economic progress.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The Government has settled down to the task of running the country and while 2007 was not a great year in terms of their performance, they should turn the corner at this juncture. There were many reasons for the state of affairs as existed. It would be interesting to see their responses to the many outstanding issues as the New Year dawns. Principal among the outstanding issues is the appointment of overseas diplomatic representatives around the world.

The Real Estate industry is booming. The stock of properties being built to satisfy the tourism needs is expanding. Century 21 and REMAX franchises are now in St. Lucia. Private foreign owned real estate companies have sprung up in recent months and as a result local Realtors are somewhat uneasy. However, this is the reality of global business and the local Realtors will have to adjust to the new development. The unfortunate situation is that due to the high cost of establishing businesses in the developed countries, the services business will not be reciprocal.

I warned my readers that they must take action to own a piece of the ROCK. This is a good time for me to issue a reminder as many St. Lucians will be visiting for the holidays. Come see and make your decision to invest in St. Lucia. Something interesting has developed among local Realtors. A few of them got together and they are sharing listings which allows someone looking to invest in property in St. Lucia can review a wide range of options before arriving at a decision to purchase.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

St. Lucians living abroad can contribute substantially to the development of their homeland. It is time to begin to look around their immediate environment to see what ideas and programmes can be duplicated in St. Lucia. Check out new technologies and methods that are being used by cutting edge organizations and share them with persons at home trying to achieve greater efficiency in their professions. Since opening up of employment opportunities is vital to addressing crime and teenage pregnancy among the youth, efforts on the part of St. Lucians in the developed world in wooing investors to St. Lucia can play an important role. It will help by simply looking around at the operations of NGOs and other organizations that bring hope to young people to encourage them to open up Chapters in St. Lucia. The New Year will challenge those persons who really care about the future of St. Lucia and are dedicated to sharing with the less fortunate. On a final note, our hospitals are in great need of equipment and furnishings. Any help to make live comfortable for the poor who cannot afford the luxury of a private hospital will be appreciated.

I am so happy to report that God is in Charge. Keep the Faith, Dream Big and Expect Miracles in your lives!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#31 TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE WORLD'S UNCERTAINTIES AND WIN BIG!!!

January 3, 2008

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE WORLD'S UNCERTAINTIES AND WIN BIG!!!

On returning to work on the first working day of 2008, we are greeted with the news that Oil price has reached US\$100.00 per barrel.

The uncertainties in business have contributed to the situation that is currently fueling the rise in oil prices. Many will say the news is not good but coming at the start of the year with the attack on democracy in Kenya and Pakistan, there are lessons to be learnt and money to be made. Apart from Guyana where for as long as parliamentary elections were introduced there continue to be cries of fraudulent elections, the rest of the region has so far carried out the wishes of the people. Maybe, it is time for Guyanese to seek to change their electoral system and return to First Past The Post or even a combination of First Past the Post and Proportional Representation may be the most democratic system in dealing with elections. Let the debate begin as the people of the world demand that those who seek to represent them be treated fairly and with respect. To rob citizens of a democratic choice as to who will lead them is nothing short of TREASON.

Group of Nations Assemblies such as the UN, OAS must be able to intervene when such atrocities are practiced. Many times, it is the people without the aiding and abetting of politicians, destroy cities and kill those who side with their oppressors. Iraq has been in the back burner this week and the battle against terrorists is now shifted back to Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Americans have President George W. Bush to thank for his taking them to fight a war in Iraq that should have never been.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

As Americans head for the polls in 2008, the picture is interesting and as I take note of the developments, I am ready to stay with my prediction that Sen. Hillary Clinton will gain the Democratic Nomination while Tom Mc Cain is going to be the headache for the rest of the Republican candidates. It is too early to call the Candidate who is likely to win the Republican Nomination. While all early indications seem to suggest that the Democrats will win the 2008 Elections, I am not seeing clearly that Obama will be the Vice President. Tonight's Caucus will give an early indication as to where Sen. Clinton is leaning whether it's John Edwards or Barack Obama?

Politics and Investments/Business are related and politicians must come to the realization that the words free from fear and free and fair must be solemn commitment when it comes to the electoral process. Transparency and accountability must be the mantra for those who gain office. Referendum must be used as a means for testing decisions that directly affect the people.

This is my selected quote for the week:

YOU MAKE YOUR OWN OPPORTUNITIES

Your destiny isn't a matter of chance, it's a matter of the choices you'll make in the coming year.

Success isn't something you wait for, it's something you must pursue in the months ahead.

Don't wait for extraordinary opportunities to be successful.

Seize common occasions and turn them into great ones.

Opportunities sometimes come disguised in the form of misfortune, or temporary defeat.

Start where you are.

You're at this moment, standing right in the middle of opportunity.

If you act on your dreams you can live them in the New Year.

You have a lot to look forward to. Happy New Year!

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HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The uncertainties and anxieties of life at this juncture are nothing short of living on a time bomb. However, those who panic lose. The race is not for the swift but he that endures. There is no quick fix to what is going on in today's world. Those who will continue to do business as usual in unusual circumstances are those who do not understand that in times of crisis, the greatest opportunities become available to those who are prepared to take risks and know when and where to strike.

The currency market gave big yields to those who were watching the trends and not scared to jump in and take their piece of the pie. I wonder how many of our Entrepreneurs were savvy enough to have made some money in currency trading. How many of our children are studying courses that will permit them to understand the stock market so that they can begin to share information that can give Caribbean people an edge? Gains as much as 136% were made in 2007. I always tune in on the programme Bulls and Bears on Fox News. This year I promise to take a closer look at the stock market. What is interesting is that information is all around us. I hope that one of the Private Sector Associations will promote a series of lectures on Investing in the Stock Market. I believe that you don't have to have the financial capacity to learn to play the game. Gain the experience and be ready when you arrive at the place to be a part of the game. Buy stocks when they are falling so that you can apply the principle of "Buy Low, Sell High" You must know when to quit. Don't get greedy.

Another good area of investment is Real Estate and don't tell me about what is happening in the USA, the game is not played in the same manner in St. Lucia. You must begin to look seriously at this area of investment. The Realtors Association will be holding a 3 Day Beginner's Course from January 14 -16, 2008, 5.00 - 9.00pm at the Bay Gardens Hotel. This is a timely programme and will be useful information that everyone can use. I am heading for my piece of Real Estate in Cyberspace.

I will like to see a number of Motivational Speakers visiting St. Lucia this year to share some life skills with St. Lucians. We need to change our Mind Set and don't just see things as they are but as they can be. Let us begin to see possibilities.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Here's wishing my readers the very best in the New Year and may all your desires be realized. Make 2008 your best year ever! Happy New Year!!!

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Miracles all the time!!!

#32 ST. LUCIA IS EXPERIENCING HEIGHTENED INVESTMENT INTERESTS!

February 28, 2008

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

ST. LUCIA IS EXPERIENCING HEIGHTENED INVESTMENT INTERESTS!

It is simply fascinating to participate in Investment Meetings these days in St. Lucia. I had such an experience this week for three days. I was exposed to presentations made to a group of Investment Brokers and I wondered if I was in a different country. Some many projects were put on the table that will soon be on stream. Many of them will last between 2 to 5 years. St. Lucia is the country in the region that all eyes are on as it takes the lead in the development path, taking over from Barbados in the next few years.

Investments in commercial and touristic properties are showing up all over the island. Labour is being brought in to help out with the construction boom taking place. It is obvious that St. Lucia's time has come and there is no stopping us now.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The people of St. Lucia had more than the observance of the 29th Anniversary of Independence on this occasion. It was a celebration of expansion. There are so many projects in the pipe line as Brother George would have said. Today, we hear about the redevelopment of the Castries Waterfront, Tunnel through the Barre de L' Isle, Hess Oil Refinery, Deep Water Port in Cul de Sac, Ritz Carlton, Westin, Le Paradis, Raffles, Signature Golf Courses by the best known names, infrastructural development, new road route to Vieux Fort, additional flights from the USA and Europe, expanded relationship with Caribbean Airways, etc., etc.. I feel it wouldn't be long below a solution is found for LIAT.

Saint Lucia Nice! Economic prospects for the future looks great and what is interesting, it is just the beginning of a long road of economic progress. These are exciting times. It is a great time to be living in St. Lucia.

Politically, Hon. Stephenson King is heading to the Party's Convention unopposed for the leadership of the party in spite of the uncertainty which existed towards the run up to the nomination. There was no time that the SLP current leader Hon. Dr. Kenny Anthony was expected to be challenged in the run up for his party nomination.

The UWP has learnt to create a buzz and then do the obvious thing. They are bent on keeping the team intact and run the government. Budget is around the corner and it will be very interesting to see what measures of meeting the expectations of the people emerge. In the meantime, life goes on and the people have a lot to be grateful for. The Investors are simply finding their way to St. Lucia, falling in love with the beauty of the island and make decisions to invest. This is good as employment opportunities will abound in the future.

There is never a dull moment in St. Lucia. This is a Magical period for St. Lucia's economy and one which will continue for a long time. It is important to note that while Americans contribute 60% to our stop over visitors, Europeans are the big investors. Members of the Caribbean Diaspora are invited to take a serious look at St. Lucia and step forward to own a piece of the Rock. Come for St. Lucia Jazz and take some time off to look around the island and invest in property.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Miracles all the time!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#33 AGRICULTURE ON THE FRONT BURNER!!!

March 13, 2008

Edward Harris at Large!

AGRICULTURE ON THE FRONT BURNER!!!

The importance of Agriculture in the economy is gaining serious attention as the agencies concerned with the development of Agriculture take steps to put the sector on the front burner. The importance of Agriculture cannot be over emphasized. Even if the Banana Industry is in the twilight stage, there is still a role for farmers to diversify production to ensure food safety. With the impact of global warming and all the pitfalls of the environment, food supply must nevertheless be maintained.

Last week I had the pleasure of sitting in on a 4-day workshop which sought to promote Entrepreneurship in Agriculture. This week I was exposed to the implications of the Economic Partnership Agreement as they relate to the Agriculture Sector. Dr. Claudius Preville led the discussions and pointed to areas of concern and opportunities as a result of the EPA. Since what is done is done and it will take protracted negotiations to undo some of the grey areas in the agreement, I would rather deal with the challenges and opportunities.

The principal challenge is to keep the citizens of the region informed about the EPA and how they can access the various measures that have been put in place to facilitate the development aspect of the agreement. The European negotiators have been able to achieve in three years what the regional grouping has been unable to achieve in thirty-five years. That significant agreement is to gain trade access to the Bahamas market when the Agreement comes into effect. It is my feeling that CARICOM Prime Ministers have a window of opportunity to request that the trade aspect of CARICOM be expanded to afford fellow CARICOM countries duty free trading access into the Bahamas market. It is time that the Bahamas yield to its CARICOM partners.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Entrepreneurs in the region must begin to forge business relationships with their counterparts in the Bahamas and the Dominican Republic not when the agreement comes into effect but now. Joint ventures in the manufacturing and services sectors must be vigorously pursued. In penetrating the two markets, emphasis should be placed on setting up satellite plants wherever practicable instead of trying to export finished products. Frooty Foods and Baron Foods are two local companies that should be able to establish a presence through joint venture to penetrate the two markets.

The price of oil has now risen to US\$111.00. This development has serious implications for cost of doing business and the cost of living. The US dollar at the said time is declining. Americans are feeling the heat financially. Our tourism industry has serious challenges. There is no need to panic. Rather, we must seek to find ways to cushion the effects. Restraint is very important. Opportunities to conserve and effect savings in every possible way in the home and the business place must be pursued. These austerity measures have to be applied by the Government and Citizens alike. The time has come when we are challenged to get more from less. However, I am confident that this too shall pass.

I expressed the position in previous articles about the need to expand the income of the household by more family members finding jobs. The unemployed can no longer sit around and wait for the ideal job. It is timely to remind my readers that there is dignity in labour. Those who are already employed need to seek out opportunities for the second and third job. We need our people to be industrious.

In spite of all the financial problems being experienced, credit is still freely available and the temptation is there for the people to incur further indebtedness. If ever self-control was necessary, it is now! Should the cost of living continue to escalate there will be a serious financial crisis. I sincerely hope that our people will not find themselves living in tents as the Americans who were thrown out of their homes due to their inability to upkeep their mortgages.

Hereunder is my selected motivational quote for the week.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

FOCUS ON YOUR FUTURE NOT YOUR PAST

Your future is a big adventure.

Prepare for your future don't live in the past.

Savor your good memories,
use any bad ones as lessons in life.

Carve out a niche for yourself in your imagined future.

Think, feel and see yourself as successful.

To achieve any goal in life, you need to project your end result.

Think of the elation, the satisfaction, the joy you'll feel.

Carry these ecstatic feelings with you every day
and they'll bring your desired goals into view.

Sooner or later, you can win if you think you can.

The cards you are dealt in life
are less important than the way you play them.

Everyday you're offered a new deal and new cards.

Success is in your future if you're willing to work for it.

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HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#34 TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR ACTIONS!

April 24, 2008

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR ACTIONS!

It is BUDGET time again and Parliamentarians are busy trying to impress their constituents about the good, not so good or bad things that have happened or have not happened and what is to come. The long-awaited estimates of income and expenditure for 2008/2009 is now in the public domain.

While there is a lot that could be said for and against the budget, the reality is that looking on the positive side, it is a mouth full. I had to close my eyes while reading the document on line at intervals and imagine a St. Lucia in ten years' time. It is like a fairy tale but the future is filled with possibilities and if it can happen it will. What the Government needs to do is to declare 2008/2009 budget period - IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD. Time lines should be clearly stated so as to temper the expectations of the citizens. Show the people the works, put all foreign missions to work to attract friendly governments, donor agencies, investors and any agency that can help to implement the several projects that are on the drawing board or as some will prefer in the pipeline. My recommendation several years ago to appoint Trade and Investment Representatives around the world continues to be a worthwhile gesture as the Government is not in a position to support the amount of missions that will be necessary to promote and sustain investments in St. Lucia.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Today, we hear about over development, especially in the tourism sector. Hon. Philip J. Pierre was cautious in his response to questions on the subject and concluded that it was a chicken and egg situation. My take is that an increase in hotel plant/rooms will drive the destination and the thorny issue of airlift could be substantially improved. Even with the possibility of hoteliers forming alliances to provide their own charter flights from destinations that are overlooked by the established national airlines. There will always be a concern about the survival of the smaller hotels and a real strategy has to be worked out to attract visitors to fill their rooms. We are in an era where ideas must compete and if strategic planning, market research and marketing are still tools used by forward thinking companies, it will be a backward step to halt the progress that is currently being advanced.

I like what I hear about work permits and taxes amnesty. These are bold moves. In the interest of ensuring that we keep those skilled persons who remain in the region, CARICOM Nationals seeking employment should be encouraged to stay in the region. The work permit issue should be simplified as is done with the right of establishment in relation to establishing businesses across the region. Individuals should be able to apply for their own work permit instead of having employers securing their work permit. Work permits are not transferable and, in many instances, if there is a fall out between employer and employee, the worker in many cases is lost to the country as he/she leaves in search of employment elsewhere.

I called on the Government when it came into office to establish a Ministry of Innovation and Technology. Failing to see any action in that area, I made the call for a Secretariat of Innovation and Technology when the first Budget was about to be presented. Still nothing has happened. Maybe after reading the extract of a release from the OAS hereunder something tangible will be done to ensure that ICT at least is taken seriously.

The Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) Ambassador Albert Ramdin in a recent encounter with policy makers, providers and experts attending the Joint ITU/CITEL Forum on “Enabling an ICT business environment in the Americas Region” called on them to put greater emphasis on applying innovation in information and communication technologies (ICTs) to address the needs of the poorest in society.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

He also noted that this is an unprecedented opportunity for us to learn from your reflections from experience and your visions of the road ahead; I leave here some questions for your consideration on the debates that will follow.

- * How do we create mechanisms to influence positive change in society by building partnerships amongst the private sector, civil society and member states to promote economic progress and opportunity for all?
- * How can innovation in ICTs help us to address the need of the poorest?
- * How to build, in developing countries, a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the ICT sector so that we can stimulate the creation of local producers of ICT applications and services?
- * Which are the critical aspects of the telecommunications sector where we need to focus?
- * How can we provide the environment in which individuals, entrepreneurs, and institutions can adapt to the changes around them, while gaining from them and forging the changes of the future?
- * How we can create the right environment for businesses to develop and adopt new technologies?

We are yet to begin to utilize the Internet for implementing Internet Marketing Businesses that will have a global reach and make millions for their promoters. Let's have a conference on this business idea.

Lots of interesting things can happen for us but we need to understand what businesses are driving the economies of the developed world and how those businesses could be duplicated in our region.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Here is my selected motivational quote of the week:

FREEDOM MEANS RESPONSIBILITY

Freedom is the right to live as you wish.

If you wish to free yourself from enslavement,
you must choose freedom and the responsibility it entails.

There's a price for every freedom,
something to be given up for every liberty.

It's up to you to weigh the price you must pay
for each of your freedoms.

And everything you want has a price.

Freedom is the opportunity to make decisions.

It's the capacity to take a hand in your own development.

Freedom is the right to choose.

It's the right to create for yourself the alternatives of choice.

No one is free who is not master of himself.

You are free to do whatever you like.

You need only face the consequences of your actions.

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HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#35 THE BALANCING ACT OF SURVIVAL!

May 1, 2008

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

THE BALANCING ACT OF SURVIVAL!

The 2008/2009 Budget was debated in the Lower House and the Senate. Citizens are fully aware of the various arguments raised by both parties but the budget went through its stages and is now passed. It is now time for action.

The issue of food security is no longer a mere talking point but an international crisis. Solutions to this crisis are high on the agendas of all regional governments. In recent times, the call was made for action but the crisis is well advanced of any real action taken to kick off the programmes that could guarantee food security. Guyana's failure whatever the reason/s to meet its obligation to supply rice and brown sugar to the region is another blow to regional trade, especially those items that are mandated to be sourced from within CARICOM.

The government has responded to the plight of the small man and has placed a basket of essential products under price control. With the prospects of declining business activities in the consumer sector, subsidies are likely to be threatened. Already there is decline in money transfers from the Diaspora in North America to relatives in the region. This is evidence that cost of living is hitting the rich countries as well as the poor.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Challenges to everyday living are usually diverted by entertainment events as is currently the case of St. Lucia Jazz that will bring joy to many citizens and visitors over the next nine days. The lineup is exciting and is going to give many persons the opportunity to take some much-needed respite after a Budget that has engaged citizens' attention who are grappling with the already high cost of living. With rising oil prices, things are likely to get worse before it levels out.

Individuals and business owners must avail themselves of every opportunity to inform and educate them in the art of surviving in today's cruel economic environment which is filled with uncertainties and anxieties. The OECS Secretariat Hub and Spokes Project in collaboration with the Government of Saint Lucia presented a 2-day Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) Sensitization Seminar which was held at the Bay Gardens Hotel Conference Centre, Rodney Bay on April 28 & 29, 2008. The organizers lamented the poor turn out of the private sector. As the EPA approaches implementation stage, it will be necessary for all stakeholders to have an understanding of what the challenges and benefits are. The EPA is a Trade and Development Agreement. Information about the trading aspect is in the public domain but the development aspect is yet to be discussed in detail with stakeholders. This area of involvement needs urgent attention if the benefits to our people are to be maximized.

Mr. Hilton Jn Baptiste is the new President of SLISBA. He assumes the leadership of the Association at a critical time when it is being challenged to meet the needs of an expanding membership. Fortunately for him, his first meeting in the chair, he was given the commitment of the membership to be fully involved in the development and execution of the programmes of the association.

Labour Day 2008 could not have held much promise for workers around the world as members of trade unions prepared for a period of austerity filled with uncertainties. The Labour Code is back on the front burner. This is a very difficult time to negotiate such an agreement when the economy is in decline and businesses are struggling to keep their doors open.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

No one can be sure of what tomorrow will bring. Companies' budgets have to undergo constant updating, many times reducing projected profits. Many businesses will experience shortfalls in sales and as a result profits, even navigating the storm with losses, hoping that the turbulent period will be short lived. Cost cutting measures and attention to details will have to be implemented by businesspersons.

In the meantime, while the developments of the past week take root, let us enjoy sweet jazz music for the next week. The organizers continue to ensure that Jazz is taken to the less fortunate in the rural communities. Many of us will be looking forward to welcoming visiting relatives and friends from overseas during this period. Have fun!

Here is my selected quote of the week:

YOU DO NOT EXIST FOR YOURSELF

Your success depends on the support of other people.
The only hurdle between you and what you want to be,
is the support of others.

Put yourself in another's place,
and you'll know why they think and do certain things.
You can succeed fastest by helping others to succeed.
Always think in terms of what the other person wants.
You'll get everything in life that you want
if you'll help enough other people get what they want.

Doing things for others always pays dividends.

You're not an isolated island.

You're a piece of the planet, a piece of the universe.

Personal relationships are the fertile soil from which all advancement,
all success, all achievement in real life grows.

When you help someone's boat across a river,
you'll find your own boat has reached the shore too.

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HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#36 ALL THAT JAZZ!!!!

May 8, 2008

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

ALL THAT JAZZ!!!!

St. Lucia is an outstanding destination whether you are seeking to do business, holiday or retire. There is never a dull moment in St. Lucia and you are at liberty to mix business with pleasure. St. Lucia – Simply Beautiful is great place to be!

The week of Jazz so far has received mixed reviews. The weekend activities will seal the deal as to the real success of St. Lucia Jazz 2008. I hope the weather holds. Due to deadline constraints, I cannot report on the Friday evening's event when the nation and all those who are visiting our beautiful island for the events will be given an opportunity to enjoy the music of Michael Bolton and Air Supply. Many will be breathless and for some it will be a visit to a world of ESTACY.

St. Lucians are special when it comes to enjoying themselves. Many will claim the privilege of enjoying Heaven on Earth in simply beautiful St. Lucia. Those of us who read the Bible are well aware of the special virtues of the islands. However, it must be of concern to the citizens of St. Lucia about developments at the political level. Based on the news on television, the talk show hosts and various interviews, it seems as though an end is in sight to the recent problems in the governing party.

After eighteen months in Government, it is time that the dust settles and the nation proceeds in harmony to meet the challenges of high cost of living and doing business. It is very clear that in an environment of uncertainty and anxiety, it cannot be business as usual. There is lot to be done and all hands need to be on deck.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

It is time to move forward. The budget has created a level of expectation that needs urgent implementation of the several projects. The efforts of those who seek to ensure progress should not be frustrated. The private sector must be given the opportunity to expand in an environment that is consistent with policies and actions that will facilitate such expansion. The level of investors' interest is at its highest and the opportunity should not be squandered.

I continue to be concerned about the future direction for innovation and technology in our country. The world is not waiting on us. Something should be done as a matter of urgency to ensure that cutting edge industries of the world are being encouraged in St. Lucia. There is need to place Innovation and Technology on the front burner with the creation of a dedicated Ministry or a Secretariat to advance research and seek early implementation of projects with a global reach.

There was an idea when the Taxation System in the region was being reviewed – that government will invest 20% of its revenue in the business sector. We don't have to wait on that project to be implemented, it is worthy of consideration and early implementation, even at a 10% level was be welcomed.

There is also a proposal for governments to support the work of private sector associations with a tax on imports. This was first recommended by Mr. Michael Astaphan of Dominica, now a politician. I will like to add reputable NGOs. The time has come for governments of the region to invest in private sector organizations in an effort to sustain their contribution to productive sectors, especially micro, small and medium businesses (MSME). This grouping is the real engine of growth in the economy.

In an effort to advance the work of private sector associations, the government needs to follow up on its budget pronouncement that it will forge a new relationship with the private sector with a meeting with the Private Sector Council of St. Lucia, preferable with all members of the Board of Directors of participating Associations.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Here is my selected motivational quote of the week:

TODAY IS THE TIME FOR ACTION

You must be ready when opportunity comes before you.

Luck is the time when your preparation and opportunity meet.

There is a tide in your affairs, which, when taken at the flood,
will lead you on to fortune and success.

By the law of periodical repetition,
everything which has happened once must happen again
and again and again, not capriciously, but at regular periods,
and each thing in its own period, and each obeying its own law.

As events tend to repeat themselves,
the tide of opportunity will come to you.

Be prepared and your chance for success is sure to come.

Look around you. Seize an opportunity to change your life.

You can change chance into good fortune if you are ready.

The only sure thing about your luck is that it will change.

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Continue to enjoy what is left of St. Lucia Jazz 2008.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Miracles all the time!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#37 LIVING LIFE – ST. LUCIAN STYLE – NEVER A DULL MOMENT!

MAY 12, 2008

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE

LIVING LIFE – ST. LUCIAN STYLE – NEVER A DULL MOMENT!

The curtains came down on St. Lucia Jazz 2008 last Sunday and Carnival is now ahead of us. I continue to state that there is never a dull moment in St. Lucia. During the Jazz season, politics fought for centre stage but the people decided not to bother too much about politics and embrace the sweet sound of Jazz and other genre of music.

Thousands of visitors joined St. Lucians as they enjoyed St. Lucia Jazz 2008, May 2 – 11, 2008. Many observed that this year, it was the biggest ever as massive crowds converged on one of the most exotic locations on earth. The Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Senator Allen Chastanet along with Prime Minister, Hon. Stephenson King at his side made brief appearances moments before the final performance on the night of May 11, 2008 and announced – that contrary to rumours, St. Lucia Jazz will not be discontinued, instead there is a plan to transform the event where it would be recognized not only as the best in the Caribbean but one that is the best in the world.

The period May 2 – 11, 2008 provided an opportunity for citizens to explore the Jazz experience and unite with visiting relatives and friends from overseas. It was a week when many persons took time off from their busy schedules in an effort to ease the stress of daily existence and spend some pleasurable moments with friends.

All Hotels on the North Coast were sold out for the weekend. Businesses in the services sector had a good period for Jazz 2008 and how wonderful it would be even if fifty percent of the level of business transacted could be sustained throughout the year.

During Jazz many visitors mixed business with pleasure and took the opportunity to look into acquiring a piece of the rock. In recent times, property developers are designing their properties with world class amenities to cater for the most discriminating clients.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

St. Lucia is getting back into position as one of the leading destinations in the region for meetings, workshops and conferences. My guess is that the members of organizations and business travelers have adjusted to the high airfares being charged by LIAT. Recently LIAT announced a freeze on airfares but that is not what most people wanted to hear. Instead many of us will like to hear about a reduction in airfares and that the airfares confiscated by LIAT should be given back to those persons who inadvertently failed to cancel before the date of their flights. It is the Governments of the region that keep LIAT in the air and the taxpayers are the ones who in the final analysis pay the debts.

St. Lucians are settling down to the reality that crying will not help, they have to be creative in their approach to dealing with the high cost of living and doing business.

Almost on a daily basis I get a phone call or speak with persons who share their business ideas with me. I am very pleased that finally, I am hearing that people are willing to leave their comfort zones and venture out into the world of business with some very creative projects. I wish them well.

Carnival will be officially launched on Sunday, June 1, 2008. The Carnival weekend up to Carnival Monday and Tuesday runs over the period July 18 - 22, 2008. Check out the vibes at www.scuffyradio.com. The entire Carnival Programme is on the home page on the site. You can also check out www.socafreak.com

DREAMS DO COME TRUE

You are never given a wish
without also being given the power to make it come true.

The achievement of your goal is assured
the moment you commit yourself to it.
If you have the desire, you have the power to attain it.

You can have anything you want in life
if you will sacrifice everything else for it.
Your dreams can come true if you pursue them.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Where there's a will, there's a way.

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#38 THE ST. LUCIA GOVERNMENT IMPASSE PARLIAMENTARIANS RUFUS BOUSQUET & MARCUS NICHOLAS WILL BE BACK IN THE CABINET!

May 28, 2008

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

THE ST. LUCIA GOVERNMENT IMPASSE PARLIAMENTARIANS RUFUS BOUSQUET & MARCUS NICHOLAS WILL BE BACK IN THE CABINET!

It has been three weeks of turmoil in the Government of Prime Minister, Honourable Stephenson King. The main subject of the impasse was the removal of Senator Ausbert d'Auvergne who members on the Government's side in Parliament believed wielded too much power. However, there are mixed signals coming from the people as many believe Senator Douvergne is the man best suited to head the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Economic Planning, Investment & National Development. The call for his removal was also echoed by members of the party in opposition.

Senator Ausbert d' Auvergne finally tendered his resignation which takes effect May 31, 2008. This development cleared the way for Parliamentarians, Rufus Bousquet and Marcus Nicholas who had formally withdrew their support for Prime Minister to reverse their decision.

The Honourable Prime Minister addressed the nation on Tuesday evening 27/5/08 and informed the citizens about the developments in recent days and in going forward a new and reduced Cabinet will be announced shortly. No later than June 1, 2008. He noted that citizens have been patient with his Government and he intends to make up for lost time.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

All representative associations of civil society expressed concern over the impasse in Government and called upon Prime Minister, Hon. Stephenson King to resolve the matter at the earliest. Relief finally came and the nation anxiously awaits the announcement of the new cabinet. A letter to the Prime Minister which appeared in the media highlighted the state of the economic and social problems of the nation. The St. Lucia Industrial and Small Business Association (SLISBA) detailed the problems facing the nation as a result of the state of affairs in the country in relation to governance. Extracts of the letter are detailed hereunder:

***“Our members have demanded that we as their representative do write to inform you of the hurt to that sector as follows:

1. Lack of business activity
2. Uncertainty with the security of the nation resulting in increased criminal activity.
3. The laying off of workers due to the down turn in activity in the sector.
4. Scarcity of Commodities
5. Escalating costs of doing business.
6. Reduce productivity due to the instability of the government.
7. Reduction in available finance to businesses.

The above are not exhaustive but are indicative of the seriousness of the situation.

We in the Small Business Sector, whilst sympathetic and understanding of the myriad of problems are at pains to understand why this situation has been allowed to deteriorate to this extent. The unfortunate and most difficult part of which is the lack of information reaching the public and the seemingly indecisions of your administration to date.” ***

It continues to be a very difficult period for the Prime Minister but it seems that the people are uninterested in going back to the polls at this time and are still prepared to give the Government an opportunity to make good on its mandate.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

In the meantime, the sun continues to rise every day and the citizens of the beautiful island Paradise – Saint Lucia are doing their best to keep hope alive. It is definite that the way the business of politics and governance are played out in St. Lucia will have to change. The period ahead will define the next steps whenever it is time for the people to prepare for elections. It is clear that if there was ever an opportunity for a serious third party, it is now.

We can only pray that the outstanding issues being resolved, the activities of the nation will return to normalcy.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Miracles all the time!!!

#39 OAS/YABT TO LAUNCH CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PROJECT IN ST. LUCIA

June 19, 2008

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

OAS/YABT TO LAUNCH CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PROJECT IN ST. LUCIA

Finally, St. Lucian businesses and industries will officially be a part of a global thrust to promote Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in their enterprises. In recent years businesses were involved in philanthropic programmes as they attempted to reach out to their communities. Today, it is proven that CSR programmes enhance the goodwill of businesses and improve the bottom line of companies that practice CSR.

St. Lucia was selected to be one of five CARICOM Member States to participate in the OAS/YABT CSR pilot Project which began in 2007. The other countries are Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Following the introduction of the project in Trinidad in September of 2007, training programmes were held in all five States. Special training is continuing to equip Country Trainers who are expected to promote the virtues of CSR especially to SMEs. It is important to note that many large companies are already implementing and practicing CSR. In the case of St. Lucia, the Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture has recognized companies that subscribe to the principles of CSR at their Annual Awards Dinner.

The St. Lucia Project is scheduled to be launched with a three-day National Workshop, Monday – Wednesday, June 23 – 25, 2008 at the Royal St. Lucian Resort & Spa, Reduit Beach. The Seminar will be preceded by a Train the Trainer Workshop on Sunday, June 22, 2008. On Thursday, June 26, 2008 there will be a joint session with OAS/YABT and ISO where the International Standards Organization will introduce aspects of ISO 26000 which is expected to be launched in 2009. It is interesting to note that ISO 26000 is a Voluntary Standard.

Corporate Social Responsibility is expected to put a human touch to businesses as they seek to capture the hearts and minds of their customers and communities in which they operate. The time has come for a new approach to doing business which is based on caring and sharing – giving back.

What is CSR? A definition of CSR is in order. There are several definitions but the one hereunder should suffice:

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a concept, which encourages organizations to consider the interests of society by taking responsibility for the impact of the organization's activities on customers, employees, shareholders, communities and the environment in all aspects of its operations. This obligation is seen to extend beyond the statutory obligation to comply with legislation and sees organizations voluntarily taking further steps to improve the quality of life for employees and families as well as for the local community and society at large.

It is anticipated that the nation will benefit in several ways as the results of the CSR project sweep across St. Lucia.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

There is a new development whereby businesspersons who are skeptical about taking time off of their businesses to get involved in conferences/workshops providing information relating to entrepreneurial activities, will be left behind. This is the age of information. Entrepreneurs have to plan ahead and seek out opportunities to ensure the survival of their businesses. In recent times, I have discovered that conferences/workshops are delivering information that is necessary to meet the challenges of doing business. The benchmarking gives Entrepreneurs an opportunity to have an in-depth look at what successful businesses are doing. At least to know what they are competing with.

I am aware of the sacrifice that is necessary to keep up with the demand that is placed on the time of Entrepreneurs to attend meetings but it could be well worth the sacrifice. The opportunity afforded those persons who attended the conference on Profiling Economic Vulnerability and Economic Resilience in Small States: The Case of St. Lucia at the Gaiety Conference Centre, Massade, Gros Islet on June 16 & 17, 2008 was one such example of the quality of information that is shared with participants. My advice to my readers is not to sit on the fence and think of conferences/workshops as mere talk shops but instead attend and make your contribution.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Hereunder is my selected motivational quote of the week:

FOLLOW THE PATH OF OTHERS TO SUCCESS

You can learn from other people to make up for your lack of experience in any area of life.

Be open and receptive to people around you.

They have things to teach you.

Take advantage of the people that have made the journey ahead of you.

Try to pick the right role models.

Don't look for people that make you feel good or entertain you.

Look for people that can help you.

Role models are more than people you like and admire.

The key is to look for people that will help you to be more successful.

You can learn from the mistakes of others.

You can learn different approaches to overcoming challenges.

Learning what not to do is as important as learning what to do.

Success depends on using not opposing.

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HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#40 JULY 23, 2008 – THE PROPOSED DATE FOR THE SIGNING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND CARIFORUM ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT!!!

July 3, 2008

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

JULY 23, 2008 – THE PROPOSED DATE FOR THE SIGNING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND CARIFORUM ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT!!!

Several agencies involved in the Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations are busy discussing the pros and cons of the proposed agreement scheduled to be signed by Heads of Government in the Cariforum region on Wednesday, 23rd July, 2008. Many express doubts as to whether this will be possible as dissenting voices are being echoed by Governments across the region. CARIFORUM members include: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

President Jagdeo of Guyana is in the forefront of making public pronouncements as to his Government's displeasure with the agreement and in recent days Hon. Rufus Bousquet, Minister for Trade, Industry, Commerce, Consumer Affairs & Investment in Saint Lucia has also gone public to express concerns. It is interesting to note that while the dissenting voices are getting louder, Hon. Christopher Sinckler, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Business of Barbados is yet to make a definitive statement on his Government's position that is carried by the region's media. Minister Sinckler is well known throughout the region for his work with the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) on behalf of NGOs in general and for his outspoken position against the EPA prior to his appointment as a Minister, joining in protest meetings and demonstrations in the region and beyond. The Heads of Government can do with some guidance from Hon. Christopher Sinckler.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Two meetings were hosted in St. Lucia during the past week on the EPA, interestingly one was sponsored by the CPDC in collaboration with Christian Aid. The technocrats have been at pains to explain the several aspects of the proposed agreement since the initial agreement by Heads to proceed with the EPA as negotiated late last year.

St. Lucia is currently being the preferred destination for meetings and workshops in the OECS and it is noted that most of them run from two to four days. The demand to share information among stakeholders is growing and the agencies charged with various aspects of development within the region are busy at this time. It is definitely a race against time as on the one hand it's the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and the EPA on the other.

It is great news for the region as the CSME Development Fund was finally launched by Heads of Government in Antigua on July 1, 2008. The original size of the Fund was set at US\$250,000,000.00 but was launched with US\$60,000,000.00. At least it is a step in the right direction. Mr. Patrick Joseph, a past President of the St. Lucia Industrial and Small Business Association (SLISBA) should be pleased with the announcement as he kept reminding the Leaders of their promise to implement the Fund.

Hon. Stephenson King is back in the country after a trip to the Republic of China on Taiwan and things are quiet on the front line of Government. In the meantime, the Government of Taiwan will be collaborating with the Government of Saint Lucia to mount an Exhibition of Taiwanese goods and services in Saint Lucia in October, 2008. Relationship between the two nations is progressing and there seems to be no shift in policy in relation to Saint Lucia under the new administration in Taiwan.

The greatest challenge to the Government and people of Saint Lucia is the rising cost of living. With the cost of oil continuing to rise with no end in sight, it is time for serious adjustments at all levels of society. Something will have to be done to arrest the situation.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The tourism sector is being challenged by contraction in the airline industry and the high cost of air travel. There has to be new approaches to the old problem of airlifts. Just when the future looked good, the oil crisis came along to rob us of the economic growth we anticipated.

Life goes on and there is need to be strong. Lifestyle changes are definitely on the cards. It is some conciliation in all that is going on in the world today that we realize that THIS TOO SHALL PASS.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Miracles all the time!!!

#41 CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORK CONVERGED ON THE CASTRIES MARKET STEPS TO PROTEST PRIVITISATION OF THE WATER SECTOR!!!

July 16, 2008

Edward Harris At Large

CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORK CONVERGED ON THE CASTRIES MARKET STEPS TO PROTEST PRIVITISATION OF THE WATER SECTOR!!!

While the Carnival revelry is taking place with such activities as Mass on the Square in the evenings, the Civil Society Network under the leadership of Ms. Flavia Cherry took to the Castries Market Steps calling on the Government to hold back on the privatization of the Water & Sewerage Company Inc. – WASCO. The several speakers included the President of the National Youth Council – Mr. Marvin Edgar and Past President of the National Consumers' Association – Mr. Andrew Antoine. They all called on the UWP Government not to renege on their Campaign Promise – not to privatize the Water Sector in St. Lucia. Ms. Cherry promised not to back down on the Water Issue and will take the issue to the streets with massive demonstrations if necessary.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Ms. Flavia Cherry is the President of Caribbean Association for Feminist Action and Research (CAFRA) – St. Lucia Chapter. This Association collaborates with the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) on matters affecting civil society and provides necessary support to Governments on women's issues and trade. The two organizations' contribution to the Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations between the European Union and the Cariforum States have been invaluable and played a major role in drawing to the attention of the region's Governments flaws in the agreement and the need to hold off on signing at this time. The EPA should have been concluded on 23rd July, 2008.

While the EPA is still a work in progress, the region's governments are getting ready for trade negotiations with Canada. One of the issues at the very core of the EPA is that Caricom Governments will not be able to negotiate a more favourable agreement with any other State without giving the same treatment to the EU. The old saying more haste, less speed is very applicable to this situation.

The Carnival Season is at its peak with the Panorama and Calypso finals set for Friday and Saturday – 18 & 19th July, 2008. The Bands will be taking to the streets on Carnival Monday and Tuesday. It is interesting to note that the route for the Bands to parade has been extended.

Carnival is never without controversy and Carnival 2KGreat is no exception. The artistes are demanding more prize money and better pay for performances. The Queen Show winner Miss Digicel, in spite of winning the crown was not the favourite. It was widely felt that Miss Piton walked away with it. Some persons believed that there was conflict of interest and suggested that the sponsors of the overall event should not be involved in direct sponsorship of a contestant. After all these years, Carnival 2KGreat has shown some flaws in many respects. Judging and other issues that after all these years should have been on auto pilot.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

In spite of the economic hardships being experienced in the country, this Carnival is slated to be one of the biggest in recent years. I heard that one band has about 800 persons. I cannot wait to see the parade of the bands this year. I also hear that the brothers and sisters in the region and the diaspora are coming for Carnival 2KGreat. It is not too late for those of you reading my column to join us for last lap. From Friday July 18 to Tuesday 22, 2008, it will be party nonstop. There is no place on earth that you should be at this time – but in St. Lucia. St. Lucia Nice!!!

Although we continue to hear cries about high cost of living, life goes on and St. Lucians are in no mood to be bothered. It is Carnival time again and it is time to hit the streets and party. Suzette is waiting! Herb Black is set to be crowned Road March King 2KGreat!!!!

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Miracles Every day!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#42 CARIBBEAN PEOPLE SHOULD SUPPORT OBAMA IN THE RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE!

August 21, 2008

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

CARIBBEAN PEOPLE SHOULD SUPPORT OBAMA IN THE RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE!

Pushing against deadline is the worst nightmare of a journalist. I find myself wanting more time before I submit this article. The Obama camp is under serious pressure as John Mc Cain closes the gap. Most political pundits predict that the VP pick could put Obama back in contention. Although Obama, as I write this article has confirmed he has already made up his mind on a VP, no one is prepared to put the word out there on who is the chosen one. The situation that emerged over the past week has many of us who hoped for the dream team ticket of Barack and Hillary having second thoughts as it doesn't seem as though Hillary was ever considered for the position. Such is the game of politics. It is not always expediency.

I am just hoping that Obama will step out and hit the ball, get on the offensive and deal with Mc Cain straight up. If President George W. Bush could have been nominated by the Republicans and won two elections with no experience, how come experience is such an issue today? What is the role of Dick Cheney? He hasn't helped much, apart from getting the war started in Iraq so that those who have heavy investments in corporations producing military supplies and military consultancy firms could make tons of dollars. Elections everywhere are about the Leaders of political parties. Parties win or lose based on the popularity or unpopularity of their leaders.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Every Caribbean citizen should be proud of the achievement of Obama and rally their relatives and friends in the Diaspora community. This is as much our election as it is our relatives and friends residing in the USA. How many of us have made financial contribution to the Obama campaign? It isn't too late to put your US\$25.00 in the pot. I am hoping that there will be several Election nights parties in St. Lucia. This is a good time for our top restaurants and bars to put on Election Night events for their candidate and give their patrons a choice. I hope they will be creative and get all election paraphernalia to put on a great show.

This is a great moment in time for people of colour. Exciting times are ahead. It is time for change you and I can believe in. It is time that Cuba to be set free and the Caribbean be remembered as a true ally. Change has got to come and the time is now!!!! It is said that when America sneezes, we in the Caribbean get influenza. It is definitely so in relation to tourism. We have every reason to be involved in the politics of the United States of America and let our voices be heard. Go to www.barackobama.com and let your comments be seen and give Obama a campaign line. To date Obama has run a civil campaign, we need to help him find some knock out punches for Mc Cain and what better place he can turn to other than the Caribbean? We have a few things to teach politicians in the rest of the world. I had the privilege of working alongside the great Dick Morris and we did have some interesting exchanges.

Up to the point of my signing off on this article, the noise is in the corner of Senator Joe Biden for Vice President but other names are also surfacing as the suspense continues. I signed up to receive the email announcing the VP. What will be will be! I wish Senator Obama every success in his bid for the White House

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Here is my favourite quote of the week:

FOCUS ON YOUR FUTURE NOT YOUR PAST

Your future is a big adventure.

Prepare for your future don't live in the past.

Savor your good memories,

use any bad ones as lessons in life.

Carve out a niche for yourself in your imagined future.

Think, feel and see yourself as successful.

To achieve any goal in life, you need to project your end result.

Think of the elation, the satisfaction, the joy you'll feel.

Carry these ecstatic feelings with you every day

and they'll bring your desired goals into view.

Sooner or later, you can win if you think you can.

The cards you are dealt in life

are less important than the way you play them.

Everyday you're offered a new deal and new cards.

Success is in your future if you're willing to work for it.

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HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#43 THE WELL-BEING FAIR WAS A SUCCESS!

September 18, 2008

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

THE WELL-BEING FAIR WAS A SUCCESS!

St. Lucians are definitely fighting back and seem to be determined to take their health and well-being seriously. This was evident from the hundreds of patrons who converged on the Cultural Centre on Sunday, 14th September, 2008 to attend the Well-Being Fair that was hosted by the Great Physician International in collaboration with the Natural Health Clinic.

The Rastafarian community led the way in showing that eating healthy foods and adopting a healthy lifestyle were of vital importance to the well-being of humans. The steady line towards the food booths continued until the conclusion of the event. This augurs well for the future when an Ital Restaurant could be established. I am hoping that the group will take the opportunity to secure a Castries location at the earliest. I am reminded of an earlier article I wrote suggesting that if we are serious about eating healthy foods in an attempt to deal with diabetes and hypertension, there is need for the establishment of Salad Bars and Restaurants that target persons seeking to develop healthy eating habit. Dr. Almus Mc Dowall has always spoken out against the use of Aluminum Pots and Pans in the kitchen and the adverse effects on our health. There is a lot to be learnt about what we do about staying healthy.

Feature addresses were delivered by experienced doctors of Natural Medicines, including Dr. Gilbertha St. Rose, Dr. Almus Mc Dowall, and Priest, Dr. Kalash Leonce, a young St. Lucian who studied in Cuba and Manchester, England.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The various health issues affecting humans were highlighted and the large gathering, telling from their enthusiasm, were very appreciative of the information shared. They sampled and purchased many of the health foods, natural medicines and herbs that were on sale. The Rastafarians wanted to make a statement on health and well-being and the event provided an excellent opportunity to do that. They succeeded in getting their message across. People were amazed at the information provided at the seminar. They had their appetites filled not only with the appetizing dishes but also the information as regards the dangers that Styrofoam based products/utensils pose to human health.

Feedbacks coming from the audience indicated that more well-being fairs should be held around the island with the aim of encouraging health lifestyles. This should be done by all other industries. Industry Fairs should be the thrust for generating consumer awareness in 2009.

It was a day well spent, a day filled with knowledge and information on how we can prevent and possibly rid our society of the many diseases that are cause for concern.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

DON'T BELIEVE IN MIRACLES, DEPEND ON THEM

You don't need an explanation for everything.

Recognize that there are such things as miracles,
events for which there are no explanations.

Later, knowledge may explain those events.

The fact that you plant a seed and it becomes a flower,
share a bit of knowledge and it becomes another's,

Smile at someone and receive a smile in return
are common miracles.

Your duty to yourself is to believe that for which you
have sufficient evidence, and to suspend your judgement
when you have not.

Any sufficiently advanced technology
is indistinguishable from magic.

Some things have to be believed to be seen.

Vision is the art of seeing invisible things.

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I am seeing Miracles every day in the Obama Campaign. He is ahead again and is very likely to stay there as the economy of the USA continues to decline. If the USA is an example as to how political campaigns should be conducted, the US politicians need to take several pages out of our Caribbean political guide book. When God anoints someone for a job, there is no earthly human being who will be able to change that.

It is time for some serious debates on the USA Elections and the implications for Caribbean relationship with the next President. When we attempt to discuss the issues, we will find that Obama is not only good for America, he is good for the Caribbean and the rest of the world. What an opportunity? The possibilities are awesome! However, only time will tell.

Have a great weekend.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Miracles Every day!!!

#44 WILL IT BE?

October 14, 2008

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

WILL IT BE?

Will the members of the Cariforum group sign on to the European Partnership Agreement (EPA) on Wednesday, 15th October, 2008? By the time this newspaper hits the newsstands it would have been known to the world how united are the leaders of CARICOM and the level of importance they attach to forging ahead with the EPA be it for better or for worse.

Civil Society Groups have failed to hold back the signing and can only be satisfied with the many gains they made over the months of active negotiations. No one can deny Civil Society's contribution during the negotiations, especially when Mr. Christopher Sinckler headed the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) in Barbados. He is the current Minister for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Business in the Barbados Government and a strong advocate for the signing of the EPA.

I am plagued by deadlines falling just before the actual events. I never get the opportunity to get the conclusion of the story. If they sign this time around, I would have been correct when I predicted in an earlier article that Governments will go along with the agreement they signed in December, 2007.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Sir Shridat Ramphal is requesting that Cariforum leaders have a stay of execution as it relates to the signing of the EPA at this time. However, the leaders are feeling that there has been enough delay and should not be seen as indecisive. It is almost a year and the agreement has yet to be concluded. In today's world, procrastination is not an option. The state of the world economies is not encouraging and it is necessary to get their feet into the door before further deterioration in the economies of European nations.

There is also the need to expand markets for our tourism which is the mainstay of the economy of most countries in the region. We are hearing now of Real Estate Tourism. This is a welcomed idea. It is something that has occupied my attention for several years. I am always seeing the tourists as potential investors in the property market and even conceptualized programmes for bringing property deals to the attention of tourists. Every tourist should be given an opportunity to be exposed to the economic prospects of the destination. St. Lucia is fortunate to have a young, dynamic Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation who has vast experience in tourism and airline industries. I feel that Senator Allen Chastanet has a vision for the tourism sector of St. Lucia and based on his experiences should be able to find solutions to the problems currently plaguing the industry.

These are serious times as much is at stake in the tourism sector. We just can't afford to fail. It is against this background of challenges that all the best minds in the industry need to get together to help to find solutions to the decline in tourist arrivals due to the economic situation on the one hand and airlifts on the other. Tourism and Investment must now find common ground and move forward in a complimentary manner. I developed the theme "St. Lucia - A Unique Destination for Investment, Vacation and Retirement".

I am not about to give up on St. Lucia. I caution you not to listen to the prophets of doom and gloom. This too shall pass. When I was optimistic, many accused me of living in another country but when the boom came, I proudly reminded many - that I told them so! I have always recommended to members of the Caribbean Diaspora to look to St. Lucia to invest in property. I stand firm on my recommendation. There are still genuine bargains in the real estate sector in St. Lucia today!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Miracles Everyday!!!

#45 LARGE GATHERING AT GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY IN VIEUX FORT – ST. LUCIA

October 29, 2008

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

LARGE GATHERING AT GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY IN VIEUX FORT – ST. LUCIA

Mr. David Singh a native of Guyana who migrated to Canada almost 35 years ago is bullish on investing in St. Lucia. He signaled his intention to build a multi-million-dollar Ultra-Modern Medical School in Vieux Fort at a groundbreaking ceremony on Wednesday 29th October, 2008. Construction is expected to commence by November 1, 2008. The project is located next to the Windward and Leeward Brewery Limited (producers of the internationally famous Piton Beer) on the St. Jude's Highway, about a quarter of a mile from the St. Jude's Hospital.

Attendees included the Prime Minister, members of his Cabinet, Government and Private Sector Officials, Entrepreneurs and Professionals who witnessed the unveiling of the architectural design of the project. The opportunity was also taken to announce that Destiny Group of Companies will donate to the Victoria Hospital a Mammography Machine to assist in the early detection of Breast Cancer in women.

The Destiny University School of Medicine & Health Sciences is currently operating as a distance learning university at renovated premises formerly the Sandy Beach Hotel. When the University facilities are fully established in 2010, St. Jude's Hospital could benefit substantially from its presence in the area.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

While there are signals that suggest a slowing down in the economy and in particular the construction sector, the Destiny University Medical School and Health Sciences project will begin long awaited construction activity in the south of the island, while the start of the Ritz Carlton project is being eagerly awaited.

There is evidence of another Medical School that is currently operating in Vieux Fort is likely to construct their own facility in the new year. A sign on the adjacent land indicates their interest in establishing their own campus facility.

It has been a long time coming and the year 2009 is very likely to be the year that will change View Fort for the better, fulfilling its role as the new development frontier. The infrastructure was put in place several years ago but until now is greatly under-utilized. If it can happen, it will and it is about time that prosperity returns to Vieux Fort.

St. Lucians continue to closely monitor the trends in the financial markets and the oil price in particular which has been moving steadily downward. However, the price of gasoline and diesel at the pumps is still EC\$12.95 / US\$4.77 per gallon. Citizens have not been too vocal in demanding that prices at the pumps be adjusted due to the fact that the Government subsidized petrol at the pumps for a few months and is heavily subsidizing cooking gas, flour and a few other basic food items.

There are lots of developments at the regional and sub regional level and St. Lucia is fully committed to participating in these initiatives. OECS and Trinidad & Tobago Economic Union, OECS Economic Union, European Partnership Agreement, CARICOM – Canada Trade Agreement and CARICOM Single Market are all very much on the front burner.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Regional and international meetings are once again being hosted at the level prior to the oil crisis and increased airfares. It is difficult these days to secure conference facilities to host workshops, conferences and meetings. Hotels are benefiting as they are to keep their employees during the slow periods. We are expecting a great cruise ship season but Senator, The Honourable Allen Chastanet, Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation continues to grapple with the issue of airlifts. With the declining oil prices, the possibility exists for a rethinking of the routes by the major airline companies and our own regional carriers like Air Jamaica and Caribbean Airways. God knows we can do with some cheaper airfares.

I cannot conclude my article without noting the developments taking place in the Presidential Campaigns in the USA. History is in the making and with an Obama WIN; the world will be a better place. Let us pray for a people's victory on November 4, 2008. I will be watching and cheering and shouting just as much as you as I participate in a special election watch which is being organized by the newly formed American Chamber in St. Lucia.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Miracles Every day!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#46 SAINT LUCIAN REALTORS ATTENDED NAR CONFERENCE & EXPO IN ORLANDO, FLORIDA!!!

November 13, 2008

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

SAINT LUCIAN REALTORS ATTENDED NAR CONFERENCE & EXPO IN ORLANDO, FLORIDA!!!

I began writing this article at Miami International Airport on my way back from the National Association of Realtors (NAR) Centennial activities in Orlando, Florida which saw the installation of a new Board of Directors headed by a Black Man – Mr. Charles McMillan as its 101st President. Mr. Mc Millan is Principal Broker of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Dallas/ Fort Worth, Texas. The Association has 1.3million members.

The Realtors Association (Saint Lucia) Ltd. was represented by Edward Harris, Chairman and Mrs. Karleen Greenidge, Treasurer and Convenor of the Education Committee. The opportunity to visit and network with national and international members of NAR was a great experience. We attended many presentations by experts in the various fields of real estate and investment, and visited the exhibition where there were over 500 booths. On the exhibition floor there were offerings which included stress chairs to help Realtors cope with the difficult times. In spite of the current situation in the real estate industry in the USA, there are still states that are doing well. The business is by no means at a standstill in the USA even if some Agents have to get involved in Quick Sales and Foreclosures. The advice of professional agents is always in demand.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

I was amazed at the number of persons who walked up to me and had good things to say about St. Lucia. St. Lucia tourism image is positive and I believe that with the power of the internet, in a few years millions more will get to know about St. Lucia and come to share the experience. Many had a glimpse of the island during a cruise stop and expressed the desire for a stay over holiday. I have attended lots of trade shows during my business career and always make the point of attending the trade shows of the industry I am involved with. Since I began writing my weekly column, I continued over the years to stress the importance of new ideas. New ideas are always available at trade exhibitions. I take this opportunity to encourage Entrepreneurs to attend their industry trade exhibition.

It is interesting to note that in recent times business persons have been traveling to the Far East on buying trips but not attending trade fairs. In 2009 I am hoping that SLISBA will be promoting a number of visits to trade fairs. It is hard work to walk the floor of international fairs to identify products and services but it is very rewarding.

The upcoming National Exhibition for the 30th Anniversary of Independence during February, 2009 is expected to be the best ever and we can look forward to local manufacturers and service providers really putting on a grand show. It seems as though 2009 will be a very active year for St. Lucia as a conference/exhibition destination.

I feel that nothing should prevent us from seeing increased economic activity early in the New Year as the economic situation levels out and President Barack Obama takes office. The world is watch and waiting.

Here is my selected quote for the week:

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

THE ODDS ARE ALWAYS WITH YOU IF YOU TRY

Success in anything is connected with action.

Successful people keep moving.

They make mistakes but they don't quit.

They hang on long after others have let go.

You must have persistence.

Keep trying is the rule that you must follow
to become successful in anything.

Persistence means taking pains to overcome
every obstacle, to do all that is necessary
to reach your goal.

You must never, never, never give up.

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President Elect Barack Obama is headed for the White House with a level of popularity that is unprecedented at such period of anxiety and uncertainty. Seventy five percent of the people feel he will do a good job. He won an election where the world voted. While Americans actually marked their ballots for Obama, the rest of the world voted with their hearts. It is truly a wonderful world!

Have a great weekend!

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, A new Day is Dawning, Dream Big and Expect Miracles
Every day!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#47 TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

November 13, 2008

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

Senator Barack Obama, now President Elect! To God be the glory! Great things he has done! If it can happen, it will. President Elect Barack Obama is headed for the White House with a level of popularity that is phenomenal at such period of anxiety and uncertainty. While Americans actually marked their ballots for Obama, the rest of the world voted with their hearts. It is truly a wonderful world!

I began writing this article at Miami International Airport on my way back from the National Association of Realtors (NAR) Centennial activities in Orlando, Florida. The opportunity to visit and network with national and international members of NAR was a great experience. I attended many presentations by experts in the various fields of real estate and investment, and visited the exhibition where there were over 500 booths. On the exhibition floor there were offerings which included stress chairs to help Realtors cope with the difficult times. In spite of the current situation in the real estate industry in the USA, there are still states that are doing well. The business is by no means at a standstill in the USA even if some Agents have to get involved in Quick Sales and Foreclosures. The advice of professional agents is always in demand.

The experience has equipped me to deal with the challenges in the real estate industry in St. Lucia where I head the Realtors Association (Saint Lucia) Ltd. Mrs. Karleen Greenidge, Treasurer and Convenor of the Education Committee of the Association attended the conference and exhibition. Due to her previous attendances at such events, she was of great assistance.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The Government of Saint Lucia is currently looking into amending the Alien Land Holding License Act to make it more relevant to the needs of today's investors. The turnaround time is too long and generally frustrates investors. Finally, this impediment to doing business in St. Lucia is being dealt with. In first quarter of 2009, many of the large projects will get back on stream and new, exciting opportunities will open up. This column will provide regular alerts as to the state of the economy in general and investments in the real estate sector in particular. It is my belief that overseas investors will settle down to the reality of a changing global investment environment and move on.

St. Lucia in spite of the difficult times is moving ahead. The private sector is maintaining its position as the engine of growth. Innovative ideas are coming to the fore and the level of employment within the sector is being sustained. There has been no report of retrenchment in the private sector except for seasonal workers in the tourism sector but with a bumper cruise ship season being expected, better days are ahead.

Gasoline and Diesel prices at the pumps are being held at US\$147.00 a barrel prices even though the price is now below US\$60.00. This is to allow for an adjustment in revenue since the Government subsidized fuel and cooking gas to consumers for several months. The retail price per gallon is just over US\$5.00.

I feel that nothing should prevent us from seeing increased economic activity early in the New Year as the economic situation levels out and President Barack Obama takes office. The world is watch and waiting.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Miracles Every day!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

**#48 ST. LUCIA ON THE MOVE – *BARON FOODS LTD *MEGA J
*OECS ECONOMIC UNION *124th AGM OF THE CHAMBER!!!**

November 19, 2008

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

ST. LUCIA ON THE MOVE – *BARON FOODS LTD *MEGA J *OECS ECONOMIC UNION
*124th AGM OF THE CHAMBER!!!

St. Lucia had a very active few days that will long be remembered. Saturday, November 15, 2008 – Baron Foods Ltd. celebrating its ISO 22000 – 2005 Certification; the first in the Caribbean. It is the highest standard in the food processing industry. It was a night to remember when the Who's Who of St. Lucia converged at the Sandals Grande for a three hour long cocktail reception which went well beyond 10.00pm. It was a proud moment for Mr. Ronald Ramjattan, Managing Director and his team. The feature address was delivered by Hon. Stephenson King, Prime Minister who traced back his early encounters with the Mr. Ronald Ramjattan. Everyone expressed the view that Baron Foods Ltd. is truly a company of Excellence!

Sunday, November 16, 2008 – MEGA J was officially opened. St. Lucians can now boast of first world shopping. It is as good a shopping experience as any, anywhere. When the operations are fully established and the range of products expanded, consumers are likely to find real bargains. As I walked around the 50,000 square foot shopping centre on Tuesday, 18/11/08, I was very impressed with the operations and am further convinced that St. Lucians can achieve whatever they put their minds to and that the team of investors and professionals of the group of companies do have a vision for their enterprise.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Monday, November 17, 2008 – It was time to look towards the OECS Economic Union. A very impressive ceremony was held in the Derek Walcott Square and attended by Prime Minister, Hon. Stephenson King, Members of Parliament, Ambassadors of OECS States and the Diplomatic Corps, Government Officials, Private Sector Representatives and Members of Civil Society. Addresses were delivered by the Chairperson of the OECS Economic Union Task Force for St. Lucia – Ambassador Dr June Soomer, Director General of the OECS – Ms. Len Ishmael, Chairman of the OECS Task Force on OECS Economic Union – Sir Dwight Venner, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia – Hon. Stephenson King and visiting Ambassadors of OECS nations.

It was noted that the OECS Economic Union is well advanced as common services in the judiciary, telecommunication, civil aviation, drug procurement, security, banking, are already being done on a collective approached.

To date only 4 States have launched the public discussions process. It is now the job of the local task force to lead the public discussions that will precede the establishment of an OECS Economic Union by December, 2009.

Wednesday, November 19, 2008 – The 124th Annual General Meeting of the St. Lucia Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture was well attended by Executives of leading Corporations, Government Officials and Entrepreneurs. President Christian Husbands was upbeat in his presentation and outlined the Chamber's plans which include housing the Secretariat in the new year. The Annual Report of the Association gave an impressive account of the activities of the association over the past year.

The feature address was delivered by Hon. David Thompson, Prime Minister of Barbados and he shared many ideas to cope with the difficult times that are upon us. He said that the industry to watch is Alternative Energy. Prime Minister, Hon. Stephenson King made an impromptu contribution as he spoke about his plans to help the economy. Building roads and clean up campaigns are in the works.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

In the past few days, it has been good news for St. Lucia, the OECS Economic Union is great for fulfilling the objectives of CSME and moving the States of the OECS closer to a Political Union. I am fully convinced that the CSME will be functional in the OECS while it will be very difficult for the larger States to make the sacrifice necessary to advance a CSME. Already Barbados and Belize are not enthusiastic about freedom of movement of other nationals into their territories.

In the OECS, we are forging ahead with the OECS Economic Union while our Private Sector and their Associations are as resilient as ever.

Here is my selected quote of the week.

COURTESY OPENS ALL DOORS

There is no investment you'll ever make that will pay you so well as the effort to scatter sunshine and good cheer where ever you are.
The deepest principal in human nature is the craving to be appreciated.
If you treat someone as if they were what they ought to be and could be, they will become what they ought to be and could be.
Everyone thrives on being appreciated, loved and needed.
There is no stimulus like that which comes from the consciousness of knowing that others believe in you.
Applaud others when they run.
Console them when they fail.
And cheer them when they recover.
As water is to a flower, so is praise to the heart of another.
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Have a great weekend!

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, A new Day is Dawning, Dream Big and Expect Miracles Every day!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#49 ST. LUCIA'S HOSTING OF CHTA MARKET PLACE VERY TIMELY!!!

January 22, 2009

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

ST. LUCIA'S HOSTING OF CHTA CARIBBEAN MARKET PLACE - VERY TIMELY!

The CHTA Caribbean Market Place hosted in Saint Lucia from January 18 - 20, 2009 was very timely as it has put Saint Lucia into focus at a very critical time in the industry. Global tourism industry movers and shakers have noted the achievement of Saint Lucia in hosting such an event. The collaboration among the organizers and sponsors is worthy of the highest commendation. It has been proven once again that working together, great things can be achieved.

The Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA) was founded in 1962 and in 2008 became Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) in an effort to embrace all stakeholders - businesses and organizations in the industry. It has a membership of more than 800 member hotels and 750 allied members. You can visit their website at <http://www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com>

The St Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association in collaboration with the St. Lucia Tourist Board, Ministry of Tourism and Civil aviation and the Caribbean gave a fitting welcome to the visitors at the Opening and Awards Ceremony at the Gaiety on Sunday evening, 18th February, 2009.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

St. Lucia has received yet another award for being an excellent destination. This time it is the Star Diamond Award from the American Academy of Hospitality Sciences. Mr. Joseph Cinque, President of the Academy presented a plaque to Prime Minister, Hon. Stephenson King who approvingly passed it on the Senator, Hon. Allen Chastanet whose efforts in promoting St. Lucia as a destination of choice is tireless. It was a great evening for the Honourable Minister as it was announced that finally the Caribbean Destination Marketing Plan has been approved.

St. Lucia took advantage of the opportunity to launch its BRAND during Caribbean Market Place 2009 while the local, regional and international media were on hand. It was a proud moment marked with fanfare as the SAINT LUCIA BRAND was unveiled. You can now let your imagination soar to the heavens with what you perceive Saint Lucia to be. There is a lot more to Saint Lucia than being simply beautiful. It is no longer Saint Lucia – Simply Beautiful – there is no tag line to the BRAND. There should be a competition to get an idea of what citizens and visitors perceive Saint Lucia to be. The Tourism Master Plan was shared with the gathering and the Village Tourism Concept was well received.

The statistics provided by the organizers are impressive and point to the fact that interest in the tourism industry continues to be strong. There was a total of 406 booths lining the corridors at Caribbean Market Place 2009 as 1,366 delegates gathered to meet to and discuss marketing initiatives that are needed to spur demand for Caribbean vacations.

This is the first time in a decade that the number of booths topped the 400 mark. There were 397 booths in 2008 and 371 booths in 2007.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

There were 871 supplier delegates ready to meet with 298 buyers from 124 partner wholesaler tour operator companies from more than 20 countries worldwide. This compares favourably to a year ago when there were 908 supplier delegates. However, the number of buyer companies has decreased as consolidation in the industry continues to shrink the number of wholesalers worldwide. The 12,292 scheduled appointments were second in number to the record set last year, indicating that interest in meetings between suppliers and buyers remains strong. (Statistics extracted from Media Contacts KTCpr 20/1/09).

I had the privilege and pleasure of attending 10 press conferences, two press lunches and on press breakfast which provided me with a good sense of where the industry is today and where it is headed over the next three years. In spite of the global economic down turn, industry leaders during their presentations have expressed a degree of confidence that they will be able to ride out the storm.

It is important to note that CHTA Caribbean Market Place is an annual Event which showcases tourism related services to promote the offerings of its members and is hosted by one of the countries in the region. St. Lucia is the first to host a Market Place in the Eastern Caribbean.

I took the opportunity to discuss with two Ritz Carlton Marketing Executives prior to and at their Press Breakfast, the status of their Black Bay project. They clarified a situation which most people do not fully understand. It is necessary to differentiate between a Developer and an Operator. There is a developer for the Black Bay property. Ritz Carlton will be the operator when the property is completed and handed over. However, it makes good sense for Brand association throughout the development of the project. The project is scheduled for completion in 2012.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Customers Incentives are high on the marketing agenda of hoteliers as some offer substantial discounts while others offer value added. Both approaches reduce the bottom line but the later maintains a pricing level that will be easily retained beyond the crisis and does not diminish the premium status established in the first place. The value-added approach seems to be favoured by the high-end properties.

Hon. Richard Skerritt, Minister of State for Tourism, Sports and Culture at St. Kitts Press Conference shared his Government's efforts at sustaining the industry. He made special reference to a package of incentives which includes Free entry on import of materials, machinery, food and wine that is being given to small hotels to assist them in cutting cost during these difficult times, while affording them the opportunity to upgrade their hotels and be more efficient. He noted that timely reports on their operations will have to be provided.

I was very impressed with the presentation by Mrs. Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes, Director of Tourism at the Bonaire Press Conference. She demonstrated that with passion for your industry, your story could inspire your listeners to dream. Bonaire has been on the upward trend in recent years and has established a place for itself as a leading windsurfing destination. Her presentation was centered on expansion and gains made in the industry.

St. Lucian service providers and volunteers have done a great job and their performance attests to the quality of service that is available in St. Lucia. Hoteliers have taken note of this and are planning to recruit St. Lucians in the industry to take up appointments overseas. Our taxi drivers also came in for high praise. St. Lucia is a special place and its people shine every time. Bay Gardens Resort catered for on-site meals and served as much as 1,300 lunches on the last day of event. This is a great achievement for a small hotel.

The reception and show at Pigeon Island on 20/1/09 gave St. Lucians another opportunity to appreciate their culture, especially our local artistes. It was an opportunity well utilized to showcase our culture to the visitors.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

What is the legacy? I was reminded that the efficiency of the volunteers was as a result of the training received in preparation for CWC 2007 and their subsequent participation in the event. The legacy of Caribbean Market Place 2009 will be the focused PR provided by the Journalists to the world. The decision to host the event at this time will pay dividends even when the filed reports to media houses around the world rest in their archives.

Make 2009 you best year ever, Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Miracles Every day!!!

#50 THE BRAINSTORMING MASTERMIND GROUP IS NOW REALITY!!!

February 19, 2009

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

THE BRAINSTORMING MASTERMIND GROUP IS NOW REALITY!!!

The Brainstorming Mastermind Group was officially launched at the Bay Gardens Lantana Room on Wednesday, 18th February, 2009. The meeting was well attended and professionals/entrepreneurs in the furniture, ICT and real estate sub sectors were well represented.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Martin Satney of SATGRO Solutions Ltd. and the key note address was delivered by Mr. Terrence Elliot, Managing Director of Converge Solutions Inc. who addressed the gathering on the topic "The role of Technology in a Global Economy - St. Lucia's Position" Mr. Elliot left no doubt in his listeners' minds that technology is the way to go. He hinted that his company will be launching a website during the 30th Anniversary celebrations that will promote St. Lucia's products and services around the world. Attendees gave immediate commitment to participating in the programme when it becomes operational.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Founder of the group Edward Harris was encouraged by the level of interest shown in the initiative and noted that the group will share techniques that will give members a positive outlook on life and expose them to opportunities to make full time/passive income. Affirmation and goal setting will be used to build confidence to achieve success and exposure to ground floor opportunities in global businesses will be the vehicle for generating income. Technology will be fully utilized for realizing financial benefits.

Testimonies on the importance of networking were shared by Mr. Lynch Thornille, a very successful young Realtor/Entrepreneur and Mr. Cuthbert John, an ICT and Project Management Consultant who is introducing to St. Lucia the LEAN Concept for improving efficiency in businesses.

Mr. Hilton Jn Baptiste, President of SLISBA applauded the Founder for introducing a very timely initiative, alluding to the state of the global economy. He said the need for business persons and professionals to come together and brainstorm cannot be over emphasized. He moved a Vote of Thanks on behalf of attendees.

The audience was made up of several CARICOM Nationals which augers well for the future expansion of the group beyond St. Lucia. The first meeting of the group will be held shortly. NGOs, Social and Sports Clubs are invited to request information on the group by contacting the Founder at Email: eahmastermindgroup@gmail.com
www.brainstorminggroup.webs.com

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

There has never been a time that professionals and business persons need to be talking with each more than now. It is heartening to see that some business persons are recognizing the need and doing something about it. The Furniture Manufacturers are making a serious attempt to form an Association and they are encouraged by SMA and SLISBA to ensure that their attempt this time will be successful. Mr. St. Brice is heading a three-man committee to put arrangements in place. The attendance at the meeting held on 17/2/09 at the Bay Gardens Inn was encouraging. The meeting was addressed by Officials from the Export Development Unit of the OECS and Sir Arthur Lewis Community College who offered assistance to the group once they are organized. Miss Ava Marius is the Officer responsible for the furniture sector in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Consumer Affairs. She has worked tirelessly to assist the sector. It is now up to the persons in the sector to help themselves.

Here is my selected motivational piece for the week:

YOU ARE YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Always be mindful that you're a product of your environment.

So choose an environment that will best develop you toward your objective.

Analyze your life in terms of your environment.

Are the things around you helping you toward your success,
or are they holding you back?

The first step toward getting somewhere

is to decide that you're not going to stay where you are.

You're not a captive of your environment.

If you don't like where you are, you can make some changes.

You're not planted permanently in the ground like a tree.

Don't say, "You would, if you could,"

start saying, "You will, because you can."

When you become a part of anything it becomes a part of you.

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Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Miracles Every day!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#51 KALALU, JAZZ, CALYPSO & MORE ST. LUCIAN STYLE!!!

March 27, 2009

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

KALALU, JAZZ, CALYPSO & MORE ST. LUCIAN STYLE!!!

Rain or sun, money or no money St. Lucians will be having great Festivals in 2009! I continue to predict that the month of August will be the month that St. Lucians will feel the real effects of the global economic crisis. In the meantime, it is going to be dancing in the parks and in the streets. There will be no stopping us from enjoying the sunshine and fun that is ours to savour.

The Kalalu Festival normally held in December having missed last year will be held this year in April. The festival will be held on April 11 and 12, 2009.

St Lucia Jazz will be next and is being hosted from May 2nd to 10th, 2009. The Minister of Tourism, Senator, Honourable Allen Chastanet is upbeat about the hotel bookings and projects a great St. Lucia Jazz 2009. Visit www.stlucia.org

The St. Lucia Hotel & Tourism Association (SLHTA) held its 45th Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, 25th March, 2009 and Mr. Anthony Bowen, Managing Director of the Windjammer Landing Villa Beach Resort was elected as President.

Looking ahead at Carnival 2009 during the months of June and July, it will be fun regardless of the projected economic dislocation that will result from the global economic down turn. This will be a great way for us to end a period of expansion and begin to tighten our belts as we strategize and implement plans to put our nation on the road to recovery. By this time signs will be clear as to how the special programmes of the Budget are being implemented.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Do not get the impression that it is all fun in St. Lucia, leaders in the public and private sectors are engaged in serious discussions to find solutions to the problems that are looming upon us. In recognition of the leaders in business, the WHO'S WHO in Saint Lucia Business 2008-2009 was launched with an impressive ceremony at the Royal St. Lucian on Thursday 26th March, 2009. The project was undertaken by Right Angle Imaging with support from the National Development Corporation. You can check out the publication at www.whoswhostluciabiz.com

Regarding the Budget, there are signals of no new taxes, reduction in the prices of fuel and provision of jobs in the construction sector. Everyone believes that the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Sector (MSMEs) must be sent a clear signal of government's recognition of its contribution to the economy and to employment in particular. It is also very clear that new areas of business will have to be developed. Creativity must be encouraged; training and exposure to new businesses will have to be intensified. A Secretariat of Innovation and Technology must be a serious consideration of Government to be implemented during the 2009/2010 budget period. It has become necessary for government to take on the role of the driver of new age industries.

We can minimize the negative effects of the current economic fallout but it cannot be business as usual. These times call for business unusual with the mobilization of all the creative energies available to us. The time for words and action is now. Those who are cynical about talking must change their position and begin to talk again but ensure there is appropriate action. We will have to talk through the state of affairs in which we find ourselves. We must engage the minds of the brightest and the best and be unafraid of implementing what is decided upon. President Obama is an example to the world. He has left the politicians behind and is dealing directly with the people. This approach has broadened the discussion making process and engages the people directly. Some very interesting things are happening in President Obama's White House. Caribbean politicians should take a few pages out of his book.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Miracles Every day!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#52 THE INCLEMENT WEATHER COULDN'T STOP ST. LUCIA JAZZ 2009!

May 13, 2009

Edward Harris At Large

THE INCLEMENT WEATHER COULDN'T STOP ST. LUCIA JAZZ 2009!

It was the Budget 2009/2010, then there in the midst of the uneasiness of the public sector, the number one party in the Caribbean was just in time to present a diversion from the financial woes and job uncertainty being experienced by many.

The 18th Jazz event formerly St. Lucia Jazz Festival, now St. Lucia Jazz was a memorable one in many ways. Officials of the Tourist Board expressed satisfaction with the level of visitor and local participation. The spotlight was definitely on Amy Winehouse and St. Lucia got a lot of media exposure as journalists monitor her every move in St. Lucia. Her performance was the worst ever staged at the event and the discussions will continue for a long time regarding the impact of her performance on the event.

All the negatives aside, the event was well received and patrons got value for their money. The local participation in this year's event was significant and their performances were outstanding. This development is very encouraging and the future of the music industry seems set for the next level. It is now accepted that St. Lucia has talented artistes and musicians.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Carnival 2009 was promoted during the Jazz event in an effort to secure the participation of patrons during the season. The National Cultural Foundation under new management is expected to deliver an outstanding Carnival Season 2009. This timing of Carnival will this year more than any other in recent times offer a welcome diversion from the financial crisis that will be at its fiercest at that time as parents attempt to cope the summer holiday demands of their children and their back to school requirements. Dancing in the streets will be therapy for many.

The demand by public servants for final payment of 7.5 percent on their negotiated 14.5 percent package has met with resistance from the government which claims that it cannot afford to pay the entire amount due at this time and has made a counter offer of 3 percent. The teachers are demanding 100 percent of the amount due while public servants are prepared to accept 4.5 percent with the balance payable within 12 months. It will be unfortunate if a compromise is not reached as any further disruption to the economy will be crucial. The deadline that is given by the unions is May 26, 2009. If an agreement is not arrived at there is a threat of strike action. St. Lucia cannot afford such a situation at this time and everything should be done to avert such a crisis.

Allocations in the Budget are very likely to be released during the month of June as contracts are finalized and serious work begins on the many projects especially in the construction sector. Serious emphasis has to be placed on the tourism sector. The 45-million-dollar allocation for promoting the destination must be spent in areas that will produce the best results and innovative ways of reaching potential visitors must be found. Embrace all those persons who will like to assist in promoting St. Lucia.

This is a very difficult period to predict the future, even in the short term but there seem to be some significant developments that give hope. There has been a surprise prediction that the recession will be reversed by the end of 2009 and that is the best news we can get at this time. The 2009/2010 tourist season will definitely be better than 2008/2009 and our lead sector will be back on track. The cruise sector is doing fine and it seems as though the Eastern Caribbean is getting some increased traffic as a result of the H1N1 Flu. So far St. Lucia has not recorded any case of the flu and it is hoped it stays that way.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

It is time to take a positive look at the future and play your part to bring about the necessary changes that are so necessary to ease the current financial crisis.

Keep the Faith; remember always God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Daily Miracles!!!

#53 SLISBA GETS READY TO CONVENE ITS 20th AGM

July 15, 2009

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

SLISBA GETS READY TO CONVENE ITS 20th AGM

This may not be the best of times for many, especially those in the private sector, who are experiencing declining sales and increased operating cost. I know many of you are experiencing anxious moments caused by the uncertain future but this too will pass.

The St. Lucia Small Business Association is experiencing once again very difficult times but it experienced such periods before. It comes with the territory. However, I am very confident that the opportunity for unity among business persons has never been greater. This is the time to bring creativity to the table. A collaborative approach will bring clarity to the vision. There are several solutions to the problems that we face at the moment but it will take dialogue aimed at solving the negative issues that confront all of us. Hope needs to be engendered into the society and the best approach for undertaking such a programme is by empowering SLISBA.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The government, regional and international agencies need to help SLISBA to form alliances that will expose the leadership of the Association to overseas business opportunities that can be duplicated in St. Lucia. There should be planned visits to specially selected countries with dynamic MSMEs that will be willing to share business information and even participate in joint ventures. I expect to hear a call for a Venture Capital Bank echoing from the hall of the 20th AGM. Big businesses in St. Lucia need to support SLISBA because SLISBA supports most of the businesses that trade with them. The importance of SLISBA should not be ignored.

I am reliably informed that SLISBA has been requesting assistance for several years to undertake an Audit of the MSME Sector in St. Lucia without success. We cannot continue to assume the needs of business persons; it is time we find out what their needs are.

I am hopeful that business persons will make a serious decision to attend the upcoming AGM, determined to meet the challenges that the global financial crisis has brought about. I am expecting that a strong Board of Directors will emerge and that the general membership will support the work of the Association by participating fully in the various projects that will be initiated in the months ahead. The Association will be as active as the members' demands for services. There is much to be done. With the implementation of the EU programmes, SLISBA needs to strengthen its Secretariat and establish strong committees with persons who can respond to the international requirements as it relates to identifying funding opportunities and preparing project proposals. SLISBA is headed for the next level.

The micro, small and medium sized business sector continues to be afforded the support of a group of individuals under the banner of the Small Business Association which was established in 1980 and merged with the Manufacturers Association to form the St. Lucia Industrial and Small Business Association in 1989.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

SLISBA celebrates 28 years of continuous service to the MSME sector through good and bad times without wavering from its responsibility to be the voice of the sector. Advocacy has been and continues to be the core activity of the Association. However, in recent years additional services were introduced. As the nation grapples with the current economic crisis which is fueled by global recession, SLISBA will have a vital role in ensuring the survival of businesses in St. Lucia.

It is touted that 85% of all businesses is in the MSME category. In the context of St. Lucia this figure is much higher. The challenge is to ensure the survival of the MSME sector so that employment levels could be sustained at the 2007/2008 level and even expand. I am not afraid to suggest expansion because there are many areas of business that are yet to be introduced locally. There are many micro businesses that can be introduced at the community level.

The 20th Annual General Meeting of SLISBA is scheduled to be held on Sunday, 2nd August, 2009 at the Palm Haven Hotel, Rodney Bay, Gros Islet (behind DIGICEL) at 3.00 pm. Business persons are encouraged to make every effort to attend the meeting.

I decided to write this article at this time so that adequate notice is given to those persons who would like to attend will have adequate time to prepare.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Hereunder is my selected motivational piece of the week:

DO ALL THINGS WITH LOVE

Love is the most important ingredient of life.

Your life echoes emptiness without it.

With it, your life vibrates meaning and warmth.

Love will shine through even in hardship.

You will find as you look back upon your life that the moments that stand out, the moments when you have really lived, are the moments when you have done things in a spirit of love.

If you have it, you don't need to have anything else, and if you don't have it, it doesn't much matter what else you have.

Treasure the love you receive above everything else.

It will survive long after your wealth and good health have vanished.

The way is not in the sky.

The way is in the heart.

Life in abundance comes only through great love.

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Keep the Faith; remember always God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Daily Miracles!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#54 ALL ROADS LEAD TO GUYEXPO 2009 IN GUYANA!!!

August 26, 2009

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

ALL ROADS LEAD TO GUYEXPO 2009 IN GUYANA!!!

Whether Guyana is poorer than Haiti and St. Lucia are now just as poor, there is business to be done regardless. My own take is that Guyana and St. Lucia in no way can be compared with the economic status of Haiti. There is room for serious debate how the recent conclusion on the state of poverty has been arrived at by the Consultants. It is important that if there is any inaccuracy in the findings that it be corrected in the shortest possible time at it can affect the psyche of our people.

It is quite obvious that unemployment is a major indicator in measuring poverty but St. Lucia doesn't seem to be in the category it has been placed. However sometimes the situation could be far different from what it appears to be. Looks can be deceiving. It is time we sit up and took a deep breath, look around us and put our statisticians to work on the numbers. If the Consultants who produce the report are correct, we are in some deep trouble, especially when we expect the economic woes to deepen in our part of the world.

If only the need to take warning of the impending situation, it is time that the Government, regional and international agencies do everything within their power to advance entrepreneurship in the region. A major step is exciting entrepreneurs to the opportunities that exist even in these difficult times. Most of all expose them to business opportunities through, exhibitions, workshops, seminars and conferences that will replace fear with confidence.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The truth is that as the financial crisis deepens in the region, disposable incomes are going to be challenged. Yes, consumers will have to make hard decisions in many areas in their lives and in the end, they will have to tighten their belts. This does not mean that there are no longer viable businesses. That is far from the truth.

This past week saw the Embassy of The United States of America in Barbados with responsibility for the OECS and Monroe College collaborating with SLISBA to present a Lecture on SMEs by Mr. Chuck Mills, President of Salera Capital Management of Reston, Virginia, USA. Mr. Mills' presentation was like music to the ears of his audience. He has a very exciting background which included being a Helicopter Pilot who fought in combat and flew two Presidents, namely Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton respectively. He worked on Wall Street and now manages his own business.

He lectured in many countries including Brazil and South Africa. He talked about the purpose of Incubators and their ability to mold business persons and set them on the road to success, utilizing the power of networking. He alluded to the importance of training and stressed that while most people apply great importance to finance, he placed training as the number one priority. Aspects of sourcing and managing finances were discussed at length in his presentation.

Ms. Flavia Cherry, recently elected President of SLISBA is very much up to the challenge of taking the Association to the next level. She was encouraged by the attendance of members of the Association and other business persons.

I am committed in my articles to point to ways of achieving some of the recommendations I make from time to time. It is my firm conviction that business persons cannot afford to sit back and allow opportunities to pass them by. Business persons must become explorers. They must form alliances. Joint Ventures should be actively pursued. Cross Border investments must be the new thrust. Lawyers and Accountants have a unique opportunity to coach business persons. Many of our successful business persons can be further advanced than there are if they get the right advice and, in some cases, act together.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

All roads lead to Guyana for GUYEXPO 2009. Visionary Consultants in association with the Office of the Honorary Consul for Guyana to Saint Lucia has begun to actively make arrangements to ensure that the planned Business Mission to Guyana achieves the objectives of: 1) Gaining first-hand knowledge of goods and services available in Guyana 2) Securing two way trade, 3) Securing Distributors' Agreements, 4) Establishing Joint Venture Relations, 5) Experiencing the diverse cultures of Guyana.

Business persons and individuals are being presented with an opportunity to visit Guyana during GUYEXPO 2009 which is scheduled for October 1 – 6, 2009 (please note the change of dates, previously scheduled for September 24-29, 2009) at the Sophia Exhibition Site, Georgetown. Persons interested in participating can spend 3 or 5 days depending on their schedule. Ed Harris can be contacted at 485-1456 for further details and registration form. The Business Mission is scheduled for 6 days.

Hereunder is my selected motivational piece of the week.

YOU GAIN STRENGTH OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Sooner or later you'll encounter a crisis in your life,
and how you meet it will determine your future happiness and success.
Since the beginning of time, everyone has been called upon to meet
such a crisis.

Close scrutiny will show you that most "crisis situations" are opportunities
to either advance or stay where you are.

Indeed, most people make changes in their life out of either
"inspiration" or "desperation."

Personal growth is the process of responding positively to change.
Whatever comes your way, give it meaning and transform
it into something of value.

A precious stone cannot be polished without friction,
nor humanity perfected without trials..

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HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Keep the Faith; remember always God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Daily Miracles!!!

#55 RAYNEAU GAJADHAR AT IT AGAIN – DEVELOPING A NEW BREED OF ENTREPRENEURS!!!

September 17, 2009

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

RAYNEAU GAJADHAR AT IT AGAIN – DEVELOPING A NEW BREED OF ENTREPRENEURS!!!

It is definite that some of the best ideas evolve from periods of crisis. Great Entrepreneurs think beyond the immediate and come up with business ideas to meet their customers on the other side of the bridge. What will be the state of your business when the crisis is over?

Earlier this year Mr. Rayneau Gajadhar, Managing Director of Construction & Industrial Equipment Ltd. (CIE), a member of RG Group of Companies launched a Stimulus Package for the Construction Sector which was well received by persons seeking to acquire property up to EC\$350,000.00.

Currently, Mr. Gajadhar is promoting an initiative for 2009 School Leavers with business ideas who have the qualities to be engaged in business. He is interested in developing a group of young Entrepreneurs whose projects are based on innovation and creativity – thinking out of the box. It is obvious that at some point the copycat approach will have to end. New Thinking, New Ideas!!!

Mr. Gajadhar has put his money where his mouth is. Talk is cheap. He has put up the sum of EC \$50,000.00 which will give to support a minimum of 10 young Entrepreneurs. The success of this initial programme could well be the beginning of great things for the young people of St. Lucia. Entrepreneurship is the life blood of all capitalist economies.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

It is always with great pleasure that I welcome such news from Entrepreneurs who are willing to go beyond the usual hand outs and do something tangible to improve the lives of those who have the ability to do better but lack the support.

The Stimulus Package for the Construction Sector is supported by other businesses which provide building materials at reduced prices and from lending institutions that provide loans and mortgages. It would be great if the same level of collaboration could be extended to the current Entrepreneurship Programme.

It is all about giving back. Corporate Social Responsibility in action. Providing real LEADERSHIP. I listened to Mr. Gajadhar on the AGENDA with Dave Samuels on Thursday, 17/9/09 and I am hopeful that a number of persons made a commitment to volunteer their services as coaches for the young Entrepreneurs. This programme has the ability to be expanded. Every applicant may not be helped financially in this initial programme but should be coached to understand fully, the implications of doing business in today's competitive environment.

The importance of thinking out of the box and seeking out new ideas cannot be over emphasized. Exposure to diverse businesses in various countries, visit to trade exhibitions, business missions, networking must be tools of Entrepreneurs of this era. There is no better time to bring your creative instincts to the fore. When the going gets rough, the rough gets going! These are difficult times that need real solutions.

Have you registered as yet for GUYEXPO 2009 scheduled for October 1-6, 2009 in Georgetown, Guyana? A group of St. Lucian Entrepreneurs in Manufacturing, Distribution and Services sectors have registered to participate in the Business Mission. This is a great place to be to check out business opportunities and network. Contact Ed Harris Mobile 485-1456.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The month of September has passed its half way mark, everyone is fully aware that the financial crisis has finally reached our shores. The question is – what are you doing to improve your level of efficiency in your home, at your place of employment or in your business? In every aspect of existence, there is the call for discipline.

Hereunder is my selected motivational piece of the week.

YOU ARE WHAT YOU THINK.

It's a psychological law that whatever you desire to accomplish you must first impress upon your subconscious mind.

Your inner thoughts can cause you to be rich or poor, loved or unloved, happy or unhappy, attractive or unattractive, powerful or weak.

What you impress upon your mind, you'll inevitably become.

Relentless, repetitive self-talk will change your self-image.

You'll affect your subconscious mind with verbal repetition.

Constant repetition carries conviction.

When you change your values you'll change your behavior.

Start thinking of yourself as becoming the person you want to be.

Self-suggestion will make you the master of yourself.

You can become whatever you want to be.

When you believe you can, you can.

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Keep the Faith; remember always God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Daily Miracles!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#56 BUSINESS MISSION REPORT – GUYANA IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS!!!

October 14, 2009

EDWARD HARRIS AT LARGE!

BUSINESS MISSION REPORT – GUYANA IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS!!!

Visionary Investment Consultants in association with the Office of the Honorary Consul for Guyana to Saint Lucia concluded a successful Business Mission to Guyana. The group comprised of twenty-three St. Lucians representing manufacturing, distribution and services sectors. Seven Associations were represented. The visit coincided with GUYEXPO 2009 held from October 1 – 6, 2009 in Georgetown.

Officials in the Guyana Office for Investment (GO-Invest) did a great job in ensuring the necessary courtesies were extended to members of the Business Mission and that they were provided with information that will encourage them to do business in Guyana. Members of the Mission were met at the airport, assisted with immigration and customs formalities and dropped off at their hotel. Their return to the airport on the date of their departure was also facilitated by the Agency.

St. Lucia's had the largest overseas delegation and was recognized in every major statement regarding participation. The St. Lucia Booth was used in the promotional advertisements on television and was visited by thousands of individuals. Several interviews were done on site.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

During their five day stay in Guyana, members of the Mission were engaged in the following activities.

Day1. Attendance at the Official Opening Ceremony of GUYEXPO 2009. The theme of the exposition was “Promoting Business in a Low Carbon Environment”. The gathering heard addresses from His Excellency, President Bharrat Jagdeo, Hon. Manniram Prashad, M.P., Minister for Tourism, Industry & Commerce, Mr. Derrick Cummings, Co- Chairman – GUYEXPO 2009 and Mr. Gerald Gouveia, Chairman – Private Sector Commission. After the ceremony, invitees were allowed to view the Exposition which consisted of over 200 booths which showcased goods and services provided by participating companies.

Day 2. Members of the Mission attended an Investment Seminar at the Conference Centre, on the East Coast of Demerara. This seminar was rescheduled from Wednesday 30/9/09 to Friday 2/10/09 to accommodate members of the Mission. Hon. Manniram Prashad, Minister for Tourism, Industry & Commerce traced the development of the economy from 1992 to the present and highlighted the following:

- a) From a situation where Government controlled 85% of the economy and there was no role for the private sector to an open economy. From 90% of national revenue paid towards debt service in 1994 to 4% currently.
- b) Nationalized state owned properties were given back to private enterprise.
- c) Guyana is the freest economy in the region.
- d) Free to buy and sell property, no restrictions. 10% Capital Gains Tax is applicable.
- d) Huge opportunity to acquire agricultural lands by serious investors in the sector.
- e) Developing relations with Brazil will change the business dynamics in the region. The Takatu Bridge and the road infrastructure will open up access to a new shipping route for Brazil through Guyana.
- f) Tourism is new to Guyana but steady growth is being realized. The Brazil/Guyana road will further develop the industry. Entrepreneurs were invited to get involved in small guest houses/lodges in the Lethem area. Guyana is forging ahead as a Nature and Adventure destination.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Hon. Manniram Prashad was so moved by the interest of the St. Lucian participants that he extended an invitation to them to visit Baganara Resort along the Essequibo River on Sunday 4/10/09.

Mr. Geoffrey Da Silva, Chief Executive Officer – Guyana Office for Investment in his address highlighted the achievement of his Agency and drew attention to:

a) The influx of proposals from Investors seeking to set up businesses in Guyana. His agency received for the period January to September, 2009, 348 project applications.

b) Keep Brazil in mind when considering investing in Guyana.

c) No foreign exchange control. Foreign exchange accounts allowed with Bank of Guyana approval. Full and unrestricted repatriation of profits.

d) Special Sector Incentives available. Unlimited carry over of losses from previous years.

e) Opportunity to export to markets outside CARICOM – Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela, 3 countries with a population of 320 million.

f) Hot spots for investment in Guyana are Lethem, Linden and Corentyne. Guyana is currently hosting investors from 24 countries and forging closer relations with China, India and Brazil.

g) There are 8 sectors which are currently being developed, namely: 1. Petroleum, 2. Gas, 3. Solar Power, 4. Hydro Power, 5. Bio Fuels, 6. Bio Diesel, 7. Wind Power, 8. Cogeneration from Rice Dust.

h) Gold Production is on the rise, Call Centres and ICT services are expanding.

i) Concessions could be finalized between 3 to 6 weeks.

j) Efficient supply of Electricity and Bandwidth are two challenges that solutions are being actively pursued.

He cautioned employers to ensure that employees are properly compensated and encourage them to “work smarter and better, rather than harder and cheaper”

Some members attended One on One prearranged Meetings while others toured the Caricom Secretariat in the afternoon and met with Heads of Departments and other officials.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Day 3. One on One Meetings continued, Shopping Trip & Evening with St. Lucian Hosts.

Day 4. Boat trip to Baganara Resort.

Day 5. a) Meeting with Supplier of PreFab Timber Houses and other wood products.
b) Wrap up meetings and final visit to Exposition.

The stage is set for members of the Mission to share their experiences with associates and members of their respective Associations. Guyana is open for Business in all sectors and it is up to those who have been exposed to the information on investing in Guyana to take advantage of the opportunities.

Immediate opportunities are available for the importation of wood products, sea food products, craft items and pharmaceuticals. Opportunities are available for joint ventures in a number of areas. It is important for St. Lucian entrepreneurs to get together and invest in Guyana. Follow up will be necessary to undertake further investigations in possible areas of investment.

It has been a rewarding experience and many of the members of the group have committed to pursuing business with their counterparts. Thousands of Guyanese know a bit more about St. Lucia and many have expressed an interest in visiting St. Lucia to invest or for a vacation.

Check out these websites for further information on investing in Guyana:
<http://www.mintic.gov.gy> and <http://www.goinvest.gov.gy>

This initiative was supported by St. Lucia Coalition of Service Industries Inc. and promotional materials were provided by SLISBA, National Development Corporation and the Tourist Board.

Hereunder is my selected motivational piece of the week.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

COURTESY OPENS ALL DOORS

There is no investment you'll ever make that will pay you so well as the effort to scatter sunshine and good cheer where ever you are.

The deepest principal in human nature is the craving to be appreciated.

If you treat someone as if they were what they ought to be and could be, they will become what they ought to be and could be.

Everyone thrives on being appreciated, loved and needed.

There is no stimulus like that which comes from the consciousness of knowing that others believe in you.

Applaud others when they run.

Console them when they fail.

And cheer them when they recover.

As water is to a flower, so is praise to the heart of another.

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Keep the Faith; remember always God is in Charge, Dream Big and Expect Daily Miracles!!!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#57 CMEx 2009 AN OPPORTUNITY MISSED!

December 9, 2009

Edward Harris At Large!

CMEx 2009 AN OPPORTUNITY MISSED!

The 18th Caribbean Media Exchange on Sustainable Tourism Conference with the theme “Multicultural Marketing: A Climate for Change” was held in St. Lucia, December 3-7, 2009 at the Coco Palm Hotel, Rodney Bay. The conference was a resounding success.

The conference was addressed by Entrepreneurs and professionals in many areas of endeavour including, tourism, airline, public relations, marketing, shipping, real estate, venture capital, photography, image consulting, environmental planning, Diaspora affairs, change-engine consulting, climate change consulting, television, media, entertainment, business management, finance and travel services.

Operators within the local tourism sector were very hospitable in their sponsorship and afforded both local and foreign participants the opportunity to experience St. Lucia’s tourist offerings. Apart from the conference hotel – Coco Palm, participants were entertained at Cap Maison Hotel, Rendezvous Hotel, Jade Mountain, Bay Gardens Hotel, Sandals Grande. A day trip to Soufriere on one of the Carnival Sailing boats with visits to the Sulphur Springs, Fond Doux Estate, Hotel Chocolat and the Tet Paul Nature Trail provided a real opportunity for the group to experience the beauty of St. Lucia. In spite of the difficulties being faced by the local tourism sector and businesses in general, the sponsorships of local hotels and businesses were outstanding.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Members of the Board of the Soufriere Development Foundation and Senator, Hon. Allen Chastanet, Minister for Tourism & Civil Aviation met with the Group at Jade Mountain on Saturday, December 5, 2009 and took the opportunity to discuss the state of tourism in Soufriere and the nation as a whole. Based on the presentations, the future of tourism looks good in spite of the challenges currently facing the industry.

St. Lucian journalists missed an opportunity to interact with their counterparts and share the rich experiences of the entrepreneurs and professionals who contributed to the various discussions. Information is key as journalists seek to inform and educate their audiences. It was truly a missed opportunity.

The networking opportunity was great and is continuing as many participants utilize Facebook and LinkedIn to maintain the dialogue. There are many matters that arose during the discussions that were eye opening. It was observed that the Caribbean is one of the most climate friendly nations in the world. The richness of our Biodiversity is among the best in the world. Climate is a natural asset. However, soon there will be the issue of about Oceanic Acidification – this will be the most troubling for the citizens of the world.

Mr. Bevan Springer and his team did an excellent job in the execution of the conference and I am convinced that the timing of the conference was perfect as St. Lucia's profile as a tourist destination has been further enhanced by the global coverage that the conference received. The agenda of the conference can be viewed at www.caribbeanmediaexchange.com and hopefully, presentations will be posted shortly.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Hereunder is my selected motivational pick of the week:

Success Is Determined On The Drawing Board

It isn't enough to just want to be successful. You've got to ask yourself: "What are you going to do to get the things in life you want?"

Your problem is to bridge the distance which exists between where you are now and the goal you intend to reach. Planning brings your future into the present so you can do something about it now.

Somewhere there is a map of how it can be done. All you need is a good plan, and the courage to press on to your destination.

A well-built house is started with a definite purpose and a set of blueprints. Your plan should provide the pattern for the actions you'll take. Take time each day to study, think and plan.

Plan your steps, then implement your plan, then review your results. Do this frequently and make the appropriate alterations to your plan, and you'll develop the power that will bring you to success.

No one was ever lost on a straight road.

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Keep the Faith, God is in Charge and expect Daily Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#58 THE 2010 ST. LUCIA BUSINESS AWARDS WERE WELL RECEIVED!!!

January 28, 2010

Edward Harris At Large!

THE 2010 ST. LUCIA BUSINESS AWARDS WERE WELL RECEIVED!!!

It was a glorious night as the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in collaboration with the Government of Saint Lucia hosted the Saint Lucia Business Awards on Saturday 23th January, 2009. I congratulate the organizers and the service providers who made the event such an outstanding one.

Upon arrival of guests, photographs were taken at the entrance to the lobby of the Jefferson Clinton Ball Room. At the far end of the lobby interviews were done in a setting that caused many to stand in awe. The back drops at all points of interest were outstanding. In my recollection of all the functions I attended at the Sandals Grande, the setting and the gathering were exceptionally outstanding. This was a classic event graced by the presence of the Governor General and Prime Minister. It is a night that will long be remembered. I was very impressed with the attendance of young Executives from the public and private sectors.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

In most things hind sight will always prove valuable and while not taking away any of the luster from the event there are many views that will help to make the next event a better one. Generally, it is felt that the Awards should take on a more national scope and involve all sectors if it is to live up to its title – St. Lucia Business Awards. When all aspects are considered, it will be nice to award the movers and shakers operating in all areas of industry and commerce in our midst. The door to a whole new initiative has been opened and it is time to put a secretariat into operation to plan and execute St. Lucia Business Awards. Take the project to the next level where an in depth look at the operations of each company nominated will be undertaken.

I take it that any company worthy of an award should have no difficulty in providing information about its operation, except in cases where age old secret formulae are involved. Method of Distribution, Fair Compensation and outright policy position in relation to recognition and the treatment of operators in the distribution chain and the end user should one of the key areas for scrutiny. Corporate Social Responsible must be featured in every category. Businesses must reach out to communities to empower their customers – socially and financially. That brings me to the point that effective distribution can create jobs.

To the companies which received the awards, I challenge the management and their staff to live up to the high expectations of the nation and in particular the guests who witnessed the ceremony. It was a moving experience. Two young Executives walked away with the Entrepreneur of the Year and Idea of the Year awards – Adrian Augier and Rayneau Gajadhar respectively seem to be ready to take Saint Lucia to the next level. Lots of great things can come out of the simple recognition of our leaders in the private sector. This is surely one important step in motivating our Entrepreneurs to a level of excellence.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

I await with bated breath the IMAC (Internet Marketing Association of the Caribbean) Internet Marketing Seminar scheduled for the 6th & 7th of February 2010. Experts in the field of Internet Marketing from the United States will teach St. Lucians how to use the Internet to create employment. Mr. Choix Melchoir, principal promoter of the two day event makes the point that “there is No Government Agency, No Industry, No Business entity in St. Lucia that can provide jobs for all our people; we need to empower ourselves and to provide income for ourselves; the Internet is the only medium that we know that can most adequately provide employment for our people.

While we plan for the next big occasion, one where we will have to take note of excellence, I must make the point that the time is right for an exclusive MAN SHOP in St. Lucia. A Hand Book on Dressing for Success will also be helpful. There are few times that an invitation is sent out with the dress code being FORMAL, last Saturday evening was one such occasion. Usually the dress code is ELEGANTLY CASUAL which is not clearly understood by many, so is business attire. It is time for us to get specific. The ladies are always at their best. Maybe it is because there are so many Boutiques around, catering almost exclusively to women. It is time for the men to get fussy and be well groomed. Let us do it in 2010!

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge and expect Daily Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#59 ADAM GINSBERG, STEPHEN PIERCE & PJ VAN HULLE WERE IN SAINT LUCIA!!!

February 9, 2010

Edward Harris At Large!

ADAM GINSBERG, STEPHEN PIERCE & PJ VAN HULLE WERE IN SAINT LUCIA!!!

St. Lucia's First Ever Internet Marketing Seminar under the theme "St. Lucia: Claim your Financial Independence" was scheduled to take place at The Gaiety, Rodney Bay on Saturday 6th & Sunday 7th February, 2010. Due to lack of support for the venture, the Presenters invited the attendees to the Royal St. Lucian where the programme was executed.

Main Presenters were: Mr. Adam Ginsberg – Auction Millionaire Secrets/Master Internet Marketer from Los Angeles, USA, Mr. Stephen Pierce – The World's #1 Internet Wealth Advocate, Miss PJ Van Hulle – The Prosperity Queen and our very own Mr. Kirk Elliott – St. Lucia's Ambassador of Photography and Emerging Internet Marketer.

At last I felt that Corporate Citizens heard my plea and were ready to support initiatives that will empower their customers, unfortunately in this instance the citizens did not respond as was anticipated. But all was not lost as those who attended the event did not only respond to the invitation to move to the substitute venue on Saturday afternoon but returned for more on Sunday.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

An opportunity was missed to interact with persons who have excelled in their businesses and charge thousands of dollars for their seminars. In their presentation it was abundantly clear that successful people learn from persons who are already successful. Just being among successful people challenge you to be successful. If nothing else was lost it was the opportunity to learn from the Masters at their Professions and the challenge to be even to be more successful than they are.

Adam Ginsberg is a Best-Selling author. His book, published by Harper Collins, "How to Buy, Sell & Profit on eBay" is the best-selling published eBay book of all time...reaching the top #1 on Amazon.com and #1 on Barnes & Noble.com in less than 1 week of its release.

In today's economic climate, where it's more important than ever for people to take control of their financial situation, Adam is the perfect person to speak to your audience. Adam has thousands of successful students all around the world including two of his most famous clients: Lou Ferrigno and Paula Abdul. Adam Ginsberg routinely speaks at events for Rich Dad (Robert Kyosaki), Tony Robbins, World Internet Summit, Real Estate Forums, Internet Marketing Events and more. One of Adam's specialties is to customize his presentation to fit any marketplace on any topic.

Mr. Adam Ginsberg introduced his seven-week-old Speedlings project which builds a website in 60 seconds with access to eBay, Amazon and AdSense which are income generating sites. Everyone with a website that needs to be promoted needs Speedlings. The good thing about Speedlings is that while you are promoting your business, you are making money by clicks and purchases made on your site. That is a Win - Win proposition. You can visit Adam's sites at: www.speedlings.com www.adamginsberg.com

Stephen Pierce, the World's #1 Internet Wealth Advocate travels the world speaking to tens of thousands of people about the enormous power of the Internet and how to leverage the Internet for staggering financial success. It can cost several thousands to attend one his programmes. He is a living example that anyone can succeed, it is up to the individual. It is not what society wants someone to become, it is what the person wants to achieve in his or her life. Must visit www.stephenpierceinternational.com

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

P. J. Van Hulle – The Prosperity Queen is the Host of the Prosperity Summit which will be held in March and October, 2010. She is a dynamic Speaker and shared with the attendees many real-life experiences. She bounced back from a state of unemployed to being a Prosperity Queen by developing a mindset geared towards prosperity and in the process of a few years owning 35 investment properties. She shared many ideas about investing in real estate including the one percent rule. You can visit her website at www.realprosperityinc.com

Kirk Elliott, while he is known as St. Lucia's Ambassador of Photography with his recent "Dare To Dream" solo photo exhibition, as well as his daily photo blog, less people may realize that Kirk is also a successful emerging internet marketer. He alluded to his quest for internet marketing knowledge and noted his involvement in related seminar overseas at great cost to him. His web address is www.kirkelliott.com

As a follow up to the event, a meeting of interested persons was convened last Wednesday at Helen Inn, Gros Islet and it is expected that we have not heard the last of the opportunity missed by many. Those who attended were blessed to be there. The main promoters of the two-day event – Choix Melchoir, Neville Auguste and Garner Simon of IMA Caribbean (Internet Marketers' Association of the Caribbean) should be encouraged and supported to continue their efforts to promote the effective use of the internet to generate income. It is time we make reality of the work from home industry in St. Lucia. Visit their website at: www.imacaribbean.com

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge; expect Daily Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#60 PROFESSOR COMPTON BOURNE URGES BETTER COLLABORATION BETWEEN CARICOM GOVERNMENTS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

March 4, 2010

Edward Harris At Large!

PROFESSOR COMPTON BOURNE URGES BETTER COLLABORATION BETWEEN CARICOM GOVERNMENTS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus Saint Lucia in conjunction with the Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) cohort two (2) of the Cave Hill School of Business (CHSB) hosted a half day seminar on the topic, "Entrepreneurship and Growth" on Saturday 27th February 2010. Professor Compton Bourne, President of the Caribbean Development Bank, served as Facilitator.

Professor Compton Bourne's experience in Business welded with his accomplishments as an academic undoubtedly brought significant value to the topic which is of relevance to the current global economic recession.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Those who attended the seminar got a glimpse into understanding today's economic trends and the importance of niche marketing. Professor Bourne noted that:

- No more protection of markets. Business people have to face the competition.
- Innovative Entrepreneurship is a scarce commodity and it is necessary to structure a system of incentives and rewards. Sometimes, it is necessary for governments to set the pace but it is for businessmen to innovate and create new markets.
- Economic Agencies should be flexible and change in accordance with the needs of the time.
- Procrastination shrinks margin of profit – such as delay on the wharf, etc.
- Decision makers must be quick to spot a difficulty that needs to be addressed and take decisive action.
- It is necessary to create a framework in which the business community plays a larger role in shaping policy and giving urgency to policy.
- The Diaspora can be an important element in growth of trade in Food Products.

The Question and Answer period was very lively and it was generally agreed that there are many initiatives that can be taken to reverse the negative economic trend. New activities will have to be found to generate sustainable income. Areas such as Knowledge Transfer, Solar Heating, Sports Tourism, etc. – simply finding the right niches should be pursued.

Listening to Professor Bourne was a re awakening to the many calls I made in the past to get government to be the driver in areas that only political direction can yield the desired results. Sometimes, government has to set the pace, it is their call. There are initiatives for the government to undertake and there are initiatives for the private sector to undertake. Sometimes achieving a specific goal will take collaboration to yield the best results.

There is no better way to find solutions to problems regardless of their magnitude than providing an opportunity for a meeting of minds. The participants expressed great satisfaction with the quality of interaction that the seminar provided. Mr. Michael Joseph and his team did a commendable job.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

I was delighted to participate in the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Republic of Guyana which was held at the Sandals Grande last Saturday evening. The gathering which comprised of Guyanese and St. Lucians of all races was graced with the presence of Her Excellency, Dame Pearlette Louisy – Governor General and Honorable Stephenson King – Prime Minister and Mrs. King. Mr. Lokesh Singh – Honorary Consul for Guyana to St. Lucia and members of his committee who executed the activities did Guyana well in celebrating the important milestone. Long live Guyana! The few speeches were well received and quickly gave way to the night's entertainment with jokes provided by Mr. Shivnauth Doodnauth and musical renditions by Ronald Hinkson and Dave Martins. The buffet was sumptuous and Guyanese were introduced to Guylucian Pepperpot. I was reliably informed that a new pepperpot recipe is now in circulation.

The first quarter of the year 2010 is upon us and as usual all eyes have begun to turn into the direction of the Budget. This has got to be the most innovative budget ever. Stimulus is the watch word and business persons are expecting that job creation in the construction sector will put money in the pockets of the wage earners. This will generate business activity. However, it appears to me that the biggest dent in generating new employment will come from the micro and small business sector. I am hopeful that the Youth Enterprise Equity Fund will be rolled out in the shortest possible time and the young people will get to work in the ICT sector. I see a major thrust in generating employment in Internet related businesses. Let us make it happen!

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge; expect Daily Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#61 LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL AS BUSINESSES GET A BREAK!

April 27, 2010

Edward Harris At Large!

LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL AS BUSINESSES GET A BREAK!

It is about that deadline again, one day too early as the nation awaits the visit of an anointed messenger of God this week. Bishop T. D. Jakes is expected to challenge our people to take a stand for righteousness. Those who plan to take the time to be numbered among God's people can only expect to be blessed – I expect to be blessed abundantly. Pigeon Island is a fitting venue for such an occasion. I will be attending both evenings, April 29 & 30, 2010. After all Bishop T. D. Jakes is revered by Christians and non-Christian in many parts of the world for his biblical exhortations and practical applications.

Senator Hon. Allen Chastanet should be smiling as the event unfolds. I can envisage that after the event, and the visit is given the publicity through Rev. T. D. Jakes network, the beauty of St. Lucia will be revealed to the people of God in keeping with the prophecy of the isles. Our destination will be on the minds of the leaders and members of Faith Based Organizations everywhere and many will even pray and affirm that the Lord will bless them with the means to visit Saint Lucia.

The budget is behind us, going forward business persons are getting ready to get their piece of the pie that will be shared over the next three weeks as St. Lucia hosts the 20/20 Cricket Matches and St. Lucia Jazz 2010. It is party time and you don't have to worry about St. Lucians they will find the money to enjoy themselves as much as the visitors who grace our shores. It is real – St. Lucia nice!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The tourism/hospitality services sector is in for a good spell over next three months. Our restaurants and night clubs in particular will hold their own. The year 2010 holds promise for businesses as the recession is arrested and consumer confidence begins to slowly return to normalcy. The additional airlifts that have been negotiated are very encouraging and augers well for businesses. Every visitor to our island increases the ability of businesses to earn income.

I attended the SME Training Workshop for Homecoming 2010 with the theme “Business Planning, Marketing, Social & Networking Skills” at the National Insurance Corporation Conference Room on April 26, 2010. The workshop was sponsored by the Office of Private Sector Relations (OPSR) and executed by Right Angle Imaging. Mrs. Barbara Jacobs-Small was assisted by Mrs. Sonia Sifflete and together they did a fantastic job in creating awareness of effective communication and the importance of doing things right. The fundamentals in getting a business off the ground on the right footing were emphasized. There was role play among participants which was well appreciated. The workshop produced many tangible results as participants practiced the art of networking. Relationships were established and commitments were made to collaborate in business.

While in my small business I internalized everything, I was motivated to produce my company’s Vision and a Mission Statement during the workshop to share with the world which will be posted on my website: (www.stluciapropertydeals.com). The workshop laid the ground work for participants to maximize on business opportunities that Homecoming 2010 will present.

The Realtors’ Association (Saint Lucia) Inc. met on Wednesday, 28 April, 2010. Members were brought up to date on developments in the industry by their President – Ms. Heather Floissac and the opportunity was also taken to network. It was generally noted that the market for sales is very slow but rentals have picked up.

Forget your sorrows and dance. Even if we have nothing, we have life!

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge and expect Daily Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#62 SAINT LUCIA JAZZ EVENTS – OPPORTUNITIES TO MIX BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE!!!

May 6, 2010

Edward Harris At Large!

SAINT LUCIA JAZZ EVENTS – OPPORTUNITIES TO MIX BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE!!!

I look forward to the month of May each year as I get upbeat at this time when Jazz is in the air. I am excited to see small business persons really getting their piece of the pie and many taking time off to enjoy the fringe and main stage events. There is something special about St. Lucia Jazz. Forget your troubles and tap your feet to the beat! This period of real good music provided by local, regional and international artistes is great for relieving stress, meet family and friends, and network generally. This is one time that business and pleasure mix perfectly together. Some of the vendors can't hold back on the beat and serve their patrons with movements of the waistline in keeping with the beat.

I am doing my best to keep a light hearted approach in writing this article but I am reminded about my principal objective which is to stimulate interest in business and to inform and educate my readers in this regard. I feel very blessed to share this extract with you in validation of what I continue to stress in my articles whenever I highlight the importance of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector – “While business is certainly important for creating middle-class jobs, the fact is that small and medium-size businesses really do the majority of hiring and firing. When those small and medium-size businesses are growing and hiring people, the economy is robust, and when they are not, it is in recession. So, if there is to be a middle, small and medium-size businesses must play key roles. What is exciting and encouraging about the flattening of the world – and innovations like the Business Web – is the degree to which they give small business so much power and so many more cost savings to innovate and compete globally.” – Page 303 – The World is Flat – Thomas L. Friedman.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Last year my Jazz weekend article drew to the attention of the tourism industry leaders an opportunity to promote our tourism offerings in a unique way – MLM. I say no more on this matter at this time but I will continue to be optimistic that some innovative ways will be found to differentiate our approach to promotion and offerings. I look forward to the much talked about Real Estate Tourism product. I can't wait for further developments in this area.

As always, my hope is that our visitors will go beyond having a great time but will look around for business opportunities and take time off to discuss with family and friends some cutting edge ideas that can be duplicated in this part of the world. In making the point about this part of the world, it is time that our Entrepreneurs see beyond St. Lucia and at least for a start see all CARICOM Member States as their territory. When we negotiate for a distributorship – negotiate not only for St. Lucia but for the entire region.

Home Coming 2010 is on my mind and I am hoping that some publicity will be done to promote this wonderful initiative at all possible events. My call to bring ideas to the table cannot be over emphasized. Our people, our future! I am fully persuaded that member of the St. Lucia Diaspora can be of tremendous assistance to the development of our nation. We must seek out every opportunity to take advantage of their expertise and relationships that they have developed over the years.

Within a few days Health & Wellness TV (HWTV) – Channel 42 on the Lime Network will begin testing and the viewing public will be given an opportunity to make suggestions about programmes they will like to view on their TV. The Management promises – A Breath of Fresh Air in their programming – Enhancing Total Well Being by promoting principles of Health & Wellness! It's all about Positive Lifestyles! Viewers will be invited to register to be a part of the In-Studio Audience for any scheduled programmes of their choice – Health, Wellness, Wealth, Business, Entrepreneurship, Religion, Youth, Sports, Lifestyle, Professions, etc. Organizations with Video Footage that they will like to be shown on TV are invited to contact the station. The management of the station could be contacted at Email: hwtv42@gmail.com

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Go out and enjoy Jazz on the Main Stage at Pigeon Island this weekend and ensure Mother is well treated on her special day – Happy Mother’s Day! Don’t forget your business cards.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge and expect Daily Miracles!

#63 ST. LUCIA JAZZ – A MUSICAL EXPERIENCE!

May 13, 2010

Edward Harris At Large!

ST. LUCIA JAZZ – A MUSICAL EXPERIENCE!

Imagine it until you can live it! St. Lucians really lived it up in the past few weeks. It began with Bishop T. D. Jakes, then it was cricket, Jazz and cricket again and still more to come. Over the past three weeks there has never been a dull moment. The main street in Rodney Bay Village was busy with visitors. Just the way a tourist hot spot is supposed to be. Business should have been great for the proprietors of restaurants and bars. They don’t have to discount. The hotels are still on the discount path and seems as though it will be that way for a while yet. However, getting the right levels of occupancy should suffice.

The reports indicate that the 19th St. Lucia Jazz was a great success, Pigeon Island received its highest numbers yet. It is surprising that in spite of the difficult economic times the grounds almost overflowed? The patrons of the fringe and main stage events responded to my invitation to leave their troubles and dance! I had a great time meeting old and making new friends but most important – networking.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

St. Lucia Jazz will always present challenges to its organizers, you can't please everyone but the word Jazz in St. Lucia Jazz continues to cause some degree of confusion in the minds of adult patrons. It is time for a tag line to St. Lucia Jazz – "A Musical Experience!"

St. Lucia Jazz Festival, St. Lucia Jazz over the years has grown from strength to strength. Our local artistes can now demand their place on main stage. St. Lucia Jazz gained the recognition of citizens across the nation and has finally got the acceptance of the young people. There is something for everyone. Cancellation of artistes and unavailability of others can be a major headache for organizers but in spite of setbacks St. Lucia Jazz 2010 was great.

The 20th production of St. Lucia Jazz presents a real opportunity to dispel the fears of those who feel that something has to be fixed in spite of the apparent success and keep the satisfied fans coming. I predict with the right line up for 2011, Pigeon Island will overflow its capacity. This is the opportunity to fix whatever needs to be fixed imaginary or otherwise.

Name recognition is very important. Introducing new international artistes to our stage will always pose a challenge unless they are exceptionally talented, but the big names will always be an easier sell. I left the Pigeon Island Sunday night fully convinced in my mind – St. Lucia Jazz will grow from strength to strength and I will definitely be back next year! In the meantime, it is necessary to check the pulse of the patrons and give them what they need. Be guided by the feedback received from the patrons – visitors and locals alike. St. Lucia Jazz – "A Musical Experience!"

There is a business opportunity to fill a need for males to carry around their essentials. A fashion designed bag for them to carry around two cell phones, two or three pairs of glasses, bunch of keys, etc. could be a hot selling item. I hope a local Entrepreneur can see a business opportunity in producing/marketing the product.

I have always proposed that if business persons are going to be successful in business, visits to trade shows are integral to being ahead of their competition with ideas, products and services. A number of business persons are expected to visit Shanghai Expo 2010 which was officially opened May 1, and ends October 31, 2010. It is my sincere hope that business persons take full advantage of the opportunity. Contact the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Consumer Affairs for further details.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

SLISBA will host a General Membership Meeting on Friday, 21st May 2010 at 4:30pm at Juliette's Lodge in Vieux-Fort. Please make a very special effort to attend and to be on time.

I decided that in 2010 I will not carry my motivational piece in my column as I felt that it was time that most of my readers were subscribing to www.yourdailymotivation.com, especially those who recognize that there is power in words and a daily/weekly dose of inspiration/motivation can work miracles in their lives. However, I was moved to share with you a motivational piece that touched the core of my values.

QUALITY OF LIFE BEGINS IN YOUR MIND

It's not what you have, but what you enjoy that constitutes your abundance.

Your real riches are riches in your head and heart. Wealth without enjoyment is little consolation.

True satisfaction comes from appreciating what you have.

There are two ways of being happy: you must either diminish your wants or augment your means.

It's always better to appreciate things you cannot have than to have the things you cannot appreciate.

Your riches will always lie within you, not in your material possessions.

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Keep the Faith, God is in Charge and expect Daily Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#64 ST. LUCIAN CHEF WALKED AWAY WITH US\$10,000.00 ON FOOD TV!

June 16, 2010

Edward Harris At Large!

ST. LUCIAN CHEF WALKED AWAY WITH US\$10,000.00 ON FOOD TV!

It was a very emotional feeling to watch my son Edward Harris Jr. who was born in St. Lucia walk away with the prize money – US\$10,000.00, after competing against 3 other chefs on the CHOPPED Show on Food Network Television last Thursday night.

Edward Harris Jr. was born in Cedars, St. Lucia and lived in Barbados, Guyana, Grenada and Jamaica before returning to St. Lucia to finish his secondary education at Micoud Secondary School and Charter House in Micoud. He last lived with his father in Black Bay, Vieux Fort before leaving for New York, USA where he completed High School and moved on to the Art Institute where he graduated in 2001.

In a few short years, Ed Harris Jr. put together a substantial portfolio which earned him the position of Sous Chef at the La Jealousie Plantation in Soufriere where he had a short stint and opted to return to New York. Prior to his St. Lucia stint, he worked as Sous Chef for Michael's Restaurant between Fifth and Sixth Avenue on Broadway where celebrity guests included President Bill Clinton. From humble beginnings, Edward Harris Jr. continues to make St. Lucia and his parents proud. At age 30 he is well advanced in his career. You are invited to check him out at: Sous Chef – Buddakan, NYC.
<http://edharrischeflife.blogspot.com> Email: www.cheflifetshirts@gmail.com

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The following is the outline of the competition:

In the Appetizer Basket A super bitter ingredient left the chefs in a quandary and the judges with a sour first impression.

In the Entrée Round, filleting and cooking turbot correctly became the key to the chefs' success.

When the two finalists came up with the same idea for their English Muffin desserts, it was anybody's guess whose will taste better. And the winner was – Ed Harris Jr.

I learned a few lessons in dealing with children especially what dries them. At a very tender age, I couldn't keep Eddie out of the kitchen. Apart from being afraid that he would have burnt himself, I really wanted him to be a fashion designer, At Micoud Secondary, he was the only male student who did sewing primarily because I insisted. Going to live in NY, he took advantage of every opportunity that placed him in front of a stove. When your children insist on a vocational path, follow them – don't try to lead them. If your child is natural with his left hand, don't try to change it to right. Let the creative energies emerge. Many of the jobs that were considered lack luster are now emerging as the better paying jobs with great lifestyle. As an Executive Chef, he/she could be flying in private jet and living the life of the rich and famous. Let your children find their way and only jump in if necessary when guidance is needed. Feel free to offer an opinion but never – it's your way or no way. A child must be allowed to follow their dreams. When a dream is followed, the child is very likely to succeed and possibly excel.

Our young people need shoulders to lean on; they can be good citizens that will make us all proud. Let the adults be listening mentors, willing to understand the urges of the young people, monitoring their progress. Let us seek to bring out the best in our young people. Challenge them to do better. Give them opportunities to express themselves.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The issue of CRIME continues to be on the front burner. Young people destroying their lives, let us show them a better way. Those who are in positions to help by sharing ideas and pointing to productive ways of beneficial engagement in society should seize the moment. Rehabilitation of prisoners; expose them to opportunities during their period of incarceration. There must be ways that will enhance the quality of life beyond the prison walls. There will have to be – the things I used to do, I do them no more stories, told by prisoners. In reality a reformed prisoner must reject the past and live his dream of being a good citizen with the opportunity to prosper and share his experiences.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and expect Daily Miracles!

#65 CUSTOM TAILORED SOFTWARE VERSUS BLACK BOX SOLUTIONS!

July 8, 2010

Harris At Large!

CUSTOM TAILORED SOFTWARE VERSUS BLACK BOX SOLUTIONS!

In the midst of the economic crisis which will not be going away anytime soon, the struggle continues for small businesses to survive. The systems that were hitherto ignored by business persons have now become their only hope of survival. They really have to keep their pencil point sharpened and constantly fine tuning the numbers that are constantly changing. Business persons have to be on top of their businesses, micro management in many instances may be the only answer. However, you may be amazed to find Entrepreneurs who still resist writing it down, paying attention to details and behaving as we are still in the pre-2008 period.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

I received a call a week ago and was invited to have a look at cutting edge software that will put business owners in the driver's seat. Software for Success Programme will work with companies' management and personnel to reinvent their businesses by supporting them to enhance their resources to achieve optimum efficiency. The programme will be tailored to the specific needs of the individual business to provide up to date information that will allow them to make better informed decisions. Services include: Inventory Control - Fleet Management - Vehicle Tracking System with GEO Fencing - Innovations & Efficiencies. SME owners are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to be introduced to technology that will generate significant cost savings and improved productivity.

Business people today grapple with poor work ethics, total disrespect for leadership and all the work-related misconducts that can be imagined. Inventory Management should be of major concern to all business persons as some employees are bent on being dishonest seeking to justify their actions blaming inadequate wages.

Wastage must be eliminated at all cost. Proper inventory control and sales performance statistics could be helpful in spotting areas of weaknesses. Unfortunately, just in time orders cannot be effectively instituted at the level that will be helpful to many businesses. Cash flow could have been greatly assisted if this system was working effectively.

One of the areas that is a major headache for business persons is the indiscriminate use of companies' vehicles. With modern technology, it is possible to monitor every aspect of maintenance and movement of your fleet of vehicles. Fuel consumption needs to be monitored closely as the already high prices will be further increase in the months ahead. The disaster in the Gulf of Mexico is not helping. In the short run prices will rise and once again shipping will be affected.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

One local Entrepreneur is taking the challenges seriously and is moving to adopt technology to keep on top of his business. The Managing Director of Ideal Bakery has invited P & D Group of Toronto, Canada to provide software and equipment to streamline his Inventory Control and Fleet Management aspects of the business. The state-of-the-art system was shared with business persons at a presentation at the Bay Gardens Hotel on Thursday, 8/7/10.

It is heartening to learn that over 100 businesses, especially small businesses will be participating in the Home Coming 2010 Partnership Fair at the Beausejour Cricket Complex, scheduled for July 26-29, 2010. The expectations of local entrepreneurs are high with the prospects of sales of products, distribution agreements, joint ventures and business cooperation. There will be lunch time lectures on Doing Business in St. Lucia and opportunities to network.

Guyanese Nationals residing in St. Lucia, mindful of the state of affairs in their homeland will get together to launch the SAINT LUCIA CHAPTER OF THE ALLIANCE FOR CHANGE at the Bay Gardens Inn, RODNEY Bay on Friday, 16th July, 2010 at 7.00 pm. All persons interested in demanding Good Governance in Guyana are invited. Hon. Kemraj Ramjattan will address the audience and a number of regional Delegates will be in attendance.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and expect Daily Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#66 SAINT LUCIA NICE – CARNIVAL, HOME COMING & MORE!

July 16, 2010

Harris At Large!

SAINT LUCIA NICE – CARNIVAL, HOME COMING & MORE!

What a time of year and what a year it is. There is never a dull moment. The atmosphere is electrifying, everything is beautiful! St. Lucia nice! There is no better place to be at this time that right here in St. Lucia in spite of the economic pressures being experienced at this time. Things are rough, the economy is further contracting. The projects that were expected to come on stream in the first quarter, didn't come in the second but expectations remain high that something major will happen soon.

Carnival is in the air and we are down to final weekend. What a ride it has been. If there was ever a need for a postmortem, it is on this occasion when every effort must be made to get Carnival right in 2011. It is definite that the Government will have to come to the table with a budgeted contribution that will allow for the level of success that is possible to achieve. Carnival is more than a Cultural event. It is an economic venture.

The whole business of Carnival is linked to the entertainment industry in general and the music industry in particular. It is necessary that we do not lose track of our objective to put the music industry on a strong footing. There have been too many frustrations this season. However, some good things happened along the way and generally, lessons should be learned.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Home Coming is well on the way and the planners are putting the final touches to the programme. The value of this event to the nation cannot be over emphasized. Getting St. Lucian to come home to see the developments at first hand is good for everyone. It will give those who have been away for a long period an idea of how far we have come and the sacrifices made by those of us who are left behind. Home Coming 2010 will open up opportunities for overseas based St. Lucians to make investments in their country and participate generally in all other aspects of life in St. Lucia. The Partnership Fair to be held at Beausejour, July 26-30, 2010 will expose visitors to products and services offered by local entrepreneurs. The sluggish Real Estate sector should get a boost as visitors seek to invest in ownership of a piece of the rock – Saint Lucia.

Something struck me in recent days. Former employees of Cable and Wireless have carved out a niche in the ICT sector and many of them have grown into entrepreneurs in their own right. This realization struck me when I attended a presentation by Cisco, a Fortune 500 company partnering with Converge Solutions to introduce cutting edge technology in Telephony, VOIP systems and other innovative technology to St. Lucians. There are many others and maybe C & W should highlight this success and share with other companies their experience on how they prepared their staff to transition from employees to employers.

There are some very creative businesses being introduced to the world. I was introduced to project a few days ago and I am still amazed at how creative some entrepreneurs could be. I invite you to visit www.dinnerintheskycaribbean.com

Lots of interesting things are happening, the Bay Walk Mega Mall is taking shape as shops are opening up and excitement is in the air. St. Lucia nice! I can't wait for the casino to open its doors. I will arrange a few seminars on Black Jack and Slot Machines to teach the WINNING PROPOSITION!

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and expect Daily Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#67 HARRIS AT LARGE IS BACK!

November 11, 2010

Harris At Large!

HARRIS AT LARGE IS BACK!

I have just achieved one of my major goals in life – to be a published author. It is great to be in Saint Lucia in spite of the ravages left behind by Hurricane Tomas. I sympathize with persons who have lost family and friends. I am more than ever convinced that we never know when we will be called to higher service, and it is necessary for us to live each day as if it is our last – loving each other.

Once again, it has been my privilege and pleasure to visit the continent of Africa, this time – The United Republic of Tanzania, www.tanzania.go.tz The United Republic of Tanzania was formed out of the union of two sovereign states namely Tanganyika and Zanzibar. Tanganyika became a sovereign state on 9th December, 1961 and became a Republic the following year.

Zanzibar became independent on 10th December, 1963 and the People's Republic of Zanzibar was established after the revolution of 12th January, 1964. The two sovereign republics formed the United Republic of Tanzania on 26th April, 1964. However, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania is a unitary republic consisting of the Union Government and the Zanzibar Revolutionary Government. Those of us who are old enough will remember President Julius Nyerere.

The country has the largest concentration of wild animals. It also has pristine sandy beaches and Africa's highest and snow-capped mountain, Mt. Kilimanjaro. Tanzania is home to the world famous **National Parks and Game Reserves** of: Ngorongoro Crater, Selous Game Reserve, Gombe Stream, Tarangire, Lake Manyara, Mikumi, Arusha, Ruaha, Saadani, Udzungwa Mountains, and Mkomazi Game Reserve. Other Game Reserves include: Amani, Kigosi, Lukwika-Lumesule, Maswa, Monduli Mountains, Msangesi and Ugala.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Many of our young people are not aware of the days when African countries were gaining their independence from their colonial masters and were introducing their version of socialism which appealed to their people. Our people in the Caribbean need to know more about Africa. African History should be taught in schools.

Tanzania has an area of 947,300 square kilometers and a population on forty million. Tanzania is now a part of the East African Community which includes 5 of the 8 border countries (highlighted): Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia, a market of 130 million with prospects of expanding when the three other nations join. Since my return, I have been sharing my experiences with my friends and I get the feeling that many of them are beginning to realize the need to visit the Mother Land. My colleagues are very keen on visiting Tanzania in March of 2011. Plans will be put in place to formalize a Business/Familiarization Mission shortly.

I was invited by a friend to spend a few months in the City of Arusha which is one of the principal tourist areas in Tanzania where I wrote three books and made a study of the publishing business. Since I returned to St. Lucia I have been speaking with Writers and finding out more about experiences of Published Authors. I am encouraged by the fact that many young people are attracted to the vocation. Miss Syreeta "Tu-Che" Alcee' - author, song writer, singer and entrepreneur is making a serious statement in the digital and print media. Her online advertising business, Digital Connection St. Lucia Inc. www.dcslu.com is supported by TOUCHE' Magazine. She recently published her first book - "A Better Life" currently available in paperback and will be hosting a programme on HWTV in time for the holidays.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

My new area of involvement is in writing and publishing non-fiction books, and as always, I am ready to share my experiences with the world. I made contact with members of the Writers' Forum before returning home and I will attend their meetings. It is a great feeling to be a published author, when I saw my first book on www.amazon.com my whole being celebrated. I always wanted to leave a legacy that will change lives. I want to share my experiences in religion, business, politics, romance and self-improvement. I am so excited about my next book which is scheduled to be released early December - "You can be a Successful Business Person" with the subtitle Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Fundamentals. There are lots of papers produced on business in the Caribbean but I am unaware of any business person in the region setting out in simple terms how to implement a business and be successful. Get a new understanding of the word GREED and how to apply it in your business without using it at the expense of others. I refer to its application as Ethical Greed. In the book I shared my own failures, I don't speak only about successes, that is the easy part but it is for entrepreneurs to prevent pitfalls that is most important.

With a serious business approach to writing, St. Lucian Authors could add yet another product to the existing range of tourism products. Cruise passengers could be a hot market for selling published books. There is need for book exhibitions and book signing events to promote the work of our local writers. Since my return I was able to share my thoughts with a young entrepreneur who has already put in place arrangements to host a Book Exhibition at the City Hall from December 14 - 17, 2010. Published authors will get a timely exposure to promote and sell their books in time for the holiday season.

I am confident that St. Lucia will be back on its feet in the shortest possible time and everything will be OK once again.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and expect Daily Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#68 MAKE IT A SEASON FOR CARING & SHARING!

December 1, 2010

Harris At Large!

MAKE IT A SEASON FOR CARING & SHARING!

In times past there were calls to defer the observance of the Christmas Holidays but that never happened. There may be a similar feeling among many St. Lucians at this time as we head for the holiday season. There is definitely a somber mood in our country as we reflect upon the devastation left behind by Hurricane Tomas a month ago.

Every constituency suffered from the effects of the hurricane and in some cases many persons in spite of having insurance coverage did not qualify to file claims against the insurers. I understand that in some cases, a claim can only be filed if in excess of EC\$ 20,000.00. This will present hardships for many who are not in a financial position to deal with such disruption to normal life.

The after effects of the global economic recession is still very much with us, compounded by Tomas, it is going to be a very difficult period for many St. Lucians as we enter the Holiday Season. I am never one to be preoccupied with the negative possibilities, but always giving thanks for whatever, the Heavenly Father bestows upon me. I know that there are certain things that regardless of whatever state persons find themselves, they will do what they have to do whenever it has to be done. Plans are well in place for Christmas parties and the stores are all decorated to give patrons the Christmas spirit. We hear Silver Bells so we know it is Christmas time in the city and in every home. There is something special about Christmas that the rich and poor share. It is a feeling like none other. Peace, love and the joy of sharing. It is truly the loveliest time of the year. I just love the feeling.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Many St. Lucians this year will not only exchange wishes and kisses, they will seek out opportunities to share because they care. If there was ever a time to be our brother's keeper, it is now. Let us take a special interest in the less fortunate in our midst. The children need us this year like never before. The business houses with few exceptions will be somewhat restricted this year in their giving. It is my hope that the true spirit of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) will prevail. Citizens who are blessed to be custodians of God's gifts should seek out opportunities to share. Before Hurricane Tomas there were challenges to celebrating the season in a manner that it was done in previous years. I am feeling confident that we will do the best for ourselves and others.

Why am I talking so early about the holiday season? I have a good reason and that is for us to get into a frame of mind to celebrate the birth of the Holy Child in a manner that will be pleasing to our Saviour. There is every reason for us who are alive to give thanks.

This year there will be much more attractions to enjoy if only with the eyes. Shopping is going to be great as owners of stores in the two Malls in the North rush to complete stocking to catch the holiday sales. Our Entrepreneurs must be commended for their bullish approach to provide consumers with world class goods and services.

Every year at this time when my readers are preparing their list of Christmas gifts, I urge those who do not own a computer to purchase one and to own a personal Bible if they do have one. Everyone needs to own a personal Bible so that he/she could highlight verses that awaken them spiritually. This year, residents and visitors will get an opportunity to give books produced by St. Lucia Authors as gifts which will be available at the 4-day Gift and Book Show scheduled for December 14 - 17 at the City Hall, Castries, opening hours 9.00am to 6.00pm. During the show, poetry will be read and Lectures will be delivered by outstanding St. Lucian Writers.

Do you see what I see? In spite of the difficult period being experienced by St. Lucians, it is going to be Season of Thanksgiving! Remember the poor in our midst, especially the children. It is a time for Caring and Sharing. **Welcome the Season of Goodwill!**

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and expect Daily Miracles!

#69 SAINT LUCIAN PUBLISHED AUTHORS SHOWCASE

December 9, 2010

Harris At Large!

SAINT LUCIAN PUBLISHED AUTHORS SHOWCASE

THEIR WORK AT THE CITY HALL, DECEMBER 14 – 17, 2010!

The reading public will be in for a treat as local published Authors showcase their work at the Castries City Council Auditorium from December 14 to 17. Opening hours – 9.00 am to 6.00 pm. The show is endorsed by the St. Lucia Writers' Forum and the organizers are receiving full cooperation from the Executive Committee and general membership.

The event is scheduled to begin the day after National Day holiday which signals a continuation of the observance as we celebrate with our Writers their achievements. The show will bring together well established and emerging Authors from all over the country. I am certain that the challenges that the fraternity faces will be discussed at length over the 4 days. It is interesting to note that Dr. Anthony Felicien, Education Officer – Curricular will deliver the Keynote Address at the opening ceremony scheduled for 10.00 am on Tuesday 14th December. Writers continue to express the need for closer collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture and it is expected that the show will open up an opportunity for dialogue with officials of the Ministry.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

There is a very interesting possibility of a linkage between Writers and the tourism sector. Every time that a book is written by a St. Lucian Author, it is another opportunity where St. Lucia is promoted. There should be opportunities for officials in the sector and St. Lucian Authors to collaborate in promotional activities. The current economic situation in the country will demand that we do more with less and mobilizing local Writers could be one way to a Win-Win situation in respect of the promotion of tourism.

Looking ahead this show will challenge all persons with a story to tell to seek out opportunities to publish their books. There is a lot of talent in our midst and I see a great future for writers who will JUST DO IT – write a manuscript. With the introduction of Digital Books, publishing has become inexpensive. There are many approaches that can be taken by Writers. There is a very interesting offer from a publisher which puts your manuscript on line within 48 hours at no charge. There is also a major breakthrough that is being talked about that will definitely put writers in the driver's seat. Technology is the driver of the future and the publishing industry is a major beneficiary.

Amazon.com, apart from offering PDF eBooks, now offers Kindle version which is the latest addition to the digital delivery of books. Exciting times are ahead for persons already in the industry and those seeking to get on board.

There is need for dialogue among writers and every opportunity to get together and learn from each other should be welcomed. Published Authors who have not made contact with the organizers and are desirous of participating in the show are encouraged to do so as soon as possible.

In spite of the obvious problems, St. Lucians are defying all odds in ensuring that the Holiday Season is not postponed but enjoyed. I am heartened by the cheerfulness of our people. The clouds will soon roll by and confidence will be restored once again. In the meantime, it is necessary for each of us to play our part. There is a lot of work yet to be undertaken and it needs all hands-on deck. We have an opportunity for our people to come together to chart a way forward that will put our country back on track in the shortest possible time.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Remember Readers are Leaders. Make a commitment to read a minimum of one book per month and witness how you will feel so much better about yourself. You would have accomplished something. Make it one of your New Year resolutions.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and expect Daily Miracles!

#70 TAKE A STAND TO MAKE 2011 YOUR BEST YEAR EVER!!

January 6, 2011

Harris At Large!

TAKE A STAND TO MAKE 2011 YOUR BEST YEAR EVER!!

The year 2010 is behind us, 2011 is with us with all its challenges and opportunities! It is no special knowledge when I tell you that in 2011 the world will experience unprecedented changes. The good news is that changes unveil opportunities if you know where to look for them. Although it is claimed that the recent recession has been arrested and we are returning to normalcy and possible growth in some instances, there is some degree of uneasiness among financial experts, many seem to feel that the worst is yet to come. Statements from the capitals of the world are not helping as the Governments are called upon to reduce spending at a time when they should be injecting funds in their economies. There are conflicting signals which further help to confuse the situation and cause the people to act irrationally.

It is no secret that the financial movers and shakers are putting their money in silver and gold and these metals are heating up. Financial Market intelligence is going to be the key in the months ahead as an alternative to what exists today must be put in place before it is too late. What will be the next big SECRET solution for securing your assets? In all the confusion, the big banks that are left standing as a result of the help of their Governments are back on their feet, making profits and paying incentives that are causing Governments to think about implementing special taxes on bonuses.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The New Year is a famous time for making RESOLUTIONS of things you want and hope to achieve in the New Year. I think wanting and hoping isn't good enough anymore, and it's time to commit to making things better in all the areas of our lives that really matter. My recommendation is Just Do It! Make 2011 a year of action.

It has been said many times that knowledge is power, but in 2011 and beyond I believe we will see that knowledge is SURVIVAL. There will be no more room left for trial and error or ignorance.

Personally, I am committed to making 2011 my best year ever. I am committed to sharing with my readers the very best information that I put my hands on. My aim is to share experiences with you in this column and on my TV Show - **Let's Talk Business** which is scheduled to be launched on Thursday 13th January, 2011 on HWTV Channels 42 LIME and 78 Karibcable at 8.30pm.

I plan to do a number of Business Seminars this year all across the country on the topic of Entrepreneurship. I continue to be convinced of the power of the Internet to transform lives and provide financial and time freedom. **Internet Marketing of goods and services turns dreams into reality and provide a global distribution platform.** There are existing products/services on the internet that can be tweaked and adopted to our specific needs and then marketed to the world. To achieve this, we need to put our heads together, providing ideas to technical experts and producing world class product/s. Everyone will be able to earn adequately from such a coming together. We are not going to enter into the global battle if we continue to believe that we can do it individually when experience has shown otherwise. All the great products we enjoy are put together in a collective process. It is time to change our mind set and begin to do what is consistent with progress. Joint ventures are yielding great success when people of like minds come together. It is the power of two or three. I don't want to get into the Bible here but we all know that it is the first two and three who make a congregation possible. Our difficulty is getting the minimum of two together and begin a work with multiplying effect.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Everyone is looking for a job, no one is thinking about exploring an opportunity to put their skills to work. No one wants to invest their time in developing a project that could turn him/her into an employer without ever having to be an employee. There are great success stories of millionaires who never worked for anyone. This is a direction we must pursue in 2011 and beyond. We must change our mind set. We must also begin this year to get excited about each other's project and give support. We must change our mind set if we are to succeed in many areas that are so necessary for the success of our nation.

I wish above all things that you will prosper and be in health – Happy New Year to all!

Remember always to Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and expect Daily Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#71 THE YEAR 2011 WILL BE A LIFE CHANGING YEAR

January 12, 2011

Harris At Large!

THE YEAR 2011 WILL BE A LIFE CHANGING YEAR!

All the Resolutions are behind us now. It is implementation time. Have you developed the rhythm and are prepared to stick to your commitment? Too often we make commitment and do nothing. This year you will be your own judge regarding the progress you will make in keeping with your resolutions. This is a life changing year. The world situation can't be worst for many so there is no going further downhill. From here onward things can only get better. It is certain that the jobless people of this world who seek gainful employment are most likely to put finding a job in 2011 at the top of their list. That's a fact, it is for you to step out into the world armed with your resolutions and stay focused.

It will take all the hype, all the motivation that you can muster to get through 2011. There are all types of predictions, many positive ones and justifiably so, as if we are to listen to the prophets of doom and gloom, the trend will change from homicide to suicide. Everywhere you turn, you hear about problems, problems, problems. There is an urgent need for problem solvers. In business it is about finding solutions to problems before they escalate. If the problem is cash flow a solution has to be found. In today's world we need to be able to predict all the controllable and uncontrollable variables and take preventative action to put things in place in the event things do not go the way we predicted them.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Those persons who are grappling with surviving during these economically depressed times have no other alternative than to not just hope that things will get better but rather do something to make things better. What happen to the promises that are made in the Bible? Is God's word the same, yesterday, today and forever? What happen to the great optimists and people of faith? What about the wonderful books on positive thinking such as "The Power of Positive Thinking" and the companion book, "The Amazing Results of Positive Thinking"? There are so many great books that are life changing. I am always very pleased to introduce persons who are seeking to find a path of fulfillment to a particular book - "Think and Grow Rich" by Napoleon Hill which is now free on the Internet.

You are less likely to effect change in your life if you fail to accept that there is a greater power at work in your life than you. If you believe there is then you are on your way to changing your circumstances. You must be able to apply faith by believing in a Supreme Being that you need to establish communication with. That is the first step. Then by faith, you request the things that will bring about change in your circumstances. Everything is within the realm of possibility. Just have Faith. What is Faith? I have a Biblical explanation for faith. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Whatever you want to be, you can be. It is always a process but sometimes along the way miracles happen. The journey of a mile begins with the first step.

I have been extremely busy in these difficult times trying to find a solution that can take care of many persons who are hurting. I can't do it alone and help is not forth coming. I keep crying out loud that the INTERNET is the future and no one seems to be listening. Our young people have the skills but will only be motivated by a salary. The individuals with the money are not willing to finance something that they are not acquainted with. The governments of recent years have not placed the kind of emphasis on INNOVATION and TECHNOLOGY that will give immediate and massive impact. These are pillars upon which a modern work force is built. Training institutions must begin to turn out the finished products, persons who are in business for themselves before being graduated. The High Impact Growth Strategy sessions produce businesses in 3 to 5 days. ICT is one sure way of making a positive impact on the unemployment situation. Something can be done but it must be on a collective basis.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

It is my wish that some significant progress will be made this year in the way we think in our approach to business. Let ideas contend, come together and turn your idle time into producing creative projects that have potential to be marketed globally. Together, we have the ability to turn our economy around for the better.

Remember always to Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and expect Daily Miracles!

#72 IT WAS ANOTHER GLORIOUS NIGHT!!!

February 3, 2011

Harris At Large!

IT WAS ANOTHER GLORIOUS NIGHT!!!

The Saint Lucia Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture in association with the Office of the Prime Minister has done it once again with the successful hosting of the 2nd St. Lucia Business Awards. The private sector support continues to be outstanding. With excellent programmes like the Business Awards, it is obvious that such events will attract the support of Government. The event was held under the distinguished patronage of Her Excellency the Governor General Dame Pearlette Louisy on January 29, 2011 at the Sandals Grande St. Lucia Spa & Beach Resort.

It was a great night for many business persons as their companies received Awards for outstanding achievements in their categories. It is important to note that Awards are open to any company/individual operating in St. Lucia and not limited to members of the Chamber. Let us begin to look around and nominate those companies/individuals that we perceive to be doing an excellent job. I will like to see some new entrants but I suspect that some companies are afraid of the limelight. It is always a great moment when an individual or a company is recognized for excellence.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The 1st National Bank is doing something right and is an outstanding example to micro, medium and small businesses in St. Lucia. It shows that small could be a power force for change and excellence. With every Award the Bank receives, it reaffirms its presence in the economy as a serious player in the industry and a good corporate citizen. The Bank has also taken its corporate social responsibility seriously, supporting important social and cultural programmes. Another interesting Award – Entrepreneur of the Year went to Mr. Rayneau Gajadhar of the RG Group of Companies which includes Construction & Industrial Equipment Ltd. (CIE). The Group has placed great faith in the economy of St. Lucia and continues its expansion programmes in the most difficult economic times. Construction is their business and the company is committed to providing affordable housing in 2011.

Things are not getting better even if we claim that the economies of the developed world are experiencing a turn around, and the recession is now behind us, the political unrest in Egypt is not helping the situation as we see the oil sharks taking the price of oil to a new level in excess of US\$100.00 per barrel. Are we looking at EC\$15.00 per gallon in the new week? The buying power of the dollar is under serious pressure as when oil rises, almost everything else follows. Transportation is one service to watch.

There are many aspects of our lives that we will have to revisit. Budgeting was a word for businesses and governments but today it is a major discussion in the home. A few years ago, a few people were smart enough to use their calculator to work on savings on sizes of containers as related to price when shopping and to ensure that they can pay for their purchases when they get to the cashier. Those persons by now have a degree in budgeting.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

All indications are that there is a need for additional sources of income. We have to develop a plan to share money among ourselves. The Americans developed Multilevel Marketing which pays at several levels so that persons associated with a sale gets a piece of the commission pie. MLM does not only apply to vitamins and consumer items, it is also applicable to services. I am waging a battle to get idle hands to get on board the Internet Marketing train. Soldiers are currently being recruited. I had the pleasure on interviewing Miss Keitha Glace, one of St. Lucia's outstanding Web Developers of Glacegrafix on my show "Let's Talk Business" which is scheduled to be aired on Wednesday, 9/2/11 at 8.00pm on Channels 42 LIME and 78 Karibcable, and on the internet at www.sluhwtv.com . She has some wise words for our young people. You can visit her website at www.glacegrafix.com and see how she uses technology with all the bells and whistles.

Remember always to Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and expect Daily Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#73 ENTREPRENEURS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!!

February 10, 2011

Harris At Large!

ENTREPRENEURS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!!

It was the Chamber's Business Awards, then last Monday evening, it was Caribbean Youth Fest Ltd. (CYF) – Youth Fest 2010 Prize Giving and Thank You Ceremony at the Bay Gardens Conference Centre, Rodney Bay. It was a well planned and executed function. The Feature Address was delivered by Mr. Adrian Augier, Managing Director of Landmark Events Inc. who emphasized the link between corporate sponsorship and building a wholesome society.

The promoters of Youth Fest now in its seventh year have established beyond reasonable doubt their commitment to the young people of Saint Lucia and the soundness of their business model. The uniqueness of this incredible display of confidence in our young people is not only noticeable in the painstaking elimination process of the under 12, Teens 13 – 19 and 20 – 29 categories but also in placing them alongside accomplished local and international talents. In the end, the results have demonstrated time after time that Saint Lucia has talented young people. Another aspect of the promotion is how the organizers handle the various aspects of the project so professionally, bringing together artistes, contestants, sponsors, service providers, etc.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Those companies which provided sponsorships over the years, especially those that have been from the inception like The Windward Islands (WINERA) Packaging Co. Ltd. and as a result are the catalysts for attracting other sponsors over the years, should be proud of their involvement. It is not only about contracting local and international artistes, but also prizes for the winners and donations to organizations like CARE and in the most recent case to the NCF for Hurricane Tomas Relief. Hats off to the principal promoter Mr. Omar Davis former General Manager of WINERA who has turned the annual event into a movement for emancipating the young from failure and giving them hope that they can succeed if they believe in themselves.

What's next for Caribbean Youth Fest? Too often we are satisfied with the success achieved on the home front and failing to capture the opportunities outside of our immediate space. Caribbean Youth Fest has grown into an institution and in my view, it is ready to be a Franchise with an active relationship/presence in every CARICOM Member State. The success of this project must not be taken lightly. Dr Basil Springer is always on the lookout for projects with the DNA of an Elephant. Caribbean Youth Fest is definitely one such project.

Caribbean Youth Fest does for sponsoring companies what will be difficult if not too expensive for them to do for themselves. CYF presents a package that combines Corporate Social Responsibility, Public Relations and more. It gives participating companies the type of visibility that sets them apart from the competition. CYF reaches the youth and shows them a better way. The songs they sing soothe their hearts and the hearts of their peers. This is sure one effective means of reaching the youth of our beautiful island. Congratulations to all those persons/companies who have cooperated with the promoters in one way or another.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

I have been pointing to the business of writing “How To E-books” for some time now and I am pleased to report that I launched my first publication this week. The Title is – “Introduction to Investing in Real Estate in St. Lucia”. It targets Foreign Direct Investment/Investors seeking to invest in St. Lucia. I will provide the link on my social network at www.facebook.com/eaharrisdestiny and www.twitter.com/saintlucian . I am still hopeful that a group of professionals will join with me in producing an Anthology on the Real Estate Industry in Saint Lucia.

The battle cannot be won by one soldier against an army and it is for this reason I continue to extend an invitation to persons of like minds to join me and bring some ideas to the table, so that the collective efforts of those who understand that no real progress in many areas of today’s businesses can be achieved by one person. Let us unite and be big winners.

Entrepreneurs can make a difference. Entrepreneurs are leaders of Industry and of necessity are creative people. It is time that the creativity that brings success in business be extended to other areas of social and cultural endeavours which need drivers. Share your success with your community.

Remember always to Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and expect Daily Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#74 INTERNET WOES!

February 24, 2011

Harris At Large!

INTERNET WOES!

The situation online is cause for concern as the scam artists are using creative means to get information from internet users that shouldn't be shared. The compelling appeal of the scammers can cause you to submit the information they humbly request if you are not knowledgeable about the various strategies they apply. Whether it is to get your password to your email account/s or to lure you into scams such as to share a large sum of money which you will help to retrieve, your email was drawn in a lottery sponsored by major corporations, etc.

The list of scams is mounting everyday as the economic problems take away legitimate opportunities. The unfortunate situation is that many internet scams can be very deceiving as they appear to be real. Even when a product is offered you can be cheated because it is does not represent value for money.

Almost every type of scam has landed in one of my several inboxes. It is interesting how these promoters can really ignore real opportunities to earn legitimate money and turn to promoting scams. It is worth looking into these scams as legitimate programmes could be developed from them. Many years ago, I read a book on turning illegitimate business into legitimate business and that is exactly what is possible in many instances if you redirect the strategies of the scam artists.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

I have discovered that it is necessary to know who the principal promoter of an internet offering is. Many offers are launched without this basic information. In startups I have seen nothing under the about us link. Many times, they rush the launch and earlier participants pay the full price while the offer is still being developed. This is unfair. However, there are very few players in today's get rich quick by any means world who apply ethical standards in their businesses. The US Government has been dealing with pyramid scams when detected. I received a total refund on one occasion but I suspect that was at the tail end when the Agency had already moved in on the company's operation.

Is the internet a safe place? My answer is no, since there are reports of hackers shutting down major sites. In the past, there were all types of viruses which are not as prevalent these days. I cannot over emphasize the point that in using the internet, we must exercise caution. You must be extremely careful with the use of debit cards as there is no recourse to recovering your money if unscrupulous internet marketers defraud you of your hard-earned money. This article is not intended to scare my readers but rather to alert them to the silent war that is ongoing in cyber space between honest users, and scammers and hackers.

If a proposition looks too good to be true, then it is. While getting in on the ground floor is the best way in getting big returns from Multi-Level Marketing programmes, it is very risky as many of these programmes fail before being fully established. It is very interesting to see how even the weakest propositions attract substantial following. In recent times, many companies introduce their offerings with a Prelaunch programme where individuals are invited to participate with a promise to be rewarded with persons being placed under them when the programme is launched.

I have seen programmes which never passed the prelaunch stage as the approach was used to build a massive mailing list. In some instances, these scams are even extended if the response is good. In the internet marketing business, the money is in the list. Your list provides your customer base and your sales force. There should be list sharing among persons seeking to market their products on a global scale. Joint Venture marketing is one way of getting access to other internet marketers' lists.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

I continue to lament the fact that there is urgent need for drivers to promote the Internet Marketing Industry in Saint Lucia. The political season is once again with us and this is the time to get commitment from the politician vying for office. Get a commitment from your candidate on Innovation and Technology so that the creative minds in our midst can go to work on producing ideas and businesses that will open up new opportunities for investment, learning new skills and employment.

Something must be done to develop a new mind set whereby our young persons will see new opportunities in areas where they can apply their skills. It is fashionable these days to be on Facebook, Twitter, Myspace and other social media but we keep to the social aspects and fail to take advantage of the powerful business tool that social media offers. We can enjoy the best of both worlds – pleasure and business. There is a lot of excitement out there and in the process, there is money to be made. Unfortunately, there has to be a movement of people of like minds coming together to make our economic circumstances better. There are few opportunities that take one person, the power today is in numbers. Look how well public companies have done over the years.

On a final note, JACKIE O, an Events & Artistes Support Management Company was launched at the poolside of H2O Restaurant in the Marina on Wednesday, 2/3/11 with an impressive ceremony which was well covered by the media. Ms. Jackie Cherebin-Weekes is the Managing Executive of the Company. I co-hosted the ceremony with Keena C, popular radio personality on Rhythm FM 95.5.

Remember always to Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and expect Daily Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#75 ANOTHER GLORIOUS NIGHT IN PARADISE!

March 31, 2011

Harris At Large!

ANOTHER GLORIOUS NIGHT IN PARADISE!

Miss Joycie Mederick was back with her usual fabulous fashion show after an absence of three years. The rain drizzled; it fell heavily but the show went on. The patrons were spared the disappointment of a cancellation. The clouds did roll by and the show was nothing short of a touch of class, Fashion and TV personalities from the USA were in attendance and participated in the show.

There is no turning back or should I say nothing can stop Cinnamon Productions. Joycie has stepped up her fashion production to the next level and plans to take St. Lucian Fashion Designers and Models along with her for the ride. The winner of the 1st prize from among the seven participating designers will travel to New York later this year to participate in a Fashion Extravaganza.

It was a glorious night. The audience was primarily young people who really enjoyed themselves. This auger well for the future of the industry. Joycie did not disappoint. The show opened with the launch of Joycie's Swim Wear Collection for Summer 2011 which was a hit with the audience. The models did justice to the collection of swim wear. Oh, what a night!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The competition to select Best Designer was high energy with the models' rally getting down to serious business as they did their best to show off their outfits and impress the judges and audience. The models got a great opportunity to experience at first hand the joy of being a model. I am certain that with the contributions of the US based professionals many lessons were learnt. The New York Designer treated patrons to a collection of his designs which was very much appreciated and was definitely a welcomed bonus.

Saint Lucia has talent in many areas that can be commercialized; unfortunately, there are not enough drivers and available financial resources to advance the transfer of ideas into businesses. The business environment is constantly changing and the time has come to recognize the fact that business is not only buying and selling. The move towards creative industries is where the action should be at this time. I sincerely hope that government will come to the assistance of our creative people and give tangible support to this emerging sector. We need drivers of new age industries. In many instances what is new to us has been around for decades. We are now trying to catch up. We get involve in too many activities for FUN. It is time to change that mind set and get into the habit of doing things for PROFIT. We must learn to turn our passion into business whenever possible. Some industries have longevity, they will always be around. The Music and Entertainment Industry will always be around. It is a growth industry, driven by increased population.

The people who continue to struggle along with ideas and projects, sometimes even having to compromise their pride by becoming beggars as they seek sponsorship should not be treated that way. One of the most frustrating tasks in the promotion business is getting sponsors to support events. It is literally a beggar's job. That has to stop. There must be a better way. Serious promoters should be able, like in any other business to present a viable project proposal, giving value for money and get it funded. Maybe, an incentive to give Entrepreneurs who invest in such projects a 50% premium on the amount provided as further deductible towards easing their corporation tax. Another approach could be to create a Creative Industries Fund where corporate contributors will be given an incentive for their contributions.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

There are several ways in which funding could be mobilized. Yet another idea, I feel that the Fund should not only give nonrefundable support and a system of advances should be introduced where the amounts will be repaid. There are many projects in the creative industry sector that can be self-supporting but needs initial assistance. There is always a way. All that is needed is the will.

In recent weeks, I witnessed the relaunch of Jackie O an Events Management and Artistes' Management Agency and the return of Cinnamon Products. The services sector is on the move but needs drivers to lead the charge and financial support to back the efforts.

Remember always to Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and expect Daily Miracles!

#76 BVI INVESTMENT CLUB – A MODEL TO ADOPT!

June 29, 2011

Harris At Large!

BVI INVESTMENT CLUB – A MODEL TO ADOPT!

It was an opportunity missed by Entrepreneurs on Wednesday 22nd June, 2011 when the St. Lucia Chamber of Commerce & Industry in collaboration with Office of Private Sector Relations (OPSR) hosted Directors of the British Virgin Islands Investment Club to share their experiences. The Club was represented by Mrs. Margaret Penn and Mr. Glenn Harrigan, 2nd Vice President and Treasurer respectively. They were accompanied by Ms. Ermyn Richardson, Executive Assistant.

I am fully convinced that I am correct in my constant plea to business persons to come together to seek alternatives to dealing with the current economic crisis and general changes in the global business environment.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

If you were to undertake a survey among business persons today, asking the question – what is the greatest hindrance to your company's success? There will be one resounding answer – MONEY! We, in this part of the world were not fortunate to get Stimulus Packages from our governments but the reality is business persons should be able to at least get Cash Flow Assistance. Many persons in the present business environment cannot meet their current obligation with their bank, and find it extremely difficult to request additional facility. As a result, they are using their suppliers as their bankers and putting further hardship on them as they grapple with their own overseas suppliers. It gets even worse in the manufacturing sector.

What then is the alternative? My take is that while business persons struggle with their existing businesses, an aggressive approach should be taken to mobilize finances and seek out non-traditional businesses which are emerging currently. The days of the one-man show is over. The BVI Investment Club was launched on the 26th of September, 1992, almost 20 years ago, but in the first 10 years, it established itself as a force to be reckon with. I will share with you the story as I heard it. Twenty-four individuals got together, each contributed US\$1,000.00. In their first year of operation an opportunity presented itself to acquire CCT Boatphone from Ameritech Corporation, and in a partnership with Falconwood Corporation, Boston Communications and Columbia Capital, the deal was formally concluded on the 8th of December, 1993.

The Club continued to identify opportunities for its members and went on to make some very valuable investments among members of the club and the general public by offering shares in the open market.

November 25, 1994, purchased 17 acres of land which was sub divided into lots and fully sold out.

September 12, 1996, purchased 45 % in Ocean Conversion Limited. On February 21, 1997, 25% was successfully sold BV Islanders and Belongers.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

October 10, 1997, the Club in partnership with the Gibbons family, officially launched Colonial (BVI) Limited, the BVI's first locally owned insurance company.

April 25, 2000, the Club with the assistance of Prudential Securities, ventured into the US Stock Market.

May 2, 2000, the Club assisted in establishing three other Clubs, namely Quest Investment Club, Nottingham Estate Investment Club and C-Tech Investment Club.

April 15, 2002, the Club through its member-owned company Sage Investments Limited successfully sold approx. 15% of its ownership in CCT Boatphone to over 600 members of the BVI public.

April 26, 2002, the Club launched the BVI Investment Club Foundation.

The foregoing was achieved in the Club's first ten years of existence. This phenomenal achievement was based on a strong vision – "A vision of securing for all BVI Islanders and Belongers their rightful place in the development of the British Virgin Islands." There are five principles that guide the membership of the Club. 1. A shared vision and passion about the role which BVI Islanders and Belongers must play in the future economic development of the territory; 2. Mutual respect for each member as an individual; 3. Equity in investment; 4. A fundamental trust in each other, and 5. A deep trust and belief in the collective wisdom of the members of the Club.

I have always contended that we must trust each other before we can do business with each other. Serious emphasis was placed on the word TRUST. The BVI Investment Club is a success story for the private sector as the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank is for the Governments of the OECS.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

It must be noted that the Club from humble beginning was able to negotiate with the Development Bank, Commercial Banks and finally place some offers on the stock exchange, Can this business model be successful in other parts of the region? My answer is, Yes – it can. You can catch up on the 2nd ten years of continued progress by visiting the Club's website at www.bviinvestmentclub.com The Club continues to Fulfill the Vision of Economic Empowerment.

ALWAYS BE PREPARED FOR SUCCESS

There is no shortage of opportunity. Every day you are presented with countless chances to be, or do whatever you desire.

Luck is a matter of preparation meeting opportunity.

Don't miss out on an opportunity because you're not prepared.

Your preparation is absolutely essential.

To achieve success, you must have self-discipline.

You must increase your knowledge and develop your skills.

You're always in the right place at the right time when you're prepared. © 2010
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HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#77 GUYANA AND SAINT LUCIA IN ELECTION MODE!

October 27, 2011

Harris At Large!

GUYANA AND SAINT LUCIA IN ELECTION MODE!

Election Campaigning is raging across the countries of Guyana and Saint Lucia and the Nationals of both countries are caught up in the heightened political fever of the moment. In Guyana 31 parties were considering to do battle against the incumbent – PPP/Civic, in the end 7 parties presented their list of candidates on Nomination Day – October 27, 2011. Elections were last held in Guyana on the 28th of August 2006. The officials at Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) the agency responsible for supervising the election process must be relieved due to the reduction in the number of parties.

The parties contesting the upcoming elections are as follows: The incumbent People's Progressive Party/Civic; the opposition coalition headed by the PNC now A Partnership for National Unity (APNU); Alliance For Change (AFC); The United Force (TUF); Horizon and Star; East Berbice Development Association (EBDA), and the Fundamental Structure Group (FSG). There are only three parties that will start and finish the race, namely in alphabetical order AFC, APNU and PPP/Civic; the others will not pass the finishing line.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

I continue to ask the question – who came up with the grand idea to drop the name of the leading opposition party – the People’s Nation Congress (PNC) which existed for several decades in favour of A Partnership for National Unity (APNU)? The party in 2006 fought the elections under the banner of the PNC/Reform. Why change now? What is the party faithful saying about this despicable act? How can a formidable political party sacrifice its name to others that have never been a challenge to the ruling PPP/Civic party? In the end it is the Alliance for Change (AFC) that is having the last laugh. In the early days of APNU, everyone who supported the grouping insisted that the AFC should join the grouping but its Leadership, overwhelmingly supported by the membership decided not to give up their identity. Today the AFC is the Momentum Party. I can’t wait to join the campaign. A change has got to come!

The AFC is in with a chance; whatever the results, the AFC will be the game changer in the politics of Guyana in the future. Constitutional Reform must take place in Guyana. It cannot be business as usual; it is time that the wishes of the late President Cheddi Jagan in respect of Constitutional Reform be honoured. Guyana cannot continue on the path it is currently headed. It is time for change. The upcoming 2011 elections will produce a result that will change the political landscape in Guyana for the better. The writing is on the wall.

It is important for all Guyanese who seek change to be vigilant at election time to ensure that the elections are free and fair. With the number of political parties greatly reduced, it should be easier to manage the polling stations and political activists whose parties are not directly involved in the elections should volunteer to assist participating parties as polling clerks and observers to ensure that the process is not manipulated unfairly in favour of any of the contesting parties. It was interesting to note The PPP/C held its “Grand Victory Rally” at Stewartville not after, but before the 2006 elections. Could that level of confidence be repeated this time? The records show that there were many unanswered questions after the 2006 elections.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The Guyanese Diaspora has been very supportive of the major parties but it is significant that there has been a major shift in support from the PPP/Civic and APNU to the AFC. It is very much the same in Guyana with high profile political personalities embracing the AFC, leaving parties that they have been associated with for decades. This is all positive for the AFC.

While in Guyana, elections are scheduled for the 28th of November, 2011, the date for elections in Saint Lucia is yet to be announced. Will it be 2011 or 2012? In the meantime, the talk shows are on a high and the politicians are seriously engaging the electorate. The parties and independent candidate are taking no chances; they are already assembling at the starting line.

Remember always to Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and expect Daily Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#78 THE GUYANA ELECTORAL SCENARIO!

December 15, 2011

Harris At Large!

THE GUYANA ELECTORAL SCENARIO!

This is a very special time of year when people of Goodwill everywhere come together to share the joy of the Holidays. However, in Guyana and Saint Lucia, citizens are preoccupied with the adjustments that have to be made as they adapt to the new realities. While I will prefer to deal with the spirit of the Holidays, I feel obliged to deliver on the promise I made last week to discuss with my readers the Guyana electoral scenario after the general elections of November 28, 2011. Guyana and Saint Lucia held elections on the same date and both results produced surprises. In the case of Guyana for the first time under the existing constitution a hung parliament emerged.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

I feel a sense of pride as I see what I fought for in 1997 and 2006 has finally been realized. I was involved in two political campaigns with the single purpose of producing a hung parliament. On the last occasion, I returned from Guyana with my left leg in a cast from my hip to my ankle. When asked by my friends what was the outcome of the elections? My response was, that I was cheated but not defeated. In 2006 the Alliance for Change (AFC) in nine months of existence, gained five (5) seats and began its march to fulfilling the dream of many to achieve electoral reform. This is now possible as the House of Parliament/National Assembly will for the first time since independence in 1966 will serve as a truly democratic institution. It began with the appointment of a Speaker. In times past it would have been an irrelevant detail, the PPP/Civic would have gone ahead and named a Speaker as was attempted, today it is a relevant issue. There must be consultation. The days ahead in Guyana will definitely be better. Democracy at last! This holiday season will be one of the best ever. President Donald Ramotar has an opportunity to fulfill the wish of the late President Cheddi Jagan to effect amendments to the constitution including the issue of electoral reform.

The present electoral system in Guyana allows for a minority party to assume the mantle of government and to administer the affairs of the nation. The party that gets the most seats in parliament forms the government. There is no provision for a COALITION Government in Guyana. Until December 28, 2011 the party with the most votes always received in excess of fifty percent of the ballots and it was easy to cruise along with a parliamentary majority. Unfortunately, the opposition parties had no voice as their contribution was not necessary. The government introduced motions and bills, and generally had their way.

Electoral Reform was never an issue as the ruling PPP/Civic party was quite satisfied with the constitution, especially in relation to the electoral system. I recall on one occasion when President Bharrat Jagdeo addressed Guyanese in St. Lucia, he referred to the fact that the constitution was written and passed in parliament by the PNC regime under the late President Forbes Linden Sampson Burnham, and his government saw no need to change it. Under the present constitution, electoral reform will need two thirds of the members of parliament to vote in favour of any amendment for it to become law.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

In the National Assembly 65 members are elected through a closed-list proportional representation system to serve a five (5) year term. The President and Prime Ministerial Candidate head the list of candidates for each contesting party. Twenty-five (25) seats are divided between ten (10) geographical constituencies and forty (40) seats are in one, nationwide constituency. There is a total of sixty (65) seats in parliament. The results produced 32 seats for the PPP/C, 26 seats for APNU (an alliance which includes the PNC) and 7 for the AFC. Voting for General and Regional elections is undertaken at the same time.

It is very difficult to write an article when one is emotionally involved. I hope however that my readers will be better informed about the electoral system in Guyana and I encourage you to use Google Search to further look into the electoral system that is different from all other countries in the region. Whereas all the other member states of CARICOM subscribe to FIRST PAST THE POST, Guyana has PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION. In the latter, the number of valid votes divided by the number of seats produces the number of votes needed to be accorded a seat. Then the number of votes received by each party is divided by the number of votes per seat. The party with highest number of left-over votes will be given the seat to arrive the final number of seats.

The people of Guyana in due course will achieve success in all their endeavours as they have spent many decades in preparation. The AFC is the party to watch in the years ahead. The contribution of the leadership of the party in the democratic process will be closely monitored and come 2016 elections, the AFC could be a major player in the politics of Guyana. I feel that the AFC is well prepared for its role in the future.

Citizens everywhere must also be prepared to make the best of opportunities as presented from time to time. This is my motivational piece of the week:

ALWAYS BE PREPARED FOR SUCCESS

There is no shortage of opportunity. Everyday you're presented with countless opportunities to be, or do whatever you desire.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Luck is a matter of preparation meeting opportunity. Don't miss out on an opportunity because you're not prepared.

Your preparation is absolutely essential. To achieve success, you must have self-discipline. You must increase your knowledge and develop your skills.

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HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#79 IT WILL BE THE MORNING AFTER!

November 4, 2011

Harris At Large!

IT WILL BE THE MORNING AFTER!

I am not speaking about the pregnancy pill; I am speaking about the morning after the results of the elections would have had time to sink in. Reality definitely steps in the morning after, as the winning party puts its team together and begins to plan for the next five years. What happens next? You are either excited about the victory of your candidate or moaning your candidate's loss. If your candidate lost, you will be asking many questions. Did you make the right decision in casting your vote for your candidate? Why did the other guy beat my guy? Was he or she a better candidate? Were you right in voting party or should you have voted for the better candidate? There is nothing you will be able to do by then except to accept your defeat and move on with your life for the next five years.

Everyone is expecting that the date for the general elections will be announced this weekend. Unfortunately, you will be reading this article before the announcement. However, you still have time to assess the situation and make up your mind on which of the candidates you will give your support. It is my view that the majority of voters' support party. This situation leaves many good candidates out in the cold all because they find themselves representing the party that doesn't have the established tradition of winning the constituency. This is the reason why Independents seldom win. It is the exception, rather than the rule when an independent wins.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Trying to get an idea of the possible outcome of the upcoming elections is very difficult except for those individuals who have set up residence with the party of their choice, they will not be moved and as far as they are concerned their party has already won before the votes are counted. But that is life. What is certain with every election, it is getting more difficult to predict a winner until the last weekend before elections, only then the outcome can be predicted by observing the colours. In the countdown of the 24 hours leading up to election day no one will be prepared to flirt or go along for the ride. Those persons attending the closing rallies have placed their future squarely in the hands of the party of their choice. They want to be seen by their candidate, some will even want to hug and kiss their candidate. The message is simple – they take a stand for their candidate.

I like political campaigns; you get an opportunity to really experience how people place their faith in politicians only to be let down in many cases especially when their expectations are too high. Every voter has a price, even if it is the simple acknowledgement that his or her vote helped to give the candidate the victory. Humility should be the watch word for every politician, always recognizing that politicians are elected to serve the people. Unfortunately, modern day politicians fall short of this all-important reality.

It would have been so much better if voters took the time to research the past and present performance of the politicians who seek their vote. This will be one way of setting your level of expectation. Voters put politicians in office in spite of knowing that their expectations will not be met. This is nothing short of insanity.

On this occasion those persons who have attained the age of 18 and whose names appear on the voters' list, should make a statement by exercising their franchise. Do not leave the decision to another person. You have a choice and a voice; take responsibility for your action. Do what is right. Vote for the party of your choice. I would rather suggest that you vote for the candidate of your choice but in the Caribbean, it is the party and not necessarily the candidate. If you are lucky you may be in a constituency where you can enjoy the best of both worlds, having a preferred candidate in the party of your choice.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Remember always to Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and expect Daily Miracles!

#80 A NEW DAY HAS DAWNED IN SAINT LUCIA – POLITICALLY!

December 8, 2011

Harris At Large!

A NEW DAY HAS DAWNED IN SAINT LUCIA – POLITICALLY!

My grandfather used to say “Long Life is a Blessing” and always ended up with this statement “If you live long enough, many of the things that seem impossible will happen before your very eyes”. I have proven him to be correct many times and this week I am smiling at how many things that I have given up on and doubted myself about have happened.

I have been writing consistently about Innovation and Technology begging that a Ministry or Secretariat should be set up to drive this all-important aspect of development, especially in the area of employment generation. Finally, after over a decade of crying in the wilderness, I am so happy that I am alive to see that a Ministry for Public Service, Energy, Science and Technology has been established with responsibility for Information and Communication Technology (ICT). I know that once the Government is serious about providing JOBS that the entrepreneurial aspect of Science, Innovation, Technology and ICT will emerge in the grand scheme of things. I discussed the need for placing emphasis on Innovation in my last article and went on to show the prospects for opening up opportunities for employment on a grand scale.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

I have been involved in politics from my teens and I have always been thinking about the politics of winner take all and locking out the contributions of those who do not support the party in office. Thank God I lived to see the day when a political leader welcomes into the fold other politicians who can make a contribution for the good of the nation. I congratulate our newly elected Prime Minister, Hon. Dr. Kenny D. Anthony for his leadership in getting the Party to extend a hand of welcome to other politicians who can bring their expertise to bear on the grueling task ahead, especially as it relates to the economy.

I have two other recommendations and I will be looking on at what develops in the weeks and months ahead. I have written on these extensively and a search of my archive (International Tourism and Investment Representatives) at www.stluciasimplybeautiful.com will refer to my recommendations. The Government and all citizens whether managing the economy or a household need to do more with less money. Money needs to be stretched like never before. It is for this reason Governments should find creative ways to do things, and surprisingly in many cases will yield amazing results. It is necessary for us to get back to basics. The time is rife for volunteerism. Each citizen must be given an opportunity to make a contribution. Self Help should be promoted. The Government must not feel compelled to pay for everything. The citizens must be motivated to help themselves.

We must attract Foreign Direct Investors; this is vital to our economic future. We must get the message out to the world that St. Lucia is a world class destination for doing business. In the meantime, we must get our Ease of Doing Business ranking to an acceptable level. In the interest of getting more for less, the efforts of all ministries and agencies seeking to attract foreign direct investments must be effectively coordinated, seeking joint representation and participation in events that will showcase what St. Lucia has to offer.

In spite of the state of the world economic situation today, I am fully convinced that by opening up the game and leveling the playing field, giving all citizens an equal opportunity, we can be at the dawn of better days.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

I have a very special feeling about what I have been hearing and seeing in the past few days since the elections. The Cabinet seems ready to get to work. Regardless of the results, whether your party won or suffered defeat at the polls, let us also get to work and make the best of the next five years. Let us pray for the leadership and people of St. Lucia.

Remember always to Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and expect Daily Miracles!

#81 THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS NOT HOLDING BACK!

February 29, 2012

Harris At Large!

THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS NOT HOLDING BACK!

The challenges to life come in many forms and must not be allowed to overwhelm you. In today's mad world, you must be strong. Your faith in your ability to overcome obstacles must be deeply grounded. Everywhere there are challenges of one type or another. I have many challenges in my life but I am resigned to the fact that nothing lasts forever and some are gone faster than could ever be imagined. Never let your own challenges prevent you from doing what you should be doing for others.

The economic outlook for the region is far from being what can be considered reasonable. It is back to the drawing board; new strategies must be worked out to reposition our economies to be attractive to the Foreign Direct Investors. While tourists from Europe are being threatened by addition taxes on their travel tickets, the countries of the region are concerned that the new taxes will possibly dampen the enthusiasm of potential tourists to visit the region. Every country in the world is grappling with the issue of new and increased taxes as a means of balancing their budget. Europeans are not afraid to tax their citizens but American seem very reluctant to tax theirs, especially the rich.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Looking at developments at home, citizens are being called upon to exercise patience as it is obvious, it is not going to be business as usual. New ideas, necessitating new approaches will be the order of the day. I like the consultative approach being practiced involving some of our best minds. I have always alluded to the benefits of such an approach. I will like to see the process broadened. Get contributions from the people; in the final analysis, it is the people who will be the beneficiaries of the outcomes. The bottom up approach is necessary in these times. I remember an economist in earlier days who spoke about planning from below. What it simply means is to involve the people in the planning process.

A lot of funding went to the small business sector over the years but has any study been undertaken to really understand the real needs of the sector. As the new government seeks to implement its various plans, especially plans to deal with unemployment, the needs of the private sector in general and the small business sector in particular should be identified and addressed. In the past subventions were given to the representative body for MSMEs, many times too late. A serious look needs to be taken at the level of government support that should be given to SLISBA.

Most people will jump to the conclusion that micro and small businesses need adequate financing but there are more fundamental issues than money. Why MSME operators cannot pool their resources, financially and otherwise? What specific areas of training are necessary? The majority of small businesses are owned by persons advanced in age, 50 and over. The services sector is attracting younger persons but a substantial number of older persons are also involved. Demographic assessment, all these things should be informed by a comprehensive survey of the MSME sector.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

While there are many issues within the MSME sector and generally the wider private sector, private associations are busy promoting their sectors. The year 2012 is a stellar year for associations as we witnessed the Chamber Awards, sold out Luncheon Meeting addressed by Hon. Emma Hippolyte, Minister for Commerce, Business Development, Investment & Consumer Affairs. A Luncheon Meeting will also be held in Vieux Fort on March 13, 2012 and will be addressed by the Hon. Minister. This weekend Manufacturers Awards Ceremony was sold out two weeks ago. I tried everything to get a ticket, so far at the time of writing this article, I am still hoping. Entrepreneurs can only do what they do best and it seems that they will allow nothing to stand in their way. Government and Business working together can find solutions for many of the pressing challenges that confront the nation.

Here is my motivational piece of the week:

THE HIGHEST OF DISTINCTIONS IS SERVICE TO OTHERS

The truly successful person doesn't use others, other people use them.

If you can contribute to others, no matter how small your talent, you too can become successful. The measure of anyone is the number of people that they serve.

Service to others is the essence of success.

No one achieves success without being of service.

All great men and women became successful because they gave some talent or ability in the service of others.

Everybody has to be somebody to somebody to be anybody.

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#82 THE SOUTH IS READY TO EXHALE!

March 16, 2012

Harris At Large!

THE SOUTH IS READY TO EXHALE!

OMG! I just feel that something great is about to happen in Vieux Fort and environs. I attended the recording of the second show in the series Family Reflections featuring Pebbles in my shoes – How to survive in critical times last Sunday at Coconut Bay Resort. It was a blessing to hear the stories told by the two guests who are differently abled. We do have stories to tell. I am convinced that with the right environment, St. Lucians can contribute substantially to local radio and television programming. Ms. Mathurine Emmanuel and her team should be complemented for the bold step they have taken.

By Tuesday Hon. Emma Hippolyte, Minister for Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs was addressing business persons in the South at a Chamber Luncheon held at Kimatrai Hotel on initiatives being undertaken by her ministry. She was supported by the Parliamentary Secretary in her Ministry and Ministers with responsibility for Tourism and Foreign Affairs. The Minister of Commerce expressed the pressing need for St. Lucia to be a hassle-free destination providing Ease of Doing Business and improving its ranking in the World Bank Report in the short term. The Minister is upbeat and given her background, the Ministry will once again execute its mandate purposefully. Business is the engine of growth.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

On Wednesday, Stakeholders were meeting at Juliette's Lodge to discuss the way forward for the Free Zone Authority. The new Chairman of the Board – Mr. Rolston Taylor is very knowledgeable about the operations of the Free Zone and looks forward to providing improved services to the tenants. Mr. Taylor noted that it is one of government's objectives to make St. Lucia, the easiest place for doing business in the Caribbean in the shortest possible time.

My contact with business persons gives me further confidence in the future of business in the South. Many business persons have welcomed me back to the South with open arms and I had no problem in settling in. I hear a call for a business luncheon by one of the leading manufacturing executives in the South and I know someone was requested to put it together. In the meantime, I hear the Chamber making some bold statements which lead me to conclude that the Chamber plans to be more active in the South. There are whispers about a Southern Chamber but you don't need to reinvent the wheel. The Chamber should make its move now, the South cannot wait.

Entrepreneurs in the South are taking the lead. We now have all types of manufacturing, retail and professional service businesses in the South. A local Developer is in the construction stage of a project that will set the standard for future projects in the South. An interesting development is that local persons are showing interest in this upscale development and some have already committed.

Those who have been watching and waiting to establish branches or to invest in new projects in the South are advised to make the move without any further delay. Don't wait another day. Make your move now. Secure your space in the New Frontier. It is no longer a dream; it is fast becoming reality.

Recreational facilities are improving. The beaches are very much occupied with locals at weekends and new restaurants, bars and entertainment spots are opening up. You can still get a meal for EC\$10.00 and beverages are priced within the reach of customers. The future is in the South, be a part of the experience.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Here is my motivational piece of the week:

THE SEED OF SUCCESS LIES IN YOUR IMAGINATION

Visualize all the things that you want in life. Then make your mental blue print, and begin to build.

Your imagination can show you how to turn your possibilities into reality.

You must make every thought, every fact, that comes into your mind pay you a profit. Make those mental images work and produce for you.

Think of things not as they are but as you want them to be. Don't just dream, be creative.

The will to succeed springs from the knowledge that you can succeed.

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HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#83 SOUTHERN ENTREPRENEURS LEAD THE WAY!

May 23, 2012

Harris At Large!

SOUTHERN ENTREPRENEURS LEAD THE WAY!

The St. Lucia Employers' Federation hosted a workshop – “A Practical Guide on using Quick Books Accounting Software to Handle VAT” in the South of the island at Juliette’s Lodge, Vieux Fort on 22nd May, 2012, followed by another in the North on 23rd May, 2012. The SLEF must be congratulated for hosting the Workshop first in the South and then in the North. Is this recognition of things to come? The response was great with 32 participants in the South and 44 in the North. Representatives from the manufacturing, retail, services and tourism sectors including a Funeral Home participated fully in the exercise.

Entrepreneurs in the South of the island are anxious to get on with business and are seeking to prepare themselves to deal with the changing environment. The workshop was not concluded when the participants were calling for the VAT Team to visit the South. Mr. Joseph Alexander, Executive Director of SLEF promised to make a request for their visit at the earliest opportunity.

The facilitator for the workshop was Mr. Cuthbert John, who has worked with many OECS governments and private sector organizations on the introduction of VAT. He shared his experiences with participants and gave practical demonstration in the use of Quick Books Accounting Software. I believe that those business persons who missed the two workshops should be given an opportunity to be exposed to the valuable information that was shared.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Mr. Alexander urged participants whose companies were not yet members of SLEF to join the association as the next few months are going to be very challenging for business persons as they seek to grapple with the realities of a Labour Code in August and VAT in September, 2012. This is going to be hectic. The question that came up throughout the workshop was – what assistance will be provided by the Government to businesses in preparing for VAT implementation.

In the coming months, it can be expected to be a consumers' market as retailers rush to reduce stocks. SALES signs will be appearing everywhere. There can be some real deals if you shop around. One thing is certain some items will be cheaper while some will get more expensive. However, it is important to note that there are some real opportunities for new entrants into business and for them to hold their own.

Are you thinking about getting into business? Do your research now. Read my book “You can be a successful business person”. Get your free copy by sending an email to me at eaharrisdestiny@gmail.com with BOOK in the subject line. This is the perfect timing to cash in on an idea I referred to over the years in my column. Visit my archive at www.stluciasimplybeautiful.com and catch up on some of the opportunities I discussed.

I am really excited about the prospects of the South, especially as I interact with some of the business persons. I hasten to repeat a call that I made in an earlier article since I returned to reside in the South. I encouraged persons interested in investing in the South to make their move now. Well-developed properties are going between EC\$12.00 and 16.00 per square foot. Commercial buildings and warehouses are still very attractively price. Make your move now before prices begin to move upward.

I am very reluctant to travel to Castries these days but I am definitely looking forward to the EXPO 2012 Exhibition at Union this weekend which is promoting Export Ready Companies. I will give you my take on it in my next article. The OPSR is the executing organization for the Trade Export Promotion Agency (TIPA) and is coordinating the exhibition.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Here is my motivational piece of the week:

WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET

The realities of life result from many outside factors, none of which you can control.

Your attitude, however, reflects the way in which you evaluate what's happening to you.

It is not your situation, it's your reaction to the situation that's important.

Things always seem to turn out best for those people who can make the best out of the way things turn out.

Life at any time can become difficult. Life at any time can become easy. It all depends upon how you adjust yourself to life.

You cannot always control your circumstances. But you can always think positive thoughts.

There is nothing either good or bad, only your thinking makes it so.

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HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#84 IT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO!

June 19, 2012

Harris At Large!

IT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO!

It is the right thing to do. This is a statement which challenges many persons on a daily basis. Unfortunately, many have had to take a contrary route for expediency. Will my decision fit into what is popular? I am really happy for the six years I was privileged to be a member of Rotary. The four-way test really reinforced my belief. This is a test that has proven difficult for many to adhere to. Over the years during and after my Rotary involvement, I hold fast to those principles. It was not difficult for me as it only reinforced the belief that was instilled in me from my childhood.

President Obama in his last election campaign used the phrase – Yes, We Can, this election he is striking at the consciences of the electorate – It is the right thing to do. Whether dealing with the issue of Gay rights or Illegal Immigrants. It is very important for your conscience to be alert and responsive to the witness of the Holy Spirit. Some people act so heartless that it is sometimes remarked that cock roach ate out their conscience.

In the next quarter, the conscience of St. Lucians will speak loud and clear as the Government and people grapple with the challenge of putting the economy on the right footing. The Labour Code comes first in August and Value Added Tax in September. These actions are right for the benefit of all; better employer and employee relationship and effective tax for all to contribute fairly.

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REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The two pieces of legislation will necessitate the working together of members of the private sector, government, labour and civil society as a whole. The various sub sectors within the private sector need to share information – especially on stock levels, so as to ensure that current stocks are sold off and a minimum level of goods be available at the time of implementation of VAT. The timeliness of actions will be of essence as VAT is implemented. It is very likely that the storage at Port Castries will be challenged as never before during this period. We have all heard about Just In Time shipments but it never worked in this part of the world. If it can happen, it will, and in most cases, it happens in this part of the world. But the big winners this time will be those who manage the Just In Time process well. That is definitely the right thing to do.

There are so many things that seem just right to do. Unfortunately, because of selfish reasons, everyone is preoccupied with their own survival, failing to recognize that it will be better for all if the thought process could be changed to thinking about others. Use your ability to make life easy for others and you will be amazed how easy life will be for you and those who rely upon you. If you clear a path, it is not only you will walk through but others who need access to their destination as well. Savor in the feeling of achievement. If you can help others, then your life will not be in vain. Just touch lives. It is the right thing to do.

Always endeavour to be a blessing to others. Leaders should always strive to be servants of the people, doing everything possible to make their lives more fulfilling.

With every step you take, try to do what is right because it is the right thing to do.

Here is my motivational piece of the week:

ALWAYS THINK IN TERMS OF WHAT THE OTHER PERSON WANTS

Personal relationships are the fertile soil from which all advancement, all success, all achievement in real life grows.

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Your success depends on the support of other people. You can get anything you want in life if you're willing to help enough other people get what they want.

The only hurdle between you and what you want to be is the support of others.

You cannot hold a torch to light another's path without brightening your own.

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Remember always to Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Dream Big and expect Daily Miracles!

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#85 PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON, WARREN BUFFET AND DONALD TRUMP AGREE THAT MLM IS GOOD FOR YOU!!!

President Bill Clinton, Warren Buffet and Donald Trump saw the writing on the wall. In times like these when uncertainty and anxiety reign as the economies of the world remain in stagnation mode, people have to learn to cooperate with each other in an effort to sustain their livelihood. Rod Cook defines MLM as the only hope for the little man. I bought into that bold statement many years ago and have held fast to the principles of this great industry.

More than ever before the Multi-Level Marketing (MLM) Industry holds the future for many new entrants into the work environment, persons laid off from full time jobs, and persons seeking an additional income. Not only that the little man has found a home in the MLM industry but in recent years many professionals and business persons have seen the opportunity, joined the industry and made great strides. In many instances leaving their established vocations and accepted a lifestyle change for Financial and Time Freedom. It is a great feeling to be able to do whatever you want to do without the constraint of time or money.

MLM is an industry that does not discriminate against the little man whether in terms of ethnicity, religion, education, financial nor social status. Mankind has a right to work and to be at the top of his or her game. MLM levels the playing field giving each one an opportunity to reach the top of his career.

I have watched this industry for several decades. I have been involved in a number of companies but being located in the Caribbean, there are a few hurdles that mitigate against the level of success that could be achieved as in the developed countries. Population size, handling charges, excessive customs levies and high unemployment and low wages and salaries, all account for the limitations that an Independent Distributor will encounter. In many instances the startup enrollment fees charged were prohibitive. I never lost faith in the words of Rod Cook of MLM Watchdog. I believe in my heart his words to be true.

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Over the years as the economic situation worsened and disposable incomes shrunk, Entrepreneurs in the industry arrived at the position that the market could no longer bear the high startup cost with expensive Starter Kits. We are at that point in time when the industry will explode because of a few leaders who truly believe in the principle of “people helping people” and everyone should be given an opportunity to realize their full potential in the industry. EPXBody is one such company.

To all skeptics, I say take another look and step out to join the global revolution where MLM companies are bringing to the market high quality products and services at affordable prices, backed by cutting edge technology to deliver an aggressive marketing programme.

From my base in St. Lucia, an island State in the English Speaking Caribbean, I look forward with enthusiasm to the new day that is dawning in the MLM industry where tycoons, micro, small, medium, large business owners, professionals can meet the little man across the table as players on a level playing field. Thanks to President Bill Clinton, Warren Buffet Donald Trump and many other persons held in high esteem for endorsing the Multi-Level Marketing Industry (MLM) and letting the world know it is good for everyone!

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#86 MULTI LEVEL MARKETING (MLM) IS GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY!

April 4, 2013

MULTI LEVEL MARKETING (MLM) IS GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY!

The million-dollar question is – what can you do differently to supplement your current income or find employment? There is one Industry that will significantly impact your income and change your lifestyle in as little as ninety days. That industry is Multi-Level Marketing/Network Marketing which is one of the few platforms where ordinary people can achieve extraordinary things.

Since my first article on the subject of MLM, I guess many of my readers took the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the workings of this life changing industry. In your research, I guess you found many things worrisome about the industry. How it is all about pyramid schemes and there is nothing good about the industry. Some persons feel this business is not for people in the Caribbean and St. Lucia doesn't have a large enough population to sustain MLM businesses. There was a time when that was partly true.

With the advent of the Internet and Social Media, MLM is now a global business. From the comfort of your home you can communicate with the world. Establish relationships with strangers, get to know them and develop a sense of trust, and ultimately do business with them. So, you can develop your MLM business with your downline consisting of persons from around the world. The MLM industry is one of the few industries where technology has leveled the playing field. The MLM business is also nondiscriminatory. You can emerge to the top regardless of your race, colour, religion, educational background, financial status, or social class.

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Don't be carried away with the negatives you will read or hear about. Ask yourself a couple of questions – are all MLM companies bad? Are there no genuine ones? The truth is – there are many excellent companies around the world. Seek out the truth. Check Google Search for the top one hundred MLM companies in the world, and the top one hundred companies in the United States of America. Keep up to date on developments in the Industry and find out which companies are up and which ones are down on www.mlmrankings.com and who is getting into trouble with the law or treating their distributors badly at www.mlmwatchdog.com

When you are in the MLM business, you are in a real business, treat it as a business/profession. In this business you automatically become a leader of the people you bring into the company and there is nothing stopping you from making more money than the person who introduced you to the business. The more I look into this industry, the more I get excited about it. Take care of your team; get the best results for your company and team. Stay in touch. From time to time companies will fail, compensation plans will change resulting in fall out with Distributors. Leaders have been known to walk away with their entire downline. It is just like in the job market, if you are not satisfied with your terms and conditions, you move to greener pastures. There are thousands of MLM companies to choose from. Always remember there are many good ones out there. Thank God there are good MLM companies. You may have had bad experiences in the business but this is not an Industry to walk away from especially at this time. It is the business not only of the future, it is the business of the moment.

It is time the leaders in the Industry start talking with each other and begin to make representation to Government for waiver of custom levies on Imports that are sourced under the MLM business model.

There are stories where the MLM industry has made significant contributions to communities by contributing to training, employment and the economy. The MLM business is a home-based business where self-motivated, purpose driven individuals prosper.

Keep the Faith, God is in Charge, Expect Daily Miracles.

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#87 PONZI, PYRAMID AND MLM ARE NOT THE SAME!

April 25, 2013

PONZI, PYRAMID AND MLM ARE NOT THE SAME!

Before I get down to delivering to you some simple steps to succeeding in the business of Multi-Level Marketing (MLM), I feel compelled to define the operations of Ponzi and Pyramid schemes which are structured differently and have no relationship to legitimate MLM businesses.

Ponzi scheme was introduced back in the 20s when investors were cheated out of a few millions, nothing in comparison with our modern day Bernie Madoff who ran off with BILLIONS, now languishing behind bars. A Ponzi scheme has a single perpetrator who acts as the hub for all transactions and has many victims. The perpetrator of a Ponzi scheme is usually someone well respected and is a very influential professional or entrepreneur. Deposits are expected to gain substantial appreciation within a certain time. The investor is always expected to take out more than he invested.

In the case of a Pyramid scheme, it is initiated by an individual who invites other persons along for the ride and continues to apply the system of duplication. A pyramid has many perpetrators and many victims. If there is no product, or a product that is of no value to the customer who is not involved in the scheme then it could be considered an illegal pyramid. Pyramids never pay out more than they receive – Ponzi does.

MLM plans are not supposed to pay out more than the amount received. A MLM model must offer a product but in recent times scammers have been offering low end products which only benefit the Distributor and not the end user, leaving them wide open for the FTC to step in. Pyramid scheme promoters have given the MLM industry a bad name as they attempt to disguise their offers.

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Be careful when looking at compensation plans as in some cases the impression is given that they pay in excess of 100%. Most times it seems this way, the company is actually applying the percentages on Bonus or Commission points – Bonus Volume (BV) and Commission Volume (CV). Watch out for the most lucrative payment plans. Today, companies are paying as much as 100% Fast Start Commission. No wonder companies are going out of business nearly as fast as they get in. In all the confusion that is out there, there are companies in operation for several decades. Beware of startup companies in prelaunch offering the world, not saying what the product is, and don't even have a contact address. Many are only building a mailing list. Be sure to check all prelaunch offerings for the promoters, information about the product and street address of the company.

I am first to accept that some of the worst scammers pass through the MLM industry, many are presently behind bars. This happens all because the business is very lucrative and the urge of unethical greed. Greed is good. Who can be against wanting more but not at the expense/hurt of others? Keep up to date on the postings of Rod Cook at www.mlmwatchdog.com This is a free service but could be a very high-priced subscription. However, because of Rod's love for the MLM industry, he exposes the bad guys and embraces the good ones. He is an advocate of the MLM industry.

Here is the system I promised that will make your experience in the MLM industry hassle free. You had the opportunity to read my articles and to do your own research on the internet. I feel very confident that you are ready to get to the next stage which is to get involved in the industry. Here are a few steps.

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1. Take your time to research the type of company you wish to be associated with before making the decision to get involved. You have the choice of a well-established company with many years in the industry or a company under 2 years that is making strides and holding its own in the rankings at www.mlmrankings.com Be sure the company is offering product/s that will give value to the customer. Remember always – if it sounds too good to be true, it may well be.
2. The company's products must be affordable so that the Distributors can maintain their active status. Most important, affordable products guarantee a constant flow of new Distributors.
3. The compensation plan must be simple and not complicated. There are several types of compensation plans, Stair Step, Unilevel, Binary, Matrix, etc., etc.
4. In recent times there is no need for you to make a list of family, friends, business associates, etc. Your warm list is your friends on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. I have news for you, you don't even need them, you have over a billion people to make friends with and introduce your business to them. Recruiting persons into your MLM business has never been easier. Get a working knowledge of Social Media and its contribution to MLMers' success. Visit www.maxsteingart.com/webinars and www.youtube.com/freeleads You will be pleasantly surprised at the information shared by Max for FREE!
5. Make sure that you have the right mind set from the beginning. You are in a global business not a local family and neighborhood business. The persons who you know don't have to be in your business. They don't have to be your first stop. Launch out globally and let them see your new lifestyle and then they will be asking questions. The industry that they now look down at, they will be soon be looking up to it. MLM is good for the little guys and for the economy.
6. MLM/Network Marketing is all about relationships. Speak with a minimum of 5 persons per day whether in person or on line. However, be respectful of the other person's privacy.
7. Stick with the script provided by your company. Follow the system to the letter.
8. Be supportive of your downline, help them grow and you will prosper.

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I am happy to share these simple steps with you and I sincerely hope you will look at the MLM industry as a means of changing your circumstances for the better. Put your desktop or your laptop or your smart phone to work for you. If you are currently unemployed, you can be employed. If you are underemployed, you can do a makeup. If you are looking for an additional source of income, MLM can be the answer.

#88 A FINAL WORD ON MULTI LEVEL MARKETING (MLM)

May 1, 2013

A FINAL WORD ON MULTI LEVEL MARKETING (MLM)

I tried to present my best case to my readers to impress upon them that MLM is legitimate business. Too many persons without even knowing about the industry are ready to spread negative propaganda calling the companies involved pyramids, Ponzi schemes or even outright scams.

What is interesting is that because of ignorance many are ready to embrace the first opportunity that comes their way. I was a victim of that approach in many instances. It wasn't until I made a study of the industry, read several books and searched the internet that I freed myself of knowing almost nothing about the industry but investing blindly. I am sincerely grateful to the many leaders in the industry that I met on the two MLM cruises and especially my encounter with Rod Cook whose quote "MLM is the only hope of the little guy" has caught my imagination and kept my faith in the industry. If you are interested in keeping on top of the industry, I invite you to check out his website at www.mlmwatchdog.com and subscribe.

MLM is not only good for the individuals but for the economy. Everyone is concerned about the unemployment situation in our country. This situation is not unique to St. Lucia but the world. European countries are currently experiencing unemployment levels as high as fifty nine percent. Everywhere, political and industry leaders are challenged to generate investments so that jobs can be created. The quality of life is dependent on being able to earn an income. You are then able to make choices, put bread on the table and pay your bills.

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Let us put aside all the negatives you have heard about the industry and seek out information that is based on reality. Do a Google Search on anything you need to find out about the industry. Here are a few search ideas: 1. The top 100 MLM companies in the world. 2. The top 100 countries in the USA. 3. The oldest MLM company in the USA. Do your due diligence before investing. Decide whether you wish to play it safe and join a well-established company, even one that is listed on the stock exchange or you will go for a startup company with solid management, great products and a fantastic compensation plan. I am an Entrepreneur (a risk taker) and as a result I go for high stakes. My choice favours startups.

Coming from our part of the world, from the outset you have to think global. You will need to source information about how you play the game on a global scale and the technology and marketing systems that are driving the industry. I like to follow the leaders and one of the top coaches on Social Networking is Max Steingart. He is so confident about his method that he has thrown out a lot of resources that can be accessed without cost on the internet. He is on webinars at least three times per day. Details are available www.maxsteingart.com/webinars You can also visit www.youtube.com/freeleads and listen to some of his recordings. His method works well for Realtors and Network Marketers.

In the leading economy of the world which is not China but still the USA there is a strong base of Home-Based Businesses. The most financially rewarding home-based business is MLM. This industry has created more millionaires than any other. The power of duplication reaps fantastic rewards for those who will apply themselves. John D. Rockefeller pointed to the virtues of duplication – He said “I would rather earn 1% off 100 people’s efforts than 100% of my own efforts”.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

There are thousands of MLM companies in the world and what is interesting, like churches, they all have followers. It is amazing what sells. Your search for a home in the MLM industry can be easy. Make a decision on whether you wish to join an established company or a startup. Then do your due diligence. Many times, however persons are introduced to an opportunity by a friend or responded to an invitation to attend an opportunity meeting or a webinar. I am at the stage where most new MLM opportunities cross my desk. I am currently a Distributor for EPX BODY and invite you to take a tour at www.getepx.com/stlucian and participate in our monthly US\$1,000.00 Draw.

This is your opportunity to participate in an industry that is Life Changing. It is a perfect fit for almost everyone. Whether you are unemployed, underemployed, stay at home mom, physically challenged, college student or retiree, MLM has a future for you. I am in love with the MLM industry and I am taking every step to ensure that it is mutual. Finally, we have come to the end of this series and I wish you well.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#89 Investment Opportunities in St. Lucia

November 18th 2016

Vieux Fort, Saint Lucia

I am humbled by the opportunity afforded me to be a member of the team of contributors to the New York Edition of the – GUYANA CHRONICLE newspaper. I am Guyanese by birth, and I left Guyana at the age of 35 and found a home away from home in Saint Lucia.

In spite of my 38 years of travel and living in six countries, apart from my homeland, I remain an active member of the Diaspora seeking at all times to contribute to the advancement of Guyana. I speak to an audience of very special people who contribute to the social and economic wellbeing of fellow Guyanese through visits, investments, and remittances to family and friends.

From my base in St. Lucia, the headquarters of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) comprising of the following island states, *Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, *British Virgin Islands, Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, *Montserrat, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and *Martinique (*English and French Territories). I am uniquely positioned to share with my readers, the social and economic perspectives of the sub region and the wider CARICOM region, divided in Less Developed and More Developed nations. Details of the work being undertaken by the OECS and CARICOM can be pursued at <http://www.oecs.org> and www.caricom.org respectively.

After almost five years of absence from involvement in my favourite pastime, I am back writing. 'Harris at Large' graced the columns of newspapers and magazines in the region and internationally for fifteen years, with almost 400 articles archived at www.stluciasimplybeautiful.com.

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Whatever investment option you prefer, going forward, it will be my task to expose my readers to doing business in the small island states of the Caribbean. Welcome to St. Lucia and the rest of the English-Speaking Caribbean, whether, it is Business or Pleasure, or a combination of both, St. Lucia is the place to be. To prove the point there are some very outstanding Guyanese who have made St. Lucia their home and are contributing to the social and economic fabric of the St. Lucian society.

The month of November 2016 has been declared by the Government as Business Month. Very early in the month of activities, an impressive conference was held on November 2, 2016 highlighting alternative financing sources for micro, small and medium enterprises, where participants were introduced to innovative ways of financing startups in the form of 'Angel Investing and Crowd Funding'. There are Angel investors in Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad, and a regional Crowd Funding platform is scheduled to be launched in March of 2017. Crowd Funding is an area of investment ideally suited to investors of the Caribbean Diaspora.

The St. Lucia Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture at its Luncheon Meeting held on November 4, 2016 at the Coco Palm Conference Centre played host to Mr. Timothy Antoine, Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) which is headquartered in St. Kitts (www.eccb-centralbank.org). Hereunder are some highlights of the Governor's presentation:

1. ECCB is a Non-Deposit Institution with excess of 10 billion USD in assets.
2. Pursuing options to establish a Caribbean Bank in the USA.
3. St. Lucia contributes 25% to the OECS economy.
4. St. Lucia is being challenged to continue to lead the economies of the small island states of the OECS.
5. St. Lucia must do more to improve its ranking in relation to the World Bank Report on 'Ease of Doing Business'. However, St. Lucia continues to be #1 in the OECS. (<http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/st-lucia>)
6. St. Lucia is currently paying approximately 0.75 cents on the dollar in Payroll, Pensions and Debt Servicing.

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In spite of the facts stated above, St. Lucia is still a great place to live, work and offers great opportunity for new investments. The Government which assumed office on the 6th of June, 2016 has already established itself as an Investor friendly Government. Hence there is adequate growth potential.

St. Lucia and Guyana have long standing social and economic ties. There was a time when Guyana was home to St. Lucians seeking social and financial advancement. Madia in the interior of Guyana is famous for its St. Lucian Creole Festivals such as 'La Rose'. In recent years, the table turned and St. Lucians have reciprocated. Guyanese are welcomed to work and do business in St. Lucia.

Remember always to Keep the Faith, knowing that God is in Charge!

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#90 NEVER A DULL MOMENT IN SAINT LUCIA!

November 20th, 2016

There is never a dull moment in the isles of the Caribbean, of which St. Lucia is chief. St. Lucia continues to lead in the Less Developed States under the banner of the OECS. The Bible speaks to this fact – that a little child shall lead them. St. Lucia is a remarkable island nation with potentials that are just reaching the surface, aiming for the top of the Pitons, our World Heritage Site.

In every commentary on tourism that I have read, the friendliness of the people of St. Lucia stands out. As a result, we have a tourism product that is sought after. St. Lucia ranked as the top Honeymoon Destination for a number of years. The room stock will increase substantially in 2017 with expansion of existing hotels and establishment of new ones. The Sandals Group is doing a fantastic job in promoting St. Lucia with their theme – “Love is all you need”.

There are many developments within the tourism sector. The Tourist Board is slated to become an Authority. The top executives are no longer on the job and restructuring is currently taking place under the administration of Mrs. Agnes Francis, someone who is not new to the industry. Honourable Dominic Fedee, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Tourism, and former executive of Sandals Resorts is bringing his experiences with one of the top hotel chains in the world to bear on his decisions. We will await the final position on the way forward in this vital industry. Our economic future at least for now relies heavily on TOURISM for its survival. Tourism is our main export earner.

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While tourism heavily depends upon Foreign Direct Investors, our local investors in the sector are rising to meet the challenges of the industry and taking their place at the table. The Fond Doux Plantation & Resort property in Soufriere recently received an Experts' Choice Award for 2016 from [TripExpert](#), which rates hotels and restaurants around the world based on reviews from journalists and professional travel writers. This is an Eco-Friendly property situated on the west coast.

Employment in the Tourism sector will expand as additional rooms and new properties come on stream. The Government is forging ahead with plans to ensure that well trained staff is readily available to meet the employment needs of hoteliers – existing and new.

The St. Lucia Hotel & Tourism Association (SLHTA) is expanding its mandate and in recent years has embarked on a number of new initiatives. You can check out their progress on line at www.slhta.com

I received a phone call from a friend of mine who owns a restaurant just moments before I commenced writing this article. He promised to send me an email which he did almost immediately. He shared with me an invitation (all expenses paid) he received from the owner of a new restaurant in Australia which is scheduled to be opened mid-December, 2016. The menu of this little restaurant in Gros Islet, St. Lucia will be highlighted on the menu of the new restaurant in Australia. The restaurant is situated in an area frequented by cruise ships, and based on the level of publicity planned for the exposure of St. Lucian cuisine, the tourism sector can benefit from the additional publicity. It can be a Win, Win, Win situation. This simple achievement attests to the quality of the culinary skills available in St. Lucia.

St. Lucia nice! St. Lucia Simply Beautiful! You are welcome to visit our beautiful island and engage in whatever activities that you choose, whether as Tourists, Investors, or Retirees seeking a place for your retirement or a combination of interests – an enjoyable, productive and peaceful future awaits you.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Remember always to Keep the Faith, knowing that God is in Charge – Dream Big and Expect Miracles!

#91 BUSINESS MONTH IN ST LUCIA ENDS ON A HIGH NOTE!!!

November 29, 2016

HARRIS AT LARGE!

BUSINESS MONTH IN ST LUCIA ENDS ON A HIGH NOTE!!!

Several announcements during the month of November have energized the people of St. Lucia and gave them hope for a bright future with many projects in the pipe line and others currently in execution stage. Many indicators speak to the expected increase in business activity on the island and a surge in employment as the New Year dawns.

The Ministry of Commerce in the Office of the Prime Minister can only be proud of Business Month, 2016 Initiatives held during the month of November, 2016. Many interesting programmes/projects were executed, including Global Entrepreneurship Month – GEW, Saint Lucia – Taiwan 9th Annual Trade Show, and the Sod Turning Ceremony for the \$2.6 billion Pearl of the Caribbean project being promoted by Desert Star Holdings Limited.

Royal Bank of Canada was one of the principal sponsors of GEW 2016 when a number of interesting programmes, including Entrepreneurship Speed Networking were successfully executed. This is the 6th year of the GEW programme in St. Lucia and with every passing year, it gets better. Youth Entrepreneurship is vital to the future economic progress of the nation.

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The 9th Annual Saint Lucia – Taiwan Trade Show which was held from November 25 – 27 at the Johnson's Conference Centre, Rodney Bay, Gros Islet was a resounding success. Approximately 60 small business persons participated and displayed some very interesting products and services, such as Rub for Pain, Costume Jewelry, Exotic Fruit Drinks, Seamoss Beverage, Decorative Mirrors, Sofas, Dresses, Organic Liquid Fertilizer, Organic Cleaning Products, Professional Services – Insurance, IT Programmes, Small Business Advisors. Business Books by Deborah Bowers and Edward Harris were on sale at special show prices which will give purchasers an opportunity to get into business on an informed basis based on the information provided in their books. The team of show organizers headed by Ms. Cindy Eugene of the Ministry of Commerce did a fantastic job and special commendations for their efforts. The show was well supported.

The big moment of the month was on Friday, 25th November, 2016, His Royal Highness Prince Henry (familiarily known as Prince Harry) of Wales attended the sod turning ceremony for the Royal St. Lucia Turf Club (a race track project) in Vieux Fort situated in the South of the island. It is expected that substantial employment will be generated from the initial component of the \$2.6 billion project.

While the year 2016 so far had its fair share of challenges for Entrepreneurs, as we come to the close of the year, there are prospects for a bright holiday season and a brighter and better New Year.

Since my last article as I closed off Business Month 2016, I felt a sense of achievement as I participated in several activities of GEW, and St. Lucia – Taiwan Trade Show where I promoted my book – Winning Strategies for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises to exhibitors and patrons. The event presented me with an opportunity to network with fellow Entrepreneurs and visitors.

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The South has been involved with a number of activities in the areas of Sports and Entertainment. The most successful season of the Blackheart Football Tournament was in 2016, and to close off the year Youth Fest is scheduled to be held on Sunday, 18th December, 2016. This is the 14th year of the Festival. Mr. Omar Davis, Director of Caribbean Youth Fest Limited should be congratulated for his support of the Youth of St. Lucia over the years.

Remember always to Keep the Faith, knowing that God is in Charge – Dream Big and Expect Miracles!

#92 THE URGENCIES OF 2017!

December 28, 2016

HARRIS AT LARGE!

THE URGENCIES OF 2017!

To my readers everywhere, especially those of the Caribbean Diaspora, it is my hope that you spent a most enjoyable festive season and that you are ready to face whatever challenge/s that may come your way in 2017. With just 3 days to go at the time of my writing this article, I am filled with expectations and anxieties like never before experienced in my adult life. I speak for many others who have expressed the same sentiments. It is a matter of urgency that we expect and receive better economic performance than was experienced in the past 6 to 7 years. It has been a downhill battle to survive; many have resigned to the fact that it is over, while many stood their ground and continue to keep hope alive. It has not been all doom and gloom, many Entrepreneurs in our midst the difficult times have done well, and will continue to excel.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Every year, the St. Lucia Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture successfully hosts their Awards Ceremony which highlights the excellence of St. Lucian Entrepreneurship. Already nominees for 2017 have been announced. However, speaking for the majority, things cannot be allowed to continue as usual, a change has got to come. We can no longer continue to do the same things expecting different results. It is not surprising that we no longer hear buzz words like Paradigm Shift, Thinking Outside the Box, Diversification, etc. Our political and community leaders went back to business as usual. It is time to wake them up. Those who show signs of moving forward with a different agenda – one that is in sync with the current trends, and consistent with the EASE of DOING BUSINESS, using INVESTMENT as the catalyst in moving forward must be encouraged and supported.

Based on my recent articles, you would have noted that St. Lucia is poised for a massive investment of US 2.6 Billion Dollars in the South of the island – Pearl of the Caribbean being promoted by Desert Star Holdings Ltd. But there are many more projects slated for 2017 in the South, the upgrading of the Hewanorra International Airport, building of new hotels and upgrading of existing ones. Developments are not only scheduled for the South; the North continues its expansion with two new hotels scheduled to be officially opened in 2017. Sandals Resorts International has signaled its intension to build a six star hotel on Pigeon Island Causeway. The year 2017 is St. Lucia's year and there should be no stopping this little island state. Our time has come. This is massive!

While I pray without ceasing for this door of opportunity to be opened, I will not throw caution to the wind. We have been there before, even though not at this magnitude but expectations have been high in the past without yielding any positive outcome. However, this is the nature of business – some will fail and some will succeed. We should always strive to succeed rather than fail. This simple fact establishes the heavy burden on Leaders who are entrepreneurial in their approach to investments and as a result, ultimately take risks.

As we head for the churches on New Year's Eve, let us become prayer warriors for progress, this will not be only for St. Lucia but the Caribbean as whole, including all member states of CARICOM.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The future looks great for FDIs but how much more guaranteed that future will be if our friends in the Diaspora would turn their eyes to the Caribbean and seek out investments, and not leave it exclusively to the extra regional investors. Any investment at this time in the South of island (the New Frontier) can only be positive. Apart from housing and land development, there are opportunities in every area of business. The South needs restaurants, retail stores with quality products, specialized businesses and services, etc. If you have an idea that you feel the time has come for it to be introduced to the Caribbean, enter into a confidential agreement with a reputable Business Consultant and get an initial survey done to access the viability of the idea – will it fly? St. Lucia has all the indicators of being the right place to be in the Caribbean! Check the facts. This brings me to the point where I introduce you to this week's recommended website – www.investstlucia.com

In parting, let me take this opportunity to wish you, your families and your associates – A Happy, Productive and Prosperous New Year. Demand the life you deserve!

Remember always to Keep the Faith, knowing that God is in Charge – Dream Big and Expect Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#93 INTERNATIONAL HORSE RACING SLATED FOR VIEUX FORT, SAINT LUCIA IN 2017!!!

December 13, 2016

HARRIS AT LARGE!

INTERNATIONAL HORSE RACING SLATED FOR VIEUX FORT, SAINT LUCIA IN 2017!!!

The Festival of Lights is usually celebrated in the evening of December 12 and precedes National Day- December 13. The year 2016 should have special significance to St. Lucians in general and Vieux Fortians in particular. Saint Lucia is named after its patron Saint, St. Lucy, and December 13th is annually celebrated as National Day. Observed the night before the holiday is the National Festival of Lights and Renewal in honour of St. Lucy of Syracuse who is also the saint of light. As part of the celebrations, decorative lights, mostly represented with a Christmas theme, are lit in Castries, the capital city. In time, this activity should take place in every community around the island.

The Pearl of the Caribbean project being promoted by Desert Star Holdings Limited is scheduled to commence its US\$2.6 Billion investment in St. Lucia early 2017. If all goes as planned, major infrastructural works will commence and the horse racing track will be a reality, welcoming international horse racing fans and owners of horses to our shores in the last quarter of 2017. We expect to see our regional people involved as well, as the sport of horse racing is very popular in Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados and Guyana.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

A new day dawns for Vieux Fort which has been dubbed the New Frontier for decades. It is expected to light up all of St. Lucia and the Caribbean. St. Lucia is about to host the mother of all projects in the region. Can you imagine the transformation that will take place in the South? Castries, Gros Islet and Soufriere have all gone ahead and established their mark in the tourism sector. Now is Vieux Fort's turn. Truly, the best has been left for last. Many decades ago, Vieux Fort was made ready to receive the boost that is being talked about today. The international airport, the electricity and telecommunications infrastructure, the roads and other infrastructural facilities were all put in place. Some may say it took too long, but nothing ever happens before its time. When the time is right the bridegroom will appear. There are lots of issues still to be officially placed in the public domain regarding this mega project but in time, we will all know the real facts.

Horse racing has some pleasant memories for me. I watched the final race at the Durban Park Race Track, Georgetown, Guyana many years ago when I was in my early twenties, and ended up winning in an upset that gave me enough money on that beautiful Sunday afternoon to attend a concert with my cousin at Queen's College, featuring the top artistes in Guyana at that time. The late, great MC Pancho Carew was in his glory. Then there were my frequent visits to the Horse Racing Betting Shops where I won with a 5/8 combination that paid a few hundred dollars. I had fun with my friends for the rest of the day.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

I also had an interest in Goat Racing. I had the opportunity to attend a few races at the Bourda Cricket Ground in Georgetown where the boys from Lodge dominated the sport. Several years later, I used my little knowledge of the sport and began a crusade to introduce commercial goat racing in the Caribbean. I made at least two trips to Tobago at my own expense. I wrote several newspaper articles, highlighting the benefits of Goat Racing. While I was writing on the subject, an Irish gentleman spotted my articles and made a proposal to promote the sport internationally. I talked to many persons including politicians about the project but was unsuccessful. Finally, I shelved the idea. Hopefully, now that the sport of the Gods will be established in St. Lucia with an international appeal, maybe it is the right time to begin a conversation once again to introduce commercial Goat Racing for the little guys. Here are a few benefits that will accrue from a Goat Racing project. 1. Self-Employment – rearing of goats, 2. Training for persons involved in all aspects of the sport, 3. A tourism attraction, 4. Production of Goat Meat and Goat Cheese, 5. Sales of Goat meal and racing gear, 6. Pride in ownership, 7. Sponsorships, etc. Most importantly the little man having a stake in the economic and cultural activities of the Nation.

I wrote this article on National Day and I feel that I am in the right place at the right time. This opportunity is taken to invite you to own a piece of the rock. Take massive and immediate action. Land in Vieux Fort is between EC\$15.00/US\$5.52 and EC\$20.00/US\$7.36 per square foot. I am ready to predict it will be doubled in five years.

There are lots of troubling signs in the world today but I implore you to look on the bright side – there is money to be made. Read my book www.knowledgesharinginstitute.org There is a chapter on Real Estate.

This week's recommended website is www.stlucia.org The site of the St. Lucia Tourist Board.

Remember always to Keep the Faith, knowing that God is in Charge – Dream Big and Expect Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#94 IT IS TIME FOR EXCELLENCE ON ALL FRONTS!!!

January 11, 2017

HARRIS AT LARGE!

IT IS TIME FOR EXCELLENCE ON ALL FRONTS!!!

I can't believe that we are fast approaching the third week of the first month of this new year. The days are moving along swiftly and many of us are left wondering how the days are running out so fast. Well, I must revert to an old saying when we were young with not much to do, the days lingered and nights even stayed around longer, many of us concluded that we were spending a longer day than 24 hours. Today, with our hectic, on the go lifestyles with packed agendas, the days appear to be shorter but it is the same twenty-four hours – nothing more, nothing less. The Creator of this universe is the same yesterday, today and will be forever! Time waits on no man.

In the first month of what is slated to be an exciting year on all fronts, we in Saint Lucia celebrate Nobel Laureate Week Festival. Nobel Laureate week highlights the achievements and successes of the two Nobel Laureates of Saint Lucia – Sir William Arthur Lewis who won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics in 1979; and Honourable Derek Walcott who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1992.

The Chairperson of the Committee, Governor General, Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy under whose guidance the planning committee expanded its scope of the celebrations and gave it the type of activities that can be celebrated as a Festival. The theme is **“Celebrating Excellence: Fostering National Pride”**. It used to be held for a period of one week; this year it will be held from January 15 to February 4.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

You will always be reminded by me that there is never a dull moment in St. Lucia. I refer to St. Lucia as the party island in the Eastern Caribbean. The fun never stops. This year we welcome the beginning of things to come with the introduction of our Summer Festival with diverse entertainment, cultural and social events. Jazz week will be one of the events to look forward to.

While we speak of Celebrating Excellence and Fostering National Pride, there are persons in our society who are bent on disgracing our nation. In the first ten days of 2017, we have almost recoded as many homicides. All types of causes have been advanced from every quarter of society but one thing is certain we didn't come to this point overnight. It is a journey that took years. The situation of utter lawlessness is today staring us in our faces. What is the solution? The sociologist, the psychologist all related professions that have something to do with human behaviour are hereby summoned to our help. Our economic future is threatened, our principal export is tourism – we must find answers. If anyone reading this article has the expertise to contribute toward a solution, please go to the government's website and identify the Ministries that will be concerned with this modern plague of crime.

My own recommendation is that we return to our former values of religious belief, respect for others, establishment of vocational centres and an aggressive campaign of SAYING NO TO DRUGS. Is it time for National Service in the region?

All is not well on the Southern front but in time it is my humble opinion that the matter will be amicably resolved. The 2.6 billion US dollar DSH project is a challenge to many of us as the scope of such a project is beyond our imagination. However, it my belief that most persons will approve of the project when the true facts are known. At the moment there are too many rumours, some false and without basis. As I write this article, 11.01.17, many of my friends have called me to inform me about a meeting being hosted Vieux Fort Concerned Citizens Coalition for Change (VFCCCC) this evening. These types of activities will prepare both Government and citizens for the most important dialogue that will seek the final approval of the majority of our citizens.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Remember always to Keep the Faith, knowing that God is in Charge – Dream Big and Expect Miracles!

#95 SAINT LUCIANS CALL UPON THEIR GOVERNMENT FOR TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY!!!

January 19, 2017

HARRIS AT LARGE!

SAINT LUCIANS CALL UPON THEIR GOVERNMENT FOR TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY!!!

It has been a hectic past week when the Hon. Allen Chastanet led Government had to deal with a number of issues including crime, black mail claim by a Minister, the St. Jude's hospital reconstruction and the Desert Star Holdings Limited – 2.6 billion US dollar investment.

Most St. Lucians are now convinced that the issue of crime is not something that has recently surfaced. It is a result of years of neglect and a lack of social services and opportunities to keep the minds of the youth off of drugs. The drug business is one business where recruitment seems to be steady and is now shifted to the schools where students are members of gangs and fighting for turf. Something has to be done to remove the focus of our youth from a life of crime to something more in keeping with a lifestyle consistent with the social values which most people seem to have forgotten. Many years ago, in one of my columns, I called for leaders in our country to take notice of the declining values of our young people and do something to arrest the situation before it is too late. Now it has almost hit crisis proportion and everyone is concerned.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

It is not a new call for our Leaders in all aspects of life to lead by example. But it is human to err and there are provisions in the Bible for their forgiveness through the act of Confession. The Bible states that – if we confess of our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us. There are those who will claim that this is taken too far when preachers preach on a daily basis against certain sins and will even disfellowship some of their faithful members, end up committing the same sins, and after public outcry are welcomed back into the faith. The clear conclusion therefore is that once we live in a state that subscribes to the Christian Faith, unless someone runs afoul of the law, the Bible must prevail. A final word on this – God is not mocked. Whatever is done in darkness must come to light whether in life or in death. No man can fool God. Can I have an Amen!

Senior Minister, Honourable Guy Joseph, Minister of Economic Development received the report on the problems regarding the completion of the St. Jude's hospital and promised to prosecute anyone found to be in breach of their contractual agreement. After spending ninety-five million dollars, the hospital is far from completion. In the meantime, the residents of the South continue to wait for better health services.

The Desert Star Holdings Limited mega investment continues to make headlines. In response to Vieux Fort Concerned Citizens Coalition for Change (VFCCCC) and other concerned citizens around the island, this week, the government sought to set the record straight in a Press Conference hosted by Invest St. Lucia, where important aspects of the framework agreement were presented in a Fact Sheet to the public and are now making the rounds in the electronic media. www.facebook.com/pearlofthecaribbeanslu Discussions on the proposed investment are continuing and Hon. Allen Chastanet, Prime Minister is expected to meet with the Developer in London this week. The opportunity will also be taken to meet with members of the Diaspora at the High Commission in London.

Remember always to Keep the Faith, knowing that God is in Charge – Dream Big and Expect Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#96 THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR GETS A BOOST!!!

January 25, 2017

HARRIS AT LARGE!

THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR GETS A BOOST!!!

Mr. Rayneau Gajadhar, Managing Director of Construction and Industrial Equipment (CIE) unveiled a Stimulus Package for the construction industry on Sunday, February 8, 2009. In reality he challenged the business community to be creative and come up with packages that will keep businesses open and employees employed. He invited Banks and other businesses to participate in the programme which lasted several months.

The SLP Government subsequently followed up with their own Stimulus Construction Package. In the 2012/2013 Budget presentation with the theme “Building Opportunities for Our Common Future” then Prime Minister Honourable Dr. Kenny D. Anthony announced an 18-month construction stimulus package in an effort to jump start the economy which was very sluggish at the time. The stimulus package was launched in May, 2012 and was extended in response to calls from the business community and banks. The programme finally concluded on February 28, 2014.

Several concessions were granted, including lower Mortgage Rates, 5% for the first five years – the banks were very supportive. Government granted waiver of the 15% VAT and other customs levies on a list of construction items which included Sand, Cement, Lumber, Plywood, Steel Rods, Nails, Fencing, Roofing Sheets, Paints and other building materials. That was then.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Today, the construction sector is currently benefitting from competition among Suppliers of Hydraulic Cement for construction within the region and extra regionally as they are involved in a fierce battle for market share, giving developers and home owners a real opportunity to make substantial saving in the purchase of the product. A Supplier out of Turkey supported by a regional representative out of Barbados is currently introducing ROCKHARD Cement to the region at prices which made the regional Suppliers stand up and take note. The new product was introduced at a retail price of EC\$23.50 when a few Retailers were selling at EC\$27.95 with the lowest available price in limited supply at EC\$25.00 per sack. Cement is currently being sold at a wholesale price of EC\$19.04 ex-ship and EC\$22.67 at retail. There is substantial savings to be made if one is seeking to construct domestic or commercial buildings using concrete. Within a few weeks, prices for concrete blocks and ready mix will decline as block makers and suppliers of ready-mix concrete lock horns. The natural thing to expect is that Retailers of building materials will join in and offer substantial DISCOUNTS.

Hon. Dr. Kenny D. Anthony current Parliamentary Representative for Vieux Fort South and former Prime Minister stated that he wanted to designate Vieux Fort Town – University City where special incentives will be given to medical schools to locate in the South. It is very obvious that the Medical Schools in the South are expanding. A new development is taking place in the South of the island. Guest houses and large dwelling houses are being leased by Medical Schools to house students. There is urgent need for housing in the South and up to 25 room Guest Houses and Restaurants.

I can't help keeping Desert Star Holdings Limited in the news. It is the only big thing being talked about in the Caribbean. The long-awaited sensitization meeting will take place in Vieux Fort on the 8th of February, 2017 when Invest St. Lucia and Government Officials will brief members of the communities in the South on the 2.6 billion US dollar DSH project. The Chamber is coordinating the event.

Remember always to Keep the Faith, knowing that God is in Charge – Dream Big and Expect Miracles!

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

#97 SAINT LUCIA PRIVATE SECTOR IS VERY MUCH ALIVE – JUST WAITING TO EXHALE!!!

January 31, 2017

HARRIS AT LARGE!

SAINT LUCIA PRIVATE SECTOR IS VERY MUCH ALIVE – JUST WAITING TO EXHALE!!!

I was happy to be among St. Lucia's leading Entrepreneurs and Executives in the private sector and government officials including the Honourable Allen Chastanet, Prime Minister. It is the first time in my writing career that I shared with my readers, a Press Release in its entirety. I am so pleased to note the progress being made by members of the private sector, especially the young Entrepreneurs, in spite of the challenging times we face. It was an evening to remember – Saturday 28th January, 2017.

St. Lucia Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture

PRESS RELEASE

8th Annual St. Lucia Business Awards!!

Castries, St. Lucia – January 30, 2017 – Windward and Leeward Brewery Ltd, emerged as the 2017 Business of the Year winner at the 2017 St. Lucia Business Awards. The gala event hosted at the Johnson Centre took place on January 28 as the closing event for St. Lucia's Nobel Laureate Festival. In its rich and outstanding tradition, the Chamber of Commerce put on an entertaining and captivating evening of excellence which was broadcasted live by The Wave 94.5 93.7 FM, and across St. Lucia and the rest of World on Choice TV, powered by LIME.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The large number of guests flowed in a steady stream from the Welcome Cocktail onto the red carpet and into the grand ceremony hall again transformed into a made for TV Awards Ceremony by Landmark Events.

The media was out in full force capturing the guests on the red carpet and at the fun-filled cocktail reception. Hosted for a second year by the duo of Shayne Ross and Masana Morrison the evening was well presented with light touches so humor and playful banter.

Corporate St. Lucia continued to provide great support for the event and was rewarded with a night fitting of their stature as the “Pillars of Industry and Commerce”. Additionally thirteen awards were handed out for successes in various aspects of business operations. The winners in the 2017 St. Lucia Business Awards are:

Business of the Year Award : **Windward and Leeward Brewery Ltd.**

Prime Minister’s Award for Innovation : **Green Haven Fresh Farms**

Award for Service Excellence: **Emagine Solutions Inc.**

Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award: **Johanan Dujon Algas Organics**

Goods Exporter of the Year Award: **SMJ (St. Lucia) Ltd.**

Award for Excellence in Human Resource Development: **Windward and Leeward Brewery**

Award for Marketing Excellence: **Bay Gardens Resorts**

Award for Corporate Leadership: **Sebastian Sanchez**

Award for Corporate Social Responsibility: **Cool Breeze Jeep Rental**

Green Award: **Green Haven Fresh Farm**

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Idea of the Year Award: **Green Haven Fresh Farm**

The President of the Chamber delivered a powerful message to members, the wider business community and the nation, calling for more active participation in the work of the Chamber, closer collaboration among private sector institutions and national collaboration in the fight against crime. He identified a project which has been discussed with the Minister of National Security, an integrated CCTV system for the City of Castries and called on members to support it.

Tribute was paid to recently deceased Chamber Members and Friends of the Chamber in the persons of Andy Delmar, Cornell Charles, Chris Renwick and Sir Dwight Venner.

The DuBoulay Brothers Tony and Dustan were the Lifetime Achievement Award Recipients for the long and illustrious career of over 45 years, with both brothers having served on the Board of the Chamber in the past.

Tropical Shipping used the auspicious occasion to make a financial contribution of US\$15,000 to the St. Lucia Youth Business Trust operated by the Chamber on an evening when outstanding youth were drawing attention to their outstanding pursuits and achievements.

The 2017 St. Lucia Business Awards Corporate Sponsors include: 1st National Bank St. Lucia Ltd, Massy Stores, Flow, M&C, Peter and Company, Cool Breeze Jeep Rentals, RBC Royal Bank, Sandals Resorts, Sagicor Life, Tropical Shipping, Landmark Events, Flow, Royalton, MediaZone, Windward and Leeward Brewery Ltd, First Citizens Investment Services, Bay Gardens Resorts, St. Lucia Distillers Ltd, LUCELEC, Windward & Leeward Brewery Ltd and The Wave 94.5 93.7 FM.

The 2017 St. Lucia Business Awards was a resounding success with live coverage, exceptional pizzazz on the Red Carpet and superb entertainment celebrating corporate St. Lucia's success culminating in a high spirited after party where nominees and winners celebrated their successes.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

ENDS

Remember always to Keep the Faith, knowing that God is in Charge – Dream Big and Expect Miracles!

#98 CITIZENSHIP BY INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (CIP) & DESERT STAR HOLDINGS (DSH) CONTINUE TO BE HIGH ON THE AGENDA!

June 7, 2017

HARRIS AT LARGE!

CITIZENSHIP BY INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (CIP) & DESERT STAR HOLDINGS (DSH) CONTINUE TO BE HIGH ON THE AGENDA!

It has been one year since the United Workers Party Government has been in office after gaining a substantial majority in Parliament on 6th June, 2016. The Prime Minister of Saint Lucia continues to be adamant that the DSH project – The Pearl of the Caribbean is good for St. Lucia and as the first year of his government in office is observed, he and his ministers are claiming substantial gains for the nation. The opposition disagrees but the man in the street is not ready to argue whether the government is doing a good job or not, except to say one year is not enough to give a verdict – the government needs more time.

Lots of developments are in the making but it takes time to get from planning to implementation and sometimes the world seems to stop. However, our people are patient and continue to be on the lookout. Jobs, Jobs, Jobs are very much on the minds of our politicians, but unless we attract foreign investors to our shores not much will happen. Thank God for the Royalton Resort which brought many jobs during construction and ended up hiring four hundred and fifty persons in the first phase when opened. This is the kind of employment boost that is needed.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

In the meantime, what can we do to help our local businesses to generate new jobs? This is a question that should generate some discussions. We have waited on foreign investors sometimes for years without getting to implementation stage. In the meantime, couldn't we have been giving local Entrepreneurs the necessary incentives and support to make them grow and deliver on the jobs situation? I have a suggestion – only give financial support to existing companies that have proven track record and serious potential for growth, both locally and export while developing a core of innovators in all productive sectors of the economy, especially in services. These industries must have the power of duplication to reach local, regional and extra-regional markets. In short, let us go after businesses with the potential to expand globally.

How many of our local companies with the ability to establish and do business in other CARICOM states in general and the OECS sub grouping in particular of which St. Lucia is an active member have done so? Congratulations to the hand full of companies that have dared to explore new territories. The major obstacle to moving forward and exploring other territories is the lack of trust for each other and the feeling that we must do everything ourselves. What about Joint Ventures, sub distribution, agency agreements, etc. Simply think through your approach, and arrive at a strategy for having a presence in multiple markets. When you are a first mover, don't ask for St. Lucia, you ask for all the countries in the region by name, and offer your services to establish their products or services throughout the region. This applies to anyone reading this article. Let us get back to basics. The Jamaicans, Barbadians and Trinidadians in the past secured agencies and promoted them throughout the region. I knew a gentleman, now deceased who had the Shilling Oil agency for a few territories in the region.

Going forward our local producers of goods and services must try to look at the global picture, and exports to sub regional, regional and global markets will become part of their overall strategy.

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Apart from the government seeking opportunities to fulfil campaign promises, the entertainment scene is also very high on the agenda; the calypso season is gearing up, Roots and Soul Festival is very much talked about and Miss Universe Contest is also making the rounds. There is never a dull moment in the lives of St. Lucians and those you choose to come and visit with us. We welcome you! St. Lucia real nice!

Remember always to Keep the Faith, knowing that God is in Charge – Dream Big and Expect Miracles!

#99 SAINT LUCIA POISED FOR US BILLION DOLLAR INVESTMENT COMMITMENT IN 2017!!!!

June 15, 2017

HARRIS AT LARGE!

SAINT LUCIA POISED FOR US BILLION DOLLAR INVESTMENT COMMITMENT IN 2017!!!!

The inclement weather in the past 24 hours sought to remind us that we are in the Hurricane Season, and it signaled that proper preparation is necessary. In the Caribbean, we take the position – Don't Worry, Be Happy! We ignore warnings and go merrily about our business. However, with the weather pattern being as unreliable as it is due to Climate Change, we must change our approach to responding to warnings.

In spite of the weather, the meeting which was organized by the St. Lucia Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture at The NSDC complex in Vieux Fort was held on Wednesday, 14th June, 2017. This meeting was scheduled to facilitate business persons in Vieux Fort and environs, the opportunity to meet with the Chairman and CEO of the Citizenship by Investment Programme (CIP) and learn at firsthand about the operations of the CIP.

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The small gathering got immersed into the discussion and at the conclusion everyone was very satisfied with the information shared. The CIP team sought to share the progress of this important organization with emphasis on transparency.

The programme is in its second year and the year 2017 after the amendments to the legislation which removed the requirement for applicants to have assets of three million dollars to a simple donation of US\$100,000.00 which is being the most popular with persons seeking our Saint Lucian passport. Apart from the Donation category, there are three other categories – Real Estate, Enterprise Projects and Government Bonds. To date only two of the four categories are fully operational, namely: Donation and Government Bonds, yielding eighty-three and five applications respectively.

To date there are thirteen Authorized Local Agents who receive a ten percent commission for each successful applicant. Eighty-eight applications have been submitted, with 4 rejections and two were reversed. The Minister responsible for the CIP is the Prime Minister who has authority to reverse a decision in case of appeal by an applicant. In the interest of transparency, a Board of Appeal will shortly be established. With respect to Due Diligence, there are 4 levels which involve in house, private investigation, Interpol and final clearing bank. The average time to process an application is 71 days.

Dominica is the lead destination in the region at the moment and St. Lucia is very much in the game. There has to be continuous updating of the programme and it was refreshing to learn that the Governments of the region will be getting together to arrive at common positions to deal with this very important foreign exchange revenue earning programme. I invite my readers in the Caribbean Diaspora to engage the CIP executives in finding opportunities to invest and receive assistance in realizing your project. Check out the CIP website and make your move. Put your project on the table. Visit www.cipsaintlucia.com

HARRIS AT LARGE REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

The final item on the agenda was DSH. The Desert Star Holdings Limited, the company that is promoting of the Pearl of the Caribbean project remains in the front of the debate when it comes to investments in St. Lucia. We cannot deny the fact that there is no shortage of projects in St. Lucia. My own position is that investments in the pipeline will exceed a 1Billion US dollars by the end of 2017.

Remember always to Keep the Faith, knowing that God is in Charge – Dream Big and Expect Miracles!

#100 BOOK REVIEW – WINNING STRATEGIES FOR MICRO, SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES!

Please visit www.facebook.com/ksibusiness and get an understanding about the KSI platform. Please feel free to contact me for further details. Email: eaharrisdestiny@gmail.com

WINNING STRATEGIES

For Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises by Edward A. Harris

A Review by Modeste Downes

Although Edward Harris has no scruples about revealing his age—which for purposes of this review is of little consequence—the contents of this specialized volume (94 pages) has achieved a lot more than to convince this writer that the author is suitably qualified to write on the subject and to urge his readers to accept the advice he so magnanimously shares to all and sundry. To remove any doubt as to the strength of this statement, one simply has to browse the man's data provided toward the latter part of the book (Ch. 18).

HARRIS AT LARGE

REVISITING ST. LUCIA'S PAST

Although he has written extensively in the local press over a long period, how many know, for example, Edward Harris has provided consultancy service to the garment industry, on assignment, to Saint Lucia, Jamaica, Guyana and as far afield as Sierra Leone, West Africa? (pp. 82-85) Besides the country of his birth, Guyana, Ed has lived and worked in Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and, of course Saint Lucia, his adopted home for more than three decades. On the basis of such information, I am prepared to say upfront that I endorse unreservedly Harris' claim, at pg. 80, "I feel eminently qualified to use the designation QBE", to say, he is qualified by experience. Which is not to say the writer is not otherwise schooled and educated.

Winning Strategies is a one-stop shop to understanding, setting up and developing a business, and to do the right things and develop the right attitudes to make a success out of it. 'Dedicated to students, employees, and business practitioners', the book seeks to guide and influence those learning about business and trade in a formal setting, enthusiasts desirous of venturing into business, as much as it offers advice to the established entrepreneur who may be in need of a paradigm shift.

Set out in short chapters and written in clear, easy-to-digest English, Winning Strategies maps strategies and techniques, from the birth of the idea, to determining what type of business/structure—sole proprietorship, joint venture or partnership, etc.—to preparing a business plan, where to locate, securing finance, to staffing, marketing, etc.

Finance being a major ingredient for initiating a business venture, the writer, no doubt based on his own experience and observation and knowledge of the sector, urges business enthusiasts to seek and secure all the advice they can get from professionals before approaching a bank or other prospective financier, if that is a necessary step to move forward. This is in tune with a statement I heard recently on the evening news, by a trainer at a small business workshop: "Small business persons (often) have difficulty accessing finance because they do not meet the standard requirements..."

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Curiously, the author does not limit his advice to physical or financial or infrastructural wherewithal for establishing a business or service, or for the marketing of a product. For instance, there is the issue of 'the mindset'—"which is based upon information and education about the implications of business and a passion to succeed." Emphasizing the need for discipline, passion to succeed, the writer speaks of 'ethical greed'—the desire to achieve more without offending others (which I suspect refers to customers as well as one's competitors). (Ch. 2)

Chapter 13 offers a wide range of useful tips for success (pp.64-66) followed by The 4 P's of Marketing (Ch. 14): Product, Place, Price, Promotion, all essential ingredients to success in business.

Additionally, *Winning Strategies*, instructively, speaks to a whole lot more than the attainment of personal goals and success in business. The book offers sound advice for life. For instance, the exhortation to approach life with the right attitude or mindset, translates to "Be right with your mind and you will be right with the world." (pg. 13) Harris stresses further, that it should never be about business for self, the bottom line. Social responsibility, consideration for the needs of the community where the business or the entrepreneur operates, is part of the ethics of business, thus we often hear the expression 'giving back' when the business community makes donations, etc.

The twenty-two chapters that constitute *Winning Strategies for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises*, is an ample manual for whoever is interested in acquiring an understanding of the sector, the rudiments of business or entrepreneurship, or is keen to reshape their already established business for profitability and a more fulfilling experience.

Edward Harris is a deeply religious person. His writing and the advice he offers is strictly professional. Yet he manages to squeeze in a line on faith, as he ends a section and extols the virtues of Multi-Level Marketing (MLM): "Remember always to keep the faith, God is in charge, dream big and expect daily miracles!" (Ch. 15)

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Understanding the role of information technology (IT), the Internet and social media in the environment in which businesses thrive, flounder or crash depending on whether or not the free and timely access to information is used as an effective tool, Harris provides an entire section, (Ch. 20) with links to relevant websites.

With Harris' credentials and wide ranging experience (QBE) in Business and PR Consulting, Real Estate, Networking, Freelance Journalism, Motivational Speaking and Private Sector Advocacy (pg. 81), I stake my own integrity on the assurance that the advice contained in *Winning Strategies* is authoritative and will serve the author's intended target most beneficially.

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