



THE OLD HILARIANS ASSOCIATION

Bishop Anstey High School,
145 Abercromby Street,
Port of Spain,
Trinidad, W.I.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2006-2007

Fellow Hilarians,

I present this report to you for the year in review 2006-2007. As it usually does, the first quarter of the year proceeded very slowly, we all had to recover from the 10th anniversary fete which was held on Saturday 28th January 2006. At the last AGM held on Thursday 27 April, 2006, amendments to the rules which were proposed were unanimously accepted by the members. These included the change in the term of office of the Executive to two (2) years and an increase in membership fees. The entire Executive was returned to office with the inclusion of a young new member, Nneka Luke. The executive had been operating with one person short since the departure of Avril Reid in 2004. Once again there was difficulty in obtaining a quorum for the AGM; members still insist that they do not see the advertisement or hear the radio advertisements. I think that we should decide on a fixed date for the AGM, such as the third Thursday in April and circulate this to all members.

Thursday May 4th was the day set for the first meeting of the executive. At this meeting, it was decided that all members would continue in their previous posts and with the same responsibilities.

The Annual luncheon was held on Saturday July 01 in the Jubilee Hall as usual. It was decided that there would be no theme for the event, and for the first time in many years, I was unable to attend as I was out of the country on business. The theme for the luncheon was "Eastern Delights"; this was evident in the décor and the catering, which highlighted a blend of Arabic, Chinese, and East Indian foods. The catering was done by Vijay Arjoon.

We had been in constant contact with the year group 1966/68 who were celebrating their 40th year reunion; this event had been planned for over a year and there was a week of activities culminating in the luncheon. Hilarians' came from across the globe to celebrate this special event. The group made a presentation of a class picture to the principal, it now hangs in the foyer of Anstey House.

Even though we had to deal with the usual space constraints of the hall, Hilarians' had a great time, and the Hall was bursting at the seams. The special honouree was Ingrid Granderson-Wooding. Bishop Anstey received ten (10) scholarships in the 2005 GCE A'Level examinations, the awardees along with the Head Girl and Senior Prefect, were all seated at the Head Table.

During this period, the Executive was informed by letter that Diane Shurland (Chairman of the Fete Committee) would no longer be able to represent us on the Board of BAHS, since she was migrating; she also tendered her resignation to the Fete Committee. This information was indeed a great shock to all of us as Diane has been the driving force of the Fete Committee from its inception and has given sterling representation to the Board. We were very sorry to see her go, but wished her well in her future endeavours. An official thank-you would be planned at her convenience. The Board was officially written, nominating me as the Hilarian representative. The letter of appointment from the Bishop Anstey Association was received in February.

The Executive had decided that all energies this year would be focused on repairs and refurbishment of the school plant, with special emphasis on the bathrooms and showers in the "new building". To this end, meetings were held between myself, the principal, Debbie King (chair of the Parents Support Group), and Cheryl Adams (chair of the Building Committee). Projects were prioritised and work began apace so that much could be completed prior to the beginning of the new school year. Total cost of these projects is \$323,923.00. Attached is a listing of projects undertaken during this period. The students and staff were very pleased with the new look.

There was an outstanding issue with the EMA for a noise variance issue from Fete 2005; this was settled in August.

The Executive had decided to invest in new memorabilia (mainly stationery items) which would be available for purchase from the students all year round. Pens, pencils, erasers, tote bags and sport bags were just some of the items purchased, all emblazoned with the crest and BAHS. These items first appeared for the second uniform sale held on August 17th. The items were well received by parents and students. Three members of the executive assisted at this event.

The Association was once more asked to assist financially with the Sixth Form Orientation exercise, and we were pleased to do so. The school bazaar was held on Sunday 5th November and the association was once more in charge of the very successful bottle stall. The disco was revived once again and executive members assisted the Parent Support Group in hosting an extremely successful event.

Mrs. Cumberbatch informed us in November that she would be resigning from her post of Office Manager, effective December 31, 2006. This Hilarian sister has worked tirelessly for her alma mater and could always be relied on to sell tickets or do whatever was necessary to make our lives a little easier. It was with sadness that we saw her departure, but it is good that she has a chance to enjoy her retirement. She was honoured for her dedicated service at a Christmas function held jointly with the Parent Support Group.

Fete 2007 was held on January 20, 2007. Diane's resignation had left the Fete Committee in a quandary, but she had been preparing us for a while. Gem Ible-Lewis agreed to be coordinator and everyone else went on with their specific responsibilities. Someone was hired to work in the Hilarians' office to coordinate ticket sales and to assist administratively; this really helped in the organization of the event. It also emphasizes the fact that we need to do the same for the association. There were many frustrating aspects of organizing the fete, costs have increased considerably and more government agencies are demanding a "piece of the pie". The Port of Spain Corporation and the VAT office are sending their officers to the fetes (at a cost to us) to ensure that we comply with certain regulations. We are also being called upon to be VAT registered. Despite all these frustrations, Fete 2007 was great; the refurbished bathrooms were a hit and the new food items were also eagerly snapped up.

While attempting to assist officers of the VAT department, we discovered that the Old Hilarians' Association has never been registered as an organization. A name search was done at the Ministry of Legal Affairs and to our surprise, our name did not exist. We are currently going through the process and have until June 12th to present a draft to the Ministry for registration as a non-profit organization.

The Association continues to provide grants and bursaries to selected students which are presented at the annual Speech Day function. We also assisted by paying for the rewiring of certain areas of the school to allow for networking of computers in Anstey House. This is a part of the Ministry of Education project. Requests for financial assistance came from four (4) students who were selected to attend the Global Young Leaders Conference, each student was given \$2,500.00.

The Chairman of the Board called a meeting of all stakeholders of the school on February 26, 2007; unfortunately there was no representation from the Association as I had an emergency meeting at work and the Vice-president had urgent personal business. Efforts are being made to schedule another meeting.

This year we feel a great sense of achievement, especially when we look at the hall and the bathrooms. There is still a lot of work to be done in and around the school, we had hoped to paint the outside walls and do some other refurbishment, but due to financial constraints we were unable to do so. We hope that we can do some more of these projects in the coming year.

The focus in the next year will be to hopefully have at least two other fundraising ventures, beside the fete and also to complete the membership database and have the office functioning optimally. We are currently in the process of revamping the website and this is going well. We also need to set plans in motion for 90th anniversary of the school.

I would also like to suggest once more that we revamp our Standing Committees and hold Ordinary General Meetings for more active participation of the membership, the Executive cannot do it on their own.

I would like to thank all members of the Executive, SHIP and Fete Committees for their unstinting support during the past year. It has been an honour to serve.

Non Sine Pulvere Palmam

Marguerite-Anne Moore
President
April 18, 2007