



The Antigua and Barbuda High Commission

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International Relations goes into high gear when

Prime Minister Spencer meets United States Secretary of State

Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Baldwin Spencer, on Thursday, 25 September joined his CARICOM colleagues in a meeting with United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. The meeting, held

in New York on the margins of the 63rd United Nations General Assembly, is an annual encounter aimed at further strengthening the relationship between CARICOM and the United States.

High on the agenda was the issue of security and the need for both parties to work more closely in protecting the Caribbean region, which is widely recognized as the United States' Third Border. Other areas that were discussed included: development, trade and investment and education. Also mentioned was the progress on the Conference on the Caribbean, Washington, D.C., specifically the passage of the Caribbean Basin Trade Promotion Act through Congress in mid May this year.

Prime Minister Spencer in thanking the Secretary of State said the CARICOM sub-region stood "ready to collaborate with the Government of the United States in devising solutions to the challenges and concerns discussed, as well as those raised in the past."

Her Excellency Deborah-Mae Lovell, Ambassador to the United States of America accompanied Prime Minister Spencer to the meeting with the Secretary of State.



PM Spencer delivering his address during the award ceremony. (Left is UN President Brockmann and right is H.E. Ambassador Francis Lorenzo of the Dominican Republic) page 5

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A MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY DR CARL ROBERTS, HIGH COMMISSIONER



President of the Antigua and Barbuda National Association of London, fellow High Commissioners members of the Clergy, other distinguished guests, friends and fellow Antiguans and Barbudans – it continues to be an honour to present to you my reflections as High Commissioner to the Court of St. James. On the first of November Antigua and Barbuda will be celebrating its twenty-seventh year of independence.

use over \$3,000,000 to stabilise the price of fuel at the pumps so as to prevent undue hardship for the citizens of our fair nation. In 2008 we have seen some of the highest prices ever for crude oil. This hardship is compounded by the financial crisis which is rippling like a tsunami around the world. It is indeed very difficult to live in today's globalised and connected world especially when you import most of what you consume.

In a previous presentation I stated that we welcome an international trading regime under the WTO which is fair and not skewed towards the larger developed trading partners as a result of size, economic strength or utilises rules which the developing countries had no participation in creating. Under such a fair regime, we can begin to develop our own agricultural and other industries and export where possible.

The plight of small-island developing states is unique. We are adversely affected by events to the North in the developed countries; we are unequally impacted by the consequences and fallout of their industrial activities and we do not have the resources to properly handle these shocks. We are therefore most grateful for the assistance rendered to us by friendly National partners: example UK, USA, Canada, China, and Venezuela.

This brings me to the theme for our independence celebrations this year: "One family – striving for peace and harmony". In a developing society where the distribution of income is never uniform, social plans must be improvised to assist in the reduction of poverty, hardship, disease and ill-health. These things foster strife and disharmony. Whenever we speak of one family, however, we must include citizens of Antigua and Barbuda scattered around the world.

As a family we should also join together in celebrating the joys of our brothers and sisters and relieving the sufferings of those in need like those affected by the recent rains in our country. The Government's assistance programme is a very good example of this. The Street Pastors (International) Antigua and Barbuda Executive Body is an integral player in reaching out to those in our society who have lost focus on life and are on the verge of commencing a life of vagrancy, crime or drug addiction.

In celebrating the accomplishments of some of our family members let me reflect happily on several of our leaders of tomorrow. I remember Miss Isata Megan Kenneth-Mason, "The Little Girl from Mapperley Park"; a young girl of 12 years of age who had her first spotlight in the classical field of music as a concert pianist and composer of her Piano Concerto. I also recall Glory Charles, another young and extremely talented Antiguan and Barbudan, who had the premier exhibition of his painting with the theme "The Passion of Paint" under the watchful eye of Dr. Helga Fox, the owner of HF Contemporary Art and an art critic. I also want to draw to your attention Second Lieutenant Jamal Aska, who graduated from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 2006 but who returned this year to attend the Platoon Commander's Battle Course.

Our celebrations this year will be under the theme of ONE FAMILY – STRIVING FOR PEACE AND HARMONY. Government continues to extend an invitation to nationals and friends of Antigua and Barbuda to join those at home for these special Independence celebrations and I certainly hope that some of you will accept that invitation and visit the homeland.

This year the activities commenced on 20th September and includes a variety of events such as a homecoming calypso competition, the usual national ecumenical church service at the Antigua Recreation Ground, a schools Steelband competition, the annual "At home" exhibition of local arts and crafts at the Multi-purpose Centre, a gospel concert and the homecoming queen zone preliminaries and final pageant. These events will climax with the traditional parade at the Recreation Grounds on the 3rd November, followed by the National Food Fair.

Last year has been a year of challenges for Antigua and Barbuda in several ways. In addressing you today, let me first reflect on some of the key activities over the last twelve months, some of which will make us proud while others might give us cause for concern.

If what I say disturbs you, then my next subject should perturb you even more. In the 1970s, developing countries were severely tested by an escalation in the global price of oil. Antigua and Barbuda then struggled and failed to successfully complete several of the action plans from its strategic development. The government of the day then faced tremendous difficulties in enabling its meagre resources to meet the rising costs of fiscal expenditure.

More than thirty years later, the cycle has come full circle. Once again this government is confronted with skyrocketing oil and food prices. During 2005, Government was forced to



**Isata Kenneth-Mason with
H E Dr Carl Roberts (page 2)**

We recognise the elderly from time to time and feature them in our Bi-Monthly Newsletter. Take for example Mrs Molly Richards who has worked behind the scenes to help us every year at fairs and exhibitions. We not only recognise and feature our elderly but our young people who proudly stand as shining examples of focus on education and capacity building. I cite the examples of Mr. Ian Horsford, Miss Caroline George and Ms Chalene Roberts, just to name a few.

We also recognise and join in celebrating happy achievements with those who regularly take time out of their busy schedules to help our nation prosper; to prepare our youths for tomorrow and to develop our upcoming leaders. One striking example is Lord and Lady Tunnicliffe, who a few months ago shared with me fond memories of Antigua and Barbuda during the celebration of their Ruby (40th) Wedding Anniversary.

Earlier this year Antigua and Barbuda was recognised as the "Best Island for



Glory Charles (page 2)

Families" by the Sunday Times Newspaper. We felt a sense of pride as we read about the Hon. Dr Jacqui Quinn-Leandro, Minister of Labour Public Administration and

Empowerment, the first female Minister of our country to address the 52nd Session of the Commission on the State of Women (CSW) at the UN Headquarters in New York. We rejoiced at the successful "Romance Rhythms" celebration in Antigua and Barbuda; for long after the stage has been dismantled and such artists as Lionel Richie, Keyshea Cole, Shaggy and Kenny Rogers had departed our shores, the sense of pride still swelled in our breasts.

Those memories were shadowed by sad events at home. The passing of two prominent citizens of our nation: Sir George Walter, former Premier and distinguished trade unionists and Mr. Charlesworth Samuel, a respected parliamentarian and outstanding educator. These events were followed by the untimely and tragic events several months ago.

One family working together would never mean we intend to, or can even, do the process of building our nation alone and un-assisted. We welcome investment in our main industry – tourism, in financial services, trust, International Business Companies and in Information and communications technology (ICT). We intend to foster a transparent, ethical and generally productive and profitable business environment in Antigua and Barbuda in which everyone, both local and foreign business can prosper. We therefore invite you to consider Antigua and Barbuda as your investment or retirement destination.

Where do we go from here however, and what can we expect in this year up to October 2009? We can expect an increased focus on the expenditure of government. We must also address the variant behaviour of those in our society who see crime as their livelihood at the expense of other peace abiding citizens by equipping our security and law enforcement agencies to better handle crime.

Much work needs to be done however. We therefore call into action our citizens and friends from around the world especially here within the UK. We need participation in other areas of economic activities – in agriculture, telecommunications, ICT and infrastructure. Government cannot do it alone.

Once again I raise the clarion call to prepare ourselves for CSME - the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

It may be our last chance to work together in a Caribbean Family to achieve a better way of life for the peoples of the region.

Ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters, citizens and friends of Antigua and Barbuda the road ahead will not be smooth. There will be many challenges. Even as we raise the level of politicking in the upcoming round of elections, let us debate the "How" that is how best to implement appropriate plans for the strategic growth and development of our beautiful, unspoilt nation. Let us pledge to join together for the common good. We should focus on the best and most effective means of achieving our national goals.

For as we look around us in this big global village, we notice that those who are unable to chart an effective path to progress will simply see the poor getting poorer, the rich of the world getting richer and developing countries like ourselves becoming more marginalised because the skills and resources necessary to appropriately engage the new paradigm are in short supply or have migrated elsewhere.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I end as I did three years ago by imploring everyone to act wisely, avoid short-termism and plan strategically for a better quality of life for all who chose to call our nation their home in this dynamically changing world.

In closing, let me on behalf of my wife and family, wish each of you happy celebrations, good health and the abiding presence of the Almighty in your lives till we meet again next year if his plans so allow.

God Bless

I thank you all.

*Delivered by H. E Dr Carl B Roberts,
High Commissioner
on 26th October 2008 at the Antigua
and Barbuda Association's
Anniversary of Independence Service at
St Mark's Church, London*

Prime Minister The Hon. W. Baldwin Spencer Overseas Independence 2008 Message

Fellow Antiguan and Barbudans;

Friends of Antigua and Barbuda:

It is my great pleasure to extend warm greetings to you and your loved ones on this, the 27th anniversary of our nation's Independence.

I am confident that with every passing year, your pride in our country grows as you silently affirm the sentiment, "This is my own, my native land."

We have many reasons to be proud of our homeland.

Among those reasons, the honour accorded our nation on being asked to chair the Group 77 and China, the voluntary association of states girdling the globe and embracing the nations of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

This gives Antigua and Barbuda new standing in the world community of nations.

Foreign direct investment, as well as local private investment, in our country is strong; and we have won the trust of donor countries and the international agencies.

Our economic turnaround has been widely lauded and our national community is generally confident about the future.

I say this, acutely conscious of the fact that the collapse of financial institutions and markets in the United States of America and around the world provides limited cause for optimism.

Notwithstanding this, Antiguan and Barbudans are not only confident people, we are uniquely resilient and resourceful people; and we face the future with a positive outlook.

We have survived serious crises and we have overcome momentous challenges. Whatever the challenges ahead, we shall overcome.

From economic chaos five years ago, we have so managed the economy that we have been able to significantly upgrade essential infrastructure, in addition to delivering a range of meaningful social programmes, of benefit to every child, every man, and every woman in Antigua and Barbuda.

We brought VC Bird International Airport up to acceptable standard in time for Cricket world Cup; and as it turns out, for the Stanford 20/20 Cricket spectacular.

We are modernizing the Port of St. John and speeding up the systems for handling cargo.

A nationwide road improvement and expansion programme is in place, and we have made tremendous strides in joining regional leaders in applied information and communications technology.

From a twelve percent Cyberspace connectivity a few years ago, Antigua and Barbuda is now close to sixty percent online.

An innovative Connect Antigua Barbuda Programme, employing mobile computer cafes, has the capacity to provide Internet access in every school and every neighbourhood in the country.

It is gratifying to me that we now have in excess of 1,000 Antiguan and Barbudans on scholarships overseas.

We have an upgraded and expanded hotel plant; together with new tourism attractions and events, all complemented by the renowned warmth and hospitality of the Antiguan and Barbudan people.

The generous character and the spirit of community of our people came sharply into focus last week in the aftermath of the destructive deluge associated with Hurricane Omar.

Ever blessed, Antigua and Barbuda was spared the full fury of that hurricane.

I shall ever be thankful to The Almighty that we have been spared direct hurricane hits, to date, while I have been vested with responsibility for our nation's affairs.

I take this opportunity to recognize the valuable contribution of Antiguan and Barbudans living abroad and sending home regular remittances to their families.

On this score, your Christmas Dollar Barrels will ensure that the season is a bit more joyful for your connections at home.

As my government nears the end of our first term, election fever is already in the air in our twin-island state. As you well know, regardless of the fact that it can be up to



**Honourable Baldwin Spencer
Prime Minister of Antigua
and Barbuda**

eight months before our General Election takes place, the election intensity here at home is as high as it is in the United States Presidential election.

I imagine that for many of you, the focus on **change** in the Obama campaign is reminiscent of the same mood in our 2004 General Election.

I also imagine that many of you would like, and are perhaps working to ensure, that change will trump experience on November 4, and that the result will be as transforming as it was in our General Election four and a half years ago.

If it is God's will, that desire will surely be granted

In concluding, I say to you our nation's sons and daughters, born and adopted, in the Americas, in Europe or elsewhere, let us work for ways to the fulfilment of the ideal in our nation's anthem, '**each endeavouring, all achieving**'.

To that end I look forward to continuing to work with you.

May God bless you and your loved ones.

May God continue to generously bless our beloved Antigua and Barbuda.

A happy Independence to each and every one of you.

Prime Minister Spencer receives UN's MDG Award

Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister the Honourable Baldwin Spencer was awarded the United Nations 2008 Millennium Development Goals Achievement Award on Thursday 25th September becoming the first Head of State or Government to receive this prestigious award.

"In all modesty I stand here today very much honoured to have been chosen as the 2008 recipient of MDGs Achievement Award and feel very proud to contribute in the course of cooperation and development of the South," said the Prime Minister, who received the award in recognition for his commitment and contributions to

the promotion and strengthening of partnerships between the UN and the private sector to achieve the MDGs. The MDGs represent a global partnership that has grown from the commitments and targets established at the world summits of the 1990s. Responding to the world's main development challenges and to the calls of civil society, the MDGs promote poverty reduction, education, maternal health, gender equality, and aim at combating child mortality, AIDS and other diseases. Set for the year 2015, the MDGs are an agreed set of goals that can be achieved if all actors work together and do their part. Poor countries have pledged to govern better, and invest in their people through health care and education. Rich countries have pledged to support them, through aid, debt relief, and fairer trade.

In accepting the award from the current President of UN General Assembly His Excellency Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, Prime Minister Spencer further observed that the MDGs represent a true compact between all the nations and other stakeholders including civil society and the private sector.

"The MDGs are our hopes to spur development by improving the social and economic conditions of more than a billion people in the developing world living in extreme poverty, hunger, lack of water and shelter.

It is meaningful to me that the contributions I have tried to make over the course of my career and my leadership as Chair of the Group of 77 have been seen as valuable and thus I accept this award on behalf of all the people of the South."

IMF STAFF VISIT CONCLUDES

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) team concluded a four-day visit to Antigua and Barbuda on Thursday 23rd October 2008. Starting on Monday 20th October, the small team from the Fund, which was headed by Mr. Guy Meredith, Assistant Director of the Western Hemisphere Department, met with various public sector departments and private sector entities to discuss fiscal and other economic developments in Antigua and Barbuda.

The IMF team also held discussions with the staff of the Ministry of Finance and the Economy in respect of fiscal and economic growth projections for 2008 and prospects for the medium term.

Following a full four days of meetings, the team presented its findings and conclusions to the Minister of Finance and the Economy, Dr. the Hon. L. Errol Cort, late in the afternoon on Thursday 23rd October. The key issues discussed were the economic growth and fiscal prospects for Antigua and Barbuda and the ongoing financial crisis in the United States and Europe.

With respect to economic growth, the Ministry and the Fund agreed that, for 2008, economic performance is expected to remain relatively strong. In terms of fiscal performance, the Fund indicated that revenue administration systems have improved and emphasized the need to generate similar improvements in respect of expenditure management and controls.

Dr. Cort pointed out that the improvements in revenue administration represented the tangible results of the ambitious tax reform initiatives undertaken by the Government. He also stated that a number of initiatives to boost the expenditure management framework had been implemented and indicated that the Government will continue develop policies and identify mechanisms that would ensure more efficient and effective expenditure management in the public sector.

With regard to the global financial crisis, the Fund representatives and Minister Cort agreed that there is still much uncertainty with respect to the ultimate implications of the ongoing financial challenges for the world economy and the economies of the region. While the consensus is that there is little or no apparent exposure of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union to these

financial problems, it is anticipated that there could be some indirect impact on the economies of the region particularly with respect to tourism. However, the nature and extent of this potential impact on tourism would only be revealed over the coming months.

The Fund representatives again indicated that the IMF stands ready to provide technical and/or financial support to any country that has been impacted by the financial crisis and stated that the Fund has put in place a number of facilities that are flexible and accessible.

Finally, Dr. Cort thanked the team for the significant work done over just a few days and indicated that the Government welcomed the views and perspectives presented by the Fund. However, he pointed out that while there may be merit in some of the ideas proffered by the Fund, the Government must and will continue to seek to strike a balance between the pursuit of macroeconomic improvements and the enhancement of the social and economic welfare of the people of Antigua and Barbuda.

The IMF team will return early in 2009 to undertake the Article IV Consultations.

Antiguan receives Honorary Doctorate of Divinity Degree in the UK

Rev. Dr. Eugene C. Edwards, son of Doraine Browne and the late Oscar Edwards of St. John's Street, Antigua, was a former teacher of Antigua Pilgrim High School and the St. Joseph's Academy School. He was also the Pastor of Willikies & Cedar Grove Wesleyan Holiness Church and the Assistant Pastor of the Beacon-Light Church of the Nazarene, Villa Area.

Rev. Dr. Edwards received an **Honorary Doctorate of Divinity Degree** from the church in which he was ordained - the American Fellowship Church and the University of California on September 28, 2008. He is currently serving in the Church of God of Prophecy – Melrose Christian Fellowship (Basingstoke) and Ashford Hill Christian Fellowship, here in the United Kingdom. When he is not doing his church duties, he works at McDonald's Restaurant as a Shift Manager. He also travels to the United States from time to time and preaches at several churches such as the St. Mary's Reformed Episcopal Church in the Bronx, New York, Church of God of Prophecy and other Churches in the USA. He is also the author of four books – Restored by love, Stress kills – Beware of it, RICE (Respect, Integrity, Communication – Excellence), and With God All Things Are Possible.



Rev. Dr. Eugene C. Edwards (left), daughter, Kelysha Edwards (right) and great-niece Myasha Mack (centre)

Rev. Dr. Edwards is the proud father of two children; **Kareem and Kelysha Edwards** who presently live with their mother Dewliss Edwards in USA. He is presently married to Vernary Bachelor-Edwards from Antigua who works at the North Hampshire Hospital here in the United Kingdom.

As the saying goes **“can any thing good come out of the Point Area, in Antigua”**? Here is the answer, Yes, as son of the soil (Antigua) and the Point Area has shown that with God all things are possible.

Rev. Dr. Edwards's motto is 2Blessed2BStressed has helped him to achieve his goal. Since migrating to the United Kingdom some 5 years ago, he has studied in the field of Bookkeeping with the Institute of Bookkeeping and is now doing another study in Financial Administration which is recognized by the Financial Service Authority (FSA). His aim is to reach the top and let Antigua and Barbuda feel proud of a son of the soil. His family and friends congratulate him on a great success.



Cricket, lovely Cricket

Antiguan designer turns heads at Guyana's Fashion Week

Young, ambitious and talented only begin to tip the iceberg for Antiguan designer Junay Powell.

Revolutionising the art of knitting with her sister Jahlene, the duo have been tearing up the local runways over the last three years and are now taking that "knittable" heat to other runways across the Caribbean.

Having been part of the Antigua and Barbuda contingent that travelled to Carifesta X, Junay was invited to return to Guyana for their Fashion Week, 1-5 Oct. Impressed with the young designer's talent and flair, CEO of the Guyana Fashion Week Sonia Noelle personally extended an invitation.

"The experience was great," Powell shares, noting the excitement that the

fashion week brought with it. "I felt really proud," she continued, "when I realised how much they were all loving my designs on the runway."

Exhibiting 40 pieces from her swimwear line "Intoxicated", the designer/model not only turned heads with her woollen creations but with her modelesque body as well.

No stranger to the runway, Junay can proudly say that she not only saw her designs on a regional stage, but she sashayed as well.

BVI designer Krystal Fraizer couldn't resist asking the young designer/model to take it to the runway for her line.

In addition to the exposure from the Guyanese audience, Junay also peaked the attention of international fashion journalists, including Walter Greene. A known fashion journalist from the US who frequents fashion weeks throughout the Caribbean, Greene will be featuring J's Fashion in an upcoming premiere magazine *Bangamary*.

Also in the near future for the young designer is the possibility of taking the St. Lucian runways by storm, through another invite extended by Noelle, who lives in Barbados.

Still exhilarated by the experience at the Guyana Fashion Week, Junay hopes to participate in as many regional fashion weeks as she possibly can.

One of the main elements of her line that stands out from other designers is the fact that her material is wool, and handmade.

"People thought that it was machine-stitched ... so as I get more exposure, that's something I want (the Caribbean) to realise ... that it's all from wool, and all handmade."

Even at her young age and with a humble portfolio in the industry, Junay was certainly able to stand out among the 46 designers present from Guyana, the US, the USVI and other Caribbean islands.

Source: *Antigua Sun*

Caribbean Broadcasting Association Awards

Hazra C. Medica is a Features Writer for the *Antigua Sun* Newspaper. She is the recipient of a Gold Award in the 2007 UNFPA Annual Caribbean Media Award Competition, she is twice published in *Poui- The Cave Hill Annual Literary Journal* (2005 and 2007). She is also the winner of Antigua's 2002 Independence Creative Writing Competition as well as the winner of Antigua's 2007 Independence Literary Arts Competition. Source *CBA*

Dollar Barrel Gets Underway

The annual Dollar Barrel initiative is now in effect.

Minister of Finance and the Economy Dr. Errol Cort announced that the programme is now underway and will continue through to 31 December.

The initiative allows residents to bring in a barrel of a variety of items from overseas for only one dollar in port and clearance charges.

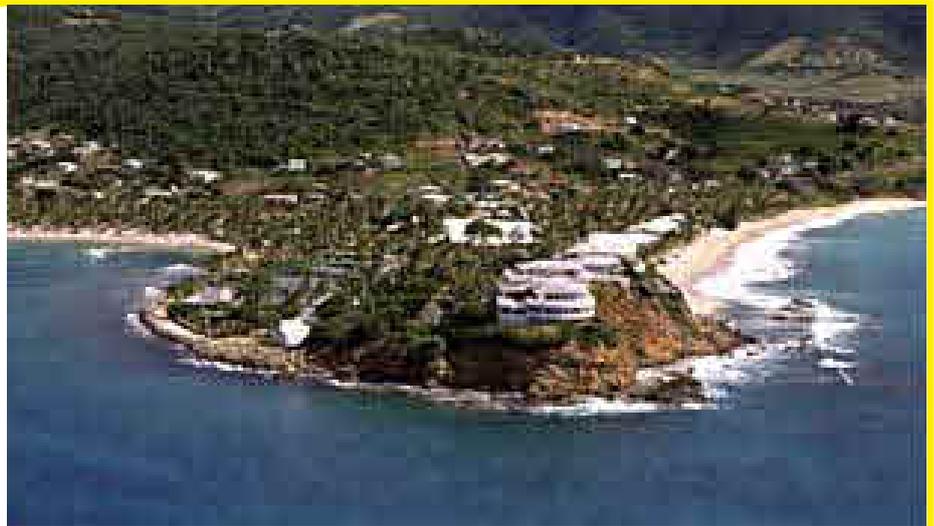
Dr. Cort noted that the government will once again cheer up many families at Christmas by allowing each household to import into the country a standard-size shipping barrel of selected goods free of all duties and taxes but for one dollar.

The goods to be allowed in the Dollar Barrel are foodstuff, clothing, not exceeding seven pieces of the same type, toilet paper, toothpaste, deodorant, soap and shampoo.

Source: *Antigua Sun*

The Man behind Antigua's Curtain is Knighted

The owner of Curtain Bluff Resort in Antigua, Howard Hulford, has been awarded a knighthood after he was named Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of the Nation (KCN) for his outstanding contribution to the building of Antigua and Barbuda and to the welfare of its citizens. Hulford, with his wife Michelle, opened Curtain Bluff next to Old Road Village in the south of the island, in 1962



Curtain Bluff Hotel

Hulford, a former World War 2 Mustang fighter pilot, instituted The Old Road Fund, a charity that through donations from Curtain Bluff's management and guests has raised over \$1 million to cover medical and education bills for the local citizens of Old Road Village.

Villagers make up over 90% of the resort's staff and many have been sent by "Uncle Howard" all over the world to learn their trades. To date he has provided 45 young adults with a full university education and sent 150 children to tennis camp in the United States, thereby fostering

a special relationship with the village where his resort is located.

"We are proud that Howard Hulford has been recognized with this prestigious award," said Curtain Bluff managing director, Rob Sherman. "His dedication to the people of Old Road Village does not go unnoticed amongst his staff, and we're pleased to see that this recognition is now being appreciated on a larger scale."

Curtain Bluff is located on 20 lushly landscaped acres on the south coast of Antigua and is surrounded by two

beautiful sandy beaches. Under the same ownership and management for over 40 years, Curtain Bluff offers a total of 72 beachfront rooms and suites, including 18 Deluxe Rooms, 40 Junior Suites and two one-bedroom Grace/Morris Bay Suites, with connecting rooms to accommodate families or large groups.

All rates are all-inclusive and cover meals and bar drinks, most of the activities (everything from scuba to Pilates is included in the room rate), a freshwater pool and two beaches.

Antiguan team takes part in Commonwealth Youth Games

An Antigua and Barbuda team left the island on Wednesday 8th October to attend the Commonwealth Youth Games in India.

The team's five junior tennis players were Alicia Williams, Shani Williams, Kai Piggott, Kyle Joseph and Brian Phillip.

They were accompanied by Coach Cordell Williams, who is also the president of the Antigua and Barbuda Tennis Association.

Kenryca Francis, the reigning 1500-metre CARIFTA Games Under-17 champion, distance runner Maverick Weathered, and long jumper Vincent Walter were the track and field athletes coached by Peter Cuffy.

Also making the trip was boxer Yakita Aska, who was accompanied by coach former light middleweight world champion Maurice Hope.

Yvette "Vetty" Francis was the Antigua and Barbuda chef de mission at the 12 to 17 October event.

Antigua gets new British Consul

A new Honorary British Consul has been appointed in Antigua and Barbuda.

Rob Wilkinson was appointed by the British High Commission in Barbados.

Wilkinson is a partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers, with offices on Old Parham Road, St John's.

British Nationals either residing in, or visiting Antigua and Barbuda, who require emergency consular assistance should contact Wilkinson on his cell phone at 268 764 4653, or via telephone or fax on 268 562 5046.

Routine consular enquires and all visa-related enquiries should be directed to the British High Commission in Barbados on 1 246 430 7800.

Cabinet Statement Response to the Passage of Hurricane Omar 18th October 2008

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda has decided to offer immediate basic relief to families affected by the floods in the aftermath of Hurricane Omar.

Cabinet met in emergency session this afternoon and committed to assist persons in the worst affected areas: Piggotts, Paynters, Bolans, West Palm Beach, Urlings, Bendals, Jennings, Grays Green, Yorks and other affected areas across Antigua and Barbuda.

Government will immediately provide the following:

- A maximum of Two (2) double beds
- One (1) table-top stove

- A cash voucher of EC\$500 per household; and

- Two (2) uniforms per child. In this instance, the Ministry of Education will provide replacement vouchers to the children.

This assistance will be coordinated through the Ministry of Social Transformation. This is an initial immediate relief assistance which government is offering until a detailed assessment is provided by the National Office of Disaster Services.

The Cabinet also acknowledged the extensive devastation to the agriculture and fisheries sectors from initial reports and has agreed to an assistance package to farmers and fishers in Antigua and Barbuda as part of the rehabilitation and restoration efforts.

Cabinet is also cognizant of the businesses on Lower Market Street which were flooded by the passage of Hurricane Omar. Government will make an assessment of the kind of

assistance to offer to these businesses.

Cabinet also received two presentations from the Director of the National Office of Disaster Services, Philmore Mullin and the Manager of the National Solid Waste Management Authority, Denise Roberts.

The National Solid Waste Management Authority in collaboration with the Central Board of Health will be launching a National Clean-up Campaign over the weekend to begin the process of cleaning the entire country. The clean-up will begin in the city and suburban areas on Sunday 19th October and in the other communities on a zonal basis including Barbuda thereafter.

Meanwhile, Cabinet is awaiting a more comprehensive assessment and detailed audit from the National Office of Disaster Services, which is currently ongoing.

**Presented by
Dr. the Hon. Jacqui Quinn-Leandro**



**Flood
Waters
In
Antigua**



MINISTER LOVELL IN EUROPE TO HELP BOOST BUSINESS TO THE ISLANDS

The Honourable Harold Lovell, Minister of Tourism & Civil Aviation recently returned from Europe where he personally met key European trade partners, including hotel representatives, tour operators, airlines and members of the press.

His busy itinerary began with hosting a Hotel Partners Meeting at the UK Tourist Office in London. Well attended by the Islands' key hotel and resort representatives, discussions centred on business moving forward and a personal update from Lovell concerning new developments on the Islands and at the airport. Antigua and Barbuda's UK advertising agency, *My Giraffe*, presented the results of a Mystery Shopper's trade survey which was undertaken to gauge general perceptions of the destination. The positive results clearly indicate that Antigua and Barbuda remains one of the most popular destinations in the Caribbean with agents highlighting the Islands' key selling points as beautiful and friendly with lovely beaches.

The Minister met with Tour Operators *Thomas Cook Signature, Saga Holidays, Kuoni and Virgin Holidays* as well as airline partners, *bmi, British Airways and Virgin Atlantic*. One on one press interviews took place with *The Daily Mirror newspaper,*

New Nation, Travel Weekly, The Flyer and Caribbean World Magazine.

The focus of the trip was to reassure trade partners that in these turbulent times it was still "Business as usual for Antigua;" the general consensus of opinion was that while some travellers may reduce their total number of annual trips, the yearly holiday was an integral part of the British psyche and other domestic expenditures were more likely to be reduced before holidays were too adversely affected.

Accompanied by Carol Hay, Director of Tourism for the UK/Europe, the Minister travelled to Italy for a meeting with *Livingstone Airlines* as well as key Italian tour operators.

Comments Minister Lovell: "My visit to Europe was a very productive trip which resulted in frank and productive dialogue with our trade partners. The mutual benefits of meeting them personally after an eventful summer and when the global economy is undergoing such change, enabled me to better understand their needs and discuss how



**Honourable Harold Lovell
Minister of Tourism & Civil Aviation**

we can work together in promoting the destination in the days and months ahead. We sincerely value their support and look forward to working with them in 2009 and beyond."



Junior Minister of Tourism meets Minister of Tourism

Kaeiron Saunders-Rogers, the newly selected "Junior Minister of Tourism" received an official tour of the Ministry of Tourism Headquarters last week. The 15 year old, fourth form student who attends the Antigua Girls' High School, was introduced to technical and administrative members of staff

within the various departments of the Ministry.

During her meeting with the Minister of Tourism, Harold Lovell, he acknowledged her participation at the Caribbean Tourism Organisation/Travel & Leisure Youth Congress in Trinidad last month, where she joined 15 other regional "Junior Ministers of Tourism and

Commissioners of Tourism" in discussing issues which impact the tourism sector.

Minister Lovell commended Saunders-Rogers on placing third at the event and encouraged her to continue participating in various tourism education programmes, so as to expand her knowledge of the field.

He also encouraged her to recognize that even though her career path may not be directly related to tourism that it

was important that she understands the existing relationship between tourism and all other sectors of the economy and that her contribution in any field will help to influence the competitiveness of our nation.

Saunders-Rogers is a member of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Cadet Corps, which meets every Friday at the Multi-Purpose Cultural Centre. Discussions and research on tourism topics, hospitality clinics, seminars and workshops, destination tours, tourism projects, personal development sessions and work experience/internship programmes, are all part of this year-long programme.

Secondary school students throughout Antigua and Barbuda, will get the chance to learn more about the Tourism and Hospitality Industry when the Ministry of Tourism's Hospitality Industry Careers Road Show takes place on November 25, as part of the Annual Tourism Week being held from November 23 – November 28.

CEO APPOINTED FOR NEW ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TOURISM AUTHORITY

Colin C. James, an Antigua and Barbudan national, has been appointed Chief Executive Officer of the newly created Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority.

Mr. James assumes his responsibilities early in the New Year and brings extensive commercial experience and business acumen to his new role, having served with distinction as General Manager of PDV Caribe Antigua and Barbuda Ltd, since March 2007. Prior to this he served as Chief Executive for Cable & Wireless St. Lucia, the largest of the Cable & Wireless East Caribbean businesses. Mr. James previously held the position of Chief Executive of both Cable & Wireless Dominica and St. Kitts & Nevis.

His distinguished career also included roles as Marketing Manager with Cable and Wireless USA, Area Customer Services Manager for the Leeward Islands and Head of Customer Service for Cable & Wireless Antigua and Barbuda.

His key priorities for the Tourism Authority will be marketing and communication initiatives which will promote the beautiful twin island nation to increase visitor arrivals and drive on-island spending.

The vision of the Tourism Authority is to market and promote Antigua and

Barbuda as an upscale and unique destination known as the events capital of the Eastern Caribbean. Antigua and Barbuda will be positioned as a destination that offers a wide array of facilities, activities and events and marketed as one that is attractive, elegant and renowned for its service quality. The Tourism Authority will work in tandem with the Ministry of Tourism, which will continue to provide strategic direction.

All overseas tourism offices will now fall under the structure of the new Tourism Authority.

Mr. James will report directly to the Minister of Tourism, the Honourable Harold Lovell, who adds, "Colin's appointment is a very welcome addition to our team. His experience in the private sector will be invaluable in helping us enhance our many unique selling points to overseas visitors."

Comments Colin James, "I'm extremely delighted and excited about the opportunity that has been afforded to me to serve my country in this capacity. The global financial crisis has resulted in unprecedented challenges which are affecting Antigua and Barbuda at this time. However, our country is in a unique position to combine the experience, skills and



Mr Colin James

talents of our people, working with our key industry partners, to ensure the continued sustainability and success of our tourism sector."

James emphasised that Antigua and Barbuda has a great product to offer all its visitors. The new Tourism Authority will ensure that all local stakeholders are continually made aware of the importance of the industry while working to provide a visitor experience that is second to none.

Mr. James describes himself as a family oriented man of faith. He is married with two teenage children and holds an MBA from Baruch College the City University of New York.

Antigua and Barbuda National Association's Executive Officers 2008 - 2009

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Songs powerfully rendered – the Festival of Choirs

by Hazra C. Medica

Late October the Holy Family Cathedral came to life with the sound of Antigua's choirs. The event was billed as the "Festival of Choirs".

A not too modest audience was gathered in the hope that they were in for a treat. Their hopes were not unfounded.

Those in attendance included Governor-General, Dame Louise Lake-Tack, Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer, Minister of Culture, Eleston Adams, members of the Antigua Christian Council and Minister Chandlah Codrington.

Things got off to a start with the singing of the National Anthem – all three verses. It had indeed been a long time, for many of us, no doubt, since we had the opportunity to pay tribute with our voices to all three stanzas of our national anthem.

As each verse was sung with much gusto, the "Independence feeling" crept closer and closer upon me. It was a more than welcomed feeling.

The national anthem was followed by a dance presentation by the Holy Family Cathedral Liturgical Dancers. Each dancer was decked out in "national dress" wear and each held an Antiguan and Barbudan flag which was waved along to the song 'Antigua Land.'

Following the dance presentation was the procession of choirs, then

the audience got the opportunity to lend their voices in song for the first time that night with 'Come Let Us Join Our Cheerful Songs'. After this hymn was the invocation and then we were sent fully on our way to the night's main events.

The Holy Family Cathedral Choir, 30 members strong, was first up and it set a rather fine precedent. Its first number 'This is My Song' pleased the audience. The second number – an original piece – 'Oh! Antigua and Barbuda', had the audience swaying to the rather catchy and up-tempo tune. There was even a "clap along" at the end of the song as the drummer maintained the beat.

Next to appear on stage was The National Youth Choir of Antigua and Barbuda. This five-year-old group rendered Siyahamba (South African in origin, if I recall correctly) in soulful tones that would make for great "meditative listening".

Many were the audience members who could be seen – bodies strained forward – listening for every note issued from the lead singer and the rest of the choir. Rapt attention was also given to the choir's rendition of 'Praise His Holy Name'. Thunderous applause greeted them at the end of their performances.

Then it was time for the all male cast of The Men's Choir which treated the audience to a Gospel medley followed by a rather interesting interpretation of 'Every Time I feel the Spirit'. Their second rendition came with a bit of an uncertain shuffling as the men tried to feel the beat of the tune and get into their "groove" but before long all were Feeling the Spirit. Some eyes in the audience were focussed on one choir member standing on the left

who seemed rather "chippery" as he sung.

A break was had for the offering (proceeds of which were intended for the St. Vincent DePaul Society and the Amazing Grace Foundation). After this, the audience was led into some "warm up" exercises (the "me me me me" type) as master of ceremonies, Maurice Merchant, took us through some scales.

The scales out of the way, the audience was then ready to do justice to 'Where Land and Sea Make Beauty' before the renown 56 year-old Antigua Community Players took to the stage to remind us why they are always considered such a treat by audiences inside and outside of Antigua. Their performances illustrated why they were considered true veterans in their field, veterans will always be veterans.

Second to last on the programme was the over two decades old National Choir of Antigua and Barbuda which offered us upbeat renditions of a traditional Negro Spiritual and 'Ride the Chariot'.

Last (no means least) was the most upbeat (and probably youngest) group of the evening, Sanctuary with their renditions of 'Our Father' and 'I Shall Sing'. During their second song, some audience members took to tapping their feet. Someone to my left took to tapping a pen to keep the beat and not long after someone behind me joined in.

The usual fare of the vote of thanks, benediction, closing hymn and all ended the night. It was a short but pleasant night for all.

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