



Winter 2001-02

NEWSLETTER

THE VICE-PRESIDENT SPEAKS

by Yvette Ballantine-Phillips

Another year has passed. A new one has begun.

With the approach of each New Year, individuals have a tendency to make new commitments that are known as New Year's Resolutions. The St. Croix Hiking Association, which has been around for several years, will adopt some New Year's resolutions as well.

During the years of our existence, some members have made New Year's resolutions and have committed themselves to the growth and success of the organization. And even though all of us have very busy schedules, we ought to make the time to assist in any small way possible, for every member is important to the organization. It is only by being active members that we can take control and reap the benefits that the organization provides.

The StXHA has some of the most talented persons whom I have had the pleasure of meeting. But we must all cultivate those talents which will lead to favorable membership participation. We can learn from, and support each other while we promote the development of this vitally important organization, by becoming involved.

Each of us can make a difference. We should not expect our fellow members to do the work that we can, and ought to do. "I'm Stepping Up to the Plate" should be our New Year's resolution.

I encourage each of you to get involved in the activities that will enhance the Association. We have a lot to do. Step up to the plate for 2002.

God bless you, and a Happy New Year to all.

ALONG THE TRAIL

Anegada-Jost Van Dyke trip

"The best laid plans o' mice and men

Gang aft a-gley

And leave us naught but grief and pain

For promised joy". R. Burns

In spite of all our careful plans for what we hoped would have been another memorable off island trip, a late storm intervened and forced us to shelve our planned trip to the British Virgin Islands. Are we discouraged? Far from it. We are now putting our plans for this year's Dominica trip into high gear. Read on.

The Newest Member of the St. Croix Hiking Association family was recently born to Wendy and Henry Harris. His name is Luis Emmanuel Harris. He is a very precocious fellow. Can you imagine that he is already planning to join us on our next bike/hike? What a guy!

The proud mom and dad are doing fine, so is Luis. Our congratulations go out to Wendy and Henry.

Luis, we are delighted to have you as our newest member.

(The flapping wings of a stork seems to be approaching? The sound is getting louder and louder! Is a new member coming to join us?).

Annual Christmas Party

Just as we were beginning to feel that 2001 would have ended "not with a bang but a whimper", along came our culminating activity, our Christmas Party which was a real "bang". It was a night to be remembered!

The party was held on December

28, at the Penthouse Rooftop Restaurant, a cozy hideaway which gave us the impression that we were somewhere above St. Croix, far removed from the hustle and bustle of the St. Croix which we normally experience every day.

The music was entrancing and exciting; the food was fine, filling and fattening; the ambience, alluring.

Tom Zimmerman, Treasurer of the organization, was announced as Male Hiker of the Year; Sonia Maynard-John, President, as Female Hiker of the Year. Tom is a first time winner; Sonia is a repeat winner. Let's step up to the plate and give them some competition this year. Get involved. We have room for a lot of good people, just like you.

After Sonia and Tom received their plaques it was time to P-A-A-R-T-Y.

You should have been there!

Village Project

The future of the Village clearing and restoration project at the Nature Conservancy is now faced with an uncertain future. The co-ordinator, George Hampson, has found it impossible to continue in his role as co-ordinator and/or as a volunteer, for personal reasons. Anyone wishing to continue with the project should get in touch with the President, Mrs. Sonia Maynard-John

AROUND THE BEND

{Upcoming Events}

Christiansted Historic Site

Fort Christiansvaern, The Scale House, Post Office Building, Steeple Building, Government House... These are some of the points of interest which will be visited on this hike.

Fort Christiansvaern, an imposing building, dominates the harbor. Built during the period 1738-1749 by the

Danes on the foundation of an old French fort, it was partially rebuilt in 1771 after it had been repeatedly damaged by hurricanes. The best preserved of the remaining Danish forts in the Virgin Islands, it is now a National Historic Site.

Goods passing through Christiansted were inspected and weighed at the **Scale House** which was built around 1855. The building now houses a Visitor's Bureau where descriptive walking tour pamphlets may be obtained.

For additional information concerning other important buildings in this historic site, join us on Saturday, January 19. It will be an easy, but very informative hike.

Agricultural Fair

The Association will have a booth at this year's Agricultural Fair. The Fair runs from Saturday, February 16 to Monday, February 18. Our booth will be manned by members around the clock. All members are asked to volunteer some time in order to share the workload.

We will exhibit pictures highlighting our past activities, and information will be available about our upcoming Dominica trip as well as for prospective members.

Our participation in the 2001 Ag-Fair was a huge success. Let's make this year's effort a super one.

Mount Eagle Hike

On Saturday, February 23, The St. Croix Hiking Association will conduct a hike to Mt. Eagle, elevation 1,165 feet, the highest point of St. Croix. East of Mt. Eagle, covered with antennae and dishes, is the second highest peak, Blue Mountain, elevation 1,096 feet.

The hike will not begin at sea level, so we will not be climbing the entire 1,165 feet. This hike will be moderately difficult. All hikers are asked to wear comfortably rugged shoes and, perhaps, a hat.

Magen's Bay Hike

The United States Virgin Islands includes four major islands. Most of us know very little about the islands on which we do not live. The Hiking Association has hiked St. John, but never St. Thomas nor Water Island.

On Sunday, March 17, we will have the opportunity to visit St. Thomas.

We will hike the nature trail adjacent to Magen's Bay, and swim in the waters of what is reputedly one of the most beautiful beaches in the world, and perhaps, the most beautiful beach in the Virgin Islands. This beach is popular with tourists and locals alike.

Dominica trip (May 25-31)

The planning committee for our upcoming Dominica trip is in the process of planing the nuts and bolts of this ambitious venture. Folks planning to go with us should start setting aside funds necessary for the trip. We are looking for hikers who are prepared to commit themselves to make this trip a success, persons who are prepared to do some serious hiking on this beautiful Nature Island.



Dominica is one of the largest and most mountainous of the former British Windward Islands. It is of volcanic origin, and is located between Guadeloupe and Martinique. The highest peak, Morne Diablotin, rising to 4,747 feet is often shrouded in mist. Dominica is known as the Nature Island of the Caribbean, with parks and reserves protecting vast areas of forest that cover most of the interior.

With a total area of 290 square miles, Dominica is gigantic when compared to St. Croix whose total area is only 84 square miles, and whose highest peak is a mere 1,165 feet

Stumbled upon by Columbus in 1493, Dominica was fought over by Britain and France until 1753 when it was formally ceded to Britain. It became a member of the W.I. Associated States in free association with Britain in 1967, and an independent republic -*The Commonwealth of Dominica* - in 1978.

Because of its volcanic origin, Dominica does not have the white sandy beaches favored by tourists. It has, however, 365 rivers; and the flora, fauna and natural physical points of interest make it an ideal place for ecotourism.

Wai'tukubuli was the name of this island when the Europeans came. This name lives on, in an abbreviated form, in a very delicious and refreshing local beer called Kubuli. We've got to try some when we get there.

RECOMMENDED READING

G. W. Lennox & S. A. Seddon: **Flowers of the Caribbean**, 1978

- This book has sections dealing with herbs, shrubs, trees, and orchids. In the Caribbean, as a resident or a visitor, you can't fail to be impressed by the richness and luxuriance of the vegetation. Many of the plants encountered produce colorful flowers. Most visitors soon become keen to develop a better acquaintance with some of the more common plants and their exotic blossoms. In this book you will learn about the different species of flowers.

Dorothy & Bob Hargreaves: **Tropical Trees** (Found in the Caribbean, South America, Central America, and Mexico), 1965

- There are over 125 full color pictures of tropical trees in this book. You will learn about the tropical trees which seem to create unusual interest to people. These unique trees serve mankind by providing spices, medicines, fine furniture, and food. The authors have selected these trees for illustration and description

St. Kitts & Nevis Ministry of Tourism: **St. Kitts** (Mother Colony), 1997

- St. Kitts is known as the "Sugar City" island of the Caribbean. Mountains range up to 3,792 feet above sea level. The island is volcanic in origin, with a dormant volcano which was called Mount Liamnigo, or "Fertile Island" by the Carib Indians. The book contains colorful pictures of points of interest such as: historic buildings, natural sites, forts, open sugarcane fields, etc.
- St. Kitts & Nevis will probably be the site of our off island trip in 2003.