



NationWIDE



SATURDAY MARCH 5, 2016

Top Nationals Honoured for Independence 37!



Photo by Marius Modeste

Saint Lucia has celebrated Independence Day all of 37 times. Each had common and different features and aspects that will be remembered by all who experienced them. But this year was the first time since 1979 that Saint Lucia has exercised the right to name and appoint its own Dames and Knights. On February 28, Her Excellency the Governor General Dame Pearlette Louisy conferred the orders of Knight Commander and Dame Commander on Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott, former Prime Minister Dr Vaughan Lewis and retired Public Servant Lawrence Laurent. The two men are now referred to officially as 'Sir Derek' and 'Sir Vaughan', while the lady is now 'Dame Lawrence'. The recipients of the new Orders were among the record 43 persons honoured this year – the highest ever. The Chancery of the Order of Saint Lucia also received the highest-ever number of nominations for national awards for Independence 2016. The investiture ceremony was just one of a record list of activities held across the island to observe Independence 37 under the theme 'The Journey Continues' (More on Independence on Pages 2, 3, 5,6,7,8,9 and 10). Meanwhile, Saint Lucia's journey to recovery continued in the past two weeks, during which the Government of Saint Lucia continued to report on various projects at home and abroad, including continuous unveiling of plans for projects long negotiated and now to come on stream. Read and enjoy this edition of Nationwide and while at it – as always – remember not to forget to tune in to *NationwideTV* on NTN and browse the Nationwide Website at stlucianationwide.com

Happy Reading! Happy Viewing! Happy Browsing!

Independent Food for Thought! - Page 2

Marigot School Renamed After Jon Odium - Page 3

Electoral Department Extends Deadline for Unverified Voters - Page 3

Social Transformation Ministry Helps Choiseul to Help Dominica - Page 4

The Diplomatic Courier - Page 11

Five Off to USA for Football Trials with Sports Ministry's Blessing - Page 12

WHAT'S INSIDE



Independence 37 - The Journey Continues!



Is Sovereignty Real?

by Clement Wulf-Soulage



As we observe our 37th anniversary of Independence, there has never been a better time to raise a few pertinent questions about the notion of national sovereignty – in an era where everything is becoming more alike, and the symbols, institutions and instruments of sovereignty are increasingly being redefined – not least by the forces of international cooperation.

There is no denying the fact that the world society and economy have entered a new age of convergence and interdependence – and the slippery idea of sovereignty has changed over time.

Against the backdrop of globalization and trans-sovereign dynamics, Saint Lucia has been affected by a range of important trends: the renewed and spreading consciousness of individual and human rights, higher development expectations, the disruptive power of the internet, the multilateral approach to decision-making and the general pursuit and inculcation of global values.

With all this convergence happening around us at breakneck speed, there is an abiding sense that

nation states like ours – already handicapped by very small markets and relatively backward economies – are losing their grip on their own power as it relates to their sovereignty, territorial integrity and development interests.

The encroachment of international and multilateral regimes on the internal affairs of small and micro states – whether in the form of tax and fiscal advisories, diplomatic demands or political directives – have invoked fears of foreign subjugation and aroused distrust,

skepticism, even hostility.

The Juffali case, for instance, which has prompted furrowed eyebrows in academic and diplomatic circles around the world, shows clearly how the rights of a small country can be violated by a larger state.

The fact is, whether Dr. Juffali's appointment was ignoble or not, it is the unequivocal sovereign right of Saint Lucia to make whatever ambassadorial appointments it wishes under international law.

It's not up to a parochial London court to decide whether Dr. Juffali's appointment is "spurious" or not, having been accredited as a diplomat by the host nation.

If anything, only the people of this country should demand answers and make any such determination. Arguably, globalization has not necessarily made life any easier for small developing states.

Since the idea of sovereignty is already laden with expectations, it is becoming increasingly difficult for small states to pursue their economic goals, let alone their political ones, in the rising tide of global relations and economics.

Mr Lee Kuan Yew, the late Prime Minister of Singapore, is reported to have once said: "Small island states are a political joke".

Was he implying that in the modern context, the sovereignty of small states is a concept that resonates more in theory than in practice? Or was he suggesting that since the world will not change to suit the conveniences of small nations, they'll have to constantly adapt to trends set by the developed world?

Which begs another question coined by a political journalist: Is the notion of sovereignty sacrosanct, or can we describe it as fallible?

As far as I'm concerned, sovereignty is not simply an entitlement, but an obligation – and is far from being fallible. The main justification for its endowment is economic and social development – and I'm not only talking about the sovereignty of parliament, but also the real sovereignty of the people in matters of constitutional change through the use of referenda, for instance.

Without a doubt, there is a need to further entrench our sovereignty to allow our people to both think and do things differently as well as to facilitate a change in our weltanschauung.

Above all, our sovereignty should reflect a wide set of cultural norms and practices which reinforce our ideals of self-determination and self-identity.

Equally critical is the impera-

tive of developing structures and institutions which promote participative democracy – the result and outcome of which must be a people who are responsible for their own progress and take ownership of the processes of development and growth.

At times, it appears the main threat to our national sovereignty is not necessarily some external force, but our own indisposition and incapacity to defend our democracy, patrimony and rights as citizens.

We often label ourselves "patriotic citizens" and boast about the irresistible beauty of our island. On social media and in the wider world, most, if not all citizens use the tagline "Proud To Be Lucian" to express their love for country. Some genuflect before it, but few actually define it.

What does it truly mean to be a sovereign nation with the Queen of England still officially the Head of State? How does the way we are governed in small island states conflict with the need to tackle the major economic and global issues?

Sovereignty is a holistic concept which entails both personal and collective responsibility, as well as the obligation to ensure that all human and civil rights are respected. Moreover, the thinking and actions behind sovereignty should ensure that the judicial, social and economic infrastructure and institutions which underpin our development as a people are in place and function as they should.

The institutional capacity to administer justice and provide security is an existential challenge that any sovereign nation should tackle head-on. "In the absence of justice", said Saint Augustine, "what is sovereignty but organized robbery?"

However, it is Gijs de Vries, a former European Union anti-terrorism co-ordinator, who nailed the point home when he observed: "You can't get closer to the heart of national sovereignty than national security and intelligence services."

Needless to say, a breakdown in law and order in any country (think of Haiti, Grenada, Palestine or even Ukraine) is an invitation for some foreign power to either intervene or impose self-serving conditions on another country.

When we are constantly hobbled by petty and tribal politics instead of pursuing a more participative, creative and progressive approach to development, the collective energies required to strengthen our democracy and guard our sovereignty are uselessly expended.

Just the same, if we thought we could enjoy full sovereignty without some measure of food security, then we ought to think

Continue on Page 12

Editorial Independent food for thought!

The adopted feature article on this page is very good food for thought as we observe our 37th year as an independent nation, with all the sovereignty that came with our elevated status in 1979.

The writer asks the questions and offers his own answers and suggestions as to where to look.

Sufficiently well-equipped to always rise above the din and make his points from global, regional or national perspectives, this author doesn't genuflect to the political whims and fancies of the day's gubernatorial make-up. His arguments and offerings for thought are usually based on fact, not fiction. Widely read and well taught, his words of wisdom normally appeal for sober consideration of the issues he comments on.

In this case, for example, he uses his considerable wealth of experience and understanding of international relations and diplomatic issues to offer a well-placed perspective from which to view the so-called Juffali Affair.

The alarm bells being raised on this issue by those bent on pursuit of narrow partisan political gain in an election year have been so loud, that it is indeed refreshing to be reminded that this land that gave us birth continues to produce sons and daughters who will always put principle before profit, honour before glory and country before self.

The questions the writer raises on the reality (or lack thereof) of sovereignty ought to be answered by us all – but especially those still unable, for whatever reasons, to define sovereignty and independence.

There can be little or no

doubt that after 37 years we still have much to do to consolidate our independence. We have scored successes and triumphs that will have made us proud. But there's still much more to do to grapple with the continuing redefinition of sovereignty in a global village where change is an accelerating constant.

Climate Change is very real – and so are the consequences for small island developing states like Saint Lucia everywhere in the whole wide world. Global events also impact in real ways on poor and developing countries worldwide.

Small island states are not advised or expected to always behave in their relations with the world's largest and richest states like proud Davids eternally standing up to imperial Goliaths on every issue. Moderation and compromise are two essential ingredients for ensuring harmonious relations between states, big and small.

But when national sovereignty is being carelessly trampled on without regard, by any state big or small, by any entity or person big or small, wherever and whenever, sages with voices of reason are always expected and called upon to offer guidance and wise counsel.

The accompanying article by Clement Wulf-Soulage is highly recommended. Indeed, it can be considered our Independence Gift to all Saint Lucians – with an invitation to use it as a basis for considering all the issues he raises, not just this weekend but for all the rest of our 37th year of independence as a small and sovereign nation.

Here's to the best for all the rest of this Independence Year!

90 minutes WITH SHELTON DANIEL
WEEKDAYS 8:30AM - 10:00AM
RSL 97
97.3 97.7 RSLONLINE.COM

YSPEAK))
with MAUNEY LEWIS
6:30 PM MONDAYS
4:30 PM SATURDAYS
NATIONAL TELEVISION NETWORK
CHOICE
https://www.facebook.com/YSpeakSLU

Marigot Secondary renamed after Jon Odlum!

The island's most modern secondary school will now be known by a new name that evokes decades of development and national service. The former Marigot Secondary School, opened in 2006, was officially renamed the Jon Odlum Secondary School during a function held for the purpose on Tuesday, March 1, 2016. Mr. Odlum served as Member of Parliament for Castries South for 23 years, prior to which he was one of Saint Lucia's first Labour and Social Welfare Officers.

Prime Minister Dr. Kenny D. Anthony remarked that the ceremony was being held "to celebrate the memory of Jon Odlum, and to cast his name in stone to recognise him as another great Saint Lucian who has contributed to our development."

Indicating that the school was intended to serve children from the communities of Anse La Raye, Canaries, Roseau, and Cul de Sac, the Prime Minister also reminded that its construction was a long-held ambition for Jon Odlum.

Dr. Anthony said, "He beat the pavement and the muddy paths of the Cul de Sac, Marigot, Barre St. Joseph and Roseau Valley, interacting with the people of these

areas, sharing their triumphs and failures, their tears and their pain, and their hopes and dreams.

"He knew very well their plight, their deep poverty, their hand-to-mouth conditions. He always championed education as a means of lifting people out of the debilitating conditions of poverty. "He knew that education was the only answer to the poverty that had been cultivated from the days of the sugar plantations.

"As such, this school here at Marigot is effectively the tangible pinnacle of a dream, an institution which represents the zenith of Jon's belief that education was the key to the future of the down-trodden and dispossessed."

The Prime Minister went on to reveal that the newly renamed Jon Odlum Secondary School had completed the realization of another goal, that of secondary education for every Saint Lucian child.

Dr. Anthony continued, "This school has a special place in our history. "It was, effectively, the last public secondary school constructed and opened on this island as we pursued at that time the achievement of Universal Secondary Education.

"USE, as it was dubbed, was an important achievement of the Labour Party Administration I led



The Marigot Secondary School got a new name during the 2016 Independence celebrations

in 2006. "And many at the time and perhaps some even now, believed that USE should not have been pursued. It was an incredibly myopic and an elitist view.

"But it is the reality. Some people do not believe in the equity of education. They believe that there should exist an uneducated class upon which to construct an economy to benefit from low wages.

"On the contrary, this Gov-

ernment, this Labour Party Government is resoundingly unapologetic in our belief that education is a basic right; that education is a ladder out of poverty; that education provides the knowledge and skills upon which society and economy are built upon; and that there must be equity and equality in education for all our children."

The renaming ceremony was

attended by Cabinet colleagues, including Minister for Education and current Member of Parliament for Castries South, Hon. Dr. Robert Lewis; members of the Odlum family, including Mr. Odlum's widow, children, and grandchildren; representatives from the Ministry of Education; and the entire school population. Mr. Odlum passed away in 2013.

National Security Minister welcomes transition of 41 Special Constables to new Police Officers

The Passing out Parade of Course 34 of the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force on Friday, February 26, 2016, has ushered in an unprecedented opportunity for Special Police Constables within the Saint Lucia Police Force to advance to full-fledged Police Officers.

In the past, the progression from Special Police Constables (SPCs) to appointed Police Officers of the Royal St. Lucia Police Force was not readily available. Minister for Home Affairs and National Security, Senator Victor Philip

La Corbiniere, indicated how pleased he was to see this change come into fruition.

He said, "I am particularly happy to see this graduating class, because some four years ago when I came into office, I thought to introduce the idea of Special Police Constables being able to move from that point of their career into the regular Police Force.

"Of course, all of you would know that as Special Police Constables you have in fact done everything that you do in policing."

The Minister noted that the duties, experience and exposure of Special Police Constables are in essence similar to that of regular Police Officers.

"And so in my mind, there had to be an opportunity to be able to afford some transition into regular policing." The newly trained Police Constables will deploy throughout the island.

The Minister also emphasized that the balance between experience and academic qualifications must always be maintained. He



Minister for Home Affairs and National Security, Senator Victor Philip La Corbiniere indicated how pleased he was to see this change come into fruition.

said experience has to count in the way such opportunities were being rated. Forty-one (41) officers

graduated and launched a new page in their new careers on Monday, February 29, 2016.

Electoral Department extends deadline for unverified voters

The Electoral Department has extended the deadline for persons whose names appear on the list of unverified voters to check with the office, to get on the official Voters List.

The announcement was made on Wednesday during a press conference at the Department's High Street, Castries office, where Chief Elections Officer (CEO), Gasper Jn. Baptiste, announced a date.

Jn Baptiste declared that registered electors whose names appear on the list are asked to avail themselves at any one of their offices located across the island, no later than March 15.

"We have taken the decision to extend the period for scrutiny if the list by an additional month giving registered electors whose names appear on that list a further opportunity to regularize their registration status," the CEO explained.

The Department first published a list of unverified voters on February 7, 2016.

According to Jn Baptiste, failure to do so will result in their names being deleted from the Voters List in accordance with

the Elections Act, which states that where an elector who has been notified has failed to appear before the CEO, the elector's name must be removed from the register of electors.

However, electors whose names are on the list of unverified voters, will still be able to vote at the next general elections if he or she shows up at the polling station on Election Day.

The Department said 640 registrations have been rectified as of February 29, 2016.

Meanwhile, the number of electors without an identification (ID) card is now 26,351, while there are 68,324 ID cards due to expire in 2016, something the Department hope could be rectified before elections.

"Holders of National ID cards that are due to expire in 2016, are asked to visit one of centres or offices for the renewal of their cards, along with a birth certificate," Jn Baptiste declared.

The Department has debunked claims that the unverified list was prepared only this year, explaining that the process started since 2015, because elections is constitutionally due in 2017.

Parliament hosted Montessori students for Independence 37

The Office of the Parliament welcomed students from the Happy Vale Montessori School to the Chamber as part of its Independence celebrations.

President of the Senate Claudius Francis and Speaker of the House of Assembly Peter Foster (QC), along with the staff of the Office of the Parliament hosted the children, and explained the roles and functions of Parliament and parliamentarians in simple terms.

Foster said such interactions, especially at a young age, are important in shaping the consciousness of the next generation of leaders.

"I'm extremely happy to see young children taking part and being interested in what takes place in Parliament. I think that this is the first time this has happened.

"This is all part of the education process, all part of instilling in our young ones national pride. Education is the most important gift we can give to our children."



The Office of the Parliament hosted students of Happy Vale Montessori, and explained the roles and functions of Parliament.

Juliet Braithwaite, founder of the Happy Vale Montessori School, said it is critical to engage children, as it will help shape their lives later on.

"It's very important because a lot of things go over their heads, and they hear things but they don't really understand it.

"These things are very important because as they get older, they'll remember.

"They'll look at things on TV and remember; and as they get older, they will begin to understand what it's all about and hopefully want to be part of it because this is their country."

The Happy Vale Montessori School will be celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. (More Independence 37 News on Pages 5 to 10)

Ministry of Social Transformation donates to Choiseul Council to help Dominica recover

The Choiseul Council has made a donation to the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) to assist the Commonwealth of Dominica in post Tropical Storm Erika recovery efforts. Dominica was devastated last year by the storm which left floods, mud slides, major infrastructural damage and a number of fatalities in its wake. NEMO Director Velda Joseph, commended the altruistic ef-

forts of the Choiseul Council.

"A huge investment is required to [restore] Dominica that requires a tremendous effort at resource mobilization; and we know that every dollar counts, so we say thank you to Choiseul and the Constituency Council that spearheaded the entire effort.

"We believe that this donation will be appreciated by the people of Dominica, and will in some way help alleviate the difficulties they have experienced."

The Choiseul Constituency Council falls under the Ministry of Social Transformation, Local Government and Community Empowerment.

Chairman Hamilton Cooman presented the \$3,000 cheque to NEMO on behalf of the Choiseul Constituency Council.

Tropical Storm Erika has been described as the most devastating natural disaster to occur since Hurricane David made landfall in 1979.



The Choiseul Constituency Council presented a EC\$3000 cheque to NEMO.

PM urges Saint Lucians to seriously adopt drought mitigation measures!

A plea is going out for Saint Lucian homeowners, businesses, and farmers to brace for further extreme drought conditions. Prime Minister, Hon. Dr. Kenny D. Anthony has pointed to data from the World Meteorological Organisation, the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology, and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, which indicate that the persistent drought that has affected the Caribbean in recent years could worsen in 2016.

In the face of the prolonged dry spell being predicted in coming months, the Prime Min-

ister explains that whereas Government is doing its part to help ensure there is a measure of resilience, householders, employers, and agriculturists must take action to safeguard themselves.

"Extreme drought has been affecting Saint Lucia and the Caribbean for the past few years. The data show that the year 2015 was the driest on record for some forty years, and due to the relatively low levels of precipitation during the rainy season, we actually entered the dry season in a rainfall deficit. Across the region, our neighbours are facing huge reductions in their agricultural yield. This is quite

alarming, and we certainly cannot ignore this phenomenon," explained the Prime Minister.

He said while the government is doing its part to ensure water security, the citizenry must also join in water storage and conservation efforts.

"This Government is taking steps to help alleviate this very serious situation. The John Compton Dam Rehabilitation, the Vieux Fort Water Supply Redevelopment, and the Dennery North Water Supply Infrastructure Project are major priorities. Once completed, these initiatives will provide relief to over 100,000 citizens,

by improving the consistency and quality of the water supply to tens of thousands of homes. Government and private sector stakeholders have also undergone training in drought mitigation and management, which is important."

"But whereas these projects will reduce our vulnerability, it is still necessary for each and every one of us to do what is needful to prepare ourselves, our homes, and our places of business. The purchase and installation of water tanks to enable rainwater harvesting must become second nature for us. Our farmers have to look at

planting hardier crops and improving drainage. We have to do all in our power to conserve water, and to use this precious resource wisely," urged Dr. Anthony.

Researchers believe the Caribbean is entering a period of extended dry periods never before seen. In January, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission held a four-day workshop on National Drought Management Policies and National Drought Early Warning Information Systems in Saint Lucia, in collaboration with various regional and international organisations.

Plans in place for commemoration here of World Consumer Rights Day 2016



The March 15 observance will be held under the theme "Antibiotics off the Menu."

The Consumer Affairs Department of the Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs in collaboration with the National Consumers Association will be marking World Consumer Rights Day (March 15) by joining a global campaign to get "Antibiotics off the Menu."

Consumer organizations from around the world, in partnership with Consumers International, are calling on food companies to make a global commitment to stop serving meat from animals raised with the routine use of antibiotics.

As the department charged with the responsibility to educate and protect the welfare of consumers, the Consumer Affairs Department along with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards and the Saint Lucia Poultry Stakeholders Committee, will be joining the campaign with several planned activities aimed at increasing consumer awareness.

These activities include information dissemination sessions at the Vieux-Fort Town Square and the J.Q. Charles Mall in Rodney Bay (March 8 and 9); a roving road show (March 11); a walk from Mega J to Pigeon Is-

land (March 13); and a discussion on the theme "Antibiotics off the Menu" (March 15).

The walk is open to the public with registration commencing on Feb. 23 at the Consumer Affairs Department. Interested persons can also register at the information dissemination sessions on March 8 and 9.

The Ministry of Commerce encourages everyone to participate, particularly in the walk. The ministry also urges consumers to be vigilant and to read all labels before making a purchase.

The overuse of antibiotics in agriculture is a major driver of antibiotic resistance. About half of the antibiotics produced globally are used in agriculture, with much of this being used to promote faster growth and to prevent, rather than treat, disease. Despite worldwide concern about the overuse of antibiotics, their use in agriculture is due to increase from 63,200 tons in 2010, to 105,600 tons in 2030.

The World Health Organization has warned that without urgent action, we are heading for a post-antibiotic era, in which important medicines stop working and common infections and minor injuries can once again kill.

New WASCO Chair brings wealth of experience to the post!

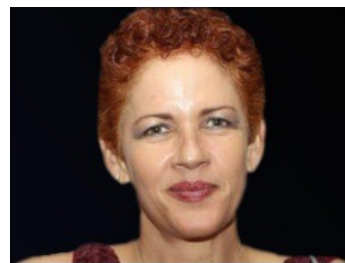
Alison King, an engineer by profession, served as a member of the WASCO Board of Directors for the last four years.

The Board of Directors of the Water and Sewerage Company (WASCO) has a new chairperson.

Effective February 8, Alison King assumed the position of chair of WASCO, replacing Egbert Louis, who served in the top post for four years, from January 2012 to January 2016.

Ms King, an engineer by profession, has served as a member of the WASCO Board of Directors for the last four years and brings a wealth of experience and expertise in the water sector to her new position.

She takes her position at an



Alison King, an engineer by profession, served as a member of the WASCO Board of Directors for the last four years

important juncture for WASCO, as the company embarks on the major exercise of de-silting the John Compton Dam, while simultaneously undertaking the redevelopment of the water systems in the Dennery valley and Vieux Fort.

In welcoming the new chairperson, Senator Dr. James Fletcher, minister with responsibility for the water sector, expressed gratitude for the leadership provided by the outgoing chairman, Egbert Louis, who guided WASCO through a challenging period and laid the groundwork for the improvements in the service provided by the water company.

He also articulated confidence that the new chair and the Board of Directors would build on this platform, and that WASCO would continue its evolution into a modern, responsive, customer-focused water and sewerage company, efficiently serving the needs of all residents on the island.

Gas and Diesel prices continue to decline!

As of Independence Day (Monday, February 22), pursuant to reductions in the price of crude oil on the international market, consumers in Saint Lucia will pay less for both gasoline and diesel.

Gasoline will be sold for 4 cents less, at \$9.68 per gallon. Diesel will be sold for 35 cents

less, at \$8.72 per gallon.

There have also been reductions to the retail prices of liquid petroleum gas (LPG) - 100lb, 22lb and 20lb cylinders. The retail price of kerosene remains unchanged.

Given the further reduction in the landed price of LPG, the Government of Saint Lucia has decided to pass part of the re-

duction on to consumers via subsidy. The 20lb and 22lb LPG cylinders will be subsidized at a cost of \$7.98 and \$8.50 per cylinder, respectively.

The next price adjustment will be made on March 14.

Below is a schedule of the retail prices for petroleum products:

Petroleum Product	Existing Price	New Price	Change
Unleaded Gasoline	\$9.72 per gallon	\$9.68 per gallon	Decrease by \$0.04 Decrease by \$0.01
	\$2.14 per Litre	\$2.13 per Litre	
Diesel	\$9.07 per gallon	\$8.72 per gallon	Decrease by \$0.35 Decrease by \$0.08
	\$2.00 per Litre	\$1.92 per Litre	
Kerosene	\$5.40 per gallon \$1.19 per Litre	\$5.40 per gallon \$1.19 per Litre	Unchanged
LPG:	20 Pound	\$24.97 per cylinder	\$22.73 per cylinder
	22 Pound	\$27.74 per cylinder	\$25.28 per cylinder
	100 Pound	\$174.74 per cylinder	\$153.54 per cylinder
Bulk	\$1.62 per pound	\$1.41 per pound	Decrease by \$0.21 Decrease by \$0.47
	\$3.57 per kilogram	\$3.10 per kilogram	



Independence 37 - The Journey Continues!



'Ours is A Story Worth Sharing and Celebrating!'

Following is the full text of the 2016 Independence Day Address to the Nation by Hon. Dr. Kenny D. Anthony, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, delivered on Monday February 22nd 2016 at the Mindoo Philip Park, Marchand, Castries.

THE INDEPENDENT SAINT LUCIAN

Today, we celebrate that we are Saint Lucians, 100% Saint Lucians. We celebrate that we are independent and free. We are the independent Saint Lucians! There was a time when our ancestors hid from the sound of cannon or from the volleys of invading armies. Today, we can freely celebrate as we wish: with bamboo bursting and fireworks echoing and illuminating cove and valley. Today, the independent Saint Lucian is not forced to dance the cocoa pods, or cut cane with the rhythm of songs in the field, or cower from the whip of the slave master.

Rather, we can shake and sway to our own drums, we can chant our own melodies of merriment; we can dance to Kutumba, the Polka or the La Comette; we can run our own races on our own tracks.

Today, the independent Saint Lucian need not perceive her story merely through the histories of others. We are the makers of our own history. Today, she can make and express her own story in drama and dance, in poetry and prose, in musical note, in colourful paint, in film, fashion and artifact.

UNCONTROLLABLE PATRIOTISM

There was a time when it appeared that independence was an event about the pomp and ceremony of the state. It was "a Government thing." We have journeyed past that. This is clearly no more.

Today, we see an unparalleled rise in patriotism, unhinged from and independent of the efforts of the state to instill pride, dignity and honour. At long last our people have laid claim to what is theirs. We have become 100% Saint Lucians!

INDEPENDENCE BELONGS TO EVERY CITIZEN

Independence belongs to every citizen, to every proud Saint Lucian, to every patriot. And we see this in song and dance, through fashion, through displays in the windows of shops and stores, through festivals, food and fanfare, through flags on homes and cars and hills, through competitions of sport, beauty and talent.

We have an event now that is not limited or barred by rainfall or sunshine or by place or location. It is not segregated and celebrated by one race or religion, or some com-



Photo by Marius Modeste

The PM urged nationals during his address to 'Show the world it's our time, our day and our independence. Raise your hand if you are a proud Saint Lucian!'

munities but not others. It is not divided by red or yellow. It is for Saint Lucians, here and abroad, wherever they may roam.

100 PERCENT SAINT LUCIAN

Today, all of us must proclaim that we are 100 percent Saint Lucian! We are 100 percent free! We are 100 percent united! We are 100 percent proud to be from this beautiful island, this majestic island, this fair Helen of the West Indies!

SEEMINGLY TANGENTIAL REALITIES

At 37, our country is still young in many respects. Consider for a moment, if we selected a single index that summarizes the age distribution of our population.

At independence, the median age of a Saint Lucian was 18. Today, the median age of independence is 32. We can deduce two seemingly tangential realities.

WE CAN ACHIEVE UNIVER- SAL HEALTHCARE

First, our population is on average older. Our birth rate has

fallen. Our schools are operating below capacity. And the demands on our healthcare are more acute as our population ages.

It means that we must look closely at how we are going to finance these sectors, and especially how we can achieve universal healthcare. This Government is committed to realizing a healthcare revolution that secures healthier, longer lives for the vast majority of our people.

The second reality from this observation of median ages between then and now is that, despite the aging population, the majority of our population was born in post-independence Saint Lucia.

NO RECOLLECTION OF THEIR OWN

Our youth have no recollection (of their own) of the Saint Lucian flag being hoisted for the first time. They have no memory of the struggles leading up to independence. They may not comprehend the difficulties of life in

It's so amazing, knowing that right now, in this moment, we are all Saint Lucians, 100% Saint Lucians. It's a wonderful feeling!

the Saint Lucia of the 1950s, 60s and 70s, and the struggles of their parents, grandparents and great grandparents.

The soul of any country - the pride a people has for itself - is formed and molded, buttressed and affixed upon what is created and achieved and passed down from one generation to the next. We are inheritors charged by our history to bequeath to the next generation.

It is passed down through stories. And these stories and beliefs are sometimes anchored in fact, but are more often than not, passed down informally through the oral discourse of myth, of lore, of tales and legends.

Our story is essential to who we are. Whether we see ourselves as lions, or as sheep; whether we imagine ourselves as giants, or as hobbits; whether we liken ourselves to heroes, or we lower our gaze like cowards.

WE MUST OWN OUR STORY

We must define our story. We must own our story. We must tell our story. And we must believe in our story. We must say who we are. It is our story that shapes our society, our economy, and our culture. And we are now free to do just that now.

We must feign no more from speaking our own language, from writing our own history, from acting our own plays.

When we sing our national anthem in both of our languages, in kweyol and in English, then we announce that we are not ashamed of our history; we simply laying claim to our image and our identity.

IN THE IMAGE AND LIKE- NESS

Our flag maker, the late Sir Dunstan St Omer gave us not only our flag, but through his murals and works, a deep sense that if we are made in the image and likeness of God, then God must look like us. We must be able to tell the story of Sir Dunstan.

SHARE AND CELEBRATE OUR STORY

Likewise, we must share and celebrate our story. We are beginning to tell the story of Derek and Roderick Walcott with a museum in their childhood home.

We are beginning to tell the story by commencing the dialogue on establishing a National Museum. And that dialogue will commence through the National Trust in the next few months. And we need investment in public education so that all our people can learn about ourselves.

NEW NATIONAL CULTURAL COMPLEX

And we must tell our story by having a national home for the creative industries. And we have begun the dialogue on the designs for a new National Cultural Complex. And this will create a home for the performing and visual arts, for theatre and dance, for modern and traditional forms of creative expression.

A STORY WORTH TELLING

Ours is a story worth sharing. It is a story worth celebrating. We need to tell the story of how this little island produced for Nigeria its first Chief Justice, Sir Darnley Alexander, after its independence. We need to tell the story of how this little island was able to produce two geniuses in our Nobel Laureates in Sir Derek Walcott and Sir Arthur Lewis.

And we also need to tell the recent story how this little island through its diplomatic efforts was able to influence the outcome of the Climate Talks in Paris to help protect our planet for the future of mankind.

It is a story worth speaking in our own tongue; a story worth producing; a story worth defending! So today, I take comfort; I take pride and I take honour, not just as Prime Minister or as a leader but in being simply, a Saint Lucian.

It's so amazing to see all of you children here, your parents, those in the stands, those at home or at venues around our island or even in the Diaspora abroad, knowing that right now, in this moment, we are all Saint Lucians, 100% Saint Lucians. It's a wonderful feeling!

Show the world it's our time, our day and our independence. Raise your hand if you are a proud Saint Lucian! Let us sit and feast on our lives.

Let us write our own story, shape our own future and tell the world that we are Saint Lucians first and foremost, one hundred percent (100%) Saint Lucians!

This is my Independence wish for Saint Lucia! God bless each and every one of you; God bless Saint Lucians we all say, "Thank God that I am a Saint Lucian."

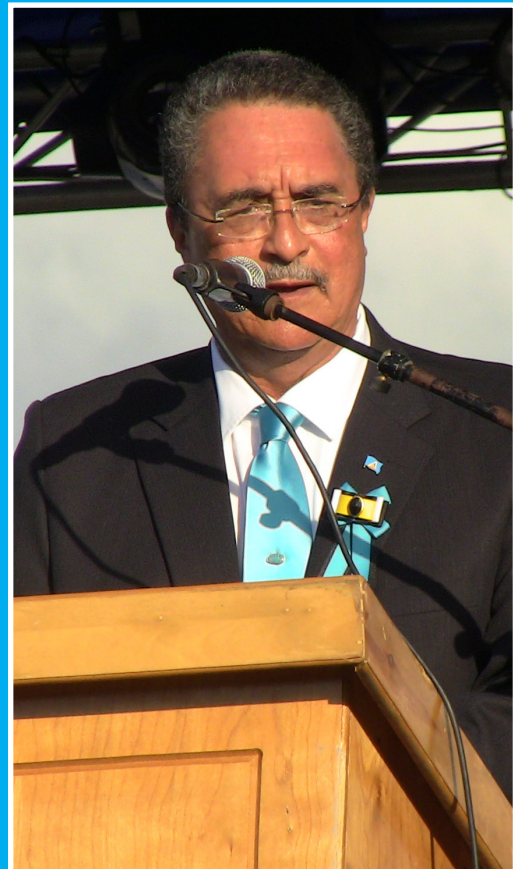
'We must define our story. We must own our story. We must tell our story. And we must believe in our story. We must say who we are. It is our story that shapes our society, our economy, and our culture. And we are now free to do just that now.'



Independence 37 - The Journey Continues!



Independence 37 - The Journey Continues!



Prime Minister expresses gratitude for 'Respect and Dignity' shown by nationals during 2016 Independence observances!

Prime Minister Dr. Kenny D. Anthony has expressed appreciation and congratulations to Saint Lucians home and abroad, as well as civil society, for the manner in which they commemorated the island's 37th anniversary of political independence.

The 2016 anniversary was marked with a military parade, school rally and performances from musicians, poets, and dancers, all held at the historic Mindoo Phillip Park.

The day was preceded by a host of weekly activities in Saint Lucia and in major metropolitan areas, such as New York, Toronto, and London.

Tens of thousands of nationals took in the celebrations and the outpouring of national pride was acknowledged by the Prime Minister.

"Our celebrations have been embraced with a fervor that is indeed tremendously heartening," Dr. Anthony said.

"To see Saint Lucians, young and old, clad in the colors of our flag, to witness the expressions of our native creativity and to observe so very many people demonstrating what it means to them to be truly Saint Lucian, it has been a fabulous remembrance, another wonderful stage in our journey.

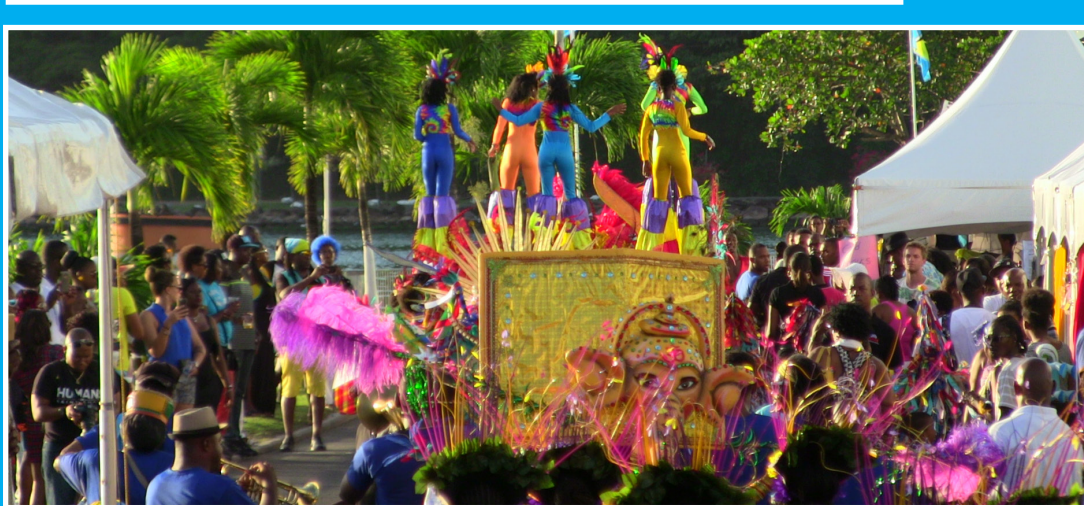
"The masterful precision of the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force during our annual parade deserves special commendation and our Royal Saint Lucia Police Band was, as always, superb, and unmatched."

"Even beyond the official ceremonies, I must also thank our citizenry and the private sector for the manner in which they paid tribute to Saint Lucia, for the respect and dignity they have exhibited," he continued.

"There are, of course, several events still to come on the calendar. I urge my fellow Saint Lucians to ensure that they continue to make this year's anniversary a real reflection of our unbridled delight in our sense of self."

The parade, rally, and other functions organized under the auspices of the Office of the Prime Minister were attended by Governor General, Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy, Cabinet colleagues, Members of Parliament, foreign dignitaries, leaders of the local corporate community, representatives of youth organizations and the general public.

Photos by Marius Modeste





Independence 37 - The Journey Continues!



Kweyol National Anthem approved by Cabinet

The Government of Saint Lucia, through the Cabinet of Ministers, has agreed to the adoption of a Kwéyòl version of Saint Lucia's National Anthem. This decision comes on the eve of Saint Lucia's 37th Anniversary of Independence on February 22, 2016.

As Kwéyòl is seen as a mother tongue for Saint Lucia, this development is also in commemoration of UNESCO's International Mother Languages Day, which is celebrated on February 21, 2016. A number of events marking Independence 37 will use the new Chanson Nasyonnal for this first time.

Work on adopting the

Chanson Nasyonnal commenced as far back as 2010.

While a church group in Gros Islet had valiantly attempted an earlier Kwéyòl version, the Kwéyòl Language Committee of the Folk Research Centre, chaired at the time by Lecturer, Ms. Lindy-Ann Alexander, decided to develop and seek formal adoption of a Kwéyòl version of our National Anthem that captured the essence and meaning of the original song written in English by Fr. Charles Jesse, OBE (deceased).

Pastor Wulstan Charles, a member of the Kwéyòl Language Committee of the Folk Research Centre, was commissioned to prepare a first draft for consideration. This he did, and this formed the working draft for adoption.

The final version of the Chanson Nasyonnal was developed after going through a number of iterations. This work was undertaken by a special committee chaired by Her Excellency the Governor General, Dame Pearllette Louisy.

The words of the Chanson Nasyonnal closely conform to the meaning of the English Anthem, though changes have been made to ensure that the Kwéyòl lyrics are in consonance with the music composed by Sir Leton Thomas.

Many countries throughout the world have more than one version of their national anthem. There is also precedent set by many countries to have their national anthems sung in their mother tongue and their official language. Examples of countries

with multiple versions include Canada, Cameroon, Ireland, Haiti, Mauritius, New Zealand, Seychelles and Paraguay. (The anthem of South Africa in fact incorporates five of the country's eleven official languages.)

The Government of Saint Lucia sees this formal adoption as a momentous and historic occasion in embracing our national identity and in particular our Kwéyòl language heritage.

The Government intends to pursue further efforts to promote the use of Kwéyòl, as committed to in the Throne Speech of 2014.

The Government of Saint Lucia encourages the wide use and adoption of the Chanson Nasyonnal at national public functions where the anthem is sung.

The Government of Saint Lucia

continues to remind all Saint Lucians to show due regard and respect to both the English and Kwéyòl anthems.

EDITOR'S NOTE: On 17 November 1999, the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) adopted International "Mother Languages" Day to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism. This UNESCO Day is recognised on the 21st of February each year. Saint Lucia is also a member of La Francophonie. Other speakers of French creole languages in the world include Martinique, Guadeloupe, Dominica, Haiti, Mauritius, Reunion and the Seychelles.

PM urged Students to let their Schools spark their Passion for Education!

Prime Minister and Member of Parliament for Vieux Fort south, Hon. Dr. Kenny D. Anthony addressed students of District Six at an Ecumenical Service on Wednesday, February 17.

The service took place at the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Vieux Fort, in commemoration of Saint Lucia's 37th Independence Anniversary.

Hon. Moses Jn Baptiste, Member of Parliament for

Vieux Fort north was also in attendance.

Dr. Anthony delivered an address to the students on what it means to love the country that defines them.

"It was my school that excited my passion for University education.

"It was my school that made me who I am today -- and just as my school made me, so too Saint Lucia has made us, its citizens. We have to Thank God for giving us one of the most beautiful countries in the world.

"We are blessed with our in-

heritance and I am pleased and proud with the way you have embraced it today."

Dr. Anthony added that we all have "an awesome responsibility to care for Saint Lucia for future generations," and implored the students - as they celebrated Saint Lucia's 37th Independence Anniversary - to celebrate their country by showing love to their parents, teachers and friends.

Outstanding students, teachers and ancillary staff were honoured at the ecumenical service during a special awards segment.



The PM told the students: "We have an awesome responsibility to care for Saint Lucia for future generations."

Obama sent greetings through Secretary of State John Kerry

United States Secretary of State, John Kerry congratulated the island nation on its accomplishment and made mention of its unique culture and natural environment.

"On behalf of President Obama and the American people, I congratulate the people of Saint Lucia on 37 years of independence," the message read.

"Defined by its welcoming population, lively music, and beautiful beaches, Saint Lucia is a major tourist attraction for travelers from around the world - and it is a key partner to the United States on a wide range of critical issues in the Caribbean and across the Western Hemisphere.

"Together, our nations work to promote citizen security, good governance, respect for



US Secretary of State, John Kerry

the rule of law, and human rights.

"Our countries support energy diversification through the Caribbean Energy Security Initiative, and our peoples are connected through programs implemented by the State Department, by the efforts of the US Agency for International Development (USAID),

and by the steady stream of Peace Corps volunteers who have served in Saint Lucia since 1961.

"On this special day, as the people of Saint Lucia celebrate another year of independence, I offer my best wishes and express confidence that our friendship will grow and prosper for decades to come."

Congratulations poured in for Independence 37

On the occasion of its 37th Anniversary of Independence, friendly states and organizations, worldwide have delivered congratulatory messages to Saint Lucia.

Hon. Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Enrique Peña Nieto, President of the United Mexican States, expressed their desire to continue bilateral cooperation.

"As you mark another milestone on a momentous journey, it is my ardent prayer that the mutual bonds shared by our countries will be maintained and strengthened," Dr. Gonsalves said. "I trust that our two countries will continue the very friendly and cooperative relationship which we have built."

"I express my deepest congratulations on the occasion of Independence Day," echoed President

Nieto. "I am confident that through dialogue and collaboration we will continue to strengthen the excellent relations of friendship between our two countries."

Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia, Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, reflected on the agricultural and educational partnerships forged between the two countries.

"I am pleased that our bilateral relationship has grown stronger over the past year," Prime Minister Turnbull said.

"Australia continues to support Saint Lucia's development priorities through funding a livestock management system for small farmers, working in partnership with the Saint Lucia Diabetic and Hypertension Association to prevent cardiovascular disease, and granting 17 Saint Lucian nationals the Australia Awards scholarship."

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) also sent congratulatory remarks.

"IICA wishes to reaffirm its commitment to strengthening the close ties of cooperation and friendship between the institution and your government, and to express its strong desire to contribute to the development of rural communities in your country."

Prime Minister Anthony in response said that he is grateful to all of these countries for their friendship and support to the Government and people of Saint Lucia. The messages, he said, are "reassurances of the high esteem and regard with which Saint Lucia is held by these states."



Independence 37 - The Journey Continues!



43 received 2016 Independence Day Awards

NOTICE of the Awards for Independence Day 2016 in respect of the Order of Saint Lucia and the Public Services Long Service Awards.

On the occasion of Independence Day 2016, Her Excellency the Governor General, as Chancellor of the National Societies of Honour, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 25 of the National Honours and Awards Act, has been pleased to make the following appointments.



Knight/Dame Commander of the Order of Saint Lucia
Derek Walcott

(For exceptional and outstanding service of national importance to Saint Lucia)

Vaughan Allen Lewis

(For exceptional and outstanding service of national importance to Saint Lucia)

Lawrence Martha Priscilla Laurent

(For exceptional and outstanding service of national importance to Saint Lucia)

The Saint Lucia Cross (SLC)

Harold Calixte Simmons (Posthumously)

(For distinguished service and contribution to Culture and the Arts)

The Saint Lucia Medal of Honour (Gold) SLMH

Earl Mingus Bousquet

(For Outstanding contribution in the field of journalism)

Zacheus Dominique

(For an act of conspicuous courage in circumstances of extreme peril)

Kerwin Francisand Kudisha Francis

(For acts of conspicuous courage in circumstances of extreme peril)

Haggeus Carlton O'chilly

(For an act of conspicuous courage in circumstances of extreme peril)

The Saint Lucia Medal of Honour (Silver) SLMH

Jacqueline Lois Bird-Compton

(For eminent service in the area of child advocacy)

Andrew Kenneth Richardson

(For outstanding contribution and exemplary service in the field of medicine)

Lawrence Poyotte

(For outstanding service in the Trade Union Movement)

Rickie Raynald

(For an act of bravery in hazardous circumstances)

The Saint Lucia Medal of Merit (Gold) SLMM

Vincent Adrian Augier

(For long and meritorious contribution in the field of Arts and Literature)

Levern Donaline Spencer

(For long and meritorious service in the field of Sports)

Bernard Cecil Theobalds

(For long and meritorious service in the field of Engineering)

The Saint Lucia Medal of Merit (Silver) SLMM

Stephen Trevor Anthony

(For long and meritorious service in the field of Music)

Emmanuel Bellas

(For long and meritorious service in the field of Sports)

Wilfred Monty Maxwell

(For long and meritorious service in the field of Music)

The Saint Lucia Les Pitons Medal (Gold) SLPM

Carolyn Archibald

(For long and meritorious dedicated service to Special Education in Saint Lucia)

Taj Weekes

(For long and meritorious service to Saint Lucia)

Elphege Brown

(For long and meritorious Community Service)

The Saint Lucia Les Pitons Medal (Silver) SLPM

Euphemia Shirley Bissette

(For long and meritorious Community service)

Dahlia Bertha Gail Francois

(For long and meritorious Community service)

Julius James

(For long and meritorious Community service)

The Saint Lucia Les Pitons Medal (Bronze) SLPM

Emmanuel Kingsley Powlette

(For long and meritorious Community service)

Veronica Lebrun

(For long and meritorious service in Community Health Care)

Anna Maria Antoine

(For long and meritorious service in Community Health Care)

The National Service Medal

Emmanuel Victor Dudley

(For long and meritorious service in the Saint Lucia Cadet Corps)

Andre Philip Mathurin

(For long and meritorious service in the Saint Lucia Cadet Corps)

Lawrence Spencer James

(For long and meritorious service in the Saint Lucia Cadet Corps)

THE PUBLIC SERVICES LONG SERVICE AWARD

Her Excellency the Governor-General has been pleased to award the Public Services Long Service Award in respect of Independence Day, 2016 to the following persons:

Saint Lucia Public Service

Corona Verna Mondesir

Glenda Marilyn Polius

Saint Lucia Teaching Service

Marian Bernadette Hazel Southwell

Mary HerminaBobb St. Hill

Royal Saint Lucia Police Force

Augustin Sampson

Stanislas Smith

Saint Lucia Air and Sea Ports Authority

(Ports Police)

Lucretia Alexander

Mariana Angelina Epiphane

Saint Lucia Fire Service

Bernard Prospere

Claudius Evans

Bordelais Correctional Facility

Augustus Leonce

Riccardo David



Independence 37 - The Journey Continues!



Independent, I am!

by Adia Andre

Growing up on this small democratic island called Saint Lucia gives me the privilege to become who I am today. My country Saint Lucia, known as "The Helen of the West Indies" is not only the most luxurious island in the Caribbean but is the most outstanding island known for its heritage sites.

Haven't you seen those twin majestic peaks standing tall in my community called Soufriere and not forgetting the World's only drive in volcano? These sites have helped boost my community's economy and the Tourism Industry in my country. Like all other countries with a government to lead, I've gotten the right to vote for any politician or political party I want to serve my country.

It should be noted that those who serve and have served made a significant contribution to the development of our country. They've maintained my country in so many different ways, making it a true independent state.

One notable example is helping every child obtain free education and skills which give them a strong

foundation and thus pave the way to enlighten their future. This year my country celebrates 37 years of freedom, 37 years of teaching us St. Lucians to stand up for our rights, to be liberated, to make meaningful contributions and decisions, to not just stand up but to stand out and to make a difference and to serve our country with pride.

We as St. Lucians must be proud of our country wherever we may be. My country being independent means so much to me. It gives me the best opportunity to become an independent woman as well, to stand up for my rights and to make right decisions on my own.

My opinion is that being independent is the ability to do what you want even if it's not what society thinks is the right thing to do.

We can't please society nor can we do what everyone does or wants us to do. We must endeavor to do what's right and not what society deems to be accepted or the norm.

To be fully independent is to be self-reliant, trusting and believing in ourselves. Not being doubtful of your own talents, thoughts and beliefs but being the best that you can be. We must believe that there's greatness within and be the best that we can be.

Despite the upsurge of violence, hatred, greed and the many social ills in our society, we must come together united and strong and stand with our



The writer expresses the inexhaustible pride of being counted among the sons and daughters of this land that gave us birth!

chest high, heads up, proud St. Lucians, raising our national flag with pride and dignity for our country and fellowmen.

I would like to take this opportunity to honor our many distinct great sons and daughters who have made this country proud and have contributed tremendously to our success as an Independent country.

Our Saint Lucian heroes you are honorable. Thank you for paving the way for me and all other St. Lucians. Our noble laureates Sir Arthur Lewis and Hon. Derek Walcott, our many great athletes, singers/song writers who continue to make our coun-

try proud, we salute you.

Our deceased Queen of Culture Dame Marie Selipha Descartes, a chantwelle of extraordinary talent who captivated the imagination of all and was a central figure in the revival of our folk songs and dance traditions of St. Lucia as well as Hon Dunstan St Omer must never be forgotten.

We must honor and remember them for the outstanding contribution to this island of ours. We must continue to seek respect and honor for all those who have help our country to be where it is today.

Let us never forget our dedi-

cated police officers, doctors, nurses teachers and the many who continue to diligently serve our country well. Our youths, the future of tomorrow, stand up, stand out and make your country proud.

Happy 37th Independence day to all St. Lucians, continue to play your part and make this country of ours the best.

The journey continues as an Independent country and we must all play our part. I am a proud St. Lucian. I am liberated. I am independent!

Let's celebrate our Freedom as a People and a Nation!

by Felicia Browne



Our 37th year of independence is yet another momentous period in our history as a people. We are united by the spiritual and cultural heritage of a nation imbued with collective perseverance, resilience and a great sense of gratitude. As a people, St. Lucians are known for their innate intellect and moral enlightenment.

We St. Lucians live in harmony with our exceptional environment: from the warmth of Vieux Fort seas, to the majestic Pitons in Soufriere, to the hills of Choiseul, to the bustling

sounds of Castries; from our agricultural wealth in Micoud, to our fishing boats in Dennery and Praslin; from our tourist developments in Gros Islet, to the serene waterfalls of Anse la Raye and Canaries.

Yes! We are proud of our everyday contributions, as we work towards the development and progress of our beloved country.

We are proud of our culture, language and our unique ability to remain steadfast in times of great uncertainty.

We are a joyous people and always find an opportunity to share our knowledge, our culture and our unique sense of humor everywhere we may roam.

We are St. Lucians by virtue of race, religion, social and political backgrounds. We are all St. Lucians, not only by nature, but also by our conscious decision to give homage to a land which binds us together. Today, we celebrate St. Lucia in our own private and collective ways. Let us celebrate together to create a greater movement for justice, peace and equality. Celebrate today, Celebrate our freedom as a people and a nation!

Micoud brother and sister awarded Medals of Honour for their bravery!

A pair of Micoud teenagers was awarded on February 28 for their bravery as part of the 2016 Independence Awards ceremony at Government House.

Wednesday 3rd June 2015, turned out to be an unexpected and terrifying turning point in the early lives of the brother and sister from Micoud, 18-year-old Kudisha and 16-year-old Kerwin Francis.

On that day, a fire in the village consumed four buildings, leaving eleven members of an extended family homeless. One of the buildings and the family affected by the fire was their own.

When the fire broke out, Kudisha and Kerwin, who were in another room with their parents, realized that their younger sister, Rebecca, was not with them.

Ignoring the fact that he suffers from asthma, Kerwin immediately went to rescue Rebecca from the room they all believed her to be trapped in.

When he retreated with burns to his face, overcome by smoke and unable to breathe, Kudisha leapt into action, running into the burning room in search of their younger sister.

Kudisha and Kerwin Francis

Their mother, who had managed to escape from the building, was heard saying that Rebecca had got out through a window and was safe. At that point Kudisha left the building with Kerwin. By then, she had already suffered burns to the right side of her body, face, arm and leg.

After the fire, when Kudisha and Kerwin were asked about

their actions Kudisha's simple response was, "I couldn't bear the thought of my little sister getting burnt".

For their outstanding bravery and courage in the face of extreme peril, Miss Kudisha Francis and Mr Kerwin Francis are awarded the Saint Lucia Medal of Honour (Gold).

The Diplomatic Courier

CARICOM Leaders congratulate Dr. Fletcher on his leading role at COP-21

Saint Lucia is being congratulated by CARICOM for its leading role played on the world stage in getting the international community to better understand the threat of climate change to the Caribbean and the small island states around the world.

The CARICOM, Heads of Government commended Saint Lucia's Minister for Sustainable Development, Senator Dr. James Fletcher, for the sterling work in achieving a positive outcome for the Caribbean in the negotiations during the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP-21) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Dr. Fletcher is the Chairman of the CARICOM Task Force on Sustainable Development and the Chairman of the Regional Coordinating Committee on Climate Change and he led the negotiations in Paris in December last year, on behalf of CARICOM, which led to the historic adoption of the Paris Agreement.

At the recently concluded CARICOM summit in Be-



Sustainable Development Minister Dr. James Fletcher

lize, the leaders recognised the need to capitalise on the achievements at COP21 by working to improve the national and regional capacities to take advantage of the opportunities provided in the Paris Agreement.

They also agreed on the need to mainstream climate change in national development plans and accelerate readiness programming to facilitate access to climate financing.

The CARICOM leaders directed that the Regional Task Force on Sustainable Development,

led by Minister James Fletcher, together with the team of regional negotiators and experts, should continue their work to facilitate the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

The commendation by the CARICOM Heads of Government for the work of Dr. Fletcher echoed a similar acknowledgment by the then Chairman of CARICOM, Prime Minister Freundel Stuart of Barbados, which was delivered in the Barbados Parliament in December last year, at the conclusion of COP21.

Saint Lucia's top Finance Ministry official to become next Commonwealth Secretariat Director of Economic Policy

Permanent Secretary in the Department of Finance, Dr. Reginald Darius will soon assume the position of Director of the Economic Policy Division at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, UK.

In this position, Dr. Darius will be responsible for providing strategic advice to the Commonwealth Secretary-General on issues of sustainable economic development, particularly in international finance, international and regional economic co-operation, small States, and economic management.

Dr. Darius will bring to this position a first-hand understanding and appreciation of the development challenges of Small Island Developing States. His appointment, therefore, represents a positive develop-



Dr. Reginald Darius will assume the position of Director of Economic Policy at the Commonwealth Secretariat

ment for Saint Lucia and the wider Caribbean Community.

Dr. Darius assumed the position of Permanent Secretary in the Department of Finance in August 2012. He brought to the

position extensive knowledge and experience in macroeconomic and fiscal policy.

Prior to assuming the position of Permanent Secretary, Dr. Darius held the position of Senior Economist at the International Monetary Fund.

Dr. Darius holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Warwick, and a Masters Degree (Economics) from the University of Cambridge and he has published papers in a number of international journals in the areas of fiscal and monetary policy, exchange rate regimes and unemployment.

The Government of Saint Lucia thanks Dr. Darius for his excellent leadership of the Ministry of Finance over the past three and a half years and wishes him success in his new endeavor.

US Ambassador Presents Credentials

Her Excellency Linda S. Tagliatela, Ambassador Designate of the United States of America to Saint Lucia presented her credentials at Government House on Thursday.

Governor-General Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy said the United States of America has been a good friend to the island.

"Bilateral assistance on the part of the United States has contributed significantly to Saint Lucia's development agenda, particularly in the area of training and capacity building and I would therefore like to place on record our gratitude and appreciation," she said.

Ambassador Tagliatela said her government remains committed to maintaining a strong



Ambassador Tagliatela said her government remains committed to maintaining a strong relationship with Saint Lucia.

I am honored that the President has chosen me to be his representative to this beautiful island of Saint Lucia. I can assure you that the United States

is committed to continuing the strong relationship with our two countries.

Saint Lucia and the United States of America established diplomatic relations in 1979.

Prime Minister extends condolences to St. Lucia Ambassador in Taipei

Prime Minister Dr. Kenny D. Anthony has expressed condolences to the island's first Ambassador to the Republic of China (Taiwan), Ambassador Hubert Emmanuel.

Mr. Emmanuel's wife, Myrle, passed away on Tuesday evening in Taipei, after having struggled with illness for some time.

Prime Minister Anthony has

since spoken directly with the ambassador via telephone to offer his sympathies. It is understood that Mrs. Emmanuel's remains will be cremated.

Mrs. Emmanuel is survived by her husband and their three daughters, one of whom is studying in the Republic of China (Taiwan).

The ambassador assumed his post in November 2015.

Saint Lucia Prime Minister congratulates new Jamaican counterpart

The Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) is now in place to form the new Jamaican Government after defeating the People's National Party (PNP) at General Elections on February 25, 2016.

JLP Party Leader, Mr. Andrew Holness, is now already the nation's new Prime Minister, replacing Mrs. Portia Simpson-Miller, who served for one term.

In the first count after the polls, the JLP was declared to have won 33 seats and the PNP 30. But after a recount demanded by the PNP, one of the results was reversed in one constituency resulting in the PNP candidate winning by nine votes.

In the end, the JLP's two-seat majority was reduced to one, from 33-30 to 32-31, the smallest possible margin in any election.

Mr Holness was on Thursday sworn-in as the new Prime Minister, his second time around after having spent two months five years ago before his JLP was replaced by the PNP following the 'Dudus' Coke upheavals.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Dr. Kenny D. Anthony has congratulated Mr. Holness and the JLP on their victory.

"I wish on behalf of the Government and people of Saint Lucia to extend my congratulations and felicitations to Mr. Holness on winning the elections and look forward to welcoming him to the CARICOM family.

"The bonds between Jamaica and Saint Lucia are long and enduring, and the Government of Saint Lucia looks forward to continuing a strong and cordial relationship with Jamaica on matters related to Caribbean Integration and the common agenda of our shared community of nations," said Dr. Anthony.

The Saint Lucia Prime Minister also expressed his thanks to Hon. Portia Simpson-Miller for



JLP Leader Andrew Holness is Jamaica's ninth elected Prime Minister

the guidance provided to Jamaica and CARICOM during her tenure in office.

According to the Prime Minister, even in defeat, Simpson-Miller demonstrated leadership by offering congratulations to the JLP and committing to holding the Government of the JLP accountable to the people. "The people of Jamaica have spoken. This is good for democracy.

"It is also good that the few incidents which occurred did not discourage the people of Jamaica from voting for the government of their choice.

"Now is the time to bring the country together in peace and harmony.

This is even more necessary as the road ahead will not be easy for the new Government since Jamaica faces continuing adjustments under its IMF Programme.

"We also join the people of Jamaica in thanking outgoing Prime Minister, Portia Simpson-Miller, for her diligent service these past five years, and wish her and the PNP all the best, going forward," Dr. Anthony added.

Now aged 43, Mr. Holness is Jamaica's ninth Prime Minister.

Australian funding approved for Rainwater Harvesting project in Micoud

The People Empowering People (PEP) group of Micoud is proud to announce the approval of funding for their project "Climate Change Adaptation Through Rainwater Harvesting" by the Australian Direct Aid Program.

The public is invited to attend an introduction to the project this coming Wednesday, March 9th at 3:00 pm in the Micoud Multipurpose Centre.

The project provides for local resilience to conditions caused by climate change, especially to help mitigate fluctuations in the district water supply to homes and businesses.

This initiative for Rainwater Harvesting seeks to address water supply problems for Micoud District resulting from unusual weather patterns in recent years, including both flood and drought conditions.

PEP is implementing this project as a way of assisting in the re-balancing of water supplies, and using sustainable natural resources to the best advantage.

"Climate Change Adaptation Through Rainwater Harvesting" is a two-fold project: one stage for the community at large and one to assist individual households.

The second stage involves the construction of Rainwater Harvesting Systems at several key sites in Micoud, which includes emergency shelters and service buildings.

The aim is to ensure that the design is simple, low-cost, and easy to implement, which would allow residents and business owners to have their own reliable, self-sustaining water supply — serving as a buffer for Micoud's recurrent problems with public water supply.

PM lauds nation's Top 2016 Sports Personalities as Lavern Spencer wins a top Gold National Award!

Dr. Anthony encouraged athletes to remain steadfast, and keep striving for the top. Saint Lucia's top sportswoman of all time has been rewarded with a top national award.

Lavern Donaline Spencer was one of the 43 Saint Lucians who received national awards for Independence 2016 last Sunday (February 28).

During an investiture ceremony at Government House, Lavern was presented with a Saint Lucia Medal of Merit (Gold) 'For ritorious service in the field of Sports' by Governor General Dame Pearlette Louisy.

Lavern's award was announced by the Governor general on Independence Day, February 22 during the national rally at Mindoo Philip Park.

She then received the award two weeks having been – yet

again – judged the best sportswoman of the year.

The 36th edition of the National Sports Awards concluded on Saturday, February 13, where Lavern and Jordan Augier were named as Saint Lucia's Sportswoman and Sportsman of the Year.

Spencer, a 31-year-old world-ranked high jumper and 2015 Pan American Games champion, won her 13th title, while Augier, an Olympic hopeful swimmer, won his first senior title, having been named Junior Sportsman of the Year in 2011.

Awards were also presented at the ceremony that evening for winning athletes, teams, coaches, administrators, and districts.

Although he was unable to attend the ceremony, Prime Minister Dr. Kenny D. Anthony extended felicitations to the nominees, the winners and the

organizers, setting Ms. Spencer for specific mention.

Said Dr. Anthony: "I must congratulate all of the award recipients, the teams and individuals who represented themselves, their families, their communities -- and indeed all of Saint Lucia, to the very best of their capability, through the 12 months past.

"It is truly heartening to see the volume of sport that has been included in the program for Independence 37; and it is really gratifying to witness our youth benefitting from and taking full advantage of the investment that this Government has made in positioning them for success on and off the field of play.

"But amongst all of the winners, I think it is fitting that we single out Lavern Spencer for special attention.

"What a tremendous example she is for our young people, our up and coming athletes in particular.

"But Lavern is an exceptional example for all of us as proud and patriotic Saint Lucians.

"Her dedication to her craft, her tremendous self-confidence and ambition, her dignity, and above all, her ability to compete with the very best in the world -- these are the attributes that make her a champion worthy of celebration and worthy of emulation.

"This is part of the fabric of who we are as a people and it was telling that Lavern once again matched her Caribbean record on the same day she was being lauded by the Ministry of Youth Development and Sports, who staged an excellent and well-received ceremony."

Dr. Anthony also encouraged



Dr. Anthony encouraged athletes to remain steadfast, and keep striving for the top like Lavern Spencer.

the athletes to remain steadfast, and to keep striving for the top.

Among the other winners, Jamaica-based sprinter Julien Alfred and West Indies youth cricketer Johnnel Eugene were named Junior Sportswoman and Sportsman of the Year, while Soufriere was named as the top sporting district.

Sports Minister heads top CARICOM body



Hon. Shawn Edwards

Saint Lucia's Youth and Sports Minister is the new Chairman of an important Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Ministerial body.

The Ministry of Youth Development and Sports announced earlier this week that the Government of Saint Lucia had appointed Youth and Sports Development Minister Shawn Edward to assume the Chairmanship of the CARICOM Council of Human and Social Development (COHSOD).

The minister has since taken up the post, which will last for a full year.

Minister Edward, who is also the MP for Dennerly North, took over the chairmanship at the XXIX COHSOD Meeting on Youth and Culture, which took place in Guyana earlier this week.

The meeting started on Thursday and ended yesterday (March 3 and 4) in the Guyana capital, Georgetown.

During his tenure, the Saint Lucia minister will be required to provide ministerial representation and chairmanship for a number of meetings geared towards addressing issues faced by CARICOM on youth development, youth unemployment and sustainable youth governance structures.

Mr Edward brings to the Chairmanship his expertise in community mobilization and participation, youth development and sports management.

Five off to USA for football trials with Sports Ministry's blessings!



HEADING FOR AMERICA: (Left to right) Shadrack Henry, Anton Paul, Kenhil Polius, Nyron Winter and Alton Richards.

The Ministry of Youth Development & Sports is assisting five young St. Lucian footballers from different clubs from around the island to travel to United State for football trials.

The five -- Alton Richards, Nyron Winter, Anton Paul, Shadrack Henry and Kenhil Polius -- received the good news recently at a ceremony held at the ministry's conference room in the Blue Coral Mall in Castries.

Speaking at the presentation

ceremony, acting Sports Scholarship coordinator in the Ministry for Youth Development and Sports Antonius "Nickie" Calderon expressed the hope that the players would use that platform to extend their football knowledge, skills and careers.

He also urged them to strive to use their newly-acquired skills to go on to secure scholarships.

Calderon went on to say "The Ministry has always empathized in getting our young

players to further their education through sports and today is no exception. We wish them well as they pursue their dreams."

Youth and Sports Minister Shawn Edward said that if after arriving in the USA the footballers impress sufficiently, they will win themselves scholarships.

"Part of the mandate of the Sports Scholarship Desk in my Ministry is to go beyond the shores of St. Lucia and find op-

portunities for young St. Lucians who are excelling at sports and try and get them places at universities and colleges that will facilitate their overall academic development, as well as any other sporting discipline they choose" the sports minister said.

The young men will be engaged in two days of trials, at Bryant and Stratton College in New Jersey, as they seek to impress coaches and scouts in the United States.

Is Sovereignty Real?

Continued from Page 2

again. Today, we have to import most of our food from aboard – a serious injustice to our healthy soil and pleasant agricultural climate.

It's worth noting that annually more than US\$2 billion is spent by CARICOM countries on food imports, although their combined population is only six million people. If ever we needed evidence of the neglect and under-

development of the agricultural sector in the region, this is it.

As for financial sovereignty, no such thing exist for small states like ours, as the power centres of global capitalism have sought to tackle tax evasion and money laundering – problems which they themselves have bred and facilitated – by unfairly targeting Caribbean countries and restricting financial flows with little consideration for the health of these economies.

Of further disquiet is the recent labeling of Caribbean islands as "tax havens" by individual state governments of the USA – despite the fact that these islands deal with the federal government and not with its individual states.

For this and other reasons, small nations need to continuously be on the guard against the bullying and highhandedness of foreign powers that have ostensibly set "operative ideals" on how international relations ought

to be conducted in the 21st century.

On that basis, I implore small nation states to remain vigilant in the fight to protect the rights and interests of their people from a few large states and global institutions that are hell-bent on ruling the world.

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