

**FATIMA OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION
PRESIDENTS REPORT
MAY 24, 2012**

Opening

Good afternoon, it is great to have you here with us. This has been an eventful year with some great successes and some hiccups, as we continue to strive to grow our Association and our alma mater.

As I have done for the past couple years, I will provide you with a synopsis of what the Old Boys have tried and accomplished over the past year.

This will be done under three main headings, and by extension, our three main objectives:

1. Assisting the College
2. Fund-raising activities
3. Alumni-related activities

Assisting the College

Firstly, assisting the college. We continue, as an association, to work closely with the college to provide as much support and assistance as we possibly can, and I would now like to review some of our more meaningful contributions over the past year.

Library Project

I must start with the library refurbishment project, the major project we undertook this year. This was a significant upgrade to the library, which was initially built in 1974 and has not had much further work and improvements done on it.

The size of the library was increased and the layout improved. Furniture was replaced, and a large, separate room for Form 6 students alone was created with multi-media facilities and comfortable executive seating arrangements, hopefully an incentive to study and to get scholarships.

Take it from me; this was an important initiative. And the project was done on time within the August holidays last year.

Actually this is what we hope to be the first phase of the library project. The second phase on which we are keen, entails accessing the data and knowledge through technology to reduce the need for physical books. But that is a work in progress.

I feel it is necessary to pay special tribute to Dwight Andrews who spearheaded the project, Noel Aming, Graeme Ottley and Trevor De Landro, for the special effort in getting this done, and doing it well. Thanks, gentlemen.

While undertaking that project, we also took the opportunity to make some improvements to the audio visual centre, and to enhance some safety features around the school, primarily by building an emergency exit for the Form 1 classrooms above the cafeteria.

During the year, we also installed a state of the art security camera system.

Sporting Activities

The next area with which we assist is in the field of sports. We continue to play an integral part in the development of sport within the school through our involvement in financing and working with the various sporting disciplines.

As usual, we have continued to significantly contribute to the football, cricket and athletic programs. And as we did the year before, we assisted the school in sending a Fatima athletics team to the Penn State relays, and a cricket team to Barbados.

The other sporting disciplines have not benefitted financially as significantly as these top three. However, Fatima has been dominant in other sports for example rugby, chess, swimming and water polo, amongst others, and though our assistance is not significant in these areas, we did partly finance the Fatima students who made the Trinidad & Tobago secondary school rugby team on their tour to Barbados last August.

Donations

We also make some donations to the college, in times of need, and to others affiliated with the College (for example, during the past year we provided some financial assistance to two students who represented the TT U19 cricket team in Guyana).

Advisory Committee

And finally, in terms of providing support to the College, FOBA continues to play a very important role on the Fatima Advisory Committee which is chaired by Fr Gregory and includes members of the Parent Support Group.

Fund-raising Activities Held During the Year

To accomplish these goals, we must have major funding. So the second objective that I will review today is fund-raising.

As we strive to increase the assistance that we provide to the school, we are constantly looking at improving our fundraising opportunities and trying to identify new ways to generate funding and interest.

In many cases we have succeeded remarkably, but we have also had our hiccups (and we did unfortunately have two of them this past year).

Old Years Night Party

One was the Ole Years night party (Trini Ole Years) that we tried for the first time. The party itself turned out well, however financially it failed miserably to put it bluntly.

Musical Blends

More recently, in fact last weekend, we were to have our Musical Blends concert, featuring the Temptations Review, but made a decision a week before to cancel due to relatively poor ticket sales to that point, and after noting the poor attendance at other similar shows during the previous weeks.

Obviously some learning opportunities for us as a committee, but definitely not events to deter us from continuing to work hard to build our Association.

On the plus side, all our other fund raising activities did very well and we were able to grow the revenue generated from each of these events.

Cookout

I will start with the annual Salt and Pepper Cookout which was held in October. Very successful event once again...well organized and well attended, which was quite remarkable considering that the country was in a state of emergency, with a curfew in place and that there was torrential rainfall for almost the whole afternoon and evening.

The Fatima spirit came shining through on that gloomy, rainy day as old boys involved (cooks, who still came out in their numbers, those working on the day, and those who bought tickets) ensured that it was a success. I will never forget the sight of Fr Gregory and others helping on the day, becoming totally drenched in a thunderstorm as they moved chairs and tables from the quadrangle to the hall, a decision that was made at the last minute.

One of the main reasons for having this cookout is to provide an opportunity for all involved in Fatima to get together, enjoy a good lime while savouring some sumptuous dishes in a nice environment. And we feel we have accomplished that while bringing in some much needed cash for the association.

I would like to specially thank the Cookout sub-committee, which was headed Mitch De Silva who, though not a committee member, assumed responsibility for managing the event and included Hayden, Derek and Afiba, for helping organize a wonderful event.

Carnival Fete

The ever popular all-inclusive Carnival fete followed in February. The theme this year was "Let There Be Light" and a great light did shine upon it. Once again, our reputation for having one of the best fetes of the year was maintained, or I dare say, exceeded. This is our biggest fundraiser and I am glad to report that this year's fete was the most profitable ever.

We do place special care and effort in ensuring that the fete is successful and that patrons get their monies worth....the level of planning and review is phenomenal.

And this year we tried a few innovative ideas that turned out to be popular. In particular, the layout of the party was changed pretty radically, to the surprise and pleasure of most; and we introduced the concept of "Corporate Boxes" that was a hit and financially a success.

We also as well had a lottery to provide Old boys registered on our database who may not have been able to get tickets for the fete with an opportunity to do so. Gladly, we were able to provide all those who entered the lottery with two tickets.

Wall Signs

The final major fund-raising activity that we manage is the revenue from the wall-signs. This continues to be a very useful source of funds for us, and Kenny Young continues to explore opportunities to improve in this area, and has some interesting plans in the works.

Alumni-related Activities

Other activities that we undertook during the year were more alumni-focused, and this is the third major objective review.

Firstly, we once again had the 7-a-side football in 2011, the sole purpose of which is to get our alumni together, to enjoy a day of fun and exercise.

Secondly, our Alumni Membership committee has continued its efforts to ensure that Old Boys can be kept informed of what's happening.

Their work through the FOBA web-site (which is continually being upgraded), our Facebook page, the alumni database, and last but not least, the impressive newsletter "Beyond the Grey Shirt" provided up-to-date information on happenings within FOBA.

In addition, during the past year, the committee launched the sale of branded merchandise, available during our events, and continues to work on developing the estore.

I would like to thank the Alumni Membership Committee, led by Stephen Harris, for the great job they are doing, and I have invited Stephen to do a short presentation this afternoon on what they've been doing, which he will do after my report is completed.

Appreciation

When I first joined this committee a number of years ago, a lot of sacrifice and effort was required of a member. If I dare say so, and in my view, the work load now has maybe doubled since that time.

The major projects being undertaken by the Association; the continuous fund-raising efforts that are required; and the communication and interaction with the alumni have asked a lot of the members.

Words cannot express the appreciation and respect I have for all the members of this committee for their dedication and commitment to the Association and by extension to Fatima College. It is absolutely amazing (and this is an amazing committee)!!!

At times it is a struggle and a sacrifice, but hopefully the enjoyment of working together and the fruits of our labour make it worthwhile. I definitely feel so!

So thanks so much to each one of you. To the vice president, Stafford, who has provided immense guidance and support to me, to Ruthven (the trusted Treasurer for the past 4 years), Graeme, our Secretary, who has brought more discipline to our process, or should I say tries to, and to Kevin (who volunteers for everything), Hayden, Derek, Roger, Kenny, George, Newman, Afiba (our very young energetic member), Raymond, Trevor, Keith, Noel. Thank you.

But that's not all, as I would like to say a special thanks to Dwight for the magnificent effort you made during the year, being heavily involved and playing a key role in many if not all of our initiatives. Great job, Dwight.

Thanks to Others

As a committee we know that we cannot achieve what we set out to do without the assistance of so many others, who volunteer their time, effort and resources (financial and otherwise). I am speaking here of:

- The past members of the committee who continue their close association and support of us
- The extended fete committee (so many of you who take an active role in our organizing committee, and who provide yeoman service on the day itself);
- The cooks at the Cookout: we serve over 90 dishes at the cookout due to our loyal alumni
- Those who donate financially and otherwise, including by buying and helping us sell tickets for our events

- Karen, our dedicated secretary and her faithful team of ladies, friends & family who are a God-send during our events, and throughout the year
- The Parent Support Group which is playing a more important role in our events
- The companies that consistently support us when we come begging (which seems very often);
- And last but not least, Fr Gregory who has been an excellent support to us, and with whom the Committee works closely to accomplish our goals.

Once again, thanks to all of you as we would not be able to achieve what we have without your invaluable assistance.

Summary

So, in summary, FOBA continues to

1. Provide greater assistance to the school; with the major refurbishment of the library, the installation of safety and security measures, and our support of the sporting programs being the highlights for the past year.
2. Despite the ventures that did not turn out as we would have liked, we continue to grow our revenue through successful fund-raising events: hosting a popular carnival fete and a successful cookout, and increasing our revenue through wall signs.
3. Generate interaction and communication with our alumni, through the website, facebook and the newsletter, and through activities like the 7 a side football and the cookout, to mention it again.

And this could not be done without the hard work and sacrifice of our committee and so many others.

Conclusion

FOBA plays a big role within Fatima College. All of us are needed (whether on the committee or not) to assist Fr Gregory and the faculty in their efforts to keep Fatima growing.

Fatima Boys have a spirit that is dynamic and inspiring, and we must keep it that way....we all have an important role to play in that respect...you must continue to help.

Nitendo Vinces and Thank you