

Fatima Old Boys Association

President's Report for 2014-2015

Good afternoon to all. I am always pleased to see not only the familiar faces, but also several new ones in this AGM. It is an indication of the strength of FOBA and the Fatima Brand which other organisations cannot match and which allows the quality and quantity of our endeavours to be in a different class.

The year 2013-2014 saw us undertake the construction of the North Wing. Due to the financial commitments involved in its construction, our hands were somewhat tied regarding new capital projects this year, however, that does not mean that we did not continue to work diligently and make meaningful contributions.

Each year FOBA chooses a capital project as a way of making infrastructural improvements that would otherwise go undone. This year was no different.

Back when most of us were in Fatima, teachers used blackboards and chalk as lesson delivery tools. Some time ago the school switched to using markers and whiteboards. That was an evolutionary step. This year's major capital project represents a revolutionary step in that we have **signed a deal to install smartboards** in every classroom by September 2, 2015!

The smartboards will be provided by Flow under a managed service arrangement. This allows us the flexibility to have them changed as the technology improves. The contract also includes a maintenance agreement. The cost, though, is not cheap. It will cost FOBA \$50,000 per month for 5 years to outfit the school with smartboards. This is no minor financial commitment and, as a result, our fundraising needs are greater than ever. We are counting on all of you to help ensure that we can continue to offer the greatest educational opportunities to our students.

This year, we also made significant progress with a long time idea of ours which was to **standardise the school sports uniform**. This time last year, I announced to you that the designs were finalised and that we were in the process of procuring the uniforms. Because of the bespoke nature of the uniforms, we had to look overseas for a supplier. We chose a supplier in Pakistan and we are quite pleased with the results. I can announce now that all Fatima sports teams that require the uniform have received them. Should any of you wish to purchase a supporter jersey, we have those for sale through anyone in the Alumni sub-committee or at the FOBA Office.

The cost to outfit all of the school's teams was over \$100,000, however, due to the tireless work of a few key members of the Sponsorship sub-committee, the vast majority of this cost was underwritten by sponsorship from Lucozade.

In order to accomplish all that we do, FOBA needs to engage in significant fundraising, the majority of which comes in the form of events. This past year we hosted the familiar events: the Cookout, the Annual Carnival All-Inclusive Fete and the Carnival Cruise.

As usual the **Salt & Pepper Cookout** was held in October. This event presents the Fatima family with an opportunity to socialise and mingle in a relaxed atmosphere while enjoying some good food. To this end, we were successful, posting a profit of \$150,000.

Every year our All-Inclusive Fete is considered by many people to be the number one fete during Carnival. In fact, it is so consistently good that we no longer compete with other all-inclusives – we compete against ourselves. This creates a conundrum for us as each year our faithful patrons expect more than the previous year. It is a testament to the tremendous amount of hard work and planning that goes into it that year after year we keep them begging for more! Once again, the fete was a resounding financial success, yielding a profit of \$1.8 million dollars.

This year there was an unsavoury aspect to the Fete that left a sour taste in a lot of patrons' mouths. I'm sure you will be pleased to know that we will not be re-engaging with the character responsible again.

In 2015 we hosted the 3rd edition of our Carnival Cruise which is now known to be on the Harbour Master on the Wednesday after the Fete. As we did last year, we partnered with other alumni associations to cast a wider net. The partnership this year was with St. Francois and Holy Name and the results were fantastic! The cruise had more than 500 patrons on board and, at the end, partyers refused to leave. People had such a good time that they continued the party in the car park after being evicted from the boat. We really look forward to the next edition of the Carnival Cruise. This event realised a profit of \$96,000 of which \$18,000 was given to St. Francois and \$9,500 going to Holy Name. Fatima's net profit was therefore \$68,500.

We attempted for the first time, a screening at Digicel Imax in an effort to raise funds. This first-time effort only broke even but we intend to try again next year in anticipation of better results. As many of you may know by now, we also have carded for July 4, our first ever back-in-time event which will be held right here in Fatima hall. This event will be held in partnership with St. Francois Girls College Alumni. We therefore urge you all to come out and support this effort of the FOBA Events Sub-Committee.

While raising funds to benefit the school will always be one of FOBA's primary purposes, we cannot forget the importance of our role in [fostering camaraderie among the old boys](#). This past year saw the re-establishment of efforts to bring old boys closer together. Last year, during the World Cup, the Alumni and the Events sub-committees hosted a bar tour where old boys watched games together in a very relaxed and social atmosphere. This initiative was a resounding success and we look forward to doing more of these.

The Events sub-committee also re-started a historically popular event: the football tournament. This event, held in September 2014, was very well attended and the beers were flowing long into the night. It was such a success that the sub-committee decided to host a similar one for cricket in April. This too brought out old boys in their numbers and had appetites whetted for the next edition.

FOBA has been working on the [establishment of a Hall of Fame](#) for several years. For various reasons, this project has started and stopped. We have decided, however, that we will launch the Hall by the end of November 2015. We are determined to do so in recognition of two

significant events both taking place in this calendar year 2015. Those two events are the 70th Anniversary of Fatima College as an educational institution and the 50th Anniversary of the Fatima Old Boys Association. Indeed, it is our intention in the 2016 version of our aforementioned carnival fete to celebrate these two achievements. It is our intention to induct seventy persons in the first induction ceremony to the Hall of Fame. Thereafter, a yet to be determined number of persons will be inducted each year. The Recognition and Benefits Sub-Committee is leading the effort in ensuring that the Hall of Fame is established by the stipulated date. Of course, our Principal, Fr. Gregory Augustine, serves as advisor to this committee along with our historian, Mr. Keith Simpson.

As many of you may have noticed, FOBA has become the main income earner for the school. Consequently, we have been looking at our structure and the way we do business. As you will be allowed to vote on later, we propose a structure change more consistent with our objectives as the main income earner for the school. Tabled on our agenda will be the redefinition of our Executive Committee. At present, this committee is made up of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. This Executive Committee is responsible for all strategic decisions of FOBA. We have recognised however that this format puts undue burden on some members while under-utilising the skills of others. We are therefore seeking to develop an executive structure which will assign specific strategic responsibilities to executive members. We are proposing therefore that the executive be aligned more to that of a medium sized business. The positions of President, Senior Vice President, Vice President (Sports and Extra-Curricular Activities), Vice President (Finance), Vice President (Strategic Operations) and Secretary are therefore being put forward to you for approval moving forward. It is hoped that this change will assist in further allowing FOBA to be efficient.

All of our progress and successes could not have been achieved overnight and without much hard work. It is good for us, on occasions such as these, to **express our appreciation**. FOBA, while not the oldest alumni association in Trinidad, is definitely one of the strongest. It certainly did not become so by chance. Over the previous 5 decades yeoman service was provided by

several stalwart members long before it became somewhat 'fashionable' to be involved with the Old Boys Association. People like Derek Johnson (our first President), Dennis Ramdeen, Ian Benjamin and several others too numerous to name are no longer involved at the management level but never fail to lift a finger when asked. Our gratitude to you is boundless.

The past couple of years have seen other long serving members like Roger d'Abadie, Stafford Yorke, Kenny Young and Derek de Gannes ride off into the sunset ...so to speak. They, however, still remain quite involved in operations of FOBA. Gentlemen, thank you.

The Executive Committee consisting of Ruthven - the Vice President, Hayden - the Secretary, Mitch - our Treasurer, Rawle - the Assistant Secretary and Laurence - the Assistant Treasurer perform well as a team and each bring something unique to the table. I cannot imagine where I'd be without them. Gentlemen, thank you.

The other members of the management committee contributed significantly to another successful year for FOBA. Newman, Trevor, Kevin, Raymond, Dexter, Noel, Keith, Bobby and Rene - the sum total of your efforts is greater than the individual contributions. Gentlemen, thank you.

I'd like to single out the sub-committee chairmen who frequently do the double duty of running their sub-committees and also contributing at the management level. Colin, Kent, Jason and Carlos - your current work augurs well for the future of the organisation. Gentlemen, thank you.

I would also like to thank the extended FOBA family. FOBA receives significant support from many outside of the organisation itself. At the very least, they make our job much easier and enable us to accomplish so much more. In particular I would like to thank:

- The extended Fete Committee who help organise and run the event. It would not be what it is without you.
- The cooks at the Cookout who come out in their numbers to provide and serve dishes.
- The companies and individuals who donate and provide sponsorship.

- The Parent Support Group who help not just FOBA but Fatima – thus making our job easier.
- Karen, our Administrative Assistant, who works tirelessly and adds great value to every single aspect of all that we do.
- And Fr. Gregory – without whose support and consent, all of our efforts would fall flat.

In thinking of those we need to thank, it is always likely, though never intentional, that a name or two may have been forgotten. Be assured that I extend my deepest and sincerest gratitude to you all.

Conclusion

This past year has been one of significance for FOBA. We attempted a lot and achieved a lot as well. But the work doesn't stop here. There is a lot more to do and we will get there – with the support and dedication of members like you.

Nintendo Vinces!