



NATIONWIDE

A publication of the Department of Information Services



Butch Stewart



David Singh



Steven Baker

ST. LUCIA HAS FAVOURABLE INVESTMENT CLIMATE – FOREIGN INVESTORS

On the heels of a statement by Chairman of Sandals Resort International (SRI), Gordon “Butch” Stewart that it is St. Lucia’s favourable investment climate that enticed him to build yet another hotel here, another foreign investor, David Singh, Chairman of Destiny Health and Wellness based in Canada has echoed similar sentiments. And not too long ago, Steven Baker, President and CEO of United Network of the Eastern Caribbean (UNEC), shared the same view.

SRI, the parent group of the Sandals and Beaches chains, announced last week that it would construct a new US\$80 million hotel on 35 acres of land the company recently acquired at Pigeon Point.

The new hotel, which was originally carded for Vieux Fort, will be a five-star property with 300 rooms and luxury suites. It is expected to employ approximately 250 jobs during the construction phase and some 600 fulltime jobs when it commences operation.

Mr. “Butch” Stewart said at the time of the announcement, that a major factor behind his group’s decision to make yet another investment in St. Lucia was “the enlightened business climate” that has been evolving on the island.

Mr Stewart said Sandals was proud to be an active player in St. Lucia’s economy and was enthusiastic about the introduction of its new line of family resorts to the island.

Speaking of the new resort, the Sandals Chairman said it was intended to introduce “a new dimension in St. Lucia’s tourism product” and that “nothing will be spared to make it a showpiece for St. Lucia’s tourism industry.”

The Jamaican entrepreneur said Sandals “will continue to do all in its power to unlock the island’s tourism potential and bring more prosperity to its nationals.”

The Sandals group has been operating in St. Lucia for eleven years. With three properties on the island, the group already employs nearly 2,000 workers and its contribution in direct revenue to the economy last year stood at \$300 million.

Beaches St. Lucia will be the chain’s first such hotel in the Eastern Caribbean.

Only this week, Saint Lucia was chosen to be

the headquarters of a Canadian company, which is in the process of expanding to the United States, South America and the Caribbean Region. By December of 2004, one of Canada’s leading nutraceutical companies, Destiny Health and Wellness will be part of the island’s growing league of regional and international companies. Chairman of Destiny Health and Wellness, David Singh said that he found the investment climate in St. Lucia very attractive.

“The reason I am here in Saint Lucia is to look into putting all the pieces of the puzzle in place to launch our business here in the Caribbean, and more so specifically here in Saint Lucia on December 6, 2004. Sorting all the pieces of the puzzle means we’ve got all kinds of banking and legal work to do, but we are committed to being here and launching Destiny Health and Wellness in Saint Lucia,” Mr. Singh said.

And recently, Steven Baker, President and CEO of United Network of the Eastern Caribbean (UNEC), a geothermal exploration company said that St. Lucia had the right conditions for investment.

Speaking at the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government for work on finding alternative energy source in Soufriere, Mr. Baker said, “One of the reasons we came to St. Lucia and what attracted us is that the economy here is very strong, it’s very stable, it is a developing economy”, pointing out that from what they had seen, all the right conditions were in place in St. Lucia to enable them to have a good working future. The US\$10-million project is to begin in 6 months and will last for a period of three years.

Mr. Baker also praised the Office of Private Sector Relations (OPSR) in the Prime Minister’s Office for facilitating the process, which had led to Tuesday’s signing. He said the fact that such an agency existed as a go-between to do the ground work for setting up shop in Saint Lucia was invaluable.

The project is expected to create employment in the construction sector as well as employment within the plant. UNEC has pledged to transfer the technology within five years of operations in Saint Lucia, with a number of openings to be created in the field of Engineering.



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Every Friday at 6.15 p.m. on **NTN**, Cablevision Channel 2.

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A fresh news package
daily
on all local radio stations



Leading health and wellness company coming to St. Lucia



David Singh

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According to Mr. Singh, in light of the health conditions that plague the local community, there is scope in St. Lucia for the nutraceutical industry, which focuses on the preventative side of medicine. "The types of things we are looking for before we go into a

particular marketplace are things like the need for our products first and foremost, and we know there is a need here in Saint Lucia; we know there is a global need for our products all over the world. We are aware for example, that hypertension and diabetes are two big health issues here in Saint Lucia", Mr. Singh explained.

Mr. Singh said that funding to fully establish this new initiative was expected to run into millions of dollars, and would create employment opportunities for several persons.

Saint Lucia advance in preparations for Caribbean Court of Justice

Saint Lucia has been aggressive in its efforts to meet its commitment to the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), according to Mr. Deale Lee, a representative of the Attorney General's Office on the CARICOM Single Market and Economy Task Force.

Pointing out that preliminary work had been completed, Mr. Lee said, "The Caribbean Court Justice is still on stream it's just that there has been a postponement in the official launching, which was supposed to take place in November of this year. Hopefully, it will take place in the first quarter of 2005".

Me. Lee emphasised that in terms

of Saint Lucia's readiness, the basic preparatory work had been completed, and what needed to be done was to make amendments to remove the Privy Council, as "our final appellate jurisdiction." Saint Lucia, he pointed out was one of the few countries that have actually passed legislation providing for the CCJ.

The CCJ, a major organ of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy is expected to make it easier and cheaper for people of the Caribbean to have every tool of the legal system at their disposal.

Mr Lee said the Privy Council, which serves as the final court of appeal is a costly venture and sometimes discour-



Prime Minister of Jamaica, P.J. Patterson and Dr. Kenny D. Anthony are strong supporters of the CCJ

ages people from pursuing cases to that level, noting that with the CCJ residing in the Caribbean, the regions people would have an option when making a decision about how to proceed with a case, rather than abandoning an action because of cost.

According to Mr. Lee, benefits from the CCJ will primarily be in terms of

cost. He explained that the Privy Council was often used as a sword against poorer litigants, who were not able to take their case to the Privy Council, thereby enabling wealthier litigants to win the appeal by default. "That is a situation, which will disappear with the CCJ", he said.

PM supports Concert to benefit Grenada



Grenada: Devastated by Hurricane Ivan

The Office of the Prime Minister has thrown its support behind entertainment group Caribbean Visions for the staging of a concert in Saint Lucia to benefit Grenada.

The concert will be a telethon to be staged at the Pigeon Island National Landmark on Saturday, October 23, 2004 and is to start at 11:00 a.m. and end at 8:00 p.m.

Caribbean

Visions has enlisted a number of well known local artistes, including Ronald 'Boo' Hinkson, 2004 Calypso Monarch Jany Williams, Emran Henry, Elra Ermay and Friends, Sisterhood, Vincent Small Lewis and Claudia 'Diva' Edwards for the show.

An impressive array of talent from sister Caribbean territories is on the bill, including The Windiez Band, Caribbean All Stars, Onyan out of Antigua, Andy Amstrong of Square One band from Barbados, Kurt Allen of Trinidad and Tobago, Madzart of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Cornelle Phillip of WCK Dominica.

The star-studded event will see the appearance of an icon of West Indies Cricket, Curtley Ambrose.

The sound system will be provided by Arthur Tisson's MC Sounds/Atlantic Gardens.

The main organisers, Caribbean Visions said that a number of persons and organisations were assisting with the production of the Grenada Benefit Telethon.

On September 7, 2004, much of Grenada was destroyed, following the passage of Hurricane Ivan. Since then the region's people have been assisting the island in every possible way.

Government to address discrimination against children

One of the oldest forms of discrimination against children in Saint Lucia is the ‘illegitimate children’ categorisation. This is one of the existing circumstances that will be addressed under the Revised Family Law Reform Project. The process forms a major part of the Saint Lucia Civil Code Reform Project, which became operational in July, 2002.

Legislative Draughter in the Attorney General’s Chambers, Allison Isaac said that the Attorney General’s Office

would hold a major public consultation on Tuesday, October 12, 2004, to review the provisions of the draft report of the Family Law Committee, and source feedback from the community before the document is submitted to cabinet.

“We need them to tell us where we’re going or if they’re in agreement with the way we’re proposing to change the law. The places we intend to make some significant changes include the areas that deal with the rights



Participants at public consultation with Attorney-General Petrus Compton at left

of the child; we want to propose that we remove all forms of discrimination against children”, Ms. Issac explained, adding, “we would also like all children to have equal rights to maintenance”.

The revised legislation also proposes to address the rights and duties of

spouses to each other, including spouses in relationships other than marriage.

A number of public and private sector organisations had been invited to attend the conference at Bay Gardens Hotel.

Private sector heeding to Government’s call on HIV/Aids

Two hotels on the island have taken the lead in responding to the Government’s call for employers to formulate policies on “HIV/AIDS in the Workplace”, for their organisations.

Executive Director of the AIDS Action Foundation, Miss Joan Didier said that the Foundation had been working progressively, to help business places develop an HIV/AIDS in the Workplace Policy.

“We have begun doing this work for quite some time, we started two years ago with the Sandals group of hotels and Jalousie in Soufriere. We began working with key focal people in their hotels to educate and sensitize then on HIV and AIDS, so they in turn became peer educators for their peers in the workplace. Sandals has gone one step ahead and actually formulated a draft HIV/AIDS in the Workplace Policy”, Miss Didier said.

More employers in both the public and private sectors are being called upon to move speedily to join in the move to adopt an informed approach to dealing with the incidence of HIV/AIDS while on the job.

The call was made at the recent launching of the HIV/AIDS in the workplace Programme.

Minister of Labour Relations, Public Service and Cooperatives, Honourable Velon John said that considering the amount of time spent at the workplace, and the level of interaction that occurs, the need for increased education and sensitization becomes even more paramount. Further, he noted that government was very concerned about the impact of HIV and AIDS on the supply of labour and the cost of productivity, since the most vulnerable age group, ranging from ages 15 to 49 form a major part of the workforce.

“In our context, it affects large and small businesses, and public and private

sector organisations, civil society and all such institutions. According to the National Labour Organisation, 90 per cent of the 40 million people infected with this disease, and that is a conser-

vative estimate, are in their productive and reproductive age group. Worst affected throughout the pandemic realm are persons between the ages of 15 and 49”, Minister John said.

The HIV/AIDS in the Workplace Programme is being funded by the Organisation of American States (OAS) and will inform the national HIV/AIDS Policy.



Participants at the launch of the HIV/AIDS in the Workplace Programme



The Beaches Hotel: Exc PM in conversation



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny D. Anthony

Hello St. Lucia, The big news last week was the announcement by the Sandals Group that it would construct a US \$80 million hotel on the Pigeon Island Causeway.

The Sandals announcement

The announcement of the introduction of “Beaches”, a new line of hotel resorts by the Sandals Group was good news to those interested in ensuring that we have enough rooms for “The Best Cricket World Cup Ever.” But it has also ignited the predictable debate about Butch Stewart and his investments in St. Lucia.

A history of investment

For some inexplicable reason, an opposition spokesman has firmly opposed the construction of another hotel here by the Sandals Group, claiming, among other things, that it would give Butch Stewart a disproportionate advantage over other hoteliers. The Government is accused of allowing the sale of 35 acres of land on the Pigeon Island Causeway that could have or should have gone to someone else. It was said that the Sandals Group already has too much influence on our national tourism product, and the Government is negligent in “putting all our eggs in one basket.”

No stranger to St. Lucia

Sandals is no stranger to St. Lucia. The group has been operating here for eleven years – meaning, it started operations here four years before this administration took office. Its three properties employ nearly 2,000 workers

and together they contribute over 800 rooms to the island’s total hotel stock. The new Beaches hotel will take the number of rooms on the island managed by Sandals over the 1,100 mark. The Group’s contribution in direct revenue to the economy last year stood at \$300 million.

The new hotel will be a five-star property with 300 rooms and luxury suites. It is expected to employ approximately 350 persons during the construction phase and another 600 fulltime persons when it commences operation.

In a statement last week, I welcomed the news that in order to start the construction as soon as possible, Sandals Resorts International has fast-tracked the design and tender processes for the new resort. I indicated I was also happy that the new hotel will be completed in time to add to the available room plant on the island for Cricket World Cup 2007.

Indeed, it is my view that, rather than criticise the proposed investment just because it belongs to Butch Stewart, we should welcome the investment in a fourth property on the island as yet another manifestation of the confidence that Mr Stewart and his Group have in St. Lucia and St. Lucians.

A showpiece for our tourism

Sandals has said that a major factor behind its decision to make yet another investment in St. Lucia was what Butch Stewart described as “the enlightened business climate” that has been evolving on the island. He said Sandals was also “proud to be an active player in St.

Lucia’s economy.”

According to Sandals, this new hotel at the Pigeon Point Causeway is intended to introduce a new dimension in St. Lucia’s tourism product. The Group says it intends to make this new hotel, the first in the Beaches brand for St. Lucia, “the most spectacular and extraordinary family resort in the Eastern Caribbean”, and that “nothing will be spared to make it a showpiece for St. Lucia’s tourism industry.”

This is no idle talk. Just look at what Sandals has done with the former Hyatt Hotel at Pigeon Point and what it has done with the former La Toc Hotel. Unlike any of the three existing properties, this one will be constructed from scratch, so we can expect a superb product in the finest tradition of the Sandals Chain.

No happy-go-lucky company

I understand the concerns about supposedly “putting all our eggs in one basket”, but we are not dealing here with some happy-go-lucky company with a history of loss and failure.

The indisputable fact is that Sandals Resorts International, a Caribbean Company, is the largest operator of luxury, ultra all-inclusive resorts in the Caribbean. Its holdings include Sandals Resorts, Beaches Resorts, and Royal Plantation, Ocho Rios. The group has a total of 12 couples-only properties, with seven in Jamaica, three in St. Lucia, one in Antigua and one in Nassau. Beaches Resorts, which specialises in hosting families, has four hotels in Jamaica and Turks & Caicos Islands. The

“Beaches” hotel to be established here will be the brand’s first in the Eastern Caribbean.

Butch Stewart could have gone elsewhere. Other Caribbean Governments are constantly offering him incentives to invest in their countries. The fact that Butch Stewart continues to invest here is the result of a combination of the business climate created by this Government over the years and Sandals Chairman Butch Stewart’s own confidence in St. Lucia and St. Lucians.

Petty nationalism at large

Unfortunately, some here have already taken to describing the Sandals Chairman as “a Jamaican.” How sad that his nationality is an issue. I have said time and again, that with the Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME) just around the corner, it is important to shed these petty nationalist positions. Butch Stewart is a Caribbean man in every sense of the word!



We cannot continue to treat or describe our fellow Caribbean citizens as “foreigners” when, not too long from now, they will be enjoying most of the same rights we will be enjoying here; and vice versa, we too will be able to enjoy the same rights they enjoy in their respective countries.

But then, what’s all this fuss about Butch Stewart being “a Jamaican”? With a company which is not breaking our laws, that is contributing millions of dollars annually to our Treasury and employing 2,000 St. Lucians, tell me, in these enlightened times of Caribbean Nationhood, why should we hold it against Butch Stewart that he was born in Jamaica?

A tremendous asset

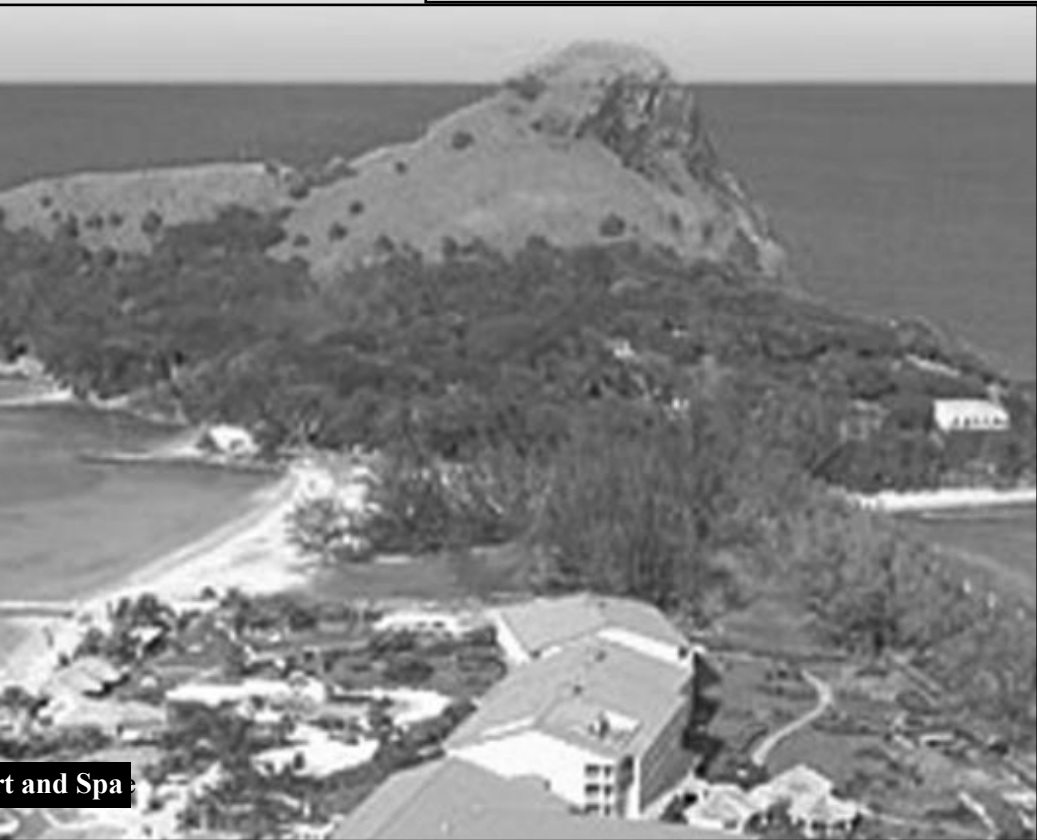
The Sandals Group is an asset to this country. For starters, the group has an advertising and promotion budget that is bigger than that of the St. Lucia Tourist Board. St. Lucia has benefited

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from the group’s superior international marketing and sales strategies and its promotion of St. Lucia as a favourable destination. Its unique connections with Air Jamaica, for example, have also assured a continued and continuing flow of visitors to its hotels on the island, ensuring an average 90% occupancy year-round. This high level of occupancy has in turn meant continued major promotion of St. Lucia, particularly in the US and Caribbean markets. St. Lucia’s name is on the tourism map, not only because of our national accomplishments and the work of our Tourist Board, but also because of the brand



Sandals Regency Golf Resort and Spa at La Toc



rt and Spa

name, Sandals. Sandals is a household name in the United States, Europe and elsewhere. And, just as important is the result that a couple thousand St. Lucians are able to have secure employment and be able to feed their families, pay their mortgages and send their children to school.

Those who simply oppose Butch Stewart’s acquisition of the Pigeon Point property on the basis of his nationality seem to have ignored the fact that the land in question had been available to its former French owners for 13 years, indeed since 1991. Are the critics saying that it should have been left idle and subject

to speculation on the market for another 13 years, until someone else, somewhere else, decided to do something with it? Remember the old proverb – a bird in hand is worth more than two in the bush!

Tough business!

The critics also take issue with the fact that the Sandals and Beaches brands cater for all-inclusive visitors. Of course, I would prefer a more diversified tourism product, but attracting new hotels is no easy challenge for any Caribbean country. It is tough business, these days.

We cannot always pick and choose as we would like to, but we also have to ensure that we attract the right investments and that having done so, we have to keep them here.

Expanding our hotel plant

While it is attracting all the attention, the Sandals Group isn’t the only one increasing its investments here.

Almost every major hotel here -- large or small, local or foreign-owned -- has expanded of late. From Bay Gardens, Anse Chastanet and Koko Creole to Le Sport, Rainbow and Windjammer, all of these hotels have taken positive steps to increase and improve their plant and operations.

The former Club Med in Vieux Fort is completing renovations and will be open for business in January under its new name, Coconut Beach. The Jalousie Hilton is on the verge of changing hands and expanding to operate in the super-luxury category as part of the internationally renowned “One and Only” chain. Then, there’s the new large hotel to be constructed at Praslin Bay. There is also Discovery at Marigot Bay, which is already quickly taking shape. I expect others to follow.

These are truly exciting times for tourism.

Until next Monday, God willing, do enjoy the rest of this week.



Sandals Halcyon

CHAMP targets low building standards

The Caribbean Hazard Mitigation Capacity Building Programme (CHAMP), is to implement a building and training certification programme at Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, in an effort to encourage artisans, builders and home owners to subscribe to higher building practices. The wider region is also to be included in training programme.

Mitigation and Research Officer of CIDERA, Ms. Evan Inniss said that the pilot project was being backed by sev-

eral international organisations, which recognise that reducing the vulnerability of the region to natural hazards, was directly linked to the use of safer building practices.

“When it comes to low income housing, persons are not so concerned about the safety building techniques; they are more interested in the bottom line - how much it would cost; so to get those carpenters and masons actually wanting to build those homes to those particular standards is what we are try-

ing to get”, Ms. Inniss said.

The pilot project is targeting Belize, the British Virgin Islands, Grenada and Saint Lucia. Ms. Inniss informed that the programme was primarily designed

for persons who work in the informal building sector. She emphasized that the training was critical, in light of the extensive damage to homes by Hurricane Ivan.

Dame Pearlette Louisy Primary School elects its first PTA

The Dame Pearlette Louisy Primary School has its first Parent Teacher Association in place.

The school which opened a little over a year ago in September of 2003, has a student population of over 900, making it the largest primary school on the island.

Principal, Mrs. Ethlene Leonce said that all the resources available to the school would have to be harnessed in order to build its character.

She saw the election of an executive for the PTA as a major step towards ensuring at the earliest, that parents are made aware of the need to be committed, not only to the academic development of

their children, but also to ensure that the school environment evolves, to embrace values, with which the entire school community can be proud to be associated.

The new executive boasts 14 members, including eight floor representatives for the infant and primary units of the school. The PTA will be led by President, Mr. Linwall James; Vice President, Miss. Deborah Edward; Secretary, Ms. Allison King-Joseph; Assistant Secretary, Miss. Zachariah King; Treasurer, Idonia Jules; Assistant, Miss. Marina Bernard; Public Relations Officer, Miss Valerie Albert; and assistant PRO, Miss Virnet St. Omer-Fontenelle.

Official opening of new Bureau of Standards building at Bisee, Castries



OECS High Commissioner presents credentials to Canadian PM

High Commissioner for the Countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Her Excellency Lorraine B. Williams, on Tuesday, October 12, 2004, presented her Letters of Introduction to the Rt. Honourable Paul Martin, Prime Minister of Canada. The presentation ceremony took place at the Prime Minister's Office in Ottawa.

During the ensuing discussion, High Commissioner Williams congratulated Prime Minister Paul Martin, and the Liberal Party, on their victory at the June 28, 2004 election. Noting that the countries of the OECS continue to be strong allies of Canada in regional and international fora, High Commissioner Williams expressed appreciation on behalf of the Government and people of the OECS, to the Government and people of Canada, for that country's continued support for the OECS in its pursuit of economic and social advancement. The High Commissioner also raised the need for Canada to provide concessionary funding, on a bilateral level, for development projects in the islands.

Prime Minister Paul Martin, who is personally familiar with the countries of the OECS, assured High Commissioner Williams of his Government's continued support to the OECS. He was also quite enthusiastic about the proposal for a renewed Canada/CARICOM summit, which could take place possibly, in 2005.

Prime Minister Martin conveyed his

deepest sympathy to the Government and people of Grenada on the tremendous losses suffered by the passage of Hurricane Ivan. He gave assurance that Canada would continue to provide financial and technical assistance to Grenada for the rebuilding of the country.

Her Excellency Lorraine B. Williams has been the High Commissioner for the Countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States since June, 2003. The presentation of her Letters of Introduction was delayed due to circumstances occurring in both Canada

and the OECS.

The High Commission in Canada represents the interests of the governments of Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. K and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

St. Lucia Tourist Board hosts Journalists for Bridal Publications



Jalousie Hilton Resort and Spa: Haven for weddings and honeymoons

Four Journalists representing the following publications; Bridal Magazine, Weddings for US and First for Women, were the hosts of the St. Lucia Tourist Board from October 8 – 13, 2004.

These magazines have a very large readership, particularly among women, and couples planning their weddings. Weddings and Honeymoon is St. Lucia's largest niche tourism market, and accounts for more than 30% of tourism arrivals or over 75,000 tourists per year. In 2003, there were 4,000 visitor weddings in St. Lucia.

The presence of these journalists is part of the marketing effort of the Tourist Board, to provide St. Lucia, with maximum coverage in key publications targeted at the bridal market.

The Board planned a number of activities for the journalists, including site visits to hotels and attractions, as well as discussions with the Director of Tourism, and meetings with other key private sector partners.

The journalists left the island on Wednesday October 13 2004.

Open Day at GIS/NTN

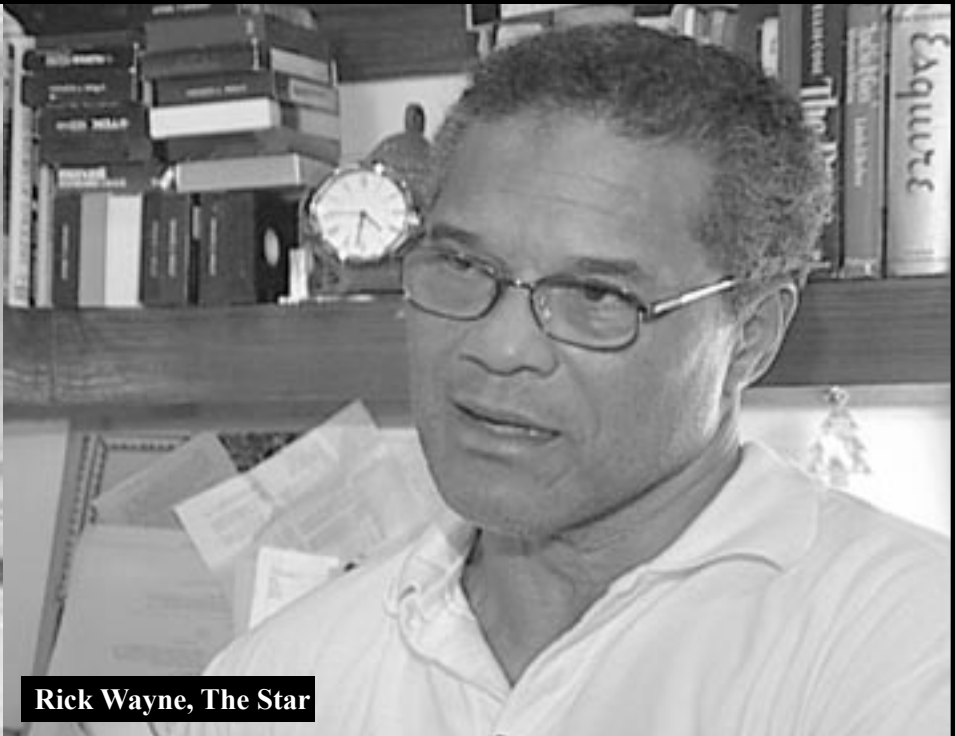


Corinth Secondary School students get a feel for the TV camera on Open Day, Thursday, Oct. 3

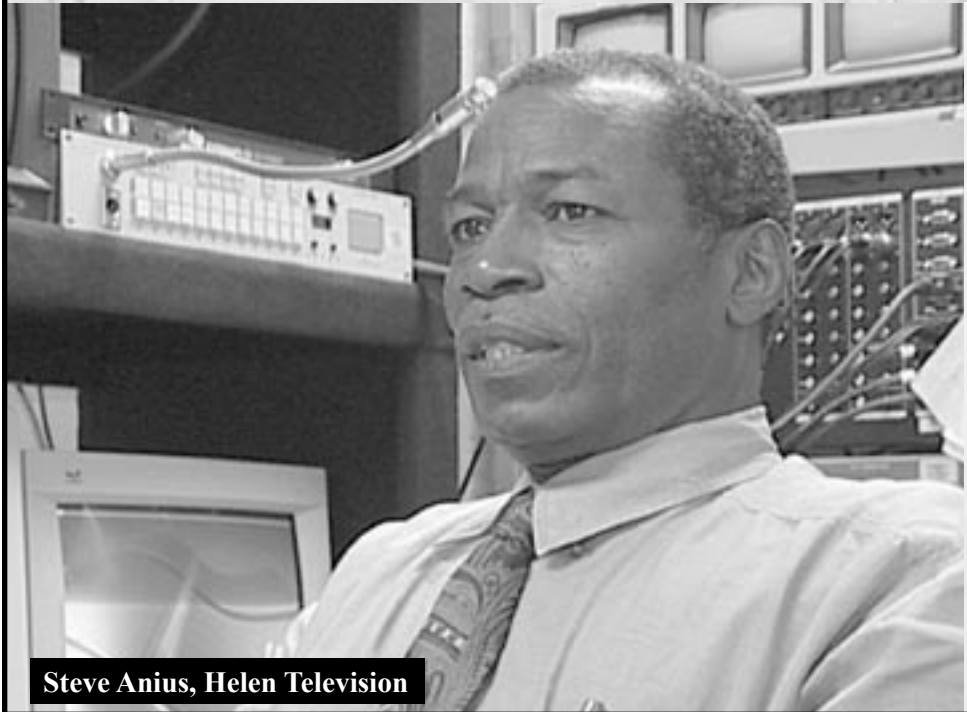
Local Media: Nothing but praise for NTN



Bernard Fanis, Choice TV



Rick Wayne, The Star



Steve Anius, Helen Television



David Vitalis, The Mirror

Happy 3rd Anniversary NTN

Prime Minister's Message



As we celebrate the third anniversary of NTN, it is important to understand why NTN was established.

On October 14, 2001, this Government took the decision to establish NTN to reflect our people, our culture, our being and our values. Too often, we have been bombarded with canned foreign programmes that are of little or no benefit to the people of St. Lucia. But with the coming of NTN, we have been able to show the people of St. Lucia many social and cultural activities taking place throughout the island.

Through the capability of NTN, we

are also able to do live broadcasts of important events, such as Parliament, funerals of important members of our society, Jazz and other cultural events. These we cannot leave solely to commercial TV stations to do.

NTN was also established for the purpose of providing the Government Information Service with a conduit through which it can disseminate information on Government's policies and programmes

NTN has also taken the responsibility of bringing this country closer to the

global community and show St. Lucians how people in other countries live. For example, since establishing diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China seven years ago, NTN has been able to bridge oceans of water to bring the peoples of these two countries together, through a series of programmes, which enable them to learn about each other.

I say to NTN let us grow stronger and better, day by day.

Congratulations to NTN on its 3rd anniversary.

