

President's Report 2006-2008

My last report was 2005. Last year was special as Dominicans celebrated 30 years of Independence from Britain. There were many activities in this Reunion Year and DAAS, our Diaspora Organisations and communities and resident citizens played their part.

As we enter this New Year, 2009, I wanted to give an overview of the [Dominica Academy of Arts & Sciences \(DAAS\)](#) activities during its short existence from the formal launch of its website in November, 2000. At that time total membership was barely 30. Today it is over 350 and rising. Webmaster, Raglan Riviere, attended to all details and continues to do an excellent job.

DAAS was subsequently incorporated in Maryland, US in May, 2002 and is registered in the US as a non profit, tax exempt 501 (C) 3 organisation. It has served its membership to the present time and now we need to look at the future of the organization.

The present management structure stands as follows:

Board of Directors

Chair	Dr Clayton Shillingford
Vice Chair	Dr Dorothy Wills
Legal Advisor	Gabriel Christian
BOD Treasurer	Dr Leroy Mitchell
Asst BOD Treasurer	Lynton Scotland
BOD Secretary	Dr Maureen Paul
Assistant Secretary	Marvlyn Birmingham,
Director	Frank Watty
Director	Irving Andre
Director	Vincent John

Executive Committee

President	Dr Clayton Shillingford
Vice President	Gabriel Christian
Secretary	Petronella Savarin
Assistant Secretary	Dorothy Henderson
Public Relations Officer	Alwyn Bully
Treasurer	Dr Thomson Fontaine
Assistant Treasurer	Shirley Richards
Research & Development Officer	Dr Peter St Jean
Webmaster	Raglan Riviere
Committees Coordinator	Frank Watty
IT Specialist	Fraser Jones

Please note: positions of Webmaster and IT Specialist were not contested in the election as these are specialized positions.

Executive, Local Chapter (All temporary pending local elections)

Chair	Frederick Baron resigned, now vacant
Vice Chair	Marvlyn Birmingham
Secretary	Agnes Esprit
Treasurer	Nicholas Waldron
Member	Joan Etienne
Member	Dr Henry Fagan
Member	Eric Blanchard

Members of the Board and the Executive have not been able to meet as we did for the Planning Meetings in Buffalo in February 2004 and Washington in August, 2006. To date DAAS continues with plans and projects that have been submitted by the chairpersons and members some of which were identified at the Buffalo and Washington Meetings. The results of the deliberations at meetings and other initiatives have been distributed to members. Some of the DAAS achievements to date can be seen [on the website](http://da-academy.org/daaschronicle01.html) from <http://da-academy.org/daaschronicle01.html>.

Chair of Working Committees

Agriculture & Environment	Dr Clayton Shillingford
Education & Youth	Dr Peter St Jean
Tourism & Hospitality	Anita Bully
Health Assistance	Marvlyn Birmingham
Finance	Dr Thomson Fontaine
Membership	Vacant. Bernard Hurtault resigned
Business & Economic Development	Dr Maureen Paul
Arts and Culture	Delmance "Rasmo" Moses
Research & Development	Dr Peter St Jean
Dominica-Diaspora Relations	Franklyn W. Watty
Emergency Relief	Gabriel Christian
News & Information (PRO)	Alwyn Bully

Special Project Coordinator

Dominican Associations Worldwide	Raglan Riviere
----------------------------------	----------------

DAAS PROJECTS

The key projects from last President's 2005 report, http://www.da-academy.org/presrpt_04.html, were initiation of the agricultural recovery program, aid to Blows Agro-products, organising of Dominica Medical professionals, health watch, renewed membership drive, crime prevention research, Save our Sons (SOS) and substance abuse prevention, mentoring, Dominica State College guest lecture series, youth soccer tournament and camp, and DAAS raffle. We have lost momentum with some of the projects initiated in 2004, The year 2004 ended with preparation and presentation in October of the DAAS Draft Diaspora Policy Paper to the Government and the creation of a website to feature the Dominica Botanical Gardens. The latter project has seen considerable expansion and exposure from its inception to the present time.

Botanic Gardens Website

The highlights of the [Botanic Gardens website](#) are the detailed descriptions and attractive photographs of about 90 plants found in the

Gardens, and almost 40 birds commonly seen there. The site also includes a listing of medicinal plants and their uses among those Gardens plants described, a history of the Gardens, and a complete listing of the Curators. In addition, it provides three quick virtual tours of the Gardens. The site is becoming increasingly popular. It now averages about 600 page visits (hits) per month, up from about 200 in 2005 when we first started. Recently there were 400 hits in one day. Most visitors come from various Caribbean islands, Canada and the US, with many coming from the UK, France, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Australia. The increased popularity of the site is primarily due to increasing numbers of plants and birds, the identification of medicinal plants and their uses, and the improving photo quality. Partly as a result of this increased visibility, the site received grant finance of \$1,000 from an American benefactor. This provided DAAS with seed money for a Gardens Fund used to procure and ship several pieces of equipment requested by Gardens management. (See list of equipment below.)

Equipment sent to the Gardens

Power pruner (1)

16' Pole saw (1)

Weed whackers (2)

Folding pruning saws (2)

Anvil hand pruners (2)

Lopping shares (2)

Backpack sprayer (1)

Sharpshooter spades (2)

Brushguard visors (2)

100' Fiberglass tape (1)

Surveyor's safety vests (5)

Crime Prevention

During last year Dr Peter St Jean, Chair DAAS Youth Committee in cooperation with the Dominica Police Division conducted a series of seminars at different parts of the island on crime prevention.

Other Projects

There were several other projects in which DAAS played a pivotal role in their initiation.

- Worked with Dominica Employers Federation to sponsor political debates among the three parties
- Discussed DAAS affairs and future collaborative plans with (Oceanographic Institute of Dominica) OID for marine biology teaching and commercial programmes. Some DSC students were employed under that programme
- Media hand-over ceremony of OID US\$1.2 million of medical supplies consequent on fire destruction of Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) Medical Stores.
- Visit of Michael Chang of Americares. Americares supplied US\$1.0 million of medical supplies to replenish medical stores
- Youth Soccer planning meetings with the Dominica Football Association, Ministry of Sports and the Newtown Juvenile Football Academy and sponsorship and management of DAAS Youth Soccer Tournament and Educational Camp in 2005.

DIASPORA POLICY DOCUMENT

On the request of Prime Minister Skerrit the **Diaspora Policy Paper** was submitted to him on October 14, 2004. The entire document can be viewed on the DAAS website at http://www.da-academy.org/draft_policy.html and

includes key issues such as returnees, overseas representation, investment, social and economic development, etc.

Apart from some brief review comments by the Customs Dept, National Development Corp (NDC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs almost five years later we have only received a recent letter from the new Minister of Diaspora Affairs, Hon McIntyre with an apology for tardiness and promise to move forward on the programmes and projects, recommendations and policies enumerated in the Policy Paper..

DAAS DIASPORA COMMITTEE REPORT

DAAS Chair of the Diaspora Committee reported as follows:

1. Still no word from the Prime Minister or the Minister of Diaspora Affairs on the Policy Paper and the way forward for a progressive and productive relationship between the Government and Dominicans resident overseas.
2. Despite promises to the contrary from both the Prime Minister and the Minister for Diaspora Affairs there has been no response to the brief presented on the rights of certain dual citizenship Dominicans to run for and hold political office in Dominica *"From Exile to Re-Union '08" - a thoughtful response to this issue in Jamaica, along the lines we proposed, is now in the works there!*
3. Despite the existence of trained and experienced Dominicans in various fields of interest to Government and to Dominica, there has been a persistent and dismal failure on the part of Government to access those skills whether in a design, review, programming or general commenting role:
 - (a) The Oil Refinery Issue.
 - (b) The Resident Tourism Policy Issue.
 - (c) Tourism Policy/Program for Dominica.
 - (d) The Roseau Development Plan.
 - (e) The Portsmouth Development Plan.
 - (f) The Botanic Gardens Perimeter Road.
 - (g) Agricultural Development
 - (h) Education
 - (i) Overseas Representation

4. We recognise and appreciate the invitations extended to DAAS to promote and participate in the Re-UNION '08 celebrations and the role played by DAAS members at the following functions:
- (a) Opening Day Diaspora representation at the Bay Front
 - (b) Participation in the Discover Dominica sponsored Community Tourism Workshop.
 - (b) Feature address at the 2008 Dominica Hotel & Tourism Assoc (DHTA) Awards banquet.
 - (c) Radio Talk Shows.
 - (d) The National Development Symposium
5. Proliferation of a number of Dominica Diaspora groups based on home communities, social interaction and other interests. We need to design some method of liaising with them, establishing joint working groups, and promoting DAAS among them

RELATIONSHIP WITH DIASPORA ASSOCIATIONS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

We continue to work with affiliated Dominican associations, and other institutions. Examples are:

- attendance and participation at the Commonwealth of Dominica Ontario Association (CDOA) annual fund raising galas
- Collaboration with Dominica UK Association (DUKA), Dominica Oversea Nationals Association (DONA), on matters of mutual interest. Attended DNDF (Dominica Natural Disaster Fund) meeting at the UK Dominica High Commission and DUKA sponsored symposium
- Continuing dialogue and provision of books and guidance to the National Association of Youth in Agriculture (NAYA),
- Ongoing collaboration with Archbold Tropical Research & Education Consortium (ATREC) on plans for a Chair at Springfield Estate and continuing efforts to establish an MOU....Government of Dominica/DAAS/ATREC for biodiversity studies and phytomedicine research

- Continue joint programmes with the Oceanographic Institute of Dominica (OID). We were able to place DSC graduates in employment there
- Collaboration with Clean and Sober Humans (CASH) on prevention and treatment of drug abuse problems
- Discussions with Government to promote export of Dominica culture, music and dance
- Active and ongoing participation in the local media on national affairs, to promote DAAS plans and programs and to discuss tourism and business promotion
- Meetings with Dominica Assoc of Industry & Commerce (DAIC) personnel to establish relationship between DAAS and the private sector and to advance involvement in local affairs
- Established individual membership in DHTA, Rotary Club
- See other Dominica Diaspora Associations at the.... [DAAS Directory of DA Associations](#)

A memorandum of Understanding was signed with Special Projects Assistance Team (SPAT), a local Development Agency, to facilitate partnership in agriculture, arts, sciences, and sustainable technology but that has not been sustained. Another MOU submitted to the Dominica State College (DSC) has been signed that will assist in defining the relationship between DAAS and the DSC. The DSC scholarships and provision of books to the Library, delivery of guest lectures, linkage with Clemson and the Smithsonian Institution are efforts in that direction

There was a draft plan before the leadership of DAAS to establish a Community Center and Headquarters most likely in Washington. The intention was to establish an international base for DAAS to serve as a physical headquarters, and in part a museum of Dominican Diaspora efforts (educational, cultural, social and economic)

That issue deserves to be revisited

VISITORS to DAAS WEBSITE

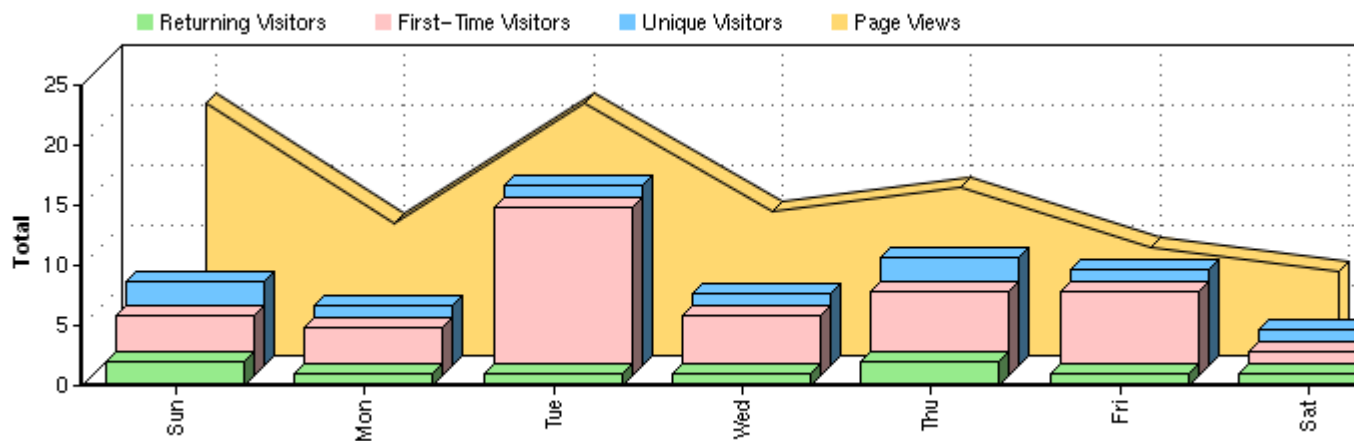
Below are cumulative statistics for DAAS as of today with accompanying graph. We receive visitors from direct hits by DAAS members or through

referrals from other site links and search engines. There is also considerable interest in visits to the DAAS Dominica Botanical Gardens website

Statistics commenced on July 29, 2002, that is about 7 years ago. With a total of 93,591 visitors (page views), that works out at 1,114 visits per month approximately or 13,370 per year.

DAAS Website Statistics

As at April 11th, 2009

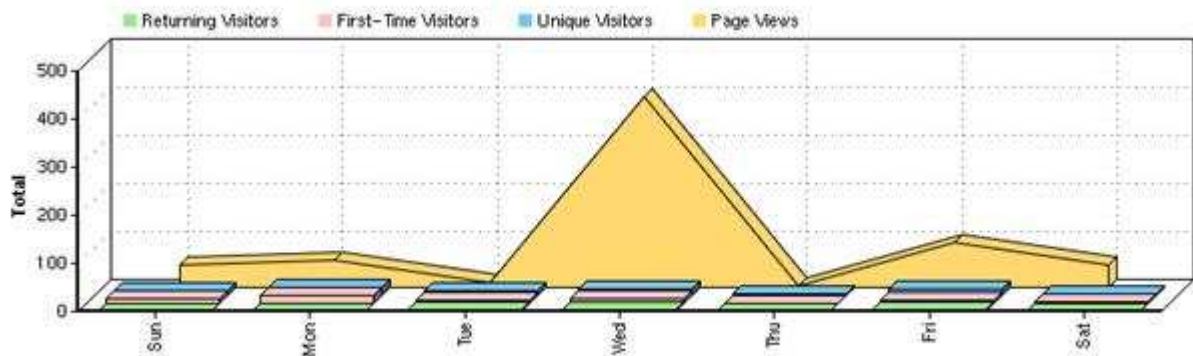


Total Page Views: 93,591

Counter Start Date: July 29, 2002

Botanic Gardens Statistics.

As at April 11th, 2009



Total Page Views: 17,581

Counter Start Date: June 24, 2005

FINANCIAL STATUS

While we have established bank accounts in the US and Dominica and are registered as a non-profit, charitable organization in the US and under the Companies Act in Dominica as DAAS Inc. we have not been able to register similarly in Canada and possibly in the UK. Attempts to raise funds through grants (Colgate-Palmolive, Bayer Americas) have not been successful to date in spite of the fact that we established grant writing contract with a grant writer Ms Karen Bonaduce. We were hoping that the formation of a Grants Subcommittee under Finance would help. The DAAS raffle, other fund raising efforts, membership dues fell short of expectations and so financial status has not been significantly improved. We are hoping that this year we will be more assertive in seeking grant funding through the Grants Subcommittee under Finance. The DAAS raffle was disappointing and did not meet its stated objectives.

A positive financial outcome is the bequests of lands from Willard De Filippis consequent on the death of his brother, [Dr Robert A. De Filippis](#), a scientific colleague and the owner of the properties. Before his death Robert De Filippis bought land in Fiji, Haiti, Bahamas and four properties in Dominica. I visited the two De Filippis Mero plots, transferred title to DAAS and

arranged for property management and a small house rent collection through Ms Shipley

We were given cash donation from the sale of Fiji land and have buyers for three lots of Dominica land in Mero and Rosalie. One use of the proceeds is to set up two scholarships in the plant sciences for one young man and woman at the Dominica State College (DSC) under the title "De Filippis Scholarships" in the 2009/2010 academic year. Simultaneously the President has established a DSC scholarship in the tourism/culinary area in his mother's memory as the "Gladys Elizabeth Peters Scholarship". DAAS members Frank Watty and Gabriel Christian in similar fashion have pledged to provide bursaries or scholarships in memory of their family members.

CONTRIBUTIONS

IT Development in Dominica's Schools

In 2005, DAAS donated 56 computers to the Ministry of Education. The 3 schools that benefited from this venture were Roseau Primary, Wills Strathmore Primary of Marigot and Castle Bruce Secondary. The computers were donated by Maytag (US based company). Special thanks to Jefferson Challenger, an employee of Maytag from the island of Dominica, Fraser Jones, DAAS IT Specialist, Peterson Bertrand of Cable & Wireless and Tom Lafond of Tropical Shipping for assistance with the freight.

Linen to Dominica Hospitals

In Spring 2007, a donation of linen to our hospitals, valued in excess of US \$30,000 USD was made. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of Claudette Loblack at the Marriott in Washington, and DAAS VP Gabriel Christian. Administrator of the Princess Margaret Hospital, Marvlyn Birmingham and Minister of Health, John Fabien, proudly accepted this valued donation and were grateful to all those involved.

Camps for Youths

Through, the president, Dr. Clayton Shillingford, DAAS made a contribution of US\$1,000 to support the camps for youths in Dominica. The donation was well received by Fr. Franklyn Cuffy, chaplain of the Cadet Corps and leader of the youth camp initiative

DAAS Donations to Dominica State College

November 6, 2008 - DAAS president, Dr. Clayton Shillingford and Ronald Charles visited the Dominica State College (DSC) to make a presentation on behalf of DAAS. The presentation centered on a donation of agricultural text books and extension publications as well as an assortment of soccer uniforms and equipment. The books were obtained from Canada, in response to a request from the National Association of Youth in Agriculture (NAYA) and the DSC Agriculture Program. The football equipment and uniforms were obtained from DUKA. DSC president, Hubert Charles accepted the donations on behalf of the students at DSC

DAAS ELECTIONS

Electronic elections were held at the end of 2008. According to the [DAAS By-laws](#), the BOD is elected for 3 years and approximately 1/3 of the directors should be elected each year. Term of the Executive is also 3 years and replacement occurs at the Annual General Meeting. An officer may only be re-elected twice, that is, to serve 9 years in the same office. I would like to encourage all members to read our By-laws to have a clearer understanding of the mission and purpose of DAAS, membership rules, the authority and composition of the BOD, Executive Committee, financial administration and the working committees.

The results of our past elections are listed above in the new BOD and Executive. DAAS membership is faltering. For 2008 we had only 20 members in good standing in the Local Chapter and 34 Diaspora members out of a potential 400 who had previously registered. I do not read these statistics as indicators of progress.

DAAS ACTIVITIES REUNION 2008

DAAS members and the organization were very active in Dominica's 2008 Reunion Year.

Reunion International Soccer Tournament

DAAS was the main sponsor of the 1st International Youth Soccer Tournament and Educational Camp on Dominica, July 19 to 26, 2005. Sponsorship was wide among DAAS members, individuals, businesses and institutions in the UK, Canada, US and Dominica. The Dominican Government played a key part in supporting the welcome party, and fee waiver for site visits and departure taxes. The press exposure was extensive on the internet, newspapers, radio and TV.

As part of the camp and education the participants were shown some of the major cultural and historical sites as well as cultural performances of music and dance. These teams were organized by collaboration with the Dominica United Kingdom Association (DUKA), the Acclaim Youth Development Group of Canada, Newtown Juvenile Football Academy, and Dominica Football Association

As a follow up to the successful Youth Tournament, DAAS in collaboration with the Dominica Football Association (DFA), Dominica UK Association (DUKA), Commonwealth of Dominica Ontario Association (CDOA), and Brian Anatol of the US were key organisers of the Reunion 2008 International Football Tournament which featured competition at the Windsor Park Sports Stadium among Dominica Diaspora teams from the US, UK, and Canada vs. the Dominican National Team. This tournament was a major contributor to the Nation's "Celebrating the Journey Together" theme and was held on October 22, 23 and 24, 2008. Dominica won!

The Ministry of Sports hosted the Welcome Cocktail on the evening of October 21 and opened the games the following evening. Major sponsors were the Reunion Committee, First Domestic Insurance Co, Dominica Brewery & Beverages, Kairi FM, and Campbell's Business Services.

DAAS Awards Dinner

This was held on the evening of October 25, 2008 at the Garraway Hotel under the Patronage of His Excellency President Nicholas Liverpool and Mrs. Liverpool. Other attendees at the Head Table of note were Ministers Julius Timothy and Dr Colin McIntyre, Sir Brian Alleyne, Archbishop Kelvin Felix

and Justice Irving Andre. Master of Ceremony was Kenrick Sylvestre. We acknowledged the presence of Yvor Nassief our main sponsor who contributed cash, wine and bought tickets for key members of his businesses (Tropical Shipping, Safe Haven Real Estate, MoneyGram, and Beacon Insurance). Other sponsors were Campbell's Business Services for defraying cost of printing of the programme and Sign Man for preparation of award plaques and the Oceanographic Institute of Dominica (OID) for 150 lbs of Tilapia Fish. Main DAAS organisers at the local level were Agnes Esprit, Marvlyn Birmingham, Frederick Baron and Dr Clayton Shillingford

Awards were granted for significant national contributions in Agriculture (John Alexander Stephenson), Arts & Culture (Pearle Christian), Diaspora work in the UK (Vincent John of DUKA) and Canada (Frances Delsol of CDOA), Education (Dorothy Leevy), Health, (Priscilla Prevost), Sports (Havis Shillingford), Tourism (Oris Campbell of the Dominica Taxi Association), Youth (Olivia Douglas of CALLS..Centre where Adolescents Learn to Love & Serve)) and Community Development (Phoebe James).

Reunion 2008 Development Conference

The Reunion 2008 Development Conference titled 'Continuing the Journey: Dominica's Development Challenges and Responses Going Forward' which DAAS promoted took place October 21 to 23, 2008 at the Public Service Union Conference Room.

The Conference covered the following topics:

- Improving Our Peoples Quality of Life
- Restoring Agriculture to its Rightful Place
- Making Tourism Work for our Communities
- Opportunities for Business in the Services Sector
- Fostering Small Business
- Dominica in the Context of Globalisation, CSME, OECS Economic Union, EPA
- Green Investment

- Fuller Engagement of the Dominica Diaspora

DAAS members who participated include; Dr William Riviere, Dr Clayton Shillingford, Colin Bully, Michael Astaphan, Dr Thomson Fontaine.

I have been informed that a complete conference report is being prepared for wide dissemination.

DAAS Facilitates Guest Lecture at Dominica State College

November 12, 2008 - Thirty-six students of the first and second year Agriculture Program at DSC attended a guest lecture by Ronald Charles, a member of DAAS's Agriculture and Environment Committee and current Chair of the British Columbia Turkey Marketing Board. The lecture provided the students with a primer on agricultural marketing and its importance in planning a farm business. In order to engage students in the discussion, the respective roles of local organizations and institutions such as DEXIA (Dominica Export Import Agency), DBPL (Dominica Banana Producers Ltd), WINFA (Windward Islands National Fair Trade Assoc), hucksters, various producer organizations and direct marketing outlets (on-farm / roadside and public markets) were examined. The students responded well and thanked DAAS for its support of DSC.

DAAS Donates Dinghy to Portsmouth Police, August 10th 2005

The Research and Development Committee of (DAAS) and Burgcom.com donated a 14-foot inflatable dinghy to the Dominica Government for the Portsmouth Division of the Dominica Police Force. The dinghy, valued at US\$5,000, will help the Portsmouth Police service the waters of the Portsmouth area

AWARDS

The Permanent Mission of Dominica to the United Nations and the Consulate General of Dominica in New York nominated DAAS for an award from the New York City Council in recognition of Caribbean-American Heritage Month. Dr LeRoy Mitchell, Board Treasurer, received the Award on behalf of DAAS

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

- The Finance Committee under the Chairmanship of DAAS Treasurer Dr Thompson Fontaine launched a proposed \$15,000 grand raffle. Unfortunately this effort at raising funds for the work of DAAS met with very limited response.
- DAAS continues to operate through the various committees (Finance, Membership, News & Information, Agriculture & Environment, Business & Economic Development, Health Assistance, Research & Development, Tourism & Hospitality, Education & Youth Development. Some of the DAAS achievements for 2005 and previous years can be seen on the DAAS website.

FORWARD LOOKING PROPOSALS. (Frank Watty)

- (a) A serious re-invigoration of members and ideas needed.
- (b) Emphasis on working with an active local chapter which must inform needs, programs, projects and priorities that DAAS undertakes.
- (c) Critical to develop working relationships with organizations and institutions on the ground in Dominica independent of government and to respond to concrete and noticeable needs on island with full publicity.
- (d) DAAS **must** consider re-organizing to establish regional chapters with some autonomy in functional areas where numbers and interest justify. For example, UK, Canada, Eastern Seaboard (US), US Midwest, US South. This might make face to face regional meetings easier, and maintain interest and involvement of general membership within a more interactive setting. As well, working at that level, it is easier to put networks to use, fund-raise and benefit from "regional" government programs.
- (e) Care needs to be exercised to avoid an appearance of political partisanship by DAAS as an institution because of the stance of individual members. Among elements of the Dominica public, that distinction will never be made, and works to the advantage of our detractors. I am personally concerned over the apparent attempt to use DAAS as leverage to promote private agendas which could be faulted for lacking transparency and smacking of Cabalism. While I may or may not support these positions, they are divisive by definition and DAAS should tread carefully.
- (f) The Organization must give thought to the issue of "orderly succession". With recognition and thanks to those who have served and are serving thus far, under the present structure the demands of effort, time, money, personal and character assassination are such as to deter the bravest among

us. Part of the problem can be relieved by re-structuring, part by motivated and selfless contribution among leadership at DAAS Chapters and "Central", part by deeper financial resources to draw on, part by strong and uncompromising financial controls.

Frank Watty, Committees Coordinator made the following remarks:

We need to challenge membership to:

1. Re-dedicate themselves to DAAS;
2. Think deeply and meaningfully on how DAAS might be renewed to face current challenges
3. Re-examine how members might contribute to the on-going, daily challenges of moving Dominica forward
4. Re-commit by generating enthusiasm through membership expansion, member involvement, finance raising, promotion of projects in and for Dominica.

Even with all that we have accomplished, we could have done so much more had there been a more forthcoming policy of co-operation on the part of Government. Yet, we will continue as best we can. Not to do so, would only be to the disadvantage of our country and its international image.

With international and local crises every day, we cannot stay on the sidelines and wish, complain or lament. Dominica like all of the Caribbean is facing a worsening social, economic and political future and we all have a part to play to deflect the worst of these forces. That must be the Mission of DAAS

Let me wish our members every success for 2009 and hope that we will be better able to meet the challenges for DAAS in this New Year. Much will depend on the participation of members, the commitment of Committee Chairs, success of fund raising efforts, and the identification of practical projects.

Dr Clayton A. Shillingford

President, DAAS

April 11, 2009