

Les MAURICIENS EN AUSTRALASIE

MEA



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MEA

LES MAURICIENS EN AUSTRALASIE

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FRONT PAGE:

The Mauritian Broadcasting Team of Radio 3ZZZ (Victoria).

(Left to right)

Orietta Wheatley, Nella Roussel, Eddy Abraham, Brigitte Abraham, Jean-Dominique Abraham, Colette Baya.

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EDITORIAL

Sylvio Belcourt

The 1998 year is well on its way and before you know it, Easter will be here. This year we are forced to make drastic changes to the MEA Magazine with even the possibility of closing the project completely.

Financially MEA cannot cope on its own and require more subscribers and more advertising dollars to survive. The fee from subscribers barely covers the printing and postage cost. Adding the cost of taking pictures and developing films, the cost of phone calls, the long hours involved in preparing the magazine etc., then the whole project is at a loss.

We are not getting enough advertisers and to compensate, we were hoping to generate some income from a Yearly dance, which would still not have covered all our expenses but would have helped a lot. This has not eventuated.

Where to from now?

We have a few choices open to us.

1. Close the project and refund to existing subscribers whatever money is still outstanding.
2. One publication every two months.
3. Increase the yearly subscriber's fee.
4. Reduce our expenses. We have done so in this edition. The fonts are smaller and the paper required is less. This reduces our printing cost. We have also decreased the number of pages to keep the weight down and hence reduce the postage cost.
5. Combine with another magazine, which could split the workload between more than one person. We have approached the editor of Francofolies on this matter and we are both considering a solution.
6. Refer all our subscribers to another publication and close MEA completely.
7. Change the editor and hopefully find someone that can improve not only the content of the magazine but its appearance etc.

We need your feedback on this matter and depending on the outcome, the fate of the MEA Magazine will be decided. Enclosed is a form, which we ask you to complete and return to us as soon, as practical.

Please note that included with this edition is a free copy of Francofolies. Many Mauritians, especially in NSW, have expressed interest in this journal due to its French influence. It costs \$25 yearly to subscribe.

MEA DANCE

The proposed MEA dance planned for the 7th February 1998 has been cancelled.

RADIO 3ZZZ.

The Mauritian Broadcasting Group of Ethnic Radio 3ZZZ (VIC) scoops the pool for the sixth year in the annual Radiothon.

The group raised \$10,655 for the community run Station, making them the unbeatable Radiothon champions for six years in a row.

The Awards presentation to the highest fundraising groups took place on Friday 12 December 1997. Special guests included Martin Ferguson, M.P., Shadow Immigration Minister, Eddy Micallef, State M.P. for Springvale, and Stephan Rominiw, Chairperson of the Victorian Multicultural Affairs Commission.



Eddy Abraham (centre) receiving the trophies from Martin Ferguson, M.P (right) and Certificates from George Zengalis, President of Radio 3ZZZ (Left).

Accepting the Award for the "1997 Radiothon Fundraising Champions", Eddy Abraham, the Convenor of the Mauritian Group said, "Our listeners have proved once again that they have faith in our Program and in those running it." As a sign of recognition for the tremendous contribution the Mauritian community has made to Radio 3ZZZ over the years, Eddy Abraham asked that a room at the Station bears the name "MAURITIAN".

Several prizes were offered during the Radiothon. The first prize, a ticket Melbourne-Mauritius-Melbourne, offered by AIR MAURITIUS, was won by Neville & Jacqueline Louis of Vermont South. The MEA prize was won by Luc Ohis of Bundoora. Altogether, sixteen prizes were offered to listeners for a donation in cash. Prizes ranged from Airline tickets to "Dholl Pourri".

The Mauritian Program began broadcasting on 3ZZZ since

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its inception in June 1989. It goes to air every Saturday between 12:00 and 2:00pm. It broadcasts in French and in Mauritian Creole. The Broadcasting team comprises of: Eddy Abraham, Colette Baya, Orietta Wheatley, Nella Roussel, Gerard Laville, Jean-Dominique Abraham and Brigitte Abraham.

Here is a sample of the contents of the program, which has been so successful over the past eight years, French and Folkloric music. (Segas from Mauritius, Seychelles, Rodrigues and Réunion), News bulletins from Claude Fanchette the News correspondent in Mauritius, Interviews, Community announcements, Cultural and Historical segments received from Radio France Internationale, Listeners requests, (adults and youth), a quiz game, Recipes, Humour, and a good dose of Creole flavour.



At the Award Presentation many members of the Mauritian community were present, including Guy Caliste and Maryse Abraham from Mauritius.

The program caters for a vast audience, and has segments for young and old. It has attracted a lot of young listeners learning French. Students from Chandler Secondary College in Noble Park, featured in a special segment, Manuella Sin Wai Poo and Matthew Pan, recited poems in French. Year 12 Student, Vesna Petrovic, was interviewed in French by the Gonvenor. Year 7 and 8 students performed a French song, "Pas de Collège" French Language Coordinator Stephan Mégroz said, "The Mauritian program gives the students a tremendous opportunity to hear and practise French". Students from Assumption College in Kilmore also participated in the program. Two year 12 students and the Language Coordinator, Gillian Carpenter, were interviewed.

3ZZZ broadcasts in 57 languages. Funds raised during the annual Radiothon, enables the Station to meet its financial commitments. All broadcasters are volunteers. For a typical Mauritian Program, tune in to Radio 3ZZZ, every Saturday, between 12:00 and 2:00 p.m., on 92.3 FM.

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George Gaugalis, President

YOUNG MAURITIANS ON HOLIDAYS.

During the holiday period many Mauritians in Australia entertained friends from our homeland. MEA met with some and this is what 18yr old, Ginette, had to say regarding Mauritians in Australia.

I find the Mauritians in Australia to be very materialistic. They work long hours but they do not know how to enjoy themselves. I find also that there is a lot of wastage of food, e.g. if a fruit is slightly spoiled, they throw it out. In Mauritius, we will cut that bad part and eat the rest.

During the week, there is no socialising at all. After work, everyone watches television. I have never made my bed until I came to Australia. I find it very unusual to have to do so but I respect my auntie for wanting me to keep my room clean. Its fun and I like it

During my 4 weeks holidays in Victoria, I was very bored until I met some Australian girl friends. One Thursday night, they invited me to go dancing and they offered to pick me up from where I was staying. I waited until 10.00p.m and they didn't turn up. So I went to bed to be woken by my auntie telling me that my friends were waiting for me. It was 11.00pm. My auntie stopped me from going at first but after my friends talked to her, she agreed. I could not understand why they arrived so late, until they explained that in Australia, it is the trend to go out late and stay out until the early hours of the morning.

I really enjoyed myself that evening. I met many boys of my age and they treated me like a princess. I find the Australian boys to be more fun than the Mauritian boys. That evening Paul was my favourite. He is very sexy and a real gentleman. He said that for the first Mauritian person he has ever met, he liked my company far more than if I was Australian. I was fun to be with. He has invited me to go out again, but my auntie refused. We promised to write to each other. I invited him to visit Mauritius one day and I hope that he does so. *(Ginette originally was keen to have her photo published, but if her parents back home find out that she stayed out all night, there will be trouble.)*

HOW MUCH MONEY IS HE MAKING?

Marian Belcourt

(Please note that the comments made in this article are in no way directed to anyone in particular and are not to be taken as deformation of character to any person or persons. It is only expressing a general opinion on real experience encountered so far.)

When my husband Louis started the MEA magazine project a few years ago, many Mauritians commented that it would eventually fail because no one would support it, due to the fact that Louis would be making lots of money. This comment shocked and surprised me at the time and I refused to believe that this could affect the project.

I am a Kiwi and I have known Louis for over 21 years. My personal experience with the Mauritians is that I find them to be very friendly people. Their love and passion for a good social evening and dancing is quite remarkable. At all the functions that I have ever been, every one is so friendly as if it is a big family. Everyone knows each other and the atmosphere is so relaxed.

During the third quarter of 1996, I met, at a charity dance in Sydney, a very charming Mauritian couple, whom I will name for confidentiality reasons, Baby and Bobby. They told me then that they had a story to write about Mauritians. Naturally Louis was very pleased, as this is what the magazine needed. Then came the big surprise. The article they wanted to write was about a charity dance (to raise money for Braille equipment) which after many years of success suddenly started to lose popularity because many Mauritians were asking, "How much money they were making?". This was my first experience with this Mauritian attitude and it saddened me. After talking to Baby and Bobby, Louis wanted to publish their story, but somehow due to lack of time, it never went through.

I know how much effort and hard work goes into organising a dance and to end up having to cancel because a handful of jealous Mauritians sabotage the project because they believe that the organiser is making money is just shameful.

Over the last few months, many organisers also told me that they experienced the same remarks from many Mauritians.

Now it has happened to me and I was very upset to experience this attack. It has upset Louis so much that I can't published what he said.

I have wondered on many occasions, why he bothers to write about Mauritians. It takes long hours to compile

information and sometimes he works until the early hours of the morning. The MEA magazine costs him a few hundred dollars every month. So it can't be for a financial reward. I asked him if it's for the love of his country? It can't be because he has never been back to Mauritius since he left in 1967. He finally told me that because he is a Mauritian and proud of it, he believes that Mauritians in general are a unique race who have many talented and successful people. Other nationalities have their magazine, why not a Mauritian National Magazine. So he does it solely as a hobby.

On 3rd January 1997, Louis and I were invited to the Monash Palace Melbourne to celebrate Hervé Rochescouste 50th Birthday. (Refer story on page 6.) On the other side of the room there was another party and Hervé introduced us to a couple who were celebrating their 30th Anniversary. So we asked them for some details for the magazine which they were very pleased for us to publish.

They are rude, they lack good manners and are a disgrace to the Mauritians culture.

(Paragraph removed)

In pursuit, I have asked many Mauritians to comment on this disgraceful attitude and some have said:

They are jealous and they are too lazy to do anything themselves.

One organiser in Melbourne commented that he is always faced with this problem which frustrates him. Now he selects very carefully whom he invites to a function.

In conclusion, I consulted with many Mauritians before releasing this article and all have said it's the best thing that MEA can do if it can stop this atrocious behaviour forever.

HERVÉ'S 50th BIRTHDAY

Hervé Rochecouste celebrated his 50th Birthday in grand style at the Monach Palace in Clayton, VIC on 3rd January 1998. About 100 VIPs were present. There is not enough space to publish pictures of all of them.



(Left to right). Maurice and Hélène Henri (from Mauritius), Michèle and Hervé, and Daisy Rochecouste.



Kim Telfer with Pierre Rochecouste.



Roseline and Louis Marion.

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT IN MAURITIUS.

Hotel, bank stocks push up Mauritius share index. Jan 19, 1998.

The Mauritius Semdex stock index rose 1.71 points on Monday to 401.95, pushed up by a rise in hotel and bank stocks, brokers said.

Turnover fell to 4.95 million rupees on 360,771 shares from 7.63 million rupees on 417,820 shares last Friday, they said.

Brokers said the market could continue to rise this week after last week's gains of 8.12 points, which pushed the Semdex over the 400-point level.

"We expect the market to be more active this week further to foreign investors' interest in some leading shares," one broker said.

State Bank of Mauritius gained 20 cents to 13.50 rupees on 250,700 shares, whereas Mauritius Commercial Bank remained unchanged at 100.0 rupees on 885 shares.

Hotel concern Sun Resorts climbed 40 cents to 49.50 rupees on 4,264 shares.

National carrier Air Mauritius lost 80 cents to 29.0 rupees on 3,333 shares.

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Mauritius bourse index up again on hotel shares. Feb 02, 1998.

The Mauritius bourse index Semdex continued its upward trend on Monday, edging up 1.48 points or 0.37 percent to 406.45, brokers said. But traded volume remained low.

Turnover fell to 2.58 million rupees on 123,834 shares from 5.84 million rupees on 237,377 shares on Thursday. Despite the low volume traded, Semdex is moving upward, driven mainly by four leading stocks in the hotel and banking sectors," one broker told reporters.

During the past 12 trading days, Semdex has gained a total of 14.62 points to 406.45 on Monday from 391.83 in mid-January.

New Mauritius Hotels rose 1.10 rupees or 2.46 percent to 45.90 rupees on 1,225 shares, whereas Sun Resorts remained unchanged at 50 rupees on 1,000 shares.

Commerce conglomerate Ireland Blyth Ltd gained 10 cents to 19 rupees on 1,800 shares, industry concern Mauritius Breweries Ltd gained a rupee to 77 on 758 shares and transport stock national carrier Air Mauritius

Mauritius exports buoyant in 1997.

Export earnings from the Mauritius Export Processing Zone in calendar year 1997 rose by 10 percent to an estimated 23 billion rupees (\$1.02 billion) compared with the 1996 level, industry officials said.

The deputy head of the Mauritius Export Development and Investment Authority (MEDIA), Chand Seebah, told reporters 1998 would be even a better year if the sector maintains growth at 10 percent.

However, other industry officials qualified such forecasts in the context of the financial crisis in Asia which could result in Asian competitors offering lower prices for similar products as those of the Indian Ocean island nation.

There are indications the slow rate of growth of the export zones or EPZ, which began a timid recovery in 1996, is poised to gain momentum in 1998, industry officials say.

The sector holds 28 percent of the country's total employment, with textile and garments manufacture providing about 88 percent of the those jobs.

This year alone, the sector hopes to create some 2,500 new jobs in addition to the 80,000 in existence.

"The good mood is here and we can easily feel it. As for the actual trend, we have the impression that 1998 will be much better than last year," Francois Woo, managing director of Compagnie Mauricienne de Textile said.

"Clients who stopped dealing with some of the Mauritian enterprises in early 90's have been seen knocking at our doors these last two years," Woo added.

The Mauritius EPZ's were created in 1970 to diversify the economy which was heavily dependent on sugar exports --

and whose earnings fluctuated with the weather.

In 1985, the EPZ sector overtook sugar as the island's leading foreign exchange earner posting one billion rupees in 1981, 10 billion rupees in 1991 and 21 billion rupees in 1996.

Many major enterprises plan to expand their interests in 1998 and are recruiting additional workers to meet increased demand, Woo said.

But the way forward will not be without some difficulty.

Analysts say turmoil in Asian markets could have a negative impact on Mauritius exports and could lower the projected growth to 7-8 percent from 10 percent.

"We don't know the reactions of our clients to the Asian crisis (yet) but we have to act promptly if the South East Asian countries offer their products at low prices," Fakhru Currimjee, chief executive of Bonair Group told reporters.

Mauritius tourist arrivals up 11 pct in yr to Nov 1997.

Mauritius tourist arrivals for the year to November 1997 rose 11 percent to 480,500 from 433,100 over the same period in 1996, the Ministry of Tourism said on Wednesday.

The Ministry forecast arrivals would rise to 540,000 in 1998.

Tourist arrivals to the Indian Ocean Island for the month the ministry added.

"This rise was driven by our main markets namely Italy, France, United Kingdom, Germany and Switzerland which have maintained their positive trends," one official at the ministry told reporters.

Total gross receipts from tourism are forecast to reach 10.0 billion rupees (\$444.11 million) in 1997 from 9.04 billion rupees in 1996.

An old chap on his seventies was concerned about his lack of sex drive and consulted his doctor.

"Well, what would you expect at your age?" said the medic.

The old geezer was still worried, "But my next door neighbour is over eighty and he says he gets it every night."

The doc thought for a moment. "Well, why don't you say it too?"

OBITUARIES

We learned with much regret the death of Cyril Marchand who passed away on January 5th 1998. Our condolences to his families, relatives and friends.

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