

LES MAURICIENS
EN AUSTRALASIE

MCA



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MEA

LES MAURICIENS EN AUSTRALASIE

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FRONT PAGE: The Grotto of the Immaculate Virgin Mary and the shrine of Père Laval in the grounds of the Church of Our Lady of Mercy, Penrose Park, NSW.

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EDITORIAL

Sylvio Belcourt.

We are pleased to say that our subscriber numbers have steadily increased over the last two months. MEA would like to thank all those that have recently subscribed. We sincerely hope that you will find the magazine interesting. Do not forget



that it's free to publish your story or an article in the magazine and we look forward to your contribution. MEA is the magazine for all Mauritians in Australia.

In the next few months, MEA will concentrate on VIC, QLD and WA to promote the magazine. We know that there are a lot of

activities going on in these states, due to the presence of long established clubs.

We only have a minimal number of subscribers from Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth and none from Darwin or Tasmania. We will try to get more stories from these states as the magazine covers all Australia. Has anyone heard of any Mauritian club

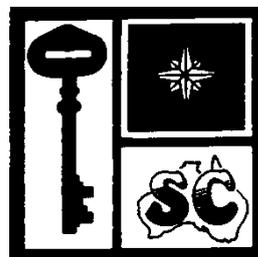
in South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory?

I have been asked to include my picture in the editorial section of the magazine so that people will know who I am. Instead of my picture alone, from now on, I will include other people as well, to make it more interesting. (*Sylvio Belcourt –left with Fr. Janusz Pawlicha at the new Church of Our Lady of Mercy at “Penrose Park” where the shrine of Père Laval is located).*

STELLA CLAVISQUE CLUB

FULL STEAM AHEAD.

Sylvio Lebret Part 4.



The Club was being revitalised by these successes, and many more were on the way. The Club's Executive Committee did not sleep on its laurels of success reaped at the 1973 New Year's Eve Ball, and moved

quickly to prepare the programme for 1974, but it seems that negotiation took a while to be finalised for a “Wine and Cheese Tasting and Dance” which was held finally on the 4th of May. The function was expected to be promising judging by the invitation in the Club's newsletter, which read “A night with STRONG appeal to gourmets and those after A GOOD TIME”. The expectations were justified, but the guests mistook the term “tasting” and turned the function into a “party”: 114 guests present at the East Bentleigh Hall consumed 25 flagons of different wines presented by Seppelt and 28 pounds of cheese presented by Frank D'Agostino, and there were some other food laid on individual tables. The night was animated by Jean-Pierre Lebret's newly formed band *Century's Invention*.

Next on the programme of events was the mid-year Ball. The publicity for that function was meant to attract a good crowd: a very classy invitation on thick glossy paper with fancy sketches of a band, musical instruments, a couple being served at their table, a dancing girl etc. and what was promised was “*notre plus grand bal, musique française, bonne compagnie, ambiance,*

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menu délicieux, excellente organisation et musique exceptionnelle". In fact, the organisation was very involved, as five committee meetings were held between the 4th of May and the 9th of July, three days before the big event at Mitcham Parish Hall. With an attendance of almost 300, the distribution of guests at the tables and the setting of tables caused a major headache. The floor show featured a dancing girl: Jackie was wearing not much more than some large feathers; the entertainment was assured by the *Pentagon*, a French Latin-American band, and the decorations, including a large net filled with balloons hanging at the ceiling, were of very good taste. On that occasion a huge cake on which were six large anniversary candles was cut after dinner. The only hitch to that exceptional night was the caterer who was not up to standard. The profit of that function was sent to Mg Margéot, Bishop of Port Louis, for charitable organisations; this gesture followed a pledge made to the Bishop during his last visit to Melbourne.

In the meantime, a large number of new applications for membership was approved by the Committee. Though the Stella Clavisque was growing in popularity, this influx of new members was not a reflection of the popularity: the reason being that Mauritian wanting to go on holidays by the Federation Charter Flight had to be members of a Mauritian Club at least six months prior to their departure. A large majority of the new members did not even renew their membership at the end of the financial year. Karl Bozelle was at that time President of the Federation of Mauritian Clubs, as the Stella Clavisque had been elected in July 1974 as Executive Committee of that organisation. The matters concerning the charter flight business were becoming more and more complex including the air-carriers, the travel agent, the airlines and the Government of Mauritius, so much so that the services of a solicitor, Mr Verbaken, had to be retained to deal with legal aspects of the proceedings.

The Club was offered 50 tickets for all members who wanted to attend a social night organised by the International Epicurean Society at the premises of the Swiss Club on the 24th of August in the city. The guest speaker was a well-known Mauritian personality, Mr Maurice Lavoipierre QC. His talk was to be followed by a French fashion parade and a floor show; however the function did not attract

the expected response. Next on the programme of the Club was a Mauritian night, which seems to be the only one organised on a large scale. Again, the organisation was very involved, and the Committee decided to seek the help of spouses of committee members and some club members for the preparation of the food: "faratas, dhal pourris, gateaux piments, rice and different curries, achards, daube de viande, rissoles etc". The turn-up was very encouraging, as many guests had not enjoyed Mauritian delicacies for some time.

A decision was taken for a more fitting newsletter in the light of the Club's growing extension. An Editorial Sub-committee was formed consisting of Jean Commins, Daniel Fijac and myself. The main objective of that decision was to have closer links with members. The new-look newsletter went out to members in late November 1974. It contained some humour, an extract from the Springvale and Community Aid Bureau report about help available to migrants and relevant services, children's games and crossword, a "Members' Corner", news from Mauritius, first-aid tips and the recipe for a "*bouillabaisse*". The Children's party to be held on the 8th of December and the New Year's Eve Ball were also advertised. The first function was eventually held at Churchill Park, preceded by a b.b.q for the parents. Santa Claus was present, impersonated by Jacques Lebrasse, who arrived in a decorated trailer pulled by a car, distributing lollies and ringing a bell. The New Year's Eve was a real challenge for the Committee: the only hall available was an undersized, dreary one at Atherton Road, Oakleigh, and it was a huge effort to decorate the bleak walls and ceiling. The result was incredibly successful. On this night samples of perfume were distributed to ladies, and samples of Philip Morris cigarettes were placed on tables. Apart from a few hitches on the caterer's part, everybody enjoyed themselves to welcome 1975.

At the last meeting of 1974, Paul Lesur announced his decision to resign from the Committee. The President asked me to take over and the Committee's approval started a sting of fourteen and a half years of secretaryship.

(to be continued...)

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PÈRE LAVAL

Known in Mauritius as the Lourdes of the Indian Ocean.



On Sunday 20th April 1997, a special mass was held “*en l’honneur du Bienheureux Père Laval*” by father Jan Chrzczonowicz. The “open air” mass was celebrated in front of the shrine of Père Laval, in the grounds of the Church of Our Lady of Mercy, Penrose Park, NSW.

The shrine, in the typical Mauritian hut style, was erected by Joinville François Collet (left), Christian

Guillemin (right) and Hervé Senat (not in photo)



The mass was attended by a large crowd of



Mauritians as can be seen from the photo below.

Next to the shrine there are a couple of plaques with the following inscription.

BIENHEREUX PÈRE-LAVAL

Jacques Désiré Laval was born at Croth, Normandy on 18th September 1803. He left medicine to enter priesthood at St Sulpice seminary in Normandy, and was ordained on 2nd December 1838. He practised his ministry at Pinterville, Normandy until 1841 when he departed for Mauritius.

In Mauritius, he spent his time as a missionary, teaching, listening, administering confession and converting a large number of “pauvres Noirs” (freed slaves). He died on 9th September 1864 and was beatified on 29th April 1979 in Rome.

PRAYER

Almighty God, you have given us Blessed Jacques Désiré Laval as a model of prayers and holy life. The humble apostolate of this devout priest teaches us to love you above all and to care generously for our brethren.

Since he is with you in heaven, you have granted us through his intercession all sorts of favours. Today, we beseech you, O Lord, in your great goodness, grant us... (State the help you need).

Let us pray, O Lord, you called Blessed Jacques Désiré Laval from the care of the sick to the priestly ministry, preaching the Gospel to the poor. May his example and his prayer lead us to live in harmony with all our neighbours and to find strength in the force of the Holy Cross of thy son. Amen

Imprimeur.

Jean Margéot, 29.4.1979

PICNIC IN THE PARK

After the mass was over, many gathered in the surrounding park for a picnic.

(My wife and I expected to be able to purchase food at the grounds and therefore we did not bring any lunch with us. However Mauritian hospitality, friendliness and welcoming culture came to the rescue. Whilst talking to Fr Jan about where to

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buy lunch, Mrs Tuyau invited us over to join her. Opening the boot of the family car, you could find just about a complete menu of Mauritian snacks, main course, wine, beer coffee etc.



We would like to thank Louisa Tuyau, Marguerite Tuyau, Michel Tuyau, Roland Ridonat and Marie-Claire Guimbeau for the warm hospitality you extended to Fr. Jan, Marian and myself who enjoyed a most delicious meal. Ed)

Gather a few Mauritians together on a sunny Sunday afternoon for a picnic in a beautiful park and it would not be perfect without music.

With no mains power available in the grounds, a 12-volt battery and a 240-Volt converter were used to power the instruments and amplifiers.



How can a spoon be used for an instrument?

Ask a talented Mauritian musician. It does require very long hours and special training to be able to master this instrument... Usually two spoons are used together and held between the fingers of one hand. The two bottom parts of the spoon, facing together, are then tapped between the thigh and the other hand producing a unique sound.

For the singers, there were plenty of volunteers

who sounded pretty good. (I wonder if the band manager has discovered new talents.)



At 3:00pm in the afternoon, a Rosary procession started from the Père Laval shrine to the grotto of the Immaculate Virgin Mary where the Rosary was completed.



THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF MERCY, PENROSE PARK.

When he first set foot in Australia in April, 1981, Father Augustine Lazur had a mission - to extend the influence of our Lady of Jasna Gora to yet another country. After many interesting adventures, which are recounted in a book available from the Penrose Park bookstall, Father was led to the Southern Highlands of New South Wales and in 1984, with a great deal of faith and the help of countless benefactors, purchased the property now known as Penrose Park. It is a story that stirs the imagination, but those early days of the Order in Australia saw many miracles of faith, which have continued through to the present day. Just ten years after Father Augustine arrived in Australia, the Pauline Fathers first moved into the newly-built Monastery and in 1995 a start was

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made upon further extensions, the Pauline Fathers moving into their improved quarters, and their lovely private chapel, during that year. Thanks to the wonderful response of the pilgrims who come here in large numbers, especially for the Fatima Day celebrations on the 13th day of each month, work progressed on the beautiful new church, from mid-1994 until the present, when we can see the fulfilment of all our dreams. Although May 24th 1997 will be a great day of celebration, with the consecration of the new church, work will continue throughout the life of this calendar to make the Church and the grounds of Penrose Park even more beautiful. With the blessing of our Lady of Mercy, as She is known in Australia, and the support of thousands of faithful pilgrims we have already witnessed many miracles here. We have great faith that your fantastic support will be maintained and that Penrose Park will long continue to be a place of pilgrimage and a sanctuary of peace for all who come here.

The church is near completion with some minor additions being completed for the consecration Mass by the Most Rev. Philip Wilson D.D.J.C.L (Bishop of Wollongong) on Saturday, May 24th, 1997. The programme for the day is:

10:30am Rosary procession to the Grotto
11:00am Devotion at the Grotto
11:45am Light Refreshments
12:40pm Introduction
1:00pm Mass celebrated by Bishop Philip Wilson
3:00pm Lunch
4:00pm Cultural Programme
5:00pm Thanksgiving Devotion and Benediction

It is expected that over 10,000 pilgrims from all nations will attend this truly religious occasion. No doubt many faithful Mauritians will also be present.

HOW TO GET TO "PENROSE PARK"

Although the official address is "Berrima", when driving from Sydney, do not divert to the village of Berrima as the Shrine is a considerable distance away. "Penrose Park" is located on Hanging Rock Road, (Old Hume Highway), some 19kms south of Berrima, and only 1 km off the Hume Highway.

F.A.S.T

During Fr Henri Souchon's visit in Sydney, he expressed his desire on many occasions to meet as many young Mauritians as possible. A letter was



left with MEA to all youngsters from Mauritius to youngsters of Australia.

Dear Friends of Australia,

We members of the F.A.S.T which means "Friends Always Stay Together", we are very glad to send you this letter through our parish priest, on behalf of the youngsters of the "Immaculate conception" parish as well as the rest of the Mauritian Nation. We believe that it will be of pure hypocrisy saying that here in Mauritius, we keep on thinking of you, but at least we can say that anytime we hear about an Australian event or come through an happening on your adopted country, across the media, we can't help thinking of you Mauritians who live across the ocean.

All Mauritians in Australia should be aware of our French saying "Loin des yeux près du coeur". Which is relevant to you, as though you are far away from us, the blood running in your veins will always stick to the island and your hearts beat for Mauritius. Though we don't know each other and living differently, separated by thousands of miles, we will always form part of the one Mauritian family together with the Mauritian diaspora which has migrated over the world. For us the youngsters, **TEACHERS & MASTERS DO NOT MEAN A THING**. But we totally abide to witnesses as for example Sister Emmanuelle and her community at Medjugorje.

During her visit to the parish not so long ago she shared all the experiences that she has everyday

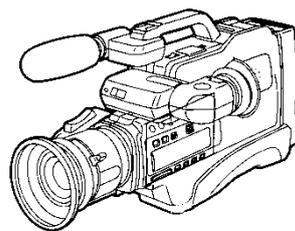
with the young persons who encounter various revelations from our Virgin Mary, who appears to them frequently. The old parish church gathered more than two thousand youngsters of different community who during more than two hours were suspended to her words in a religious silence. Love and compassion are the only words in which we can translate the give and take interest that overtook the heart of the youth listening to her talking about the revelations. The best teacher or master in the world will never meet such a success. All this, to make you aware how much nowadays witnesses are more important for us youth and not theories.

Together during this lent period, let's glorify God for having sent us his son Jesus to unite us, while showing us the way of his everlasting love through the commandment: "Love thy brother as thy love oneself". We would like hereon to end our letter before all the members of the F.A.S.T dedicate these few créole words to you: Pendant banne dernier l'année "ène sel le pep, ène sel nation" ti parole sacré pou tout banne mauriciens y compris ça panaché d'expatrié impé partout dan lé monde. Nou ti a souhaité qui ène jumelage ti capave établir entre la paroisse Sydney avec banin zénes Immeulée Conception, pou ki nou l'arc-en-ciel gagne encore plis coulère.

Lots of kisses.

LA BELLE EPOQUE

On Thursday 24th April 1997, Torrid Zone presented "LA BELLE EPOQUE", a night of fun and dance featuring Mauritius 5 and many guest artists. The dance was held at the Blacktown Civic Centre, Blacktown, NSW. The theme of the night was "Music from the 60's through to the 90's". As usual for the Mauritians in Sydney, a large crowd turned up but this night was very different to other dances organised in Sydney recently. From the theme described above, one would expect that this would be an older generation Mauritian night. It turned out that many younger Mauritians were present. This was due to the fact that the band "Torrid Zone" has the ability to cater for a wide range of audience with their incredible variety of music.



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However, there were rumours that one or two Mauritians complained that there were too many young ones present. (*You can't please everyone all the time but you can try.*)

There was plenty of Mauritian food available during the evening,

To top off a great evening, France Jemon and two of the Hibiscus dancers (Rosemarie Vincent and Liza Saminaden) in their colourful costumes gave the audience a spectacular show.

Congratulations to the organisers. It was a great evening and it certainly was encouraging to see so many young Mauritians present.

"There was no Generation Gap"

TORRID ZONE

(Part 1 of 2)

BIOGRAPHY

Take five dynamic musicians, blend them together in a unique style and what do you get?..Well, if their names happen to be Chris, Gilbert, Jean-Marc, Guy and Gervais, then you've got one of the hottest groups "TORRID ZONE".

The group formerly called "MAURITIUS" cannot be tied to any single style of music and it is this versatility that keeps them ahead of other performers. Whether it be the pulsating Funk, Rock, African Rock, Reggae or Ballad, the group truly proves to be dynastic and dynamic. Individually, each brings to the group diverse backgrounds, which collectively form the elements of a strong team. Originating in Sydney, the group's music lays emphasis on a strong rhythmic content, as well as innovatory compositional and improvisational technique. Their main object is an exploration of new musical horizons and at the same time they realise the need for communication with their audience and entertainment of their listeners.

Perhaps it must be pointed out that TORRID ZONE does some really steaming sets. Doing more or less the same tunes every night means, they have to use their imagination to find ways of keeping the music fresh, and the enjoyable bits of playing they do are when they improvise together with no fixed structure, something very few popular rock bands have the courage to do. They shine on Lionel Richie's Ballads and a reggae version of the Eagles' classic "Hotel California" as well as the sharp tightly meshed up tempo of the Beatles "Twist and Shout".

GERVAIS SAMINADEN first started when he was nine years old. It was because of Arthur Smith, Chet Atkins, Hank Marvin, and some other guitarists of that time that he took interest in the guitar. He had been watching his parents entertaining at social gatherings with Dad on guitar, singing in harmony with Mum. Curiosity finally got the better of him and he started to take the parental guidance seriously. He learnt three major chords from his Dad and carried on with the rest on his own.

He never studied music, just the kind of passion which is far more valuable than schooling. He is a self-taught musician and always learnt a lot by transcribing from records. Transcription was the formative stage of his musical career. He learnt Arthur Smith's "Guitar Boogie" from a 78 r.p.m. record as 45's were not invented yet. By then, Gervais had music in his blood. This was to be the pattern of his life; it was a challenge to him and he just could not let it go past.

Gervais fused his first band in 1961 with his brother, sister, and two of his cousins. Charts did not exist; he taught each member what to do and showed everyone how to harmonise. In the end, he began to develop his own ideas, style and music. In Mauritius, his band "The Midgets", was labelled the most popular kids' band on television.

Gervais has played guitar and sang professionally in all those areas from bossanova to behop, from gospel to rock & roll. He is not a mega-note axe hero; he is simply an exhilarating musician who performs with a definite down-to-earth approach. Listening to him playing on stage with TORRID ZONE is like an unguided tour of contemporary music. He hopsotches from one style to another in the twinkling of an offbeat, while delivering fascinating, clean, melodic music.

GUY SAMINADEN. A well-known figure in the music industry. He gained a wide knowledge of sound while working at EMI Australia, and became involved in sound recording.

Guy learned the guitar at the age of eight and didn't start playing bass until he was fifteen when his father bought him his first short-scaled Vox bass guitar. His bass playing improved so rapidly that he began to gain more notoriety for that instrument than the guitar. Like many other recording and pro musicians, Guy does not read music. But his reasons for not doing so are constructive ones. He built his own home recording studio and broadened his musical horizons.

Guy represents a wave of music based on proficient playing. Unlike the simplified aggression of punk rock, Guy is reminiscent of the early American periods when bands were shaking audiences with rhythm of the early jazz-rock and funk. He regards his stint with Greg Walker (world known Santana lead singer) at Rubens discotheque

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in Sydney, as one of the biggest steps in his musical career; playing bass with Greg was like going to a new school.

On stage, Guy is a master of his 1954 Fender precision bass and wields the instruments like a machine gun. Although essentially a funk player, Guy sees his playing as being more than just holding down the beat. From his standpoint as a sound engineer and a producer, he is challenged to do things and create certain effects to improve the group's standard. Guy really enjoys hearing quality songs from any area of music and describes his whole philosophy as refining the sound. His aim is to give total advice to musicians and sound engineers in providing a wide range of alternatives with a view to giving the greater choice to all musicians. *(To be continued)*

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THE BUDGET SUMMARY 1997

No Incentives, No New Taxes.

The 1997/98 Federal Budget has proved to be largely a "non-event" from the viewpoint of the business community. The good news is that there were no new or increased taxes in the Budget. The bad news is that the Budget contained nothing substantive in the area of tax reform, employment or expansion incentives. More than one wag has

said that the best thing the Government can do for business is to leave it alone to get on with business. The Budget at least meets this criteria.

Continuing expenditure restraint, a Commonwealth debt reduction of \$5 billion and a projected underlying Budget surplus in 1998/99 augur well for interest rates. The projected pick-up in GDP growth to 3.75% with inflation remaining at 2% is consistent with the Government's stated policy of creating an economic environment conducive to business growth.

Overall the 1997/98 Budget is a classic "steady as she goes" mid-term Budget. If its projections are met, the Government will be in a strong financial position to give substantial pork-barrel hand outs in next year's Budget, its pre-election Budget.

ECONOMIC SUMMARY

An underlying Budget deficit of \$3.9 Billion for 1997/98, with a projected surplus in 1998/99. Debt repayments in 1997/98 of \$5 Billion and no net borrowing.

Annual real change in Major economic indicators:

	1996/97	1997/98
Real GPD Growth	3.25%	3.75%
Employment Growth	1.25%	2.00%
Inflation by CPI	2.00%	2.00%
Average Weekly Earnings	4.75%	4.00%
Business Investment	16.00%	8.00%

SAVINGS TAX INCENTIVE

A 15% tax rebate will be introduced applicable to underdeducted member superannuation contributions and net personal income from savings and investments up to annual cap of \$3,000. The maximum rebate will be \$450 and the rebate will not be means tested.

The rebate will apply to net personal income from savings and investment including interest receipts, dividend income (grossed-up by imputation credits), net rental income, net capital gains, privately funded pensions and annuities, assessable life insurance and friendly society bond bonuses, partnership income and attributed foreign income. The rebate will also apply to the net business income of a sole trader or a partner in a partnership.

The savings rebate will be calculated by the ATO from information on individual tax returns.

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Information on undeducted member superannuation contributions will thus need to be incorporated in future tax returns. Taxpayers will be able to vary their provisional tax in anticipation of the new rebate.

Commencement: In 1998/99 a transitional rebate of \$225 will apply at the rate of 7.5%. From 1 July 1999 the maximum rebate will be \$450 p.a. calculated at the rate of 15%.

Comment: It appears more appropriate to describe this measure as a tax handout than a savings incentive. It appears highly unlikely that a maximum tax rebate of \$450 p.a., will have any noticeable impact on the spending and saving patterns of most Australians. Meanwhile, virtually every taxpayer will be eligible for some tax rebate (e.g. even if only because they receive bank account interest) even if they do not increase their savings in consequence of the Budget incentive.

It is interesting to note that virtually all income is eligible for the new rebate except salary and wages income. Limiting the rebate to an income cap of \$3,000 p.a. (e.g. \$60,000 invested at 5% interest) carries the anomalous implication that larger savings are either undesirable or require no incentive.

SUPERANNUATION

More Choice for Employees - Further Burden on Employers

From 1 July 1998, employers will be required to offer new employees a choice of at least five complying superannuation funds or Retirement Savings Accounts (RSA) to which contributions may be paid. Employees will be given 28 days in which to make their decision. If no nomination is made, employers will be able to make the necessary choice. Employers have two years in which to present a similar choice to existing employers.

Commencement: 1 July 1998

Comment: Employers will have to offer new employees a reasonable "spread" of different types of fund (i.e. public offer fund, RSA, in-house fund) from which to make their choice.

Opting out of the Super Guarantee System

Following on from last year's Budget, the Government has decided to permit certain

employees earning between \$450-\$900 a month to receive Superannuation Guarantee contributions as salary or wages.

Commencement: 1 July 1998

Preservation Rules Tightened

In an effort to further restrict early access to superannuation benefits, all contributions made to a superannuation fund, irrespective of whether made by a member, or on behalf of a member, will be preserved. However, the greater of a member's undeducted contributions (that is, contributions made by the member personally for which no tax deduction was given) and the member's resignation/retrenchment benefits, as at the commencement date, will remain unpreserved.

Commencement: 1 July 1999

Double Dipping Curtailed

The Government has decided to move the superannuation preservation age closer to the pension age. For those born before 1 July 1960, the super preservation age will remain at 55; for those born after 30 June 1964, the preservation age will be 60.

Early Release of Super Benefits - Changes

A number of changes have been announced to remedy perceived abuses in relation to the early release of super benefits. For those who have left Australia permanently, super benefits will not be released until their preservation age is reached. Further, the \$500 preservation threshold will be abolished. The threshold permitted members to receive benefits before the preservation date if the total amount was less than \$500.

Significant tightening in relation to the release of benefits on the grounds of hardship have also been announced. A member will have to have continuously received certain social security payments for 12 months (9 months for those aged 55 or over) before the ground will have been met. Early release on the grounds of permanent incapacity remains unchanged.

MAURITIUS ECONOMY

HOW DOES IT COMPARE?

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

Mauritius has been an independent and sovereign nation since 1968 and became a Republic in 1992. Under the constitution, which is based on the British parliamentary democracy, executive power rests with the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. The President, who is the Head of the State, appoints the Prime Minister after general elections which are held freely and every five years.

There are three representatives for each constituency, which is a small geographical area, and of which there are 20. In addition, Rodrigues Island which forms part of the Republic of Mauritius is represented by two members. When elected by universal adult suffrage, the representatives become members of the National Assembly. There are now five main political parties: the Labour Party, the Movement Militant Mauricien, the Movement Socialiste Militant, the Renouveau Militant Mauricien, and the Parti Mauricien Social Démocrate.

Government and opposition parties alike display a highly positive attitude towards industrial development and foreign investments. Central Government delegates certain powers to democratically elected local government.

Mauritius enjoys a stable political climate and actively participates in world affairs through membership of the British Commonwealth, and other international organisations such as the United Nations, the Organisation for African Unity (OAU), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC). Mauritius is also one of the initiators of the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) association which aims at promoting regional co-operation among countries of the Indian Ocean region. (Refer April Edition).

THE ECONOMY

The economy of Mauritius was originally almost entirely dependent, on the sugar industry. However, over the last two decades, an active policy of diversification based on export oriented

industries has been implemented. The tourist industry has also developed into a major income generator with more than 400,000 visitors every year. The present thrust is on the service sector with as objective the development of Mauritius into a regional financial and business centre. The Offshore Business Centre and the Freeport have been set up to facilitate this development.

Mauritius has achieved high rates of growth, of output and employment in the past ten years. Buoyed up essentially by the manufacturing sector, economic growth averaged 5.6% during 1990 to 1994. Unemployment, which affected nearly 20% of the economically active population in 1984, was brought down, to an estimated 5% in 1989 and today, the economy is considered to be in a situation of full employment, with an unemployment rate of 1.8%. The rate of inflation was 7.3% in 1994 and 6% in 1995.

Developments in the external sector of the economy have culminated in a striking improvement in the financial standing of the country. For the first time since 1975/76, the current account registered a surplus of Mauritian Rupees 176 million in 1985/86 and from then on till 1991/92, the overall balance of payments showed surpluses.

As a result of this continued improvement, the foreign exchange reserves rose to Rs 14,226 million in 1992, representing 30 weeks of imports. The balance of payments started to deteriorate in 1992/93 and has since registered growing deficits, reaching Rs 1,009 million in 1994/95.

The sustained growth achieved over the years has significantly strengthened business confidence in the country. The main challenge remains the continued transformation of Mauritius into a newly industrialised country (NIC). Today, Mauritius is engaged in the second phase of its industrial development which involves graduating from a labour intensive economy to a capital and skill intensive one. Special incentives are being given to industrialists wishing to invest in areas like jewellery, electronics informatics and the service sector. Increasing attention is being given to manpower training and the development of skills to improve productivity. It is clear that Mauritius needs foreign direct investment and technical know-how if she is to sustain the

LES MAURICIENS EN AUSTRALASIE

relatively high growth rates of the last decade.

EXTERNAL TRADE

Total exports increased from Rs 18,797 million in 1990/91 to Rs 25,482 million in, 1994/95. Export Processing Zone (EPZ) exports stood at Rs 18,100 million representing 67% of total domestic exports in 1995.

Total imports rose from Rs 24,005 million in 1990/91 to Rs 35,290 million in 1994/95.

The pattern of external trade is characterised by two main features, namely the concentration of the export markets and the diversity of the countries sources of import supplies. The EU and the USA are the main export markets whereas France, the United Kingdom, Japan, South Africa, West Germany and China are the country's main suppliers of durable consumable goods, capital equipment and raw materials. The major suppliers of oil to Mauritius are: Kuwait and Bahrain.

PRODUCTION

Agriculture

Agriculture consists mainly of the production of sugar cane, tea and food crops. Output of sugar per crop year is normally in the region of 600,000 - 650,000 tons and around 500,000 tons are exported to the European Union under the export quota for Mauritius. A further 85,000 tons of quota have been secured after negotiations in 1995 for the next six years.

The agricultural sector accounts for approximately 11% of GDP and sugar exports accounted for only 22% of total exports in 1995 compared with 40.5% in 1987. This declining trend is likely to continue with the growing importance of the other sectors of the economy.

Industry

The growth in industrial production in Mauritius can be considered as spectacular. This performance is largely explained by the success attributable to the EPZ enterprises. By end 1991, there were about 586 enterprises operating in the EPZ compared with 275 in 1985. However, since the beginning of this decade the EPZ sector has been undergoing a difficult period of restructuring. Between 1991 and 1995, the number of persons employed in large EPZ firms declined from 86,000 to 80,300 while the number of establishments

decreased from 586 to 470.

Manufacturing activity is largely concentrated in the textile and clothing sector, and steps are being taken to diversify the industrial base of the country.

Tourism

Tourist arrivals have been growing steadily over the past years and 416,000 tourists visited the island in 1995 compared with 300,670 in 1991. Similarly, despite an increase in the number of hotels, total room occupancy rose from 51.0% in 1991 to 66.4% in 1994, Gross earnings increased spectacularly from Rs 3,940 million in 1991 to Rs 6,052 million in 1994.

Due to its unique blend of good climate; excellent beaches, first class water sports facilities, friendly and welcoming people, Mauritius has been established as an exclusive tourist resort in the Indian Ocean.

Economic indicators	1993	1994	1995
Population mid year (1000)	1063	1078	1087
Real annual growth rate %	4.9	5.2	5.5
GDP at market prices (m)	3200	3507	4042
Per Capita GNP at market prices(m)	2919	3132	3570
Gross Domestic Fixed Capital Formation (Investment) (m)	910	1089	1073
Inflation Rate %	10.5	7.3	
Total Imports (c.i.f. value -m)	1718	1919	2062
Total Exports (f.o.b. value-m)	1333	1375	1611
Balance of visible trade (m)	-22	-30	-26
Export Processing Zone (m)	896	921	1084
Overall Balance of Payments(m)-40		-17	6
Sugar Production (mt)	565026	500209	550000
Tourist arrivals	374630	400526	420000
Tourist earnings (m)	300	337	
Foreign Reserves	806	777	776
Unemployment rate %	1.8	1.6	

M = million US \$

Mt = metric tons

Source: Central Statistical Office

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PRESIDENT: Régis Jasmin

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**STATE COUNCIL ON THE MAURITIAN
ASSOCIATION (NSW)**

CHAIRMAN - Percy Cotte

STELLA CLAVISQUE CLUB INC. (VIC)

PRESIDENT: Sylvio Lebret

(We have been asked to include the phone number of the presidents of the above clubs, so that new members may contact them. We will do so in the next edition. We will only use after-hours phone numbers. Presidents should contact MEA if they do not wish to have their phone number listed or they prefer a different number such as a mobile phone.

If you know of a Club, which is not listed above, please let us know.)

MAURITIAN PUBLICATIONS

MAISONS TRADITIONELLES DE L'ÎLE

MAURICE Jean-Louis Pagès. \$13.95

PARLEZ CRÉOLE. James Burty David, Lilette David, Clarel Seenyen. \$ 4.25

BIRDS OF MAURITIUS Claude Michel \$9.30

MARINE MOLLUSCS OF MAURITIUS

C. Michel, S. Takoor, M. Coowar. \$6.75

LE SEIGNEUR DU LAGON OU LA PÊCHE

AU GROS À MAURICE. Bertrand Noël. \$23.25

MAURICE À L'AUBE DE L'AN 2000

Régis Fanchette, Pierre Argo. \$40.00

FESTIVALS OF MAURITIUS. Ramesh

Ramdoyal \$40.00

JE T'OFFRE MA TERRE. Jeanne Gerval-

Arouff \$9.30

QUATRE BORNES URBS FLORIDA.

Lilian Berthelot \$9.30

HISTOIRE DE LA LITTÉRATURE

MAURICIENNE DE LANGUE FRANÇAISE

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A NEW HISTORY OF MAURITIUS

J. Addison, K. Hazareesingh. \$ 16.00

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LES MAURICIENS EN AUSTRALASIE

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GILLES SERRET

A COPY OF MINISTRY OF HEALTH OPERATION SHEET:

Medical Report for Mr Serret



Gilles, 26 years old, was admitted to the male, Burns Unit, Victoria Hospital, Mauritius, on 31st December, 1996, evening for an extensive burns by flame over his whole of face, neck, whole of the anterior trunk, circumferential deep burns, both upper limbs, including fingers, hands as well as

left thigh (anterior aspect)

Total body surface area of burns is 48% - 2nd degree and 3rd degree over trunk, 3rd degree both upper limbs, face and neck, 2nd degree superficial...(this part of the document could not be read properly due to doctors hand-writing)

The general condition is stable. At the request of the parents, the above mentioned patient is authorised to fly to South Africa...

Gilles needs to fly to South Africa for further treatment. Your support is required. Please come along to the Fund raising dance organised for Saturday 7th June, 1997. (Refer Coming Events section for details)

COMING EVENTS

(NSW) Every first and third Friday of the Month, the Club Mauricien hold Domino nights at the Blacktown City Bowling Club, Lismore Street, Blacktown. For further information feel free to contact any of the following: Pierre Commarmond 9624 1395, 018 642170, Sylvio Jolicoeur 9626 6685, George Laboulet 9639 3794, Alain Laxale 9639 9283, 018 269858, Harry Louise 9831 3615, Clency Thomas 9888 2941.

(NSW) Prestons Soccer Club plays Soccer on the following Sundays at the Blamfield Park, Liverpool. 11th May, 18th May, 25th May, 1st June, 8th June, 15th June, 22nd June, 29th June, 6th July, 13th July. Mauritian Food and drinks are on sale.

(NSW) Saturday, 31st May 1997 – Preston Soccer Club Inc. presents its Annual Autumn Ball 1997 at the James Meehan High School, Harold Street, Macquarie Fields, 7:30 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. Band is Night Shift and DJ is The Lennons. Snacks and drinks will be available. Members: \$12.00, Non-members: \$15.00, Children: 5-12 yrs \$6.00.

BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL – Seats are limited, no tickets will be sold at the door. Contact Dolly Lennon 9832 7282 or Yves Antoine 9607 0145

(NSW) Saturday, 7th June 1997 – Father Laval Charity Group Gilles Serret's fund raising cabaret show dinner dance at Marconi Club, Bossley Park, NSW. This dance is organised for Gilles Serret who suffered extensive burns to his body and is

LES MAURICIENS EN AUSTRALASIE

currently receiving medical treatment in a South African hospital. Time 7:00pm. Ticket \$20.00. For more information contact the following: Harry Louise 9831 3615(AH), Dominique Louise 0419 468612, Danielle and Alain Perombelon 9825 1897 (AH) 0419 555421, Marielle and Sydney Decotter 9821 1461(AH) 018 602065, Bianca Raffaut 9774 3939(AH), Jocelyn Empeigne 9823 9466(AH) 0412 294579, Patrick Hope 9897 2006(AH), Sarah Jale Peerbye 9677 0463(AH) 019 127735, Norbert Busooa 9829 5636, Henri Emraz 9605 3917(AH).

(VIC) Saturday, 12th July 1997 – MSA Dance. Refer next edition for details.

(VIC) Saturday, 25th October 1997 – MSA Dance. Refer next edition for details.

(NSW) Saturday, 22nd November 1997 – MEA celebrates its first birthday in Sydney at the Auditorium, Club Marconi, Bosley Park.

NEWS IN BRIEF

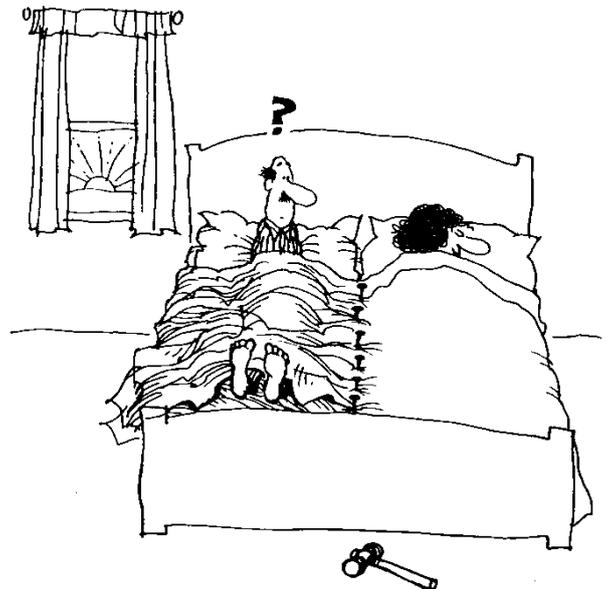


Congratulations to Denise and Michel Brû on their 49th Wedding Anniversary - 29th April 1997.

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Marian at 10:00 p.m.



Sylvio (left) at 6:00 a.m the next morning.