



M.A.M

Tel. 246-427-5835
664-491-3685
Email: lowellex@hotmai.com
P.O. Box 410
Montserrat
(©) Lowell Lewis

MONTSERRAT ALIVE MAGAZINE

In this issue
Page

Money cannot buy love	1
What will bring people back	2
Remembrance Day Parade- a reminder	3
The other story - Dead Elephants	3
Looking back. What KMAM said	4
MAM Health page	6
Millenium Montserrat	7
The Democracy Experiment	7
BOT New Jewels of the Empire	8

Money Cannot Buy Love?

19th February 2000

The inevitable collapse of the new dome, which will bring further major ashing on to Salem, Olveston and Woodlands later this year, is an issue that requires attention. MAM is not a vehicle of pessimistic doom, as Keep Montserrat Alive Magazine (KMAM) was once described, but a proponent of common sense, vision and fair play, qualities sometimes regarded as naïve stupidity

(Continued on page 2)



Happy Hill Medical Center

EDITORIAL

Where we came from

At last! The over due second edition of MAM. It is with regret that we received the news that, after 18 months of no dome growth, the volcano started to shove material up its vent again in September 1999. Unfortunate, but probably a good thing since it may reverse the decision to stop assistance for those residents of Salem who want to build new homes in the North.

Several weeks ago during a programme discussing the preparations for March 17, 2000, "**Montserrat Heroes and St Patrick's Day**," an ex-Chief Minister called ZJB radio and reminded us that we must know where we came from if we are to move on. He was very right, especially since we must know what not to go back to, the way we manage our country has to change.

"Me barn and grow up in Roaches Mountain on free land, just like my mother and father. I don't believe they were slaves, but they lived off the land. The Mercer family was in charge of the Estate, but we never had to pay rent. Then we save up and got a small house in Kinsale on free land by the sea, and now the government move us to a small house on Davy Hill, but it don't belong to us, and it is not free land. I can't pay rent, and have no money for food because I have no pension."

These words from an 84 year old lady who then squeezed out of my car door, and clung to her walking stick. She then limped through the doorway of the Bank of Montserrat at the top of Forgathy. She had decided to buy a small refrigerator. That would bring her savings to less than \$4,000.00, so she could qualify for welfare. I hope her new electricity bill does not take too much of the government hand out.

This story tells of where a lot of us have come from, but it does not have to be a description of where we are going to.

Do you have Diabetes or High Blood Pressure?

Is your Cholesterol level too high?

Do you know the signs of cancer of the breast, prostate and colon?

Prevention and early detection is the preferred approach.

**Read MAM Public Health Edition Vol I No. 1
at www.montserratreporter.org**

and no match for cunning.

For example, in KMAM of 23rd August 1996, I wrote: "When I read the MVO report of August 10th, I drew two pencil lines on my map of Montserrat, one down Farm's ghaunt and the other down from Farrels to Belham Valley. I then shaded in an area on both sides of the lines of about ½ to 1 mile in width to allow for the zones ii and iii of a pyroclastic flow, as recently described by Wadge. The shaded areas took in the airport, Air Studios, some of Corkhill, the Monlec electricity generators and Old Road Bay." "

We are a little better prepared now. Tropical Mansion Suites is available for residents of Olveston and Old Town who may once again require temporary relocation, but it is a pity the owners of the Good Life did not build a 100-room hotel on top of their restaurant and dance floor and a pity that Governor Savage did not get to build the 1000 homes he wanted to build in the safe northern area.

Today was a beautiful day in Salem, and I enjoyed talking to patients in my newly opened "Happy Hill Medical Centre" under the shadow of the mountain, within reach of any hot surge that will accompany any pyroclastic flow that may come down the Belham Valley. Not much sense for a medical centre to be in this location, but it is a deserving use of abandoned family property. My original intention was to open it as a Gallery, dedicated to the memory of my late great grandmother Augusta Ryan and her two daughters, Sarah Ryan and Jane Perkins, for exhibition of photographs and distribution of local video productions.

However, the need for a medical service in that area became so apparent that I changed the word Gallery to Medical Centre. Nevertheless, during the time that I am overseas, visitors will be invited to view a photographic exhibition, either before or after a visit to the Frith's Bird's Eye View of the Volcano. In any case, the centre can be moved completely within six hours.

MONEY CANNOT BUY LOVE? How could I describe this is a myth (See previous MAM article "BOT New Jewels of the Empire.") This MAM valentine edition is late, but it is still worth sharing the thoughts contained.

The issue hinges on the definition of "Love." We all know what the oldest profession is, and even though the epidemic of AIDS seemed to threaten its position as the number one vice, above gambling, in some societies, thanks to the proper use of condoms it still serves to meet the carnal needs of obsessive ram goats, who should really give their hearts to Jesus.

But this is not LOVE. It is carnal need, which, by coincidence, is an important part of the expression of love. Just like when we say "We love you" "We love you," it is just that, A SAYING, which sometimes actually means "We Need You" "We Need You."

One of my obsessions is ice cream, and I have started to eat smaller volumes because I am likely to develop Diabetes Milletus like my late grandmother and late Uncle Morgan. But I have assured my good friend John that my warnings about diabetes have no chance of closing his business down. His ice cream is just too nice. My warning couldn't close his business down, and neither could anyone wishing to give away ice cream.

Miss Henny of Trials could have given him a run for his ice cream. I visited her in her comfortable apartment in Leicester, England, and noted that on benefits, she could save more than she could ever earn in Montserrat. It is a pity that apartment could not have been one of the 1,000 houses that Governor Savage wanted to build in St John's.

Then she wouldn't have to be wrapped in six layers of clothing when she goes shopping, and I could have got one of her Xs.

Money cannot buy love, but it certainly can buy gratitude, support, more money, better health care and sometimes an X. Money can buy hate. If you give away food, you close down the grocers; you provide free services by highly paid overseas consultants and professionals, you make it impossible for self employed to make a living. Provide subsidised ferry and helicopter services and it is impossible for anyone to embark on a project that could break the stranglehold that restricts travel to and from Montserrat.

Money cannot buy love, but it can buy a future, hope, fulfillment and happiness, but this depends on who has the privilege and authority to spend it. The recently announced social welfare programme is a slap in the face of all over 60 years old who were not established employees and therefore without pension.

In the United Kingdom, the limit for savings to qualify is £10,000 (\$40,000), and since when has the value of assets been a factor? God help the little old lady who has no money for food, electricity, water and cable television, who has a small piece of land in Drummonds, where there is no road water or electricity. She now has to sell it for \$3,999 to qualify. Money cannot buy love, but it can change a community's destiny. ■

Housing, Jobs, Security Will Bring People Back



Lookout Housing Development

12th November 1999

Most post-volcano migrant Montserratians in the United Kingdom have settled well, in new homes, regular jobs or College and University training courses, and many have no intention of returning to Montserrat. However, some of the older folks are homesick, long for sight of the seas, hillsides, goats, pigs and fowls, and miss the feel of the warm tropical sunshine.

"What would it take to make more of our people want

to return home?" "Affordable houses to live in, jobs for the young and middle aged people, pensions for the retired, and unemployment benefits for those out of work."

I should add "Full resolution of the volcanic activity," since some are still frightened of the rumblings and eruptions. I should also qualify my comment on affordable homes by stating, "In the Northern Safe Area," since I am still of the opinion that housing in the buffer area of Salem to Woodlands is not, and will never be completely risk-free investment.

Property owners in the North are still wrongfully being blamed for the impasse in the provision of new housing stock. The problem really lies with a policy which proves reluctance to use UK Aid Funds to facilitate the development of private properties by the provision of utility installations.

If it costs \$10,000 to take water, electricity, sewage works and roads to each housing plot, an arrangement should be possible for this to be taken from the \$40,000 grant being made available for those wishing to build in the Northern Safe Area. Property owners would then make it their business to subdivide their properties into housing lots, and actively seek customers for lots, in order to gain access to "Infrastructure Development Funds."

This commentary attempts to promote and justify the allocation of funds to infrastructure installations on privately owned property, with the provision that the land adjacent to the housing plots that bear the utilities (roads, water and electricity and communication cables) be handed over to the crown. The utility companies can then contribute to Government for the use of this crown land.

In principle, it is wrong for land to be compulsorily acquired for resale to private individuals or for rental to tenants, and it is unlikely for private individuals to proceed with construction of properties on land subject to a decision by the courts.

There are several other factors which remain critical to Montserrat being attractive for returning nationals and prospective tourists and investors.

Despite the unfortunate location of parts of Lookout under the flight path from Gerald's Park, the construction of a strip for fixed-winged aircraft should be a priority, and I am curious to see whether any of the present crop of decision makers have the guts or ability to make this happen by June 2000. This landing strip should be the first phase of the proposed development of a sports facility in the area, and any attempt to drop the landing strip from the project should be strongly resisted.

Purchase of the Ferry for Montserrat would also be a useful achievement, if only to gain access to transportation for products of any industrial process that could be established on Montserrat. The Ferry should overnight in Montserrat, and cargo for transhipment through Antigua, off and on loaded in appropriately prepacked 'aircraft size' containers.

A later departure from Antigua in the mornings would encourage day trippers to stay overnight in Montserrat.

The coming Christmas Festival is keenly awaited. The opening of Tropical Mansions at the top of Davy Hill, the completion of the Entertainment Complex and Cultural Centre at Little Bay, and the Agricultural Exhibition should be special events worth looking forward to.

We hope that future visits by cruise ships will allow the day visitors to interact with more people and more businesses. Visitors being driven through the port gates and being restricted to one or two stops is not consistent

**Dr Lowell Lewis,
announces the opening of
Happy Hill Medical Center
in Salem at the top of Happy Hill**

**Services include general practice consultations;
adult and paediatric general surgery;
specialist laparoscopic and renal surgery.**

**Specialist surgery performed
at Bay View Hospital, Barbados**

**Dr. Lewis expects to be in Montserrat
for 10 to 14 days each month**

**A nurse is available fulltime
9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday to Friday
For information and appointments call
491-3685, 491-2379, and 246 427 5835**

with promoting free enterprise.

We hope that the 500 or more holidaying overseas Montserratians expected for December, will be presented with a mix of cultural festivities that includes more than just loud music, wining in the street, late night shows, and free-flowing bars and rum shops.

Montserrat remains alive. With a little good will, commonsense and determination, the year 2000 could be good for us. ■

REMEMBRANCE PARADE November 1999 "A REMINDER"

November 19, 1999

At 7 a.m. Sunday 14th November 1999, the remaining uniformed organizations in Montserrat gathered outside the Pentecostal Church in Brades. Dressed in their clean, starched attire, some had walked up the steep hill from lodgings at the Brades Shelters or the part chipboard housing units at Davy Hill. Others climbed off the yellow school buses which had made pickup stops in Salem, Olveston, Woodlands, St Peters, and St Johns.

The car park and the western patio of the church served



Governor Abbott comforts old soldiers

as dressing room for the predominantly young marchers, who fidgeted and helped each other with their uniforms. Tinted windows of minibuses allowed the police to fix their spotless head-gear at exactly the right angles.

Veteran Remembrance day celebrant Rupert (Cobbler) Nanton was on hand with a basket of poppies. He would later carry out his now traditional role of reading the names of those who fell in the two great wars. Pinning on the red poppies was problematic for some of the younger folk, but they were all eventually successful.

Radio Montserrat was on hand for a live broadcast. The technician's equipment was set up early, and Rose Willock carried out her usual meticulous preparations for what would be another interesting and entertaining programme for ZJB listeners. Later we were soothed by the mellow tones of recently retired temporary Magistrate Karney Osborne. In one of his many, many, many roles, we heard him talking to Rose about "Tradition, discipline and values."

The commanding figure of Lieutenant Horatio Tuitt, (a local Montserrat Defense Force Officer, who has recently returned from a period of service in Yugoslavia,) called the parade to order and gave instructions for the proceedings. In an orderly fashion, all sections moved into the church and the band of the Seventh Day Adventists, reinforced by remnants of the now defunct Defense Force Band, took up position on the western patio of the church.

The usual faces were present. Old soldiers showing off their medals, retired civil servants, clergy, members of the Legislative Council, glamorously attired young ladies and a few bewildered, curious infants on their mother's shoulders.

An honor guard of flags remained at the main entrance of the church, to greet the Hon. Chief Minister David Brandt, and Mrs Verna Brandt, and his Excellency Governor Anthony Abbott. Both parties arrived in their flagged white range rovers. This was perhaps the last public ceremonial duty of the current Queen's representative, who carefully carried his feathered white pith helmet into church. The following procession of the flags took them to their place of honor at the altar.

Gone are the guns of the Montserrat Defense Force, the awesome reminders of the instruments of war now replaced by symbols of brotherhood, unity and nationhood.

The "Last Post" trumpet solo echoed through the doors of the church, preceding the laying of the wreaths, led by the Governor and Chief Minister. Among the wreath layers was the familiar son of a lost World War II merchant seaman, who has laid a wreath for his father every year for over 30 years. This year's service was without a sermon, but the prayers and scripture readings provided all the spiritual inspiration required. "O God our help in ages past" was wonderfully sung. I believe the hills responded with the "Amen."

The growing role of women in the church was very apparent at this ecumenical event.

Mr. Rupert Nanton, ex-Air Force Serviceman, presented the names of the fallen, "Those who fell in the 1914 to 1918 war: John Kingsley Martin, William Nugent Gordon, William Goathe, Burliegh Hannam, Maurice Hannam, Adolphus Peters, Arthur Samuel Warner. Those who fell in the 1939 to 1945 war: Benjamin Allen, Alfred Wade, Peter Lee, Frederick Smith, James Browne, Eugene D'Vanier, Anthony Benjamin. They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old. Age shall not weary them nor the years. At

the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them."

The plaque with the list of names omitted one of the Hannam Brothers, an error which should be corrected by next year.

The National Anthem was sung with the usual gusto, "God save the Queen." A sentiment consistent with the leading flag of the procession being the Union Jack. Our own Montserrat National Flag, with the emblem of the Irish lady playing a harp, followed.

In remembering our war dead, we were reminded of our position in the Empire; of the forces for unity and service; reminded of tradition, and most important of all, reminded that the Montserrat Community still exists. As the Governor inspected the ranks of police, fire service, school cadets, scouts, guides, brownies, Red Cross, Seventh Day Adventist Ventures (and any other group I forgot), he must have realized the error of canceling the last Queen's Birthday Parade and the unthinkable consideration of not having a Remembrance Day parade.

The solitary distinguished figure of Lieutenant Horatio Tuitt on the parade ground bemoaned the disembodiment of the Montserrat Defense Force. As the parade marched off briskly up the hill, Major Joseph Lynch deservedly smiled. He must have wondered how his uniform fit so well on the smart young officer leading the cadets.

I was a proud Montserratian as I heard the shouts of "Eyes Right" and "Eyes Front," as His Excellency The Governor, the Commissioner of Police and the Chief Minister took the salute at the march past. I was amused by the relaxed stragglers at the end of the parade, but hopeful that in the coming years they will be incorporated in the preceding groups, and be replaced by a new set of stragglers, and hopeful that the Montserrat Defense Force will reappear on the parade ground.

As I watched the parade, I remembered, and was reminded that the Montserrat Community will always exist; reminded that our future should be in our hands, as I watched our young people march down the hill to the spectacle of the Government Headquarters. But that is another story. ■

The Other Story - Dead Elephants

November 11, 1999

The gutters around the long white building was often covered with frog spawn, and the silent conveyor belts and



An aerial view of the temporary Government Headquarters