

## Cheer Giving the R.I.P.P.L.E.S. Way

*There's often what is referred to as a "generation gap" between the old and the young, and even on little Bequia, where modernization is less than a half-century old, there are wide differences in cultural norms between members of this present generation and their elders. Travel and technology may be partly responsible for the huge disparity in experiences, habits, opinions and behaviours. As a result these two groups do not understand each other and are usually suspicious of each other's motives.*

Part of the R.I.P.P.L.E.S. project is to strengthen ties between the two groups by bringing musical cheer to the older ones and by sitting with them and listening to their life stories, which very often contain a comparison of life today and yesterday. Out of that exercise the R.I.P.P.L.E.S. group tries to extract those principles and practices that would add value to their present way of life.

On May 30, 2006, the oldest person on Bequia celebrated his 103<sup>rd</sup> birthday. At 5:00 p.m. the group traveled to Gellizeau at the south-western end of the island to bring cheer to Uncle Earnest Ollivierre who was happy to have RIPPLES entertain him in song. Their renditions included old-time favourites like "Lean on Me" and a medley of "Amen--O How I Love Jesus--I have a Joy". They had the added benefit of other musicians like New York's Jim Coleman on trumpet and Bequia's Dermott Ollivierre on saxophone.







On June 12, 2006, RIPPLES won the race against dark rain clouds as they ran to keep their cheer-giving appointment with Mrs. Vilna Ollivierre of La Pompe. Living in her traditional two-storey house with her aged husband, "Cousin Vilna" recently had one of her legs amputated. Unable to go anywhere else than the upstairs or downstairs of the home, the elderly woman gladly accepted the group's offer to sing and play for her.

The surname, "Ollivierre", is a familiar one dating back to the 1800s when a Frenchman, Joseph



Ollivierre, owner of the Gellizeau estate, helped to establish the whaling industry on Bequia. Accompanying the cheer-givers was Mrs. Verlene Ollivierre who assists RIPPLES with their drama presentations. A motherly character filled with childhood stories about life on Bequia, "Sister Verlene" as she is sometimes referred to, is an important part of the bridging exercise, since at age 65 her jovial demeanor serves to put the children at ease. She can be described as a "mother with a youthful heart".



As rain poured down the sides of the house and seeped unto the kitchen floor, one djembe drum beat lively rhythms to the youthful voices so intent on lifting the spirits of the elderly couple on that cold and wet evening. At the end of the session both the recipients and cheer-givers felt that something good had taken place. Communication had transpired and one more bridge was about to be built.

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