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the

CARIBBEAN Connection

THE WEST INDIES MISSION COUPLES' NEWSLETTER

Message from the Mission President

Dear Couple Missionaries,

With this issue of the Caribbean Connection, we have passed the year mark of our mission. It is racing by and there is so much to be done. When we arrived, there were four couples in addition to a CES and a Humanitarian Couple. Now we have more couple missionaries than any proselyting mission in the world. Think of

the great work that is being done in each country in the mission. It is a staggering thought to think of such a powerful force of mighty couple missionaries. We are so grateful for what you do and for your constant and steady dedication to establishing the Church in this part of the Caribbean. One of our great anxieties is how to find a couple to take your place at the end of your mission as the mission can not be nearly as effective without a couple serving where you are serving. May the Lord bless each of you in this His work.

With Love, President and Sister Robison

Peanut Butter Ice Cream Topping (yield: 2 3/4 cups) Virginia Naegle

1 cup packed brown sugar
1/2 cup light corn syrup
3 Tablespoons butter or margarine
pinch salt
1 cup peanut butter
1/2 cup evaporated milk

Combine brown sugar, corn syrup, butter, and salt in 1½ qt. microwavable baking dish. Cover and microwave on high for 4 minutes or until mixture boils, stirring twice. Add peanut butter; stir until smooth. Stir in evaporated milk. Serve warm over ice cream. Cover and store in refrigerator. Reheat in microwave.

Note: Can use creamy peanut butter and add peanuts, or use chunky peanut butter and you may not want additional peanuts. In place of corn syrup in Trinidad, you could use Gold Syrup. This can also be used as a sauce for cake or other desserts.



FAREWELL TRIBUTES

We say farewell to six of our wonderful couples. The **Biehns** in Barbados, the **Oddens** in Suriname, and the **Taits** in St. Marten/Sint Maarten will be leaving for home, having served so faithfully throughout their mission. The **Whitings** in St. Kitts and Nevis, Allen and Marla **White** in Dominica, and the **Belnaps** in Antigua will be going to the new Puerto Rico East Mission. The **Biehns** will actually be going to the new mission and then departing in July. We wish all of them the very best as they go forward to more of life's adventures. May the Lord pour out his blessings on them all and on their families. Here are some tributes to them:

From the Stauffers: We are thankful to the **Biehns** for their kindness and hospitality at Zone Conferences and for what they have done to help us in this mission. We appreciated very much Elder Biehn loaning us a keyboard before we received any here. We wish them health happiness in their upcoming "non-mission" time period.

The Oddens



From the Robisons: We bid farewell, but know we will see the **Oddens** again. They have served so well for 18 months in Suriname. I personally will never forget their reaction when they received their first *Hurrah for Israel*. Not knowing the background to the newsletter and the fact that it was associated with the Brigham Young/Heber C. Kimball story, they were at first shocked to receive an e-mail from the mission president with the words "Hurrah for Israel" in the subject line on the same day that Israel bombed Lebanon. Once they opened the document, all was well, but they did have an initial surprise.

The Oddens have had a beautiful experience in the land where Sister Oddens was born and raised. They taught many investigators and brought them into the Church. They uncovered a settlement of LDS people

in Utijik, which is now a flourishing branch. Elder Oddens served in the District Presidency. They have put 55,000 km on the mission vehicle as they have unselfishly served the elders, the members and the investigators of Suriname. No one knows the shortcuts of Paramaribo like Elder Oddens.

If you have a copy of the DVD entitled "Best Two Years", you will see Elder Oddens featured as a non-member in Holland telling the elders he is not interested. Prior to serving in Suriname, that was his claim to fame. However, Elder and Sister Oddens now leave a legacy of love and service for which they will be long remembered. Elder and Sister Oddens, we love you.

From the Stauffers We were neighbors of the **Belnaps** and in the same ward for years. They are the type of people who do not just sit and watch things happen, they make things happen. We enjoy our association with them. It doesn't matter that they are going into a different mission because we haven't seen them since they entered the West Indies Mission. We're grateful for the computer so we can communicate with them.



We appreciate the **Biehns** and will miss them. Among Sister Biehn's recent emails with her helpful medical files, she wrote: "We will be at this email address forever I am sure, and we will be keeping our Barbados files when we go home. Again thank you for helping with these filters and for all you do. We know it isn't easy, but we have certainly found it worth it. The Lord blesses us beyond anything we can do in return. We will go out again in a few years. With love and a big hug for you all, Sister Biehn"



From the Tait's: This is another typically busy day, we have the Hiatts coming for three days to do "Public Relations" and Brother Briggs coming to sort out everything else we hope. However, our busy-ness does not justify our lack of communication with you. In the grand scheme of things, there must be a point where we need to share our experiences for the building up of the Kingdom by edifying each other. Elder Tait made an initial attempt and poked around your Blogging thing but quickly retreated! It is amazing how our attitudes change with old age. Instead of worrying that we are not smart enough to master the program, we see only a pathetic example of a nerd who spent his youth playing video games, trying to communicate with those of us who have neither the time or inclination to accommodate his user-unfriendly material.

By comparison, our childhood in Scotland was wonderful with no TV to "educate" us, back in the forties and fifties. So that's where we will start: We attended the same school in Perth; then Elder Tait was off to Benin, Africa to build powerlines and substations. We married a month after his return and got caught up in building nuclear powerstations after Nasser used the Suez Canal to cut off oil supplies to Britain. (Similar to the US situation today!) We then went to Nigeria, only to run into the Biafran war. We first came to the British Virgin Islands in '67 and Belize in '69. We have some wonderful tales from those days. We settled in Vancouver, Canada but moved to Seattle in 1980, where our whole family joined the Church. We returned to the BVI in 1997, and our son started a Priesthood Group; and later Elder Tait served as Branch President until our return to Canada in 2002. We were thrilled to be sent here for our Mission, which will be over on July 27th.

What can we pass on to the new Couples? Apart from the Gospel, don't take your life here too personally or too seriously! If you do, you could become disenchanted. The best thing is to have a sense of humour and plan to do no more than three major things each day. If you accomplish one, that is great!! If you get two done, that is most wonderful, so don't even consider doing the third thing! Also, don't lose sight of our goal as missionaries. Don't get too hung up on process, procedures, administration, and expense forms. We are here to show the Savior's love to investigators and members who have never seen a well-functioning ward; your actions may be the only scriptures they will ever read. Be a guide on the side, not a sage on the stage!

We most admire the smooth transition President and Sister Robison achieved from just a few couples to having so many couples in such a short time. We really appreciate their approach. We have been in a unique position to understand the administrative and logistical challenges this represented to President and Sister Dunn. They are providing a great service, especially in coping even with our well-motivated but sometimes acerbic comments during the developmental transition process!

However, our eyes have been pried wide open by the Area administration departments and employees. This has been our greatest learning experience by far. Because this is one of the most expensive Missions in the world, it follows that it should have the world's best supervision. The illogical explanation has been offered that a lack of local expertise and the geographical complexity have prevented this standard from being attained. It was previously "tacked on" to the North America South-East Area but now it is a new Caribbean Area, so already improvements are in progress. Splitting the missions is further evidence that corrective action is under way. Our greatest concern is that you will not let less-than-perfect situations or performances, perplex you or demotivate you. Our own unrealistic provincial vision of Church frugality and efficiency has been forever altered. We will doubly appreciate the value of the tiny but treasured offering from some poor Canadian widow when we get home!



Meanwhile, what can you do personally to reduce the budget? Our stewardship must include careful management of sacred funds, and we need to report to the proper authorities, areas and incidents where we witness their inappropriate use, especially concerning poor supervision or incompetent church employees. By increasing the number of responsible Couples, the Area Presidency has now introduced a wonderful new resource: diligent "frontline" reporting to ensure that shortcomings will be reduced if we all understand and participate in the process. We have enjoyed serving in Sint Maarten and Saint Martin; it is a unique island. Because of the inadequate social services, the Church is really needed here to help set standards in honesty, faithfulness, moral integrity and caring. But it is an uphill battle; immigration restrictions ensure that no one can expect to be here for too long except for the local citizens. Unfortunately, they tend to be in a minority among our faithful church members. We leave you with our testimony of the Savior and the Gospel. The Church is true!

Elder Johnson's extreme foot surgery.



Elder Tait guarantees no return of fungus or ingrown toenails.

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Elder and Sister Tait

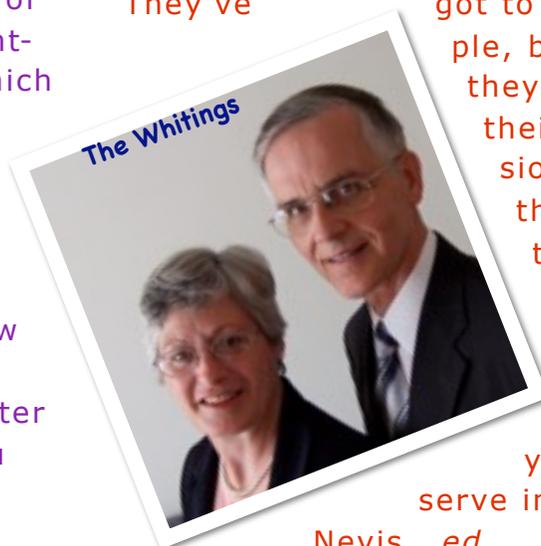


From the Robisons: As you walk the streets of Phillipsburg with the **Taits**, you will quickly note that they are on a first name basis with the locals. It seems like everyone knows the Taits. Elder Tait is known for his poetic eloquence as he speaks in phrases that send us running for the dictionary. Elder and Sister Tait have served unceasingly, unselfishly, and boldly for the past 18 months. For most of that time, Elder Tait has led the branch in St. Maarten as Branch President. Sister Tait has labored long hours at his side giving a hug for every member and literally loving the fold back into activity. Who can forget the bravery of an Elder Tait as he sat counting the tithes and offers and was accosted by a stranger brandishing a machete. The robber demanded the money. Elder Tait calmly told him that he did not want the Lord's money, but that he would give him money for some bread out of his own pocket. Then Elder Tait told him of the restoration of the gospel and actually set up appointments for missionary discussions, which the robber kept. The Taits will be sorely missed by the members, the missionaries, and the countless friends they have made in the villages of St. Maarten. Luckily, they have property in Anguilla, so we know we will see them again after the mission. You may run, Elder and Sister Tait, but you can't hide. We love you and look forward to seeing you soon.

Elder and Sister **White** (Allen and Marla) have been hugely successful in establishing the branches in Dominica in the few months they have been in the mission. They are stalwarts, and we are sad to see them leave our mission. We had hoped to get to know them better and want them to know how much we appreciate all they are doing for the Saints in Dominica. We expect and look forward to seeing them at the mission reunions. Don't forget us! *ed.*



How we will miss the **Whitings** and their clever and humorous emails! We were hoping to get to know them in person. Now the best we can hope for is to meet them at a mission reunion, or better yet, to see them when we visit our families in the Seattle area. They've

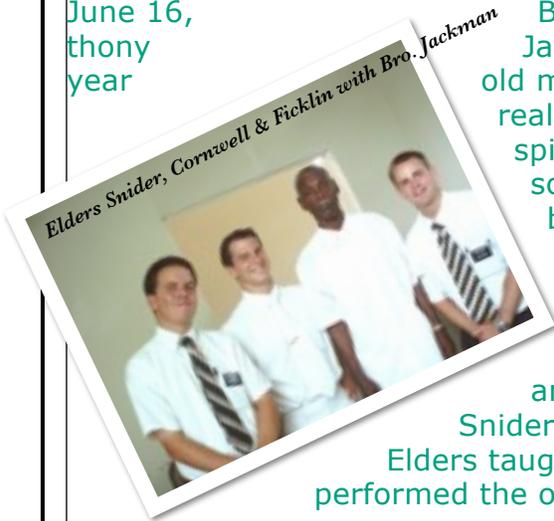


got to be a fun couple, besides the fact they are serving their second mission, showing their dedication to the gospel and the Lord's work. We wish you the very best as you continue to serve in St. Kitts and Nevis. *ed.*

From Elder and Sister Leavitt: It is hard to believe we have been out 3 months and are now settled in the Chaguanas area of Trinidad. We miss Grenada and the great Elders and fine people in the branch there but are quickly bonding with the members and Elders here also. We take turns attending Couva and Chaguanas branches and have met many loving people. We had our first baptism here on June 16, thony year

Saturday, Brother Anthony Jackman a 63 old man who really has the spirit and was so excited to be baptized in the true church. Elder Cornwell and Elder Snider our East Elders taught him and performed the ordinances.

It is a great joy for us to be around so many missionary couples and their dedicated example has inspired us to work harder. Many are serving their second and third missions.



We've enjoyed going to zone conference, zone meeting, district meetings, PEC at the branches and family home evenings. It is also a great experience for us to join with the Elders, visiting prospective and less active members. The traffic and drivers here are scary but we are slowly learning our way around Trinidad.

We are proud of the Elder's in our zone who work so hard each day and are excited to be serving our mission with them. We pray that the Holy Spirit will work through us, that lives may be touched and change for the building of the kingdom of our Father.

Front: Farrers, McGhies. Back: Naelges, Dunns, Leavitts



Note: The Leavitts had a lovely brunch on Saturday for the couples in Trinidad. We wish you all could have been there. Here we are.

Mexican Chicken Corn Chowder (Virginia Naegele)

- 1 1/2 lbs boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 to 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 T. butter
- 2 chicken bouillon cubes
- 1 cup hot water
- 1/2 to 1 t. ground cumin
- 2 cups half-and-half cream
- 2 cups (8 oz.) shredded Jack cheese
- 1 can (16 oz.) cream-style corn
- 1 can (4 oz.) chopped green chilies
- 1/4 to 1 t. hot pepper sauce
- 1 medium tomato
- Fresh cilantro or parsley, optional

Cut chicken into bite-size pieces. In a Dutch oven, brown chicken, onion and garlic in butter until chicken is no longer pink. Dissolve the bouillon in hot water. Add to pan along with cumin; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 5 minutes. Add cream, cheese, corn, chilies and hot pepper sauce. Cook and stir over low heat until the cheese is melted. Stir in tomato. Serve immediately; garnish with cilantro if desired.