



The former Skeldon Factory

Our People
 Switchboard Operator
 Renuka Hakim **Page 2**

Counselling and Testing service **Page 3**

149th SAC Meeting **Page 3**

SKELDON II Update **Page 4**

1st CROP SUGAR PRODUCTION SECOND HIGHEST SINCE 2004



The 103,267 tonnes of sugar recorded as the industry's First Crop achievement is the second highest attained since the year 2004 and signals the industry's return to the production trends of the last decade which usually exceeded 100,000-tonnes in any First Crop. This achievement however, falls short of the latest estimate for the First Crop by some 3000 tonnes.

Grinding began on February 8 when the eight factories chased a target of 106,000 tonnes of sugar. At the end of the Crop, Skeldon Estate made 12,376 tonnes. The more than 42,000 tonnes recorded by East Berbice Estate constitutes Albion's 25,964 tonnes and Rose Hall's 16,682 tonnes; Blairmont Estate declared 15,040 tonnes of sugar.

The four factories of the Demerara region wrapped up production efforts after eight to ten weeks of grinding. At the end of this period, Enmore netted 9,398 tonnes, LBI 8,329 tonnes, Wales 9,973 tonnes and Uitvlugt 5,504 tonnes.

The out-of-crop programme is reportedly progressing well as locations prepare for the Second Crop set to begin in late July.



“I’m committed to making a good impression”

Handling the switchboard for close to 20 years, Renuka Hakim is committed to her motto of “making a good impression.”

She is currently the longest-serving Switchboard Operator of Skeldon Estate. She started her career in sugar in 1991 with her husband and together they have since remained employed at Skeldon.

“I love my job. I appreciate being the one who gives callers their first impression of Skeldon Estate. I am also satisfied with my returns and am encouraged to continue giving to sugar,” Hakim said. “I am also happy to be part of the estate where everything modern is happening,” she added, referring to the new

factory currently under construction.

daughter Farzana is at secondary school.

“At first we were concerned that our jobs would be threatened as a result of the new factory and its technology but management spoke to us and assured us that although change has come, we will not be affected in any way,” she informed, and in her closing message to the 2600 employees of Skeldon convincingly said, “GUYSUCO is moving brightly ahead. As workers we should be proud to be part of what is happening. As we work, let’s aim high and work purposefully until you reach your goals.”

When asked about her attraction to work life in the sugar industry Hakim smilingly offered, “This estate is not new to my family. In fact all of my three brothers worked at Skeldon and my husband and I came to seek employment here soon after we had gotten married.”

Her husband is Corporal Azad Hakim of the Security Department and her son Reaz works as a Junior Bookkeeper with the estate. Her

The former school teacher says she enjoys the hours of work and recounts how happy she is working in GUYSUCO.

“We are a family in sugar and I intend for it to remain that way,” she states referring to the camaraderie she has with the other four switchboard operators. “We work a shift system and work as a team and because we all live close by, we would try to assist others when there are emergencies.”

Identifying the grinding period as the more challenging time for switchboard operators, Hakim is thankful for the recent opportunity of training in Customer Service which the Corporation facilitated. She explained that proficiency in the use of a radio set is also included in her duties.

Renuka Hakim celebrates her birthdate on June 19. We wish her well in all her endeavours.

Remembering the Enmore Martyrs

On the 60th Anniversary of their deaths, Lallbajee, Surujbally, Harry, Rambarran and Pooran are remembered as the Enmore Martyrs while the Corporation for which they worked is reminded of its role in adhering to the concerns of and recognizing the contribution of its human resources.

The real aim of the strike is recorded as a demand for recognition of GIWU – now named Guyana Agricultural and General Workers Union (GAWU) - as the bargaining Union for the field and factory workers and all the sugar estates in the country. There were also demands for the abolition of the “cut and load” system in the fields; and for higher wages and improved living conditions on the sugar estates.

Apprentices of GTC/PM, while on camp at Enmore, toured the site of the monument



It is out of the unfortunate incident initiated in the struggle for better working conditions and industrial democracy that came the signing of a recognition agreement some years later between the (GAWU) and the Sugar Producers’ Association in 1976.

Today some 18,500 persons are directly employed by the sugar industry which is owned by the people of Guyana and many can attest to the fact that their rights are protected and being expanded as well.



GUYSUCO to offer Voluntary Counselling and Testing service in HIV/AIDS



At the close of 2nd phase of training, some of the participants share a photo opportunity with officials of the Guyana Defence Force, the Ministry of Health and Facilitators seated in the front row

The second component of the training which involved HIV Rapid Test Training was hosted by the Medical Corps of the GDF, Ayanganna for four days beginning June 3.

The VCT training programme is organized by the Ministry of Health and began in May with a seminar to prepare participants to play a major role in motivating workers and their families to benefit from the service. GUYSUCO is working closely with the Guyana Defence Force for this cause.

Facilitator of the programme Deborah Success-Hall - National VCT Coordinator of the Ministry of Health lauded the Corporation's initiative noting that it will definitely be of national significance since GUYSUCO is the largest employer and its facilities are extended to workers' families. She added that at the end of the exercise, participants will have their experience in Counselling sharpened first before taking up temporary attachments to the Georgetown Public hospital to observe operations. For participants to accede to this level of training, they had to gain at least 80% of the marks required for the two preceding activities.

As GUYSUCO prepares to launch the service of Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) to employees and their immediate families on HIV and AIDS by mid year, five staff members drawn from the Occupational Health and Safety Department, Health services and Human Resources Department, Head Office have successfully completed the second of a three-phased programme that will certify them as HIV/AIDS Counsellors.

This extension in health care will place GUYSUCO among the first to offer the VCT service when it becomes available from July, 2008. So far, the Diagnostic centres at Rose Hall and Ogle have been identified as the meeting places.

Estate Health and Safety Officers Nolan Chetram of Wales, Claudette Moore of Head Office and Management Trainee Desiree Hopkinson; Jharna Bose - Assistant Personnel Manager, Head Office; Nurse Aides Vanessa Bristol, LBI, Veronica Leitch Rose Hall and Practical Nurse Madodrie Narine of the Ogle Diagnostic Centre. Company Health and Safety Officer Earl Morris also attended the training programme.

Those who gained at least 80 percent of the marks required for the two preceding activities will then be part of the preceptorship phase which facilitates exposure to the processes of HIV testing and Counselling at a VCT site identified by the Ministry of Health.

Voluntary Counselling and Testing for HIV/AIDS is free of charge and our potential Counsel Testers are committed to exercising confidentiality.

Directors of SAC convene for 149th meeting

Directors of the Sugar Association of the Caribbean (SAC) representing the sugar cane industries of Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis; and Trinidad and Tobago have just concluded the 149th meeting in Barbados in late May.

EU. According to a press release provided by the SAC group, the region also looked at means to mitigate the impact of price cuts coming as a result of the reform of the EU Sugar Regime.

The opportunity for regional sugar industries to access markets in the Europe which the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) was also facilitated and the steady increase in the value of the Euro in relation to the US dollar noted as a guarantee for increased revenue to the sugar producers.

Among issues discussed were the slow pace at which the EU disbursed funds to member countries and Directors were updated on the progress of the Accompanying Measures the

The projected production of 560,000 tonnes of sugar from member industries of SAC for the fiscal year 2007/8 is anticipated to allow the region to fulfill its supply obligations to the European Union.



"Out with the old: In with the new"

The old Skeldon factory has now been laid to rest. After years of producing sugar and breaking records, the old factory must now out its flame. The Skeldon Sugar factory (SWR1) was not only the major source of employment for persons within the Skeldon community but it also held significant and sentimental value to the persons who worked in the factory.

Workers reminisced of the fun times they had in the factory as well as the challenges they faced.

SWR will however not be dismantled immediately, during this out of crop period.

Minor works were still conducted as a precautionary measure.

With the coming of the state of the art factory complete with automated equipment, initially workers could not help but be uncertain of their future at Skeldon estate.

The General Manager of SWR Mr. Vishnu Panday gave his assurance that all categories of workers will be fully utilized throughout the Skeldon estate.

"A significant amount of workers will be at the new factory and have been assured of

their full utilization. Because of the expansion lands there is need for more operators in the field, so the persons who are licensed will be moved from factory to field operations. Also there are plans to significantly expand the field workshop," Mr. Vishnu Panday highlighted. He further noted, "Skeldon Estate does not foresee any problems fully utilizing its workers of the existing factory to the new one."

Skeldon II is likely to be commissioned as soon as it completes the 72 hour test at full potential in the last quarter of this year.

MARTIAL ARTS ACADEMY LAUNCHED

At Enmore Community Centre



Some of the students with instructor Nazim Yassim (back row extreme left) and Enmore Community Development Officer H.H. Rahaman (back row right)

The motto of the Little Diamond Karate Martial Arts Academy is "Train hard and Fight easy" and this is exactly what the residents of the community and its environs will be doing when they enroll for training in this discipline at the Enmore Community Centre.

At the May 31 launching ceremony of the academy's existence at Enmore, Instructor Nazim Yassim said that the venture got started at Little Diamond some three years ago and that Enmore is now an outpost.

"One year ago we started with eight members and today we are close to 50. We however intend to double this amount and want to encourage anyone from as little as five years old to come join us." Yassim said in reflection of starting of classes at Enmore.

Director of Sports Neil Kumar in his address to the small gathering reminded of the contribution of sports to the mental, physical and social development of human beings and commended parents on their involvement and support of the Karate Martial Arts Academy.

"Congratulations to both parents and students for you have both contributed to this school's success through your support. While you participants will be more rounded individuals you must be equally committed to reading and make this a daily task."

Apart from Martial Arts, the centre also offers aerobics, cricket and indoor games. Karate classes are held on Mondays and Saturdays for two hours beginning at 5:00 p.m. (17:00 hrs) to 19:00 hours.