



The Leeward's Times

"Where the Press is free and every man is able to read, all is safe." Thomas Jefferson

Nevis' Librarian gets Regional and International recognition



Mrs. Sonita Daniel conducting a reading class for children in Charlestown

By H.R. Bramble

LIAT's long standing in flight magazine, *The Islander*, has accorded Nevis' chief Librarian, Mrs. Sonita Daniel regional and international recognition which redounds to benefit of the entire

Federation.

"The Lady and the Library, Island Scholar brings literature to life," is the banner headline under which Michael Kaduck chronicles for the *Islander*, his impressions

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Nevis Librarian

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of the caliber and impressed was the Chief Executive Officer of the East Caribbean Group of Companies that he took time out to write a letter of congratulations to Mrs. Daniel.

Kaduck deals briefly with the location and historic significance of the building which houses "The Nevis Public Library, the 'people's University' which helps sustain the educational and intellectual life of the twin island Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis."

He continues: "The architect of the Library's role in the community, Chief Librarian Sonita Daniel, made her mark early as a Canada CARICOM scholar. Having earned exceptional grades and demonstrated special potential at the University of the West Indies, Sonita accepted a scholarship to attend Carleton University in Ottawa. There she received her Master of Public Administration, and returned to her native

Nevis to put her advanced education to work.

"On the occasion of a recent donation of Canadian literature to the Library by the Canadian High Commission, Sonita noted that the Library was working to promote a culture of reading in the society. She later added: Reading is the mother of all subjects.

"Sonita has shaken off the stoic shushing stereotype of the library matron, and injected new energy and distinction into her profession. The purpose of a library is to develop culture, achievement and citizenship through reading, so the promotion of reading is her primary task. Sonita takes on this role with the zeal of a missionary.

"History matters a great deal in how modern society unfold. The Nevisian librarian describes a situation where Caribbean states have high rates of literacy, but have tended historically to be oral societies. The great challenge for the lady and the library is to turn children and their parents on to reading, when there are so many compelling distractions, electronic and

otherwise."

Before Michael Kabuck from the Caribbean High Commission became acquainted with Mrs. Daniel's work, the British High Commissioner in Antigua, Mary Maxwell, rated the Charlestown library the best developed in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States.

The Nevis Librarian's initiatives over the past fifteen years include the Children's annual summer programme, the Christmas craft programme for children, after school reading programmes for children, expansion of the library service, development of a reserve book collection, creation of children's reading material, expansion of the library's opening hours making it the only library in the OECS which opens 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

In addition to outreach programmes, the Nevis Librarian host regular exhibitions and an annual poetry day. She has established a branch library and a school library in Gingerland and will provide tutorial assistance to the first Community Library established by the SJSC.