

Christmas 2016 Review

The Toronto East Goan Seniors Association was formed about 10 years ago when a few souls who saw the need for a vibrant association for older adults in the Eastern part of the city, set about taking the initiative to form a volunteer group for the benefit of a large part of the community who resided here.

It was a great idea. Travelling to G.O.A. functions more than 50 kms away was becoming difficult as local residents were ageing and finding it harder to drive in winter conditions and deciding to divest themselves of personal transportation, for various reasons. Besides, TEGSA being a community organization was more inclusive and more in tune with its membership. You didn't have to be a Goan to be a full member.

Membership has grown to over 400, simply because the association has fulfilled the objectives that the founders had set out to seek.

Seniors don't require much service when they decide to have fun and they appreciate quality when they get it. This quality to me, has been consistently given by the succeeding committees since the foundation. They have been hard-working, selfless and loyal, giving of their free time so that others could benefit from the fun and company of their friends while getting opportunities to make new acquaintances.

It was a joy at this dance to see members in their finest dress and carefree manner. It was as if all their responsibilities were lifted from their shoulders and they were determined to have a good time. As indeed it was an occasion to do. Children were grown and flown from the nest. Health was as good as could be expected and whatever the problems tomorrow, they were not going to keep them down today.

The locale was ideal as well as quite classy. The Greek Metropolitan Church had years ago, a classy, purpose-built hall erected next to their church and most of those who came would have no more than 5 kms to drive.

Mario Gonsalves' DJ music was tailored to having the crowd swing with gay abandon, waltz when they needed to swirl and two-step when they needed to hold close.

Sheilah D'Souza the Social Secretary, Austin Pinto the President and DJ Mario did a great job of sharing the emceeing which is always an essential component of leading the crowd.

Toronto seniors age well and seeing the people on the dance floor, would have easily transported you to yesteryears at the Catholic or Bandra Gymkhanas in Bombay or to an Anglo-Indian Railway Institute in Bhusaval or Nagpur.

The Banquet Hall's food and service were worthy of a Christmas function. More importantly the servers and bar tenders smiled as happily as those they served.

It snowed outside. It was the third snowfall within the past week, but none of the 300 who came were concerned. The organizers had put them in the Christmas mood and if they were still in Toronto for the New Year's Eve, by golly they were going to be there again.

Viva TEGSA and all those who make such functions possible.

Roland Francis