**Progress - Baby Beach Project**

Phase II of the Baby Beach project is complete. A tremendous project for this beautiful area, according to Minister Dangui Oduber who is in charge of all these projects in the Lago Colony. Next will be the renewal of the tennis courts, the Rodgers Beach Restaurant. Work will definitely continue.

The stairs leading to the Rodgers Beach was also completed in December of last year. Such a beautiful project which will encourage everyone to go take a few photos of its beauty. Then walk to the beautiful Rodgers Beach.

**The Old Esso Club**

It is a pity to see the ruins of, once one of the most visited clubs on the island, by the residents and locals. It was well taken care of when the Lago refinery was in operation. Plans are to build a low-rise boutique hotel replacing it. I used to go on Fridays to play billiard with Charlie Bateman, Luis Anjie and others. Always had a great time. Where we used to take our students for lunch during our management training sessions.

I understand that a local firm, Pering Group, consisting of two brothers, will take it over and build a low rise hotel. I also know of a friend of mine who is also interested in it to build a restaurant. The government is also planning to sell the bungalows at a reasonable price in order to upgrade the Colony again.

**The Secrets Hotel at Baby Beach**

The Secrets Hotel is planned to be completed in 2024. According to our Prime Minister, Mrs. Evelyn Wever-Croes, the government, since the initial plans to develop San Nicolas, is very carefully and with determination to comply with the correct procedures for the construction of the hotel in San Nicolas, in a carefully selected area. There are always some people who are continuously saying that: “San Nicolas gets nothing”, but now that the hotel is being built and beneficial to San Nicolas, they are against it. Mr. Errol de Freitas, the San Nicolas Business Association is completely in favor of the hotel and are encouraging the government to continue to build it.

The government believes and is very confident that this project will not only bring further development for Aruba but also for San Nicolas. It will provide work for those in San Nicolas and closer to their homes. Their social lives will be improved as they don’t have to drive all the way to the boulevard to work in a hotel. They will be the first ones to be hired at this hotel. The project will also be beneficial to merchants in San Nicolas because of the tourists staying in this hotel.

Three Rivers Real Estate will be the owner of the hotel while the Hyatt Regency will manage it.

**WWII Memorial at Seroe Colorado**

Prime Minister, Mrs. Evelyn Wever-Croes says:

Second World War memorial is a project that will have a historical and cultural value which will bring a real development to the Lago Colony and San Nicolas.

During a press conference this week, Prime Minister, Mrs. Evelyn Wever-Croes explained an interesting project, in regards to a memorial of the Second World War at the Seroe Colorado lighthouse. Aruba formed a very important part during the Second World War. Our very much appreciated historian, Mr. Dufi Kock, is working on the development of the area to remind us of the historical part of our island.

During WWII, Aruba’s refineries were the ones which were supplying the aviation fuel to the allies. At a certain moment, the Germans isolated the force of the allies to prevent them to continue to receive the fuel from Aruba and Curacao. They used their submarines to attack and tried to destroy our refineries. They torpedoed and sank several of Lago’s lake tankers and weren’t it for a mistake they would have destroyed the largest oil refinery in the world. A total of 47 crew members were killed.

By now I guess everyone knows the story of WWII as far as Aruba was concerned. So, permit me to concentrate on the memorial story in order to keep this story short. The topic is the building of a WWII memorial at the Light House in the Lago Colony.

Along the steps going up, at certain intervals you will find a board with the story of WWII in Aruba from the beginning to the end as you continue to go up the steps. Aside from that we will rebuild a bunker and a gun mount. The project and its changes will include minimum impact on the environment, by maintaining it with minimum expenses. In between the bunker and gun mount will be a walkway to permit visitors to walk and admire the new development. There will also be a monument with the names of the victims who lost their lives as a result of the attacks during the war. Our telephone company, SETAR will provide a QR code which can downloaded to get the complete timeline, a virtual reality of a complete film as to what happened when the submarines were getting closer until the moment that they fired their torpedoes. This will be the main attraction. We already have contacts with tour operators and are very anxious to offer all these to their tourists. Once the tourists complete their visits at this site, the tour operators will take them to the center of San Nicolas and will coordinate all the activities.

The museums and other activities will offer the tourist a taste of the Caribbean which we will be offering in San Nicolas. Close to the Arubus parkinglot, there will be a second mural which as soon as the tourists step off the bus, they will see the timeline. The walls will be lowered so that the tourists will be able to see where the refinery was. It is true that now they can also see some ruins from the refinery but it has its historic value. This will give the tourists the opportunity to have a closer view where it all happened once they know the story. The project and funds have been approved by the government.

Our committee, Aruba Outdoors Amenities consisting of Aldrich Croes, myself, and the Public Works, for quite some time now, have been working very hard along with the government to complete this interesting and historical project. Plans are for its official inauguration on May 4th or 5th, during the commemoration of World War II of next year.

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