



# Bulletin

sabagov.nl - March 2019

## Saba prepares for elections



Saba is gearing up for Election Day on March 20. Billboards have been placed in various locations, flags of the different parties have been tied up and the candidates have started campaigning. This year, there are 1,105 eligible voters for the Island Council and 906 eligible voters for the Electoral College. The elections for a new Island Council and the Electoral College kicked off on Nomination Day, February 4. During this day, the two political parties, the Windward Islands People's Movement (WIPM) and the Saba Labor Party (SLP), presented their candidates' list for the March 20 Island Council elections. Dave Levenstone submitted a blank list. The eight candidates for the Island Council elections of Saba's largest and ruling party WIPM and the current opposition party SLP submitted two lists of candidates, one list for the Island Council elections and a second for the elections of the Electoral College.

### WIPM slate

Party leader Commissioner Rolando Wilson heads the WIPM slate. Number two on the list is Commissioner Bruce Zagers, who is also WIPM Party President. Number three is current Island Council Member Carl Buncamper, followed by Eviton Heyliger on number four and Vito Charles on number five, who are both a Member of the Island Council. Hemmie van Xanten runs as number six on the WIPM slate, Esmeralda Johnson as number seven and Jelle van der Velde number eight. Having a strong track record for the past four years and leading a stable government since 1999 are two major attributions that the WIPM has in its favor. The WIPM-led government has integrity and strong financial management as its main principles, as a result of which Saba has been able to achieve a lot locally and in its dealings with the Dutch Government. The WIPM will continue to press for social economic development and a realistic social minimum. Alleviating poverty is a priority. The party will continue fighting for policies that will reduce the cost of living and cost of doing business. Affordable transportation, energy and telecommunications are objectives that the WIPM will continue to work on. More autonomy especially in the area of granting work permits is an important issue, which will only be possible when there is a stable government in place, a government that recognizes the importance of good governance, integrity and financial management. Under the WIPM leadership the harbor project and the ability to secure



the funding has been a great accomplishment which will help to grow the island's economy. The party mentioned the landfill as another positive project, serving as an example for the region how to go about waste management and recycling.

### **SLP slate**

Party leader Ishmael Levenstone, number one on the SLP list Monique Wilson, number three Thaddeus Nicholson, number four Charles Hassell and number five Sislene Matthew, submitted the lists for the Island Council and Electoral College on Nomination Day. Levenstone said that these elections would be his last, and he called on the people to vote for him one more time. Monique Wilson said that the blue party might not be the biggest in terms of numbers, but that these elections are not about popularity. "The WIPM might be the biggest, but for us it is about being there for the people. The SLP candidates have a hands-on approach. They are in close contact with the people," she said. The social domain, people's wellbeing is number one for the SLP. "Establishing a social minimum, decent social allowances and wages, a level playing field in social affairs with a justification and transparency in allowances, and support for single parents. We need equal opportunities for everyone," said Wilson. As for eradicating poverty, Wilson said that "it is nice to have paperwork and numbers," but that "in the end it is important to help people who have it very hard, people who work double jobs and families with multiple generations are living in one house." The opposition has an important role in the democratic process. "You need balance, you need that voice," she said.

### **Blank list**

Dave Levenstone handed in a blank list: the name of his party, the United People Movement, will not appear on the ballot on March 20. This has to do with the early deadline to register a new political party. Levenstone is the sole candidate on the list. He wants to get into the Island Council to improve the Council's performance. He said the Island Council can achieve much more. He said that solid debates are needed, also on a crucial issue such as the budget. "The budget is your bible and you need a debate with content." Levenstone wants one term in the Island Council after which he said he would "train the younger generation to take over." He will not participate in the Electoral College election.

### **Note from the editor**

In this bulletin, you will find a selection of some of the articles that have appeared in the media in the past weeks. A lot is happening on Saba, and it is important to share this with the people on Saba and in the rest of the Kingdom. These, and other articles can be found on the website of the Public Entity Saba ([www.sabagovernment.com](http://www.sabagovernment.com)), the government Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/PublicEntitySaba>). The idea is to release similar bulletins in the coming period with other articles that have been published in the media. Questions? Suggestions? Please feel free to contact Communications officer Suzanne Koelega at [suzanne.koelega@sabagov.nl](mailto:suzanne.koelega@sabagov.nl)

## Social Work in progress



The Public Entity Saba is investing in the Community Development Department. The opening of the office last summer was a next step for Saba in providing more structured social facilities, according to Commissioner of Social Affairs Rolando Wilson. The department is located in the former day care building, which also houses the Public Health Department. The investments are a joint effort of the Public Entity Saba and the National Government. In the past years the Public Entity has restructured the social domain, increased its activities and expanded its staff to 10 employees. As a result of these investments, the Public Entity is taking over tasks in the social domain. Some of these tasks include: youth preventive care, facilities for persons with a disability, domestic violence, poverty alleviation and labor mediation. The department also finances social partners like the Saba Reach Foundation, Body Mind Spirit (BMS), the after-school care, Meals on Wheels, the library and recently Child Focus. The department has initiated a number of projects. The BES(t)4Kids program has been set up to expand and upgrade day care and after-school care. Different Taste is a social dining project where food is prepared and served by people that face certain challenges in life. Another example of a project that is financed by the department is the recent construction/renovation of playgrounds throughout the island. The department also initiated smaller projects like the We Can Young campaign, the children's rights week and public assistance. Commissioner Wilson explained why it is important to invest in community development. "We do this for the people. When you visit people and see the requests for assistance come in, it tells

you how hard things really are. The cost of living is high, and especially single mothers and the elderly are suffering." When the Social Affairs and Labor (SZW) unit of the National Government on Saba moves to the Community Development Department some of the bureaucracy will be removed, said Wilson. "Instead of having to go from one window to the next, you will be able to get assistance in one area," he said. "We know our own people and we know their needs. I will keep investing in the social domain because we must assist those in need," said Wilson. Solid and sustainable community development requires strong policies and shared strategies. To achieve this, the department processes feedback of the community and has regular contact with local stakeholders, head offices on Bonaire and the ministries in The Hague. This year, the department will finalize its community development policy. However, a hands-on approach to policy and strategy is essential, explained Head of the Community Development Department Krijn Pons.

## Artists to Curaçao festival

Three artists from Saba will be travelling to Curaçao this month to participate at the Plein Air Festival 2019, with the financial support of the Prince Bernhard Cultural Fund Dutch Caribbean and the Saba Lions Club. Heleen Cornet, Mary Thielman and Angelita Peterson were invited to take part in the Plein Air Festival 2019, a cultural event that showcases the talents of the Dutch Caribbean and international artists through painting. Cornet, Thielman and Peterson received word from the "Stichting Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds Caribisch Gebied (PBCCG)" late January this year that their request to help finance the airline and hotel costs was honored. The financial pledge of the PBCCG makes it possible for the three Saba artists to participate at the festival in Curaçao. With a sponsorship of the Saba Lions Club, Thielman and Peterson will participate at several workshops. Cornet has the honor of showing her talents and skills at one of the Paint Outs where she will demonstrate her work on the spot, together with some 20 other artists.

## De Graaf praises well-kept Saba



Vice-president of the Council of State Thom de Graaf visited Saba on January 20 and 21, and he liked what he saw and heard. He noticed a well-kept island with a people that strives to be self-reliant, a range of projects that are important for Saba's development and a proactive government. "Saba is doing well, also within the Kingdom. Naturally, there are challenges, but the relations with the Netherlands, members of the Dutch Government are good and Saba has a stable government," said De Graaf, who was appointed Vice-President of the highest administrative judge in the Netherlands and the chief advisor in legislation and governance in the Kingdom. He visited all Dutch Caribbean islands.

### Challenges

De Graaf knows about the challenges that Saba faces. He mentioned the high cost of living and the prices of transportation to and from Saba. "I see those challenges, but what also strikes me is that Saba really does its best to be self-reliant. You see that in the general state of the island, the many projects that have started in the area of infrastructure, water, solar energy, social housing, agriculture. Saba is using the limitations of a small island resourcefully," he said. While on Saba, De Graaf and his delegation, consisting of Secretary of the Council of State Rob Visser and Council Advisor Ron van der Veer, met with the Executive Council, the Island Council and various representatives of civic society. These talks were all very positive and informative, but the Sabans also didn't hesitate to express their concerns

about issues in the social area, poverty and the need to establish a social minimum, and the bureaucratic rules in the relations with the Netherlands and Bonaire, the headquarters of the National Government Service RCN.

### Colored view

"I noticed in the meetings that the social issues tend to color the view that people have of the relations with the Netherlands and the way the constitutional changes have been implemented. People's view gets colored by the negative aspects even though there have been many improvements since October 10, 2010. This clearly bothers people and it is leading in the manner in which the relations with the Netherlands are perceived," De Graaf said. De Graaf said that he listened carefully to all that was said, and promised to include this in the requested advice that the Council of State of the Kingdom will draft in a few months. This requested advice ("voorlichting") has been asked for by State Secretary of Home Affairs and Kingdom Relations Raymond Knops and focuses on the coordination by the Ministry of Home Affairs and Kingdom Relations BZK in the execution of the policies for the Caribbean Netherlands. In general, the requested advice is about how the Netherlands deals with the Caribbean Netherlands, how this is organized in The Hague and why it is important for the islands that this is well organized, De Graaf explained. The Council of State is an objective institution, and certainly not an extension of the government. De Graaf said he liked to compare the role of the Council to that of an "honest broker." In other words, a trusted advisor. "We are not one to point fingers. I would say that we give wise advice. I am very content to be directly involved with the islands in this role. The people and authorities on the islands know me and they know that I hold the islands close to my heart. That makes it easier for me to fulfill this role."

# First Legal Desk opening a success



The first Legal Desk opening on February 23rd was a success with a good turnout of eight people. Nathalie Tackling, a legal professional from St. Maarten who runs the Saba Legal Desk, has already received requests from seven people for an appointment at the next Legal Desk opening on March 30th set to take place at the old day care building in The Bottom. Tackling said that it was her impression so far that this what she called a “tremendous initiative” taken by the Public Entity Saba so far seems to be filling a void that people are experiencing, be it in terms of having access to legal aid or simply having someone to hear them out, point them in the right direction, clear up confusion and, if applicable, provide legal and practical solutions to their problems. Tackling said the questions are wide in range: from immigration, to rental disagreements, nonpayment, land, tax related questions, and the like. “I thoroughly enjoyed the first session and I look forward to continuing this project throughout the year and continuing to assist the population and supplement other local institutions as much as possible,” said Tackling. Tackling will be visiting Saba the last weekend of each month, with office hours on Saturdays from 8:00am until 12:00pm and from 1:00pm until 5:00pm for both walk-ins and appointments. People can email to [nathalie@sabalegaldesk.com](mailto:nathalie@sabalegaldesk.com) to make appointments and to submit legal questions. Saba is the first island in the Caribbean Netherlands to set up such a help desk in this form for legal aid. The idea to start this pilot was born out of necessity: residents on Saba have limited access to quality legal advice and conflict resolution in the broadest sense. The initiative to set up the Legal Desk comes from the Public

Entity Saba and is realized with the financial assistance of the Dutch Ministry of Home Affairs and Kingdom Relations. The Legal Desk has a Facebook page: [fb.me/legaldeskDC](https://fb.me/legaldeskDC)

## Upgrading of library

The Queen Wilhelmina Library has initiated a project to revamp and modernize its facilities. The project is financed by the Public Entity Saba. As part of the Community Learning Center at the Queen Wilhelmina Library project, different areas in the building will be reorganized. The books, both the adult and children’s section, will be placed in one area, creating room for an arts and crafts space, a kiddy corner, a reading lounge and a coffee corner. The library has extended its opening hours. Once per month, the library opens on Tuesday evening, from 5:00pm-9:00pm, and also one Saturday morning per month, from 9:00am to 1:00pm. The regular opening hours are from 8:00am-12:30pm and from 2:00pm-5:30pm. The library will have space in the near future for exhibitions, meetings and presentations. Activities such as an adult and kids book club are being planned. The e-books program has already started. The library already offers three programs where children can get assistance with Dutch, English and homework, funded by the “Kansen voor alle kinderen” program. The computer corner, financed through the same “Kansen voor alle kinderen” program, has proven to be a success. In March, librarians Joanna Simmons and Tiffany Zagers travel to the Netherlands to get acquainted with libraries there. Once the reorganization is completed by the end of April, there will be a soft opening. The project, which is being supervised by Rosalyn Johnson of the Community Development Department, fits in the larger goal to get more people to come to the library. Having a well-functioning library is important, said Johnson.

## National Ombudsman: Saba is a real special place



The Ombudsmen of the Kingdom met on Saba in January 2019. “It was our turn to organize the yearly gathering. We chose Saba and everyone is happy that we did,” said National Ombudsman Reinier van Zutphen. “Saba is a real special place. We have very good relations with Saba, despite the great distance between here and The Hague where the National Ombudsman office is located. We are open, involved and we listen carefully to what the people here have to say,” said Van Zutphen. The Ombudsman is the official institution that handles complaints of people about their government. The National Ombudsman is also there for Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba. The National Ombudsman and his colleagues, Curaçao Ombudsman Keursly Concincion and St. Maarten Ombudsman Gwendolien Mossel, toured the island and spoke with different people. “We wanted to get a feeling of what is going on,” said Van

Zutphen, who was very positive about the informal workshop that took place on January 21, with a number of civil servants of the Public Entity Saba. Van Zutphen is very positive about the initiative of the Public Entity Saba to establish a Legal Desk per February 2019, the first of its kind in the Dutch Caribbean. “It can serve as an example for the other islands.” The Legal Desk will be manned by lawyer Nathalie Tackling from St. Maarten. “The access to the legal system is expensive. Not everyone can afford the high costs of a lawyer and going to court,” he said. The National Ombudsman will soon start an investigation into poverty. The first focus is on the elderly and the (social) facilities that are available to them, followed by single parents and children. The Children’s Ombudsman will be involved in this latter part of the investigation. “Two out of five families are living under the poverty line. That is unacceptable. I want to know how these families are doing. We want to hear the people’s stories. Not the figures,” said Van Zutphen, who explained that the issues that these families face will be included in this investigation and the subsequent report. More people are finding their way to the National Ombudsman. In 2018, the Ombudsman received close to 200 complaints in the Caribbean Netherlands, versus the 150 in 2017.



## Connectivity Plan

The Public Entity Saba has hired an expert company to assist in achieving a higher and more affordable transportation capacity by air and ferry, and to draft a connectivity plan. The Executive Council has approved a proposal of Commissioner Bruce Zagers to procure the services of Icasus, a consultancy company from the Netherlands which specializes in aviation. Transportation to Saba, especially by air, is too expensive and the capacity is very limited. This is detrimental to Saba’s development. The connectivity plan that will be drafted within the next few months will also look at the possibilities to expand the number of destinations. The possibilities of increasing airlift with airlines such as Windward Express and SXM Airlines, and securing scheduled charter flights will be explored. The connectivity plan will be used to lobby for subsidized transportation. The number of visitors went up considerably when travel was subsidized during the airport closure in September 2018.

## Renovated A.M. Edwards Medical Center opens

After several years of preparation, a lengthy financing process, a slow-down in the execution of plans due to the 2017 hurricanes and a reconstruction that was carried out in phases, the renovated, state-of-the-art A.M. Edwards Medical Center was officially opened January 15. With eight beds in two wards and two private rooms, three doctor's clinics, an X-ray room, a small lab, an emergency room, isolation room, a dentist room, nurses' station and reception area, the renovated building and the new equipment are a huge improvement. The original building was from 1980. Board of Directors of the Saba Health Care Foundation (SHCF) and Benevolent Foundation Saba (BFS) Dr. Joka Blaauboer and Acting Secretary-General of the Ministry of Health, Wellbeing and Sports VWS Gea van Craaikamp cut the ribbon. The US \$1.4 million overall renovation, financed by the Ministry of VWS and the ZVK, started in March 2018, and was preceded by several



phases of upgrading. In 2012, a new electrical panel board was installed and the main incoming cable was renewed. In 2013 a hurricane-proof ambulance bay was built. A covered storage for the generator, oxygen and medical waste was constructed, and a medical store room. In 2014, the former library was reconstructed to house the administration. In 2015, the facilities office, other store rooms and the morgue were renovated. In 2016, the former cultural building was renovated and turned into the care support center. In March 2018, the renovation of the medical center clinic,



admissions and the emergency room started. Service to the people was not interrupted and the SHCF's administration building served as a temporary clinic. Dr. Blaauboer thanked the entire staff, the Ministry of VWS, ZVK, the building committee, external facility manager Chris Papasavva, ICT manager Richard Hassell, local construction company Hes and contractor Winkels from the Netherlands. "Today we have achieved a major milestone. With our improved facilities, we are now leading in the region. We have a state-of-the-art building, fitted to Saba's needs, enabling us to give everyone the care that they deserve in a safe, hygienic, accessible, friendly and comfortable environment with the necessary privacy for our clients," said Dr. Blaauboer.

## Parliament supports more authority for Saba



The Public Entity Saba must be enabled to handle work permit requests, the Dutch Parliamentarians said during a meeting with the Executive Council on January 12. The transfer of this authority has been pending for too long and needs to happen pronto. “The Dutch Government has promised to fix this, but half a year later this is still not the case. Transferring the task of handling permits is specifically needed for Saba and it needs to materialize,” said delegation leader Jan Paternotte, Chairman of the Second Chamber’s Permanent Committee for Kingdom Relations. “It was agreed that Saba would be assuming more tasks. We need to give Saba more trust. Money is being wasted on a system that hampers Saba’s development. It creates a lot of frustration that can easily be prevented,” said Member of the Second Chamber Ronald van Raak of the Socialist Party (SP). “We all agree, and yet it doesn’t get done,” said Member of the Second Chamber André Bosman of the liberal democratic party (VVD). “This is important for Saba’s development. Saba knows best what it needs. Currently we have a Dutch solution for a Saba issue. It needs to be solved now.” Commissioner Bruce Zagers is content with the support of the Parliament for an issue that the Public Entity Saba continuously seeks attention for. “The current system just doesn’t work. It’s unacceptable that the schools and businesses have to wait for months to hire someone for a position of which we know that it is not available on the island. It is not conducive to Saba’s development.” The high cost of living and its detrimental effect on families has the attention of the Parliament. “We need to concentrate on bringing the cost of living down,” said Paternotte. According to Bosman, the Dutch Government should contribute to reduce the high cost of living. Nevin Özütok of the green left party (GroenLinks) expressed concerns about the poverty. “The pride of the Saba people is very valuable, but we cannot allow people to live in a distressing situation where families live in poor conditions generation after generation,” said Özütok. Chris van Dam of the Christian Democratic Party CDA agreed. “Somethings needs to happen fast to reduce the extremely high cost of living,” he said. The Parliamentary delegation praised Saba for its ‘Yes we can mentality.’ “Saba doesn’t get stuck in its problems, but actively seeks solutions,” said Paternotte. “Saba solves its own problems before asking for help,” said Ronald van Raak. “People are inventive and seek their own solutions,” said Machiel de Graaf of the Party for Freedom (PVV), who said that he instantly fell in love with Saba during his first visit.

# New air burner fully operational



The new, modern air burner of Ragnar Original Innovation (ROI), the EnviroSaver 350, which arrived on Saba on January 31, is in full operation after a minor initial technical hiccup. Personnel at the landfill has done a course so they know how to operate this piece of machinery which has brought a significant improvement in the burning of waste. The arrival of the 35 tons air burner at Fort Bay harbor on January 31 was an impressive sight. Witnessed by Commissioner Bruce Zagers, Island Governor Jonathan Johnson, crews of the harbor and the landfill, and the representatives of ROI from New Hampshire and the facilitating company Johnson's Enterprises from Aruba, the air burner was off-loaded from the transporting ship Midnight Coast. The air burner, which is equipped with tracks, then drove up to the landfill where it was parked next to the recycling building, away from the gut where the old air burner is located. The experts of ROI faced some technical issues during the set-up of the different elements of the burner. The necessary part was brought in and the air burner became fully operational shortly after. The new burner burns much more effective and efficient, it can handle a lot more volume, and very important, will produce a lot less smoke, explained Zagers. The new burner, which uses an air curtain to contain the smoke and heat, will replace the current, much smaller air burner which has been operational for many years to burn the non-recyclable garbage. "The air curtain of the new burner is far more superior than the old one," said Zagers. Next to that, the new burner has a ventilation system for both top and bottom ventilation. This means that much higher temperatures can be reached, ensuring a more efficient burning process and a significant limitation of smoke formation. The new air burner will be much larger and can handle three to four times the volume. Due to its larger size, the new burner will only have to operate a few times a week. Daily burning will no longer be necessary. "The new, much more advanced burner will be a huge improvement at the landfill and the process of waste management. It will burn cleaner, more efficiently and with much less smoke," said Zagers, who emphasized that it remained very important to separate glass, plastics, card board, aluminum and metal for recycling purposes.

# 100 percent solar power



In a historic moment for Saba Electric Company (SEC) and Saba itself, on February 27 the entire island was for the first time powered completely by solar energy from SEC's two solar parks and its battery storage system. For two hours from 3:00PM to 5:00PM, SEC's diesel generators were powered down, allowing the island to run on this renewable energy source with SEC's diesel power plant in complete silence. The next morning on February 28, by as early as 8:00AM, Saba was already being powered completely by solar energy again. The expectation is that on days with ideal weather conditions, the island can run on solar power for 9 to 10 hours in the diesel-off mode. The Netherlands-based company Ecorus was brought on board for the photovoltaic (PV) component of this project, and German company SMA Sunbelt Energy GmbH for the battery storage component. SMA was on the island to carry out various works for the implementation of the entire system. Some of these works involved were the installation of the Medium Voltage system, the installation of the new batteries in the battery container, commissioning and testing of the new inverter and battery system, and testing the diesel-off mode operation. In the second phase of SEC's solar park project, the PV capacity was doubled to 2 MWp, as well as the battery capacity increased to 2.3 MWh. The key component is the Sunny Central Storage 2200 battery inverter with grid-forming characteristics. This allows the diesel generators in SEC's power plant to be completely shut down in automatic mode, without compromising the stability of the frequency in the grid. The SMA Hybrid Controller is responsible for real-time energy and power management and synchronizes diesel and battery operation intelligently and fully automatically. Within milliseconds, the system compensates for the PV array's power fluctuations caused by, for example, the exceptionally fast-moving clouds in the Caribbean region. Instrumental to the success of SEC's solar park project, from its inception to its completion, were its technical consultants The Green World Company and its legal consultants of the law firm VanEps Kunneman VanDoorne. SEC's second solar park project was financed through budget support of the European Development Fund with partial financing by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate.

# Saba Lace room opened



Saba now has a special room dedicated to its traditional craft: Saba Lace. The opening of the Saba Lace room in Windwardside is a most welcome addition. Not only for the tradition of Saba Lace work, but also for people who want to buy this authentic artwork. The Saba Lace room was opened on January 23 in the presence of the Saba Lace ladies, government officials and guests. The driving force behind creating the Saba Lace room is Lynn Costenaro, who together with John Magor owns Sea Saba. The Saba Lace room is located next to the Kakona artisan shop and the Sea Saba dive center. Costenaro explained in her short address during the opening that she approached the Public Entity Saba with the idea some two years ago. "I wanted to set up a room to show this art form, to keep it going, and to pay tribute to the Saba Lace ladies and their wonderful work," said Costenaro. The Saba Lace room provides the ladies who produce this art form not only a place to showcase it, but also to sell their work. She said that the Public Entity Saba has been very supportive of her project. She specifically thanked Commissioner Bruce Zagers for his input. Zagers explained that the government pays the rent of the Saba Lace room. Zagers said that government found it important to contribute to maintaining a typical Saba culture. "Saba Lace has been a tradition for more than 100 years. It is part of our culture and this room will contribute to Saba Lace continuing to be part of our culture and tradition. This would not have been possible without Lynn," he said. Saba Lace, also known as Spanish Work, has been a Saba tradition since the 1800's. The craft of drawn threadwork, was introduced on Saba by Mary Gertrude Hassell from Windwardside who taught it to others. The drawn threadwork is made starting with a solid bolt of linen from which a number of threads that run parallel are cut out and tied off. The thread is then worked back into the space as the lace maker creates a variety of patterns. The current group of Saba Lace ladies has 14 members, the youngest being just eight years and the eldest 85. The eldest, Albertine Riley and present at the opening, said that she has been doing lace for some 40 years. "I enjoy it very much. It keeps me occupied. The shop is very nice and it gives me an opportunity to sell some of my work," she said. The Saba Lace room is open 7 days a week.

## Wesleyan Holiness Church celebrates centennial



The Wesleyan Holiness Church celebrated its centennial anniversary with a special service on January 21. During the service, which counted on the presence of General Superintendent Reverend Joel Cumberbatch from Barbados and District Superintendent Reverend Spencer Watts from St. Kitts, Commissioner Rolando Wilson announced that the church building of 1919 in The Bottom has been placed on the official monuments' list. Wilson congratulated the Wesleyan Holiness Church and its members with "this great milestone." "We are grateful to God that we are all here together to celebrate this centennial. It has not been an easy time," he said, referring to the ordeals that the church and the community have gone through in the past 100 years. Wilson remarked that he grew up in this church, just like St. Maarten Minister of Education and Culture Wycliffe Smith, who attended the service. Wilson presented a letter of the Saba Executive Council that officially puts the church building on the monuments' list to Pastor Vernon Liburd. Minister Smith remembered his young years at the church which in the past was called the Pilgrim Holiness Church until the merger of the Pilgrim Holiness Movement with the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in 1968. Pastor Liburd read a contribution of historian Will Johnson. The Wesleyan Holiness Church started out as the Apostolic Faith Mission in 1909. Pioneer work started in 1912. In 1919, a church building was constructed in The Bottom under the guidance of Reverend J.W. Craig, on land donated by Edward Simmons. In 1922, the Apostolic Faith Mission formed a merger with the Pilgrim Holiness Church. Saba-born Irene Blyden

stepped to fill the void when Rev. Craig returned to the United States. The Wesleyan Movement on Saba has over the years struggled, but managed to maintain its stability, in the face of much opposition and conflict. Hurricane George By 1996, the church was in a state of disrepair and funds were raised for repairs, but then Hurricane George hit in 1998, severely damaging the church and rendering it unusable. Renovations started in January 2000. The rock structure needed to be reinforced to preserve the original structure. Under the guidance of Pastor Liburd, the church was rebuilt and expanded, and the congregation increased. In April 2005, services resumed in the church. During the passage of Hurricane Irma, the roof suffered damage and the wooden shingles were replaced with galvanized sheets. General Superintendent Rev. Cumberbatch delivered the feature address. He thanked everyone who served on Saba for doing a "tremendous job" and congratulated the congregation. He called on the people to keep fighting for the greatest cause, the Kingdom of God. Congratulating Saba on this milestone, District Superintendent Rev. Watts said that Saba and its people were better off thanks to God, and that he looked forward to the next 100 years. Volunteers gave the church a fresh layer of paint earlier in the month.