

"WORKING TO PLACE OLDER PERSONS' CONCERN ON THE BELIZE NATIONAL AGENDA"

The National Council on Ageing Quarterly Newsletter

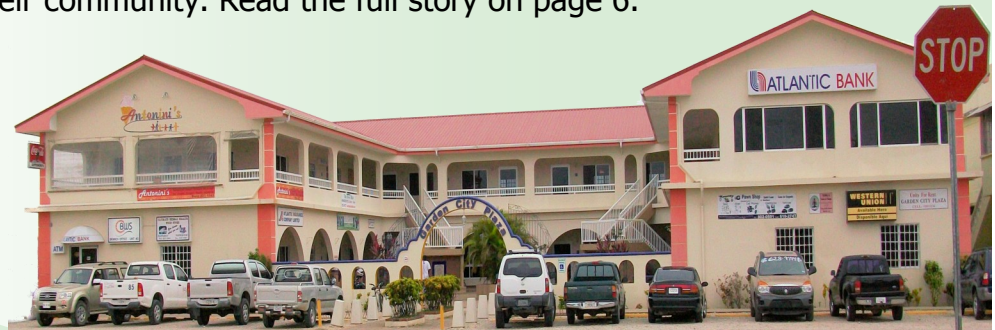


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The Golden Age Heroes Award is an annual program designed to honor older persons who have given voluntary service for the development and betterment of their community. Read the full story on page 6.



National Council on Ageing new location (page 3)

Letter To the Editor

Dear NCA, Lindy and Ix-Chel,

A very brief letter but written with much gusto to thank you and the Belize Audubon Society for the GREAT day that we the older people and members of VOICE enjoyed Saturday 25th April to celebrate Earth Day.

It was indeed fun filled and joyful. Thank you also to the US Ambassador who brought in such a lively young group with their instruments and of course Miss Leela Vernon and her magic. Also thanks to Anna and Dirk, the Master of Ceremonies, who gave us all the information on each item. A special thank you to the young man who sang so well and kept us all in the true Spirit of the Day.

Kudos to everyone who pulled the Earth Day to the top of the Guanacaste Tree in Guanacaste Park. With Many Good Wishes and please remember us again next time.

Most sincerely,
Pat Robinson

To have your letters, thoughts and concerns included in the NCA News letter write to:

The National Council on Ageing

PO Box 372

Belmopan City

Or

E-mail us at: ncabze@yahoo.com

We look forward to hearing from you !



From the Editor

Greetings to all our readers and supporters. There have been several changes and additions to the National Council on Ageing since our last news letter publication in September of 2008.



*Ix-Chel Poot
Editor*

This issue features our newly added health corner with articles contributed by Mrs. Pat Robinson. We are hoping to make the newsletter more interactive and continue to include tips and articles to promote healthy and active ageing. While it is important to keep your body active we encourage all our readers to enjoy some mental activity as well by accepting our Sudoku challenge:

The objective of the game is to fill all the blank squares in a game with the correct numbers. There are three very simple constraints to follow. In a 9 by 9 square Sudoku game:

- Every row of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order
 - Every column of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order
- Every 3 by 3 subsection of the 9 by 9 square must include all digits 1 through 9

8		2		4		9		3
		3		7		8		
5	7		1		3		4	6
		8				7		
6	5						1	8
		4				5		
7	8		9		1		2	5
		5		2		1		
9		1		5		6		7

(Solution on page 5)

New Chair for the NCA

In the last issue of our newsletter we bid farewell to Ms. Kamela Palma, who had served as the Chair of the NCA board since its inception in 2003. Hon. Eden Martinez, as Minister of Human Development and Social Transformation, agreed to take over as the new Chair of the NCA.

Minister Martinez comes to us with a passion to work for people and experience in the social sector. We look forward to his leadership and direction as we continue to



*Hon. Eden Martinez,
Chair of the National Council on Ageing*

tackle the important issue of ageing in Belize.

Welcome on board Minister Martinez!

New NCA Office

The National Council on Ageing became a reality on February 10, 2003 but it was not until July 2004 that a Secretariat office was established at #35 Mussel Creek Street, Belmopan and then officially opened in November of that same year.



*Original NCA Office
#35 Mussel Creek St, Belmopan*

The original office was homely but a bit cramped for space. The location in Belmopan was not the best and persons traveling to the NCA could easily become lost. However, the building continued to meet the day to day needs of the NCA for five years.

On December 31, 2008 as we ushered in the new year, the staff of the NCA packed up

and moved to Unit 17 of the Garden City Plaza, on Mountain View Blvd in Belmopan. The new office space provides three comfortable offices for members of staff and visiting students, a spacious conference room and an inviting reception area, which also acts as a resource library. This area provides access to articles and information on various topics of interest such as active ageing, health and nutrition, human rights, aspects of care giving and service provision available in the country. Also available are information booklets and pamphlets on Falls Prevention, Alzheimer's and Women's Health.



NCA Resource Center

The VOICE group has also utilized the new location and every Wednesday from 10:00 am to 12:00pm a VOICE member is available at the office to answer questions and address your concerns. We invite anyone interested in the activities of the NCA and VOICE to stop by our new office as we are always happy to attend to you.



NCA Conference Room

NCA Planning and Review Retreat

As a new organization established in 2003 the NCA developed a National Plan of Action for Older Persons, along with a Strategic Plan that directed the operations of the Council for 5 years from 2003-2008.

On the 26th November the members of the Executive Board of the NCA, along with the staff (a total of 18 persons) arrived at the Belize Lodge in Indian Creek Village, Toledo District for a two day review and planning process. This activity was facilitated by Ageing Specialist, Dr. Martha Pelaez, and funded by FAVACA, a volunteer agency based in Florida. The official Review and Planning sessions did not start until Thursday, 27 November, 2008.

The session opened with an overview of the work that had been carried out by the NCA over the past five years that addressed the 11 priority action areas in the Plan of Action. Although there were many areas in which the NCA had made progress it was impossible to ignore the fact that, even though the accomplishments were many, there is still much to be done to improve the lives of older persons in Belize.

Over the course of the two days all the participants were challenged to identify the gaps within the existing Plan of Action and to make recommendations as to the changes that were needed for the future.

It was determined that in order for the NCA to achieve its overall goals and objectives it would be necessary to conduct a Situational Analysis study to establish the needs and concerns of older persons countrywide. The information obtained from the study would then form the basis of the new and realistic Plan of Action for the future.



Education Committee brainstorming



The NCA Board on the final day of the Review and Planning Retreat

First Annual General Meeting of the VOICE Organization

The first Annual General Meeting of the VOICE Organization was held on Wednesday, 18th February, 2009 in Belmopan. The venue was the recently inaugurated Hazel Hutchinson Center. A total of thirty (30) delegates representing VOICE groups from eight (8) municipalities from across the country attended.

After the delegates were welcomed by Ms. Jennifer Dunn of the Belmopan VOICE group, an overview of the work of the VOICE Organization covering the past twelve-month period was presented by Mr. Evan Dakers, a consultant working with the National Council on Ageing.

In her remarks to the delegates, Ms. Lindy Jeffery, (Executive Director of the NCA) emphasized the importance of ensuring that the VOICE Organization continue to make its presence felt at the



Participants of the VOICE AGM

national level in terms of advocating for the Rights of Older Persons. As a new NGO it faces many challenges in speaking out on the many issues affecting the lives of older people countrywide but it has grown in strength over the past 2 years and the enthusiasm, commitment and vibrancy of the membership indicates that it is now in a position to meet the challenges.

A new national executive committee was elected to office and its members are:

President:	Mrs. Linda Moran
Vice President:	Mr. Paul Mc Cord
Secretary:	Mrs. Eloisa Phillips
Asst Secretary:	Mr. Rudolph Serano
Treasurer:	Ms. Dollis Reynolds
Asst. Treasurer:	Mrs. Allison Ack
Councilor:	Mr. Gaspar Ken
Councilor:	Rev. Lynda Moguel
Councilor:	Mrs. Ethel Ellis



The VOICE National Committee

The meeting ended with a brainstorm session in which delegates discussed some of the most important issues and concerns affecting older persons in Belize, not only in their Districts but also Nationally. A list of priority issues were developed which would be incorporated into a Strategic Plan of Action for the organization in the future.

Exercise Tip

BICEPS CURL



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Hold a weight in each hand with your arms at your sides. Bending your arms at the elbows, lift the weights to your shoulders and then lower them to your sides.

** A 16 ounce bottle of water can be used in place of the weights.

Sudoku Solution

8	1	2	5	4	6	9	7	3
4	6	3	2	7	9	8	5	1
5	7	9	1	8	3	2	4	6
2	9	8	3	1	5	7	6	4
6	5	7	4	9	2	3	1	8
1	3	4	7	6	8	5	9	2
7	8	6	9	3	1	4	2	5
3	4	5	6	2	7	1	8	9
9	2	1	8	5	4	6	3	7

Golden Age Hero Awards

In August 2008 the N C A launched the Golden Age Heroes Award. A program designed to honor older persons who have dedicated a lifetime of service to the country. Although nominations were slow coming in and the program date had to be rescheduled. A total of 22 older persons received nominations for the award.



Golden Age Heroes: Don Justo Castillo, Mr. Antonio Vega and Nominee Mrs. Gwen Zetina

The Award ceremony took place at the Best Western Biltmore Plaza on February 26, 2009. In attendance to honor the Golden Age Heroes were: His Excellency Sir. Colville Young, Governor General of Belize; Mr. Jack Diffly, Chargé d' Affairs from the US Embassy; Mr. Patrick Ashworth, British High Commissioner; Hon. Manuel Javier Rubido, Cuban Ambassador, Hon. Eden Martinez, Minister of Human Development and Social Transformation, and Hon. Carlos Perdomo, Minister of National Security, in addition to friends and family of the honorees.



The ceremony was hosted by Don. Hector Silva and Ms. Ix-Chel Poot. Entertainment was provided by the Benque Social Dance Club, Ms. Myrna Manzanares, Mr.

Julio Alvarado and Sir. Colville Young. Those Honored as Golden Age Heroes were:
Mrs. Arcadia Carillo Mr. Julio Alvarado
Mrs. Martha Hill Mrs. Camilla Bonell
Mr. Justo Castillo Mrs. Elfrida Miguel
Mr. Godsman Ellis
Mr. Lorenzo & Mrs. Lidia Vega
Posthumous Awards were awarded to Rev. Sadie Vernon and Sister Marilyn Panton.

The final award of the day was presented to Sir. Colville Young in recognition of his contributions to the development of arts and culture of Belize.

An additional 11 persons were honored with certificates of recognition.



All participants and attendees were invited to enjoy lunch at the Biltmore after which the dance floor was opened for everyone to shake a leg and enjoy themselves.

For a brief biography of all our honorees and more photos can be viewed at our website www.ncabz.org. You can also access nomination forms for our upcoming award ceremony in October on the website

Outstanding Woman's Award 2009

The Women's Department has created the Outstanding Woman's Award, which honors outstanding women throughout the country during March. For the past three years the National Council on Ageing has participated by providing and presenting an award to an outstanding older woman.

This year the board of the NCA chose to recognize Mrs. Gweneth Gillett as an outstanding older woman. Many Belizeans who attended St. Hilda's College, may remember her as their former teacher, or even as a young comedienne on the Gwenn & Georgie Show.

She has served her community and church with distinction, having been the Organizing Secretary of the Mother's Union for the Anglican Diocese for over two decades.

Today she co-ordinates the St. Mary's School Feeding Programme and will not miss her Friday commitment unless sick or otherwise



*Mrs. Gweneth Gillett
Outstanding Older Woman*

engaged with church activities as a lay minister at St. Mary's Anglican Church. Even as secretary of the Belize Council of Churches, a board member of the Sister Cecilia Home for the Elderly and a member of the planning committee for the Women's World Day of Prayer, she still finds time to serve as a Commissioner of the Supreme Court. As a board member of the NCA, Miss. Gwen is also the co-host of the Golden Years radio programme, which airs on Love FM every other Sunday evening. The National Council on Ageing is proud of honor Mrs. Gwen as a Outstanding Woman in the Community.

Healthy Sweet **Oh, How I love my brown Skin**

"Got a craving for caramel ice cream, cotton candy? Satisfy your sweet tooth with a healthy choice; indulge your taste buds with what the Chinese call the fruit of life . . . **sapodilla!**"

You probably think I'm a bit crazy comparing a fruit that looks like a rotten potato with the oh-so-heavenly taste of well loved sugary snacks, but please don't let appearances fool you, for hidden within that unassuming skin lies a sweetness unimaginable.



Want to know the best part? - this addictive sweet fruit won't fatten you, in fact the health benefits are out of this world!

I'm serious. Sapodillas are a natural source of energy and an outstanding source of fiber, phosphorus and vitamin C. There's more. Sapodillas are also rich in protein and iron whilst being low in sodium, cholesterol and saturated fat. These little, sugary fruits are exactly right if you're on a diet, with 100 calories in every 100 grams. Sapodillas are what I would call nature's candy, they're just good for you!

Ever wonder where they came from? Well, the sapodilla trees are native to the Yucatan, northern Belize, north eastern Guatemala and areas of southern Mexico. From these areas it was introduced into the Philippines during the Spanish Colonization, and throughout tropical America, as well as southern parts of Florida and the West Indies.



Fruits all over the world have different names and the sapodilla is no exception. In the Bahamas it's called "Sugardilly;" jump to Brazil and it's known as a "Sapoti;" skip to Costa Rica where they call them "Korob;" and leap to India where you ask for "Sapota" or "Chikoo". As you globe-trot you'll find more names - "Ciku" (Malaysia), "Chicle" (Mexico), "Rata-mi" (Sri-Lanka), "Sawu" (Indonesia), "Tisko" (Philippines) and "Zapote" (Cuba).

India is now one of the main producers of sapodillas. They are also grown for commercial purposes in Guatemala, Malaysia,

Mexico, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Venezuela and other Central American Countries. When ripe you'll be able to slice open the fruit to reveal a centre with the same grainy texture as a ripe pear and ranging in color from pale yellow to a caramel brown. The flesh is soft enough to scoop out with a spoon, all you need to avoid are the shiny black seeds (which range from about two to ten).

They may look like potatoes, but sapodillas are not reaped from the earth. The sapodilla tree yields fruit twice a year, though flowering many continue year round. The fruit has a high latex content and does not ripen until picked.

The tree itself is a sight to look at, the leaves are a glossy dark green and if the sapodilla glowed in the dark, Mother Earth would have her very own Christmas tree.

The bark releases a white substance called "chicle", which is used to make chewing



gum! So, if sweetness trickles from the tough bark of the sapodilla tree, can you imagine the delight that is within the fruit itself? Good-bye chocolate! If it were up to me I would name the sapodilla as one of the

wonders of the world, for not only is it a healthy choice, it's also used for medicinal purposes.

Because of tannin content, young fruits are boiled and the decoction taken to stop diarrhea. Some even drink an infusion of the young fruits and the flowers to relieve pulmonary complaints.

The list of wonders continues: a decoction of old yellowed sapodilla leaves is drunk as a remedy for coughs cold and diarrhea. A "tea" of the bark is regarded as febrifuge and is said to halt diarrhea and dysentery. The crushed seeds have a diuretic action and are claimed to expel bladder and kidney stones. Also, a fluid extract

of the crushed seeds is employed in the Yucatan as a sedative. A combined decoction of sapodilla and chayote leaves is sweetened and taken to lower blood pressure.



A paste of the seeds are applied on stings and bites from venomous animals and the latex is used in the tropics as a crude remedy for tooth cavities. Essentially, every single part of the Sapodilla from the tree, which bears it, to its little black seeds, serves a beneficial purpose. It's well known that an apple a day keeps the doctor away, but why look to foreign shores to make a healthy choice when you can go for the sweetness of the sapodilla?

It's so good, thank God it's not sinful!

Sapodillas are low in saturated fat, sodium and contains no cholesterol and no sugar. They are very high in dietary fiber and very high in Vitamin C.

NUTRITION FACTS

Serving Size: 1 Sapodilla (170g) . Calories 141 .

Calories from fat 17

Total Fat 1.9g (13%) . Saturated Fat 0.3g (12%) .

Polyunsaturated Fat 0g

Monounsaturated Fat 0.9g . Cholesterol 0mg (0%)

Sodium 20.4mg (1%) . Potassium 328.1 mg (9%)

Total Carbohydrate 33.0g (11%) . Dietary Fiber 9g (3%)

Protein 0.7g (1%) . Vitamin A 2% . Vitamin C 42%

Calcium 4% . Iron 8%

(Extracted from: Sherine Mungal Ed etal . The Caribbean Health Digest . APR JUN 2008/ Issue 1. Eidetic Publishing,)

Old Age and Health . . . By: Dr. George Gough

There is no age limit to the benefits of exercise. Regular activity in fact, can often slow or reverse the decreased mobility that contributes to disease and disability in old age.

The capacity for free, comfortable movement is a foundation of well-being that healthy people take for granted. But increasing age brings unwelcome changes. Musculoskeletal weakness, stiffness, and pain – among the most frequent complaints physicians hear from middle-aged and older patients – often lead to a general decline in physical activity.

The consequences of decreased mobility ripple through the older individual's life. Financial status and quality of life decline along with the ability to work and participate in leisure activities. Self-image suffers, sleep quality deteriorates, and mood may be lowered. In time, reduced capacity for exercise can compromise the health of diverse organ systems, increasing the risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and colon cancer.

If it progresses unchecked, decreased mobility undermines the capacity for activities of daily living: the ability to feed and clothe oneself, attend to personal hygiene, and perform routine day to day tasks.

However, clinical research demonstrates that for most elderly patients, including many who are frail or have concurrent illnesses, a programme of aerobic, strength training, and flexibility exercise helps maintain mobility, improve quality of life, and prolong independence.

It is difficult to sort out the relative contributions of disuse and genetically programmed processes to the overall progress of musculoskeletal deterioration. But it seems clear that while aging is not synonymous with

disuse, disuse exacerbates the changes that occur with ageing.

Research confirms that regular exercise can significantly slow or reverse many changes associated with the age-related loss of strength, endurance and flexibility.

Note some facts:

- The loss of strength and stamina attributed to aging is in part caused by reduced physical activity.
- Inactivity increases with age. By age 75, about one in three men and one in two women engage in no physical activity.
- Among adults aged 65 and older, walking and yard work are by far the most popular physical activities.
- Social support from family and friends has been consistently and positively related to regular physical activity.

Some benefits of physical activities:

- Helps maintain the ability to live independently and reduces the risk of falling and fracturing bones.
- Reduces the risk of dying from coronary heart disease and of developing high blood pressure, colon cancer and diabetes.
- Can help reduce blood pressure in some people with hypertension.
- Helps people with chronic, disabling conditions improve their stamina and muscle strength.
- Reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression and fosters improvements in mood and feelings of wellbeing.
- Helps maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints.
- Helps control joint swelling and pain associated with arthritis

What we as a community can do to help:

- Provide community-based physical activity programmes that offer aerobic, strengthening, and flexibility components specifically designed for older adults.
- Provide transportation for older adults to parks



- Encourage health care providers to talk routinely to their older adult patients about incorporating physical activity into their lives.
- Plan community activities that include opportunities for older adults to be physically active.

We will eventually find ourselves being part of this group so why not create this healthy environment. You decide.

The Guardian Pg 20 Sunday Nov 21, 2004

Intergenerational Exchange **Black Orchid Resort**

Each year March is celebrated as Women's Month, and the Women's Department, along with other agencies, host events to raise awareness on women's issues. On March 19, 2009 Ms. Elisa Castellanos, a Woman's Officer in the Belize District, organized the Intergenerational Exchange activity and the NCA provided financial assistance. Forty older women were invited to spend the day at the Black Orchid resort to interact with forty younger women from YES (Youth Enhancement Services) and the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association).

The older women were the first to arrive and where given a light breakfast after which



Y.E.S. Girls providing musical entertainment



Sadie Vernon High Presentation

the fun began as they danced and sang songs. The 2 groups of younger women soon arrived and both groups had prepared a program that included songs, poems and inspirational messages to share with the older women.



Afternoon session: free manicures

Following the entertainment the participants were separated into mixed groups, and the older women were given an opportunity to share stories of their childhood with the young women and teach them a song or a dance that was common when they were younger. Each group was then invited to present what they had learnt during their short discussion.

After lunch the older women were treated to free manicures and pedicures by the younger girls. When the pampering was through the older women were treated to gift bags from Ms. Addy Cawich, Avon representative in Belize City. The older women were also given inspirational book marks made by some of the younger women. The day ended with the promise of a similar activity in the future.

Older Persons Variety Show

On March 15, the NCA teamed up with the Belmopan Women's Council to organize the first Belmopan Variety Show for Older Persons at the Hazel Hutchinson Centre. This was organized to celebrate women's month and all participants were women. The show included drama, music, poetry and dance. The first performer of the day was Mrs. Claire Moody,



Mrs. Pat Robinson as Little Old Lady



Mrs. Juanita
Ireland

who performed a dramatized version of "*There's a Hole In My Bucket*". Mrs. Pat Robinson then took the stage and performed a song and dance created by herself and her sister during World War II entitled "*Little Old Lady*." Staying true to her culture, Mrs. Juanita Ireland, dressed in a traditional outfit, took to the stage dancing a traditional Mestizo dance. Lady Leonie Cain followed by reading a poem from her late husband's collection. The final performance of the morning was by Mrs. Gwen Zetina who electrified the audience with her Ska dance steps.

The day did not end with the final performance as everyone was invited to enjoy lunch and a little more entertainment, including two stories presented by the Governor General, Sir Colville Young. And, not to be outdone, Mayor Simeon Lopez also told one of his funny stories.

Music was provided by Bro. Fem, Mr. Lopez on the organ and Moody's Box. The final activity of the day was the opening up of the dance floor for all present to get down and have some fun.

The National Council on Ageing was proud to be apart of this event which allowed older persons to display their talents and a big thank you goes to Ms. Tiffany Taylor, UB Social Work Student, for her involvement and organizational skills.

Student Interns

Each year the NCA enjoys the company and participation of Student Interns from Belize and abroad. They add a new dimension to the day to day operations of the office. Our interns offer new perspective and fresh ideas in approaching ageing issues.

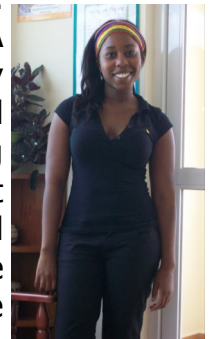
In August of 2008 Ms. Yvette Hepburn



Ms. Yvette Hepburn

Ms. Yvette Hepburn began her internship at the NCA as a Bachelor's Student from the Social Work Course at the University of Belize. During her time with the NCA she conducted a small study on the accessibility of health care for older Belmopan Residents. Although the study was done on a small scale it revealed that older persons do indeed face various difficulties accessing healthcare services in Belmopan, which need further investigation.

In January of 2009 Ms. Sandra Gillot arrived at the NCA through the New York based Suny Courtland program. As a political science major at Gettysburg College, Pennsylvania, Ms. Gillot was very interested in the cultural diversity of Belize and spent three months examining how culture impacts the care and response to the ageing process older persons in different communities in Belize. Ms. Gillot also developed several pamphlets for caregivers of older persons in Belize.



Ms. Sandra Gillot



Ms. Tiffany Taylor

Ms. Tiffany Taylor also joined the NCA team in January 2009 as a UB Social Work Associate's student intern. Ms. Taylor focused her study on the residents of Belmopan and compiled a life history booklet entitled "*Pioneers of Belmopan*". This booklet features the biographies of founding members of the Belmopan community and can be found at the NCA Office and soon on the website.

These young women have enhanced the work of the NCA and we have benefited from their presence and hard work. We wish them every success in their future endeavours.

**GOLDEN AGE HEROES AWARDS, FEBRUARY 25, 2009
BEST WESTERN BILTMORE PLAZA**



*Hon. Eden Martinez, Mrs. Ethel Ellis and
Mr. Godsmen Ellis, Golden Age Hero*



*Antonio and Lydia Vega,
Golden Age Heroes*



Benque Social Dance Group

**INTERGENERATIONAL EXCHANGE, MARCH 19, 2009
BLACK ORCHID RESORT**



Morning session of the Intergenerational Exchange

**VARIETY SHOW, MARCH 15, 2009
HAZEL HUTCHINSON BUILDING, BELMOPAN**



Mrs. Moody as Liza



Lady Leonie Cain



Variety Show dance floor

Where to find the N.C.A.
For further information about the NCA
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