

No Laptops Allowed
By JONATHAN WILSON
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In the early fall, I was asked by the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper, to travel to the Caribbean on a photo assignment. I noticed a passenger on my flight pecking away at her Powerbook. Being compulsive about my work — and life in general — I wished I had brought my laptop along.

Robert Luke, the St. Croix young men's division chief, met me at the airport. Nonplused, I watched as he walked over to the young woman and, in a total deadpan, said that laptops were not permitted on the island because they prevented people from relaxing. It brought broad smiles. This way my first introduction to Caribbean culture.

Robert is a comedian, the co-host of the Virgin Islands' top-rated morning radio show, "The Breakfast Flakes." While I was anxious about my pictures and wanted to go directly to Dr. Cora Christian's office (Cora is a physician and head of the SGI organization in St. Croix), Robert had other plans: I was taken directly to the beach! Ah, Caribbean culture.

St. Croix is a thriving organization with a contingent of young people who, like Robert, embrace the organization and practice so naturally that the SGI appears to be an island institution rather than a new arrival.

Several days later I arrived in St. Maarten to photograph Valerie and Humphrey Giterson, the Caribbean Headquarters leaders as well as the island's chapter leaders. The island has two sides, Dutch and French, yet it was clear that the members from each side of the island interact seamlessly.

I was struck anew by the universality of this practice, how all our prayers are so similar. Our hearts share the same desires — the growth and happiness of our members and for SGI President Ikeda to visit at the earliest possible date!

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