Happy Mother’s Day!

A SALUTE TO MOTHERS EVERYWHERE

GUYANA CULTURE

MAY 26, 2012

46TH INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY
MAY 5, 1838: ARRIVAL OF FIRST INDIAN INDENTURED IMMIGRANTS IN GUYANA

Gertrude Dolphin 104 not out!

Guyana Cultural Association of New York Inc. Newsletter
It is with great excitement that we celebrate with our May edition of the Guyana Folk Festival newsletter. I take this opportunity to congratulate Guyanese everywhere on the Republic’s commemoration of its 46th Independence Anniversary. The Guyana Cultural Association joins all Guyanese in honoring this historic event that chartered a course for self-governance and development of the land of our birth.

Guyana’s Honorable Diplomatic Corp spearheaded by The Honorable Brentnold F.R. Evans, Consul General of Guyana will join the Guyana American Heritage Foundation in New Jersey, in conjunction with The City of East Orange, to celebrate this special occasion at the organization’s 5th annual Flag Raising ceremony on Friday June 01, 2012 at 44 City Hall Plaza, in East Orange New Jersey. The Golden Arrowhead – Guyana’s colorful flag - will be proudly raised under the patronage of the Honorable Mayor of New Jersey Robert Bowser. The ceremony will run from 4:30p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

President of the Guyana Tristate Alliance, Ms. Patricia Jordon-Langford will join President Ira Lewis, Ms. Allison Butters-Grant, Executive Secretary and Treasurer Mr. Carl Fraser, to host all in attendance.

We at GCA are overwhelmed by your responses to this newsletter and we can honestly say we are inspired by the many thought provoking comments. Thanks to so many of you for taking the time to respond, and for sharing your great insights and concerns. Indeed, your thoughts, suggestions, and recommendations, are highly appreciated.

This is the perfect time to let you know that interacting with you is a great joy, and we are thankful for this vehicle, which affords us the wonderful opportunity to initiate a feedback column. In this issue we have a kick-off segment entitled “What our readers have to say?” We always welcome your comments and support as we forge forward.

Please enjoy the diverse articles including memoirs of Colonel Desmond Roberts raising the Golden Arrow Head at Guyana’s first independence; Maypole plaiting and May fairs; remembering Mothers on Mother’s day; the history behind Meadow Brook; Guyanese mother of nine with four sets of twins; the dying art form of the Indian tradition Tadjah; and many other interesting features.

Our website www.guyfolkfest.org, our Face Book page and this newsletter will keep you informed about all of our upcoming events.

Enjoy!

Edgar Henry
May Editor
A SALUTE TO Guyanese Women of Strength

A strong woman works out every day to keep her body in shape ... but a woman of strength kneels in prayer to keep her soul in shape...

A strong woman isn't afraid of anything ... but a woman of strength shows courage in the midst of her fear...

A strong woman won't let anyone get the best of her ... but a woman of strength gives the best of her to everyone...

A strong woman makes mistakes and avoids the same in the future... a woman of strength realizes life's mistakes can also be God's blessings and capitalizes on them...

A strong woman walks sure footedly... but a woman of strength knows God will catch her when she falls...

A strong woman wears the look of confidence on her face... but a woman of strength wears grace...

A strong woman has faith that she is strong enough for the journey... but a woman of strength has faith that it is in the journey that she will become strong...

Happy Mother’s Day Women of Strength!
I was assigned the Independence Night parade at the new National Park. A British Army officer, Colonel Hefford, who specialized in the now frequent independence celebrations in the colonies of the empire, was our guide. He seemed concerned only with “nobody is messing up my parade.” He said he had seen it happen in other countries. Perhaps, the colonel was the common factor!

My counterpart officer from the British Army was Second Lieutenant Jimmy Jonklass. Jimmy and I shared bachelors’ quarters in the still under-construction barracks to be later named Camp Ayanganna. He was to lower the Union Jack.

After several rehearsals, it was clear that there were difficulties with the small made-up flag I was using. It was being buffeted and twisted in the North East trade winds rushing across the sea defence wall. Two days before the Flag Raising ceremonies, a crisis suddenly developed.

Colonel Ronald Pope, the British Army officer appointed Chief of Staff to the GDF, summoned me to his office. Colonel Hefford had said that “the Prime Minister had said” that he wanted me off the parade. He told me that I had shown nervousness. I denied the accusation but mentioned the ‘little flag’ problem.

The next day, one day before the parade, I was again summoned to Colonel Pope’s office. He said that there had been a compromise: I would still be the officer on the parade, but he would place our adjutant, Ulric Pilgrim, alongside me for “support.” I was still to be the flag-raising officer.

It was sheer serendipity that Ulric was there. The new flag was many many times the size of the ‘little flag’; and the method of connecting the flag to the halyard was completely different. It took about five long seconds for Ulric and I to decide how we would proceed; Ulric also ensured that our new national standard did not fall or drag on the recently bituminized surface of the former grassy Golf Ground.

As the flag began its historic midnight rise up the flagpole under the spotlight, there was an eerie silence in the park. As I hoisted the standard it dragged reluctantly and limply along its route. However, as the new national flag arrived at almost its zenith it was caught by the ocean breeze and it waved to us beautifully in dance before snapping loudly out to attention. There was joyous cheering all around the ground.

There was great hope for the country when the Prime Minister, Forbes Burnham, invited his former comrade and the main opposition leader, Cheddi Jagan, to share the moment on the tarmac, where they embraced emotionally and genuinely.

History was created. The Golden Arrowhead seemed then to be pointing us onward from May 26th, 1966 in a new direction of ethnic and political harmony.
MIDNIGHT, MAY 26, 1966

RAISING THE GOLDEN ARROWHEAD:

As the flag began its historic midnight rise up the flagpole under the spotlight, there was an eerie silence in the park. As the new national flag arrived at almost its zenith it was caught by the ocean breeze and waved to us beautifully before snapping loudly to attention. There was joyous cheering all around the ground.

There was a collective gasp at its beauty: its symmetrical design, its bold colors.

2Lt. Desmond Roberts raising the Golden Arrowhead, for the first time, as Prime Minister L.F. S. Burnham and Opposition Leader Cheddi Jagan look on with pride.
Guyana Cultural Association of New York Inc. Newsletter

WHAT OUR READERS ARE SAYING

Dear Editor of the Monthly Newsletter that is compiled produced and circulated by the Guyana Cultural Association of New York.

Let me commence by complimenting the Leadership of the Guyana Cultural Association of New York (G.C.A) for taking this vital communications step of sustaining relations with the public. The advantage of writing for a culturally inspired Newsletter is that I could frame my own contributions in the form of letters to the Editor, instead of a straightforward article.

I am fortunate to be acquainted with the academic/intellectual depths and breadths of some of the principal players within the G.C.A, I have witnessed several of their verbal relays, but unless recorded, those verbal relays soon evaporate; hence it is a welcome to be able to read and store their written contributions through this ORGAN.

Editor, via this medium, I am being reminded so much about cultural and dramatic occurrences that happened during my days of growing up and living in Guyana, that I am imagining how much more beneficial the contents of your periodical Newsletters are to younger generations of Guyanese; younger persons of Guyanese descent; and especially those young ones who were not lucky enough to grow up in British Guiana, later called Guyana.

Editor, I want you and your fellow producers to know that I have read each and every article in your earlier issues, with the singular purpose of seeking to grow my vocabulary; and I reaped such a harvest of new words and their meanings from those readings that I had to feed the brain with doses of Milk of Magnesia, and Andrew's Liver Salt(s) in order to catalyze the brain's digestion of those fruits of accumulation.

Editor, I did not only read the articles, but I also perused the accompanying pictures over and over, because it was refreshing and optimistic to come upon a Guyanese institutional publication that was being inclusive, by e.g. featuring PHAGWAH, along with other pictures that “ … Crossed Ethnic boundaries…”

Editor, the May Issue of the G.C.A Newsletter will coincide with our Independence anniversary, and I hope and I pray that over time, this Newsletter will drive us towards greater cultural freedom.

Congratulations on your Newsletter; you are ensuring Guyana's cultural future with your numerous features.

Yours Fraternally,

Carlyle Harry

This is SPLENDID!

First, I very much enjoyed all the great education that I received about Guyana – I learned a lot in a very quick read. Excellently assembled newsletter!

Dan’l

Thank you for this awesome newsletter!
Forwarding to everyone!

Pritba Singb

Every month I say superb, wonderful when I see the GCA Newsletter Every month the quality gets better and better.

Romesh Singb

An outstanding communication!

I would like to, first of all, congratulate the producers of the Monthly Newsletter for an eminent and outstanding communication. It portrays and reflect the aims and objectives of the GCA...art and culture...in a reflective yet omnipresent vein. The design, layout and illustrations were a roraiman presentation...ars gratia artis.

Peter Halder

It is beyond a "newsletter."

I keep forgetting to mention what a first-rate job is being done on that GCA newsletter you all are putting out. The wealth of information in there, and the quality of it, is unusual for "awee dis" and all the people involved should take a bow. I also suggest you find a different appellation for it; what you have is way beyond a "newsletter."

Dave Martin
Many of us may know the origins of the two words - May Day - signifying an emergency or a call for help. In 1923, ES Mockford, a senior radio officer in England thought of these words to indicate distress for pilots and ground staff in an emergency.

However, Labor Day, which symbolizes an important collaborative movement in support of workers' rights, emerged in 1886, in Chicago, spearheaded by two activists and involving over 80,000 workers in the world's first May Day Parade. This action spawned other movements and parades, earning the disdain of "Chicago's wealthy industrial and banking elite, who targeted its founder, Lucy Gonzalez - a former slave - and Albert Parsons for elimination" to stymie union activities. Parsons called a peaceful protest rally, which became known as the Haymarket Riot/Massacre in which seven Chicago policemen died in a bomb blast and led to the arrest, jailing and execution of many of the militants.

Three years later, in 1889, May 1st. was declared International Workers' Day or International Labor Day, by the Second Marxist National Conference of socialist and labor parties - an official holiday in some countries when people commemorate the struggle for workers' rights and protest all kinds of ills of society in meetings, protest rallies and speeches. May Day is viewed as a fitting call for social justice by workers, for recognition of the voice of the worker through labor unions. It can be considered the precursor of the contemporary Occupy Movements, which shine the spotlight on domestic and international class inequities.

Labor unions have been established in many countries. In Guyana, for example there is the Guyana Agricultural and General Workers' Union; Guyana Airline Pilots Association; Guyana Labour Union; National Workers' Union (Guyana); Guyana Teachers' Union; Guyana Public Service Union; Clerical and Commercial Workers Union.

Among the prominent labor activists in Guyanese history is Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, the father of Trade Unions (1884-1958). After a struggle of over 30 years for workers' wage negotiations and rights, in 1917 he founded the British Guiana Labour Union (BGLU), the first in the Caribbean. In December 1964, former president Dr. Cheddi Jagan, unveiled a bronze statue of Critchlow whose contribution is remembered on May 1st, which is designated in Guyana as: Labour Day; Workers' Day or May Day.

In retrospect, Lucy Gonzalez Parsons, unlike Critchlow, has not found a place in social studies curricula. However, she has earned a prominent place in the fight for working people, women, and people of color, her country, and her world.

The history of May 1st. is intimately tied to the movement for the 8-hour work day, to immigrant workers and the long tradition of American anarchism. However in North America, Labor Day has undergone a change in recent years, varying in benefits to different segments of the population. In general, it deviates from honoring the worker and the socio-political struggles for workers' rights. Instead, the focus has been on festive activities to celebrate the end of summer; an opportunity for big business sale events; while sustaining Maypole plaiting and dancing with its "communal symbolism", a tradition common in Guyana.

Sources:
As we celebrate Mother’s day we must give credence to the Queens of the universe and reflect on their sterling contribution. Oft times in our communities there are unsung heroines who are not fully recognized despite their incredible efforts and valiant service at a time when gender roles transcend the labor force.

Guyanese, over the years, have traveled near and far and have taken with them that unique discipline, mantle, traditions, education, commitment and courage to new dimensions regardless of the challenges they encounter. The struggles and disappointments along the way only made them stronger and more focused, reinforced by their God fearing stamina, drive and determination. We owe it all to parenting, particularly the role of mothers in our lives. We should not take unconditional love for granted. A mother’s adoration is unique and the ideal mother is everything for her children and the mutually supportive relationship is the fabric of togetherness and guidance.

News items today have to be enterprising, or it is not considered news worthy. Let us pause to recognize the significance of Mothers and the extraordinary roles they play in nurturing not only their biological offspring but also the influence and care administered to those in societal circles.

Mothers have a special place in their children’s lives because of the maternal bond that starts from pregnancy and continues through infancy, childhood, and adolescence. A mother’s involvement and interaction with her children are unique because there is a strong emotional and social connection during the various developmental stages. This fond association comes with a day-to-day unconditional love and care of the family which has a strong link that exists not only for her children, but also for the welfare of their spouses.

Most male parents go through life comfortably, without being conscious of the innumerable tasks our spouses/partners are involved in raising our children and taking care of their households. Many of us men are still dwelling in the privileges and legacy of our male-dominated cultural norms and practices. If we seriously observe and count the daily tasks and responsibilities of mothers, they are many and varied, compared with those of fathers, when it comes to the unparalleled obligations and challenges of raising children to a well-adjusted adulthood.

Whether a mother is partnered or not, we assume that she is the likely candidate for family nutritionist, health coordinator and official consoler. Beyond the role of physical and emotional caretaking, mothering fosters children’s intellectual and social development. Mothers create and organize experiences for our children, both in the routine of everyday home life and in the special events and activities the family pursues outside the home. Mothers set expectations as well as boundaries, and at the same time, present themselves as role models and examples for our children’s observation. In all of these choices, a mother’s involvement continually shapes a child’s learning and social growth.

A familiar Guyanese/Caribbean parenting model of a typical family structure personifies modest resources yet an abundance of happiness; sacrificing modern luxuries to make ends meet. Notwithstanding, many families have produced high achievers taking their respective places in popular and remote regions of the world.

A mother’s intuitive recognition of errors and unequivocal admission of a mistake demonstrates strong character and responsibility, never compromising values and beliefs systems and at the same time setting examples for their offspring to pursue.

A mother’s most crucial involvement is the guidance she offers as the child’s circle of friends expands. This attachment offers the child a reassuring center of support and love. Even as the child matures and spends more time outside the home, the mother remains as a fundamental guide in all future encounters.

Happy Mother’s Day To Mothers Everywhere!
Gertrude Dolphin or ‘Aunty Gertie,’ as she is fondly known by all, was born on April 25, 1908, in Nabaclis on the East Coast of Demerara, and grew up in Victoria Village. Joanna, her mother, was a housewife and Henry, her father, was a headmaster. The second of five siblings she is related to the famous branch of the Dolphin family, her father was a cousin of C. E. Dolphin, after whom the Dolphin Government School was named.

In April 1928 at the age of 20, armed with her qualifications, Aunty Gertie was employed as a teacher at the Clarkson Congregational School in Alberttown. She remained there until it closed in January 1929, following which she was transferred to Smith Memorial Congregational School. Here she stayed until her retirement in 1965 at the age of 57.

“I love teaching; I started out as a monitor and moved on from there, and if I had to live my life again I would choose no other profession.

” Gertrude Dolphin is a wizard at remembering dates, occasions and figures.

She is quick to admit that her life has quieted down a lot now, owing to the fact that she is getting on and cannot move around as she would like. She is losing her balance and her sight. She lives with her brother, two of his children and grandchildren.
MAY, THE MONTH OF OUR LADY

MAY YOUR BLESSINGS BE MANY IN THE MONTH OF MAY

Francis Quamina Farrier

Within the Catholic Church world-wide, the month of MAY is observed as "The Month of Our Lady". It is the month when Roman Catholics pay homage to the mother of Jesus Christ. It has also been an important part of the annual activities of Catholics in Guyana. Many May observances are celebrated with extra praying of the rosary and other special prayers in honor of, and to plead supplications to Mary. In Guyana, Catholics have traditionally done the Crowning of a Statue of the Virgin Mary as the pinnacle of the month's religious activities, including processions by the Faithful before the actual crowning, within the church and outside of the church building.

A popular Marian hymn is often sung during the month, as follows:

*Let us mingle together voices joyful and gay singing hymns to our mother this her own month of May.*

As one reflects on these lyrics, one can detect a bit of Guyana's National Motto of "One People, One Nation, One Destiny". The chorus of another popular Marian hymn goes like this:

*Oh Mary we crown you with blossoms today Queen of the angels and queen of the May Oh Mary we crown you with blossoms today queen of the angels and queen of the May.*

While most of the Marian hymns sung in Guyana were composed by non-Guyanese, a popular one composed by a Guyanese Carmelite nun, the late Sr. Rose Magdalene, is entitled "Gentle Woman":
MAY THE MONTH OF OUR LADY

Francis Quamina Farrier

Gentle Woman, quiet light
Morning star, so strong and bright
Gentle Mother, peaceful dove
Teach us wisdom, teach us love.

A gentle supplication which includes the words "gentle", "quiet", "bright", "Mother", "wisdom" and "love" in the lyrics of this Guyanese hymn by Sr. Rose Magdalene, should be noted. Her "Gentle Woman" is also sung year round in Catholic churches in Guyana, but more so during the month of May.

A special Guyanese, who had a great dedication to Mary and the month of May was the late Catholic priest, Fr Michael Rose, AA, who was the brother of Guyana's first and only Guyanese Governor General, Sir David Rose. Fr Michael was always deeply involved with the activities of the Month-of-May Crowning of Mary in the parishes in which he served over the years.

Indeed, it is with spiritual inspiration and nostalgic sanctity that this May month religious ritual, embedded in the Guyanese Catholic tradition, is shared with our readers.

May your blessings be many in the month of May.

IN MEMORY

Dennis DeSouza
Famous Guyanese Pianist Passes on

Dennis De Souza, who hailed from Mahaica, East Coast Demerara Guyana, died in his sleep at the Credit Valley Hospital in Canada. The renowned international musician and pianist, was 77. After a short illness the veteran musician, who last performed publicly about 18 months ago, was suffering from Parkinson’s disease and in recent week’s pneumonia.

Dennis started playing the piano at the tender age of 9. He recorded about 15 albums and did recordings for CHFI in Toronto and Columbia Records. (USA). He recently worked on CDs, "Encounters," and "Pakarima."

Dennis preferred to play live music because the crowd interaction gave him the strength to pick up on the feel of his audience.

His many tours abroad included 27 cities in Germany, the U.K, USA, France Switzerland, South America and most of the islands of the Caribbean archipelago. He also had another interest - Cricket Lovely Cricket.

The Guyana Cultural Association of New York (GCA) recognizes his artistic musical contribution and extends sympathy to his entire family.
THE SCENE IS KITTY

Juliet Emanuel

According to the researchers compiling http://www.medievallifeandtimes.info: The origin of May Pole dancing dates back to the pagan times when the Maypole was basically a phallic symbol. Trees have always been the symbol of the great vitality and fertility of nature. Maypole dancing was therefore strongly associated with fertility. Traditionally, Maypole dancing was performed by young girls from medieval villages as part of the May time celebrations.

The history of the Maypole and Maypole dancing was connected with the Druids, Wiccans and the Romans. May 1st. was an important date for the Druids as this occurred when the festival of Beltane was held, and then Romans came to occupy the British Isles. The beginning of May was also an important feast time for the Romans who were primarily devoted to the worship of Flora, the goddess of flowers when the Festival of Floralia was held. Over time the traditions and rituals of the Floralia were added to those of the Beltane culminating in May Pole dancing which is still carried out to this day.

As the British moved from their island home to parts of the Caribbean and South America with the accompanying human trafficking from Africa, Asia and other areas and as cultures intersected, adjusted and settled, the custom of maypole, somewhat bereft of its original meaning found a place far away from temperate lands.

There was concern among Guyanese, who are ever studious, about the symbolism of the decorated pole and young girls dancing around it. But in general the May Fair, coming as it did after the soberness of Lent, the relief of Easter, the joy of kite-flying on Easter Monday (this last another subject for discussion among us) was a much anticipated event.

In Kitty, as soon as schools reopened after the short Easter break, word would travel around the village that “practice” was going to start at St. James-the-Less Anglican School. The entire operation was carefully calibrated with “month ends.” Girls, lucky enough to be allowed by their parents to take part, gathered on the appointed day for what was, in essence, an audition. They were put through their paces under the severe eye of wonderful women such as Mrs. Depeazer and a few of the older girls. Some boys did take part but they were usually relegated to the “small pole.” Kitty May Fair boasted two poles, “a big and a small.” To qualify “to plait” a child had to learn the basic round, in and out, alternating hands as he or she went.

Afterswards came the choosing of the partners and the buying of the sewing tape. The tape - six or ten yards - was attached to the practice poles and then the real work began. “Dum, dum, dum, dide dide dum” Practice! Practice! Practice! While the children were fighting not to make their mothers “look shame,” the designers of the village, having received the latest Woman’s Home magazine, would gather at the Village Hall, the Anglican schoolroom or the home of Mrs. McCrae (Cousin Baby to family) to discuss the style of the dresses. The cooperation among these women was matched only by their dexterity. Tucks, pleats, gathers, tiers, taffeta, organdy, and ribbon!

Quite often at the practice following the designer’s meeting a sad child would say, “I want to wear red but my mother said, ‘Not a bit of it. You are wearing blue and your partner is wearing blue and you know – you don’t have to plait. So!’” So all the ribbons of choice, matching the colors of the dresses, for the actual plaiting were submitted to Mrs. Depeazer and kept until the DAY!

When the glorious day arrived, the hairdresser (Madam) having done overtime duty and shoes having been sand papered a bit to prevent slipping on the grass during the plaiting of the maypole, the children, pristine in color coordinated loveliness of dress, stepped through the streets of Kitty around two o’clock and took up their places at the Kitty Pavilion. The Fair was declared open. After the May Queen, with her Ladies in waiting standing near her, bade the plaiters, “Away to the green and dance the Maypole,” there was no time for shyness. Children found their ribbons which they were seeing for the first time on the poles; swung their best and, then, suddenly it was over. Except for the enjoyment of the feast (some of it, paid for of course, passed over the fence to fairgoers on the seawall): hot-dogs with mustard and frilly lettuce; ice-cream in a cone, fudge, channa and nuts in paper cones, sugar cake, shave ice, drink, little baskets frilly with crepe paper, games galore, the smell of sawdust, wonderful freedom with your friends!
PLAITING THE MAYPOLE:
Spider Web Design

Pretty little butterfly
what you do all day
Run about at Sunday school
nothing do but play,
Nothing do but play meh da’ling
nothing do but play
Fly butterfly, fly butterfly
don’t waste your time all day.

THE MAY QUEEN
AND HER COURT
"Away to the green and dance the Maypole"

Little Claire Patterson,
Queen of the 1974
Lodge Village May Fair.
Bridget Morris
Miracle Mom of 4 Sets of Twins

Margaret Lawrence was Bridget Morris and gave me the telephone number.

When I told Bridget what my mission was, she was a bit reluctant but the name “Uncle Francis Farrier” worked the magic and we agreed that the interview would take place the following Sunday at her home, 120 Leopold Street. I was unsure of the location and she advised “Just ask for the lady with the twins!”

And sure enough, three ladies sitting on the ‘frontsteps’ of a cottage, gaffing and plaiting hair directed me and even sent a child along to show me the exact yard.

It was a long, wet, concreted yard and I was faced with two high padlocked zinc gates. I looked around and a buxom lady hanging through a push-out wooden window in the next lot asked “Who yuh looking fuh?” For the umpteenth time, I replied “The lady with the twins.” She pointed “Right ova deh.” I knocked on the zinc and a lad opened the padlock but when I attempted to enter, he cautioned me “Wait!” Then he looked back, up at the door of the top flat of a wooden two flat building. I followed his gaze and saw a nicely dressed, friendly looking woman surrounded by peeping children. She gave him the nod and I gained entry.

It was a humble and very clean surroundings. A stand pipe was at one corner and a lad opened the padlocked zinc gates. I looked in a window in the next lot and a young lady, who I thought fitted the description and said “I’m lookin for a lady who has four sets of twins.” She repeated, “Oh, the lady with the twins? Go down mo’ to dub stan’ wid de umbrella.” I did as I was told and found two girls under the oversized multi-coloured umbrella selling confectionery, drinks and costume jewellery. I stated my objective and one proudly said, “Is my mother. She at home.” Later she told me that her mother’s name was Bridget Morris and gave me the telephone number.

Then the interview began. I switched on my tape and pulled out my notepad. Bridget, without prompting, told me her life story. As it unfolded, I stopped writing and just let her words flow over me like a rain of truth, amazement and reality. I said to myself, “Margaret, welcome to the real world!” Her story is one of abuse, determination and the strength of a woman. She told me of being homeless and hungry and how she was determined that none of her children would ever pass that way.

Born 40 yrs ago on the 7th May, she is the one of 8 children born to Monica Harris and Normal Maxwell. She grew up in Vryheid’s Lust where she received her secondary education.

… but what about this feat of bearing 4 sets of twins?! Bridget describes it as a Miracle especially because she had always hoped for seven children. If genetics have any influence here, then the fact is that her grandmother bore 3 sets of twins and 1 set of triplets and the children’s father is a “twinbench” (the child born after a set of twins).

The eldest child is Carl Jr (16) who is not a twin, but may have been because the midwife said he was born with two afterbirths. The twins are Joshua and Jenelle (15), Mariha and Matthew (14), John and Jonathan (13) and Andrew and Andrea (11). The presence of biblical names reflects Bridget’s strong faith in God.
OUR MOTHERS TAUGHT US IRONY “YUH PLAYING DE FOOL, YUH GUN GET DE FOOL’S PAY”

While there are challenges, there are many joys in mothering nine children

4 SETS OF TWINS

• CARL JR. ... 16 YEARS
• JOSHUA & JENELLE ... 15 YEARS
• MARIHA & MATTHEW ... 14 YEARS
• JOHN & JONATHAN ... 13 YEARS
• ANDREW & ANDREA ... 11 YEARS
Caring for her children has not been easy. She reflects on their younger days when “I used to come home with boxes of medicine from the hospital.” When her last set of twins was born, Bridget became a single parent when she and her children’s father split, but she was determined that she would care for her children and would never give them away, even though she had been asked. Bridget emphasizes that education is important and anyone wanting to help her family can assist towards this end. Her grandmother taught her that “the footside and the headside must always look good.” Her motto is: “You mus’ always carry yuhself well” regardless of your situation.

Carl Jr., who is an excellent athlete, specialises in long distance races and is champion runner at Tutorial High School and the National Schools Athletics. He has represented Guyana in Suriname and Barbados in various relays and is about to write the CXC examination. Bridget now insists that he concentrates on his academics. Andrew and Andrea are preparing for SSEE - Secondary School Entrance Examination.

While there are challenges, there are many joys in mothering nine children who Bridget says are quite talented. On a Saturday night, she would put on some music and they would have a big concert with dance, comedy and singing. In fact Miracle Mom Bridget likes singing and fantasises about participating in the GT&T Song & Jingle Competition. She’s sure she can do well but is quite timid and admits she needs a push.

Her children have different strengths and the twins have a way of complementing each other in their daily activities. Her rule is to be independent and while she accepts goodwill, she certainly does not like to be dependent on charity. She has taught her children to be satisfied with what they have and to appreciate a good meal of “shine rice” on occasion.

Bridget’s day starts at 3am when she does her devotions and then the children rise at 4am to do their chores before setting off to school. Her spiritual upliftment comes from Pastor Joel at Freedom Life Ministry on Croal St. He has prophesied that a breakthrough is near and blessings will pour forth in abundance and she believes solidly in this pronouncement. Bridget said Psalm 23 means much to her because God will always provide for her family and use her to provide for others.

Jokingly she related that she was gaffing with a friend about what she fancies for her 40th birthday. “It must be elegant, with couples. everything must nice… with musical chairs. So when I done tell she a’l dub. She said, Bridget like you getting back. Yuh ain’ realise that you gun be 40 this year? I seb no Karen is not 40. She seb, is not 1972 you born? I cry ‘cause I always say when I reach 40 I mus’ have a birthday… and look I reach 40 and nothing eb!” Then softly Bridget admitted to me “I never had anything special….I never had a birthday celebration.”

When I was leaving I asked the children what they were giving their Mom on Mothers’ Day. They smiled and said “A gift.”

Bridget Morris already has a gift… in fact nine great gifts.

B - Brave
R - Religious
I - Independent & Industrious
D - Devoted
G - Generous
E - (an) Example
T - Talented

Happy Birthday and an enjoyable Mothers’ Day to you Miracle Mom!!

Guyana Cultural Association of New York Inc. Newsletter
HONORING WOMEN OF STRENGTH

GUYANESE WOMEN 90 - 100 YEARS PLUS... SOURCE OF INSPIRATION & STILL MOTIVATING THOSE AROUND THEM

Enid Joyce St Clair Wolfe

Born 1922. Having out lived both her parents and siblings her attitude is one of Daily gratitude for God’s grace and Mercy: The Joy of the Lord is her strength Outgoing and very outspoken... ever ready to offer a word. Young at heart and youthful in thought Contented always understanding what she has is always enough to share Exceptional woman of God Simply put after nine decades her mantra is God first in all you do, serve God by serving people and worship him “If you don’t feel well enough to go to church or Sunday school then you can’t get well later in the afternoon to go to the Gardens, Merriman’s mall or the Seawall”

Inez Bryant

Born December 10, 1917. "The fault is not in falling, it is in lying there.” “work—it is a healthy thing” are just two of the sayings Ms. Inez Bryant has made over the years. Fortnightly, clear eyed, sensitive, supportive, cheerful, courteous, non-judgemental, this woman, now in her ninth decade, has been a beacon for her immediate and extended family. Cousins’ cousins are her family. And, one word sums up her character, one word emanates from her and surrounds all her family, “love.”

Sybil Agatba Caleb

Will be 96 years old on August 24. A quiet, kind and caring person, she was a seamstress in Guyana before moving to New York. Her life is centered around her church and family and even now as she lives towards her centennial year, she remains the same strong, understanding person, always willing to extend a helping hand to anyone in need.

Linda Albertba Baker

Fondly known as Nora (Sis Nora) was born on June 2, 1922 at No. 1 Village, Corentyne. In 1983, Sis Nora survived a ruptured brain aneurysm. After being in a coma for six(6) weeks, and being hospitalized for five(5) months, she had to learn to walk, talk and regain her cognitive abilities. Today she is a shining example of strength, endurance and the ability to persevere against all odds. She is the mother of six children.

Dossie Layne Gittens

Born August 10, 1909 in Guyana, she is the eldest of nine children. She worked as a store clerk and as charwoman with the Public Library for 25 years before retiring. Her hobbies are reading, dancing, sewing and traveling.
WE HONOR MOTHERS WHOSE MEMORIES MAKE US LAUGH THROUGH OUR TEARS

GUYANA

LAND OF THE RAINBOW COLORS

LAND OF SIX RACES & THE MIXED RACE:
DE DOUGLA BOY, DE BUffiANDA GIRL & BAATCHA (BLACK & CHINESE WITH AN EAST INDIAN CALL NAME)

A rainbow is an optical phenomenon that causes a spectrum of light to appear in the sky when the sun shines on to droplets of moisture in the Earth's atmosphere. The normal human eye envisions seven distinct rainbow color sequences – red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. These seven colors are synonymous to the seven races/ethnic groups in Guyana. Alas! Many would argue that Guyana has six races, namely, Amerindians, Africans, East Indians, Portuguese, Chinese, and Europeans. In this article I venture to explain a seventh race that is prominent, but not generally talked about. Because of the great mixture of living standards, concepts and love in Guyana a cosmopolitan and multinational “mixed race” emerge in many variations.

In conversation, a Guyanese may say, “Who yuh talking bowt, I in know he?” and the response: “yuh know de fella man, de light skin brown boy from Kamarang?” Skin color is generally used to describe the individual. For example, Afro-Guyanese – de dark skin boy or de brown skin girl. East Indian – de light skin Indian boy or de fair skin girl or de Madrassi looking boy. Mixed races represent another category. De dougla boy; de light skin or dark skin dougla boy; de dougla boy wit de lil saf’ hair. Afro Guyanese and Amerindian – de buffianda boy; de dark skin buffianda boy; de light skin buffianda girl are examples.

The mixture of Portuguese and African offers another interesting set of descriptions: de red boy or de light skin or dark skin red boy; or de high color red lady. There are those with a combination of Amerindian, African and Portuguese referred to as de Brazilian looking fella, light skin or dark skin or red looking Brazilian. Chinese and African mix: De Chineeish black boy, de black boy like e gat a lil Chinee in e.

When uncertain, “light skin or dark skin Guyanese fella” will do. East Indians have various definitions: de fair skin boy, de dark skin boy; de brown skin, de black skin boy. In a serious discussion, such as marriage, one hears another definition: a Chatri boy, a Brahmin boy, a Ahir boy a Chamar boy. If a Brahmin boy is discussed, one hears about a prappa Brahmin, i.e. one that is vegetarian and who observes rituals, a Narayan, Prashad, Doobay, from a lower order of Brahmin or what is known locally as a Pork Maraj, one who eats beef or pork, drinks rum and seem not to recognize any of the Hindu precepts.

There are others whom we find difficult to determine the racial mix. For example, my friend’s father was a German soldier who married an East Indian woman. His children were known as dem potagee or dem light skin East Indian boys. French and Dutch Europeans somehow married local women and settled in the village.

According to the 1992-93 Census report, the estimate of the mixed population was 7.1% or 50,554 persons. However, the census of 1999 gave an estimate of 17.6% or 127,628 persons. These figures indicate a growth of 2.5 times within a 7 year period, something that is physically impossible. The reasons for this may be due to the unreliability of the data obtained in 1992 and 1999. Perhaps the respondents may have been more inclined to define themselves as Negro/Black in 1992 and that perception may have changed in 1999.

Apart from the official figures, we sometimes find ourselves quite perplexed in trying to figure out the racial mix in the society. For example, a few years ago I had a discussion about poverty with an Amerindian, a Chinese/Black and East Indian. The Chinese/Black exclaimed, “we Buck people gat fuh stick together befoe we can make any progress”. I was surprised and said “Baatcha! (Black/Chinese had an East Indian call name) yuh father was a Chinese, yuh in gat no Amerindian in yuh!” Baatcha smiled and continued with his speech.

So the next time yuh meet a Guyanese, doh confuse yuセル trying to figure out what is his race, whether he is a Black, Indian, Buffianda, Santantone or any other, yuh brain gun get knot up. It is perhaps best to view the person as “Guyanese” and nothing else. Just remember de motto: “One People, One Nation, One Destiny.”

Lessons Taught by Our Guyanese Mothers

“When you lie down with dogs, yuh gun get up wid fleas”

Romesh Singh

Guyana Cultural Association of New York Inc. Newsletter
Meadow Bank, East Bank Demerara, located some two miles south of Georgetown, has undergone a significant transformation from the village it was some 175 years ago, when it was heavily populated by Portuguese and the centre of the Catholic Church in Guyana.

With the abolition of slavery in 1834, many of the African slaves who worked on sugar estates eagerly left the inhuman and barbaric conditions to seek their fortune elsewhere. Portuguese from Madeira began arriving as indentured immigrants in 1835. By 1882, over 30,000 Portuguese had immigrated to then British colony. Many settled at Meadow Bank, which became the centre of the Catholic Church.

Far away from home, the Portuguese indentured immigrants, inspired by the religious worship and practices on their former island of Madeira, set about recreating them at Meadow Bank. A Roman Catholic Church was built. It was just an ordinary Church, but a devout place of worship for the Portuguese to fulfill their spiritual and religious heritage and zeal. Another aim was to encourage and inspire other Portuguese immigrants to settle at Meadow Bank. Activities featured some of the customs and ceremonies of the Churches they attended in Madeira. The Roman Catholic Bishop of British Guiana lived at Meadow Bank until he gave up his residence to Ursuline Nuns. Ritual Masses were held at the Church and its activities included jumble sales, bazaars and religious feasts or "festas."

Among the feasts observed and celebrated by the Church at Meadow Bank was the Feast of St John the Baptist; the Feast of St Peter; and the Feast of the Holy Ghost. For the Feast of St Peter, a Boat of St Peter was built and was lifted from the home of its promoter by six persons along a processional path to the Church. They walked to music and cheers from crowds who lined the roads and a band played music from a nearby bandstand. Bread was distributed at the Church.

The largest ritual, however, according to reports, was the Feast of the Holy Ghost. The event began on Easter Sunday. Two Holy Ghost Flags, red in color with a white dove in the middle, were taken by four men who were the promoters. Two girls, accompanied by a male violin player, sang in the group and they solicited money to feed the poor. A Hymn to the Holy Ghost was sung and collections and donations were placed in a Silver Crown with a dove on top of it.

During the feast, beggars were fed at the school in the village. Three altars were placed in the school - one covered with silver, one on which bread was placed and the other was covered with a flag. Each beggar was given an outfit of clothes, a pair of shoes, a basket filled with food and a towel. On occasions, the Feasts ended in bacchanalian revelry, so much so that the Bishop decided to stop the Feasts.

Passion Sunday, was, however, still observed. Members of the Catholic Guild in Georgetown walked in a procession from Georgetown to Meadow Bank carrying a Statue of Our Lady of Sorrows and one of Jesus Christ with the cross on His shoulder. Sadly, the Church with all of its Statues and religious artifacts was completely destroyed by fire in May, 1939. Meadow Bank today is not the same as it was many, many years ago.
On May 5, 1838, a reported 419 Indian laborers, 18 having died en route, arrived in the then British Guiana via the immigrant ships Whitby and Hesperus after a hazardous journey of 112 days of crossing the Kala Paani (black water) from Calcutta (Kolkata, West Bengal), India.

As Yesu Persaud has stated in various media in relation to the arrival of Indians in Guyana, slavery was abolished in Guyana in 1834 but the slaves had to serve an apprenticeship of four years which ended on Aug. 31, 1838. The liberated slaves worked when they wished and exercised the rights to work on their own terms. This behavior of the freed enslaved caused tremendous problems for the owners of the plantations which led to the imports of labor from various other countries such as Maderia, China, Malta, Germany and Ireland. However, as Persaud has noted, the “mortality rate was high” among these newer arrivals to the colony.

Persaud has remarked that looking towards India, the recruiters held out deceitful promises of “easy work, good working conditions and high wages.” The laborers were also promised that at the “end of their indentureship,” which was for a period of five years, they would return to India as “well-to-do men and women with their return fare being paid for by their employers.”

Soon after their arrival in Guyana, these indentured Indian laborers, whom were a tad bit better off than the slaves, were immediately dispersed to the various estates to work on the sugar plantations, which were left vacuumed by the African slaves. Disguised as indentured laborers, the new slaves were restricted to the confines of the plantation they were assigned to, as traveling between one plantation and another required exemption passes.

In 1917, transportation of indentured Indian immigrants (1838–1917) ended with approximately 70,000 of the 239,000 arrived in Guyana, returned to India. “Many had died on the colony, never to see their homeland again but many also stayed on to build a new life in Guyana.” Persaud has publicly remarked. Not only did the East Indian people bring their long established culture and ancient religion with them but also their spirit of perseverance and resilience that enabled them to survive the brutal 112 days sea journey and numerous hardships of their five years indentureship on the plantations. To the present day, their survival spirit is still alive among the descendants who continue to make a significant contribution in every phase of life.

In 2004, the then President Bharrat Jagdeo declared May 5th an official national holiday in Guyana. The holiday commemorates the struggles and contributions of the Indo-Guyanese toward building the Guyanese nation. May 5th’s designation came about as a result of the dedicated efforts of the Indian Arrival Committee (IAC), a non-profit, NGO that was formed in 2003. IAC “promotes Indian Culture and deals with issues and concerns of persons of Indo-Guyanese origin regardless of their religious and political backgrounds,” stated IAC member Aditya Persaud as they get ready to “launch the first Indian Museum in Guyana in the month of May, 2012.” Along with all Guyanese, the Indo-Guyanese will celebrate the 174th “Indian Arrival Day” of their ancestors at home in Guyana and internationally.
LOGIES
OLD PLANTATION “LOGIES” WERE USED TO HOUSE MULTIPLE FAMILIES

ON THEIR ARRIVAL IN THE COLONY, THE EAST INDIANS WERE GIVEN LODGINGS IN LOGIES (COMMUNAL LIVING QUARTERS WHERE HINDUS AND MUSLIMS LIVED SIDE BY SIDE) IN HOUSING THAT ONCE HOUSED THE FORMER SLAVES. IN LATER YEARS PLANTERS EXTENDED THESE “LOGIES” (CALLED THEN “BOUND COOLIE YARDS) TO ACCOMMODATE THE INFLUX OF LATER ARRIVALS.
Indentured Chinese workers first came to British Guiana from the south coast of China in 1853. Relatively few in number, the Chinese became the most acculturated of all the descendants of indentured workers. The Chinese language and most Chinese customs, including religion, disappeared. There were no clans or other extended kinship organizations, and soon most Chinese did not trace their ancestry beyond the first immigrant, because a significant number of the Chinese men formed inter-racial unions with locals of different ethnic backgrounds.

Like the Portuguese, a number of Chinese did re-sign for a second and even a third 5-year period of indenture but once they saw a potential opportunity for better economic prospects they left estate labor, venturing mainly into shop-keeping. Other Chinese engaged in farming and pioneered wetrice production, using techniques they brought from China.

However, the Hopetown experiment temporarily filled a vacuum and their success in the charcoal business laid the foundations of their challenge to the Portuguese. Hopetown is 2 miles up, on the left bank of the Kamuni Creek which is a tributary on the left bank of the Demerara River, 22 miles up, near to Timehri.

It was a large, successful Chinese settlement established by the Court of Policy in 1865 under a Chinese missionary from Singapore, O’Tye Kim. By 1874, there were 800 persons living in Hopetown.

The main occupation was the making of charcoal and shingles which they sold in a shop in Georgetown. When it became difficult to get wood for the charcoal business, many Chinese settled in the Charlestown district of Georgetown thereby creating a thriving Chinatown area.

Nowadays, there is no longer any Chinese living at Hopetown, a once flourishing Chinese community.
A TRIBUTE TO THESE OUTSTANDING GUYANESE MOTHERS: COMMITTED, DEDICATED

Thank you for your devotion and commitment to family

*Beverly Kissoon & Trev Sue-A-Quan*

**Mabel Yan**
Born May 22, 1911, at Canal No. 2, West Bank Demerara. Resides with her daughter Ann Choo-Kang in Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada. She was married to Samuel Yan (deceased) and their descendants include: 9 children; 20 grandchildren; and 35 great grandchildren. Mabel is a descendant of Loo-Shee/Rebecca Li-a-Tak – the Matriarch of many well know Guyanese Chinese families including the Ting-a-Kees, Lees, Hings, & Mings (she came to British Guiana from China by boat) – Trev Sue-A-Quan’s first publication Cane Reapers featured her. Mabel’s parents were Joseph & Mary (Ting-a-kee) Hing; Mary being the second or third child of William & Louisa (Lee) Ting-a-Kee; Louisa being a daughter of Rebecca Li-a-Tak

**Doreen Ismay Cheong**
Born May 13, 1922, at La Grange, West Bank Demerara. Resides in Scarborough, Ontario, Canada. She was married to the late Walter Ayres and was recently deceased by her husband Stanley Chung. Her descendants include: 4 children; 8 grandchildren; and 9 great grandchildren. Doreen is a first cousin to Mabel and also a descendant of Loo-Shee/Rebecca Li-a-Tak. Doreen’s parents were Edwin & Martha (Ting-a-kee) Lee; Martha being the eldest child of William & Louisa (Lee) Ting-a-Kee

**Clara Ulex Hugh**
Born November 6, 1922, in Georgetown. She is married to Alvin Hugh and they both reside at their home in Scarborough, Ontario, Canada. Their descendants include: 6 children and 2 grandchildren. She provided a story for the book “Cane Ripples” about a well-known Chinese midwife.

**Gloria Yvette Chung**
Born August 21, 1921, in Georgetown. Resides in England. She was recently deceased by her husband Stanley Chung. Their descendants include: 4 children and 11 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. Gloria is an older sister of Clara Ulex Hugh.

**Dorothy Evelyn Yhap**
Born April 30, 1920, at Warida, Demerara River. Resides in Barbados. She was married to Oswald Kenneth (OK) Yhap. Their descendants include: 4 children and 9 grandchildren. Dorothy’s siblings include Chunny Luck who is married to Eunice DeGroot and Alan Luck who is married to June Lee and the late Zena and Jean

**Joycelyn Chan-Choong**
Born April 2, 1921. Resides in Scarborough, Ontario, Canada. She was married to the late “Tots” Chan-Choong. Descendants include 4 children and 6 grandchildren

Happy Mother’s Day!
Muriel Glasgow

Recipient of the Ambassador of Peace Award for Selfless Contribution to Peace, Human Rights & Development, Working with NGOs and UNICEF

Muriel Glasgow is president of MG Associates, Inc. She has worked with UNICEF for over three decades responsible for facilitating and integrating participation in programs to improve access to drinking water, hygiene and sanitation in various countries across the globe.

In addition, she collaborates with private and not-for-profit sectors in generating ideas for sustainable programs. She envisions the role of technology that would lift communities out of poverty. She produces Internet radio shows and Podcasts, interviewing people involved in socio-economic and humanitarian development. As a member of the African Renaissance and Diaspora Network, she spearheads the development of an early childhood program with Imagination/Innovation and Creatively Units (ICU’s) where children under six can learn science education.

Described as an avid humanitarian, in 2009, Ms. Glasgow received the Ambassador of Peace Award in recognition of her outstanding work with NGOs, and UNICEF for contributing “selflessly to peace, human rights, and development.” She is a member of the UN Mentoring Program for Junior Professionals and the recipient of the Certificate of Service of the United Nations Panel of Counsel.

This daughter of our native land of Guyana will be honored by the African Cultural Center of New York, in association with African Women of Good Governance on May 24, 2012 at the New York Academy of Medicine. She is a member of the GCA Media Team, an accomplished business woman and internationally known for her commitment to alleviate conditions of poverty.

Muriel has another dimension – a designer. She is the epitome of classic, batik and tie dye African creations. She has in her possession a stunning collection of one-of-a-kind pieces that include evening attire, casual and intimate apparel. She was one of the first designers to showcase her collection at the Marble Collegiate Church in Manhattan. In her own words she states, “I gain tranquility and strong spiritual freedom from my designs.”

Muriel holds a Master's degree in Public Health from Columbia University; a Certificate of Proficiency in French and Spanish from the United Nations Language Program; Certificate in French Language and Literature – Universite de Besancon, France; and advanced training in Communication and Relationships.

Muriel’s husband is from Togo; her son and his wife Gregory and Shoko, live in Japan, where Gregory teaches at Columbia University, Teachers’ College, Tokyo Campus, and Shoko is a real estate broker.
CELEBRATING GUYANESE WOMEN OF ACTION: INTELLIGENT, SPIRITUAL, CREATIVE

Muriel Glasgow

... as a designer “I gain tranquility and strong spiritual freedom from my designs.”

Guyana Cultural Association of New York Inc. Newsletter
Rosalind Kilkenny McLymont, born in Guyana, is the executive editor of The Network Journal, a leading business magazine for black professionals and entrepreneurs and a partner in McLymont, Kunda & Co., an international trade and business development strategy firm.

She is the author of the groundbreaking non-fiction entitled, “Africa: Strictly Business” and “The Steady March to Prosperity.” Her upcoming fictional suspense novel, “The Contract” is set in Guyana, France and the U.S. The market for this book will be aficionados of international intrigue and suspense. The book draws on the author’s expertise and experience gained as a business journalist; her travels in Europe and her knowledge of Guyana, where she lived for 14 years. The plot unfolds within the cutthroat competition for global markets and presages the downfall of the likes of Arthur Andersen and Enron.

Ms. McLymont has more than 20 years’ experience as a journalist, writer, speaker and advisor to companies on global business and entrepreneurship. She was an international trade reporter and managing editor of The Journal of Commerce. She has published numerous articles on international business in Africa, the Caribbean, the U.S.A, and Europe, and appeared on major media outlets including ABC’s “Like it Is” with the late Gil Noble and also on CNN. Further, she has provided entrepreneurship training for African and Russian women and served as president of the Caribbean Media Association.

This multi-talented Guyanese sister is the recipient of many prestigious awards; the most recent on May 15, 2012 by MEA Magazine in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Commerce Minority Business Development Agency. These prominent organizations will be hosting the U.S. - Africa Trade and Investment Conference 2012 at the Washington Hilton, located at 1919 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. under the theme: Celebrating Global Leadership & Excellence.

Rosalind is fluent in French and Spanish and has taught English and French in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. She holds a master’s degree in Journalism from NYU, a Bachelor’s in French and a Certificate in Spanish Language and Literature. She is an expert in T’ai Chi and a certified Zumba instructor.

Ms. McLymont was extremely supportive to the Guyana Cultural Association of New York (GCA) particularly in the areas of the Literary Hang and the Symposium. Congratulations are in order.
EXECUTIVE EDITOR OF “THE NETWORK JOURNAL”
WRITER, JOURNALIST, SPEAKER AND ADVISOR TO COMPANIES ON GLOBAL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Rosalind Kilkenny McLymont
When Frank Bowling left Guyana as a teen in May 1953, he was not particularly conscious of his nation’s growing drive toward independence. Cheddi Jagan and Forbes Burnham had just won the first democratically held elections in the colony, and the poet Martin Carter had been holding political rallies right there in Bowling’s hometown, on Main Street, New Amsterdam. But totally focused on fleeing a difficult childhood, and seeing no possibilities for a productive social life at home, he was understandably more concerned about securing his own personal independence. Frank Bowling was running fast towards something rather than simply escaping the land that was already an integral part of who he was. The ‘University of the streets’, as Carter called his political rallies, was bypassed for dreams of an actual university where he might be able to further his education and forge a real life of his own. Frank Bowling was not an artist at the time he left the country, just a young man who knew that his destiny lay somewhere else in the big world out there. British writer, Mel Gooding, author of the 160 page illustrated monograph published recently by the Royal Academy of Arts, details the difficult transitioning of the young Bowling from an intellectually able but confused youngster seeking escape from his father’s emotional indifference and physical abuse, into a young man transformed by his revelatory visits to the British National Gallery at Trafalgar Square.

By dint of personal discipline and focus, in a few short years Bowling had transformed himself into a passionate artist of formidable promise. His intensity and rough but evident talent gained the support and respect of important critics and teachers. After attending the Chelsea School of Art, a scholarship took him to the esteemed Royal College of Art where he won the silver medal upon graduation. Of course, none of this was very easy. It was a dramatic and eventful time in his life—something worthy of a movie. And in fact a documentary film many years in the making, which encompasses the long arc of the artist’s life and career, is almost ready for release. In the meantime, twice a Guggenheim Fellow, and Britain’s first black Royal Academician, Frank Bowling, OBE, continues to do what he does best. An exhibition at his NY representative, Spanierman Modern Gallery, just concluded, but in London, his museum solo at Tate Britain, “Frank Bowling: Poured Paintings”, opened on April 30. “Frank Bowling: Recent Large Works” opens at HALE’s Gallery in London, on May 31, and “Frank Bowling: Recent Small Works” will be at Chris Dyson Gallery, London, on July 6. A Two-man show of the work of Bowling and fellow Guyanese, Dennis DeCaires opened February 28 at the University of Glyndwr, in Wrexham, North Wales.

Bowling’s work is represented in museum collections around the world including the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; the Museum of Modern Art, NY; Guyana National Collection, Castelani House, Georgetown, and the Menil Foundation, Houston, Texas, among many others.
Painted and stitched together canvas is a major feature of Bowling’s abstract paintings. It recalls a childhood watching his mom make colorful sari’s and other clothing for her many clients.

Artist
Frank Bowling
The Hobo!

Karen Kendall 1974

His body clung to the deep, dark friendliness of the hole in the side of the wall,
His face, void of expression sagging wearily, red,
as though he had been lying under the direct rays of the sun.
His fingers clasped tightly around the poison
As though it was his salvation

Contemplating - what life is for!

Slowly and unsteadily he wavers to his feet,
rags hanging loosely about him
tremble in unison with his clumsy movements.
As he wanders down the street,
he stops and scratches his thinning hair.
His mate fell prey, only yesterday,
to the pranks of some fire brandishing teenagers

Contemplating - what life is for!

People go briskly by- stepping with a purpose-unshaken by the scene- caught up in their own fantasies.
Children point and laugh and
mischievously grab at his ragged coat,
as they career off of the arms of preoccupied models.
The world seems to step over and around him
as though he did not exist-unaware of those humans who know not,
the time of year, or day.

Contemplating - what life is for!

He sought a familiar spot between two doors,
as day slowly hid behind streaks of indigo blue
BUT, the pungent odor of burning skin
still penetrated his nostrils so
he pushed on in search of another dry but familiar hole.
He pulls his rags snugly about him
And takes a swig of his salvation
It burns its warmth through him,
Warmth he so yearns for!

What is life for?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Karen A. Kendall
is a Registered Nurse and a Physician Assistant residing in Georgia. She started writing poems in her late teenager years, after migrating to North America, and has displayed her talents at Howard University Talent Shows, and at the Robin’s Book store in Philadelphia where she once met Maya Angelou. Karen has also been a guest writer for the ‘Mississauga News’ local newspaper in Mississauga Canada.
One of the impressive cultural events of long ago in Guyana was the Tadjah (or Tazia) festival. It had a Muslim origin but was eventually assumed by Hindus. This was frowned on by the Muslims. But the festival involved nearly all communities who either joined in, observed or benefited from the spectacle that Tadjah was.

The feature of the event was a towering Tadjah structure about 30 feet high representing an ornate tomb. It was a sight to behold. It’s frame was made of bamboo but it was finished in tinsel, pieces of glass, beads, little lanterns, tassels and paper in a grand variety of bright, rich colours.

During the day, the Tadjah was taken in a procession along the road as the following shouted “Hoosein! Hassan!…Hoosein! Hassan!” over and over.

The legend was that the first Tadjah was a tomb built centuries ago by Ali, father of Hoosein and Hassan, for the two sons he lost through treacherous murder during a religious war. Ali, it was said, was the son-in-law of the Holy Prophet Mohammed. He was married to the Prophet’s daughter. Hoosein and Hassan were grandsons of the Prophet. The tomb Ali built was monumental and costly; so much did he love his two sons. The bamboo and paper structures of the Guyana Tadjah, grand as they appeared, were only poor replicas of the original.

The peoples’ shouts of “Hoosein! Hassan!” were in remembrance of the young men on the anniversary of their death, observed in the month of Mohurrum (Muharram), according to the Muslim calendar, 10 days after the appearance of the new moon.

The night scenes during the Tadjah festival were also impressive. Lights were everywhere and of all kinds – gaslamps, lanterns, candles, bottle lamps and floating wicks.

Another attraction of the festival were stick fights. They were called “gatkas”. Each fighter had two long, hard sticks called dantas – one danta in each hand. As the fight proceeded, there was no aggressive combat but rather a skilful stick play in which the dantas were struck against each other, rhythmically, as the fighters danced.

Music was made on drums – mostly large, waist-high – made from wooden barrels and sheepskin or goatskin. The drums were beaten with heavy wooden drumsticks. In a village, there were as many as 100 drums lining the roads, manned by drummers competing for applause. Drumming continued through the night, accompanied by handclapping and singing.

There were other attractions. Many of them were provided to entertain the large crowds and not because they were Muslim or Tadjah related. The food items on sale were Muslim and Indian sweetmeats. Africans sold black-pudding and souse which were detestable to both Muslims and Hindus and the sale frowned on but not prevented. Some communities even had Greasy Pole climbing or walking across and tightrope walking.

At the end of each festival, the Tadjah tower was thrown into the sea at high tide. Every year, a new one was built and decorated and again thrown into the sea.

The extravagance of the festival, its kaleidoscope of bright colours and the profusion of eye-catching decorations led to the creole term “coolie tadjah” to describe any get-together or party that exuded bright colours and fandangles or even a flashily dressed person.
The focus this year is the publisher. Anyone or group who has published an expression of the word is invited to participate. Technology has forced a change in the publishing industry. Therefore, authors who have self published are part of this focus. Poets, novelists, short story writers, dramatists, essayists, lyricists and graphic writers are all welcome. This invitation includes cookbooks, travelogues, scholarly texts, newspapers, newsmagazines and newsletters.

We anticipate a lively, joyous and productive afternoon. Large exhibition spaces will be available. Readings, performance art, workshops, and interviews will be part of the program for the afternoon and evening. Included on the program will be a reprise of Minty Alley, GCA’s stunning adaptation of C. L. R. James’ seminal novel. There will also be a showing of the interviews from Literary Hang 2011.

The planned Open Mic Session will begin at 5:30 PM. Anyone wishing to take part in this session must register upon arrival at the Hang.

Registration will close when an optimum number is reached. Each Open Mic performer will have 15 minutes to perform. Performances must be appropriate since children attend the Literary Hang.

GCA vigorously encourages wordsmiths of all ages to come to the Sixth Annual Literary Hang. The conversation will be sparkling and the works enchanting.

Refreshments will be available for purchase. All vendors are responsible for the delivery and removal of all their products from the venue.

This event is made possible by the gracious collaboration of the Minister and Administration of the historic Flatbush Reformed Church.
THE GUYANA AMERICAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION INC.
ANNUAL FLAG RAISING & CULTURAL CELEBRATION GUYANA’S 46TH INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY JUNE 1, 2012 4.30-8.30 P.M. EAST ORANGE CITY HALL 44 City Hall Plaza, East Orange, New Jersey

SPRING GOSPEL CONCERT E&P PRODUCTIONS SUN. MAY 20, 2012 CATHERINE McAULEY HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM 710 E37 ST. BROOKLYN, NY 11226 (Bet. Aves D & Foster) 5:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.

DONATION: $20.00 -ADULTS $10.00 – CHILDREN For tickets call: Jenny Ferreira @ 917 607 6995 Jenny Seymour @ 917 224 4068 Errol @ 718 879 2662 Phil @ 908 693 2667

THE GUYANA EX-POLICE ASSOC. OF AMERICA, INC.

45TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER DANCE & AWARD PRESENTATION SAT. MAY 19, 2012 From 9.00 p.m. GLEN TERRACE BANQUET HALL 5313 AVENUE “N” BROOKLYN, NY 11234 FORMAL ATTIRE DONATION: $100.00 Music by D.J. Hannah Cyril Bentham - 646 823 6907 Mike Jones - 347 385 4115 Amos Britton- 908 620 3833

ST. ROSE’S MEMORIAL WEEKEND DANCE SUN. MAY 27, 2012 10:00 p.m. - 4.00 a.m. ST. GABRIEL’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH AUDITORIUM 331 Hawthorne Street Brooklyn, NY 11226 DONATION: $25.00 Contact: 917-502-7965/ 917-796-1723/917-574-2614

ST. JOSEPH’S ALUMNI ASSOC. (US Chapter) BLUE & WHITE AFFAIR Dance & Fashion Show SAT. JUNE 9, 2012 ROSE GARDEN 4224 Church Avenue Brooklyn, NY 11203 (Corner of 42 Street) TICKETS: $30.00 For tickets call: St. Joseph’s Alumni Association 718-342-4136 ColeFacts Designs 321-442-7631

THE UTOPIAN DRAMATISTS TRANSFIGURATION EPISCOPAL CHURCH, FREEPORT, N.Y. TENEMENT JUNCTION: EPISODE FOUR “THITHER WE GO, HITHER WE COME” FRIDAY, MAY 11-8.00 P.M. SATURDAY, MAY 12 8.00 P.M. [MOTHERS’ DAY EVE DINNER SHOW]

$25.00 Dinner served from 6.30 p.m. – 7.45 p.m. N.B.: Tickets for Dinner & Show must be purchased in advance. FRIDAY, MAY 18 8.00 P.M. SATURDAY, MAY 19 8.00 P.M. SUNDAY, MAY 20 @ 7.00 P.M.

TRANSFIGURATION PARISH HALL 165 Pine Street, Freeport, N.Y. 11520 To reserve yours, call: (516) 379-1230 between 10.00 a.m. and 12.00 noon Lorraine Phillipe – 917-514-4625 Admission for all shows: $15.00.

NEW YORK TUTORIAL SUPPORT GROUP SPRING FLING FUNDRAISER ST. GABRIEL’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH HALL 331 Hawthorne St. Brooklyn, NY 11225 FRIDAY, JUNE 15, 2012 10.00 P.M.-3.00 A.M. ADMISSION: $25.00 Music DJ Flexx For Info: Keith Cadogan-646 252 6606 Lorraine Edinboro- 347 365 1456 Cheryl Ferdinand- 718 778 0463 Ingrid Alleyne Greene- 718 531 0693 Pamela Granum: 718 735 9186

TO HAVE YOUR EVENT PROMOTED IN FUTURE GCA NEWSLETTERS: Contact Claire Goring claireagoring@aol.com or Edgar Henry ehenry7255@aol.com