Letter from the Editor

WELCOME TO THE FALL SEASON - HAPPY THANKSGIVING

I always feel a sense of excitement at this time of year. First, comes Thanksgiving, which brings Black Friday, and not very far behind, arrives the festive season of Christmas.

This is also the time when we begin to plan, with the hope of producing another exciting Folk Festival season. Our 2012 theme: Masquerade Lives! - will capture the history, vibrancy and colorful spectacle of this art form that continues to mesmerize and fill Guyanese with cheer at Christmastime.

As we move forward, we promise to invigorate you our readers with not only cultural programs, but also inspiring features about Guyanese who make us proud of their achievements. One example is that of young filmmaker Yaphet Jackman who is passionate about educating himself, and sharing his knowledge to inspire others.

This issue also remembers the many Guyanese who lost their lives among the 918 souls that perished in the Jonestown mass suicide in November, thirty-three years ago. Ambassador Bayney Karran honored the events of that fateful day when he delivered words of healing at the dedication of a monument in Oakland, California.

These are just some of the many articles that you will enjoy.

We would like to welcome author Lear Matthews to our team. We look forward to your continued words of encouragement, and suggestions that would help us to continue to deliver a newsletter of the highest standard to your in-box.

Please join our Face Book group, and log on to www.guyfolkfest.org for upcoming events.

Tangerine Clarke
Dear Friends and supporters of GCA:

Thank you! On October 25, the curtain came down on Minty Alley at the Meyer Levin High School for the Performing Arts in Brooklyn. Adapted by Francis Ferrier from C. L. R. James’ novel of the same name, Minty Alley was directed by Maurice Braithwaite and represented the Performing Arts Festival of the 10th anniversary celebrations of the Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc. From the feedback we have received, it was another successful contribution to our 2011 exploration and celebration of Guyana’s cultural heritage and creativity under the theme “Aaal Bady, Waan bady.” We could not have had such a successful season without your generous support and consistent encouragement.

For our 10th anniversary, GCA, a team of volunteers, organized and delivered what has been described as an impressive season. We developed new partnerships and strengthened old ones. We started earlier, added new elements, refreshed our signature programs, and, in the process, showcased the richness of our heritage and the vigor of contemporary Guyanese creativity. This year’s season started on May 8 with the Mother’s Day Dinner Theatre event and ended in October with the world premiere of Minty Alley. Also in June, in collaboration with the Brooklyn Arts Council, we presented Moonlight Story Telling: Once Upon a Time in Brooklyn, an evening when stories from the great Guyanese folklore repertoire came alive. On a pleasant summer evening in July in the gardens of St. John’s Episcopal Church, Guyanese literary creativity and the exploration of the craft of writing were celebrated at the Literary Hang.

The pre-Labor Day program for 2011, which started on July 11 with the Caribbean Heritage Summer Camp, has been described as phenomenal. The summer camp ended on August 11. The art exhibition Contemporary Expressions: Arts from the Guyana Diaspora, curated by Carl Hazlewood and generously supported by Timothy H. Griffith, has been described as the most important moment in Guyanese art history in the diaspora since independence. It opened on August 14th at Five Myles Gallery and ran until September 4th. On August 21, the annual Film and Video Festival was the venue for the North American premiere of CineGuyana—eight new short films from Guyana. The pace quickened with the Awards Ceremony, Kwe Kwe Night, the Symposium, and Family Fun Day, all of which attracted larger audiences and garnered high praise, including descriptors such as “best ever!”

As we thank you for the support and encouragement you have unselfishly given to the Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc., I ask you to join me in giving thanks to the volunteers who serve on the Board. Without their dedication, creativity, generosity, and willingness to go above and beyond over the last ten years, we would not be in the good place we are in today.

We look forward to your ongoing support and encouragement during our 2012 season when we will celebrate the rich heritage of masquerade under the theme “Masquerade Lives!” We also ask for your involvement and support as we take bold steps to establish the GCA Cultural Center by our 15th anniversary in 2016.

Peace,

Vibert C. Cambridge, Ph.D.
President
Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc.
Happy Diwali

The Guyana Cultural Association of New York Inc.
Any celebration of Diwali would be incomplete without Diyas! A Diya can be described as an earthen lamp which is lit as part of the Diwali celebration. A Diya is usually made of clay, but can also be found in other materials. The lamps are filled with oil or Ghee (a clarified butter used in Indian cooking) and a cotton wool wick is usually used to light the Diya.

Diwali, the Hindu festival of light, is also called Deepawali (or Dipawali) in Guyana and the Caribbean. The word Deep (Dip) means Diyas. Diyas are an integral part of Diwali and although various types of lamps and candles are used for decoration and lighting, the tradition of lighting Diyas is still important.

The mythology surrounding the use of Diyas is varied. One story states that when Lord Rama returned home after 14 years of exile (for killing Ravana), his kingdom of Ayodhya was decorated with Ghee fuelled Diyas to welcome him. In fact it has become customary to light Diyas as a way of welcoming important guests or relatives.

Other beliefs behind lighting Diyas are: celebrating the victory of Krishna over Narkasura who was killed by Krishna in the Dwapara Yuga. The Sikh community believes that when Guru Gobind Singh returned to Amritsar, the city was luminous with Ghee fueled Diyas welcoming him.

Diwali falls on Amawasya, a day on which there is no moon and it is one of the darkest nights of the month. Bright Diwali Diyas are used to illuminate the surroundings and as a welcome to the Gods.

With the growing popularity of decorating the Hindu home with these lamps, Diyas are now available in many different materials, colors, sizes and styles.

For a number of years, the skies over the village of Richmond Hill Queens have shown the beauty of Diwali. In the Hindu religion, the brilliant colorful lights that adorn vehicles in the annual motorcade represent the joyous celebration that spread the light of prosperity and good over evil.

On October 22, the Indo-Caribbean community once again gathered by thousands to enjoy the spectacular float parade that rolled along Liberty Avenue, and through the neighborhood.

President of the Divya Jyoti Association, Lakshmee Singh, said that the gorgeously decorated floats, aglow with lights and color, glinted on faces, evoked an atmosphere of exotic beauty and spiritual joy.

She remarked that the exquisitely attired young beauties graced the floats as Mother Lakshmi, mesmerized the crowd with their angelic appearances. The festival was a sight to be seen she added, where celebrants danced, smiled and shed tears of joy, as they recalled the way Diwali was commemorated in their native land.

Loloita Singh and Daveena Ramgolam joined Grand Marshall Ken Subraj of Zara Luxury Homes and Real Estate. They led the Tassa drummers and residents, who carried Diya Lights along the parade route.

Pandit Tillack Seerattan and Dr. Satish Prakash officiated in the offering that opened the festivities early in the day with a Lakshmi Puja and a Hawan. This was followed by a cultural presentation of music, song and dance, and a skit that demonstrated the religious celebration of Diwali. All performances were done by the youths from temples in the community.

... a joyous celebration that spread the light of prosperity, and good over evil.

by Tangerine Clarke
Indo-Caribbean artists such as, Ranjeev Ramdin, KingRaj of the Supertones Band, Randy Ramdin of Extreme International Band, the Natya Tilakam Dance Academy, and Nirvana Diwali Skit, put on quite a show at the Arya Spiritual Center, in dedication to Mother Lakshmi, to end the festivities.

Judges Pandit Ramdular Singh, President of Nirvana Humanitarian Organization and Suniel Sukhdeo, CEO of Platinum Celebrations on the other hand, had the arduous task of judging the winners of the most creative float.

The first prize went to Meenakashi Mariama Mandir, while the second and third prizes went to United Community Mandir and Prem Bhakti Mandir respectively. Singh’s Roti Shop captured the 4th prize, while Indian Majestic Sounds took home the fifth spot.
The performances of the Francis Farrier adaptation of C. L. R. James' seminal novel, Minty Alley, came to an end on Sunday, October 16, 2011 at Meyer Levin School for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn, NY, from Friday, October 14 through Sunday, October 16. Playgoers thoroughly enjoyed the "confusion" among the residents of #2 Minty Alley. Directed by Maurice Braithwaite, the production was so well received that audience commentary included an extension of the dates of the performance and a move to other venues, such as Billie Holiday Theater, Fulton Street, Brooklyn, NY. As many of the audience said that they laughed until they cried and tried not to cry when they were moved to tears.

The play, in rehearsal since May of this year, was the work of steadfast volunteers both on stage and off. Rehearsal space was generously donated by George Gordon Dahari and Lear Gordon at Leinad After School Center, Flushing Ave., Brooklyn, NY and PAL in two Brooklyn locations through the agency of Marcel Braithwaite. Part of the agreement with Meyer Levin was a series of stagecraft exercises conducted by Maurice Braithwaite for its students. Maurice Blenman assisted Maurice Braithwaite in the building of the set. Lighting facilities were in the hands of Malcolm Hall in collaboration with Mr. Chapman of Meyer Levin. A valuable and appreciated stage hand was Alexander Betton Haynes.

The intricate set, designed and constructed by Maurice Braithwaite, was donated to PAL for use by its students and staff. Part of the agreement with Meyer Levin was a series of stagecraft exercises conducted by Maurice Braithwaite for its students. Maurice Blenman assisted Maurice Braithwaite in the building of the set.

Photography was done by Denis Braithwaite. Program details were composed by Juliet Emanuel and the layout and printing were done by Claire Goring.

Claud Leandro, Hilton Hemerding, George Dahari, Michelle Sydney, Christopher Chickonie, Jacqueline Smartt, Verna Walcott-White, Juliet Emanuel and Claudius Agrippa. The stage managers were Jacqueline Newton and Rose October-Edun. Players included the Kwe Kwe dancers and drummer Akoyah Rudder. Now as the Bard wrote: Our revels now are ended. These our actors, As I foretold you, were all spirits and Are melted into air, into thin air.

The curtain has come down on another amazing production and on the end of a decade of service to the community by GCA of NY, Inc.
INTRICATE SET DESIGN, SUPERB LIGHTING, GREAT ACTING!
Yaphet Jackman is a young cinematographer who wants his audience to remember his name. According to him, he is a man on a mission to succeed in creating an institution in Guyana that would teach visual arts, media and film to young aspiring filmmakers. The American-born producer is still pumped from his first big premier with a team of filmmakers that produced CineGuyana - a showcase of short films and documentaries recently unveiled at the Guyana Cultural Association Film Festival, in Brooklyn.

Cultural Association Film Festival, in Brooklyn.

Jackman, who moved to Guyana with his parents to complete his early education, remembers all too well how at the tender age of nine, he was amazed by the graphics he said floated in the air while he watched an HBO movie.

He never really understood the concept at that age, but was however intrigued by the inner-workings of Television and immediately knew he wanted to learn more of what he has seen on the screen.

Becoming a good student was the first step. So when Jackman entered St Joseph’s - one of Guyana’s prestigious high schools, he worked as a freelance cameraman throughout his studies learning techniques from Spotlight Production’s owner, and former CBSTV engineer, Rudy Saul.

His aptitude soon developed to video editing and writing. This landed him a job with Guyenterprise as a studio manager in 2006. But with his drive and determination to become the best at his craft, Jackman learned from various production companies, even moving to St. Vincent, to broaden his creative reach of film making, and the intricacies on how to shape, and visualize a story before bringing it to life.

However he quickly discovered upon his return to Guyana, that jobs were limited in this field, and more so without a degree that would give him the opportunity to later enroll in his dream school - Ohio University.

“Ohio University has the most comprehensive media arts program” said the talented artist adding “This is where I want to complete my Master’s Degree and return to Guyana to create an institution that could properly teach visual arts, as well as media and film”, reiterated Jackman.

Fortunately for the filmmaker, his dream took shape when he enrolled at the University of Guyana. His workshop professor was no other than Guyana-born and current president of GCA, Dr. Vibert Cambridge. The School of Media Arts and Studies Scripps College of Communications, Ohio University, where Dr. Cambridge teaches, was at the time collaborating with the University of Guyana.
YAPHE Jackman  
from page 8  
Tangerine Clarke

However, Jackman was quick to point out that there is no course presently that is geared directly to film, or editing or visual effects. This is where he wants to focus his higher education to give young people like him the opportunity to learn the various aspects of filmmaking.

The twenty-six year old Jackman credits Dr. Paloma Mohamed, Director of Mass Communication at the University of Guyana for making the CineGuyana project possible through President Bharrat Jagdeo’s endowment for the arts.

“She restructured the program to give filmmakers, and budding filmmakers the opportunity to be creative through her workshops, and with expert help from Brian Zahn, an American narrative filmmaker of the Master’s in Fine Arts program, at Ohio University, the group was successful in producing eight powerful films in just four months”, said Jackman.

Zahn, with whom Jackman had produced Pepperpot – a documentary about life in Guyana, worked with Dr. Mohamed, to give Jackman and other students the opportunity to bring the film project to fruition.

He called CineGuyana history making and said the collective effort is a testament to the fact that Guyanese can make a positive impact on the world if they work together.

MASHRAMANI 2012  
GCA BOARD MEMBER, MARGARET LAWRENCE WINS LOGO THEME COMPETITION  
MASHING WITH PRIDE, KEEPING THE TRADITION ALIVE

MASHRAMANI 2012 was formally launched by the Central Mashramani Committee (CMC) on Thursday October 20th. at the Umana Yana in Kingston, with Culture, Youth and Sport Minister Dr. Frank Anthony unveiling an impressive, ‘packed program’ for the upcoming season, and expressing optimism that with continued support, Guyanese will be in for a real treat.

Among the highlight of the launching program was the unveiling of a logo bearing the theme for Mashramani 2012 observances: ‘Mashing with pride; keeping the tradition alive’.

That theme was the winning entry of several submitted, and was the work of communication icon and board member of the Guyana Cultural Association of New York Ms. Margaret Lawrence, who won herself a substantial cash prize of $50,000.

As head of the CMC, Dr. Anthony detailed activities planned for the season, and gave a vivid update on Mashra- 
amani 2012 events.

There was also a structured entertainment segment which featured Mash-winning entries from the 2011 Chutney, Road March, and Health Songs’ composers. GCA 2010 awardee Ms. Tennecia De Freitas, who last year won the Health Songs’ component of the celebrations, has something good for the crowd, as she makes another admonition in support of healthful living and healthy lifestyles. The Health Ministry has also indicated that it will continue to sponsor the Health Song competition.

continued on following page
Dr. Anthony said that, for 2012, some of the traditional elements and new approaches will be incorporated with the aim of drawing on the strengths of 2011 and making 2012 really better.

**Masquerade**

The minister announced that the competitions for 2012 will include the Chutney, Calypso and Health Song as in 2011; the Masquerade Band competition; Steel Band competition; the Light Up and Bright Up Guyana competition, and the main Mashramani event – the Costume Bands and Float Parade.

Meanwhile, the Culture, Youth and Sport Ministry is working feverishly on the reintroduction of the Masquerade Band competition and the Steel Pan competition, and is confident that these competitions will come on stream for 2012.

Assuring that there will be a Masquerade Band competition in 2012, Dr. Anthony called for a resurgence of the art form, and observed that in recent years the masquerade band has been moving into a state of decline.

Said Dr. Anthony: “This year (2012), we will have a Masquerade Band competition; and this is something we are very serious about, because we do not want this art form, which is firmly rooted in the Guyanese culture and history, to disappear.”

**National School of Dance**

He said that the National School of Dance would be working with other stakeholders to ensure there is a competition in 2012.

Meanwhile, commenting on the Chutney competition, the culture minister disclosed that there is some collaboration with Trinidad and Tobago in having the three top Chutney finalists travel to the twin-island republic to develop their Chutney skills in this regard. This idea began last year when one person visited and participated in the Trinidad Chutney Competition.

On the educational aspect of Mashramani, Permanent Secretary of the Culture Ministry, Alfred King, said that the ministry has in place systems whereby prominent Guyanese residing abroad can visit Guyana during Mashramani and participate in the national Mashramani Exhibition. Last year, Dr. Vibert Cambridge, president of the Guyana Cultural Association of NY visited and did a lecture which addressed musical development in Guyana. For 2012, it is anticipated that Professor John Rickford will be the special guest. Such presentations will be documented and distributed locally to benefit Guyanese nationals.

Among the distinguished gathering at the launch of Mashramani 2012 were Prime Minister Samuel Hinds; members of the diplomatic corps, some ministers of government, and designers of costume bands, among others.

by Shirley Thomas

Guyana Chronicle
November is the harvest month when ripened crops are gathered after a fruitful season. In Guyana and the Caribbean we looked forward to the reaping and eating accompanied by receiving, giving and sharing. This generosity was not limited to immediate family members but also extended to friends and even foes. Sharing with foes brought about reconciliation.

In our culture we as a family instilled or planted the seed of knowledge and education in our children at a very tender age. This process, once watered and nurtured, produced well educated and skilled products in time of harvesting.

Thanksgiving in the US has always been one of my favorite holidays. The story of the Pilgrims and the life-giving generosity of American Indians inspired us at the Guyana Cultural Association to continue planting seeds and harvesting the bounty.

While much of the focus is on turkey and pumpkin pie, thanksgiving is about giving and thanking – expressing gratitude for the gifts of God and the need to dedicate ourselves to serving and providing others who are less fortunate or underprivileged.

It has been 10 long years for the Guyana Cultural Association. We experienced our fair share of financial crisis, but we are not alone in this respect as the global economic downturn slammed many organizations. However, we managed to overcome and we are thankful for our blessings.

I was inspired to write this article after a recent email circulated by our secretary Dr. Juliet Emanuel urging us to:

Keep watch dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep.

Tend the sick, give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for Your love’s sake.

Amen.

We seize the opportunity to express our thanks to God for all of the blessings He has bestowed on us. First, we remember what it means to offer thanks. When things are going badly, we usually remember to ask God to make things better. But when things are going well, we tend to forget that God is the source of all of our harvesting and blessings.

If your family isn’t in the habit of giving thanks before and after meals, there’s no better time to start than at Thanksgiving as we remember those who are not so privileged.

Despite all the odds and barriers GCA encountered over our past 10 years, from our health challenges to tempers that flared, we emerged from our first decade with a grateful heart.

We are especially thankful to all our sponsors, advertisers, promoters, support groups in every category and board members past and present. We say “A Heartfelt Thanks.”

A Very Happy Thanksgiving to “All Bady, Waan Bady.”
He is Guyana’s most prolific living composer. In 2006, a list of his printed compositions totaled 280. Hugh Sam has composed in many styles but the undying source of his inspiration is Guyana's folk music. According to a 2004 biography, Hugh Sam began his music education in British Guiana studying piano and theory under Millicent Joseph and Berle Marshall. As a youth, he was a popular performer at Sunday afternoon concerts and was able to rub shoulders with icons of the period. For example, in 1949, he performed in a concert held at St. James-the-Less that featured Randolph Profitt, Iris Grimes, J. L. Sam, V. Fontanelle, and the B. G. Militia Apprentice Band conducted by Warrant Officer Harry Mayers. Over time, Hugh Sam emphasized composition and wrote the music for pioneering Guyanese musicals such as Stabroek Fantasy and Amalivaca. His compositional breakthrough came in 1958 with his Fantasia on Three B.G. Folksongs. This composition—based on Sitira Gal, Timber Man, and Itanami—won the music competition organized for the first Guyanese History and Arts Week. The winning composition was performed at the pioneering event — “A Concert of Guianese Music,” organized by the British Guiana Music Teachers’ Association on October 24, 1958. Hugh Sam’s composition and the context of its first public performance occurred at a pivotal moment in Guyanese cultural and political development. The slogan for the inaugural History and Arts week was “One People, One Nation, One Destiny”—which eventually became Guyana’s motto. The concert of purely Guyanese music was a rare event and represented a moment of pride in things Guyanese. Hugh Sam was also engaged with a number of important Guyanese musical ensembles before leaving to study music in the U.K. and the U.S. He served as musical director of the Guyana Police Male Voice Choir during its Expo 67 tour. He was musical arranger for “two Guyanese steel bands, Symphonia and Invaders,” and he recorded a jazz album, A Saxful of Harry, with “the late Guyanese saxophonist [and GCA 2011 Lifetime Achievement Awardee] Harry Whitaker. Hugh Sam studied piano and harmony at the Guildhall School of Music in London and the Manhattan School of Music in New York. He has spent the past four decades teaching at the Turtle Bay Music School and the Third Street Music School. Composition has continued to be Hugh Sam’s passion and folk his muse. His compositions have been inspired by the melodies of Guyanese, Barbadian, Jamaican, and Trinidadian folksongs. In doing this, he has joined Bartok, Chopin, Dvorak, Smetana, and other composers in recognizing and celebrating the folk music of their heritage. One of the pieces Hugh Sam presented at his performance on Friday, October 28, 2011 was Fantasia on Three Guyanese Folksongs.

©Vibert Cambridge, November 3, 2011
HUGH SAM

His compositions have been inspired by the melodies of Guyanese, Barbadian, Jamaican and Trinidadian folksongs. He wrote the music for pioneering Guyanese musicals such as Stabroek Fantasy and Amalivaca.
There was a two-storeyed house about 100 yards from the East Coast highway at Belfield. It was empty. No one lived in it for over ten years. Everyone in the village believed that it was haunted.

It was Monday, October 31. School was closed for a week. School friends Ewart Forsythe, Moonair Khan, Rosemarie Chin and Myrtle Van Sluytman decided to visit the haunted house that night to find out if it was really haunted.

It was eight o’clock and the four met outside the pop soda factory along the line road and the Highway.

Holding hands in the dark of the night, they walked the short distance to the haunted house. Moonair opened the latch that held the two sides of the gate together.

Loud squeaks greeted them as Ewart push the two sides of the gate open. They cringed. In the burial ground nearby, a jumbie bird screamed “Who you? Who you? Who you?”

Its terrifying shriek forced the quartet to hold hands tighter. Perspiration ran down their faces in the warm night. Their knees shook.

Silence reigned. Only the sounds of the waves of the ocean lashing against the sea wall disturbed the night. The walked along the narrow grass and weed-filled pathway to the front door of the house.

A crapaud jumped from the pathway and hit Myrtle on her chest. She screamed. Moonair put his hand over her mouth.

The four enter the house and were in the large living room. Eerie, weird, ear-splitting screams followed their entry.

Rosemarie knees gave way. She fell to the floor dragging the rest with her. They fell on their backs.

The rays of the full moon lent light to the interior. The four looked at the walls as they lay on the ground and saw thick, red blood trickling slowly down them. They all shrieked. Suddenly, the room they were in was shrouded in darkness.

THE OLE HIGUE OF BELFIELD

by Peter Halder

Walking ever more closely together, they reached the rickety wooden stairway.

They climbed the steps one by one, testing each before stepping on it.

A circle of light flashed across them on the stairway.

“Oh my God,” said Rosemarie in a loud voice.

“Shhh,” whispered Ewart, “that was only a flash from the headlight of a car driving along the Highway.”

They reached the landing and pushed the door. A huge gust of wind from the seawall blew the door wide open. It crashed against the wall with a loud bang.

Looking up instead of sideways at the walls, they all saw a dark shape descending.

The rays of the moon flooded the room once more.

They could make out what appeared to be an apparition descending slowly on them.

It had on a black straw tophat, a black dress with long sleeves and white yachting shoes. Two ruby-red eyes stared at the four. Around its mouth was splatters of blood. It was a female. She had a long thin bony nose, thin evil lips and a long pointed chin.
She smiled showing sets of long pointed teeth. Her fingernails were long and curved. She grinned as she descended, red blood dripping from her teeth. “The devil take me,” shouted Rosemarie fearfully, “it’s an old higue. The blood on her face and teeth proves it. What’s going to happen to us.” “Woe is me,” screamed Myrtle, “I should have stayed in Pomeroon.”

“Shaitan, Shaitan,” shouted Moonair, “go away and leave us alone.”

Ewart, while staring at the wall, had noticed a long tamarind whip on it. Throwing caution to the wind, he freed himself, jumped up and ran to the wall. He grabbed the tamarind whip from it and shouted to his friends, “Quick, get out of the way.”

Then exerting all his strength, he began plying the whip against the body of the Old Higue. With every lash of the whip, she screamed. Chastized by the power in the tamarind whip, the evil being screamed and flew upstairs.

The quartet wasted no time. They stood up and made a bolt for the door. Soon they were back on the line road and headed home.

They later found out that an Old Higue, a woman that sucks blood lived in the haunted house.

Using words of solace to comfort relatives of the Jonestown mass suicide that occurred on November 18, thirty-three years ago, Ambassador Bayney Karran spoke of the trauma and emotional suffering and stigmatism that innocent victims and their families endured.

Karran who mourned the loss of the 918 of mostly American soles said inspire of the disturbing nature of the occurrences that fateful day, the friendly relations between the people of Guyana and the people of the United States remain.

The message by Karran that honored the former members of the People’s Temple during a memorial dedication service in Oakland California on May 9, 2011, spoke of the great anguish and the loss of so many lives, and the feelings of sympathy for the victims that had swept across the nation of Guyana on that very sad day.

“I have come here to reiterate those condolences, said Karran adding “I join you in the expectations that the Memorial which you are dedicating would provide the measure of closure and catharsis for those who continue to be victimizes, as well as to help erase the undeserved stigma which many of you, just like the people of Guyana, have endured for these past thirty-three years.

The Oakland, California site become a shrine where 409 of the victims are buried and where an annual service is held. Today a $45,000 memorial of four granite plaques pay tribute to the victims in the Evergreen cemetery.

The court finally cleared the construction of the memorial, which was embroiled in controversy because of the addition of the Reverend Jim Jones’ name the former head of the People’s Temple.

The Rev. Jynona Norwood, the senior pastor of the Family Christian Cathedral in Inglewood—who lost 27 family members, including her mother, in the mass suicide and who organize the annual memorial services— had filed a lawsuit against the cemetery alleging that it had reneged on a commitment to have her install her own memorial there with the omission of Jones’ name.

However, Jim Jones junior, the son of Jim Jones, an African American, said that his father should not be blamed for the mass suicide and won the right to finally honor the victims with the monument.
On this the 33rd anniversary of the People's Temple tragedy in Guyana, I reflect on dimensions of that unconscionable disaster. The story of The People's Temple symbolizes (a) the fallibility of persons whose path to the 'American Dream' has been frustrated, because of their ethnicity or economic hardship and (b) developing nations' vulnerability to sundry international influences as they struggle to stymie conditions of poverty. The choices made by victims of discrimination and injustice, vary from complacency to desperate group action, the latter characterizing the genesis of Jonestown.

This unprecedented event on November 18, 1978, in which more than 900 lives were lost, occurred after members of a religious cult settlement, drank cyanide-laced Kool-Aid. Reportedly a significant number of the dead were African Americans, and about a third of them children. Led by a controversial religious character, Jim Jones, it is believed that some of the members were shot as they attempted to escape.

Lest we forget, that event set off an international fervor, eliciting conversations about cults, the role of religion and politics in violence, terrorism and racism. There have been lingering questions about the surreptitious nature of Jonestown, and benefits incurred by officials from Guyana and the United States. Unfortunately, the tragedy was for many North Americans their “introduction” to the nation of Guyana. This article examines the nature of a community development project gone awry and the psychosocial impact on marginalized people.

The actions of a megalomaniac, group dependency and experimentation in nation building characterized the Jonestown experience. It was the brainchild of an idealistic foreigner, who was initially supported by officials in the United States, and encouraged by the ideals of postcolonial nation building.

Determined to implement its hinterland expansion program, and to overcome resistance to efforts at resettlement, the government offered resources for hinterland development, including in its policy the invitation to foreigners to settle in the interior. A group of Americans were encouraged to established residence in the interior in 1974. Virtually unknown to most Guyanese, Jonestown became the most advanced community in Guyana. It is believed that the group was given free reign to the interior because of the Guyana-Venezuela bordering dispute. Jonestown provided an American presence that Venezuela would presumably dared not penetrate. This surrealistic community was viewed as a prototype, representing the sort of activity instrumental in the transition to ‘cooperative socialism.’ In retrospect, it was doomed to failure. At a time when Guyana was experiencing shortages of basic commodities, Jonestown residents enjoyed special privileges, and had access to resources restricted from distribution within that society. Not only was the CIA and American embassy more informed about People's Temple than did local military officials, but the latter were ostensibly prevented from investigating that ‘isolated community’.

Jones misled his followers by promising to take care of their basic needs. It was an experiment in human organization, involving a people searching for a better life and enticed by officials of a state struggling to conquer the problems of underdevelopment. Many members believed that they could create a community free from the problems encountered at home. Although this north-south migration deviated from contemporary immigration patterns, like immigrants today, participants were after an elusive “dream.”

Religion was used for preliminary indoctrination, and control, sustained by harsh discipline reminiscent of the slave plantation centuries earlier. Not only were members encouraged to develop other worldly expectations, but to expect a utopia—a place free from the prejudices and other social ills in the United States. Held against their will, many of the residents were likely suffering from serious mental health maladies.

The People's Temple debacle emerged from three divergent motivations: the Jonestown residents' desire to create a better world, government's plan to develop the interior, and Jones' determination to establish a power base away from US soil. What started out as a utopian experiment in community building, ended up an improbable venture, embarrassing to unsuspecting Guyanese, and a deadly alternative for hundreds of disenchanted African-Americans and others, who are often blamed for their own victimization. Ironically, a recent proposal to make Jonestown a tourist attraction capitalizes on an unprecedented, transnational man-made disaster and submits to human curiosity.

Thirty-three years later, there are worldwide movements seeking alternatives, desperately embracing democratic changes. Hopefully, similarly tragedies will not be repeated. We shall never forget, but must overcome our differences as an ingredient for social justice and sustainability.
ST. STEPHEN’S LUTHERAN CHURCH
FALL BREAKFAST
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2011
St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church
2806 Newkirk Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11226
TIME: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
DONATION:
ADULTS: $20.00
KIDS UNDER 12 - $10.00
For further information, please contact:
Audrey Charles, Juliet Elcock,
Margaret Hunter, Mary Kendall,
Mazie Kienemund, Sharon McKenzie, Courtney Parris
For further information, please call: 347-247-0001

ATLANTIS CRICKET CLUB
Honoring former Trinidad & Tobago and West Indies Test Cricketer Gus Logie
2011 AWARDS DINNER & DANCE
SATURDAY, NOV. 12, 2011
UNION TEMPLE OF BROOKLYN,
GRAND BALLROOM
17 Eastern Parkway @ Grand Army Plaza

LINDEN FUND USA
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2011
HAMPTON INN
SOUTH PLAINFIELD,
205 New World Way,
South Plainfield, NJ,
07080.
9.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.
To register, or for additional information please contact LFU NJ Chapter designee Charmin Critchlow, at 908-432-2478 or by email charmcritchlow@yahoo.com. In addition you may contact LFU Secretary, Linda Felix-Johnson at 917-723-2798, or by e-mail at lfelix21@aol.com and lfu_secretary@lindenfund.org.

GARY GIRDHARI PRESENTATION OF NEW BOOK
“If Only The Gods Were AWAKE”
A POETRY COLLECTION
THURSDAY,
NOVEMBER 10, 2011
4.30 P.M.
QUEENS LIBRARY
at Lefferts, 103-34 Lefferts Blvd, Richmond Hill, NY 11419

NATIONAL SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA
CREOLE SONG & DANCE FEATURING WINSTON “Jeggae” HOPPIE & HILTON HEMERDING
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2011
9.00 P.M.
ST. GABRIEL’S CHURCH AUDITORIUM
331 Hawthorne Street,
Brooklyn
ADMISSION: $20.00
Includes Creole Dish
Cash Bar

GUYANESE CANADIAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF B.C.
Fort Langley’s Douglas Day Celebration (The Caribbean Comes to British Columbia)
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2011
12.00 - 15.00 HOURS
HISTORIC SITE
FORT LANGLEY
23433 Mavis Avenue
LAUNCH OF A NEW DIMENSION TO THE GCA NEWSLETTER

WE PLAN TO NOT ONLY ANNOUNCE NEW PUBLICATIONS (BOOKS, MUSIC, FILMS, ETC.) BUT ALSO OFFER IN-DEPTH REVIEWS

C. NADYA AGARD
THE STORM WITHIN:
An Anthology.
Xlibris, 2011.
Available at Amazon.com

PERCY HAYNES.
BEYOND BOURDA GREEN.

BARBARA P. JOSIAH.
MIGRATION, MINING, AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA: Guyana in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.

RAJIV MOHABIR.
NA MASH ME BONE.

RAJIV MOHABIR.
NA BAD-EYE ME.

YVONNE MCALLUM-PETERS
GREENER PASTURE

YVONNE MCALLUM-PETERS
A MOSAIC OF MY TIME

NOEL COMPTON BACCHUS
WHERE CRIES THE KISKADEE
Ingrid Walter Campbell  
**Battle with God**

This 94 page book, was easy reading for me. It is divided into three sections; "Battle with God", "Battle with Myself" and "To God be the Glory". In the first section, "Battle with God", Campbell relates a number of incidents when she spoke to God and made direct demands of Him and the results she received. She also relates the many vivid dreams which she had and how she was guided by the events which she had experienced in those dreams.

In the second section of the book, "Battle with Myself", Campbell shares with her readers, a number of personal challenges which she faced after she returned to New York from a visit to 'Barova' (the name she calls Guyana) and the men in her life. The reader would be left with no doubt that she is a strong highly educated woman who, though falling deeply in love from time to time, is never afraid to go it alone. She also records the way she felt about "The Church" and the controversy when the first lesbian bishop was elected some years ago. She plunged headlong into the controversy on the side of those who were against that bold move by the church. However, she states in the book, "some of my best friends are gay".

Goddfrey Wray  
**Beyond Revenge**

Beyond Revenge is an action-packed 194 page novel with an unusual heroine. Ruth Elizabeth Ferreira is the daughter of an Amerindian mother and an absentee European father. She grew up at Mabaruma in the North West District of Guyana in a semi-jungle riverain community, which is steeped in Catholicism. The dear Irish Jesuit priest, Fr. Clement O'Hara, took the place of her absent father and taught her all she needed to know about spiritual and moral values. When Ruth joined the Guyana Defense Force she quickly climbed the ladder of seniority to the rank of captain. She also became an expert in the martial arts, which was her major means of avenging her numerous enemies. With her strong foundations she was well prepared for the challenges in the wider world, many of them unexpected.

Among the disappointments experienced by Ruth, was when she realized that the man she loved dearly, a senior Officer in the Guyana Defense Force, had sent her on a mission of death in the metropolis of New York City. In this novel Godfrey Wray takes the reader on an intricate tale of faith and favour, death and desire, greed and glory. His heroine Ruth Elizabeth Ferreira, stops at nothing and removes every obstacle as she demolishes everything in her path to atisfy her urge to deal with those who done her wrong, even going "beyond revenge".

Coleen Braithwaite  
**At Your Service**

makes no error with its title. An unabashed double-entendre story of a Flight Attendant and the man of her dreams who is a dedicated and disciplined officer in the United States Marshals Service. They meet on a commercial jet airliner on a flight thousands of feet in the air. Later, their every sexual encounter takes them to even higher altitudes; and their 'in-flights' were many in this 249 page racy novel. Every detail of sexual encounters are told in 'sexciting' detail, from the woman's perspective. The action involving the heroine and the bad guys are also told in such detail that it can keep the reader transfixed from page to page. While the hero teaches his lover how to use a fire arm to the maximum, she in turn, guides him along the intricacies of blissful love making. The action of this novel is set primarily in Las Vegas, New York City, Atlanta and over 30,000 feet above mainland United States of America. It concludes on the ground with a planned wedding.
PURCHASE YOUR COPY

GUYANA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK INC.
10TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EDITION

GuyFolk Magazine

$8.00
Includes S&H

EXCITING ARTICLES ABOUT
GUYANA’S HISTORY & CULTURAL HERIATAGE

DVD
MASTER WORKS/RECENT WORKS

DONALD LOCKE
TALKS ABOUT HIS LARGE SCALE DRAWINGS AND MIXED MEDIA SCULPTURE

$20.00

TO ORDER:
718 209 5207
IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 2: GCA Moving Forward... from the President of GCA
PAGE 4: Happy Diwali
PAGE 6: GCA 2011 season ends with production of “Minty Alley”
PAGE 8: Yaphet Jackman, cinematographer
PAGE 11: Harvesting and Thanksgiving
PAGE 13: Hugh Sam, Guyana most prolific living composer

Editor-in-Chief - Tangerine Clarke
Copy Editors- Edgar Henry, Lear Matthews

Layout and Design by Ashton Franklin & Claire A. Goring