

GUYANA FOLK

And Culture

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GUYANA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK, INC.

SHARING, THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS



GCA SUMMER HERITAGE WORKSHOP STUDENTS AT GCA CHRISTMAS TOY GIVE-AWAY

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Here we are, at the end of another successful year, and in anticipation of a New Year with a smorgasbord of activity and celebration. Fifty years of Independence, fifteen years as an organization, and yes, We Bridgin' – with a healthy resolve to fulfill the promise of development of cultural mores that are indigenous to the six races. 2016: a year and a season filled with all the ingredients needed to mould and shape our purpose. The mission statement holds true: we are defining our true selves and reinforcing those aspects of Guyanese culture, which would otherwise remain dormant or inhibited.

As promoters of our culture, we stand at the helm of Change. As an organization, we bring to the public forum and reward those talents, skills, and accomplishments of deserving Guyanese. The annual Awards Ceremony seeks to showcase this; still, the Summer Heritage Camp, Folk Festival, Kwe-Kwe, Masquerade, any and all of these events serve the purpose of education and/or cultural enlightenment to both Guyanese and non-Guyanese. The fabric that we began weaving as we launched project “We Bridgin’”, is almost complete with its vibrant colors of hope and promise. In another twelve months, GCA hopes to accomplish our goal of partnering with global Guyanese communities, in bringing culture to the forefront, as expressed by Dr. Vibert Cambridge. Of especial concentration is the intention to cement the rehabilitation of Masquerade as a national art form. As we intensify our research on the history of indigenous cultures, we anticipate that information garnered from those questions posed at our annual Symposia: “Who are we” and “How can we get along”, will provide a worthy sounding board to jumpstart future resolve.

2015 saw the winds of Change take full effect. A change of leadership in Guyana brought with it an energy that was almost palpable, reigniting the flames of national pride. We acknowledged the election in November, of Guyanese Roxanne Persaud as State Senator in the 19th District in New York. And woven into the “fabric” was the launch of the Guyana Arts and Cultural Center, a compendium of art, music, dance, media, and design, to name a few, all necessary components that will enhance and showcase our rich heritage and talents. We extend our gratitude to Claire Goring and other members whose indefatigable efforts enabled the culmination of this project.

As an organization, we represented in various events. Of note this past year were two Masquerade performances in Brooklyn. The International Day of Friendship, and the Brooklyn Arts Council’s “Folk Feet in the Street” which was a joining of our Masquerade Dance Troupe with Troupe Zitwal of Haiti.

Our members continue to be recognized for their illustrious work within and around the Diaspora. Congratulations are in order for Pat Jordan-Langford, newly-elected Ambassador of Brooklyn by Borough President, Eric Adams. Claire Patterson-Monah, recipient of the Caribbean Heritage Award for service to the community. Verna Walcott-White recipient of The Golden Arrowhead Of Distinction Award. Dr. Vibert Cambridge’s authorship of Musical Life in Guyana which was published in June and launched at September’s Literary Hang.

As the year comes to a close, The Guyana Cultural Association wishes you a happy, healthy, and safe New Year. Let us continue to be mindful of the meaning of this special holiday. As Calvin Coolidge, 30th President of the United States expressed:

Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas.

Or stated in “Caribbean-ese” by the Merry-men of Barbados:

Oh tell me I’ve a feeling, why can’t this Christmas feeling,
 Exist among all people thru’ the year.

Thanks to all for your continued support. 2016 is laden with promise. Let’s share in the excitement.

Gail Nunes
 December Editor

CONGRATULATIONS
LISA PUNCH
BEAUTY WITH A PURPOSE
Miss World 2015

TALENT WINNER
IN TOP 5 MULTIMEDIA
TOP 10 FINALIST

TOP 10 - BEAUTY WITH
A PURPOSE.
FEATURED SINGER
AT MISS WORLD
FINALS



Guyana's

Lisa Punch

was unforgettable

Mondale Smith

Thank you very much for the overwhelming love and support that you have shown me throughout my Miss World Guyana journey and I do hope that you continue to support us as we continue to represent Guyana as ambassadors on the world stage. I love you guys.

“Oh my God; Top ten.” That is the video message that Miss Guyana World Lisa Punch posted following the conclusion of the Miss World Pageant in Sanya, China.

Miss Spain ultimately won the Miss World crown but the name of Guyanese Lisa Punch is now on the lips of at least one billion the world over in a celebrated, positive light.

This Guyanese beauty, aged just 23, is the first Guyanese to win the talent segment of the pageant. She also placed among the top ten of the Miss World finalists and also in the top ten of the Beauty with a Purpose project from a field of more than 100 world beauties.

However, the one time Charlotte Street beauty will ultimately be remembered for wowing billions on live television with her vocal abilities.

The Miss Guyana and Miss World Top 10 Finalist and Talent winner, Lisa Punch, sang at the Miss World pageant during the live broadcast performing twice during the live television broadcast which was seen by over one billion people worldwide.

She sang her original song “One last time” in the first part of the show then belted out an Alicia Keys hit “If I ain’t got you” in the second part as part of the Miss World finals in Sanya, China.

Best talent at Miss World 2015

One of the most anticipated, emotional, and truly spectacular nights of Miss World, was the Talent Fast Track Competition, at the Beauty Crown Theatre and singer-songwriter, Lisa Punch of Guyana, came out on top as the Miss World 2015 Talent Fast Track Winner!

“She is going to fly the Guyana flag anywhere she goes and for that she is a star on the rise.”

Mondale Smith

After singing an original song, titled ‘One Last Time’, penned in tribute to her deceased cousin, who was the first person in her life to envision and encourage her prospering singing career, Miss Guyana received a standing ovation from her fellow contestants and the crowd, who were left teary-eyed and spellbound by her flawless voice, captivating delivery, and emotional lyrics. After her victory was announced, Miss Guyana, fighting back tears, said to the crowd,

“This victory means everything to me. This proves that my cousin was right, and I thank him and everyone in the audience for making my dream come true.”

“‘One Last Time’ is a song that I wrote a couple of years ago for my cousin, Samuel, who died. He was the first person to tell me I was going to make it big and would be the first person to purchase my CD.

“I wanted to perform it tonight because Miss World is the biggest platform in the world that showcases talent and I knew that this would be the perfect opportunity to pay tribute to the first person that believed in me.

“Even though he is gone, I want him to know that I am still continuing doing what he inspired me to do in the first place.”

A shining star on the rise

This outstanding Guyanese youth is a product of young teenaged love that involved Nafeza Daniels. Lisa Mary Johanna Punch’s road to popularity started with her winning the Star Guyana in 2006/2007 belting out Whitney Houston’s version of ‘I’ll always Love you.’

She became the vocal sweetheart of many as she went on to graduate as a student of excellence in 2009 from North Georgetown Secondary. Then she studied Communication and Law at the Bishops High school in 2010 before she ultimately got into the media.

Her first taste of media was as a co-host of the Hard Vibes all girls talk show on Channel 2. She then became a full time announcer at NCN from 2011 up to 2013. She also did some airtime at Hits and Jams. All along she was singing and recording music with Brutal Traxx studios and then DP records.

Lisa then made appearances practically on every stage and at almost every major as well as minor forum doing what she loves (singing).

It was no wonder that her voice was the chosen one to deliver the CARIFESTA theme song when her native land last hosted the mega regional event. Lisa is one of the outstanding young Guyanese who has traveled the

road. She had many ups and down; her family struggled to make ends meet but she always managed a smile that often turned the sad world upside down for many.

She produced songs such as ‘Secret Admirer’ and her tribute to her mother, ‘Oh mamma’ amongst others. However her tool to winning the Miss World talent was her original song titled, ‘One Last Time’ done in tribute to her cousin that left many in China and around the world with watery eyes.

Punch who dubs herself a go getter after migrating from a cramped up apartment in Charlotte Street, Georgetown to the USA almost immediately swung into gear and ended up acing a bartender’s course.

What makes her even more special is the fact that she knows what she wants and does what she needs to do to get it.

That attitude landed her in the amateur night at the Apollo in the USA after braving the rains. She made it to round two but because of an offer to be on the world renowned ABC Rising Star competition in 2014 she had to shelve the Apollo competition.

Because of Lisa’s enviable persistence the world heard of some of the realities of Guyana and while some had issues with how she portrayed her homeland it was her reality that saw even her haters warming up to her.

Lisa’s power punch caught the attention of international weatherman, Al Roker, and he too rooted for this Guyanese turned Brooklyn girl.

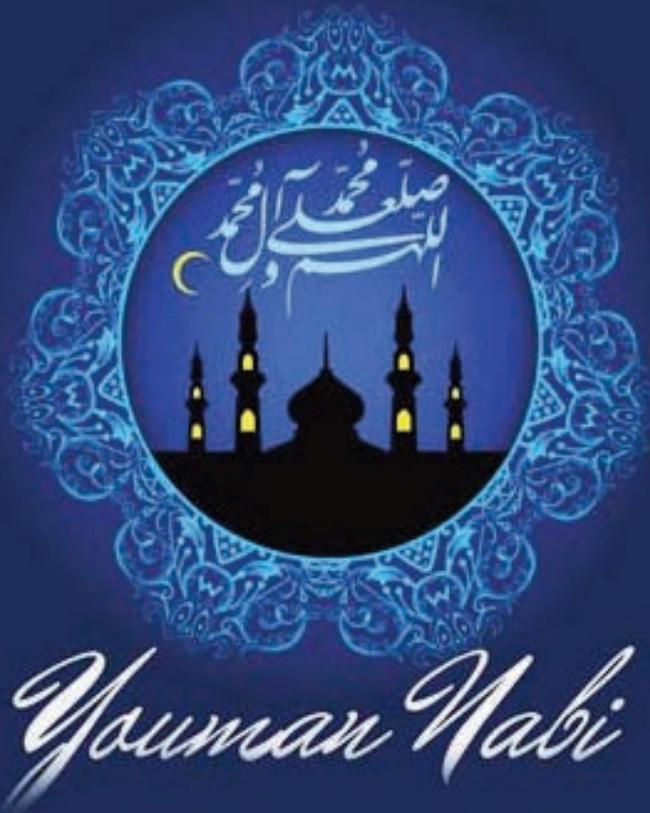
Ultimately she was knocked out after raising the wall and caused some amount of unity amongst Guyanese who ignored her abilities previously. Even the nation’s then sitting President (Donald Ramotar) celebrated her.

The young lady who left Guyana quietly for a new life in New York came back to much fanfare. Her dad and mother reunited in the USA.

Based on comments that have flooded social media in Guyana, the USA and around the world she is always humble but persistent. “She is going to fly the Guyana flag anywhere she goes and for that she is a star on the rise.”

Lisa, who has an infectious laugh, presents a genuine personality and a voice of gold that will one day land her on top of the world. Already she is on her way.

Her plan for 2015 during a previous interview was to offer a few surprises and music Videos as well as big recording engagements that will see Guyana and the world celebrating Lisa’s every punch.



Youman Nabi serves as a reminder that whatever
trials and tribulations one faces,
the prophet of god faced even greater
and yet he never allowed anger and hatred to determine his actions.

GREETINGS

FROM

THE GUYANA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION
OF NEW YORK, INC.

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MEDICAL & LIVING EXPENSES**

2015
William J. Perry Award
*for Excellence in Security and
Defense Education*



Dr. Ivelaw L. Griffith
HONORED WITH WILLIAM J. PERRY AWARD
FOR EXCELLENCE IN SECURITY
AND DEFENCE EDUCATION

Dr. Ivelaw Griffith Awarded the Prestigious William J. Perry Award

Allison Skeete

The 2015 William J. Perry Award for Excellence in Security and Defense Education recently honored Dr. Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith, one of the world's leading scholars on Caribbean defense and security issues at the National Defense University.

Named after the Center's founder, former U.S. Secretary of Defense Dr. William J. Perry, the Perry Award is presented annually to individuals and institutions making significant contributions in the fields of security and defense education. Awardees are selected for achievements in promoting education, research, and knowledge sharing in defense and security issues in the Western Hemisphere.

Dr. Griffith's has years of service as a scholar, author, and educational leader, his teaching and innovative research have informed a generation of policymakers and practitioners and enabled the advancement of an international and cooperative environment for security among nations throughout the Caribbean Diaspora. Dr. Griffith's selection for this prestigious award was aided by his significant and tangible work at several colleges and universities across the United States where he has

served as Dean, Provost, Senior Vice President, and University President; currently he is a Senior Fellow at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. His scholarly contributions and participation in countless international forums have been instrumental in building many relationships that have further increased democratic security to the Caribbean Diaspora's benefit.

The work contributed by this stellar scholar is, of course, a well-deserved source of pride for his fellow Guyanese, persons throughout the Caribbean as well as in the Diaspora.

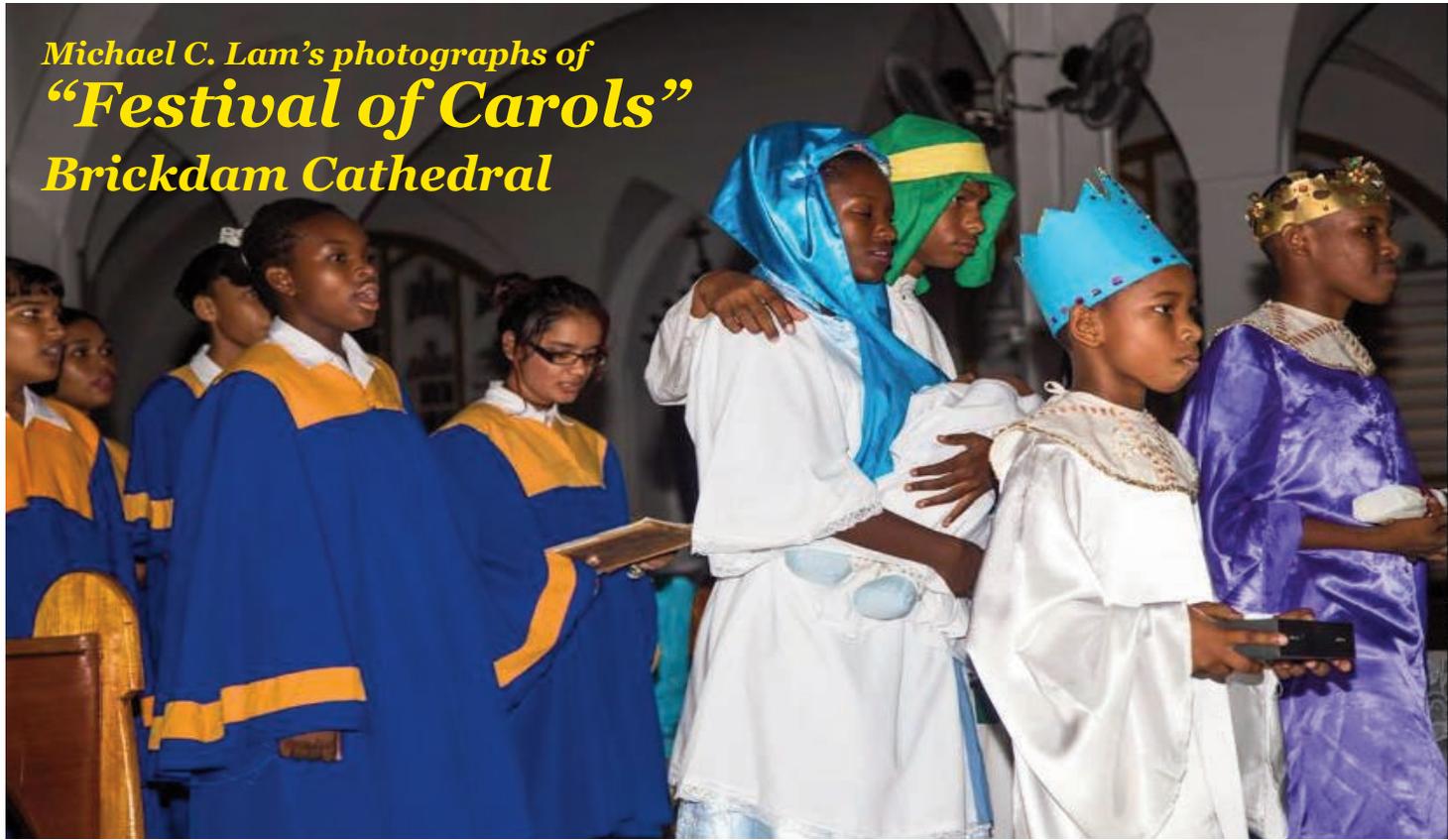
Mr. Sheridan Hill of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, in nominating Dr. Griffith for this award, expressed thanks and admiration for his contributions to Security and Defense Education, which continue to be a source of motivation for his own professional excellence.

Other notable supporters at the event included: Guyana's Ambassador Bayney Karran; Luigi Einaudi former US Ambassador to the Organization of American States; Sherry Tross, Ombudsman of the OAS; UN Assistant Secretary General, Dr. Edward Greene; former ambassador of Jamaica to the United Nations Curtis Ward; Captain Gerald (Gerry) Gouveia, CEO of Roraima Airways Inc.; Dr. John Sumner, Economist; Colonel Darnley E. Wyke, Defense and Military Attaché of Trinidad and Tobago; Hayda Wallen-Jaganath and Sir Ronald Sanders .



CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS IN GUYANA & IN THE DIASPORA

*Michael C. Lam's photographs of
"Festival of Carols"
Brickdam Cathedral*





Marigold Choir



Woodside Choir



Marian Academy Secondary School Choir



Indian dancers from the Indian Cultural Centre



*Dr Jocelyn Loncke at the piano,
with John Loncke on Violin*

HAPPY KWANZAA

Umoja

Unity

Kujichagulia

Self Determination

Ujima

Collective Work & Responsibility

Ujamaa

Cooperative Economics

Nia

Purpose

Kuumba

Creativity

Imani

Faith



GIVING BACK TO OUR COMMUNITY BETERVERWAGTING, GUYANA WITH EDGAR HENRY



KEEPING THE GUYANESE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT ALIVE IN
TORONTO CANADA
WITH JULIO THIJS



GUYANA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK, INC. TOYS FOR OUR SUMMER WORKSHOP STUDENTS

THANK YOU METROPLUS HEALTH PLAN & RONALD McDONALD HOUSE





GUYANA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK, INC.
GCA BOXING DAY HANG
AT NEW GCA SECRETARIAT

*Photographs by Pat Jordon-Langford,
Verna Walcott-White, Gillian Best-Hamilton*





ABOUT THE GUYANA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK, INC.

The Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc. a non-profit 501(c)3 was created in 2001 to document, showcase and celebrate the multiple roots of Guyana’s cultural heritage. Our Mission is to preserve, promote and propagate Guyanese culture. Our Goal is to mentor and inspire young people in the Brooklyn community by supporting education and performance in the creative arts.

Our signature events provide a space to celebrate Guyanese achievement and encourage inter-generational dialogue. Our youth programs inspire creativity, encourage learning and foster cultural understanding.



HELP SHAPE TOMORROW’S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

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Please note "GACC Program" on the memo line of your check.

• Donate online now: guyanaculturalassociation.com/donate

• Or, contact us. We'd love to meet with you or speak with you personally to discuss your gift.



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HELP SHAPE TOMORROW'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

DONATE A SCHOLARSHIP

Most talented young creative person's dream is simple: to be given the opportunity to develop their talent. "Opportunity" means a training program where they can study their craft with dedicated professional coaches who will guide them as they grow.

The GACC Scholarship Fund will fuel these students' dreams, giving exceptional students the opportunity to cultivate their talent and in this way making a lasting impact on these young people. They are our next generation of artists.

The Fund will take both talent and financial need into consideration. Recipients must demonstrate

- Artistic potential
- A passion for the arts and a drive for the pursuit of perfection in all or any one of the programs of GACC
- Promise for further outstanding achievement
- A commitment to "give back" • Financial need

YOUR SPONSORSHIP

- A donation of \$1200 covers the tuition for one year in the form of a scholarship for a talented child in need.
- A donation of \$600 covers tuition for half of the year.
- Any donation amount will make a big difference and will be applied to a full or half year scholarship donation.

TO MAKE A GIFT: Thank you for considering making a gift.

- *Mail your gift to: Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc. 1368 E89 Street, Brooklyn, NY 11236.*

Please note "GACC Scholarship Fund" on the memo line of your check.

- *Donate online now: guyanaculturalassociation.com/donate*
- *Or, contact us. We'd love to meet with you or speak with you personally to discuss your gift.*

Your gift is tax-deductible to the full extent allowable by law, and we will respond to your gift with a receipt for tax purposes.

GIVE A GIFT THAT COUNTS!

Put GACC on your list this Christmas!

Nothing to celebrate?

Dave Martins, Stabroek News

I'm a think-positive guy, not from some Pollyanna position, but largely because that's how my mind works. In every place I've lived I've known people who are perpetual grouchers – every time you meet them, whatever the occasion, immediately after the “hello”, they launch into the latest complaint, the latest project gone wrong, the latest big name caught with his/her hand in the till; the latest political shocker. As a rule, I avoid those people. They come up to me, I know



what's coming, so I find some excuse to move away. Fair enough, we have to be aware of what's going wrong, and I'm willing to give you five minutes or so for that, but pretty soon I want the conversation to move, as the Jamaicans say, “forward, bredrin”. Consequently, in the songs or poems I write, in the plays, in this very column, while I do my share of grouching, most of the time I want the chat to be about ‘forward’ – about repairing, restoring, improving, introducing.

Lately, for example, as various intimations are emerging about plans to celebrate Guyana's 50th year on our own, I find myself taken aback by several comments along the lines of “Celebration? What is there to celebrate? What have we achieved?” I'm not living in a cave; I despair over some of the things before us; just yesterday I drove through Montrose on some of the worst roads I have seen in my life; the word ‘roads’ doesn't fit; what I drove on were passages. It rocked me. But you can't let negativity consume you. If you look at our recent history and say we have nothing to celebrate, you're just looking through one lens.

The moments of light are there. Look through that lens. I look back at Guyana in those socialism years when life was rough. Coming here to play with Tradewinds I saw

the deprivations first-hand – the astonishing sight of empty shelves in grocery stores, and long lines of people, winding round the block, waiting to get their ration of kerosene or gasoline. I remember the Pegasus, our country's top hotel at the time, with toilet paper so scarce they would provide hotel guests with only half a roll when toilet tissue ran out. I remember the various banned items, and how some people with an import licence were getting rich bringing in VCRs which were almost impossible to get here. I knew one guy in West Dem like that; I used to drive by his fancy house with the new car in the driveway.

By the 70s, the taxi bringing me in from the airport had holes in the floor; I could look down and see the road beneath. Essential foodstuff was in short supply. That those days are gone is certainly an advancement; isn't that something to shout about?

Just this week, Ian McDonald has released a new book of poems called ‘River Dancer’. I have followed Ian's writings over the years, and my take on this volume is that it contains examples of his finest work. Trinidadian literary pundit Kenneth Ramchand, who raves about this recent collection, says “the poems are imbued with passing and end of life”, and there is some of that, but for me the book is the careful voice of a man unravelling before us the

strands of a life fully lived. The glories of love and devotion are here; the appreciation for the wonders of nature, in instances of such detail – in one case, a wayward hummingbird – that they stir emotion.

On page after page, Ian reaches into some corner of the lives of Guyanese, showing us the power of the human spirit in ordinary people resulting in extraordinary lives. For me, fresh from my passage through Montrose, Ian's book, which arrived unexpectedly, served to lift the spirit – to celebrate. The thought subsequently came that there are other examples of that lifting that come before us all the time. Indeed some of the very persons making the “nothing to celebrate” assertion – columnists Alan Fenty and Freddie Kissoon come to mind – are themselves examples of value, of achievement, I would point to. That there are such minds among us, constantly writing (Adam Harris, Henry Jeffrey, Ralph Ramkarran, Abu Bakr) and activists the likes of Christopher Ram and Syeada Mandboh (where in God's name do they find the time and energy?) is something to shout about. We have huge problems to fix, some of them approach daunting, many of them propelling us into despair, but it is not all darkness. If we look carefully, there are significant moments of light.

Nothing to celebrate? What about our sports teams successes in rugby, cricket (currently the Jaguars), and squash (Caribbean champions year after year), and, of course, Nicolette Fernandes, Lance Gibbs, Clive Lloyd, Carl Hooper. I remember like yesterday, standing before my TV in the Cayman Islands watching Shiv make his first century in Barbados and him suddenly bending to kiss the pitch. I was alone in the house at the time, but believe you me I was celebrating. Even if you're not a sports fan, you should know the international impact made by that quiet country boy from Unity; some time during the 50th year take a moment to celebrate that achievement.

What I'm attempting to deal with here is a subject that properly requires a properly-researched book – I expect the bloggers will chastise me for examples overlooked – but apart from the bridges over our two major rivers I know I celebrate the end of those days when our roads outside Georgetown were almost totally made of burnt earth. I don't know which was the more taxing consequence – the quagmire in the rainy season, or the dust clouds in the dry.

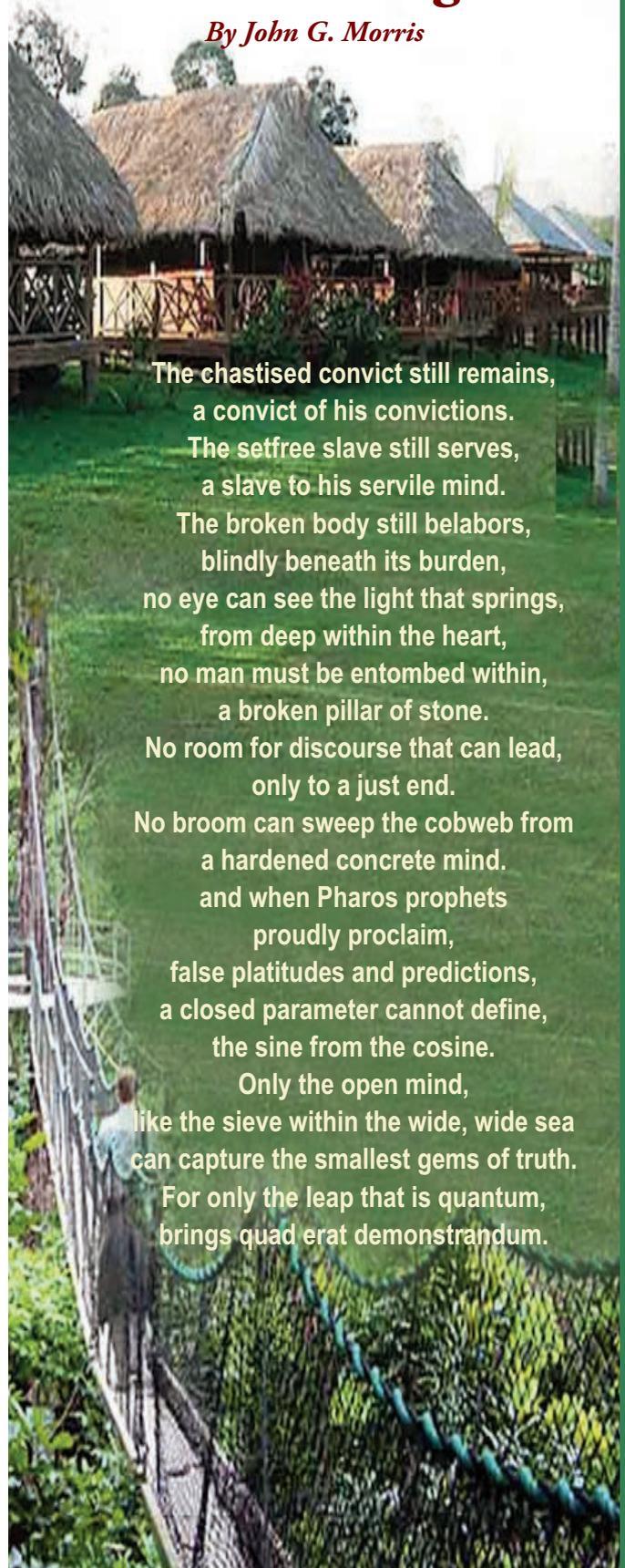
Sitting at the back of the bus on the roads that spiralled out from the Georgetown hub, you would have to brush off the dust when you arrived. I remember meeting my friends who had come up to visit me at Atkinson Field; when my Vreed-en-Hoop pal Jack Henry stepped out I hardly recognized him. Sitting at the back of the bus, his head (he was a coconut oil guy) was completely red from the dust; he looked like he was wearing an expensive hair-piece. In the rainy season, the trip would take 2 hours and there were some bad stretches where vehicle wheels had dug two deep channels in the road bed.

On a trip to town from Atkinson one day we were amused to see, blocking the way ahead, a Citroen motor car, known for its low-slung design, hung up on the hump between the two channels, wheels turning pointlessly in the red slush. I remember the airport road in the '70s with stretches where the potholes were wall-to-wall. One of the Tradewinds guys, a Trini – you know how they are – gleefully hit me with “Which pothole you taking, padna?” No more red-dirt roads is definitely something to celebrate; ask the people who suffered with them.

My exit door is closing, but I must mention the recently-opened Giftland Mall with its high quality stores, modern cinemas, friendly sales people at every turn, copious parking, and – if you've been there, you know – a strikingly clean environment. No dust, no litter, no half-finished counters. If you really feel we have achieved nothing, spend some time at Giftland.

You don't have to spend any money; just look around. You will celebrate.

POETRY

*Small Change**By John G. Morris*

The chastised convict still remains,
a convict of his convictions.
The setfree slave still serves,
a slave to his servile mind.
The broken body still belabors,
blindly beneath its burden,
no eye can see the light that springs,
from deep within the heart,
no man must be entombed within,
a broken pillar of stone.
No room for discourse that can lead,
only to a just end.
No broom can sweep the cobweb from
a hardened concrete mind.
and when Pharos prophets
proudly proclaim,
false platitudes and predictions,
a closed parameter cannot define,
the sine from the cosine.
Only the open mind,
like the sieve within the wide, wide sea
can capture the smallest gems of truth.
For only the leap that is quantum,
brings quad erat demonstrandum.

GUYANESE YOUTH IN ACTION

An odyssey in fashion with designer Delayna Scott

Ariana Gordon

DELAYNA Scott, a 30-year old Guyanese designer living in Botswana continues to proudly fly the Guyana flag.

Migrating in 1999 to Botswana with her mother, Scott knew from an early age that she was talented. She would mirror her mother, who was a part-time seamstress while she lived here.

“As a child, I would look at my mom sew clothes for relatives and friends, and I developed a passion for style and fashion. I always loved dressing up; a fashion statement was always important,” she told the Pepperpot. Before migrating, Scott attended the Stella Maris Primary School and then the St. Joseph High School. She migrated while in the Third Form, but continued her secondary education at Gaborone Senior Secondary School and the New Era English Medium. After completing high school, she read for a Diploma in Graphic Design at Genetics College and a Diploma in Pharmacy Technician from the Penn Foster College and in both instances graduating with distinctions.

With a passion for fashion, Scott enrolled at the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology’s Botswana campus, where she obtained a degree in designing.

A student ambassador for the University, and more so Guyana, Scott said it was her responsibility to ensure that everyone she interacted with knew that she was Guyanese.

“I would tell everyone I meet that I am Guyanese. I would tell them about my beautiful country and our people,” she said via a telephone interview with the Pepperpot.

“My fundamental role as an ambassador was to help prospective students learn more about the University and their programme of choice. I was fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to represent the University at the Swaziland and Lesotho official campus openings, both of which my role was to give a motivational speech to the new students.”

In 2010, she was awarded the best graduating student for her faculty while winning the presidential award certificate.

MODELLING

Scott started modelling in 2000 with a modelling agency called “Newlook Network”. She won best cat-walk model at the South African Modelling convention in 2002; and second runner-up best photographic model.

Scott has done numerous fashion shows in Botswana; music videos for Botswana musicians Apollo Diablo, Mosako, Eureka & Juju Boy.

She has also had appearances on television in 2010, after which she ended her model career to concentrate



on her passion.

Now the owner of Delayna Scott Fashions in Botswana, Scott barely has time for a break, as her clientele is ever increasing.

Her designing career did not begin recently, as she started her own fashion label while at University with a classmate. The label, DelaTash, was a combination of the two designers’ names, Delayna and Natasha. However, due to creative differences and circumstances beyond their control, the two designers parted ways. In 2010, Delayna started her own label, ‘Delayna Scott’. “My designs are for the woman who wants to feel good, loves her body, is comfortable in it, confident and not afraid to explore different styles of designs.”

GUYANESE YOUTH IN ACTION

She admitted that no one thing inspires her. "My inspiration depends on my mood and how I feel at the particular time. I can be inspired by my surroundings, or sometimes simply the personalities of my customers. I first dream it, then I believe it, then achieve it," she explained.

According to Scott, striving to achieve a dream is a process, and it comes with lots of hard work and determination. "From sketching the design, to drafting the pattern, cutting it, seeing it, and the masterpiece is created all by my magical hands," she said with a chuckle.

THE FUTURE

Though a young designer, Scott's aim is to become globally recognised. "I plan to showcase my designs at home; that is in Guyana. I want all Guyana to know about my work. But I also want to globalise my fashion brand," she said.

The **former Costello Housing Scheme resident said, it was also her desire to establish a fashion school in Guyana that could mold future designers. "A fashion school in Guyana can help those desirous of being designers realize their true potential; their dreams will become a reality," she added.

She explained that with her experience, she was sure she could make a positive impact on the lives of future Guyanese designers.

"In this world of many designers it is not easy to make your mark; you need lots of motivation, inspiration and most of all determination. I believe that with the right guidance, young designers can make that mark. I want to see that in Guyana. I want to see more Guyanese designers showcasing their designs; their products."

Challenges

Scott is a firm believer that challenges are a necessary component of success. "In every industry there will be challenges, and sometimes it is more difficult trying to operate a business in a foreign country."

She said, "I am a living testimony of that...being Guyanese and designing in Botswana has not been easy; it was not an easy road to get here but through determination, I managed to rise above my challenges and stay focused."

Today, Scott says she can boast that she has done Guyana proud. "Though I have a long road ahead in my career, I am a proud Guyanese; I am glad that as a Guyanese I can live in another country, despite the odds, and accomplish what I have."

Scott owns her own fashion studio and is classed among the best designers in Botswana. She has designed clothing for many popular personalities in Botswana, South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique.

PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Scott is the recipient of several awards including the overall winner of the Botswana Fashion Week 2011, and Colour Desert Fashion Show 2012. Her designs have also been showcased at Miss Teen Universe Botswana 2013- Best evening gown; Miss Teen Universe International- 2nd. runner-up- Evening Gown worn in Nicaragua, Miss Universe 2013- Evening gown, Miss World Botswana 2013- evening gown, Miss World Supermodel overall winner- Evening gown, and Miss Africa 2015- winner of Best Evening gown. She also designs wedding and bridesmaid dresses.



Twenty-six year old Guyanese-American Ashlee Edwards graduates with a Ph.D in Information Science

Gail Nunes

Congratulations to twenty-six year old Guyanese-American Ashlee Edwards who graduated with a Ph.D in Information Science from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill in December 2015. Ashlee's dissertation covered the use of biometric data to determine possible challenges by individuals with online web search.

Ashlee graduated with highest honors in 2011 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Information Science and a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, from UNC. Her honors thesis examined the use of mobile device tools as search engines. She then continued on to complete her graduate studies there.

Ashlee is the daughter of proud parents Alan and Sheryl Edwards.



Siblings Ima, Asha, and Caleb Christian copped first place at the just concluded 2015 Innovating Justice Challenge award conference at The Hague, Netherlands. The purse was €20,000. The Five-O team entered their police rating and review mobile and web app into the worldwide Innovating Justice competition, and was chosen from among four hundred entrants to pitch their solution to a team of six jurors at the Innovating Justice Challenge conference held at the Peace Palace at the Hague, Netherlands.

Final solutions were judged on uniqueness, scalability, sustainability, and the potential for the solution to be used in other countries around the world. The jurors scored the Five-O solution highly in all areas, and the Five-O team ultimately won the worldwide challenge. Teams from countries as varied as Afghanistan, Brazil, China, Dubai, Germany, India, Israel, Kenya, Poland, and Singapore also competed. During the conference, the Five-O team also benefited from major workshops where industry professionals advised them on ways to increase their customer base, and to make their solution financially sustainable.

“We have experienced several challenges since our initial launch,” said Asha Christian, “but we were determined to continue to push forward. We just didn’t want to give up.” Sibling Caleb Christian said, “The problem of making communities safer for citizens and police has seen no improvement since our launch last year, so we intend to learn from the many mistakes we’ve made and along with the seed funding we’ve received, we are confident that we will be able to create a more compelling platform, which will meet the needs

U.S. Teen app developers score \$20,000 in seed funding to re-launch global police conduct data repository platform

Gail Nunes

of citizens, communities, media and police departments as we all work together to make communities safer for everyone.”

The siblings see themselves as only one small part of a solution which must include community activists, media, local citizens, and police departments all working together to make communities safer, or, as one senior Western law enforcement official told the team, “Make sure everyone goes home at night.” Sibling Ima Christian, a Computer Science Major at Stanford University, added that, “Young people have the power to contribute to change in a major way and must therefore team up to think about solutions for challenges in their communities.”

The Five-O team plans to use the prize funds to redesign the Five-O platform, to reach out to police departments and community activist groups, and for launching local awareness campaigns in five test cities. The team is already fielding requests for the solution in Brazil, Russia, the UK, and South Africa.

From a Press Release by Pinetart, Inc,

The Christians are the children of proud parents Leon Christian and Karen Abrams-Christian of Guyana.

A man in a vibrant purple and gold masquerade costume is smiling broadly. He is wearing a tall, pointed purple hat with gold and red accents. He is holding a purple ribbon in his right hand. The background is a colorful, abstract mural with a yellow face and blue and green patterns.

MASQUERADE
REVIVAL REVISITED:

**PREPARING FOR
GUYANA'S
GOLDEN JUBILEE
CELEBRATION**

Lear Matthews

“Christmas comes but once a year and every man must have his share..... drinkin’ rum and ginger beer”

MASQUERADE REVIVAL REVISITED:

Lear Matthews

In December 2012, this writer participated in the Guyana Cultural Associations’ Symposium, Masquerade Lives, in our homeland. It was a classic example of the transnational connections and cultural retentions about which I often lament. The principal objective of the organizers of this unprecedented event was to resuscitate a traditional creoles art form: Masquerade. The range of topics discussed by panels of international experts in Caribbean and Guyanese folklore, history and culture, and the engagement of elders, inheritors and other enthusiasts, unequivocally articulated a passionate ownership of their craft and place in the cultural history of Guyana. The program was characterized by serious deliberation and en vivo demonstration by enthusiastic practitioners.

Following opening remarks by the then Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, the stage was set for in-depth discussion, dissecting past practices, and illuminating ways to breathe new life into what appears to be a critically wounded traditional custom. Themes varied from the origin of Masquerade to the involvement of the youth; the financial and personal challenges of the performer; the role of women; the fear factor and masks; regional similarities and differences; symbols and their social significance; the spiritual dimension of Masquerade; marketability of a Creole identity; rural vs. urban perceptions; embracing cultural identity and social awareness through masquerade; strategies of promotion; respect for, and acknowledgement of the masquerader; class and ethnic issues; the influence of technology; the need to resist the temptation to abandon “original” practices; and Masquerade beyond Christmas.

One of the highlights was the “Dray Cyart” caravan to the unveiling ceremony of the Masquerade Mural on the grounds of the National Museum. About 25 local and overseas-based symposium participants mounted two flag-draped, horse drawn Dray Cyarts at the Umana Yana under the broiling mid-day sun.

Led by a troop of youthful and elder masqueraders including flouncers, Stilt Dancer, Bam Bam Sally and Bad Cow, we rode down Main Street to the Museum, with feet dangling at the side and flanked by police outriders. Some yielding motorists fretted, while others flashed an accommodating smile. Perhaps they understood what we were trying to do. Downtown had a festive buzz – Masquerade Band comin’.

Onlookers from business establishments and Ministries along the way waved approvingly, while some gyrated to the beat of the drums and nostalgic melody of the flute. News correspondents trotted along, interviewing riders in this historic, native masquerade caravan. Sweating profusely, I opened my umbrella to get some relief from the tropical sun. I was a “small boy” the last time I jumped on a Donkey Cyart and I wasn’t going to miss this nostalgic opportunity for anything. I intermittently exchanged glances with a GCA official, who was holding on for dear life, not only for safety, but as if to symbolically secure her fate in this fleeting moment of reinvigorating a cherished art form.

The unveiling ceremony on the grounds of the National Museum, hosted by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports and the Prime Minister, attracted a diverse group of spectators, briefly distracted from their Christmas shopping. My research interest in public reaction to cultural events led me to become an instant participant-observer, keeping my ears and eyes grounded. One onlooker stated, “Christmas now start fo me, dis is like ol’time”. Another offered, “De days fo masquerade done, Ya’ll only hambugin traffic”. These reactions profoundly summed up the significant crossroads of contemporary masquerade as an indigenous practice, challenged by elements of modernity.

Indeed if masquerade is to be revived, understanding this challenge through the lens of such diametrically opposing views is critical. More importantly as panelists noted, it requires a serious commitment from the government of Guyana to provide support and resources. NGOs and Home town Associations in the Diaspora can also help. In this regard, a number of Masquerade events have been sponsored throughout the Diaspora during the past year.

However, in order to truly revive this art form, the occasional costume events, reminiscent gyaff and accolades must be followed by sustained action. This should involve those who flounce, kettle players and flautists, such as Rudolph “Putagee” Vivierios, who are not just entertainers, but purveyors of a rich unadulterated culture set. Only then the exalted Dray Cyart journey down Main Street with my compatriots on that sunny, Christmas day in December would not have been in vain. The current choreographic training of a new generation of male and female masquerade dancers in Guyana is a promising sign.

Masquerade Lives!
Hopefully, the events planned by the Guyana Cultural Association of New York for the 50th Independence Anniversary Celebration in May 2016 will make this a reality.



Seeing the Natural Guyana

Annette Arjoon-Martins photographer

It is certainly true that for anyone seeking to explore Guyana, whether a resident or a Guyanese from the diaspora or a completely new visitor, that we are fortunate to live in the technological age where a range of information is readily available and often at no cost. This very online magazine is an example of the spread, but as one of the newcomers to this technological time I am learning that there are many spokes to the wheel. I came to the process in stages, moving from a conservationist with a camera, taking photos in my travels around the country for fun. This year, some 10 years after I clicked my first shutter, in another stage of the learning, many of those images are finding a home in a Facebook venture I started with my husband, Dave Martins of the Tradewinds, to offer those images to all those would-be Guyanese explorers, on a site called Annette & Dave Martins: “Is We Own”, the reference being to one of Dave’s popular songs.

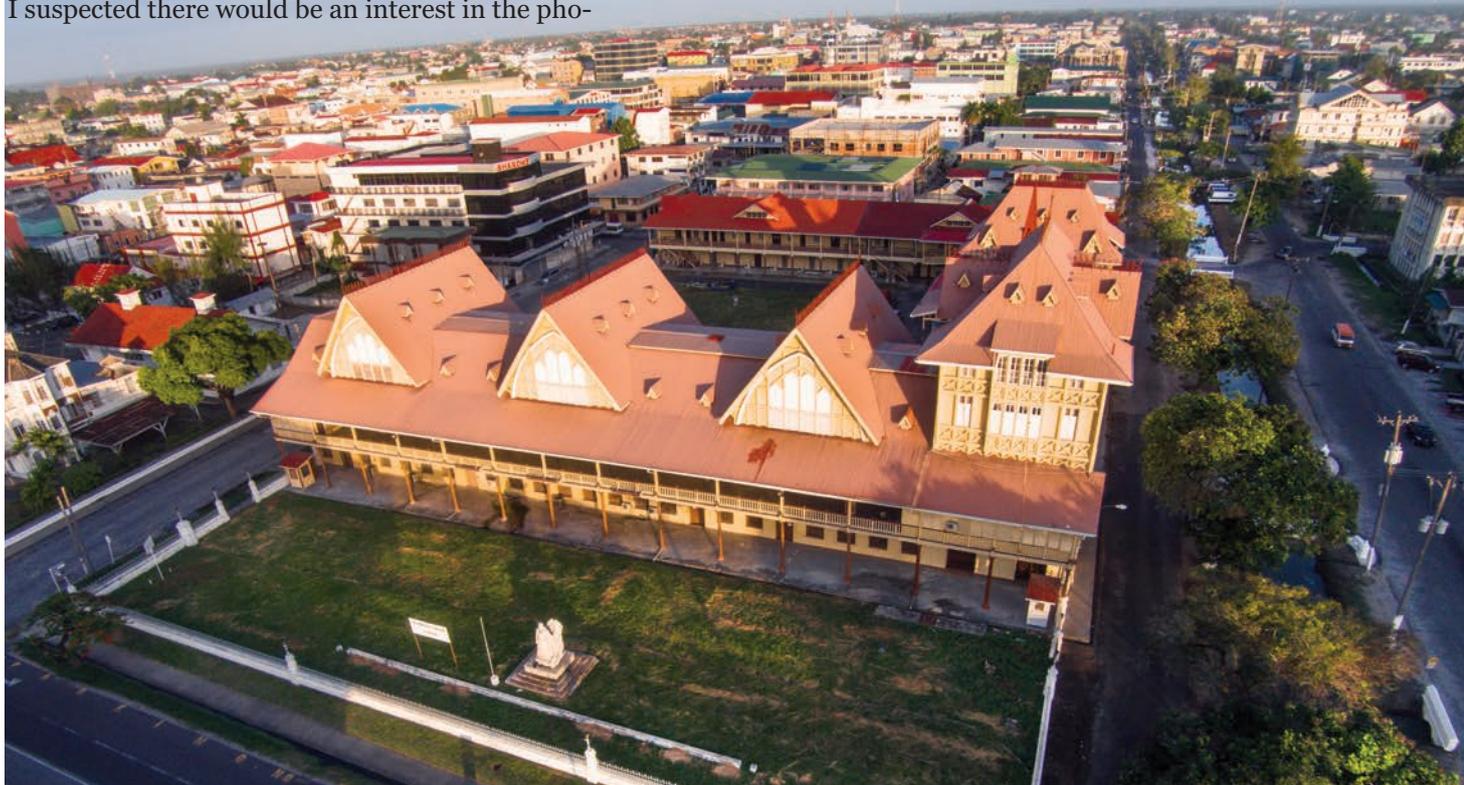
I suspected there would be an interest in the pho-

tographs because they are largely drawn from the natural world, and some of them were taken in areas not widely seen by Guyanese, but the reaction to the pictures has literally been a flood. It’s only been a few months, but the hits so far have been in the thousands. Part of the reaction is obviously from the photo quality - I had invested in a good camera years ago, and I paid attention to composition - but the bigger part is probably the subjects themselves.

In my work and travels, I had been all over Guyana, including some remote locations and many of the bloggers, themselves Guyanese, comment about seeing pictures of a Guyana they had never known. Also, along with the landscapes and the impressive waterfalls, I had captured much of the varied culture of Guyana including the Amerindian aspect which is not that widely found in detail. My postings are essentially about the beauty of the country and seldom seen images of parts of it’

From the volume of reactions -it seems I have a tiger by the tail; I posted a short aerial video of the refurbished Merrimans Mall and overnight it got over 48,000 hits.

In 2016, just in time for our 50th Independence Anniversary I will be posting more videos which will be produced from footage taken by a drone as well as my two Go Pros which are mounted on our helicopters. The go pros capture the length and breadth of our incredible interior from a bird’s eye view so come onboard and join us for an adventure of a lifetime!



HOPE BEACH KOKER



PAKARAIMA SAFARI





CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

UNCLAIMED GUYANA PASSPORTS MUST BE UPLIFTED BEFORE MARCH 31, 2016

The Consulate General of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana wishes to inform the Guyanese Community that it has in its custody a large number of unclaimed Machine Readable Passports. Several of these have expired or are soon to be expired.

Even though expired, these passports will still be required for the processing of new passports by applicants at the regular fee. Any passport application unaccompanied by the expired passport carries an additional fee.

The Consulate General is urging those Guyanese who applied for passports from 2009 and have not uplifted them, to do so as early as possible before March 31, 2016. ***After this date, a fee of US\$35 per month will be charged for each additional month that the passports remain in its custody until June 30, 2016.*** All Machine Readable Passports remaining in its custody after this date will be returned to Georgetown.

For those who may be unable to uplift their passports in person can arrange to have them collected by an authorized person who must present adequate identification.

The passports can be uplifted from its offices at 308 W38 Street, New York on Monday-Friday from 9am-3pm.

**To inquire whether their passports are among those in its custody,
call (212) 497 5110-5119 or
email guyanaconsulate@hotmail.com.**

December 2015
Jacquelyn Hamer
Deputy Consul General
Cooperative Republic of Guyana

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Support the exciting programs of the Guyana Arts & Cultural Center by becoming a Friend of GACC.

Join us to keep this dynamic center providing exceptional cultural programming by expanding its scholarship program to address a range of obstacles to learning opportunities.

Our scholarships will make it possible for many talented youth to participate in the GACC Programs, which will offer music, dance, theater, media arts, and audio/video production classes.

Join Friends of Guyana Arts & Cultural Center today and help continue to expand this valuable service to our community!

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