

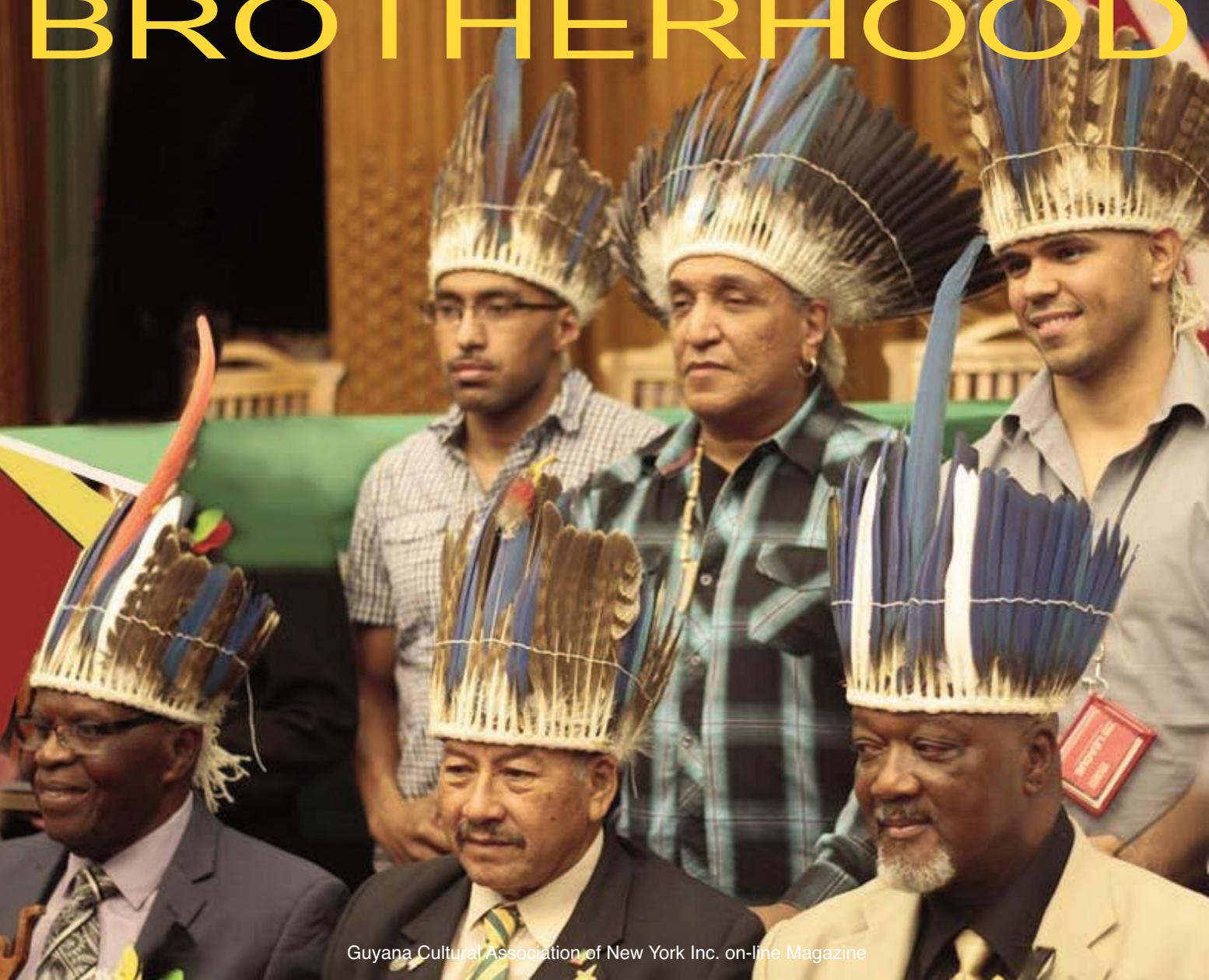
GUYANA FOLK

Aug. 30-
SEPT 30
2017
Vol 7
Issue
9&10

And Culture

CARIBBEAN TAINO AND GUYANA INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

CACIQUE CROWN A SYMBOL OF BROTHERHOOD



IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 3: Congratulations Hilton
 PAGE 4-5: At the Museum
 PAGE 6-10: The Cacique Crown
 PAGE 11-13: The Karao Group
 PAGE 14-15: The Art Gallery
 PAGE 16-26: The Art of the season
 PAGE 27: Challenges for GCA
 PAGE 28-29: Kwe Kwe Nite
 PAGE 30-31: Awards Ceremony
 PAGE 32-33: A You Tube Channel
 PAGE 34-35: Doris Harper-Wills
 PAGE 36-37: Diaspora Engagement
 PAGE 40-46: Symposium & Lit Hang
 PAGE 48-50: Caribbean Natural Disasters

Editor

Dr. Lear Matthews

Cover Design

Claire Goring & Ashton Franklin

Copy Editors-

Edgar Henry, Lear Matthews

Layout and Design by

Claire A. Goring & Ashton Franklin

Contributors:

Dr. Vibert Cambridge

Dr. Rose October-Edun

Dr. Lear Matthews

Jorge Estevez, Ronald Lammy

Carlyle Harry

Photography:

Dr. Vibert Cambridge

Dr. Patricia Cambridge

Malcolm Hall

Andrew Rosee, Tangerine Clarke

National Toshias Council

Michael Mc Garrell Abby Matthias

Dr. Rose October-Edun

GCA Media Team

Ave Brewster-Haynes (Chairperson),

Juliet Emanuel, Edgar Henry,

Lear Matthews, Claire A. Goring,

Ashton Franklin,

Margaret Lawrence Gail A. Nunes,

Francis Quamina Farrier.

Please join our Facebook group,

Website: www.guyfolkfest.org

GCA Secretariat -1368 E.89 Street,

Brooklyn, NY 11236

Tel: 800-774-5762

EDITORIAL

Greetings all!

As the Guyana Cultural Association continues to promote Guyanese culture, we trust that you had a productive summer, anticipating a fall season of tranquility, peace and good will.

All of this despite the unprecedented inclement weather conditions that wreaked havoc on our families, friends and neighbors in the Caribbean, Central America and Southern United States, and the horrific, numbing violence in Las Vegas. And, notwithstanding the potentially volatile interplay of irrational grand standing, vexing, questionable gun laws, and the perils of man-made weaponry of infinite destruction, we seek to persevere, trying to avoid being in a constant traumatized state of existence. The grim reality is that we need profiles in courage. Aesthetic and cultural identity needs, provided by the arts and heritage connections could be sources of comfort and coping now more than ever – GCA encourages you to embrace them!

Indeed the hurricanes, flooding and trail of destruction remind us to respect the force of nature. Even the technology we so confidently boast cannot insulate us from the natural world or as the fatalistic may see it: "It's all in God's hand". To those who recently lost love ones to natural or man-made tragedy, our sincerest condolences. To the survivors, we wish you speedy and complete recovery. Let us contribute whatever we can, individually or through our various organizations, to the reunification, healing and rebuilding process.

In this August-September edition, perhaps ambitiously, we seek to cover much ground. The 2017 season of cultural activities demonstrate a confluence of heritage education, youth involvement, unwavering support and genuine collective effort. We bring you reports on the various events in which we celebrate the heritage of the indigenous people of Guyana. This theme resonated in all events including the Summer Heritage Workshop; Awards ceremony; the symposium and Literary Hang featuring the work of past and contemporary researchers and artists; the Kwe Kwe night and the Family Fun Day all highlighted in this issue. The unprecedented participation of a group of Amerindians, who travelled from Guyana, was a special treat. The articles are enhanced by vivid artistry and wonderful photographic images, depicting the intricacies of various aspects of Guyanese culture, unheralded heroes and talents of participants. The season was a resounding success.

Continuing to institute the theme, *We Bridgin'*, we include a challenge the Caribbean Diaspora to respond to the material and mental health needs of hurricane survivors; present some reflections on the Diaspora Engagement Conference and showcase our own Hilton Hemerding, recipient of the 2017 Arrow of Achievement Award in Guyana.

Enjoy the read!

Dr. Lear Matthews

August-September Editor

CONGRATULATIONS

FROM THE GUYANA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK, INC.
 AND THE STUDENTS OF THE
 GCA SUMMER HERITAGE WORKSHOP SERIES



Hilton Hemerding A.A.

Musician, Composer, Entertainer

RECIPIENT OF THE
**GOLDEN ARROW
 OF ACHIEVEMENT**

Hon. Vice President Sydney Allicock, Minister of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs:

AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN - NEW YORK

By Dr. Vibert Cambridge, A.A.



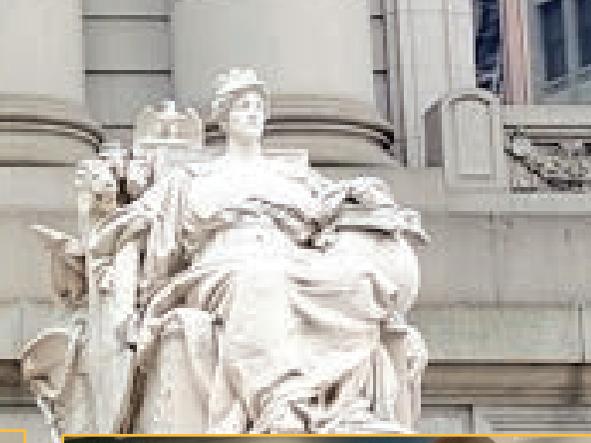
Jorge Esteves and Vice President Sydney Allicock before the start of the museum tour. Photograph by Dr. Patricia Cambridge.

The Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc. was honored to have the Honorable Vice President Sydney Allicock, Minister of Indigenous People's Affairs attend two of the signature events of our 2017 Folk Festival season.

Vice President Allicock addressed the Awards Ceremony and received on George Simon's behalf, GCA's 2017 Lifetime Achievement Award. Vice President Allicock also addressed the audience attending GCA's inaugural Dr. Desrey Caesar-Fox Memorial Lecture.

Through the American Indian Community House and Jorge Estevez, we arranged a tour of the National Museum of the American Indian in Manhattan, NY for Vice President Sydney Allicock.

These photographs by Drs. Patricia and Vibert Cambridge document his visit to the museum.



Amazonia exhibit: Sifter from Guyana. Photograph by Dr. Patricia Cambridge.



Amazonia exhibit: Wai Wai pakára (double basket). Photograph by Dr. Patricia Cambridge.



For more information on the National Museum of the American Indian, please visit: <http://nmai.si.edu/visit/newyork/>



Fishing tools and technologies. Photograph by Dr. Vibert Cambridge.



Viewing a display in the "Native Fashion Now" exhibit. Photograph by Dr. Vibert Cambridge.



Vice President Allicock took several photographs from the ceramic collection. Photograph by Dr. Vibert Cambridge.



Vice President and Minister of Indigenous Affairs met with the Singh family who were also visiting the National Museum of the American Indian. L to R: Nigel Singh, Debbie Singh, Nicole Singh, and Dillon Singh. Photograph by Dr. Vibert Cambridge.



Examining a Buffalo hide Apsáalooke warrior's exploit robe, ca. 1850. Photograph by Dr. Vibert Cambridge.



Vice President and Minister of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs exploring a wall that connects the indigenous peoples of the Americas. Photograph by Dr. Vibert Cambridge.

THE ART OF FEATHER WORK CACHUCHABANA

FEATHER HEADDRESSES OF THE TAINO PEOPLES

By Jorge Baracutei Estevez, leader of the Sangre Taino Cultural Group



GCA 2017 Awards Lifetime Achievement and Exemplary awardees honored with Cacique Crowns

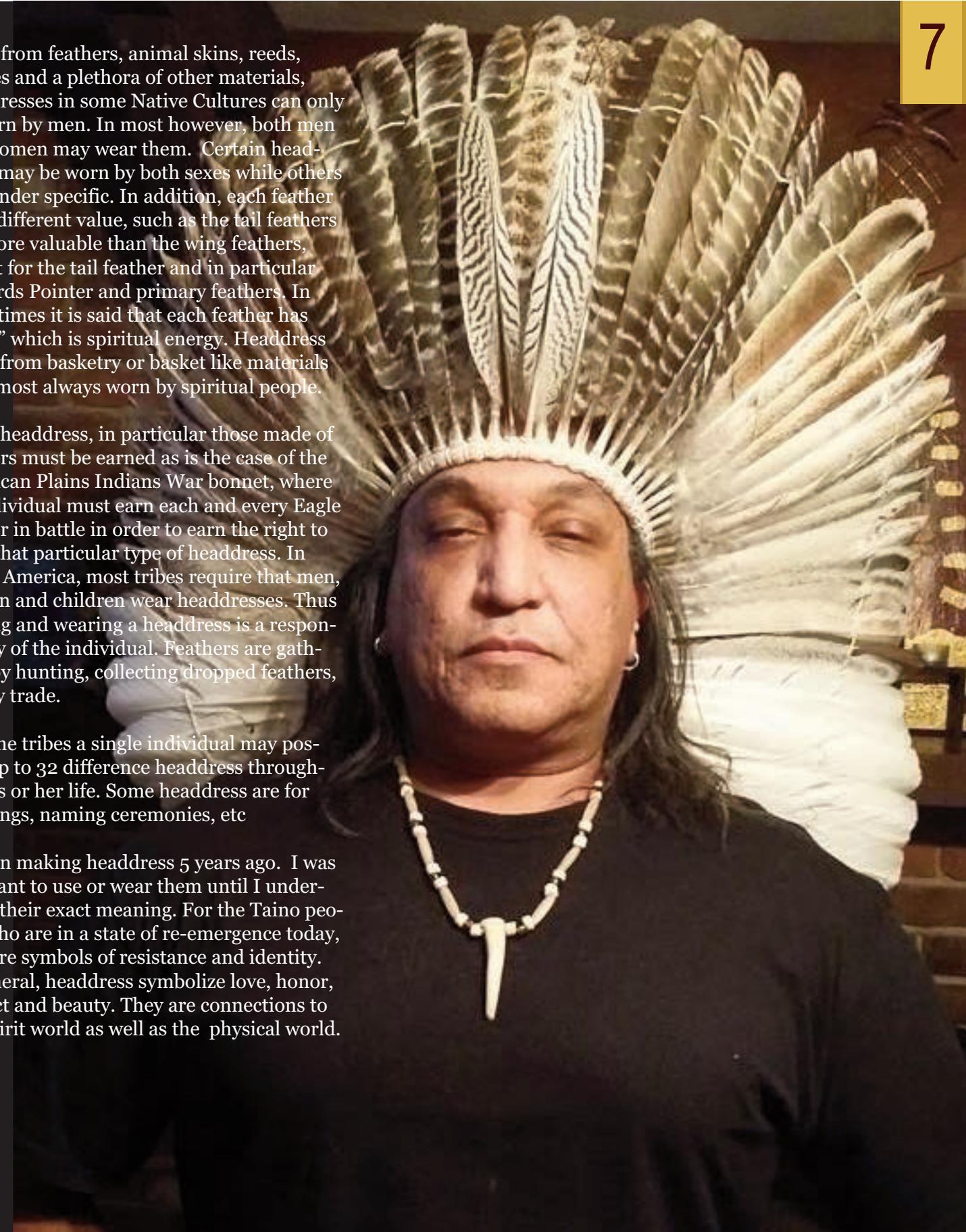
Headdresses are worn by native peoples all around the world. They are beautiful, decorative and symbolic of Identity, status and many other things. Among the most beautiful and elaborate headdresses are those made by the Indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere. The Indigenous peoples of the Americas are collectively called Native Americans, American Indian, Amerindians, Indigenous, American Aborigines, First Nations, Mestizos, Latino, etc.

Made from feathers, animal skins, reeds, grasses and a plethora of other materials, headdresses in some Native Cultures can only be worn by men. In most however, both men and women may wear them. Certain headdress may be worn by both sexes while others are gender specific. In addition, each feather has a different value, such as the tail feathers are more valuable than the wing feathers, except for the tail feather and in particular the birds Pointer and primary feathers. In some times it is said that each feather has "DUA" which is spiritual energy. Headdress made from basketry or basket like materials are almost always worn by spiritual people.

Some headdress, in particular those made of feathers must be earned as is the case of the American Plains Indians War bonnet, where an individual must earn each and every Eagle feather in battle in order to earn the right to wear that particular type of headdress. In South America, most tribes require that men, women and children wear headdresses. Thus owning and wearing a headdress is a responsibility of the individual. Feathers are gathered by hunting, collecting dropped feathers, and by trade.

In some tribes a single individual may possess up to 32 different headdress throughout his or her life. Some headdress are for weddings, naming ceremonies, etc

I began making headdress 5 years ago. I was reluctant to use or wear them until I understood their exact meaning. For the Taino people, who are in a state of re-emergence today, they are symbols of resistance and identity. In general, headdress symbolize love, honor, respect and beauty. They are connections to the spirit world as well as the physical world.



THE GUYANA CACIQUE CROWN



Photograph by Dr. Patricia Cambridge

In Guyana, the Cacique's crown is at the apex of our Coat of arms. It has pride of place in a symbol of Guyanese nationhood--its roots, its resolve and its aspirations. The recent Toshaos Conference in Georgetown, Guyana (August 2017) was an occasion in which a variety of crowns were evident. Here are photographs from the occasion, previously posted by the National Toshaos Council and Michael Mc Garrell on Facebook.



Photographs by National Toshaos Council and Michael Mc Garrell and previously posted on Facebook.



Photographs by National Toshaos Council and Michael Mc Garrell and previously posted on Facebook.



Photographs by National Toshaos Council and Michael Mc Garrell and previously posted on Facebook.

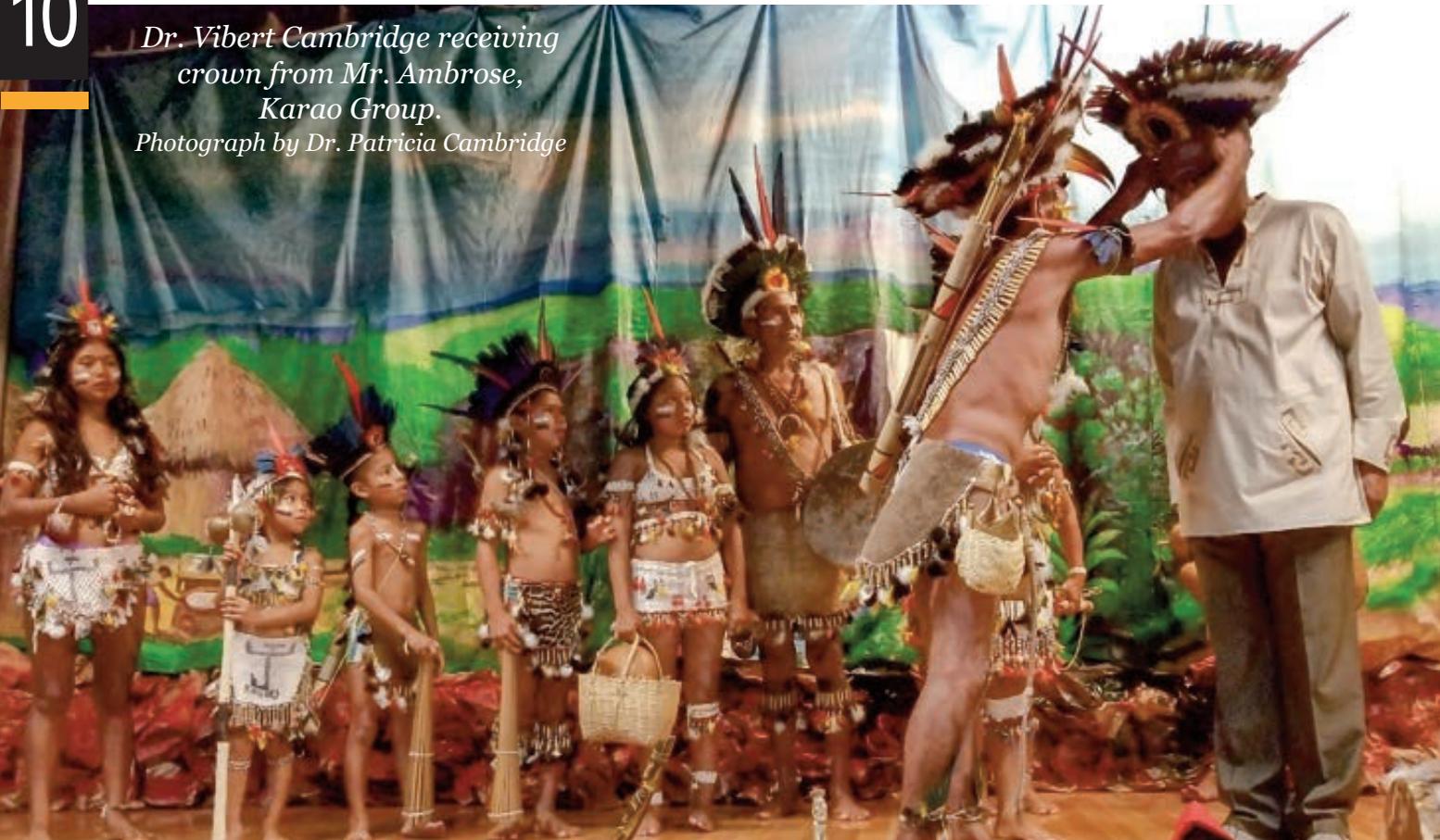


Photographs by National Toshaos Council and Michael Mc Garrell and previously posted on Facebook.



It was a special honor to receive a crown from the Karao Group. The honor was bestowed at the Dr. Desrey Caesar-Fox Memorial Lecture.

Dr. Vibert Cambridge receiving crown from Mr. Ambrose, Karao Group. Photograph by Dr. Patricia Cambridge



Vibert Cambridge acknowledging crown from Mr. Ambrose, Karao Group. Photograph by Dr. Patricia Cambridge



Hahom! - thank you!

THEY CAME AND INSPIRED

By Dr. Vibert Cambridge, A.A.



In response to our 2017 “Call for Participation,” Texas-based Guyanese Abby Matthias sent a proposal for the Karao Group from Karaudanau. The group, with members ranging in age between 6 and 60, was founded in 2005 with the aim of raising awareness about Wapishana heritage and the need to preserve the land, river, and forests. We agreed wholeheartedly. What happened was a fascinating story of cooperation among many people and agencies and in Guyana and the United States.

A majority of the group needed travel documents. Many needed birth certificates. Most required passports and all required visas to enter the United States. In Georgetown, Anna Iles, volunteered as our liaison with Guyana's Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs (MOIPA). MOIPA facilitated all the needed arrangements with the Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The group's travel to the USA was made possible with generous support from Capt. Jerry Gouveia and Dynamic Airlines. The eleven members arrived in New York on August 28, 2017 for a 10 -day stay.

During their visit, the group participated in every event held during the 2017 Folk Festival season—the Awards Ceremony, the Dr. Desrey Caesar-Fox Memorial Lecture, Kwe Kwe Night, Symposium and Literary Hang, and Family Fun Day. In addition, the Native American community in New York hosted a special welcome for their "cousins from Guyana" at the American Indian Community House in Manhattan, NY. Arrangements were also made for the Karao Group to attend the annual Shinnecock Pow Wow in the Hamptons. The Guyanese community showed their appreciation in several ways, including serving as host families and seeking photo opportunities.

We, the members of GCA wish to express our special thanks to Ms. Laurinda Clementson, our founding-president Malcolm Hall, and his brother Terry Hall for all they did to make the group's visit a satisfying one. We also extend our thanks for the school supplies that were donated by the community for the children of Karaudanau.

These photographs tell the story of Karao Group—outstanding ambassadors from Guyana—who came and inspired us. As "Slingshot" Drepaul would say, "Nuff hugs!"



Arrival, JFK Airport
Photograph by Dr. Rose October-Edun



Meet and Greet held by United Confederation of Taino People at AICH



GCA Awards Ceremony
Photograph by Dr. Vibert Cambridge



The Celebrity Kids
Photograph by Dr. Vibert Cambridge



At the Shinnecock Pow Wow
Photograph by Malcolm Hall



Meet and Greet AICH
Photograph by Malcolm Hall



First Subway Ride, in NY
Photograph by Malcolm Hall



Having fun at Brooklyn Zoo
Photograph by Abby Mathias



Performance with Sangre Taino Group, Family Day
Photograph by Dr. Vibert Cambridge



Mr. Ambrose and Beatrice delivering school supplies donated
Photograph by Beatrice Ambrose

ART GALLERY

By Dr. Vibert C. Cambridge, A.A.

THE GEORGE
SIMON EXHIBITION

George Simon. "The spiritual connection between man and nature # 2." Oil on canvas. 6ftx4ft.
Photograph provided by George Simon.

Art continues to have a special place in the Guyanese experience. Across the 20th century, Guyanese artists demonstrated self-confidence, skill, and innovation. This boldness continues at home and in the diaspora.

We created our online Art Gallery as a space to introduce Guyanese artists to digital Guyana. We visualize a series of exhibitions featuring works by Guyanese and non-Guyanese artists who have worked in Guyana. We look forward to collaborating with artists, independent curators, and international institutions such as Guyana's National Art Gallery, E. R. Burrowes School of Art, and the Division of Creative Arts at the University of Guyana in the curation of these exhibitions.

For this exhibition, we are sharing 14 paintings by George Simon that were exhibited in the 2017 Indigenous Heritage Month Art Exhibition

held in September at the National Art Gallery, Castellani House, Georgetown, Guyana.

These 14 paintings showcase his skills as a painter and his preference for oil on canvas and paper to celebrate the color and textures of Amazonia. This collection reaffirms his ongoing commitment of "drawing attention to the indigenous people and how they have lived with the environment in mind." For George Simon, "the environment is not just bland, but is full of life and has deep meaning."

You are invited to visit our Art Gallery and an exhibition of George Simon's work.

<http://guyfolkfest.org/george-simon/>



INTRODUCING

GEORGE
SIMON A.A.

George Simon is the recipient of GCA's 2017 Lifetime Award in recognition of his substantial contributions to Guyanese art and archeology. He received Guyana's Golden Arrow of Achievement in 1988 and the Anthony N. Sabga Caribbean Award of Excellence in 2012.

He was born in Pukari Village (formerly St. Cuthbert's Mission) in 1947. When he was 12, he and his adoptive father moved to Essex, England. In 1978, he graduated from the University of Portsmouth with an honors degree in art. He returned to Guyana in the same year and since then has been a powerful catalytic force in Guyanese art.

George Simon was a teacher at the E. R. Burrowes School of Art and the University of

Guyana. During the early 1980s, he made mass games art uniquely Guyanese. He led a team of Guyanese artists who earned the admiration of the Koreans who were advising the Government of Guyana on mass games. But George Simon's body of work goes beyond mass games art. His work introduces us to the "cosmos of the Lokono," and helps us to decode our timehri inheritance.

In 2009, George Simon, along with the late Neil Whitehead and Michael Heckenberger, started excavations of terra preta mounds in the Berbice intermediate savannahs. Radiocarbon testing of ceramic and organic materials from four sites indicate human settlement of more than 3,000 ago.

George Simon's work has graced important national buildings such as the National Museum and the Umana Yana. As a Guyanese of Lokono (Arawak) heritage, he has used his canvas to share the rich heritage of Guyana's indigenous people—their cosmology, color palate, and aspirations. In so doing, he has contributed to national integration.

George Simon is a leader who encourages and promotes young and emerging indigenous artists. His founding of the Lokono Arts Group and organizing the "Moving Circle" art exhibitions are examples of this work. Since 1995, the Moving Circle art exhibition has been the principal event to showcase the art of indigenous artists.

THE 9TH CARIBBEAN SUMMER HERITAGE WORKSHOP SERIES

THE ART OF OUR SEASON

By Dr. Vibert C. Cambridge, A.A.



STAGE SET

A VILLAGE SCENE IN THE INTERIOR OF GUYANA:

Designed for closing ceremony of the GCA Summer Heritage Workshop Series.

Background scenery painted by Colin Warde, formerly of the Burrowes School of Arts, Stage set by Clive Prowell, assisted by "Children of 2017."

The invitation to the Closing Ceremony of GCA's 9th annual Summer Heritage Workshop Series featured art work created by the "Children of 2017."



You are Invited
GCA THE 9TH ANNUAL
**Summer Heritage
Workshop Series**
"Arts in the Community"

CLOSING CEREMONY

Thursday, August 10, 2017

from one o'clock promptly

St. Stephen's Church Auditorium
2806 Newkirk Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11226

"Celebrating Our Indigenous Heritage"

There will be an exhibition of the Children's Work
and a celebratory reception

Your Hosts:

GCA SWS Children of 2017

With the Support of

NY Council Member Matthieu Eugene, NY Council Member Jumaane Williams, NY Council Member Alan Maisel
Metroplus Health Plan, Fly Jamaica Airways,
Materials for the Arts, Mr. Edward Isaacs - Crayola Company,
New York Tutorial Support Group, Dr. Lear Matthews, Ms Gail Nunes,
Ms Pat Jordon-Langford - Guyana Tri-State Alliance,
Caribbean American Social Workers, Mr. Charles Liverpool,
Mrs. Joyce Y. Chase, Mr. Leroy Beresford, Mrs. Lynette Marshall,
Mrs. Negla Parris, Mr. Courtney Parris, Mr. & Mrs. George Rowe,
The Howell Family, Pastor Crews & Members of St. Stephen's Church.

Supported by Volunteers from the Community

Mrs. Claudette Howell (SWS Nurse), Mrs. Deborah Assanah, Mr. Hilton Hemerding,
Mr. Clive Prowell, Mr. Clinton Duncan, Mr. Ryan Berkeley, Mrs. Janice Dougall,
Professor Keith Proctor, Mrs. Penny Bascom, Mr. Charles Liverpool,
Mr. Winston Hoppie, Ms. Donna Walcott, Mr. Reuben Freeman, Mr. Roy Brummell
Dr. Juliet Emanuel & Mr. Edgar Henry - SWS Consultants, GCA Board of Directors
Mr. Carlyle Harry - SWS Director
Interns
Ms. Faith Parris - Chief Intern,
Yves Cazeau - Assistant to the Chief Intern



Council on
the Arts



EVERYTHING MATTERS





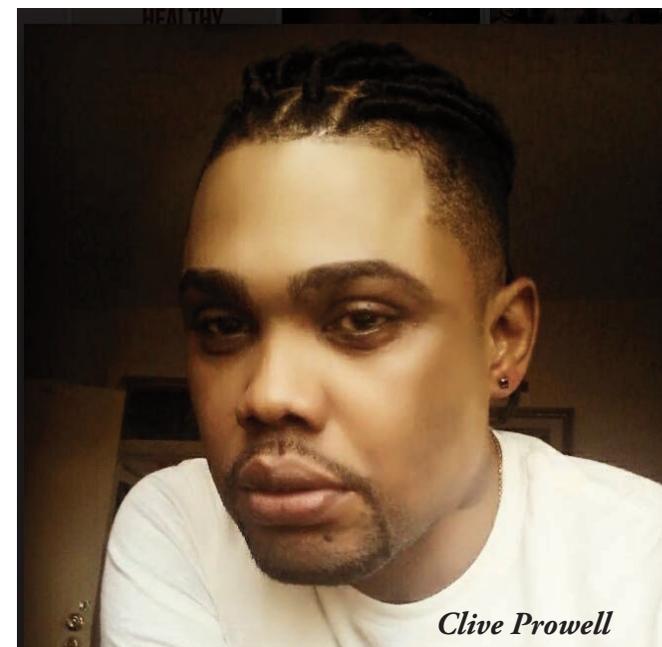
*Chang W. Lee's photograph illustrated an article in **The New York Times** (August 11, 2017) about the negative impact of proposed reductions in legal immigration on family reunification among immigrant families in the United States. These potential restrictions will have significant implications for the Guyanese diaspora in New York.*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/11/nyregion/in-little-guyana-proposed-cuts-to-family-immigration-weigh-heavily.html?smid=fb-share>

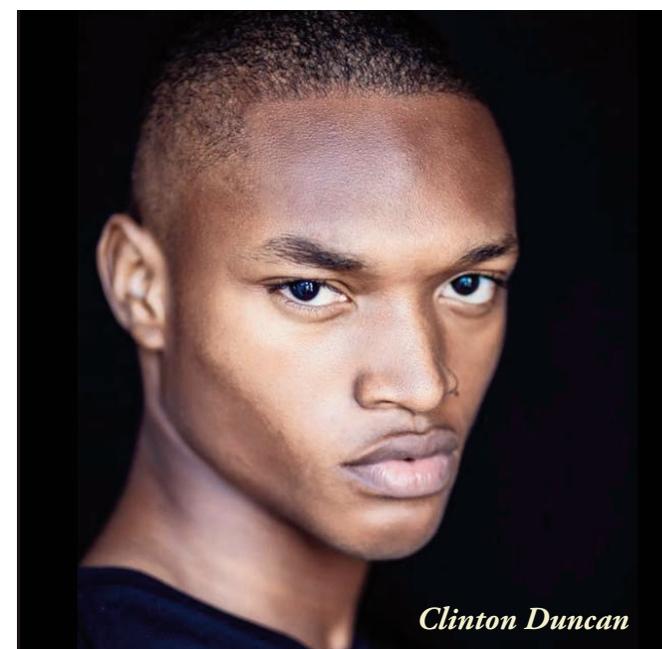
Lee's photograph from the closing session of the 9th season of Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc. (GCA)'s Caribbean Heritage Summer Workshop presents a moment in the performance of Matapee Dance from the dance module of the series. The photograph encourages us to look at the costumes—the aprons and the colorful headdresses. It also introduces a set. The photograph speaks to the place of art in our season.

The closing session represented the weaving together of the outcomes from the four modules of the workshop series—music, art and craft, dance, and drama. The music; the set, the costume, the matapee dance, the dramatic piece *Creation Stories*, along with the jewelry created in the arts and crafts module, were about a team of Guyanese designers working with the community to create a space where young Caribbean children could learn about our indigenous heritage and make and share art inspired by that heritage.

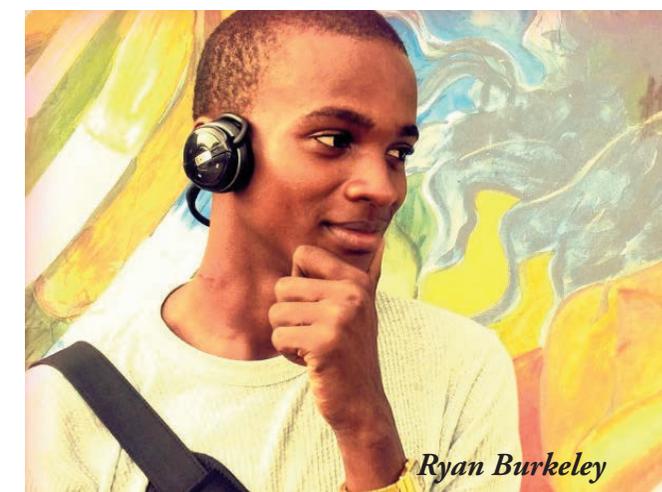
The three designers were GCA's Youth Director Clive Powell, and two 2017 interns-- Ryan Berkley, and Clinton Duncan. All three designers brought with them extensive experience in Guyana. Clive Powell, who specializes in dance and costume design, was the founder of the *Classique Dance Company*. He has received several awards among them, the *Best Dance Production/Dance Company* at the 2012 West Indian Music Award Ceremony. Clinton Duncan is a 2017 graduate with a Bachelor's degree in Law from the University of Guyana. Duncan is actively engaged in performing arts as a playwright, costume designer, and stage manager. Ryan Berkley is graduate of Guyana's E. R. Burrowes School of Art, specializing in textile design and fashion design. Berkley was Guyana's Designer of the Year 2011. His collections have been shown in Antigua, Trinidad, French Guiana, and Suriname.



Clive Powell



Clinton Duncan



Ryan Burkeley



What was created in these workshops was showcased throughout the Folk Festival season. The matapee dance was presented at Awards Ceremony on Wednesday, August 2017. The set created an impressive backdrop for the inaugural Dr. Desrey Caesar-Fox Memorial Lecture (Thursday, August 31), Kwe-Kwe Night (Friday, September 1), and the Symposium and Literary Hang (Saturday, September 2). Elements of the set were present on the main stage at Family Fun Day on Sunday, September 3, 2017.

The 9th Caribbean Heritage Workshops were presented by the Guyana Arts and Cultural Center (GA&CC) through its Arts in the Community program. Claire Goring, GCA's cultural director, is the executive director of GA&CC. Each year, Claire Goring brings a distinctive visual flavor to the Folk Festival season. This year, she integrated George Simon's "Spiritual connection between man and nature # 2" and its color palette to create the season's impressive graphic art and complementary activities.

George Simon.
**“Spiritual connection
 between man and
 nature # 2”**

(oil on canvas, 2017).

Graphic Arts

George's color palette and visualization informed our visual identity in 2017. This is evident in Claire Goring's graphic art for our social media announcements, invitations, and printed hand cards.

718 209 5207

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/GuyanaCulturalAssociation1/>

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.guyfolkfest.org

GUYANA FOLK FESTIVAL 2017

**“Celebrating Our
 Indigenous Heritage”**

KWE KWE NITE

FRI. SEPT. 1, 2017: 8.00 P.M.

ST. STEPHEN'S AUDITORIUM

2806 Newkirk Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11226

\$20. ENTRANCE

MORE AT THE DOOR FOR DRINKS

FAMILY FUN DAY

SUN. SEPT. 3, 2017

OLD BOYS HS GROUND

736 RUTLAND RD., BROOKLYN 11203

ADULTS \$10. SENIORS & KIDS FREE

GATES OPEN AT NOON

This activity is not sponsored or endorsed by the New York City

Department of Education or the City of New York

FIRST EVER GUYANA / USA

Guyanese Indigenous Peoples & Native Americans

Pow Wow

STARTS AT 3.00 P.M.

STAGE SHOW - 4.30 P.M.

• Ninja Band • Adrian Dutchin

• Fanoko Singers • T&T Roxborough Cultural Group

• GCA Kwe Kwe Ensemble • Comedian Chow Pow

• Shelly G • Other exciting presentations

**DR. DESREY CAESAR-FOX
 MEMORIAL LECTURE**

**THURSDAY. AUG. 31, 2017:
 7.00,p.m.**

Special Native American Indian Welcome from 6.00 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Walter Edwards

**SYMPOSIUM & LITERARY HANG
 SAT.URDAY SEPT. 2, 2017**

9.00 A.M. - 8.30 P.M.

ENUE FOR BOTH EVENTS

GUYANA ARTS & CULTURAL CENTER

2806 NEWKIRK AVE. BROOKLYN, NY 11226

DONATION: \$20.00 FOR BOTH DAYS

GATES OPEN AT NOON CHILDREN'S VILLAGE STARTS AT 1.00 P.M. POW WOW STARTS AT 3.00 P.M.

GATES CLOSE AT 6.00 P.M.



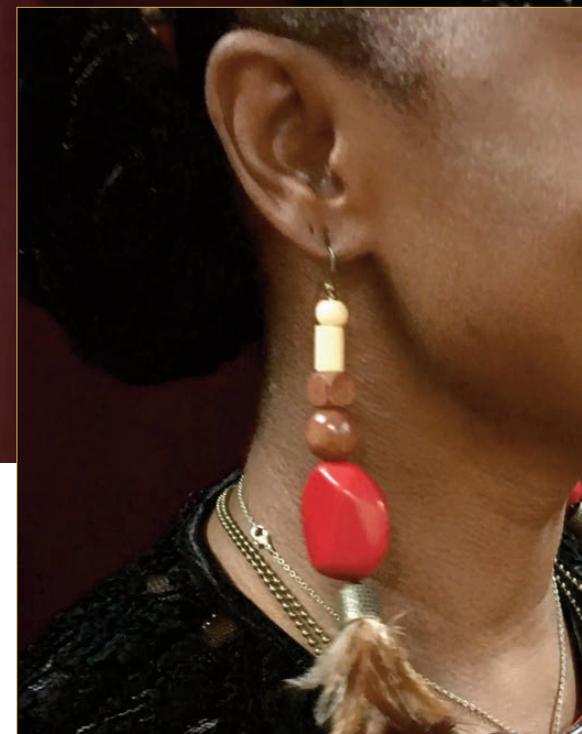
The distinguished women of GCA at Awards Ceremony, 2017.
Photograph by Dr. Patricia Cambridge.



Claire Goring. Awards Ceremony invitation.
Photograph by Penny Bascom



Dr. Rose October-Edun wears the earrings and necklaces created by the designers and ***"Children of 2017."***





The art created by 9th season of SWS was also present at Family Fun Day and at the 50th anniversary celebrations of the West Indian Labor Day Celebrations on Brooklyn's Eastern Parkway.



Members of the Impressions Dance Theater and GCA Summer Heritage Workshop Interns on Eastern Parkway, Labor Day 2017.

Photograph by Tangerine Clarke.

Photo first published in Caribbean Life, September 7, 2017.

To think about it, we had a robust expression of arts and crafts in 2017 as we celebrated our indigenous heritage.
We promised, and we delivered.



Challenges for the Guyana Cultural Association of New York

By Carlyle Harry

The Directorate of the Guyana Cultural Association ought to be extremely proud of the compliments that the organization has received from the public, via regular and social media, as well as direct means, touting the successful execution of its annual summer activities. When I learnt that the Leadership of GCA had decided to “feature the heritage of Guyana’s Indigenous Peoples”, I silently wondered how the Association was going to ‘pull it off’. But starting the season with its six-week Youth Summer Workshop Series, I realized that there was more than enough research material/data, as well as housing patterns, foods, socio-cultural practices, utensils, artifacts and other heritage items, which define the selected group, Amerindians, to be exhibited and promoted.

In this regard, a number of challenges emerge. Considering the volume and variety of information on the topic to be shared, the GCA leaders may wish to consider sponsoring a Part 2 of this project next year. Secondly, through its 2017 theme, ‘We Bridgin’, it is perhaps incumbent upon the organization to devise a strategy to effectively disseminate the information that was shared during the summer, extending it beyond the Guyanese Diaspora to the Caribbean and global publics. Since “precaution is better than cure”, one should understand why at my age and stage of my life I would have avoided the (matrimonial-related) Friday night Que Que. However, from the

video recordings, as well as the commentaries I read and heard, the nocturnal event was a beauty to behold. Similar compliments emanated from those who attended the Awards Ceremony and the Family Fun Day.

Similar compliments emanated from the Awards Ceremony and Family Fun Day. Nevertheless, I felt more comfortable listen to Dr. Walter Edwards deliver the inaugural Desrey Caesar-Fox Lecture on the evening of Thursday, August 31st. I had only heard about Desrey Caesar-Fox - en passant. Fortunately, my long-time colleague, Mildred Hunte took pride in giving a lengthy description about her contributions.

A third challenge is for the GCA Leadership to work collaboratively with Authorities in Guyana and elsewhere to highlight the biographies and contribution of our forerunners. The final challenge, I would propose is to enlighten others of the Historical, Archaeological and technological (including research) programs/projects which have been and are being perused and undertaken about our indigenous peoples, especially since research is always “researchable”.

It must be noted that the Saturday segment of the Annual Symposium and Literary Hang/Book Mart, produced a wide variety of updates, valuable information and knowledge. This, however, may have posed a great challenge for the Association in its efforts to comprehensively disseminate this vast and diverse information in a way that facilitates “BRIDGIN”.

It is never easy or safe to single out individuals for Praise. Therefore, let me conclude by offering full compliments to Dr. Vibert Cambridge and the Executive/Support Team. Indeed this is not an armchair contribution for me. If approached, I am more than willing to help the GCA to meet the suggested challenges.

GCA – You did your best

You deserve some rest.

After a successful summer,

And armed with a cultural Center,

Please pass on the culture

And thus cement the future.



Kwe Kwe Nite 2017

By Dr. Rose October-Edun

PARTICIPATION OF KARAO CULTURAL GROUP A RARE TREAT FOR KWE KWE PATRONS

Generally, Labor Day Friday is considered Kweh Kweh Nite. This year, September 1, was no different, as members of Guyana Cultural Association (GCA), sponsors, special invited guests, and patrons gathered at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church auditorium to partake in this signature event of GCA. There were many highlights of this event.

The first was the presence of our Guyanese Indigenous Peoples 11-member Karao Group that visited us from South Rupununi, Guyana. This group performed two songs and dances. The patrons were spellbound during the group's performances, as this surreal experience was noted as historical. This was the first time Indigenous Peoples visited the US from Guyana, and provided a unique experience for those in attendance.

Another highlight was the presence of Anthony "Shaka" Sparman and partner Joy LaMaison. They showcased their intricate techniques of Ballroom Dancing, an integral part of Guyana Arts and Cultural Center's (GA&CC) dance program. As nicely captured by GCA's president, Dr. Vibert Cambridge, "Kweh Kweh is what happens the night before the wedding; and Ballroom Dancing is what is done after the wedding and during the reception".

In one of the two staged Kweh Kweh sessions, there was an absence of the fathers. This meant the mothers played active roles in teaching the bride- and groom-to-be about the finer things in life. To say the least, this was both enjoyable and hilarious, as the two "mothers" who are real life sisters, challenged each in showing parenthood on a different level.

To cap off the evening, the Kweh Kweh Ensemble's freestyle music provided patrons the opportunity to showcase their dancing skills to a mixture of instruments - the drums, saxophone, keyboard, and shak shak. All had a great time! In essence, the Kweh Kweh committee would like to especially thank our sponsor, Michael Yensen/Yensen Enterprises, and everyone else who contributed to the success of 2017 Kweh Kweh.



WE ARE CONNECTED

By Ronald H. Lammy



OUR 2017 AWARDEES EXEMPLIFY WHAT IS BEST ABOUT BEING GUYANESE



This is an exceptional year for the GCA Awards. The honorees as individuals, and as a collective, have made an impressive impact in their respective fields with definitive features of being Guyanese. This article resource does not allow me to describe them all. They are all representative of excellent work, not talk. In some cases, their accomplishments are almost incomparable elements of our Guyanese reality.

Let us consider recipients who had definitive roles in confirming our historical presence and how our ancestors communicated amongst themselves. The seminal work and accomplishments that define us come under classifications of archeology, visual artistry, and linguistics. Journalism and authorship have described the contemporary environment in which our indigenous folk live today.

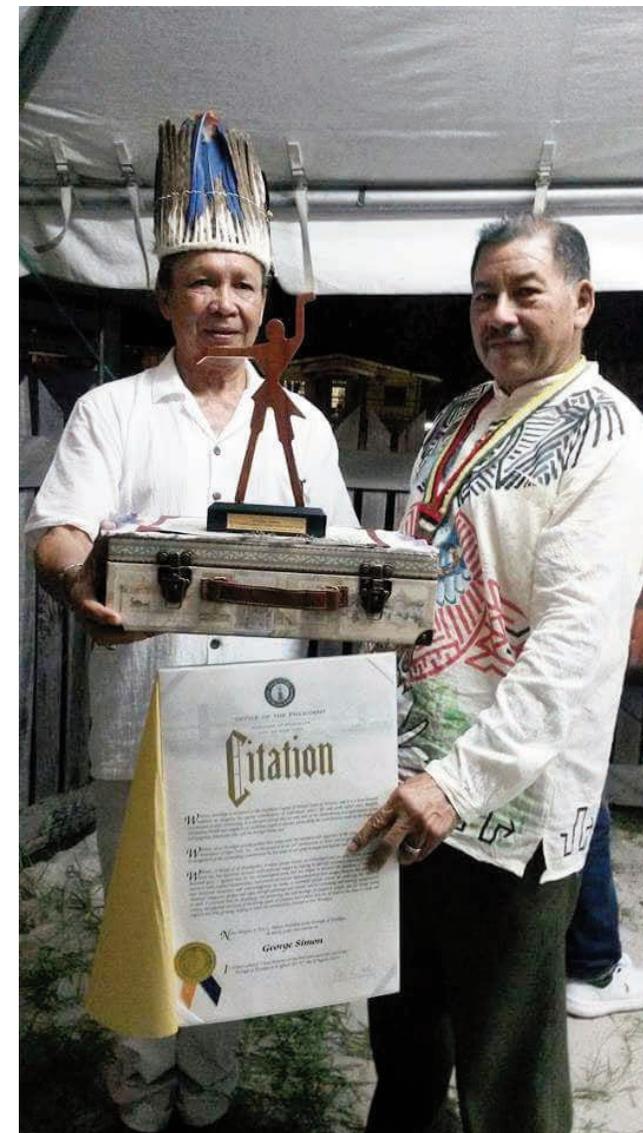
On-going research into the early habitations and the preservation of the explorations and their revelations are continuous. The collaborative work provides a bridge from colonial ignorance and falsehood to scientific confirmation of the truthfulness of our presence through our ancestors.

Our indigenous heritage has revealed pronounced traits of creativity, distinctiveness, and excellence. These characteristics have been displayed in the activities and successes of Awardees in the fields of education, medical care, community service and as cultural enablers. We see foundational, connecting human activity that enriches Guyanese lives.

The increasing attention we are paying to our indigenous heritage, and claiming it, is creating a greater awareness of our place in a worldwide experience. The elements of commonness with our Guyanese conditions could, should, encourage greater effort to remove the fragmentations in our homeland. We are not alone and we are connected.

As we consider the present and look to the future we can be quite hopeful with the indicators from our 2017 Youth Awardees. They demonstrate superior scholastic achievements; emerging performing and literary talent; youth leadership; and cultural community service.

All together our 2017 Awardees exemplify what is best about being Guyanese.



Lifetime Achievement Honoree George Simon receiving his award and Cacique Crown from the Hon. Vice President and Minister of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, Sydney Allcock in Guyana

CELEBRATING OUR INDIGENOUS HERITAGE

A YOUTUBE CHANNEL

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9MGGQuReDH5j_zhcpH5Ar6pNX_WJVs9J

by Dr. Vibert C. Cambridge, A.A.

Photograph provided by Yaphet Jackman.

As an organization committed to using participatory approaches to heritage preservation and the encouragement of creativity, we are constantly exploring communication platforms for engaging the intergenerational global Guyanese community we serve.

The materials generated at recent GCA events, such as Masquerade Lives and the ongoing “We Bridgin ...” and “Arts in the Community” programs, have encouraged efforts to develop web-based portals related to Guyana’s heritage.

We were aware of Yaphet Jackman’s work, especially his interest in Guyanese heritage and youth engagement. We first met him in 2012 when his videography in Margaret Lawrence’s short film Tradition attracted critical attention. In 2014, he volunteered at GCA’s Caribbean Heritage Summer Workshops in Brooklyn, en route to Ohio University’s School of Film to pursue a Master’s in Fine Arts degree.

Preliminary online research revealed that there were many videos about Guyana’s indigenous peoples and their heritage. Some of these videos, such as the 1911 film The Makusi, go back to the age of silent film. Others are more recent and include videos about the social, economic, and cultural life of Guyana’s indigenous peoples. Aggregating this information would be a valuable contribution to our understanding of the Guyanese experience.

For Folk Festival 2017, Yaphet Jackman collected 108 videos to launch the YouTube channel “Celebrating Our Indigenous Heritage.” To access the channel, please visit: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9MGGQuReDH5j_zhcpH5Ar6pNX_WJVs9J

The YouTube Channel, like the Guyana Digital Tent, is an important contribution to GCA’s ongoing efforts to document, package and share materials that allow us to better understand the richness the Guyanese experience. (<http://guyanadigitaltent.wixsite.com/2016>).

Immediately after the launch of the YouTube channel on August 26, 2017, I asked Yaphet four questions about the experience and sought his guidance regarding the future. Here are his responses:

What has this project meant to you?

It gave me a great opportunity to learn more about

the indigenous people of Guyana. It has also shone a light on the vast amount of information that is readily accessible about our first peoples. I deem this project an enlightening initiative that has now sparked my curiosity and also allowed me to widen my research base on the heritage and culture of Guyana.

How would you describe it?

It is a foundational step towards knowledge and information dissemination to our younger generation about our first peoples. It is a great reminder and an apt tool for any educational purposes using new and social media.

What can we learn as we move forward?

I believe this project suggests there should be a more expanded and concerted effort to educate Guyanese about their heritage and to show the interconnectivity that exists in our histories as a people. I also believe it suggests that such information be collected, curated and categorized to further expand on the accessible information about our peoples.

Where can this initiative go?

I believe this project can be expanded as an online and offline database of information about Amerindian history and the progress of Amerindians in our ever-changing landscape. The information collected and categorized can continue to serve as salient reference points for researchers, historians and interested students, as well as a reminder to the Amerindian peoples of their own cultural development, history, and aspirations.

Yaphet is the digital archivist for Folk Festival 2017. The content he creates, along with the YouTube channel and other materials, will be available at the “Our Indigenous Heritage” portal on GCA’s website.

Yaphet Jackman has a B.A. degree in Communication Studies (University of Guyana) and a MFA in Film (School of Film, Ohio University). Yaphet’s expertise is aligned with GCA’s mission to preserve, promote, and propagate Guyana’s multi-ethnic heritage and encourage Guyanese creativity. The mission of his production company, Bent Street Films, “is to preserve Guyanese heritage, culture and historical content through new media and film.”



Doris Harper-Wills performing an extract from the story "How the Warraus Came" in her book *Tales of Iere*.
Photograph by Dr. Vibert Cambridge

CELEBRATING OUR INDIGENOUS HERITAGE

Doris Harper-Wills

"How the Warraus Came"

By Valerie Codette

The topic, 'Celebrating Indigenous Heritage' raised awareness of our Amerindians. Music, dance and storytelling are ways they use to narrate their culture. As Native American Matoaka Little Eagle was speaking to the GCA literary audience, she sometimes spoke in her own language - ya ma ha hoo - (devils), and solicited audience participation. With blinders on, we repeated her words. Indeed, the exercise was quite amusing. But more delight lay in store when Doris Harper-Wills took the stage and narrated her indigenous Amerindian stories. Audience participation was nil. 'Dunce' she admonished. Laughter ensued. It was shameful, we had fallen short.

ssshhhhHHH- Listen to Doris Harper-Wills- she has much to say. Imagine children and adults who live in London - including policemen and politicians swathed in costumes - imbibing her stories about the Warrau, the Arawaks and the Caribs, while we, as Guyanese, know nothing about their history in her book, "The Wings of Iere". We now stand ready to retrieve these fascinating stories. Sixty plus years ago, these tales never appeared in books. How terribly deprived were the children of Guyana?

The Warrau Legend: In the beginning, no one lived on earth. Everyone lived either on the land or the sky. In Legend of the Raincloud, birds flew in



Hummingbird- Ruby Throated



White-breasted



Blue Coated



Black-chinned

the blue of the sky, fish swam in the sea of the sky, and snakes crawled in the clouds of the sky. One day Raincloud overheard a conversation between the Stars Hesperus and Venus, and the Sun and Moon. They were all famous: the Sun illuminated the land, the Moon manipulated the tides, Hesperus created the evening sky, and Venus adorned the morning sky. Raincloud wondered why she could not be as famous as they were. Would the people on earth ever look up to her? She wept and wept until she turned grey. A dream followed about her friends who lived in the land beneath her. In the dream, she was given thanks for her contribution. Her tears had wet the land and caused millions of trees to grow, forests to appear, and rivers to overflow. In addition, farmers gave thanks for the rain as their crops flour-

ished. And every year Raincloud's people celebrate a successful harvest at Mashramani time. They sing with joy: All Praises to Raincloud for giving us rain/ all praises to Raincloud for watering our grains.

Legend of the Lake - Makonaima, the Great Spirit was very happy with humans who lived happily among hummingbirds. When humans died he changed their souls to hummingbirds with wonderful names: ruby-throated, white breasted, blue-coated, black- chinned, purple crested and bronze-tinted. Makainoma was very proud of his extraordinarily special hummingbirds. He fixed their wings with strings to strum ... and with strings that

sing and hum:

Amerindian Air (Song):

Amerindians we/ come from the sky and sea/ Amerindians we./

Carib, Arawak, Arecuna, and Akawaio/ come from the sea and sky/ Wapisiana and Wai Wai.

Wapisiana and Wai Wai / come from the sea and sky/ Warrau and Atorai.

Patamona, Arawak and Macusi/ come from the sky and sea / Amerindians we.

The Diaspora Engagement Conference:

Some reflections

By Dr. Lear Matthews



UNIVERSITY of GUYANA

*The University
of Guyana
Welcomes
You*



The First Diaspora Engagement Conference with the theme: ***Dreaming Diaspora Engagement, Doing Diaspora Engagement***, was held in Guyana at the Ramada Georgetown Princess Hotel July 23 – 28, 2017. Among the participants were members of the GCA executive board and media team and other Diaspora organizations.. The following is a brief report and some reflections.

Sponsored by the University of Guyana, the key objectives were listed as: Building a partnership with the Pan-Caribbean Diaspora; solicit proposals and ideas in capacity building on Diaspora engagement; provide an opportunity for researchers, scholars, community advocates interacting and sharing major concerns, while discussing matters relating to their respective communities. The Planning Committee comprised of participants from Guyana and the Diaspora, and the conference attracted over 243 persons from the homeland, other Caribbean countries, the U.S., Nigeria, Mexico, Ghana and the United Kingdom.

It is important to note that tertiary educational institutions such as the University of Guyana have a mandate to provide relevant research and service to support sustainable development. By organizing this conference U.G. has demonstrated an understanding of the need for multi-sector collaboration creating an opportunity for open dialogue to unravel the barriers and tensions among stakeholders (i.e. government, Diaspora, local communities). In my view, there were two underlying premises of the conference: (1) The assumption that the Diaspora wants to be engaged and (2) The Diaspora is potentially a valued contributor to sustainable development.

The opening ceremony was impressive, with the welcoming remarks by UG Vice Chancellor, Professor Ivelaw Griffith and the keynote address by Guyana's President, David Granger. The papers presented were engaging and reflected the conference theme well. Two significant sub-themes emerged throughout the conference: the need to involve the youth more, and the apparent continuous ethnic divide. The wide range of topics advocated economic investment and giving the Diaspora a "Voice". Presentations included: the need to address the generation gap; the role and challenges of Hometown Associations; opportunities for investment; preparing migrating Guyanese families for acculturation in North America; lessons from other Diasporas including Mexico and India; the realities of Guyana becoming a petroleum exporter and the role of the Diaspora; Case studies on the experience of

Guyanese residing in Canada and the U.S. and the Caribbean; and Diaspora engagement models from Jamaica and other nations.

Apart from the on-site presentations, video interviews included Ms. Gina Miller, investment manager and philanthropist based in England, and former British Parliamentarian, Baroness Valerie Amos. Guyanese-born member of the British Parliament, David Lammy in his presentation emphasized the need for programs to bring young people to Guyana.

Notably, the Minister of Foreign Affairs did not attend, but Head of that Ministry's Diaspora Unit, Michael Brotherson; Minister of State Joseph Harmon; representatives from IOM (International Organization of Migration); the Minister of Education, and Opposition parliamentarian Gail Teixeira shared their views on Diaspora engagement. There were many promising recommendations, including the need for more 'grassroots' participation, and an increased Diaspora role in high school retention strategies.

Tours to selected areas of the interior provided a rare opportunity for Diaspora attendees to experience the lush beauty of our dear land. The conference ended with a cultural extravaganza. Performances by internationally acclaimed musician, composer and conductor, Keith Waite, Dave Martin of Tradewinds fame, East Indian dancers, African drumming and a Chinese Dance troupe were well received.

Plans for the establishment of the Caribbean Diaspora Engagement Center were announced and persons were invited to serve on the advisory board. The center was launched with a presentation of its banner by representatives from the University of Guyana and the University of the West Indies. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two institutions. This conference reflects an important step in the process of transnational connection. However, based on past experiences, skepticism regarding the government's commitment to Diaspora engagement seems to persist. Although not given much attention at the conference, there is a role for the arts and cultural heritage as a vehicle for Diaspora engagement.

CEA 9th Annual Conference

“Bridges”

April 5-April 7, 2018 Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront, St. Petersburg, FL.



©2013 MICHAEL HOLDEN PHOTOGRAPHY

And you O my soul where you stand,/Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,/ Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect them,/ Till the bridge you will need be form'd . . .

--Walt Whitman

St. Petersburg is home to the College English Association’s 2018 national conference, where we invite you to join us at our annual meeting to explore the many bridges that connect places, texts, communities, words, and ideas.

For complete information please go to www.cea-web.org.

We would be delighted to have you join us in the Sunshine City.

Dr. Juliet Emanuel, Executive Director, CEA.



Guyana United Youth Development Association of New York Inc. (GUYDA)

Is Hosting Its 13th Annual Affaire D' Honneur Presentation Dinner & Dance

On Saturday, November 11, 2017 From 9:00 P.M To 2:00 A.M



At Antun's Catering Hall 96-43 Springfield Boulevard, Queen's Village, N.Y. 11429

Music By: DJ Lady Supreme

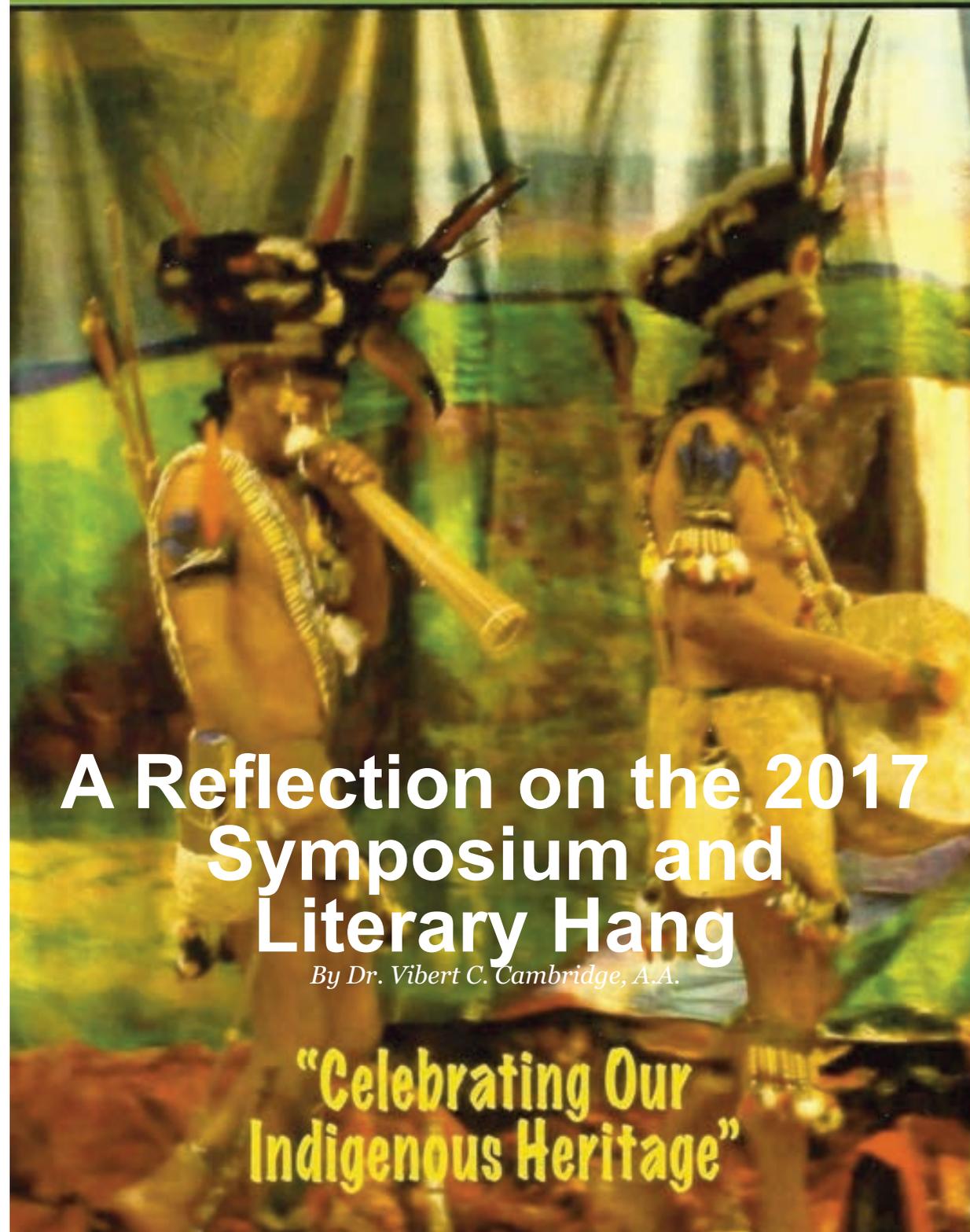
Tickets \$100 Per Person

- List of names and phone numbers: Mavis Atkinson, John Callendar, Hazel Glen, Sherry Hamilton, Beryl James, Leslie Stewart, Desmond Prass, Keith Jonas, Joan Joseph, Minette Melville, Patrick Patterson, Meigan Waddell, Cathy George, Jean Corbin.



Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc
Annual Symposium and Literary Hang

August 31 and September 2, 2017



A Reflection on the 2017 Symposium and Literary Hang

By Dr. Vibert C. Cambridge, A.A.

“Celebrating Our Indigenous Heritage”

For me, the 2017 Symposium and Literary Hang will be remembered as the most comprehensive exploration of Guyana’s indigenous heritage ever initiated by the Guyana Cultural Association of New York in its 15 years of organizing symposia.

In addition to the Dr. Desrey Caesar-Fox Memorial lecture, the 2017 Symposium and Literary Hang featured eleven sessions that provided a multi-sensory exploration of Guyana’s indigenous heritage.

The 2017 Symposium and Literary Hang was launched with Dr. Walter Edwards presenting the inaugural Dr. Desrey Caesar-Fox Memorial Lecture on Thursday, August 31, 2017. His lecture, “Desrey Caesar-Fox and the Amerindian Research Project,” is an essential contribution to our understanding of Guyana’s hinterland development policy in the early post-independence years.

The 2017 Symposium and Literary Hang reconvened on Saturday, September 2, 2017. The day-long event featured story-telling, original research, performances, and biographies all contributing to the contemporary conversation on Guyanese identity. Among the presentations were:

- Karao Group. The creation of Karaudanau.
- Victor Davson in conversation with Grace Aneiza Ali. “How the Warraus Came, Martin Carter’s Poetry and our First People.”
- Matoaka Little Eagle, “Telling the story.”
- Dan Cooper, “Alleluia: A highland shamanic revitalization movement.”
- Louisa Daggars and Dr. Mark Plew. “Recent Investigations of Prehistoric Shell Mounds in Northwestern Guyana.”
- Louisa Daggars and Dr. Mark Plew. “Guyana’s Archeological Agenda and the future of Cultural Resource Management.”
- Bobby Gonzales. “Acknowledging the Creation.”
- William I. Harris, “A Search for a Matapi Institute of Technological Research.”
- Doris Harper-Wills, “Iere”
- “They live within us,” Dr. Carmen Barclay Subryan in conversation with Dr. Juliet Emanuel.
- Hilton Hemerding, “The influence of the hinterland on me and my music.”



Dr. Walter E. Edwards.
 Photograph by Vibert Cambridge.



Dr. Juliet Emanuel, Convener, Symposium and Literary Hang.
Photo by Vibert Cambridge



Victor Davson and Grace Aneiza Ali.
Photo by Vibert Cambridge



Karoo Group.
Photo by Vibert Cambridge



Matoaka Little Eagle.
Photo by Vibert Cambridge



Bobby Gonzalez
Photo by Patricia Cambridge



Hilton Hemerding, A.A.
Photograph by Patricia Cambridge



Dr. Carmen Barclay Subryan.
Photograph by Patricia Cambridge

Altogether, the Symposium and Literary Hang was a gathering of citizens, artists, dancers, lyricists, musicians, scholars, writers, and culinary artists. They held conversations about institutional histories; archeological, anthropological, and linguistic evidence; and public policy regarding Guyana's indigenous heritage. A special edition of our monthly online magazine Guyana Folk and Culture will be dedicated to the Symposium and Literary Hang.



We, the members of the Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc., express our sincere thanks to the presenters at the 2017 Symposium and Literary Hang. Their contributions to our ongoing exploration of Guyana's indigenous heritage are substantial. Your ideas, analyses, and public policy recommendations are invaluable to a wider conversation that began at the national symposium during Guyana's Golden Jubilee in 2016. The Golden Jubilee symposium sought to facilitate cross-disciplinary discussion on four inter-related questions:

- Who are we?
- What has been our journey?
- What can we become?
- How do we get there?

Doris Harper-Wills.
Photo by Vibert Cambridge



Dan Cooper.
Photo by Vibert Cambridge

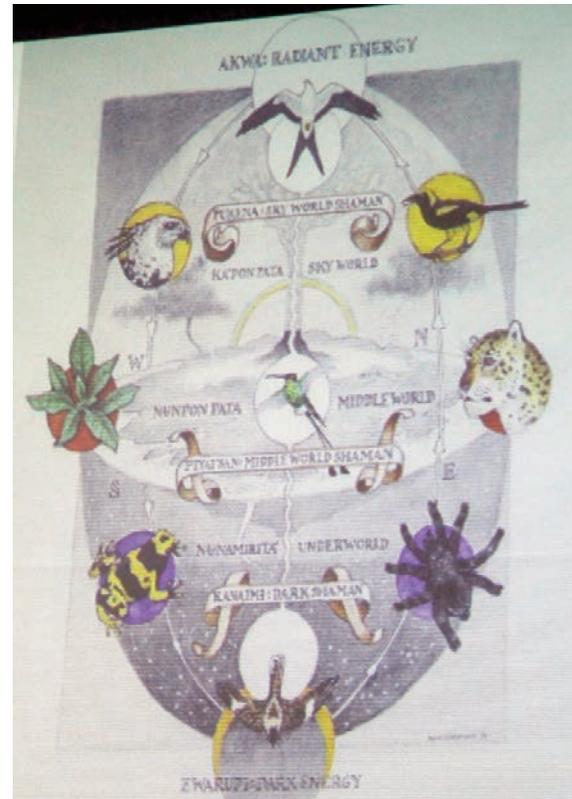
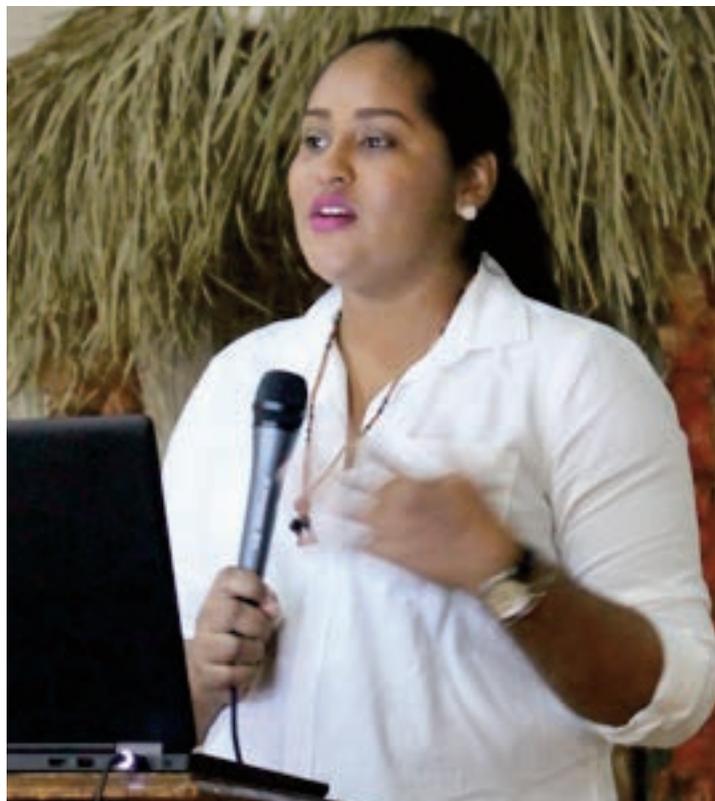


Illustration from Dan Cooper's presentation.
Photo by Vibert Cambridge



Louisa Daggers.
Photo by Vibert Cambridge



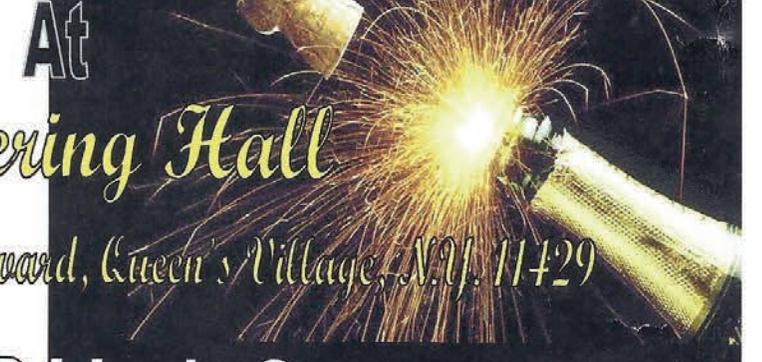
William I. Harris.
Photo by Vibert Cambridge



*Guyana United Youth Development
Association of New York Inc. (GUYDA)*

*Is Hosting Its
13th Annual Affaire D' Honneur
Presentation Dinner & Dance*

**On Saturday, November 11, 2017
From 9:00 P.M To 2:00 A.M**



**At
Antun's Catering Hall**

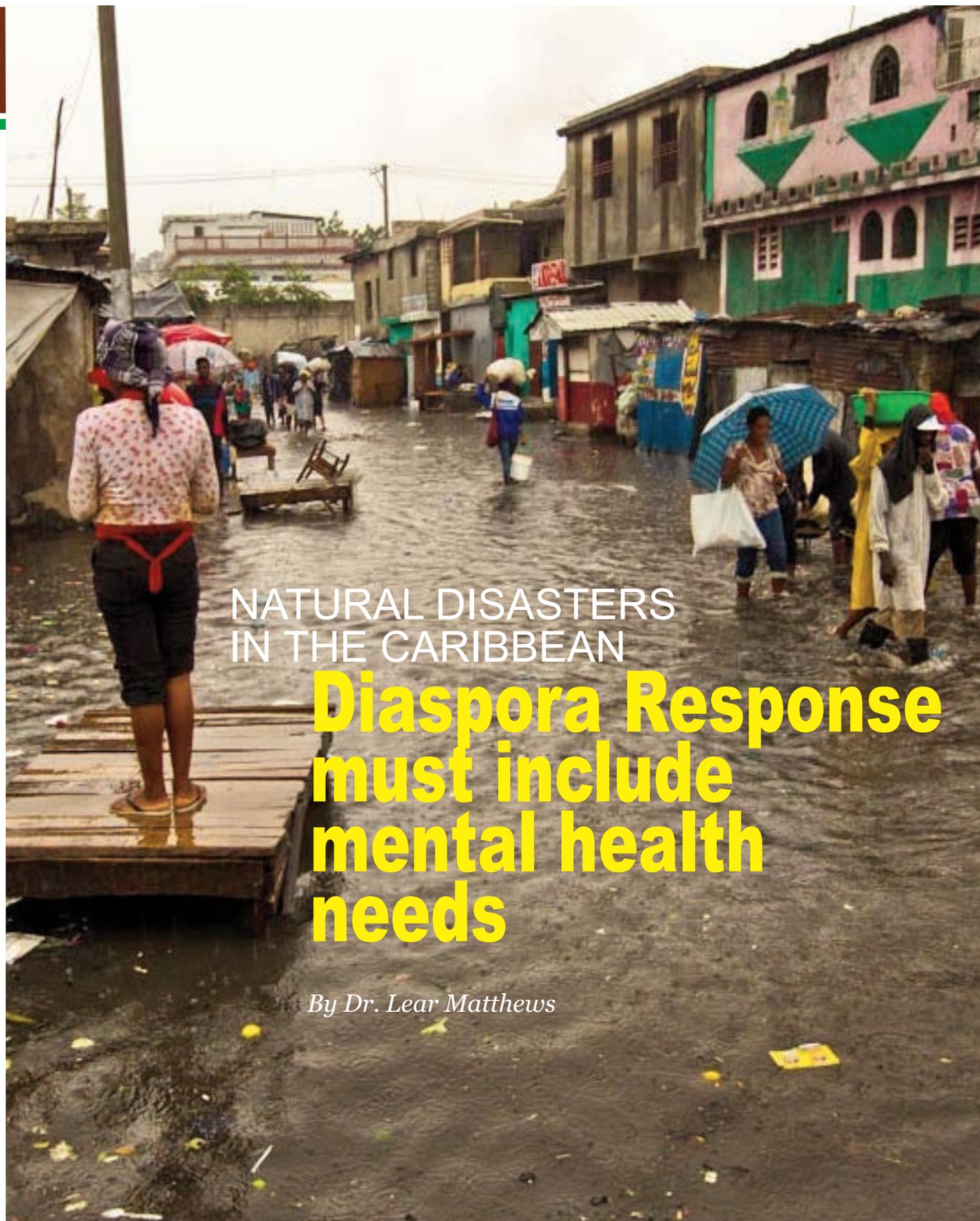
96-43 Springfield Boulevard, Queen's Village, N.Y. 11429

Music By: DJ Lady Supreme

Tickets \$100 Per Person

- | | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Mavis Atkinson</i> | <i>718-498-7526</i> | <i>Keith Jonas</i> | <i>718-527-5362</i> |
| <i>John Callendar</i> | <i>718-464-5189</i> | <i>Joan Joseph</i> | <i>718-287-1530</i> |
| <i>Hazel Glen</i> | <i>718-434-3231</i> | <i>Minette McIvillie</i> | <i>718-771-1143</i> |
| <i>Sherry Hamilton</i> | <i>718-749-3256</i> | <i>Patrick Patterson</i> | <i>646-713-9311</i> |
| <i>Beryl James</i> | <i>917-754-8313</i> | <i>Melgan Waddell</i> | <i>347-683-5910</i> |
| <i>Leslie Stewart</i> | <i>516-662-6109</i> | <i>Cathy George</i> | <i>347-240-0021</i> |
| <i>Desmond Prass</i> | <i>646-256-6587</i> | <i>Jean Corbin</i> | <i>646-912-2486</i> |





NATURAL DISASTERS
IN THE CARIBBEAN

Diaspora Response must include mental health needs

By Dr. Lear Matthews

The “Day of Giving” (October 9, 2017) sponsored by the Caribbean Diaspora Disaster Relief Coalition is admirable and timely. However, the Diaspora’s response must include an often neglected dimension of recovery and mitigation. Owing to the unprecedented intensity of multiple hurricanes in the region, long term mental health/trauma recovery services, particularly for the vulnerable and traumatized is essential. Analysts refer to trauma as “a sense of profound helplessness in the face of overwhelming danger, anxiety, and arousal when confronted with an external situation in which there is a high risk of death or injury to oneself or another”.

Although monetary/material contributions are important, social workers, nurses, psychiatrists and counselors should offer their services, through Diaspora Hometown Associations, collaborating with Helping Professionals in the Caribbean including the University of the West Indies, to address the mental health needs of survivors.

Crisis intervention immediately following a disaster is also essential, but an important part of recovery is the restoration of good mental health and long term counseling. In assessing behavioral health status, the relationship between trauma and loss must be underscored. Trauma is viewed as a particular category of experiencing loss which can deplete the survivor’s self-esteem and morale, and diminish their will to continue living.

The magnitude of the devastation caused by recent hurricanes and earthquakes in the Caribbean region, Mexico and southern United States has highlighted the vulnerability of both economically advanced and impoverished nations to natural disasters. The loss of life, and material resources, and the capacity of survivors to cope are intricately connected to the immediate and long-term response of governments and relief organizations, including the Diaspora and resilience of the affected population. In the aftermath there has been praise for the gallant, humanitarian efforts of first responders and neighbors. However, after the cameras are gone, the actions and policies of public officials regarding appropriate pre- and post disaster planning and response to the overall needs of survivors will be scrutinized as is common in the aftermath of disasters.

The poignancy of the lessons learned in the wake of these disasters is clearly noticeable and in some instances, unprecedented. For example, the thought of a refugee crisis involving displaced American citizens and the contentious debate about preferential media coverage and treatment of certain communities and countries, based on their link to the U.S., all mark a new reality in assessing the cause and effects of natural disasters.

As nations grapple with explanations and possible solutions, factors such as geopolitics, socio-economic realities, race, the influence of the media on public consciousness, and skepticism about donating to myriad Disaster Funds, feature prominently in the decisions about resource allocation for recovery. What seems to be absent is the urgency in responding to the inevitable psychological impact.

The Caribbean region is among the areas of the world that have been decimated by natural disasters, including hurricanes, volcano eruptions, earthquakes, floods and mudslides. The human cost of the resulting devastation, manifested in death, displacement, and untold suffering, has caused multifaceted risks to the affected populations. Concomitantly, governments and NGOs are challenged to respond in a timely manner, and are expected to develop programs that would facilitate the re-establishment of individual safety and community connectedness. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (the FEMA of that region) focuses on strategies to mitigate problems in the aftermath of escalating natural disasters.

However, a lack of comprehensive and effective responses to these disasters precluded meaningful recovery in the past. In particular, there have been insufficient and inadequate shelters for survivors, while collaboration between the public and disaster management agencies was virtually non-existent. Although economic losses are duly estimated and fatalities recorded, the response to traumatized groups and individuals has not been seriously addressed in recovery efforts. Arguing that there is a relationship between economic recovery and emotional well being, analysts suggests that, in assessing the psychological needs of trauma survivors in developing countries, practitioners must acknowledge the significance of local economic and social recovery as a prerequisite to improve emotional well-being.

The Caribbean region’s exposure/vulnerability to various forms of natural disasters is increasingly evident. The 2005 Guyana flood, for instance, which disrupted more than seventy thousand households, was the nation’s worst natural disaster. Damage to the physical landscape, infrastructure and economy has been clearly visible in the aftermath of such disasters. However, the symptoms and effects of psychological trauma are invariably imbedded in a plethora of physical and concrete needs, and thus given less attention. Limited resources, including emergency response personnel and lack of preparedness for the difficult environmental conditions that follow, compound this problem.

One of the most ambitious disaster response efforts in the Caribbean was the establishment of the Caribbean Disaster Mitigation project. Its goal is to develop sustainable public/private disaster mitigation mechanisms that measurably lessen the loss of life, reduce potential damage, and shorten the disaster recovery period.

In many developing countries, the recovery process among the poor is likely to take longer. Further, in the Caribbean region, "repeated, overwhelmingly powerful assaults by nature tend to reduce victims to a state of passive, fatalistic acceptance" (EDP, 2005).

Acknowledging the need for effective response to those directly affected by disasters, relief organizations such as the Red Cross include psychological support services in their recovery plans. The Grenada Red Cross Society has consulted with local psychosocial support specialists, and UNICEF dispatched a psychologist/emergency specialist and a public health/education specialist to the eastern Caribbean in the wake of Hurricane Ivan in 2004. The purpose of that intervention was to "provide psychosocial rehabilitation for children and families traumatized by the sudden collapse" of Eastern Caribbean societies (UNICEF). In Jamaica, small psychological support teams were deployed to provide assistance and counseling to people living in shelters. In Guyana, the establishment of Listening Centers, and training seminars conducted for social workers, though on a small scale, were creditable.

Although well intended and signaled an awareness of the need for psychological recovery, those efforts were compromised by the lack of resources and inadequate coordinating of services. In planning for disaster mitigation following Hurricane Ivan in 2004, UNICEF (2005) sought to initiate activities that would respond to the psychosocial needs of families, specifically children, and the elderly, groups that are often most vulnerable to natural disasters. Invariably, those response efforts to the mental health needs were made within the context of broader planned intervention by governments and/or humanitarian organizations, which focus primarily on physical and infrastructural recovery.

The emotional stress related to natural disasters is often created by destruction of property, physical injury, loss of home and/or relatives, financial hardship, community displacement and uncertainty about the future. Research on trauma and loss from natural disasters emphasize the relationship between flood exposure and psychosocial loss, the

sense of being out of control, and the need to reconnect. However, there is a dearth of studies of the psychological effects of disasters in the Caribbean. Observers argue that natural disasters in developing countries negatively affect the mental health of a broad cross-section of the population, as compared to more developed countries. Although there has been some progress, research on natural disasters in developing nations have not reflected the frequent occurrence of such disasters. Little is known about how culture shapes the psychological impact of disasters and very little about recovery under harsh conditions.

Trauma recovery from natural disasters in developing countries, steeped in western psychological approaches, is often incompatible with the customs and beliefs of the affected local communities. Indeed local economic and social recovery involving the participation of survivors can influence psychological recovery. In assessment recovery following the 2004 tsunami, it was suggested that "the most appropriate initial response to trauma resulting from natural disasters is a combination of material aid like housing, food, and employment alongside vaguely defined community building programs, rather than a focus on specific psychiatric support". Culturally relevant evidence-based research and culturally competent interventions are needed. Attempts to understand the needs of victims and survivors, traditional response to loss, their natural healing systems and conceptualization of mental health, are essential in any assessment, intervention or comprehensive recovery process. As natural disasters in the Caribbean reoccur, expressions of psychological distress and the perceived role of helping professionals will determine the extent to which survivors will benefit from or seek out mental health counseling. Regardless, the fatalistic leaves it in God's hands.

Note:

This humanitarian crisis is likely to increase the number of displaced persons from affected non-US territories seeking to migrate to the United States. Congresswoman Yvette Clarke warned, "We must be prepared to welcome them". The U.S. should offer Temporary Protected Status (TPS), which is a program to relocate victims/survivors of natural disasters to the U.S.

St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church

The Very Reverend Eddie Alleyne & Kay Alleyne
cordially invite you to the

Annual Gala

Friday, November 10, 2017

St. Gabriel's Golden Hall

331 Hawthorne Street, Brooklyn, NY 11225

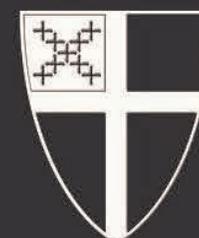
Cocktails

8:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Dinner/Dance

10:00 p.m. - 3:00 a.m.

Donation
\$100.00



Music by
DJ Batch Production

RSVP 718-774-5248 no later than October 15, 2017

TRAVEL

|