GUYANA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION LAUNCHES 3-YEAR FESTIVAL PROGRAM

Under the banner of Ma’iupe, a Makushi word for Working together in Solidarity, we are inviting your participation in a three-year project. The goal is to culminate with a grand expression in February 2020 – the 50th anniversary of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana.

Year #1: Study the history and celebrate the heroes and heroines.
Year #2: Innovate and Design—workshops in Guyana.
Year #3: Display at home and across the diaspora.
EDITORIAL

Every year the month of June marks the beginning of the celebratory events of the Guyana Cultural Association of New York.

Now in its 17th year of existence, and still going strong, GCA, cognizant of the challenges ahead, continues to make the molding of youthful minds a priority, by making significant contributions, particularly in areas of education and cultural development in the Caribbean community right here in Brooklyn.

It is our goal that this edition of our magazine will inspire you to continue supporting and become a part of GCA’s colorful, cultural sustaining proceedings. This year and for the following three years we are professing continuity and togetherness while celebrating the Festival Arts.

Each year Guyanese nationals in the Diaspora, the home country and further afield look forward to celebrations such as Mashramani, Phagwah, Emancipation, Easter - which include the Bartica Regatta and the Rupununi Rodeo - Amerindian Heritage month, Arrival Days, Deepavali, both Eid-ul-fitr and Eid-ul adha, Youman Nabi and Christmas, to name a few. In planning and implementing these festivals, we hope to bring about unity and treasured togetherness. The Summer Workshop Series (SWS) this year welcomes two (2) new administrators: Mr. Maurice Blenman and Mr. Clive Prowell. Through the kind courtesy of Fly Jamaica Airways, the Department of Culture, Guyana and Roy Singh of SCB World Realty, three interns from Guyana; Clinton Duncan, Mwanza Glenn and Paul Charles will join the GCA’s SWS and the 2018 Folk Festival this year.

In this issue, GCA’s President Dr. Vibert Cambridge enunciates the theme for this year and explains the in-depth meaning of our theme “Ma’iupe = "working together." THE SPIRIT OF SOLIDARITY within Guyana’s Festival Arts and how it will be applied to our three year program of events from 2018 thru 2020; Read Dr. Juliet Emanuel’s article, explaining how the Festival Arts will fit into our Summer Workshop Series; A perspective on the current U.S. immigration issue regarding the perils of separating immigrant families is presented by Dr. Lear Matthews; Centenarian and Matriarch, Clara Winifred Durant celebrates 100 years, among many other interesting stories, commentaries and articles.

We certainly hope that you will join us at these year’s scheduled events as we continue to celebrate various dimensions of our cultural heritage in the Diaspora.

You are urged to secure a clipping or palm card displaying our calendar of events so that you don’t miss any of the action! Join us on Face Book, and link to www.guyfolkfest.org for all of the scheduled activities.

As we forge forward, we need your input as well as your financial support.

Sincerest thanks to our advertisers, sponsors and well-wishers for your dedication, continued patronage and support.

Edgar Henry
Editor, June 2018
Although it is necessary and important to understand and to celebrate the histories of Guyana’s individual racial/ethnic communities, it is equally necessary to begin to explore and to celebrate the histories of solidarity and exchange in the Guyanese experience.

For almost two decades GCA has been exploring and celebrating the wisdom of Guyana’s folk heritage. We believe that our folk heritage is the accumulated wisdom garnered from more than 12,000 years of settlement in the Guyana space. This body of knowledge offers us a way to try to address the seemingly intractable problems facing the people of this land.

For almost two decades, we have been grappling with four interrelated questions:

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

Our early efforts have focused on the “Who are we?” question. Through our annual Folk Festival seasons and the “We bridgin …” initiative, we have sought to identify the origins, geographies and histories of what Peter Kempadoo has referred to as our root cultures. The encounters, interactions, and exchanges among the peoples of these root cultures over the past 12,000 years have created the distinctiveness in Guyanese expressions, e.g., art, food, fashion, music, dance, and language.

This season, we will consider: “What can we become?” and “How do we get there?” Central to these questions is the task of working together—the essence of solidarity. We propose to explore the spirit of solidarity within the Guyanese festival arts.

Guyanese have used natural, imported, and “found” materials. We have bent wire, painted with lights, painted on bodies, and experimented with a wide color palette to create costumes and to decorate floats, public buildings and homes to express the perennial stories of our festivals.

Guyana has many national and community festivals. Among the national holidays in which we experience the festival arts are Mashramani, Phagwah, Easter (including the Rupununi rodeos), Arrival Day; CARICOM Day; Emancipation Day; Amerindian Heritage Month, Eid-al-Adha; Deepavali; Youman Nabi; and Christmas (Christmas Day, Boxing Day, Old Year’s Night). Of course, our individual communities also celebrate “First Crop,” Kwe-Kwe, Matticore, and organize the Turtle Festival, Parasharas, Fairs and Melas. These too also draw upon the festival arts.

Guyanese festivals celebrate births, rites of passage, changing seasons, national political achievements, and the reaffirmation of our spiritual and religious affiliations. The preparation for these festivals is an act of solidarity bridging communities, generations, genders, and ethnicities to apply the festival arts in the design of artfacts and costumes and the sharing of other creative expressions. The Festival arts are barometers of the state of the Guyanese experience.

GCA’s “Spirit of solidarity in the Guyanese Festival Arts” launches a three-year program of activities to culminate in 2020 during the events to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. As is our tradition of participation, our goal is to bring together the community (e.g., Guyanese designers, the Neil Chan Foundation, and other stakeholders) to design a program of events to showcase innovations in the Guyanese festival arts. We anticipate that a series of technical workshops will be held in Guyana during 2019.

One of our goals is to promote the Guyanese festival arts with the diaspora. We anticipate that elements of Mashramani 2020 will be shared at major Guyanese celebrations—Atlanta Carnival, Guyana Folk Festival, Labor Day, and Last Lap Lime.

The new Ma’iupe phase is GCA’s contribution to the exploration and celebration of the history of solidarity and fusion in the Guyanese experience.

We believe the three-year program will begin to answer the third and fourth questions: What can we become? How do we get there? As we say in Akawoio, “Tambolo byuk goh’manodok!” “Together we live!”

Dr. Vibert Cambridge, A.A.
When Nanley and Bettelheim’s Caribbean Festival Arts was published in 1988, the authors identified three festival traditions – Carnival, Johnkunnu (Christmas masquerade), and Hosay – that were at the heart of Caribbean festival art. There was little reference to the scope of the Guyanese tradition and practice. Thirty years later, any survey of Caribbean festival arts must include the Guyanese experience.

Guyana has many national and community festivals. Guyanese have used natural, imported, and “found” materials. We have “bent wire,” painted with lights, painted on bodies, and experimented with a wide color palette to create costumes and to decorate floats, public buildings and homes to express the perennial stories of our festivals. Here are some examples:

**FESTIVAL ARTS IN GUYANA**

*Dr. Vibert Cambridge, A.A.*

*Sunscape. Photograph by Dmitri Allicock.*
The Dragon at Mash 2012. Photograph by VC

Macaw at Mash 2012. Photo by VC

All the Presidents, Mash 2016. Photograph by ??

Mash 2018: Photo by Amanda Richards
Students of E.R. Burrowes School of Art, 2018

PHAGWAH
Photograph by Nigel Hughes
EASTER

Photograph courtesy of Carinya Sharples

Easter – A sky show ...

Photograph courtesy of Amanda Richards

Phagwah 2018: photograph by John Greene
CHRISTMAS SEASON (Christmas Day, Boxing Day, Old Year's Night).

Boysie Sage All Stars 1971. Photograph courtesy of Julio Thijs
“The African sensibility of masquerade is a major focus of the festival arts. Despite their different origins, Africans in the Americas understood and practiced the masquerade, combining music, dance, costume, sculpture, and drama in a single performance.” (N&B. 1988)

Guyanese festivals celebrate births, rites of passage, changing seasons, national political achievements, and the reaffirmation of our spiritual and religious affiliations. The preparation for these festivals is an act of solidarity bridging communities, generations, genders, and ethnicities to work together and apply the festival arts in the design of artifacts and costumes and the sharing of other creative expressions.

Community gatherings, including Kwe Kwe, Matticores, Parasharas, fairs and melas are also sites for the Festival Arts.

The Festival arts are barometers of the state of the Guyanese experience. Take the case of Tadjah and Kwe Kwe. The reference to Guyana in Caribbean Festival Arts was related to Hosay – Tadjah. The article used the loss of that aesthetic to the 1930s when it was banned.
There is a tradition

Dis aye Tadjah sequence in a Kwe Kwe. Photo by VC

Dis aye Tadjah sequence in a Kwe Kwe. Photo by VC
Bookers Universal 1953. Photograph courtesy of Wayne McWatt.

Christmas in Georgetown. Photograph by Dawn Fraser.
THE HINTS OF INNOVATION
We believe that over the years there has been a maturity and cross fertilization in the festival arts in Guyana. Among the innovations and fusions is a new generation of body painting:
Through the kind courtesy of Fly Jamaica Airways, the Department of Culture, Guyana and Roy Singh of SCB World Realty, Clinton Duncan, Mwanza Glenn and Paul Charles arrived in New York to intern with the GCA’s Summer Heritage Workshop Series (SWS) and the 2018 Folk Festival.

This is the 3rd year young artists from Guyana will be interning with GCA. In addition to working with the young people, Clinton, Mwanza and Paul will themselves attend workshops to enhance their own artistic development.

In 2017, working along with GCA’s Youth Director Clive Prowell and other members of staff of the SWS, a play written by Clinton Duncan for the closing recital entitled “Celebrating Our Indigenous Heritage” was a tremendous success. A rave review of the play made the pages of the New York Times. Clinton Duncan, an experienced writer/director, make-up artist and part time lecturer at the National School of Theatre, will again be working on the Performing Arts Module with the youth and has already written an exciting short play entitled “The Campfire Chronicles.” The play reflects the GCA’s 2018 theme “Ma’iupe = “working together.”

The SPIRIT OF SOLIDARITY within Guyana’s Festival Arts.

Clinton Duncan

Mwanza Glenn

Paul Charles

Under the banner of Ma’iupe, a Makushi word for Working together in Solidarity, we are inviting your participation in a three-year project. The goal is to culminate with a grand expression in February 2020 – the 50th anniversary of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. Year #1: Study the history and celebrate the heroes and heroines. Year #2: Innovate and Design—workshops in Guyana. Year #3: Display at home and across the diaspora.
About the Summer Heritage Workshop:

The series include:

**Music:** Folk songs, folk music, ring play, gospel, music theory and practice and the history of music in the Caribbean Diaspora

**Dance:** Theory of movement, history of dance, dance form and meaning related to the Caribbean Diaspora, instruction and practice of specific movements.

**Arts and Crafts:** Theory of art in general, art forms related to the environment of the Caribbean, found art.

**Science:** Science in the art of construction of toys, including kites, cooking and observation of and interaction with the environment, including space.

**Communication:** Understanding communication, voice and diction, action, the written word, publishing (the chap book)

In addition, the activities of each week are literacy based with a critical inquiry component. The use of an on-site library is planned.

Our staff is largely volunteers as it has been in previous years and we thank them for their commitment and interest in the development of the underserved youth of our community.

SWS this year welcomes 2 new Administrative Directors: Mr. Maurice Blenman and Mr. Clive Prowell. Dr. Juliet Emanuel and Mr. Edgar Henry continue to oversee the Workshop Series as members of the GCA Board. Other Counselors for this year include: Edgar Henry, Hilton Hemerding, Raymond Bacchus Boysie Bishop and Keith Proctor (music); Lear Matthews, Charles Liverpool and Selwyn Collins (Literacy); Roy Brummell (STEM); Grace Hale, arts and craft; Pat Jordan-Langford (Etiquette);

Nurse Claudette Howell has been our resident RN and will be available again this year to take care of the needs of the students when necessary. Counselors in training include: Yves Coussou, Triston Isles, Jacqueline Medford and other former students over 16.

GCA thanks the Pastor and Council of St. Stephen’s Church for accommodating and welcoming the Summer Workshop Series each year.

The Summer Heritage Workshop Series is sponsored by New York City Council Members Mathieu Eugene, Jamaane Williams and Alan Maisel; Con Edison, Metroplus Health Plan, Fly Jamaica Airways, New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. SWS is also supported by Caribbean Vision Center, Guiding Light Construction, Edward Isaacs of the Crayola Company, The Bishops’ High School Alumni Association Tri-State Chapter, New York Tutorial Support Group and other community organizations.
Let us start our article on GCA’s SWS by quoting from the most recent essay, “School’s Out! The Verdict is In!” by the well known journalist, Ms. Yvonne Sam:

School will soon be over for the year. Here comes Summer!—Days are becoming longer, and the sun is positioned higher in the sky. Our children’s thoughts are now turned to video games, skateboarding, swimming, mall hopping and bike riding.

Yes, school is out and parents will be looking for things to keep their children occupied. Unfortunately for far too many kids, summer vacation is a time for forgetting. The saying “If you don’t use it, you’ll lose it,” is apt as kids who do not keep in touch with academics, especially reading over the summer regress. Their hard-earned reading skills decline.

Although kids are on vacation from school, it is extremely important that they continue to learn. Working on different subjects over the summer will have them in a state of readiness, prepared to thrive academically when August rolls around.

What will your kids be doing this summer? The truth is plain, their post-summer return should reveal considerable academic gain.

Starting on July 2 and ending on August 10, under the guidance and tutelage of experienced and award winning practitioners, youngsters from ages 5 through 14, will be introduced and encouraged in several content areas guaranteed to ensure they will be at the top of their game at the beginning of the new school.

From Monday through Friday, from 8 in the morning to 5 in the afternoon, they will enjoy workshops as varied as art, music, dance, cooking demonstrations, STEM, performance, voice and diction, digital production and prose and poetry composition, all underpinned by attention to literacy in the several subject areas. The days are spent in a fun, safe and respectful atmosphere thereby generating and promoting creativity in mind and body.

For early registration in Arts in the Community, Caribbean Heritage Summer Workshop Series (GCA’s SWS) and for a brochure containing all the offerings, please visit the SWS dedicated space: St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church Auditorium, 2806 Newkirk Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11226, any Saturday until the end of June or call 718 299 5207 and 1800 774 5762 for more information.

JOIN SWS FOR ONE OF ITS MOVIE NIGHTS!!!
Music is defined as a succession of tones, singly or combined to form melody, harmony, time and rhythm. As we celebrate the different forms and formats of music, it is necessary that we pause to reflect on its structure, shape, design composition, construction and appreciation while it fits squarely into our cultural heritage.

Music is an element of creation and improvisation, and throughout the years, various emotions have been expressed through this medium. For some, music captures the soul of the musician and catapults the listener to spheres beyond the finite. For others, it provides a comfort to a troubled soul or triggers emotion against corrupt systems.

The Guyana Arts and Cultural Center (GACC) kicked off to a good start on June 2nd and the ball is set in motion for weekly Saturday sessions at the St. Stephens upper level location at 2806 Newkirk Avenue in Brooklyn for music and dance from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Enthusiastic students were very eagerly concentrating on the theoretical analysis and poised to read sheet music while playing instruments such as the violin, guitar, piano saxophone and flute. Music masters Erwin Edwards “Sir Flantis” and yours truly are working arduously to assemble a quartet for the final performances of both dance and music by December this year.

The Guyana Cultural Association (GCA) Heritage Summer Camp, Summer Workshop Series (SWS) is poised to begin on July 2nd and Professor Keith Proctor, Hilton Hemerding, Boysie Bishop and several instructors will add their unique touch as they demonstrate and impart musical notation, folk music, gospel and steel pan to the juniors. Last year the focus was on our Indigenous people showcasing musical talents, customs, literacy, dance art and performing arts to reflect some of our ancestors such as the Caribs and Arawaks. This year the camp will create and showcase a synthesis of togetherness and a somewhat different image. Our Cultural Director Claire Goring with her masterpiece designs and exquisite costumes will liaise with Clive Prowell and three artistic young men from Guyana, Clinton Duncan, Mwanza Glen and Paul Charles who will bring to fore the music fusion art form, performing arts, digital production, STEM and dance to coincide with our 2018 theme “Ma’iupe= ‘working together’ in the Spirit of Solidarity within Guyana’s Festival Arts.” The entire season will use its signature mark to display events to support a multisensory exploration of some Guyanese traditions of solidarity within the Festival Arts.

Every year the Guyana Cultural Association of New York celebrates the Literary Hang and the Symposium. These exercises are spearheaded by our Secretary Dr. Juliet Emanuel and President Dr. Vibert Cambridge. Readers and presenters would express the word in true musical rhythmic pattern placing emphasis on meter, iambic pentameter, blank verse, and other models of fiction and nonfictional proficiency. One did not have to understand the rudiments of music to comprehend and appreciate the augmented and diminished rhyme, poetry and prose that were so eloquently enunciated in musical style in the past. I have full assurance that the trend will continue much more to advance and maintain that standard for sustainability.
Sister Winnie turns 100
Glowing Congratulations to beloved Centenarian, Clara Winifred Durant

Clara Winifred Durant, known as Sister Winnie, celebrated her 100th birthday on June 4, 2018. This milestone was marked by a gathering of family and friends at the American Legion Post Ballroom, Valley Stream, Long Island on Sunday, June 10th. The White Attire Affair turned out to be an afternoon of elegance, praise, thanksgiving, love, joy, memories, nostalgia and admiration for an extraordinary daughter of the Guyana’s soil.

Sister Winnie was born in Charlotte Street, Bourda, Georgetown, British Guiana on June 4, 1918 to parents Alberta and William Durant. She was known as a woman of class, pride and sophistication, upholding standards of etiquette that positively benefited those around her. She was dedicated to family, friends and was aware of the social attributes essential to personal growth. During the wonderful celebration of this important occasion, the matriarch was congratulated and honored by representatives from every generation present, all of whom showered love, gratitude and shared indelible memories of a life well-lived and continue to grace our presence.

RECEIVES WRITTEN PAPAL BLESSING FROM POPE FRANCIS AND CITATION FROM COUNSEL GENERAL BARBARA AHERLY

Clara, a staunch Catholic, received a written Papal Blessing from Pope Francis, which was read and presented at the celebration. She was also the recipient of a Citation of Congratulations from the Counsel General of Guyana, Honorable Barbara Atherley, who praised Sister Winnie for her love, dedication to her family and friends in the home country and in the USA.

The Guyana Cultural Association joins the extended family and friends in congratulating Sister Winnie on this remarkable achievement.

GCA RECEIVES METROPLUS HEALTH PLAN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AWARD

The Community Partnership Award is given to the nominated organizations that achieves the highest score based on a detailed criteria. The categories of the Annual Community Partnership Awards (ACPA) criteria include various aspects of our partnership including but not limited to: Organization’s Common Goals & Objectives, longevity of our relationship, Co-partnerships in community activities, Quantifiable Results based on educating/enrolling the uninsured population and ability to connect MetroPlus to new Partnerships.

Receiving the Award on behalf of the Guyana Cultural Association of New York, was Vice President Edgar Henry (not in picture Assistant Cultural Director Maurice Blenman).

Making the presentation: Left to right: Roger Miliner, Executive Director Marketing Dept., Lisa Simms, Associate Director, Edgar Henry GCA, Leroy Beresford Metroplus and Victor Bell III Director Marketing Dept.
As we celebrate National Caribbean Heritage Month, we must be vigilant about contemporary immigration issues. Restrictive immigration policies have undoubtedly escalated under the current U.S. government administration. Implications for the wider immigrant community, including the negative impact on cross-cultural understanding and collaboration must be taken into consideration by all immigrants.

The potential clinical and social perils of the egregious policy of separating families are clear. The forced separation of parents from their children, an act justified with biblical quotes, have evoked national and international outrage. Seeking asylum or refugee status is permitted by U.S. Immigration Law. However, this unconscionable, callous policy, labelled “zero tolerance” is reminiscent of the history of the U.S. as a country separating children from their parents among the poor and particularly people of color. This was prevalent during the 1800s with the Indian Boarding Schools, the Orphan Train movement and chattel Slavery earlier.

When parents are detained or held in custody for long periods, they are generally afraid to retrieve their unaccompanied minor children due to fear of deportation, and the children often end up in the child welfare system. The intersection between immigration law and child welfare compounds the problems for both systems, the families and the staff. The department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has been assigned to manage the social services aspect (and hopefully mental health needs) of migrant detainees. However, excessive delays at designated Ports of Entry exacerbate the separation of families. While family reunification and family permanency are central to the child welfare system, language barriers and cultural differences/nuances can cause negative repercussions.

Privately contracted detention centers featured prominently in administering services. Barriers can increase because of the following: Constant changes in immigration policies; lack of knowledge of personnel in both systems on how to navigate each system; family court judges lack of awareness of why parents may not be available to attend permanency hearings when they are detained; immigration judges who are not able to keep parents and children together. One government official stated, “we don’t need judges, we need more arrests”; and staff in both systems dealing with their own compassion for or biases against immigrants. Although most English speaking Caribbean immigrants emigrate by choice, the transnational experience can be daunting for some.

Separating children from their parents puts them at risk for myriad problems. These children often experience emotional trauma, potential safety risks, and their overall well-being is compromised. This causes anxiety and depression, manifested through aggressive and acting out behaviors including joining gangs to acquire a sense of belonging.

Dr. Lear Matthews
Humanitarianism is a doctrine based on humanity and the duty to promote human welfare. It is consistent with the values of “dignity and worth of the individual, service and social justice” that all human beings deserve respect and dignity. It is a universal doctrine we hold to be true personally, professionally and as nations. Consequently, we strive to help people who are oppressed due to persecutions, violence, religious differences, political philosophy, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, or the aftermath of wars and natural disasters.

The United States and hundreds of other countries ratified the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention treaty that builds on Article 14 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of the Human Rights, which recognizes the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries. According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website, “Refugee status or asylum may be granted to people who have been persecuted or fear they will be persecuted on account of race, religion, nationality, and/or membership in a particular social group or political opinion.”

USCIS states that an individual may apply for asylum in the United States regardless of country of origin or current immigration status. The asylum seeker may include her or his spouse and children who are in the United States on the application at the time filed or at any time until a final decision is made on the case. To include a child on one’s application, the child must be under 21 and unmarried. Current U.S. immigration policy (not law) informed by the belief that “America is overrun by illegal aliens and criminal refugees” is not based on facts, but on nativist rhetoric presumably designed to amp up a political base.

It is clear that immigration has become a simmering social issue churned by politics, economics and sentiments related to ethnocentric ideals. Politicians have been accused of using the issue of immigration as a ‘football’ to gain political latitude. The current administration exhibits xenophobic tendencies and is unpredictable in its actions regarding immigration. There is an urgent need to focus less on not appearing “weak” on immigration, but to be guided by moralistic and social justice principles. Policy decisions should be based on understanding the causes and consequences of push/pull factors of immigration and devising more coordinated humane strategies.

ICE should not be “abolished”, but reformed to reflect less politically motivated and more compassionate intervention for those who don’t pose a security threat to the nation.
COME TO A WORLD CUP VIEWING PARTY!

SOCCER FANS!

MetroPlus Health Plan is hosting a free World Cup viewing party!

There will be games, prizes, face-painting, sand art activities, giveaways and more.

MetroPlus Health Plan will be there to tell you if you or your kids qualify for free or low cost health insurance, regardless of your child’s immigration status.

Don’t miss this awesome MetroPlus event! Giveaways while supplies last.

Don’t miss it!

Old Boys and Girls High School Field
777 Rutland Rd, Brooklyn, NY 11206
July 7 10am-6pm July 15 11am-6pm

MetroPlus Health Plan
plan ahead

WE'RE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD