

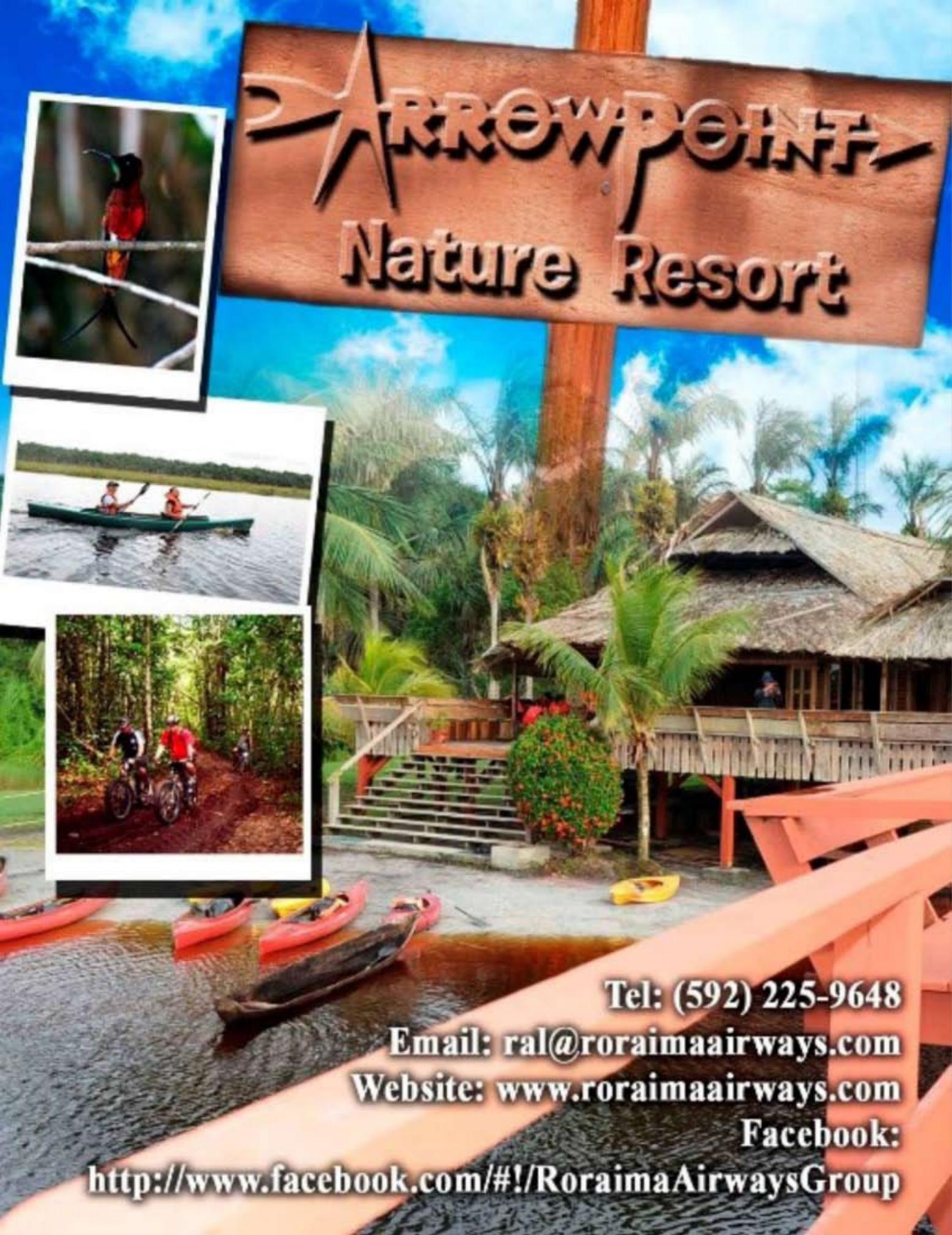
DIASPORA

TIMES INTERNATIONAL



APRIL 2017

Cover Photo
Her Royal Highness Receives His Excellency



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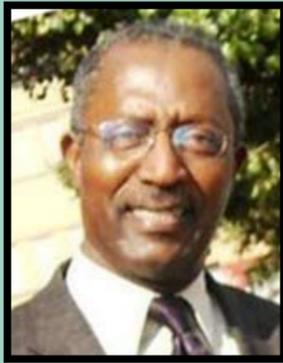
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EDITORIAL - APRIL 2017

SPRING TIME & TIDE IN GUYANA: EASTER



*Desmond Roberts is
Chairman of the Editorial
Board of the Diaspora Times.*

Easter is the saddest, holiest and happiest annual Christian holiday on the calendar. Easter embodies the basis of Christian faith in the renewal of life after death, with Christ giving his life for the sins of man and for those who believe in Him. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, his ascension into heaven and his promise to return to take the faithful to be with him in paradise, has to be believed if one can be considered an adherent of Christianity. For Guyanese Christians, and many others around the world, there is the sadness and regret of Good Friday's crucifixion, followed by the joy of Jesus' Ascension three days after and his appearance before his disciples.

For many years, only Christian holidays were observed in Guyana, reflecting the primacy and influence of the dominant European group. A major change took place after Guyana became a Republic, when the main holy days of the other two main religions were legislated as holidays. We learned about the main tenets and rituals associated with the Hindu and Muslim faiths. This acceptance and welcoming of the 'others' are now

taken for granted in Guyana, some fifty years after independence. Last month the Diaspora Times carried photographs of Phagwah being massively and widely celebrated by Guyanese of all stripes in all parts of the country. There are similar widespread and inclusive celebrations of Diwali, Christmas and Eid.

This Easter was a totally explosive celebration of the uniquely rising kites signifying the Ascension of the Lord Jesus. But in Guyana, we had our own twist. Easter now has regional significance on how the holiday is celebrated in the Cooperative Republic. With rodeo in Lethem, the Regatta in Bartica and kite flying all along the coast, many overseas-based Guyanese returned, most with children, to enjoy the breeze, spring tides, Spring Break and the good weather surrounding a truly national festival. Clearly, this unique Easter phenomenon, as President Granger pointed out, should be marketed properly as a significant tourism product. In this issue we lend the monetary and fiscal view (Dr. Khemraj) on the economy as well as possible public private partnerships (Wesley Kirton)

involving Diaspora initiatives.

What the Easter weekend also signified was the depth of togetherness that we enjoy as Guyanese, notwithstanding all the efforts to create separate voting blocs, based on religious practices or ethnic differences. We are a plural society and we enjoy the differences that make us unique. Which other country has, as everyday fare, casareep and pepperpot as well as metemgee, curry, garlic pork and baked snapper? All of which are enjoyed by all Guyanese. Guyanese, wherever they are, re-create our holidays and enjoy what we have in common. Peter Haynes gives us a view of the Diaspora in Barbados.

In the words of Rodney King, the man at the center of the Los Angeles riots, in which 58 people were killed and 11,000 arrested 25 years ago: "Can't we all get along?"

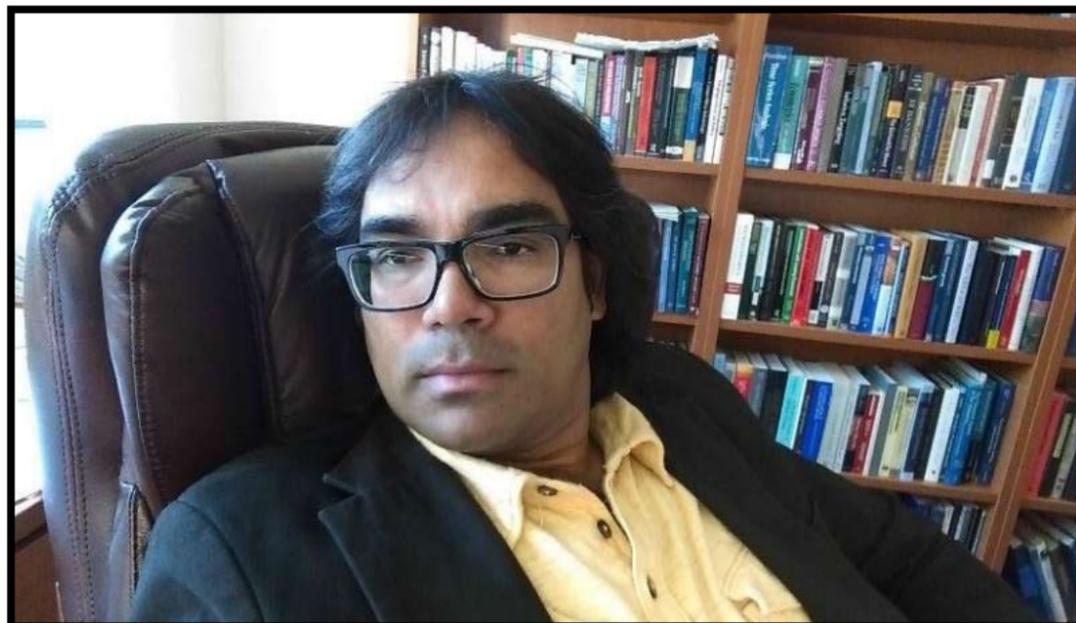
By Desmond Roberts



TO VAT OR NOT TO VAT PRIVATE EDUCATION?

By **Dr. Tarron Khemraj**

Tarron Khemraj is the Associate Professor of Economics, William G. and Marie Selby Chair, New College of Florida, 5800 Bay Shore Road, Sarasota, FL 34243



There is much display of public discontent and protests in Guyana these days. First, there was the Movement Against Parking Meters (MAPM) organizing passionate public displeasure against the introduction of parking meters for Georgetown. Many individuals are also unhappy because of the extension of the Value Added Tax (VAT) on private education.

Of course, Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo) workers are also protesting the closure of sugar estates. GuySuCo's troubles started way back in the early 1990s when several senior managers at GuySuCo argued publicly that WTO would not affect the preferential sugar price. Unfortunately, the PPP government believed the experienced managers.

The APNU+AFC government received a very bad hand with respect to GuySuCo. However, I still believe the Granger Administration could have done more. The government, like the PPP before, positions the solutions solely at the level of the firm. However, I have written many times in the past that the solutions are both firm level and macroeconomic. I am not going to say more here.

Let us focus on the first two sources of discontent: VAT on private education and the parking meter fiasco. Both events represent the desire to increase tax revenues for the central government and the Georgetown municipality, respectively. The Finance Minister has to make some difficult choices because the political types played big politics with the VAT,

which I have argued before the 2011 election should not be reduced since it is the only way to tax the underground economy. I argued that reductions should go towards income taxes for those doing legitimate work and filing returns. However, reducing the VAT requires making up the lost revenues by expanding the taxable list of items. The MOF decides it is a good idea to tax private education, several health services and water, at this point in time.

With respect to the Georgetown municipality, they also need to find ways to raise revenues to make the city the garden city my late father said existed during colonial times. However, that parking meter contract is as terrible a contract as one gets. It is way up there in distastefulness with the contract to Flip to build the access road to Amaila. The municipality will only receive a small cut of the revenues, while most will go to the private company. Moreover, the manner in which the contract was offered is a textbook case in bad governance.

While the desire to expand the tax base is understandable, the timing is not the best, given the perceptions of a weak economy. These perceptions are showing up in the depreciation of the Guyana dollar as people hoard

hard currencies and cut spending, likely the result of policy uncertainty and political factors. Expanding the tax burden in a weak economy is pro-cyclical. Most economists would agree that a counter-cyclical fiscal policy is desirable.

Education at the primary, secondary and university levels has important positive spillovers (positive externalities) in a society. When one person achieves an education, he or she is not the sole beneficiary. The family, neighborhood, church and society as a whole benefit. Democracy is more stable and effective, also. One standard recipe of economic policy suggests that these spillovers should be subsidized, not taxed. The government, for this reason, should remove the VAT on private education.

This does not mean, however, that we should not tax a for-profit university. I would tax a for-profit degree mill if it cannot achieve accreditation and acquire qualified professors. Perhaps there will be a 14 percent VAT on the proposed for-profit law school since we already have a relative surplus of lawyers. It is interesting to note that the government proposed to contribute (read subsidize) about US\$30 million to the school. Private investors will make up the rest of the US\$70 million. This is yet another

curious policy decision by this government, subsidizing an activity that has less positive spillovers compared with, for instance, a school of engineering.

By **Dr. Tarron Khemraj**

DR. NICOLE MOORE-CLARKE: FIRST FEMALE ELECTED PRESIDENT OF GABI.

By Peter Haynes



First Lady Sandra Granger and Rihanna

One of the definitions of the word "Diaspora" is that of a people scattered abroad having left their homelands to, in most cases, seek citizenship and jobs. The definition is very true when it refers to the Guyanese who have made Barbados (among other Caribbean countries and further afield) their homes.

The Guyanese Diaspora in Barbados is more than 30,000 – the official figure. Approximately 15 years ago, the Guyanese Association of Barbados Inc., was formed. It is more popularly referred to by its acronym GABI; and pronounced 'Gabby', but must not be confused with the Barbadian calypsonian, "The Mighty Gabby".

Despite the numerous highlighted immigration 'raids', the official number of Guyanese residing on the island still exceeds 30,000. It is unusual to hear comments from locals that Guyanese have made and continue to make positive and significant contributions to the island.

There was a period when the island's agricultural pursuits were effectively managed by Guyanese – in cane farming, ground provisions and other produce. Like many other Caribbean territories, Barbados imports approximately sixty percent of the food it consumes, seriously affecting the already scarce foreign currency reserves. Regrettably for the island, such production is something of the past.

The construction industry also benefited from the skills and productivity of the Guyanese craftsmen. Guyanese contribution to Barbados, however, does not stop in the production areas.

Not widely known, recognized or publicized is the fact that members of the Guyana Defence Force played a significant role in the island's 50th Independence Anniversary celebrations. The parachuting display and

the fireworks were spectacular. The Independence Memorial at the Garrison was constructed by eleven Guyanese, who only started work days before, completing the project after working around the clock. They demonstrated the skills, competency and efficiency for which they are reputed.

Why am I making reference to the many significant contributions Guyanese have made in Barbados, is because of my disappointment over Guyanese not showing sufficient support for fellow Guyanese in Bimshire. Of the over 30,000 Guyanese residing on the island, there are less than 300 GABI members in good standing. (Editor's Note: That is a significant number of members.)

GABI's objectives state, in part, that it is a non-political and non-religious organization established to promote the integration of Guyanese in the Barbados society; to endeavor to preserve and exhibit Guyanese culture; to provide resource information to immigrants in need of assistance within the scope of the law and GABI's constitution.

As usual with organizations, the main focus of some of the prospective members is that "GABI don't do anything for me." Instead of trying to shame them into contributing to the other 30,000 Guyanese, my answer is to engage my countrymen and women. 'Plan outreach programs, go to the people, talk to them, educate and organize them into seeing GABI as an organization in which they wish to be active members'. GABI's executive has to stop waiting until



April and May to mobilize people to attend the annual Taste of Guyana event.

The challenge is being thrown out to the new executive to make outreaches to the entire Guyanese community in Barbados to make GABI's objectives a reality.

GABI created history when it elected Dr. Nicole Moore-Clarke as its first female President. Dr. Moore-Clarke is a medical practitioner in Barbados. She is the daughter of the Vera.

Moore and the late Guyana Ombudsman Justice Winston Moore. In accepting the position as President, Dr. Moore-Clarke declared her passion for the community and her encouragement at having a strong executive team. The President also pledged to make GABI a shining example to everyone. Dr. Moore-Clarke called on all Guyanese both at home and abroad to be proud of their heritage, as Guyanese have much to offer Barbados, the Caribbean and the wider world.

The other members of the Executive are Jaimin Persaud-Piggott – First Vice President; Calvin Hamilton – Second Vice President; Esther Blue – Secretary; Sheion Thomas – Treasurer with Dr. Geoff Massey, Joseph Dolphin and Pam McDonald as Committee Members.



Guyanese and Barbadians have a colorful immigration past. Guyanese are now the travelers but the journey may yet lead Barbadians southwards to the shores of Guyana once more.

By Peter Haynes



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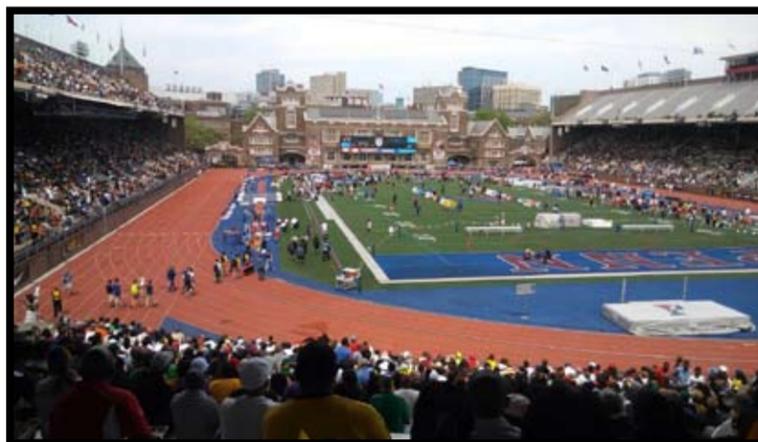
THE RAMOTARS DEPART:

It is normal for a parent to believe that his or her child is more trustworthy and competent than other children. However, it was unusual for three of former President Ramotar's children to have held influential (some crucial) positions in his administration. While son Alexei was sent off for bungling the E-Governance project very early after the APNU + AFC Coalition replaced the PPP in May 2015, it was to the credit of the new government that two of the Ramotar children were still at their jobs almost two years after. The scandal with unprotected bank withdrawals and unusually frequent gold sales, involving a brazen and corrupt cabal, has consumed Lisaveta Ramotar, who has been sent on leave from her position as General Manager of the Guyana Gold Board. Her brother Alvaro was also sent on leave from his position as Data Communications Manager of the Guyana Water Incorporated (GWI) for what some say was a major malfunction in the electronic system. There have been no adverse comments or complaints from either the former president or the PPP hierarchy on what might be considered high end nepotism or the discipline being meted out to the siblings for incompetence, if nothing else.

JUNIOR CARIFTA GAMES AND ATHLETICS NEWS:

The Junior Carifta Games are normally held over the Easter weekend; and are normally dominated by Jamaica which has invested heavily in organized athletics from the school level up. However, this 2017 outing in Curacao saw Guyanese 'home-based' and diasporic athletes harvesting four gold medals out of eight medals overall from its team of ten athletes. Although Jamaica ended up with 86 medals (39 Gold), it was the Guyanese (Linden) athlete, Compton Caesar, who won the marquee event – the 100 meters dash (with bronze in the 200 meters) - the first for any Guyanese athlete in that event, thus raising the profile of Guyana at the Games. The Guyanese women contributed two gold medals in the field events but though we received silver and bronze medals in the distance races from both men and women (gold from Natricia Hooper from the Diaspora in the Triple Jump) it was clear that the Jamaicans are producing athletes in all aspects of the sport. After 46 years, Guyana has never held the prestigious Games.

However, President of the AAG, Aubrey Hudson, has boldly stepped into the breach to organize the Junior South American Youth Championships (June 3-4) at short notice. This is a major exercise and volunteers should assist Hudson and the AAG in making this effort a success. If we do, we might just be ready to host some 28 nations for the Junior Carifta Games in the near future.



The Penn Relays

Feverish work was undertaken in New York to bring a West Coast Berbice high school team to the Penn Relays, held annually on the last weekend in April. The three day meet, held in Philadelphia, is the largest track meet in the USA and showcases high school and college talent from across the USA and Jamaica but increasingly from the Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago. The team won their heat, although I did not see their name on the program. The ad hoc Guyana team acquitted itself only reasonably but clearly needs to recruit some more youth from both the Diaspora and Guyana.



EASTER IN GUYANA:

It seems almost overwhelming for Guyana to have three well developed events in different parts of the country, all taking place over the Easter weekend. The Rodeo with its test of skills of horse riding and cattle 'control' is held in Lethem in the Rupununi and will attract incrementally larger crowds from the coast and across the Brazilian border when the North to South access roads are completed. Then there is the Bartica Regatta with beauty contests, dances, a road run and the most exciting speedboat races in the waters where the Cuyuni and Mazaruni rivers meet the mighty Essequibo. And then there was the usual explosion of pain and joy associated with children flying kites all along the coast; with Guyanese

coming from abroad to join thousands of families filling the parks and seawall, eating and drinking with their friends and relatives. Maybe, we need a schedule a tourism product, offering Saturday at Lethem, Sunday in Bartica and Easter Monday along the coast, wherever there is the lovely Spring breeze.

And then there was Linden Week. And May has 'holidays for so' – May Day, Arrival Day and Independence Anniversary.



CONT'D IN THE NEWS FOR APRIL 2017

WHO WOULD WANT TO ASSASSINATE PRESIDENT GRANGER?

Senior security officials are taking seriously a televised report from a man claiming that he was offered US\$ 35,000 (G\$ 7M) by a businessman to assassinate President Granger. Apart from undervaluing both the man's life and President Granger's, there appears to be some concern that a clumsily plotted attempt might have been concocted to bring about a change in leadership more acceptable to some sections of the community. Guyana could do without these incendiary actions and this upheaval at this time. Time to tighten up.

QC BRIGHTENS ITS FIELD OF DREAMS:

Local but mainly diaspora alumni from Queens College could take the eyesore no more and got together to cut the heavy grass that had taken over the playing field that once allowed two football and two cricket games to be played simultaneously. A field where every student was mandated to play games. The burning issue is whether the maintenance of the field and the labs and educational activities should be done through the fundraising efforts of the Board of Governors, Parent Teachers Association and Alumni organizations? Surely, the government should cover the costs of upgrading and maintaining all school facilities and their personnel costs, leaving tours, club activities, competitions and certain awards to the fundraising initiatives of students and their supporting adult organizations. Indeed, collaboration between the schools and voluntary organizations associated with the schools, should not absolve the government of the responsibility for adequately providing the annual schools' budget for public education.



50 Years of Bliss: Francis Quamina Farrier and his wife Patricia (nee Blackmore) on Saturday April 29, 2017, their Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary

DIASPORA AND HINTERLAND AIRSTRIPS

Air transport... domestic and international... is critical to the development of every country. The safe, reliable and affordable provision of efficient air service cannot be overestimated among the essential services which contribute to development by moving both people and cargo.

Recently, as president of the Florida-headquartered Guyanese American Chamber of Commerce, I had the honor of chairing the first Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the National Air Transport Association (NATA) of Guyana, held in Georgetown. I have also been visiting locations in Guyana's hinterland, observing the conditions at many airstrips. While these airstrips are safe, there is need to upgrade them not only to provide for better aviation conditions but also to improve conditions for the passengers landing and taking off from these airstrips.

Further, quite often, aircraft have to evacuate patients who need medical attention beyond the hinterland health center; and many of these airstrips are not lit. Some of the airstrips are also located near mountains.

As chair of the meeting I threw out the suggestion that the Government of Guyana look to the Diaspora for investment in upgrading hinterland airstrips. This could be pursued as profitable business through public-private partnerships involving Diaspora entrepreneurs and the Government. Quite possible are: asphalted runways, which can be lit at night, utilizing solar power; small terminal buildings with bathroom and other facilities, security; and even small hangers for aircraft

thus saving them unnecessary return flights to the coast. The upgrading of these airstrips would not only better serve the indigenous and mining communities but also open up the agri-business and tourism sectors.

The Guyanese Diaspora, especially since the election of the new Government in May 2015, along with the announced discoveries of vast oil reserves in Guyana's maritime space, has been expressing widespread interest in investing in Guyana. These are investment opportunities which the Diaspora should pursue and the Government should encourage. Minister in the Ministry of Public Infrastructure with responsibility for Aviation, Annette Ferguson, who was the keynote speaker at the NATA meeting, has invited the submission of a concept paper that would outline how such a public-private partnership would function.

Among others participating were US Ambassador to Guyana Mr. Perry Holloway, Chairman of the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) Lt. Col. (Retd) Larry London, GCAA Director General, Lt. Col. (Retd) Egbert Field and chief executive officer of the Cheddi Jagan International Airport.

Over the years, Guyanese have suffered frustrations with international air services to the country especially since the closure of Guyana Airways Corporation (GAC) and the short-lived presence of Delta. However, Guyanese entrepreneurs have stepped up to

partner with others to provide service through Fly Jamaica and Dynamic International Airways, and a seasonal Eastern Airlines charter service. The old BWIA [now

Caribbean Airlines (CAL)] and LIAT continue to service traditional Guyanese population centers, while Surinam Airways plies the Miami-Georgetown route. Aruba Airways aims to begin operating out of Guyana soon.

Guyanese in the Diaspora look forward to heightened levels of customer service from many of the airlines serving Guyana and destinations in North America. We in the Diaspora travel in large numbers and represent the single largest category of passengers using these services. We deserve higher levels of quality customer service. I am aware of the efforts of the GCAA to ensure that these airlines provide internationally acceptable levels of service to Guyanese and that safety is never compromised. There is a critical role that air transport has to play in facilitating the efficient and affordable movement of products, especially agricultural produce to coastal and North American markets. Our agri sector remains very important notwithstanding the country's oil discoveries.

We must praise the domestic air transport operators, especially Annette Arjune-Martins and Gerry Gouviea, president and vice president respectively of NATA, for forming themselves into an association and for seeking to provide safe and cost-effective service to passengers travelling to the hinterland. Again, we the Diaspora, bringing potential investors, want to ensure safe and reliable business transport around the country; not to mention when we come home with our families to enjoy all that Guyana has to offer.

By Wesley Kirton

WHO WILL SUFFER FIRST

By Desmond Roberts

The title of this article is the only rhetorical question posed by Prime Minister, Dr. Ptolemy Reid, to concerned workers during the takeover of the bauxite industry in 1970. This year marks the 100th Anniversary of bauxite production in Guyana.

America has just experienced the first 100 days of President Donald J Trump's administration. The country had voted to 'shake Washington up'. And though nothing got really shaken up, there was a display and threat of change like no other. In order to honor the promises made during the unbelievable (and unbelievably successful) primary and national election campaigns, there was a series of actions and announcements that drove neighboring countries, allies and adversaries alike into paroxysms of fear, uncertainty and doubt. However, NATO is still intact; NAFTA will be kept; Obamacare is still hanging in there; immigration policy is still the same except for a few missteps; and the media remains alive despite efforts to sue, demonize and terrorize them. A few old bombs and missiles were dropped and launched to make way for new stock but nothing on the ground changed materially. And President Trump has offered North Korea a presidential summit and direct diplomatic talks, one of Pyongyang's long stated objectives. Making President Obama's achievements disappear has not yet succeeded.

But there were a few real and proposed changes, all centered on tax and regulatory policy - where the rubber meets the road. Even in changes to Obamacare, the main proposal was to remove the taxes the rich contribute for over 20 million poor people to get routine medical services through expanded Medicaid.

Obamacare certainly needs fixing by having more states and young people join the scheme and by controlling pharmaceutical and insurance costs; not by allowing states autonomy, in potentially direct contradiction to the election promise of 50 states insurance competition. And with a Wall Street and military cabinet, there is the proposed re-introduction of corporate tax reductions and trickle-down economics, which will increase the debt and the widening level of income inequality. Alarmingly, removing or reducing environmental regulations might increase business profits but will irresponsibly harm the American and global environment. The benefits are supposedly increased employment and a happy middle class. Is it not strange that those who cleverly avoid paying taxes are the ones who want the largest and most expensive military force? Who then must pay for it?

As far as paying taxes is concerned, a gas tax to pay for environmental enhancements (a la Christie's New Jersey) will affect suburban commuters and might indirectly reduce emissions. Transnational immigrants are affected financially through a proposed 2% fee on remittances, which will further decrease the amounts being sent south.

However, I predict that with the end of the artificial '100 days' post elections marker, serious negotiations, aimed at enacting the tedious but necessary legislative agenda including

immigration, infrastructure and urban renewal will begin. There is an opportunity for Mr. Trump to build legislative

coalitions as both the Democratic and Republican parties struggle to redefine themselves in the face of insurgent factions.

In Guyana, people also voted to see change but did not get the sea change they expected. Temperaments and tactics are different in Guyana to those in the USA but people still want enhanced living standards. While we should not underestimate the difficulty of changing an underground influenced economy to a 'naturally occurring' free market version in an ethnically challenged country, there is clearly need to grow the economy. We must encourage investment, with local and diasporic Guyanese given priority. First, there must be an integrated plan for production, processing and distribution locally then for export. There is no time to waste for Guyana to lay the foundation upon which oil wealth, if it comes, can be superimposed. And there must be cheap and reliable electricity.

Those visiting Guyana recently will attest to Guyana being the new trading hub for distressed economies in the region. One can see the number of Brazilians, Cubans, Surinamese and others doing business in Guyana daily

and can appreciate what will be required to keep Guyana Guyanese. Who knew!? We must be prepared to give Guyana's youth and its veterans first options on land, resources, credit, production and marketing assistance if we are not to lose our heritage to interlopers and carpetbaggers. If all the Guyanese in the Diaspora and their children return to Guyana, the population will still be less than 3 million people. Brooklyn has 2.6 million people. We have to put Guyana First and allow all Guyanese to contribute to and benefit from their country's wealth and prosperity.

Or "Who will suffer first and who will suffer most?"

By Desmond Roberts



& WHO WILL SUFFER MOST?

NEW BOOK – ABOUT WHOEVER

By Karen Sinclair

About Whoever

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by
Karen Sinclair,

...is insightful, compelling analysis that puts human sexuality on the social analyst's couch. The book explores original & contemporary perspectives, advances social science thinking and promises a kernel of consensus among liberal and conservative points of view. It touches crucial developments in American civil Rights, "don't Ask Don't Tell" and other pertinent topics. Gay, straight, right-wing, left, or whoever we are, **About Whoever** indisputably tells about us.

Author Karen Sinclair earned her Master of Science degree from The City University in London, England, Bachelor of Social Sciences degree from the University of Guyana and Certificate in Lay Ministry from the United Methodist Church in America. Karen lives in New Jersey, USA.

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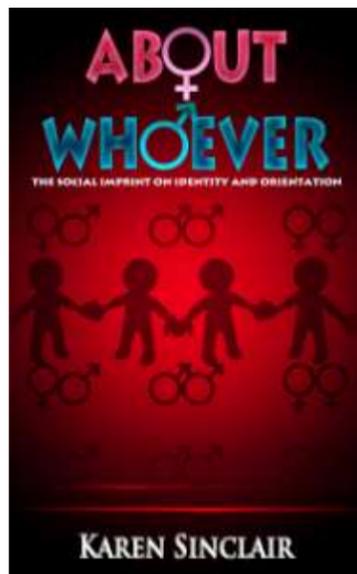
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karen Sinclair is an Analyst who contributes in the social sciences and humanities. Her recent book, **About Whoever, The social imprint on Identity and orientation**, attempts to bridge the gulf separating conflicting views on the matter using techniques of analysis. In addition to the social analysis in **About Whoever**, Karen has written other books including *Little Polka Sock*, an illustrated children's story book that seeks to support socioemotional nurturing through story telling. It is her vision to contribute to progress and harmony in various dimensions of human life. Karen lives in New Jersey, USA, with her family.

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Diaspora Corner

Dear Editor:

On several occasions I have written about the possibilities which exist for the creative industries in Guyana and the rest of CARICOM. The creative industries are well suited for young entrepreneurs involved in digital design, fashion, music and craft production.

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is offering some assistance through a joint program with Miami Dade College borsch entrepreneurs from the region and Miami. I am not aware that this information has been shared in Guyana so I ask that you publish this as soon as possible since the deadline for submission of projects is fast approaching. These are the kinds of opportunities that Go-Invest and the Ministry of Business should be promoting locally. I hope they have been doing so and it is me who is not up to date. Miami Dade College (MDC) in partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is launching an open call to select the most innovative startups in the creative and cultural industries – what the IDB refers to as the Orange Economy – from Latin America, the Caribbean, and South Florida. The deadline to apply is Thursday, May 4, at 5:59 p.m. Demand Solutions Miami will take place at MDC's Wolfson Campus, in downtown Miami this fall where the 12 best startups from Latin America and the Caribbean and the five most innovative startups from Greater Miami will be presented. Participating ventures need to have an innovative product or solution to improve lives in the following categories:

DESIGN WITH SOCIAL

RESPONSIBILITY: urban, interior and industrial design. Graphic arts, illustration and toys. Wearable technology, accessibility and cultural identity expression. Co-creation between craftsmen and designers.

SUSTAINABLE FASHION:

intelligent clothes, organic clothes, and accessories.

MULTIMEDIA TO SAVE THE

WORLD: videogames, support media for digital content, virtual reality, 3D printing and interactive audiovisual content.

GASTRONOMY AS AN AGENT OF TRANSFORMATION:

recovery of ancestral and native recipes. Fusion cuisine, environmentally minded restaurants and chefs.

STEREOTYPE-FREE MUSIC: cultural and ancestral preservation. Music as an education and language preservation tool.

This open call will award prizes to startups that have an innovative product or solution (not just an idea) that has already been launched, or a minimum viable product (MVP) with existing users. Participating entrepreneurs must be over 18 years of age and be either founders or cofounders of startups with a minimum of one year and maximum of three years of operation and implementation/commercialization of their product or service. One of the founders or cofounders of each of the selected startups will have the chance to present his or her solution before a jury of industry specialists and potential investors during the

Demand Solutions Miami in Oct. 2017.

**Yours Sincerely,
Wesley Kirton**

Posted: 04/04/17 **Region-Country:** America / Guyana

Guyana - IOM assisted the Government of Suriname in launching a website to gather information on the skills, experiences and interests of Surinamese diaspora members, and to engage it in contributing to the country's development. These will be through investment, trade and repatriation of skills.

The launch took place in the Surinamese embassy in The Hague, Netherlands, where approximately 347,700 persons of Surinamese origin (1st or 2nd generation) formally live. That's compared to an estimated current population of Suriname of 585,000.

The site (www.diaspora.sr) also provides useful information regarding visas and the regulation of Persons of Surinamese Origin (PSA), a status established in 2014 for diaspora members, including people with parents or grandparents born in Suriname.

Additionally, the site will serve as a one-stop shop for diaspora community to access information on investment opportunities and development initiatives in the South American country.

IOM Regional Coordination Officer for the Caribbean, Robert Natiello, stressed how insightful data would encourage the Diaspora Engagement Strategy.

"The Government of Suriname recognizes the value its diaspora can bring to development efforts, and the website provides a viable way of attracting diaspora to support key sectors such as agriculture and technology," he said.

The website is part of the "Mapping Suriname's Diaspora Project", a Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiative supported by the IOM Development Fund.

For further information please contact Robert Natiello at IOM Guyana, Tel: +592 231 6533. Email: rnatello@iom.int

LETTER
TO
THE
EDITOR

GUYANA AIRLIFT CAPACITY

- GEORGETOWN LIMER



- PAST AIRLINES**
- Pan Am from the US
 - Guyana Airways from Guyana
 - BOAC from England
 - KLM from the Netherlands
 - Air Canada from Canada
 - Varig from Brazil
 - Red Jet from Barbados
 - Air Caribbean from Trinidad
 - Caribbean Star from Trinidad
 - Delta Airlines from the US
 - Carib Express from Barbados
 - BWIA from Trinidad
 - ALM from Curaco
 - Viasas from Venezuela
 - Meta from Brazil
 - Tam from Brazil

- PAST CHARTERS**
- North American Airlines from the US
 - Enerjet from Canada
 - Guy America from the US
 - Sky Services from Canada
 - Zoom Airlines from Canada
 - Guyana Airways 2000 from Guyana
 - Leisure Air from the US
 - Universal Airlines from the US
 - Arrow Air from the US
 - Constellation Tours from the US
 - Travel Span from the US
 - Air Transat from Canada
 - EZ Jet from the US
 - Tower Air from the US

- CURRENT AIRLINES & CHARTERS**
- Caribbean Airlines from Trinidad
 - Fly Jamaica from Jamaica
 - Dynamic Airways from the US
 - Suriname Airways from Suriname
 - Copa Airlines from Panama
 - Eastern Airlines from the US
 - Insel Air from Curaco
 - Fly All Ways Airlines from Suriname
 - Liat from Antigua
 - Amerijet Cargo from the US
 - Laparkan Airways Cargo from the US

GUYANA EXPORTS

Related

- Guyana Interest Rate at 5.00 percent
- Guyana Inflation Rate at 0.40 percent
- Guyana GDP per capita at 3663.42 USD
- Guyana GDP per capita PPP at 7064.45 USD
- Guyana GDP at 3.17 USD Billion
- Guyana GDP Annual Growth Rate at 3.00 percent
- Guyana Imports at 355.10 USD Million
- Guyana Government Debt to GDP at 65.80 percent
- Guyana Government Budget at -1.40 percent of GDP
- Guyana Corruption Rank at 119.00
- Guyana Corruption Index at 29.00 Points
- Guyana Competitiveness Rank at 121.00
- Guyana Competitiveness Index at 3.56 Points
- Guyana Balance of Trade at -77.30 USD Million
- Guyana Food Inflation at 2.00 percent
- Guyana External Public Debt at 1144761.00 USD Thousand
- Guyana Exports at 277.90 USD Million
- Ease of Doing Business in Guyana at 137.00
- Deposit Interest Rate in Guyana at 1.07 percent
- Guyana Current Account to GDP at -4.60 percent

<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/guyana/exports>

Company	Actual	Previous	Highest	Lowest	Dates	Unit	Frequency
Guyana Trade	277.90	296.50	589.00	125.80	2001 - 2015	USD Million	Quarterly
Exports	277.90	296.50	589.00	125.80		USD Million	[+]
Imports	355.10	395.00	793.70	154.90		USD Million	[+]
Current Account	-144.20	-365.20	-63.00	-495.00		USD Million	[+]
Current Account to GDP	-4.60	-12.50	-2.53	-37.62		percent	[+]
Reserves	415.00	425.00	424.00	90.00		USD Million	[+]
Imports Index	0.30	0.30	2.94	0.00			[+]
Tourist Arrivals	206.00	200.00	206.00	99.00		Thousand	[+]
External Debt	1144761.00	1222029.00	1900000.00	950025.00		USD Thousand	[+]

THIS RATIO SHOWS THE MAIN EXPORT IS PEOPLE, YOU CANT DEVELOP LIKE THIS

GUYANA AIRLIFT CAPACITY

- GEORGETOWN LIMER

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNTAPPED POTENTIAL • NATURAL RESOURCES • AGRICULTURE • JUNGLE CANOPY • WATERWAYS • LARGE LAND MASS • ENGLISH SPEAKING 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EXPENSIVE • DIFFICULT TO GET TO • POOR INFRASTRUCTURE • UNDEVELOPED • NO LEGACY AIRLINES • POLITICS / BUREAUCRACY • NO COMMITTED AIRLINE • IMMIGRATION POLICY • ANTIQUATED LAWS • TECHNICAL EXPERTISE
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REGIONAL INTEGRATION • OGLE AIRPORT AS A HUB • DIVERSIFICATION • ECO TOURISM • CARGO • TOURISM • LEAPFROG TECHNOLOGY • MANUFACTURING 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EXTERNAL MARKET FORCES • FUEL COSTS • CONNECTIVITY • FLOODING • DRUGS



LONGING TO RETURN, BUT...

March 18, 2017 | By [KNews](#) | Filed Under [Editorial](#), [Features / Columnists](#)

Many Guyanese abroad have in recent times expressed serious intentions of returning home. Their reasons for wanting to do so vary – the majority of them admit to struggling to make ends meet in their adoptive environs. However, they have not been able to make any such move due to a lack of employment opportunities here. This is unfortunate, because Guyana needs all the skills that it can get.

Qualified engineers, architects, doctors, nurses, teachers, management personnel and tradesmen and women are among those longing to return to help develop the country. However, they are worried about the crime rate and substandard healthcare.

While this is happening, it is very painful to see so many young graduates from the University of Guyana leave our shores for the Caribbean, North America and Europe. It is even more difficult to believe that most of our young graduates see no future here. But it could be much different if they are gainfully employed.

It is not so difficult for the authorities to create such opportunities. Allowing our young graduates to leave the country at this juncture of its development could have serious consequences for economic, social and human advancement.

We have fertile land, a near perfect climate, enough food to feed ourselves and the people of the Caribbean, numerous rivers, lakes and waterways for the development of hydro-power, and the personnel to execute the tasks necessary to develop the country. Our mountains, caves, trails, tropical forests, wild animals and different species of birds can transform Guyana into world class tourist destination. Not to mention that Guyana has an abundance of natural resources and minerals and the recent discovery of large quantities of first grade crude oil in Essequibo by the US oil company, ExxonMobil could make it a very prosperous country.

However, we must transform the water and electrical distribution systems so that there can be a reliable uninterrupted source of water and electricity to supply all the people across the country. But the most important component that is missing is the political will to curb crime, jump start the economy and create jobs. It must be done if we as a people are serious about developing the country and providing a better life for all as promised during the election campaign.

The authorities must offer attractive remuneration and opportunities to the best and brightest at home and in the diaspora to return to help rebuild the bridges, construct a new network of eco-friendly access roads to the various regions of the country, restore the deteriorating infrastructure and improve the health care, education and social service systems. This is urgently needed to develop the country, reduce poverty and meet the socio-economic needs of the people and move Guyana into the 21st century.

We reiterate that it is up to the government and the private sector to provide the opportunities so that our young graduates could remain at home, and to encourage Guyanese nationals in the Diaspora who are longing to return to their beloved country.

As a nation, we should no longer sit idle by and allow the rest of the world to utilize the talents and skills of our best and brightest. We can and must afford them the opportunity to work and to build their dreams at home. Our leaders simply have to develop the political will to start the process if they are truly serious about keeping our valued citizens at home, develop Guyana and improve the well-being of all. Indeed, many in the Diaspora are longing to return home. We should not allow this opportunity to slip away.



'A GLIMPSE OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE'

By Neil Marks

THE FIRST LADY, A TECH PRO, AND A HUMANITARIAN
DISCUSS EMPOWERING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES



President David Granger is seen interacting with children when he visited last December. (Ministry of the Presidency photo)



Mrs Sandra Shividat, First Lady Sandra Granger, and Karen Abrams at the Grand Coastal Hotel, July 27, 2016. (Samuel Maughn photo)

One woman wanted a pregnant cow so she could start selling milk and then raise more cows to supplement the income her husband would get from his on and off job at the sugar estate. Another woman wanted a sewing machine, and yet another wanted her yard fenced so she could start a kitchen garden to support her family.

Sandra Shividat did her rounds, asking family and friends for contributions, so she could get what the three women, and many others, needed. But there was a bargain involved: The women would get what they needed if they kept their children in school. That was in 2005 when Mrs Shividat returned to Guyana for just about the fourth time since she migrated in 1983. She had heard of the unprecedented level of rainfall which flooded and devastated the country's coastland – the tiny strip along the Atlantic coast where most people live and where most economic activity is concentrated.

Sandra wanted to help and arrived in February, when the waters had receded, and headed straight to her hometown of Lusignan, East Coast Demerara, to see what help she could give. An aunt told her that the people in the neighbouring village of Good Hope could do with some help. She developed a form – where she would write down names and addresses and the needs of people – and headed out. With her brother, she visited 25 homes and pledged to provide their immediate needs, food and water being the most important, and told them she would return to help them further. Back in the U.S., she wrote 25 letters to the families she had visited, but got only five replies. There could be any amount of reasons why the others didn't write back, but then one reason hit home: Perhaps they just didn't know how to. It was an entirely plausible reasoning; she knew that many of the women could not read or write and their children were not going to school. On her next trip back here, she set about determining what she could do. By that time, she was expanding her network, adding more friends and family to the list of persons who were willing to offer donations. And so, the cow and the sewing machine were bought, and the other woman's yard was also fenced.

Using her own money and that of others who contributed, the families she initially contacted were still being provided with food items, and the children had everything they needed to stay in school – including uniform, bags and books. On every visit, there was always a need to fill. The Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Food for the Poor was working in the area as well, but would only build houses for those who had legal documents showing ownership of the lands they were on. The families were allocated lands by the Ministry of Housing, but they could not afford to pay. Mrs Shividat was able to gather enough money to pay for the land for five families so they could benefit from the houses being built by Food for the Poor.

"..The mission was a simple one for Mrs Shividat, "fighting poverty through education," ..

....."Our goal is to empower women, young girls, to know that they can stand up and make a life for themselves; there are ways and education is one of those ways." ...

Initially, every time Mrs Shividat would return home (now making four trips a year), she would check the children's schoolbooks and report cards, to see how they were doing, and to see if indeed the children were going to school. It wasn't on just a few occasions that she had cause to reprimand the parents when she noticed a high level of absenteeism. In some cases, she found that the mothers were taking the children out of school so they could work and provide for the family. So Mrs Shividat decided that she needed to do something else. There are many ways to get out of poverty and she thought that education had to be one of the best ways to do so. She decided to register the Lusignan–Good Hope Learning Centre as a charity in the U.S. so she could provide further help. She asked the then government for a piece of land to build a centre, which would cater for the needs of out of school youths and those in school who needed remedial classes, particularly in reading. She didn't get the plot where she wanted nor at the price she wanted. She was sold a plot in the "high income" area of Lusignan, paying US \$2,500. The Centre opened its doors in 2009. Out of school youths are taught during the day and those in school are taught reading after school. The mission was a simple one for Mrs Shividat, "fighting poverty through education," and she walked from house to house, trying to convince the parents to send their children to the centre. But once the Centre was opened, it wasn't just teaching the children to read. They came with a "basket of

problems" including abuse, and in some cases, direct opposition to schooling by some fathers. In one case, Mrs Shivdat met a 13 – year – old girl who was taken out of school. The father wouldn't let her go to school, because he figured it was only a few more years before she would be married off. She convinced the father that he wouldn't have any additional expenses if he let the girl go back to school. The father agreed, and the girl was enrolled at a private school, with all her expenses taken care of by the Centre. But the father would become irritated at nights when the lights were kept on as she studied, so the girl, determined to study, would go to her grandmother's house. Her mother and grandmother were both supportive of her schooling.

The girl wrote the CXC exams usually taken by those leaving secondary school, and she was successful. She now works as a receptionist at a hotel, and was recently married, with plans to attend the University of Guyana.

Mrs Shivdat has faced a litany of problems as she runs the Centre. She has even been threatened with a cutlass by one father whose child was attending the Centre. It was the work of the Centre and the great lengths it goes to in order to help the underprivileged and vulnerable that captivated First Lady Sandra Granger and her husband, President David Granger – two years before they had those titles, that is.



The start of the robotics camp at the Lusignan-Good Hope Centre last Tuesday. (Ministry of the Presidency photo)

Last December, Mr Granger fulfilled a promise to help the Centre and presented a cheque for \$2 million. "I am very happy with the results that have been coming out of this Learning Centre year after year... as far as I am concerned, this Learning Centre is helping you to help yourself," the President said then.

"It's more than just a Centre for children. It's a safe space in the community," said the First Lady, in an interview she shared with Mrs Shivdat, who immediately recalled a moment when she had to literally lock two children in the centre to save them from an abusive father who came to get them in a fit of rage.

"She is not only dealing with kids and their illiteracy but what impacts on their lives – the kind of environment (they live in), the challenges they face," the First Lady said of Mrs Shivdat. She added: "Sandra and Freddie (Mr Shivdat) (are)... social workers in the community. "I was there when people would come to them with their difficulties, bringing the children with their problems. They were actively engaged to take children out of danger." The First Lady was blown away by the "marvellous" work of the Centre.

As mentioned at the outset, the Centre has sought to help the women of the community empower themselves and help their families. "...for me, everything has to happen in a holistic manner. You can't just throw a plaster on one sore and expect the body to heal. And when I see something like that (what the Learning Centre has been doing to help, not just children, but their parents, especially mothers) I am captured," the First Lady stated.

As a result, the First Lady has been actively helping the Centre. Once there is an activity, she would call up the Centre to see if the mothers in the area would like to get involved. And so, when there was a training programme on how to

care for the elderly, the women of the area signed up and will soon receive training in First Aid.

The idea was that the women could use the training, with their certificates, to find employment; it should be noted that for some of the women, it would be the first time they are having something called a "certificate" with their name written on it to find employment as caregivers.

"We teach women to earn enough money, to be independent, to recognise that they can do things for themselves and when they do that, all the statistics in the world say, if a woman advances economically, the entire family advances with her," the First Lady said. Thus, the First Lady's goal to empower women through her "Self-reliance and Success in Business" workshops has benefited the women of the Lusignan Good-Hope learning Centre. And there are many other ways the First Lady has sought to help the Centre. This week, that interest resulted in the children of the Centre benefitting from sessions in 4 Lego Mindstorm Robotics programming.

That happened because the First Lady had learnt of the three Guyanese siblings from Georgia who were making the headlines in every major U.S. news network for creating a mobile app to help document Police brutality in the United States. She engaged their mother, Karen Abrams, in a discussion of how they could help Guyana and the idea of summer camps in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) came up.

Time passed, and the First Lady wrote Mrs Abrams to ask for an "update." "Karen kind of excited me when she came up with this idea, because I immediately thought of the many children who are illiterate... but a computer and robotics do not rely on knowing A-Z – it relies on how your mind works and that is the excitement for me," the First Lady related, with Karen Abrams next to her side in the same interview shared with Mrs Shivdat. She said education doesn't have to take place in a formal classroom and that the kids many dismissed as "the throw away kids" can be "caught by this idea that they can figure out

something." When she got the First Lady's email, Mrs Abrams got down to work, raising funds mainly through online platforms, such as Facebook and GoFundMe, and local sponsors. In all, some US\$10,000 was raised to hold a series of camps in Guyana, including the Lusignan Centre.

Mrs Abrams said 17 robots were bought, and it is intended that all of them would be leased so that there could be a continuation of the programme through various STEM clubs across the country. "...you have kids who feel they are in a dead-end street; there are adults who feel that way too...(but) you can just give them a glimpse of what is possible," said the First Lady. Mrs Abrams said she would like to see a lot more Guyanese children exposed to technology, "to give them the opportunity to say I like it or don't like it." She noted that because of the robust technology drive in Estonia, three of their nationals, together with a Swede and Dane created Skype, which was bought by Microsoft in 2011 for US\$8.5 billion. "If we have one kid who creates something amazing, that would be awesomeness," Mrs Abrams said, noting that results may not come "today, but maybe in 10-15 years." "We are really looking to spread a vision to inspire and to create opportunities," she stated. Mrs Shivdat adds about the work she is doing: "Our goal is to empower women, young girls, to know that they can stand up and make a life for themselves; there are ways and education is one of those ways."

The First Lady said she will continue to help centres like that run by Mrs Shivdat and initiatives such as those of Mrs Abrams, because, at the end of the day, all the efforts are intended to empower people and communities.

<http://guyanachronicle.com/a-glimpse-of-what-is-possible/>

By Neil Marks

MESSAGE TO MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS: LET'S DO IT AGAIN IN 2017

Dear Members & Supporters:

The Guyana Independence Celebration Committee (New York) has a resounding record of accomplishments. With 173 members, representing 25 diaspora organizations in 9 States, the committee organized the historic and successful Golden Jubilee independence celebration in New York in 2016, which comprised 11 events over 8 days. We mobilized thousands of Guyanese.

Our committee is a not for profit, charitable tax exempt organization. We're registered under Federal statute and New York State law. Our organization has been an asset to the Guyanese community. Our activities are not for profiteering. They are for community benefit. Following Jubilee celebrations in June 2016, our committee continued working. We began planning Guyana's 51st independence celebration from May 26 - June 11, 2017, and continued the soccer training and coaching program for our young people.

We are grateful that many of you, our members and supporters, have exposed efforts to sabotage our 2017 independence celebration; including fake claims that our committee was dissolve. This claim patently false. As you know, our board made no such decision. It is a deception meant to trick Guyanese. Let it be known that this the committee was not dissolved and will not be dissolved! It will be a permanent institution in the Guyanese landscape in New York.

Let us summon up our spirit of "Guyaneness" and reject division and deception. Do not be deceived by those who, for profiteering, stole our committee's



NY Independence Committee members brief President Granger

intellectual property; i.e., celebration plans and concepts, committee contacts and email lists, documents and protocols. We are unmoved by their attacks on our membership. Efforts to undermine our committee will remain wishful thinking. Lies, deceit or misinformation will not deter this committee from its 2017 independence celebration plans.

We make clear and unequivocal that this committee will continue to hold its Independence Mashtamani parade and concert on the second Sunday of June each year. Moreover, the above logo is the intellectual property of our committee, not the Guyana Consulate in New York. It may not be used or reproduced in any fashion without the express written consent of the committee.

We implore all Guyanese to get involved in the mission to unite the Guyanese community. Our collective task is to continue mobilizing all Guyanese to reject aversion and embrace unity and inclusion.

The committee thanks the thousands of Guyanese and friends of Guyana who have supported our activities since its establishment in 2015. Let's do it again! Join our 2017 celebration from May 26 - June 11, 2017. Come celebrate with greater zeal and national pride that ever before!

More information about is available at:
www.celebrateguyanainnyc.com.

Call or email us at Tel: 929-263-2556 and
info@celebrateguyanainnyc.com.

Rickford Burke
Chairman

GUYANA INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION COMMITTEE (NEW YORK)
FOR INFORMATION CALL 929-263-2557
www.celebrateguyanainnyc.com EMAIL: info@celebrateguyanainnyc.com



51st ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE - REPUBLIC OF GUYANA
NEW YORK CITY CELEBRATION

MAY 26, 2017 -  **-JUNE 11, 2017**

May 26, 2017 - FLAG RAISING CEREMONY
NEW YORK CITY HALL, MANHATTAN

May 26, 2017 - RECEPTION & AWARD CEREMONY
QUEENS

May 28, 2017 - INTERFAITH SERVICE
BROOKLYN

JUNE 4, 2017 - CRICKET COMPETITION
QUEENS

JUNE 10, 2017 - SOCCER TOURNAMENT
SOUTH SHORE HIGH SCHOOL PARK - RALPH & FLATLANDS BROOKLYN

JUNE 10, 2017 - GUYANESE INDEPENDENCE FESTIVAL
BROOKLYN

JUNE 11, 2017 - GUYANESE INDEPENDENCE PARADE
BROOKLYN - CHURCH AVE BROOKLYN

JUNE 11, 2017 - UNITY CONCERT
SOUTH SHORE HIGH SCHOOL PARK, BROOKLYN (TENTATIVE)



Part of the massive crowd at our committee's unity concert last year

DIASPORA

TIMES INTERNATIONAL