



# The Scribbler

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## President's Message

Fellow Alumni:

I would like to say a big "thank you" to the members of the Executive and all who devoted their time and talents to keep the fires of the Association burning over the past year. We can take much satisfaction from the funds raised and the contributions made to meet some of the pressing needs of the school. In the process we affirm and enlarge the convivial spirit that marked the best of Guyana and of Queen's.

In this issue, I would like to turn to a topic of recent discussion - that of directing our efforts towards establishing a permanent legacy for our school. Like the building shown in the pictures on page 3, the benefits of a foundation would grow and endure well beyond the annual fundraisers, and help ensure the continuation of school support into the indefinite future.

Recently, the idea of celebrating the 160<sup>th</sup> QC anniversary by raising \$160,000 internationally was posed by Dr. Laurence Clark. This could make a significant start towards a Queen's College Foundation that would be a focus of (tax-credited) donations from friends and supporters of the school. A QC Foundation would have an ongoing

income from donations, investments and fund-raising, and would be empowered to fund scholarships, equipment, special projects and the like.

Even with general support for this approach, it would be quite a challenge to organize and establish the governance of the foundation. Nevertheless, there are many existing models to guide us in setting up the scope of the enterprise, the authority of the trustees, the control of the activities etc., and I believe the effort would be well worthwhile. Perhaps this could be an area of fruitful cooperation with other school associations, to share administrative costs while maintaining independent choice in the use of funds.

Please bring your thoughts on this matter to the **Annual General Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> April**. If something along these lines is feasible, it would be important to start the work sooner rather than later. The Appreciation event scheduled on the same day ahead of the AGM gives us the opportunity to reflect on all we have to appreciate. A legacy to education would be a most commendable and tangible demonstration of that appreciation.

Patrick Chan  
 President 2002/2003  
[patchanmail@sympatico.ca](mailto:patchanmail@sympatico.ca)

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## *The Scribbler*

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## Editorial

Its that time of year again, the Annual General Meeting. It's where those who can make it, come out, pay their dues, catch up with the rest of the guys, vote for new office bearers, then go back home. Next year if we are still around we will do it all again. But will there be a next year? Look around, each year it's the same set of people being recycled through the various positions, taking a stint at doing everything. This group is getting older, for some of us, it's getting harder to do. There is a need for fresh faces, new blood (not necessarily young blood), others to bring new perspective, energy and ideas.

For we do face a challenge, one that has been getting larger every year. What can we do to attract the younger members? Get their input? Groom the next generation to take over when we are gone.

Are we going to be the ones to pull the switch? It's not a pleasant thought, but given the way things are happening it can be our reality. We really need to give some thought to the future now. Is there some way we can change the structure to make it easier for our younger members?

Trying to make it in today's world can be a 24-hour job in itself. Maybe having pools of volunteers to assist the executive in areas like making phone calls, organizing events and putting out the Newsletter make the role more manageable. So I challenge you, give it some thought and let's have your ideas, and let's take up the challenge in 2004.

## Twelfth Night Dance

For the third year running, the Toronto Chapter teamed up with the BHSAA to put on what turned out to be an outstanding evening of entertainment that was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Tickets were sold out well in advance, and the event more than lived up to its billing, with dancing continuing enthusiastically to the very end.

A large contingent from New York including Larry Boxhill (QCAA) and Barbara Chase (BHSAA) braved the snowstorm to share the evening with us, and it was a real pleasure to welcome "Che" Chesney visiting all the way from Costa Rica.

This event is now firmly established as one of our main fundraisers for the year, and is an attractive alternative to dancing on New Year's Eve. We are planning even better things next year.

## Father's Day Brunch

We are working on a new location for our annual Father's Day brunch, and will announce it soon. The date will be either June 1 or 8.

## ICQC 2003 Reunion

The venue this year will be Miami from 9-13 October, over the Miami Carnival 11-12 October. Contact Rod Westmaas 305-400-7231 for details.

## Last Lap Lime

This year the venue will be at Shangri-La, Esna Park Drive on 4<sup>th</sup> August. Your volunteer work will be much appreciated.

## Guyana Independence Festival

The event will be held May 16-18, with the cultural program repeated Saturday & Sunday. Contact [patchanmail@sympatico.ca](mailto:patchanmail@sympatico.ca) to volunteer.

## Conrad's Gift

Conrad Griffith's passion for music will come as no surprise to anyone in Toronto. Once again it came together with his equally strong passion for the school. Working with the quiet determination that is his trademark, Conrad purchased, assembled and donated a set of learning material to augment the music studies at QC.

Earlier this month, Toronto's VP Programs, Lester Fernandes, linked up with our QCOSA colleagues in Georgetown to present the materials to the school. As the picture indicates, the gift was much appreciated by all. Thank you Conrad.



QC Principal, Wendell Roberts displays some of the learning material generously donated by Toronto QCAA Director, Conrad Griffith for the music programme. Flanking her are the presenters Laurie Lewis (QCOSA President) and Lester Fernandes (VP Programs- QCAA Toronto). Ms. Roberts had also written thanking us for the recent presentation of a photocopier.

## Student Support

During Lester's visit, the Toronto chapter also presented another cheque to QCOSA in support of a deserving student. We had earlier received a moving letter of thanks for our previous support, and we are pleased to be able to continue this contribution.

## Bursaries

Members in good standing whose children are graduating from high school or CEGEP may qualify for three \$500 bursaries awarded each year. Bursary application forms will be available at the Annual General Meeting on 27th April (see page 10).

## Admin. Block Nearly Complete

The new administrative building is expected to be handed over for use this month. Equipment will be needed for the auditorium and stage.



The new Administrative block taken April 2003. Picture courtesy of Lester Fernandes



An aerial view (taken 27 Jan 2003) of the new Administrative block in the center of the East and West wings. Picture courtesy of Hylton McDavid.



Further development is being planned to encourage greater use of the playing fields in the background. Picture courtesy of Hylton McDavid.

## America, War and Neo-colonialism

By Albert Ramprasad. April 5, 2003

The peoples of Guyana and the West Indian islands of the Caribbean, over the last 50 years, are well aware of the problems related to colonialism, and witnessed the valiant efforts of the region's politicians who worked tirelessly to free us from this 'yoke' that was imposed on us by the mighty imperialistic power of Britain in this era.

The America-Iraq war, presently in progress, has forced a number of political heads of state, both in the Caribbean and the rest of the world, to comment as to whether, they support, or do not support the U.S. unilateral action against Iraq.

We are well aware of Canada's stand on this 'war issue,' and the debates that followed. Similarly, in the Caribbean, Mr. Knowlson Gift, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Trinidad & Tobago, when pressed for his opinion on the legality of the war, Mr. Gift felt that it was unjustified. He reasoned that;

*"If we go back to the United Nation's provision as a world body, where the weak are supposed to be protected from the strong, then you would expect that the justification for any assault on any member of the UN should be fully debated and aired in that body. And if that process were not complete, there is good reason to believe that something unjust would take place "*

The question now being asked, "After this type of unilateral action, what will America do next?" Rick Salutin writing for the Globe & Mail sees the liberation of IRAQ as the first in the limitless chain of assertions of US power. One wonders whether the war has a sinister wider purpose, warning other rogue states, and perhaps other states too, that this is what they can expect, if they aggravate the world's only superpower. The notion that this conflict heralds the arrival of an America with a potential for emerging as a neo-colonialist power or the creation of an American Empire, similar to what Great Britain accomplished in the past, is by now a commonplace thought. Indeed, some "friends of America" are urging it to embrace this title.

By definition, an empire is an explicit scheme of territorial aggrandizement, born of military conquest and maintained by force of arms. The conquered territory is wholly absorbed within the legal and administrative structure of the imperial power. Most important, this arrangement is permanent. Empire builders don't go home.

America's power is encompassing. It is found in the richness of its economy, the vigor of its intellectual life, and the appeal of its culture. However, to its advantage, it also happens to wield military power, on a scale that dwarfs any rival.

Now, one has to examine how this military power, has been utilized in the past. The United States is the only country, ever to ask the world's permission to use it's own forces; 1950 - in Korea, and again in 1991 - in Kuwait. And the reasons for deploying its army in both cases were; to defend other countries from being annexed by bestial dictatorships ; to halt the growth of other empires, not to embark on its own.

There are also countries, which were liberated from totalitarian rule in World War II, and sheltered from it ever since; France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark and Greece. There are Taiwan and Israel, lonely outposts, who wouldn't last a minute without American support. And in the Caribbean, the Dominican Republic saved from a communist take-over, in 1965; Grenada, which was threatened with the same in 1983. Panama, which was freed from the narcocrat, Noriega, in 1989.

In each case, America, played the role of liberator, and after the troops had completed their assignment, they went home!

With the American army, close to Baghdad, and toppling the regime of Saddam Hussein, and with the control of Iraq's oil fields within their grasp, will America be tempted to change its role of liberator, to that of conqueror, occupier, and neo-colonialist? Will they go home, as they did in the past? We'll wait and see how this saga unfolds.

## Congratulations, Eden

### Eden Gajraj awarded Queen Elizabeth 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Medal

Eden Gajraj a founding member and the immediate Past President of our Alumni Association has been awarded the 'Queen Elizabeth 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Medal' in recognition of significant contribution to compatriots, Community and Canada.

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Medal he has received for his service to the community. He previously received the 'Canada 125 Medal' and the 'Outstanding Canadian 2000 Medal'. Eden also received service awards from the former City of Scarborough and from Agincourt Community Services.

His community services over the past decade include:

- Chair, Information Scarborough
- Chair, Malvern Community Group
- Co Chair, Environmental Advisory Group.
- Co Leader, Observer Mission to the Republic of Guyana 1992 Elections.
- Director, Agincourt Community Services
- Director, Malvern Youth Group
- Director, Food Buddies

Eden also founded the Junior Tennis Academy of Scarborough and has conducted several information clinics over the years on topics relating to the economy, crime, immigration and refugees, that assisted the various communities to better understand our Canadian way of life.

## Happy Birthday, Dr. Allsopp

We salute Dr. Allsopp, and reproduce our congratulatory letter below.

25 January 2003

Dear Dr. Allsopp:

This greeting comes from the QCAA Toronto Chapter with congratulations on the occasion of your 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

We especially wish to thank you for your sterling contributions over many years to the life of the school. Many of us have reaped the benefit of witnessing your unwavering commitment to education, the example of your disciplined approach, your love of learning and your determination to raise the level of excellence in everything you did.

We are also particularly thankful for your splendid achievement in capturing the richness of the Caribbean lexicon, which will surely do great service in deepening the appreciation of the regional psyche and in lifting our esteem in all spheres.

We wish you continued health and happiness for many years to come.

With fond memories,

Patrick Chan (Queen's College 1954 -1961)  
President, Queen's College Alumni Association (Toronto)

## Appreciation Awards

Appreciation awards will be presented Sunday April 27<sup>th</sup> 2003 at 1:30pm before the start of the Annual General Meeting at Burrows Hall, 1081 Progress Avenue, Scarborough.

Members and friends are invited to participate in expressing our appreciation for many contributions over the years by:

Dr. Robert 'Bobby' Moore  
Eden Gajraj  
Arthur Henery  
David Singh

Light refreshments will be served.

## GUYANA TALK

### EARLY ESSAYS IN THE STUDY OF A CARIBBEAN CREOLE BY RICHARD ALLSOPP

*Guyana Talk* is a collection of early essays about CREOLESE by Dr. Richard Allsopp which first appeared between 1949 and 1953 in the literary journal *Kyk-Over Al* edited by Arthur Seymour.

**Creolese** is the name for the dialect of English used in Guyana and Dr. Allsopp's early essays explored the study of "The Language We Speak" as he termed the four essays, before launching into the full-blown academic analysis of the Guyanese language which he developed for his MA and PhD theses (1953, 1962). These have been hailed as the earliest academic study of any Caribbean Creole.

These essays were written in **non-technical terms intended for the general reader** of the literary journal where they had found a natural niche. It is therefore not only Guyanese of any generation who would find them entertaining and enlightening, but any Caribbean person interested in language and its development in the region should find them valuable.

The price for *Guyana Talk* is \$12 and a contribution from the sale will be made to the Q.C. Library.

Copies can be had from Leyland Muss, 905-666-0237.

## Nostalgia 101 (From Literary Evening)

The Nostalgia 101 piece centred on the "crashing" of a 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. From the search through the custom-built "wardrobe" for an appropriate outfit, to the conclusion of the "crash" itself, it was a hilarious lifestyle account that brought back many memories to a very appreciative audience, and had everyone in stitches. It is reproduced on the next two pages for those who missed the reading. Thanks for the permission, Godfrey.

## Nostalgia 101 - Guyana's Men's Fashion Yesteryear!

By Godfrey Chin. Jan 20, 2003

Well alya Guyanese really 'fast'. Since I announced in Nostalgia 97 that I planned to crash a Fiftieth Guyanese Birthday, I received at least 9 emails, enquiring ... 'Wha happen? How it go? A friend in South Florida hastened to warn me - 'The sport is formal - you must wear a jacket!' The Ex in NY even telephoned offering to get an invite on my behalf, as she knew the hosts. It's so flattering to know you are still thoughtfully appreciated.

As you know, for Guyanese, 'Crashing' is a pass-down habit – a right of privilege, a reward for not being invited, a limer's art, AND a matter of *timing*! The secret is to DRESS-UP like the guests. Careful - DRESS-DOWN is not the opposite. Lest you forgot, that mean 'move down & gie me a seat'. Very effective in Church up here, where the natives 'sprawl out' like they own the pew. Keep an eye on them - they shiver when the sermon is about 'sin', and their collection offering is usually 'copper'!

So I open up my reserve *waldrobe*. For those, who only know about clothes closets, a waldrobe is what Guyanese keep their clothes in - the equivalent to a meshed 'safe', which is for groceries & cooked food. 'Safes' went out of style after BAYGON Roach & Mice-Kill came in vogue! That was after DDT.

This waldrobe was made to *my* specifications by Fries Furniture, Murray Street, off Bishops High, and shipped. It's custom made - practical - to be converted into a coffin when I 'go'. Am going to enjoy a hearty last laugh, as all my mourners look themselves in the mirror lying horizontal. Bet ya never thought of that - This Chineese smart like Charlie Chan, eh! .....Who laugh last laugh best!

In this waldrobe I kept all the clothes I brought up from Guyana 20 years ago. My strategy is - dress styles come back every thirty years - so am waiting! Opening my Fort Knox triple locks - must wait a few minutes for the smell of the naphthalene balls I had bought from Ramcharran's Drug Store, Middle Street, to go away. Was 'stupidly' enough to initially use these like hail stones - pelting the moths and cockroaches. Always wondered if there was a female specie and what they call dem. Ever chew a naphthalene for peppermint? - tastes like Drano.

Wow! A history lesson in Guyana men's style that would impress Calvin Klein.

First find - A *Buffalo Jeans* - from Gobin's - Must bypass - the fete is formal.

A *Windsor Shirt*, I bought from Bookers Universal for \$4.95 in 1955 to start my Civil Service Career. The factory was in Plaisance. Can't wear that - the white color has turned 'dinge'.

*More shirts* - labels from TREND - AERO - KENT & an ARROW from Fogarty's - pity also off-colored like DIH 'Puma' Drink!

Wow - a *white Bell Bottom slacks* - 15 inch knee - 24 at the hem – Just remembered my 'Zoot Boy' days in the late fifties. It fits - if I don't button the fly or waist. Pity - This

would have shown me off - the splitting image of Cab Calloway. Hi De Ho!

A *nylon shirt* - Wonder if this would ever come back - but, Orlando Weather 45 degrees - Afraid to catch cold - necessitating a trip back home to the 'BEST' at Vreed-en-hoop.

AHA - *my favorite shirt* - from days when Darro Comics or NewsPrint shirts were the 'IN -THING! ... You remember these? I swear that this shirt has 14 colors, sewn in squares, that make Joseph's Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat look like a Friar's Habit.

*Four Crimplene ShirtJack Suits* - a must in the Seventies, to impress the governing Party ya one of the Boys. It even has buttons punched from dry coconut shell - which reflected loyal 'BUY-LOCAL' support, and your patience to wait 8 hours in a line for a pint of cooking oil. Ya think it easy?!

A *serge suit* - My father had since Ferriera & Gomes which burnt down in the Booker Fire Feb 23, 1945. He passed this down to me in 1976, insisting I give it to my sons at the appropriate time. Have since made endless offers to dem three, who only 'suck teeth' in reply. Wish they would be aware of history, and note how Bush followed in his father's footsteps! Jet black pin stripe - tight across the chest - inappropriate for Soca, but can use at my last funeral rites - even if they have to slit the back. Nobody would know!

A *Can-Can slip* - Wonder what this doing in my waldrobe! We Sharking Guys hated these like Sat afternoon confession at Brickdam! They were as difficult to 'negotiate' as climbing the Staircase at the Lighthouse! In dem days ya begged, coaxed, cajoled, promised. cochoored - whatever for a 'piece'. Today, if ya ask and don't get - she didn't hear! Mini Skirts & the 'mini midis' were so much more fun.

A *custom made nylon shirt* from Evergreen - Hammie's tailor uncle on South Road. Will never forget a date of a 'church girl'. Stopped first to buy 'Trojans' & put them in my top see thru nylon shirt pocket. Her father, the local St Barnabas Pastor, asked me to leave his manse *as* he greeted me at the door. He wished me 'Merry Xmas' - and it was August month! Ya think it easy?!

The next outfit I wore *ONCE* - bought it in San Juan - a three tone purple, with sunshine yellow and fluorescent green, pirate long sleeves! The designer must have specialised in jockey outfits for the Belmont Race Course, NY. The pretty Latino salesgirl, in flattering English, assured me I looked like John Travolta in this outfit - Saturday Night Fever was the rage in 1978. Would have bought two if they had another, in brighter color combination!

Madam, [the wife] and our three boys dressed - waiting in the living room to attend a BarbQ Church fundraiser. Wanted to make a fashion statement - I peacocked into the drawing room, with a Johnny Carson entry - 'Surprise!' Four voices in unison, exclaimed, like the roaring start of a motor race at the Dakota Circuit!

.....'NO! NO! NO! NEVER! - NOT WITH US YOU DONT!

Am so disappointed - my close family so unsupportive and unappreciative of modern fashion. I pleaded 'What happen - alya don't like my red shoes?'

Ought to have asserted my authority, and make every man jack stay home! But - Tickets bought in advance \$5 each & no half price - so agreed to change, rather than stay hungry at home". Ya think it easy?

Someday I will wear this fashionable outfit - Halloween coming up. Am sure if I wear it to the touring Barnum Circus, can pass thru the 'staff entrance'.

More shirts - A 'Dr No' with Chinese collar - popular after the first James Bond film with Sean Connery 1962. In dem days, we dressed like Charles Starrett & John Wayne to go barn dance! A woven sleeveless colorful poncho shirt made popular by Clint Eastwood in the Italian Spaghetti Westerns - My Ideal image as the 'Good Bad & Ugly'.

A *white bug house* - Didn't go to Queen's College but huffed & wore it to hunt labba & deer like Frank Buck. QC boys wore it to avoid 'tapping' - if ya know what's dat. Tapping & LaBasse was replaced by stick-ups & shootings in school. What is LaBasse? Pity - you didn't have school days? - or you were sick that day? Go ask your father? Ya don't know who your father is? 'Tough - Your mother probably don't know either'!

A *Sudeena Garbadeen pants* - This was \$4.95 a yard at Kisson - next to Bernard Hardware, Robb & Camp St, before Kisson went into the furniture business! One & 3/8ths yard, and \$5 for Brij Bahadur to sew, and voila, dress pants fa days! Hell, I still have that pants since 1958 - that corner burn-down April 2001! - 43 years later!

My *first 'BIF'* - Had to keep this, as it signalled 'ah now big man! B L Crombie at the Sports Counter, Bookers Universal refused to sell me size 'large' because ah was chinee. Had to threaten to show 'proof of identity'.

A *Yellow Tie* - Thought I had thrown this out. Had pledged never to wear again - after the males of the bridal party wore yellow ties at that uproarious aunty-man wedding around 1956. Will keep, as this will come in handy to tie around the oak tree when our troops return from cutting Saddam's ass again. Hate when world leaders 'glutton for blows'. Be careful again - 'Blow' can also mean - getting horn!

Hoa - a *tie-dye shirt* - African print - like the ones 'House of Israel' wore. Never wore it again since the Fr Darke incident, and also gave up plantain chips! This shirt was also useful to pose as 'Rasta' on Haile Selassie's Birthday. Just being smart like former Mayor Koch, who changed religion every national holiday - to march in front, like shirt button, in parade down Fifth Avenue, NY. I remember one day when he was an Irish in the morning and a Chinese in the evening for their new years dinner in Chinatown. We had a Guyanese politician who changed this same way - every time he changed 'wives'. I refuse to be irresponsible like the local TV & call name!

Heavens - more clothes than Imelda Marcos' shoes - A *light blue seer sucker suit*. It fits - but makes me look like 'Boy George'. The former Clerk of the Legislature [Crum-Ewing] wore one of these, when the PPP - Cheddie/Odo/Janet/Clinton Wong & 14 others walked out the legislature in their spanking white outfits. This 'white' must have been inappropriate to our rulers then [1953] and the constitution was suspended.

Found my *National Dress* we wore at the Cali, Panam Games 1971. Appropriate verdant green - for a Guyanese Party - but must be careful not to stand out - like Cher at the Academy Awards. Modest dress is a sign of good taste!

Finally settle for the all-occasion sport coat - Gold buttons, tie with Frank Sinatra knot - and walked in, just as dinner about to finish - ya boy the splitting image of Telly Savalas - ya know why?

Timing is so relevant when you crashing. The host 'welcomes' me with an Arnold Schwarzenegger handshake - "So glad you can come. Man, ah was trying to get ya for days!" ...Hell, he could 'lie' better than Clinton!

A warm hug from the hostess, who rushes to stop the buffet table being cleared. The secret when ya crash is to make the hosts feel 'guilty' for neglecting to invite you.

Then head for the drinks bar and hope to hell it's not one of those paybars popular up here. Observe the line carefully - at your turn, if it's on the 'HOUSE' [as this one was] you order Johnny Walker Black or Dom Perignon. If it's pay - Can I have a Coke? Please cut back on the ice. Now again it's timing - when the bartender turn to reach for a glass, pass your empty hand over the tip jar, smiling like Nelson Rockefeller 'This is for you!' Be generous, with extravagant smile if you wish good service - and I guarantee - they will pour your next drink while you are approaching!

The Party was great - as we Guyanese know to fete like 'vikings'. A bevy of beauties - Dougla - Chinee - Roti - Puttagee - Ebony - radiant and charming - whose halves don't dance much - some hug-up the bar - so this boy dancing up a storm.

After the cake cutting, special guests who travelled from Toronto - Maurice Serrao [Ramblers], Winston Duggin [Telstars], Ron Mollyneaux [Thunderbirds & Phase 2 in Toronto] - from Miami - Alfred Samaroo [Nite People/Telstars & Graduates]. Alan Khan [GBS] Carl Pestano, on instruments in a musical jam-session that had everyone jumping - until cock-a-crow. What a great party - And leaving, I thank the birthday host Alfred for a 'good time' and gently reminded - "Looking forward to your 51st."

And by the following Tuesday, we all in Miami in a two day lime of 'Gaff' ol Talk as Guyanese are famous for. Ron cooking up a storm of cook-up, fried butter-fish, curry goat, salt fish & bake - Guyana music on the stereo - booze to inspire endless shit-talk - and jokes as old as Sam Chase! ... ya think it easy?

## Literary Evening

By Peter Bhola, March 31, 2003

Our annual literary evening was held on Friday February 21. Although Toronto was experiencing double-digit sub-zero temperatures, the event was well attended and 50-60 people filled the hall. Lester introduced Patrick Chan, our President, who thanked the organizers and welcomed the audience.

**Lester**, the first contributor read excerpts from “The Martin Carter Tribute” taken from the *Kyk-Over-Al* magazine. Martin Carter who is regarded as Guyana’s greatest poet, died in 1997. Lester introduced his subject by providing quotes from the leading Guyanese literary critics: Rory Westmass compared Carter to Oscar Wilde, Eusi Kaywana claimed that Carter connected politics and poetry and Rupert Roopnarine remarked that Carter linked ordinary people of all classes. Lester remarked that Carter who had served in both the PPP and PNC governments, once said, after resigning from the PNC government, “The mouth is muzzled by the food it eats”. He proceeded to read an excerpt from Carter’s diary, which dealt with some of Carter’s musings when he participated in a monthly discussion group with the founding members of the PPP and members of the rank and file. Carter seemed like a disaffected intellectual liberal, whose idealism had begun to tarnish in direct proportion to the time he spent engaged in political discussions. He noted that frivolous statements about Marx’s carbuncles were treated with utmost gravity by the party elites. One man dropped out, from the group, because he felt they were on a quixotic quest to overthrow the white man and one poor black woman, in an ironic twist, always gave a sizeable donation because of that “white lady” Janet Jagan.

**Nalo Hopkinson**, an award winning science fiction writer, read a story “Shift” which was recently published by the literary journal “Conjunctions”. Shift opens up in the bedroom of a young black man and his white lover. The young man is evading his sister and mother, who are trying to reclaim him from his lover, but he mistakenly alerts them to his whereabouts and the story is built around this search and evasion. The story reads like a jazz piece. It undergoes a series of transformations but it maintains a synchrony to the structure, which is borrowed from Shakespeare’s play “The Tempest”, by constant repetition of the words “Caliban, Ariel and Sycorax”. Caliban is the young man, Ariel his sister and tormentor, and Sycorax is his mother. Unfortunately Nalo ran out of time and did not finish the story. Nalo has a large presence in cyberspace and there are many websites that carry her interviews.

**Percy Anderson**, after a meticulous introduction by Lester, started with two long pieces. The first one transpires like a lament of the promise and then the broken dreams that have befallen Guyana. In it there are some references to Shaka and Makonaima. The second one articulates the concerns of Guyanese immigrants in their adopted homeland. Although I missed out on the meaning of these two pieces, I was mesmerized by Percy’s delivery. It was evident that Percy has a deep love for the rhythm and the expressive power of the English language. At the height of his delivery, there was literally a torrent of polysyllabic words and a member in the audience pleaded for relief from “verbal hernia” which Percy took in good humor. In his introductory remarks, Lester recalled that Percy had put him in detention for wearing the wrong tie; this time Percy leant on him to extend his allotted time. The next piece was a poignant reflection of a man seriously ill, lying on his hospital bed, looking through the window and using the falling snow as a backdrop to ponder his mortality. What is said in the piece is nuanced by the imagery of the falling snow. There are striking similarities, of the use of this imagery with Joyce’s short story “The Dead”. In that story Nora uses a similar scene to recall the death of her first love. The darkness, the soft obliteration of tracks, the silence and the opaqueness of vision all evoke the images of death. The next reading describes a visit to Kaitetur Falls with a batch of students. The falls were personified as the mythological Makonaima and the streaming water was likened to a long beard of a wise man. Percy ended with a reading that he used to induct himself at the beginning each academic term. It was tightly controlled and sounded like a paean to life in all its various forms. The emotional range of the readings and their delivery moved many in the audience.

**Patrick’s** reading was from an email sent by Godfrey Chin – extracts from “Nostalgia 101 – Guyana’s men’s fashion from yesteryear”. This was a light whimsical work that traced the different fashions from the fifties to the present time. The reading started with the “closet” and then chronologically went through the clothes that were kept in it. It recalled, with appropriate colloquialisms, some of the festivals and social occasions where the clothes were worn. Godfrey was obviously a city boy who had a lot of leisure time and social connections to be invited to a lot of parties. He crashed the parties that he was not invited to, and he shared his secrets of blending in by giving a brief tutorial on the art of “popping”. As Patrick was reading, he swayed to the singsong rhythm of the piece; this resonated within the audience, most of whom shared



the same social background as the writer. Patrick, in his introductory remarks, as if to illustrate the mischievousness of Godfrey, mentioned that he had irritated the PPP government by making political statements with his carnival floats. Godfrey, putting all these troubles behind, moves to the USA, quickly blends in and becomes a subscriber to Pax Americana where he waits for the much-anticipated victory party. Near the end, Godfrey was musing about what to do with his yellow tie since most of his old clothes were coming back in style. After some deliberation, he decides to use it as a yellow ribbon to greet the “boys”, on their return from teaching Saddam a lesson for the second time.

After the intermission, **Martin Villafana**, a local actor and nephew of Jim Holder, read some excerpts from Jim Holder’s book “My Life with the Wai – Wai”. Holder worked in the post-colonial government as an agriculture officer and the reading described his experiences in the remote area and his work with the Wai-Wai. Two incidents stand out in the reading. The first one dealt with the establishment of a trading post in the interior and the Amerindians experiments with western clothes. He related how the women bought a lot of the panties but returned the brassieres. The pants that the men bought gave them rashes because they would frequently wade into the river to perform personal hygiene and wore the wet pants for most of the day. The other episode dealt with the death of a Brahma cow. One of the bulls accidentally drank the juice of the bitter cassava, which was carelessly left outside the hut. As the animal was in its death throes, Holder who may have been distressed over the loss of the animal remarked that the Amerindian “cowboys” showed no reaction to the animal in its agony. Holder was comparing his sensibilities with those of his counterpart in a hunter-gatherer society where, relationships to domesticated animals did not exist and there was nothing in their vocabulary, to express this kind of loss.

**Cecil Prashad**, the next presenter gave a talk on Wilson Harris titled “A way into Palace of the Peacock”. Cecil shortened his presentation because of the slipping schedule. He commented on certain aspects of Harris’ work - the destructional approach, the magic realism and the minimization of plot and characterization but only a few examples were given to explain these abstractions. He mentioned that Harris’ work was the ongoing solution of a puzzle that will never be solved and it tries to address what was left out in the history of the people.

**Horace Henriques**, who had participated in last year’s literary evening, was again invited to read extracts from his work in progress titled “Jacob’s house”. The story is set in a Portuguese household in an East Indian village. The protagonist is a boy who lives with his grandmother “Mooma” and his two uncles. His father, who is insane, lives in the adjacent yard and the boy sees him briefly to pass him plates of food over the fence. The family owns a rum shop and the two uncles become alcoholics – consuming the goods in addition to selling it. The story deals with the boy’s removal from the disintegrating family and his adoption, by his aunt, into a socially mobile family. At first, both the boy and Mooma find the separation painful and he would look forward to the Friday afternoon visits, by Mooma, at the schoolyard; these visits come to an end after the boy fails to show up. Mooma had become a liability to the boy because his friends now tease him about the visits. There is vividness in the writing that helps to recapture aspects of village life, from the machismo act of throwing the rum behind the teeth, passing food over the paling, Mooma’s “cure all” bottle of bay rum and the way she would wrap the shilling piece in a “kerchief” and pin it on the boy. There were some humorous parts that appealed to the audience; these were mainly sly references to Mooma’s ability to produce wind. But this humor belied the boy’s neglect, separation and his difficulties in navigating a society obsessed with race and class. This was the last reading for the evening.

Nearly all the people stayed to the end and most of the people were in high spirits. As they were preparing to leave, one of the guests quickly made his way to the front, took the microphone and gave a vote of thanks to the organizers of the event. He ended with the following joke as if to confirm, with all the allusions to farting in the previous reading, that he was also touched by the muse. This was a joke about the hard wood seats in the buses; what follows is a reconstruction of the joke. One woman after sitting a long time on a bus seat complained to her companion that the seat was so hard that her bum had fallen asleep. The second one replied that her bum fell asleep a long time ago and it had started snoring.

This was a most enjoyable way to spend a few hours on a Friday night. We must thank the presenters, Lester (the organizer), the many volunteers and Conrad, for lending his newly acquired wireless audio system. We eagerly look forward to another literary evening for the year 2004.

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 27 April 2003

Notice is hereby given that the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of Queen's College of Guyana Alumni Association (Toronto) Inc. will be held at 2:30pm on April 27<sup>th</sup> 2003 at BURROWS HALL, 1081 Progress Avenue (East of Markham, South of Sheppard). Light refreshments will be served.

## AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Minutes of the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting
3. Matters Arising
4. President's Address
5. Adoption of Statement of Accounts for the year ended January 31<sup>st</sup> 2003
6. Election of Office Bearers for 2003 / 2004
7. Appointment of an Auditor
8. Discussion of QC Foundation
9. Notice of Motions
10. Any other Business
11. Adjournment

By order of the Executive Committee

Peter Bhola, Secretary

Note:

1. Notice of Motion must reach the Secretary forty eight (48) hours before the meeting
2. Members who are unable to attend the meeting in person are requested to date and sign the enclosed proxy form.
3. A member may execute a maximum of three (3) proxy votes, except the Secretary, who may receive mailed proxies

### QUEEN'S COLLEGE OF GUYANA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (TORONTO) INC.

We the undersigned, being members in good standing, hereby nominate and second the following person(s) for the undermentioned position(s).

President \_\_\_\_\_

Vice Presidents (3) \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary \_\_\_\_\_ Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_

Asst. Secretary/Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_

Directors (4) \_\_\_\_\_

Nominated by \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name in full

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name in full

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Membership Application & Information Update Form

Membership dues \$25 per year – Feb 1 – Jan 31 (\$12.50 for Student Members)

- Renew my membership     Enroll me as a member     Update my file     Accept my Donation  
 Full Member     Student Member     Associate Member     Honorary Member

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Tel\_res: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Fax\_res : \_\_\_\_\_

Tel\_bus : \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail : \_\_\_\_\_ Fax\_bus : \_\_\_\_\_

Graduation Year: \_\_\_\_\_ House: \_\_\_\_\_ Donation Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- Volunteer for:  Newsletter     Website     Literary Evening     Last Lap Lime     12<sup>th</sup> Night Dance  
 Father's Day Brunch     Reunion     Cricket     Soccer     Golf     Tennis     Other

Special Interests \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form with your donation and/or \$25 cheque (\$12.50 for Student Members) to  
Queen's College of Guyana Alumni Association (Toronto) Inc., P.O. Box 312 West Hill, Ontario M1E 4R8

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City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Tel\_res: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Fax\_res : \_\_\_\_\_

Tel\_bus : \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail : \_\_\_\_\_ Fax\_bus : \_\_\_\_\_

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