

# my trinidad



Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow.

April 2024. Issue #04, Volume #15



Inside:

**Calypso & the Gay Experience**

How Bards deal with alternative lifestyles

**Roundabouts and Highways**

Love is Life Through Time

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trinidad

My Trinidad Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow is a monthly digital magazine capturing the essence of Trinidad, the most southerly of the Caribbean islands. It offers a nostalgic look at the island that was, and casts a skillful eye on the island that is, in an attempt to enlighten readers to the island's potential.

Its editorial vision is based on the old English philosophy that you can't really know where you are going unless you know where you've been.

In an effort to fulfil that vision our cast is made up of Trinidadian nationals at home and in the Diaspora who represent some of the most thoughtful minds of the day. In terms of infamy as opposed to celebrity, they are as follows:

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Any income generated from this magazine will go directly towards a children's charity to be established.

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The views of readers will be welcomed, and when possible, published. We reserve the right, of course, to edit same. All opinions offered in this magazine are not necessarily those of the publisher and editor.

Cover Art: Geoffrey Maclean

## April Showers, May Flowers

What's Inside! Why have some people become so prone to colourism? Check out Language prejudices and the sensitivity of



Margaret Syne

### Publisher's Note

people offended by colour. We move along to 'that future' of Trinidad, found in

the school bags of the students who carried them on the trains of the Pre-60s. Nostalgic memories of both a 'jep' stung face at our old airport and a comparison with the excellent airport of today. In addition, we get a reminder for those old enough to have enjoyed the Woolworth experience of fine first world department store shopping in developing Trinidad. Read about Oba and the evolution of the drum to

pan, which was described as the devil's instrument and the reason Pan was forbidden for some.

Check out calypso and expressions aimed at gays together with Mousie and Samson. Boy-school days of games and adventures in spooky places may surprise you. Memories and glimpses of radio and television personalities during the golden era of both radio and television (ttt). Marriage and the challenges and joys of making it work. Enjoy a few awesome photos from South West Trinidad. More joy, when you try the Sawine recipe, an eastern dessert from Pakistan/India.

A true son of the soil, Geoffrey Mac Lean has died, read more in a short pen portrait. Welcome Jo Ryan, new to MyT, a former lecturer at the EC Institute.

Clogged waterways cause Floods! Clean them!  
'April Showers bring May Flowers'



A RARE SIGHT: It is said that every 100 years or so, the Talipot Palm blooms, and so it did this year in Trinidad where it was spotted in the Botanical Gardens among other places

## Eternal Freedom from Slavery

### Soucouyants and Douens under the breadfruit tree

In Oba's dreams, he constantly got visions and flashes of hundreds of suffering enslaved Africans who died under the torment of massa; especially those who were prevented from beating their drums. He saw those who were tortured, maimed, shackled and imprisoned because of their love for the Orishas, and the praise of the drums of freedom. Despite the attacks of the Belmont, soucouyants and the douens that wanted to steal him when he was a little child, he grew into manhood and found his place under the breadfruit tree.



Johnny Coomansingh

It was here under the breadfruit tree that the spirits of his forefathers assembled as though searching for a savior, searching for freedom, searching for peace, searching for rest, yes, searching for a way to express themselves. Yes, they were restless, tormented and tired because they were deprived of the freedom that the drum offered. Here under this blessed tree that provided so many of them with sustenance when they were hungry for physical food, here they once more assembled, begging Oba for help to set them free...to take them to the place of eternal rest. They wanted one more time to hear the drums. Oba was not confused anymore about what he saw in his dreams. He knew now what he was born to do; to rekindle the power of the drums...to reunite the music of his forefathers. He understood his calling.

Sent on a direct and powerful mission, Oba was the angel who was able to quiet the restless spirits of his forefathers. The spirits related that "massa" (slave masters) prevented them from beating their drums. In their desperation, they turned to the tamboo-bamboo; the "bamboo drum" that served to give them some ephemeral comfort. They had no choice but to make do with what they had. Massa was always watching and listening. Massa feared the drum. In anguish they told of the oppression and repression they suffered at the hands of massa and the "amendments to the law" and of the terms and charges: (Amendment to the Ordinance #6, 1863 on 18 July 1883 states: "Penalty of up to ten pounds for the first or second offence and up to six months in prison and for the third or subsequent offence, hard labor for six months if they beat any drum").

They complained about the treachery of the wicked colonists and the hardships they endured in the sugar cane fields and everywhere else in Trinidad. Yes, the whippings, the torture, and deprivations they underwent; the shame of being naked on the auction blocks with chained bleeding ankles and how they were torn apart from their families and sold off to horrible people. They told of their ceaseless nights of terror and agony and how massa worked them like animals from dawn to dusk. And yes, they gleefully mentioned the tamboo-bamboo as a substitute, a relief from the repression and subjugation, but something was still missing; the power of the drums to awaken their spirituality.

They told Oba that he was the one; the prophet who was born to create the steelpan, and that under this breadfruit tree the world will begin to learn to come together, to unite, because the steelpan is the one instrument that preaches eternal freedom from slavery. Inside the steel-



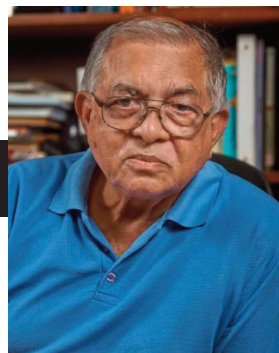
pan are the sequestered spirits of the West African forefathers who have found solace, and who are willing to share the music of real freedom. Oba figured out how to make and play the steelpan and how to present it to massa. The spirits summoned him to invite massa to play the steelpan, and in so doing, massa would also obtain real freedom.

Yes, it took a long time before massa acknowledged the steelpan. It took almost an eternity before the religion of the colonists accepted the steelpan. There were those who literally pelted and violently removed the steelpan outside their churches. To them, the steelpan was an instrument of the devil and that it had no place in the worship of their god. There were those who failed to understand the steelpan as the instrument of true freedom; it took a long time before they could taste the soul and sweetness of real freedom.

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# Language Prejudice: Colour Me Empty

*The colour I think of little moment; and am of opinion with our friend Foote, respecting his negro friend, that a good dog, like a good candidate, cannot be of a bad colour. — Thoughts upon Hare and Fox Hunting, Peter Beckford (1740 - 1811)*



Those of you who dislike, detest and abhor the use of the word "black" to connote, denote or otherwise describe anything bad, horrid, heinous, abhorrent, reprehensible, negative or just plain no good, you have a champion right here in me. I am on your side. Totally, fully and completely. And if you wish, you can thank me for being such a sport by saying that it is awfully white of me.

**Tony Deyal**

The letter from a lawyer who wrote to the newspapers recently criticizing a judge's use of the word "black" in that way, is but a symptom of serious concern for the present state of the English Language and for the colour prejudice deeply imbedded in it over the centuries of its evolution, from Old to Middle to Modern to Standard English.

English is, of course, part of the white man's burden of which Kipling speaks, and while it is in a state of constant flux, its origin in a land of people with light coloured skins who lived in great fear of the demon and danger filled darkness has caused it to be full of this particular prejudice. But this is no excuse. We have to eradicate colour prejudice from our language, once and for all. And when I say for all, I mean for all.

Let us start with black. When some American adherents of the Muslim religion call themselves black Muslims, does it mean that the religion recognizes differences based on pigmentation? Would the average Nigerian, for instance, see himself as a black Muslim? And if I talk to one of the Ayatollahs about pigmentation as integral to his religion would I not be misunderstood, deemed an infernal blackguard, and be condemned like Rushdie?

True, my example is not really representative of the prejudice against black. That is a horse of a different hue. We know about black listing and black mailing, there are black masses and black magic, and there are some who are afraid of being black balled. And we should not seek to replace the word "black" by "dark" since that, too, is prejudiced. One hears of dark secrets and shots in the dark, dark shadows and dark nights of souls. It would be a pity since we would no longer be able to bet on the dark horse in the race, but you cannot make an omelet without breaking a few eggs, or heads, as Mussolini, the leader of the Black-shirts said. I say abolish it all, all colour prejudice in the English language.

This would mean that while black is the most important ball in snooker we will no longer pot black. No more Black Widows and say done with. Bye Bye Blackbird. Worse, the phrases "in the black" to mean prof-

itable as opposed to being "in the red" or in debit must be eliminated in deference to all those of red complexion.

Yes, they are folks too, and as the debate on the colour of the Red House showed, red is a colour to be taken seriously. Those lines of Tennyson which describe a "Nature red in tooth and claw" must go. Away with them. And let there be no more red-letter days or red herrings. My friend Patricia, for instance, a highly educated cocoa panyol who I like to describe as "well red," might even take offence to having communists described as red, and will surely be highly inflamed by the phrase "better red than dead."

I can well imagine the anger of any red-blooded American Indian or Redskin when he discovers that "red light district" and "red tape" are by no means complimentary to him, and it would be a red-letter day when he seeks redress. Of course, since there is nobody to sue, one can say not a red cent for him.

Brown people also have cause for concern. Trinidadians who use the phrase "things brown" to mean bad must cease and desist. Nobody must be in "brown" studies, no more brown-bagging of meals and no more Robert Browning.

Yellow people, much maligned through the association of their native hue with disease, as in "yellow fever", and cowardice, as in "yellow-belly," would be glad when the language is purged of all these controversial usages which so discolour it. The film "I am curious, yellow" has to settle for being merely curious. And since being yellow-bellied is the same as being lily-livered or showing the white feather, whites would also be eternally grateful for our intervention. The dictionary would become a white elephant: cocaine would no longer be described as the "white lady," and people would not be allowed to go white with fright.

When the aliens land, they would be spared being green with envy or getting a poisonous look (cyan-eyed). Being healthy would no longer be termed being in the "pink", and schoolchildren everywhere would be spared Grey's elegy. No more oranges, nobody will perpetrate the atrocity of naming their children Violet, and no more feeling depressed or blue days.

What a world it would be, totally colourless. South Africa would have to end its rigid colour stratification. We would not be able to use colour as a way of expressing our identities, our feelings or our frustrations. Seeing red over the use of black would no longer be possible. The rainbow would exist but we would not be able to describe it by how it appears, we would have to describe it by what it means to us.

*Tony Deyal say, dat how, nobody would describe his writing as "purple" prose and he sincerely hopes that nobody would write to the Express threatening to sue them and him for saying that he had used their colour negatively. What he knew is that he was neither "by-legal" or "buy-lawyer."*

# Echoes of a Golden Era

## Nostalgia and Reflections on TTT

The resonance of these songs holds within them a treasure of cherished memories from a remarkable era, intertwined inextricably with our collective consciousness. They transport us back to the days when "TTT channels 2 & 13" graced our screens, when these local songs would seamlessly fill the gaps between programs, creating a harmonious bridge from one broadcast to the next.



**Joseph Lopez**

Fond recollections of *Dimanche* repeats of "TanTan" and "Saga Boy's" frequent appearances on the screen arise, evoking a mixture of fear and fascination in my childhood self. However, as the sands of time have shifted, I find myself deeply appreciative of the significance, culture and enduring legacy they represent. Kudos must be given to iconic mas man Peter Minshall who designed and created the sixteen-foot-tall dancing puppets in 1990.

The act of flipping channels, engaging in a delicate switch between TTT, TV4, and CCN TV6. Occasionally, this ritual led to encounters with the crackling static of grainy audio or the sudden emergence of vibrant stripes, signaling a temporary disruption in the station's transmission. From that familiar, nostalgic melody accompanying the TTT 7 PM Panorama newscast, a program that seemed to stretch endlessly in my childhood perception, I dreaded the news segment as it appeared to span hours without respite. Reflecting on the past, I recall the era of rear-projection televisions (big back TV's) from the 1990s. Remember those bulky sets where you had to quickly turn knobs to switch channels? Mistakes could lead to grainy visuals and unpleasant static noise. Yet amidst these quirks, a memorable nightly ritual unfolded the closing of CCN TV6 at midnight. The gentle pan instrumental signaled the end of programming, followed by a solemn prayer. These moments, though faded, remain etched in my memory, reminding me of the power of nostalgia and the unique charm of days gone by.

Who could forget those days when the sports news predominantly revolved around horseracing and boxing competitions, a subject that failed to captivate my imagination as a young child? Little did I comprehend that fast-forwarding to the 2000s would grant me the privilege of occupying the same seat as some of Trinidad and Tobago's most prolific and iconic news figures, sharing that familiar spot while narrating the unfolding stories of our era. What an extraordinary time it was.

Yet, the essence of this narrative extends beyond mere recollections. Instead, it serves as an ode to the captivating melody of "Pan by Storm" by the late Ken Professor Philmore. This tune frequently graced the airwaves following an episode of the late Allyson Hennessy's "Community Dateline" program.

The end of the program, intertwined harmoniously with the sound of Hydrocarb and Petrotrin's lunchtime whistle, resonating through the very heart of our community in Fyzabad. Often, I would gaze outside, fixating my gaze upon the towering transmitters that seemed to pierce the heavens, pondering if the melodic strains originated from their lofty realms. It was a sound that those of us who grew up in oil communities became accustomed to, although as a grown man, it has been years since I last heard its evocative serenade.



In the grand scope of life, this serves as a gentle reminder that our memories are interwoven with the cultural fabric of our existence. It invites us to cherish the songs, the programs, and the moments that shaped us, for they embody the essence of who we were and who we have become. As we navigate the currents of time, let us carry within us the appreciation for the melodies that shaped our past, for they hold within them the power to transport us back to the treasured moments of our golden era.

# Sawine/Vermicelli Pudding

Sawine is a dessert used, especially on the day of Eid, by Trini Muslims. It is called 'Seviyan Kheer' in India and Pakistan. (Seviyan means Vermicelli and Kheer means milk pudding). However, it can be made and enjoyed by anyone on any day. It is quite simple to make. You will need these ingredients: Vermicelli pasta, milk, dried fruits, nuts and butter.

Cook time: 5 mins toasting + 10 mins boiling

1) In a heavy skillet on medium heat

Melt 1 – 2 tbsps butter.

Break up 8oz vermicelli pasta into the butter.

Move around with a wooden spoon until toasted to golden brown.

Set aside.

2) Boil 4 cups of water in large pot.

Add the toasted vermicelli

Add 1 cinnamon stick

½ tsp cardamom powder

½ tsp ginger powder



¼ tsp nutmeg, finely grated. You may replace with other spices you prefer.

Stir often. Cook until tender. Leave covered off the heat to simmer. Remove cinnamon stick.

3) In a large bowl Mix the milks together. You may use plant-based milk (your choice).

1 large tin sweetened condensed milk

1 large tin evaporated milk (or cream)

4 cups normal milk (add more if prefer).

4) Toppings: Raisins, almonds, pistachios, maraschino cherries, and (your choice).

5) To serve: Fill serving dish half up with boiled vermicelli, top up and combine with milk mixture. Garnish with nuts and dried fruit, with cherries on top.

Enjoy! Bon appétit! Try it! All for you!



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# Geoffrey Mac Lean (1942-2024)

What a fulfilled and accomplice Life! Geoffrey was a south boy. He was born in Pointe-a-Pierre and started his education at St. Peter's school, not far from his home. He then moved on to secondary school at Presentation College in San Fernando. He studied architecture in England, then came back home and got married. He lived for some years in Dominica with his young family. When he returned to Trinidad, he gave his all, being the



Margaret Syne

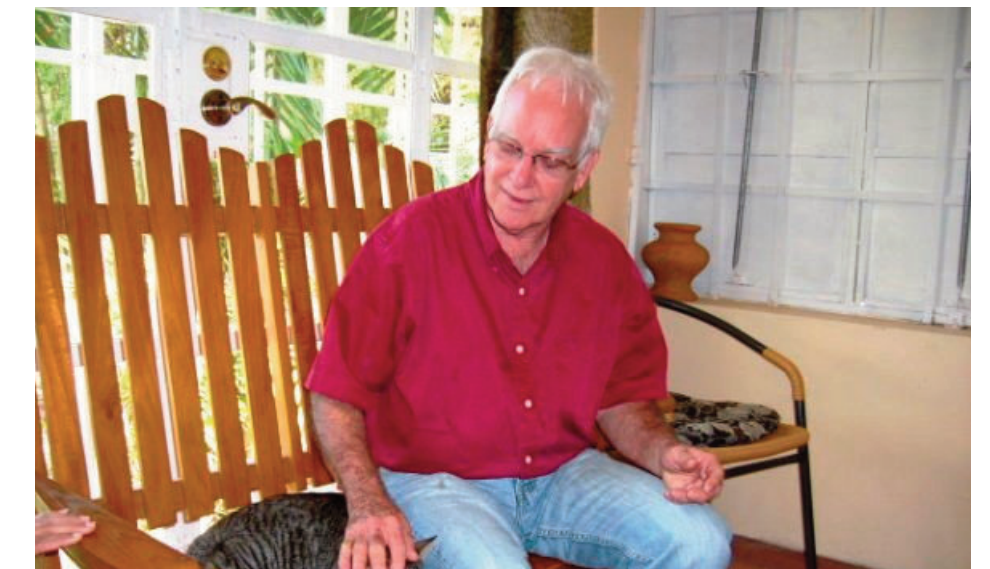
fuel behind many groups and associations affiliated with preservation, conservation and restoration of T & T's historical sites. He was a true Patriot, a true son of the soil!

His days were extremely busy. He was filled with enthusiasm and was more knowledgeable than he let on. With his love and talent for Art, he first established the Aquarela Art Gallery, then the Medulla, to carry on and improve the traditions. He was an excellent Art curator and contributed tremendously in assisting and promoting his passion, and those of others. Simultaneously, he was involved in doing his work in architecture, making beautiful designs for buildings and homes, and served as a past president of the TTIA. He was involved in Trinidad and Tobago's 'Cultural Heritage' and the National and San Fernando Heritage Trusts to conserve and restore historic buildings. He was a mentor to many visual arts students at UWI.

Geoffrey was also an expert as an Art Historian. His passion exploded in his work of Michel-Jean Cazabon, Trinidad's first great painter, and National Hero, who is well known internationally. Geoffrey was the leading authority. Among his many publications were the biography of Cazabon (1813-1888) in 1986 and in 1999, he published The Lord Harris collection of paintings by Cazabon. In 2015, he assisted the Government of TT in acquiring Cabazon's paintings that were on auction at Christie's Auction House in London England. The paintings were finally returned to Trinidad! He also contributed to MacMillan Dictionary of World, Caribbean and Latin American Art. He curated collections from Trinidad and Tobago for exhibitions in London, Toronto, Paris, Bonn, Dominica and Martinique.

Notwithstanding all the accolades, he was a humble, down to earth man. He showed respect to all and sundry. He was an animal lover. His dogs and cats always starred on his Facebook page. Geoffrey was famous for his love of a good bottle of wine. One of his favorites was Pinot Grigio. Some time back, he was having doubles for lunch, not with a red soda, but, yes, a glass of Pinot Grigio. When having salad, he loved blue cheese dressing, and never refused apple pie with coconut ice cream.

Geoffrey was just three years old when our grandfather, HR died. He spoke frequently to my mother for information on her father. There was a revered yearning to find out about his unknown grandfather, who died in the late 1940s. It was, therefore, a pleasure for my mother to impart



what she knew. These conversations led to us going on a quest to find grandfather's gravestone.

The Mac Lean family owns a burial plot at the St. Stephen's Churchyard in Princes Town. Geoffrey, with my mother and other cousins went in search of the tomb. Unfortunately, we did not find grandfather's tomb, which was close to the church building. We assumed the church expanded and covered his grave. We did not give up, and decided to go through the yard. Geoffrey found Daniel Mac Lean's gravestone, with other ancestors in a strong-concreted tomb. There was heaped dirt, which covered the lower inscriptions of the tombstone over the decades. We had no tools, but Geoffrey started moving and digging the dirt away with his bare fingers. I was elated that he found our great grandfather's resting place, along with others. The trip was indeed a fruitful one.

With all of Geoffrey's valued work, he never felt swell headed. He was a humble man. He was easy going and made people in his company feel comfortable. He quietly gave sound advice. He was committed to his extended family and worked tediously on the Mac Lean family tree. He would often get in touch with me to clarify our common grandfather's line. My mother knew more as we lived in south where HR had his estate. After my mother died, he just had me with whom to sort things out. I thoroughly treasured all the interesting interactions, and all those conversations about that complicated, intricate family tree that I believe was completed last year.

If you check his Facebook page, you would see the word 'Cheups'. He used that word in text, when fed up or frustrated with foolishness. I am almost sure he told his doctor 'Cheups' when given his diagnosis. He'll be 82 years old the 19th April. But, is now absent. 'Cheups'

It was indeed an honor and a privilege, to have known him. If you ever meet someone, whom you loved before you actually met him/her that would be how I felt about my dear cousin, Geoffrey Mac Lean, well loved by so many who knew him. Thank you for your devotion, hard work and service to Trinidad and Tobago. Well done!

Rest in Glorious Peace in the Great Art Gallery in the Sky GMCL. 'Cheups!'

# Mousie from Barrackpore

Not too long ago there was a beautiful, fashionable, and not so old, woman in the town of Barrackpore, who was well versed in the ways of the world. We called her Mousie. She ran a restaurant and Bar, and had working for her, a bevy of young, curvaceous and full bosomed girls. The young, as well as the not so young and even some elderly men flocked her Bar. For a price, a pleasure seeking man could secure the companionship of one of these alluring and sultry models, as they were called.



Mootil Boodoosingh

There was also in that same city a robber and thief named Samson, so called because he was as strong, handsome and well built. He used to enter people houses at night and rob at will. The villagers assembled and complained to the Police Sergeant, who himself was a patron of Mousie's establishment and a friend of Samson. When their grievances were ignored, they sought the help of the Police Commissioner, who was at that time the head of an Evangelical Church. The Commissioner liaised with the head of the army and they ordered that soldiers and policemen be posted everywhere in Barrackpore. Samson was caught and Mousie's business fell into lean times. Peace and quiet returned to Barrackpore.

Mousie was standing at her window, and looking down on the street she saw Samson being arrested, He was muscularly built with handsome features and she loved him at first sight. She reflected: "If I can have that attractive hunk, I will give up this bad life of mine and live respectably with him," for now that her business enterprises had dried up, she, as many before has done, had turned to religion.

Now Mousie, unlike Samson had been saving up her money and had huge investments in property and jewellery. Indeed her jewellery was worth millions, as she loved dressing up. When Samson was unable to secure bail, she gained his freedom by posting several thousand dollars to the courts and then he gratefully married her and they lived in delight and luxury.

The robber after five or six months thought: "I shall never be able to stay in this one place; I cannot stand being cooped up. But I cannot go empty-handed. Mousie's ornaments and jewellery are worth a hundred of thousands of dollars, I will kill her and take them," for unlike Mousie he was not smitten by Cupid.

So, he said to her one day, "Darling, when I was being arrested, I prayed and promised an offering to the Sacred Tree God on the San Fernando Hill, if I was ever released. I have been having bad dreams lately. It is as if He is now threatening me because I have not kept my part of the bargain, let us go there and make the offering."

Mousie replied, "Very well, dear, we will prepare and send it."

"Darling, it will not do to just send it, let us both go and present it, wearing all our ornaments and jewels as is the custom when we are doing prayers, for this can be seen as a thanksgiving to the Gods"

"Very well, my Dearest One, we'll do so."



He made her prepare the offerings and together they went along with several villagers to the San Fernando Hill. When they reached the bottom of the hill, he said:

"Dear, the Tree God, seeing this crowd of people, will not accept the offering; let just two go up and present it."

She consented, and he made her carry the basket containing the flowers, Parsad and other puja ingredients. Meanwhile he was carrying a cutlass for preparing the Bedi, and when they reached the top, he set the offering at the foot of a tree, which grew beside a precipice as high as one could see.

He then said: "Dear, I have not come here to present any offerings; I have come with the intention of killing you and going away with all your ornaments and jewels. Take them all off and make a bundle of them in your sari"

Mousie in surprise asked, "Husband, why will you kill me?"

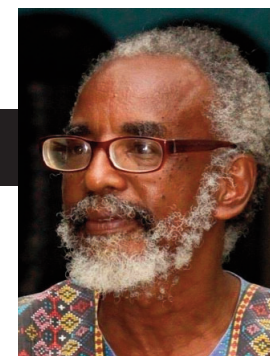
"For your money and jewellery," he laughed.

Mousie replied, "Husband, remember the good I have done for you. When you were locked up and in jail, I gave up a rich man for you and paid a large sum of money to secure your bail. I have never looked at another man since we were married, please do not kill me, I will give you as much money as you want and be your slave."

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# Calypso and the Gay Experience

The Trinidad Calypso is filled with anti-gay lyrics and sentiments. Jamaica might lead the way in the abhorrence and dislike of the homosexual lifestyle, but the Caribbean, as a whole, has never taken a liking to homosexuality, closeted or in the open. As such, the overwhelming numbers of songs, which have touched on the topic over the 100 years since calypso recordings preserved the genre for posterity, have been anti homo. In fact, there were no calypsoes that promoted or respected the gay experience, until Kurt Allen's 2019 offering, despite the tongue in cheek 'Gay Pride' by Skunky and a deceptively titled 'Coming out of the Closet' by Magic. The Caribbean has been labeled by some as "the most homophobic place on earth". However, an examination of the themes and topics touched show an interesting mix and approach to the treatise.



Zeno Obi Constance

Referenced in calypso as he-she, sissy, hen, bullerman, gayboy, homo, les, funny, sodomite, queer, faggit, queen, macomere man, chichi man, and more, the Caribbean homosexual has felt the brunt of a calypso discourse ranging from picong, derision, caustic laughter to threats and even violence.

SODOM: Calypsonians have used the oft mentioned and quoted bible verses to show their disapproval of same sex unions. Both Leviticus 18 and 20 are utilized:

Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable. (Lev 18.22)

If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads. (Lev 20.13)

In addition, of course, the well-known story of Lot and his family fleeing the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah is rehashed.

Former calypso monarch Delamo compares and equates Trinidad society of 1982 to the biblical Sodom and Gomorrah, the actual title of his calypso:

*Cause we are living in this modern Sodom and Gomorrah  
And very soon an angel go visit with we in the near future  
So if your wife turn a pillar of salt  
Know that its your fault  
And if fire and brimstone fall down on we  
I know we are all guilty*

Valentino himself was 'born again' during the riots of the Black Power revolution of the 1970's and then later be baptized as a Rastafarian, the brethren with their Old Testament leanings, not comfortable with any form of homosexuality. Vally more than once frowns on the notion of same sex relationships. In 'People are Funny' from 1991 he too cites the Sodom and Gomorrah story to chastise the modern homosexuals.

*Now according to who you choose for your spouse  
A lot of people might start to grouse  
Because man going with man, woman with woman  
Sodom and Gomorrah kind of relation*

Gospel singer Sherwin Gardner in a dancehall / rapso treatise done



in extempo style references the Bible and warns that it is Satan's trick to stop men from realizing the ordained reason for sexual intercourse – to make children and fulfill the biblical command to 'go forth and multiply'.

*Hear about a boy name Sam  
Holding a next man hand  
Kissing up a next man  
Gone in store to buy wedding band  
But that is Satan lie  
To stop you from multiply*

In 2008 with same sex marriage being legal in the United States, Stanley Adams penned the second of his two calypsoes on homosexuality. Called 'Two Brides' he too reinforces the 'Sodom and Gomorrah' warning to criticize homosexual liaisons.

*I must confess I am not a church lover  
And I don't know much about Scripture  
But ah want some priest give me an answer  
Did they confirm Sodom and Gomorrah*

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# Why Ah Never Lun Tuh Beat Pan

Yes, all ah dem come from foreign land,  
With jacket and tie, and Bible in hand,  
Men and women of the cloth dey say...  
Dress up; dress up, in dey finest taylaylay,  
Dey sink dey church and put up di cross,  
Dey come and tell yuh dat dem is the boss,  
Rules, regulations, and amendments to law,  
Written...enacted to oppress the poor!



Don't beat any drum here lest yuh go to jail,  
In dem days for drum beaters is jail; no bail!

So dey preach dey

gospel with all the bling,

Remember, the drum is ah devil ting,

We turn to the bamboo and we pong it hard,

All over the place and in everybody yard,

We dance we bongo and we sing we song,  
The tamboo-bamboo was heard all over tong.  
(pra-ka-tak, pra-ka-tak, pra-ka-tak, pra-ka-tak)

But the church and dem would not relent,  
Much time and energy on the devil ting was spent,  
To bring the masses into rel subjection,  
Create separation!

Stay up dey in Laventille!

Steelbandman and jamette must live on the hill,  
Yuh hear mih! Stay up dey and beat yuh pan,  
Doh come dong here tuh pollute the land.

Dey doh want we; we without piety!  
Dey doh want we in dey elite society!  
We cyar rank with dem who hoity-toity,  
Dat is the reality!  
Because we free and we want tuh dance,  
We so happy, we does get in ah trance,  
With the sweetness of sound from Africa,  
And melodies beaten on oil drum from America.

Listen to dis one; as a good Christian boy ah went tuh buy bread,  
Inside the bakery ah hearing ah steelpan, but ah cyar turn mih head,  
Hear what Mister Popo the old baker say...  
"Wuh yuh looking over dey for boy...Yuh put something dey?"  
He knew quite well mih mudder; mih clan,  
He knew dat I must never see, or even touch ah steelpan,  
Read the Bible boy, holy songs yuh must lun and sing,  
Always remember dat pan is ah devil ting.

So mih pardner getting married and he bring some pan,  
In the people church, he thought it was grand...  
To play the wedding march, dat was the plan,  
But the deacon went crazy with ah badang, bang, bang!  
Flying through the door were the chrome-plated pans,  
He listened tuh the people, dat foreign band,  
Who came with jacket and tie and Bible in hand,  
And plant dat church on Trinidad land.

Yes, dey tell mih dat pan eh have no future,  
Steelbandman and jamette eh have no culture,  
If yuh go in the panyard yuh go lose yuh soul...  
Listen tuh the preacher and stay in the fold!  
Doh beat no pan because God go geh vex...  
Will you be led astray by one ah dem jamettes?  
So ah stay in the church with mih Bible in hand,  
That is why ah never lun to beat pan; yuh understand?

I  
a m  
a St.



# Roundabouts, Railways and Highways

## Love Is Life Through Time

The drivers waiting to enter the roundabout on one side allow you to complete your turn since you are already in the circuit. When they get to the other side if you are still in the circuit, you must in turn allow them to proceed before you.



Gerard Pemberton

That is a law requiring you to yield or give way to cars on your right. Keep making the right turns and you can remain safely in the roundabout circuit as long as you yield to others when required. When all drivers respect all others in the circuit, roundabouts are amazingly efficient. No one must stop completely for long. There can be a free flow of cars. Not enough opportunity for tempers to flare and hold up the line. Everybody spends less road time arriving earlier at his or her destination. There is a sweet taste to this wonderful experience of discipline and tolerance. Everybody must keep moving forward. Please do not spoil this short story by calling it productivity gains. It is love in traffic in a country where the number of passenger cars outnumbers registered voters.

The cars from Germany, England and even Australia were elegant and to most folks, intended for the distinguished or privileged. Others had the trains where there was beauty to be enjoyed through the windows and admired in the seats. Secondary school attendance by train boys and train girls was 100%. Who would want to miss the daily train rides up and down? The railways connected large numbers of rural residents to the emerging elite schools, from the late fifties to the late sixties. Affordable, reliable transport enlarged the intake to the prestige schools in the city. In retrospect, the future of the country was in the schoolbags carried safely on those trains. It was love in transportation that otherwise was not available. From a near zero base, it was education and prosperity in family life. The railways produced development of minds and enriched communities.

The railways were intended to ferry bulky materials and heavy equipment to the industrial locations and homegrown agricultural products to and from everywhere. Railways still do that in developed countries. Please do not spoil the story with comparisons; be happy for those who enjoyed life through love on our trains. The railway tracks were all laid in lines, mostly straight but sometimes curved, over bridges and streams and in one place, through a tunnel. The tracks were always the same width apart. Trains headed only in one direction or the opposite. Yet the trains were everywhere and brought different things to different people. They connected communities. Our railways, in roundabout ways, facilitated the social media of those times.

In every era, un-educated, fervent minds determine the majority view of society through a medium. This is based simply and securely on justice as mercy. Similarly, the economy is the aggregate of the consumption behavior of human beings. Unless you debate concepts with economists of decades ago, invisible hands and spirits shape the economy. As of last week in global markets, there was no sure way to do that complex math. Today, even the greatest of the most informed economists do not claim to understand inflation. The people do. A stable society depends on integrity, on social cohesion, which is the aggregate of the dignity of each individual member. Give people time to form and express their views. The social media of today is not effective for that purpose.

In our country, there was a confluence of roundabouts, railways, and highways in certain locations. Most drivers just passed through, even as we now do just in faster cars. These confluences revealed indigenous art, music, technical abilities, and distinctive cultures. The meeting of the rivers enriched the people in those areas, creating swirling tides of change and development in the country. There are stories to be told, novels still to emerge from these waters. There were various confluences, each different in size and each with unique features and character. In these times, we have new ones but with malls, parking lots and mobile rides no railways, just highways. We need more roundabouts to keep us moving forward together in harmony.

Togetherness is essential for a healthy and peaceful life. However, the world changes every day, in every era. Your dignity, as a person is infinite. That never changes. We need to be connected. Love transports us in life through time. Times change continuously. Life changes constantly. Love is the only constant.

The world gets better all the time when we are willing to put aside what we think we know. Do not be a one-track train. Instead, build confluences. Connect new techniques with community and family needs. You cannot re-shape long-established human values and social norms without stopping the community trains in their tracks. That is destructive. Consider new proven knowledge and ideas that create better living conditions and minds that are more productive. Have courage and the good sense to discuss change. Produce better ideas for more harmonious living for all humans. That is the purpose of democracy. It is governance with purpose with the directive that Love is life through time. Democracy is for everyone who recognises and respects the dignity of every human being. Democracy is not an "ism"; it is a way of being human in ways unique to each community. Leaders fashion "isms"; followers define democracy. Remember that it is the tracks that determine where the engine takes the carriages. The reality is that the cart drives the horse. Which should you put first?

# Mousie from Barrackpore

## Boodoosingh from Page 8

Here she begins to sing:

“Here is a golden necklace, and emeralds and pearls.  
Take all and welcome, place me with your servant girls.”

Samson then replies:

“Fair lady, lay your jewels down, and do not weep no more,  
I have to kill you for only then, I will be sure.”

Mousie is thinking: “This rascal will not spare my life, so I’ll take his life first by throwing him down the precipice in some way.”

She then recited these two verses:

“Within all my years and conscious memory,  
No man have I ever loved, more than thee.  
Come hither, for my last salute, receive my last embrace,  
For never more upon this earth, shall we meet face to face!”

Samson impatient with her delaying said: “Very well, dear; come and embrace me.”

Mousie walked round him in respectful salutation three times, kissed him, and saying:

“Now, husband, I am going to bow to you on all your four sides as is the tradition of my religion.”

She put her head on his foot, bowed at his sides, and went behind him as if to bow there. Then with the strength of and determination of a desperate woman facing certain death, she took him by his feet and threw him head over heels down to his destruction. He was crushed to pieces and died on the spot. Seeing this deed, the God who lived on the mountaintop spoke these verses:

“Cunning is not only confined to the men,  
Wiser than the male are the women”.

So, Mousie killed Samson. When she came down from the mountain and came among her attendants, they asked where her husband was, she said:

“He is up hill still; he has much to atone for and may be there for many, many days.

Mousie then proceeded to her home.



# South West Coast: Hummers and Bee



By Sham Sahadeo

1. Meanwhile, back at the Butterfly Garden, the Long-billed Star throat Hummingbird seems to be considering taking up tenancy as it spends most of the day at the garden. It is chasing either the Mango Throated-Hummers or being chased by them. Either way- a welcomed addition to the regulars!

2. Ruby Topaz Hummingbird. What a magnificent beauty! It seems to bask in the attention given. This bird has presence in the garden and



certainly knows it!

3. The Black Carpenter Bee on a Blue Vervine. These are common bees that help with the pollination of flowers. There are lots of blooms on most fruit trees these days, just waiting for a visitor, so that they can bear fruits. Leave the bees alone. They may look like stingers, but we need them for our food.

4. A stunningly brilliant sunset that occurs each evening on the south western coastal areas of Trinidad for the past several weeks. The Serengeti Safari Sunset is nothing compared to this!



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**WASH YOUR HANDS AND USE HAND SANITIZER**

**AVOID CLOSE CONTACT WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE SICK**

**THOROUGHLY COOK MEAT AND EGGS**

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# Under the breadfruit tree

Coomansingh, from Page 3

They explained that despite the cruelty of massa they still had the gift of music to be embedded in the steelpan; a token of everlasting forgiveness, joy, love, and sweet rejoicing for all people.

Under this breadfruit tree, Oba forged the first spider web steelpan, a fulfilment of the thick spider web that formed over his crib; an omen that everybody in the household witnessed when he was a baby. He created a place to finally impound and protect the music of the forefathers and the enslaved ones who were stolen from Africa; those souls who carried in their bosom, the music of the drum.

Oba is long gone, but today the same steelpan created under the breadfruit tree is a symbol of a powerful and everlasting victory over slavery, struggle, pain, suffering, hate, wickedness, bloodshed, denigration, disenfranchisement, and inhumanity. The instrument with its spider web notes that emerged from under the breadfruit tree is representative of truth and beauty. It is a voice of discernment that simple things and simple people can make a difference. Despite the way some people feel, the steelpan echoes to the world that we are all equal and free, and that none of us should be counted as lesser mortals.

The douens that persist with their “whoop, whoop, whoop” calls are still walking around the alleys, backroads and around people’s houses. And yes, the soucouyants are still flying and flapping their wings around Belmont. Nevertheless, drowning out their influences are the soft whispers of the steelpan. The drums could still be heard as you walk through the winding roads of Belmont. Oba’s spirit is still there even to this day. All you have to do is listen.

(An excerpt from the story: “Under the Breadfruit Tree,” from the book: “Leh Mih Tell Yuh”—soon to be published—author: Johnny Coomansingh).



# Calypso and the Gay Experience

Obi Constance from Page 9

He invokes the now stereotyped argument of ‘God make Adam and Eve not Adam and Steve’, which Luta utilizes years later.

*For if that was the Master’s plan*

*Instead of Eve he would put a man*

*And we doh have to look far to prove them wrong*

*All who want children cannot bring forth none*

Benjai warns and condemns, citing the same biblical decree, this time using the term Sodomite to reinforce his point threatening and promising violent vengeance against the non-believers.

*Burn Dem*

*Some of dem boy playing ruler*

*But dem boy dem a fooler*

*Saying dem love dem culture*

*But dem boy dem a vulture*

*Dem woman and woman lover*

*Two man undercover*

With the Trans movement in the USA growing in visibility, 2024 saw at least three calypsoes addressing this issue. Mudada rages in *Leave the Children out of It*, while two of the then were Calypso Fiesta semi-finalists, DefPrince ‘*Identity Crisis*’ and Sean Singh ‘*Jack and Jill*’.



# Connecting

## Nurturing Communication in Marriage

Communication is the cornerstone of any successful marriage. It serves as the essence of connection, understanding, and intimacy between partners. Yet, good communication in marriage is not always easy to achieve. Good communication in marriage is characterized by openness, honesty, active listening, empathy, and mutual respect. It involves expressing thoughts, feelings, and concerns clearly and effectively, while also being receptive to your partner’s perspective. Good communication fosters understanding, trust, and emotional intimacy between partners, helping to resolve conflicts constructively and strengthen the relationship overall (Gottman & Silver, 2015).

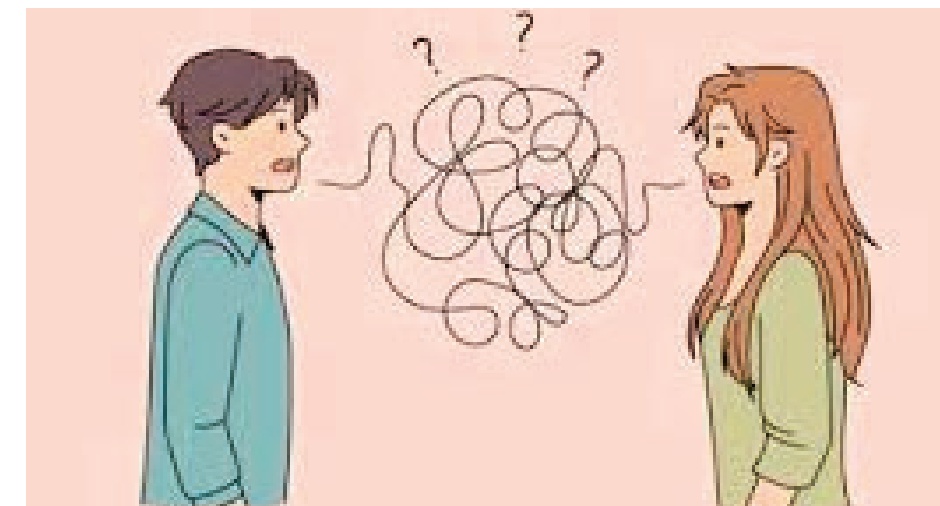


Ishwar Sooklal

In this article, I will explore the importance of communication in marriage, along with insights drawn from personal experiences with my wife. One of the fundamental aspects of good communication in marriage is the ability to understand each other’s perspectives. My wife and I come from different backgrounds, with unique experiences, beliefs, and values. Early in our marriage, we faced challenges in understanding each other’s viewpoints, which sometimes led to conflicts and misunderstandings. However, over time, we realized the importance of actively listening to each other without judgment. For example, giving your spouse undivided attention which might mean putting down the phone or turning off the television.

We learned to put ourselves in each other’s shoes, empathize with one another’s feelings, and appreciate the differences that make our relationship rich and diverse. By fostering an environment of openness and respect, we created a safe space where we could freely express ourselves without fear of criticism or rejection. My wife and I have always approached life from different perspectives. She believes in the mantra that “life is about balance,” emphasizing the importance of enjoying the present moment and exploring all that life has to offer.

On the other hand, I have been more goal-oriented, focusing on financial stability, and planning for the future. Over the years, however, we have adopted some of each other’s traits, finding a middle ground that works for both of us. While I still prioritize financial security, I’ve learned to appreciate the value of living in the moment and embracing



spontaneity. Similarly, my wife has become more conscious of planning for the future while still savouring the joys of everyday life.

Before getting married, my wife and I were introduced to the five love languages by her supervisor Ms. Charlene Johnson, a concept popularized by Gary Chapman. Very often, people tend to express love the way that they expect to receive love however, we understood the idea that people show and receive love in different ways. This insight helped us better understand each other’s needs and preferences, paving the way for more effective communication and deeper emotional connection.

By recognizing and speaking each other’s love languages, we have been able to express love and affection in ways that resonate with one another. Whether it is through acts of service, words of affirmation, quality time, physical touch, or receiving gifts, we make a conscious effort to show love in ways that are meaningful to our partner. In addition to open communication and understanding, my wife and I also enjoy incorporating fun and light-hearted activities into our relationship.

Continued on Page 19



# 'Jep' Sting at the Airport

I had been playing in the gallery of our Santa Being stung by a 'jep' for the first time, produced quite a lasting childhood memory for me that resurfaced back in 2007 when I visited the Piarco International Airport. I had gone there to meet my cousin, Barbara, who was flying in from the US to attend the eightieth birthday function for my uncle Greg. She had been back home many times, over the years. However, on this special occasion, she had not been back to Trinidad for several years and I was the one assigned to pick her up at Piarco.



**Anthony Dyett**

For her, this visit had an even greater significance since she had recently received a shocking diagnosis. At best, she knew that more than likely she could be seeing family members here in Trinidad for the last time. This grim reality, however, had neither affected her beauty nor her mood. No one by just looking at her or hearing her speak would ever have suspected that she was battling an inner stage-4 enemy.

Needless to say, she had an extra appreciation for the simple things around, including many things that I hadn't thought of seriously. As she got into my car, right off the bat, she began expressing admiration for something I had taken for granted. To put it mildly, the New International Airport Terminal building blew her away. When last she had come to Trinidad, she had walked down the stairs of the airplane, out in the open, into a slight drizzle before heading into the old terminal building. This time was different. She and her husband were able to walk right off the plane onto modern facilities without having to walk in the open.

While listening to all her praises for the new airport, it dawned on me that as a returning national, she was feeling a profound sense of pride after witnessing the new upgrades. Sure, I appreciated our new airport but its significance did not hit me until then. As I drove away from the airport onto the highway to journey to Sangre Grande, she also expressed surprise at other developments that had taken place since her previous visit to Trinidad. She had always been a proud Trinbagonian wherever she went and on this day, I got to see her Trini-pride up close. During our conversation, I noted that her patriotism also went way beyond the new airport.

Upon nearing the Cumuto Main Road, the traffic lights there changed from amber to red. I slowed, brought the car to a stop and while awaiting the change, Barbara's banter sent my mind drifting down memory lane to her mother, my Auntie Enid.

Auntie Enid had left Trinidad for England years before on a ship as part of the 'Windrush Generation'. In time, she would make return trips from the UK by plane and then from the USA where she later migrated. At those times, one thing was sure; family was always on hand to welcome her and eventually to see her off, some weeks after.

Like her daughter, Barbara, my auntie, had travelled many times to and from Trinidad. However, unlike Barbara, she never had the opportunity to set foot in the new airport. Therefore, all my outstanding airport-memories of her were at the Old Piarco Airport.

She was one of the Aunts who held a huge place in my heart. She

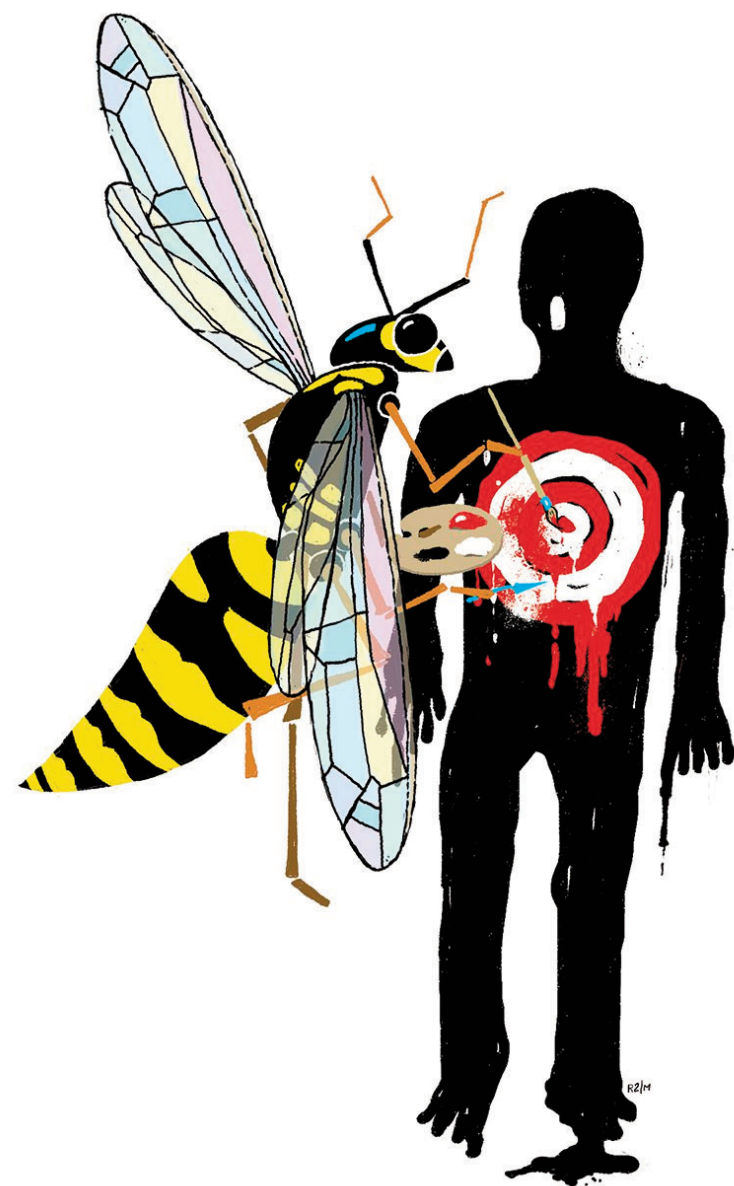
loved us all and her rounds, whenever she set foot in Trinidad, would take her to all our family locations: Port of Spain, Sangre Grande, San Fernando, Santa Cruz, and Mayaro. She was simply a gem of an aunt and remembering her love, brought back images of one enduring memory of her at the old Piarco airport.

I recall that I was in the waving gallery of the old airport, when my Auntie Enid walked onto the tarmac, making her way to the airplane to head back abroad. She would occasionally turn around to wave back at us, while also blowing us kisses. What made this time more memorable for me than any other time was the fact that I was wearing her dark sunglasses. She had given them to me to cover my swollen eyes.

The swollen face, heavy top lip and puffy eyes had come about as a result of my first ever encounter with a little brown flying insect, fondly referred to as a 'jep' or Jack Spaniard. Many children from my era would have painfully encountered them; sometimes because we were 'too harden', or as a consequence of mischief or perhaps, quite by accident. For me, it was simply a random attack.

Cruz home, when it happened. All of a sudden, I felt a stinging pain invading the right side of my face. Starting from over my eyes, the unbearable sensation travelled straight down, pass my lips to my chin and in less than a split second, my face had become a disfigured mess, overtaken by a strange heavy feeling.

**Continued on Page 18**



# School Days and Life Lessons

**By Jo Ryan**

I am a St. James boy. Born at #14 Jerry St. James, I could point out, even today, where my navel string was buried 75 years ago. I am Jojo's second son. Neville Bushell, "Timer" was my uncle.

When somebody says they are from St. James you automatically knew what school they attended. Mucurapo Boys RC, "Boys School" on George Cabral St., Mucurapo Girls RC, "Girls School" on the Western Main Road next to the library at the corner of the Western Main Road and Bournes Road, St. Agnes EC School, "Franklyn School" on Clarence Street or Woodbrook Presbyterian School, "Akal School" by the Roxy Roundabout. However, we didn't hold it against you if you went to St. Crispin's, St. Theresa's, or St. Patrick's.

I went to Boys School situated next to the then Paupers or Poor House Cemetery now known as the Western Cemetery. It was filled with graves that had collapsed in, so there were neat rows of holes about 6 feet long 2 ft wide and 1½ to 2 ft. deep separated by narrow roads. Occasionally, if there was a burial there would be a raised grave. We would skip uncaringly across these open graves as we engaged in our play activities ignoring the bones that were sometimes visible in the holes. If you fell into a grave, you became the subject of derision.

The biggest fear was to get 'jook' (pierced) by one of the bones as this spelt sure death. The "Cemetery" was where arguments were settled after school. This is where we would engage in fisticuffs. In those days if you lost, you acknowledged the victor and took your licks like a man. No rematches were allowed. Great life lessons were learnt in these rings surrounded by boys chanting 'heave, heave, heave' as blows were exchanged. We also learnt to fabricate tales to explain torn shirts, black eyes, and various cuts and bruises.

A clear area north of the "Cemetery" where the St. James Multipurpose center is now located was our after-school playground. On this site we played cricket or football depending on the season of the year. These activities would often cause you to reach home several hours after school where you would face the mandatory cuttail unless the rose petals came out in your favour. What you did was pick a rose on the way home and as you walked pluck the petals and throwing them over your shoulder muttering alternately "God say don't beat me" or "Devil say yes" your fate being determined by the last petal removed from the flower. We also soon realized that when you break the rules and get the mandatory cuttail the licks didn't really hurt.

A walled section in the furthestmost northwestern corner of our after-school playground was the "Hangman's Cemetery." No one dared to cross that wall. In those days it was a big occasion when some unfortunate soul convicted of murder faced the hangman and his (up to that time no female had ever faced the gallows in Trinidad) remains were brought to the Hangman's Cemetery for internment. This part of the cemetery was taboo. No one ventured there unless hurrying past to go by Mc Sween who lived across the road.

By far the most infamous resident of the Hangman's Cemetery was Boysie Singh who after years of various nefarious activities in Trinidad was finally convicted along with his accomplice Boland Ramkissoon, of the murder of Thelma Haynes. The first murder conviction in Trinidad without the body. Every now and then a schoolboy would run into school in sheer terror hysterically claiming that he had just seen Boysie

Singh. There were many sightings of Boysie Singh sitting on the wall of the Hangman Cemetery in his white "Saville Row" suit, holding his gold chain watch, waiting to snatch anyone who ventured too close. Fortunately, no one ever met this fate, and all the evidence is hearsay. In today's world an iPhone or Android would have either added credence to or laid those stories to rest.

The back of our play area was enclosed by a steep cliff above which was Fort George Road. This was called "The Precipice." A gru-gru bef tree perched precariously on the western edge of the precipice. Only the brave or foolish dared to climb that edge of the precipice and endure the sharp thorns (pickah in Trinidad parlance—from the French "piquant" to prick) to get the sweetest and stickiest gru-gru in Trinidad and Tobago. There is a saying that "Angels protect young children and fools." We certainly qualified on both counts.

The official school playground with a concrete cricket pitch in the middle was at the back of the school. Our annual game against Franklyn School was played here. The school garden which was mandatory in those days bordered the playing field. During the lunchtime break we played football or cricket. The football game was "backs and forwards." Half the players were backs and half forwards. When you won the ball, your team became the forwards and vice versa.

Cricket was "fight for your innings." If you fielded the ball you bowled. If you bowled out the batter you batted. If you caught him out, you batted. If you ran him out, you batted. So when a ball was played by the batter it was bedlam as we all fought to get the ball to have a chance to bowl or to take a catch. When school was called, teachers had to endure 20 or more sweaty bodies until they were released from the torture when school was dismissed for the day.

Behind the school garden was the 'Jungle.' This was thick bush traversed by several paths which led to Fort George Road, the top of the precipice and the famous GruGru Bef tree. The bush was so thick that sometimes the sunlight could not penetrate the canopy. Lagahoo, Labllesse, Soucouyant and Douens were thought to frequent this was a dark, dreaded, and dismal place. The most feared denizen of the Jungle however was the "Headless Man" on a white horse with a coffin as his head. Many boys who have ventured into this ominous place have emerged terrified having encountered the headless man and having to run for their very lives. Despite all the fearsome creatures that it harboured, the Jungle held a peculiar, perverse attraction for us youngsters.

No one ventured alone so we would gather in small groups of three or four brave lads for our forays hoping that we would be the lucky/unlucky ones to encounter one or more of these creatures. I was never part of a group that had an encounter and luckily none of these creatures ever caught any boy. The boys were always able to barely escape their clutches. The Jungle was forbidden territory and any unfortunate lad found going there was subject to a good cuttail from Mr. Louis with a whip he had to cut himself from the tambran (tamarind) or guava tree conveniently located on the edge of the playing field. Somewhat akin to digging your own grave.

Boy school days were happy days. Whenever we meet, we reminisce on the near misses we enjoyed, when as young children and fools the angels protected us.

# 'Jep' Sting

Dyett from Page 16

The shock of it all, had me 'bazodee' and more than traumatised. Generally, a soft spoken child, I began bawling as if my world were about to end and this immediately brought out all three adults from wherever they were in the house to attend to me.

My attacker, Mr Jep, had been living his best life, in a jep-nest community, hanging in one corner of our gallery's ceiling. I had often seen many like him, flying to and from the nest but I had never cared. Besides, there were low-flying butterflies, candle flies, 'bachacs' and ants around that were much more accessible. I therefore, never needed to bother with jeps and until that day, they had never bothered me. Moreover, I was around five years old and they operated high above me, in a space where I couldn't reach, even if I tried. But for some reason, on this day, one of those wicked creatures swooped down and viciously attacked my innocent face.

I remember my aunt hugging me and consoling me, while laughing at me at the same time. My mother, in the meantime, began applying a liquid to cool the site of the sting. Catching a whiff of its strong pleasant smell, I recognised it immediately as Limacol. Unfortunately, it had no effect. It simply did not work! For the next two days, my face remained swollen.

Indeed, in those few seconds, I came to learn a life lesson; those little brown beasts don't play. They are warriors, born to inflict hurt!

One source of consolation for me that day though, was that this unprovoked attack from that random jep didn't go unpunished. The ensuing justice was swift and brutal. Mr Jep had messed with the wrong child and by so doing, had incurred the full wrath of my father. He was so 'vex' that he took immediate action and proceeded to annihilate that entire jep family. He armed himself with a pump-action 'Flit' insecticide spray and blasted them while standing on a chair. He then destroyed their home with a broomstick, knocking it clean off the gallery's ceiling. Some that fell to the ground, still alive, were crushed and a few that managed to fly weakly to the other side of the gallery, he hunted down and smashed! He was unforgiving and merciless. Those that weren't dead were badly wounded! If any escaped, they were lucky.

Anyway, the following day, I still got up early, eager to go to the airport to see my auntie off. As expected, my face still bore signs of the attack and on entering the back seat of our Volkswagen, my dear Auntie with a smile, took off her dark tinted sunglasses and gave them to me to hide my puffy eyes. This was a gesture that has stayed with me ever since. Like the jep sting, wearing dark sunglasses, was in itself also a major first-time experience for me and naturally, much more pleasant than a sting. Discovering how the world looked through a dark tint, was incredibly interesting to me. As a little boy, still navigating the joys and pains of life, those dark glasses became more than a cover-up for my eyes. They became an enchanted gadget that improved my mood. The pain and swelling didn't feel so bad after that.

To say the least, that day I had quite an exciting grey coloured journey from Santa Cruz to the Piarco airport. My 'chinky', swollen eyes gazed out the car at tinted trucks, tinted trees, tinted skies, tinted clouds and tinted people along the way. As you can well imagine, those dark sunglasses

never left my eyes for that entire day.

Upon eventually arriving at the airport, and after all the goodbyes, last words, hugs and kisses, my aunt checked in and entered the departure lounge. Not long after, we enthusiastically, skipped upstairs to the WAVING GALLERY where I, along with my swollen face and dark shades, could bid a final farewell to my auntie as she walked towards the airplane.

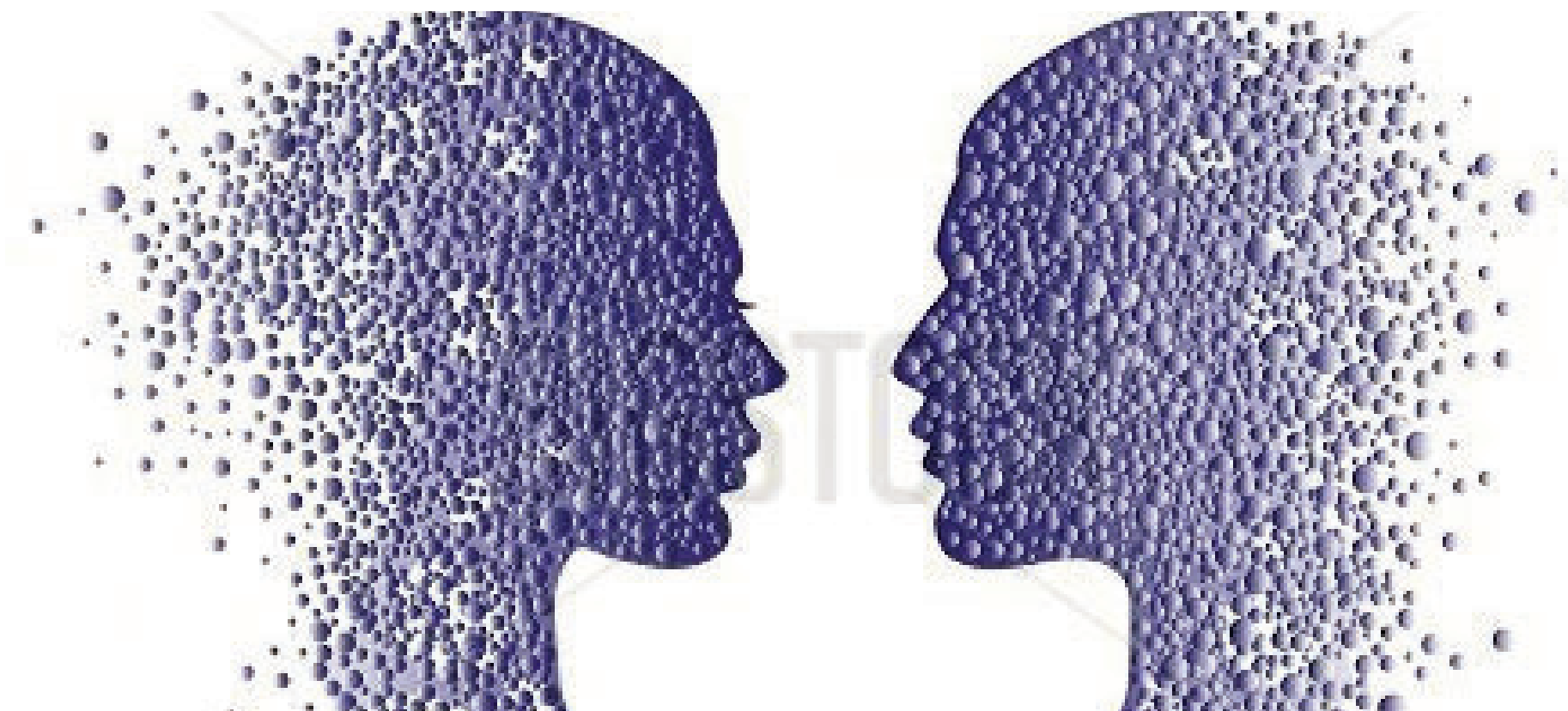
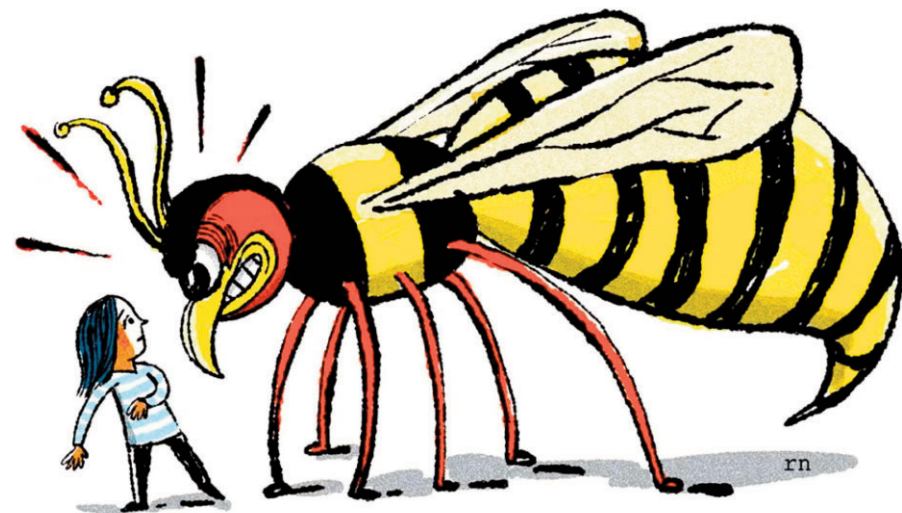
I was not alone. That day, The GALLERY, like a stadium, was packed to capacity and around me, through dark tinted lenses, I could see other families also there to bid loved ones goodbye. These families included children, aunties, husbands, wives, uncles, grannies and grandpas, all exhibiting expressions mixed with excitement, happiness and at times, tinges of sorrow.

And then ... there was the sudden honking of a horn as the traffic lights turned green. This snapped me back from my memories to the then present moment, only to hear my cousin still chatting excitedly about the new airport terminal. As fate would have it, this trip back to Trinidad turned out to be her last and I became the first and last person to ever meet her at the New Piarco International Airport Terminal.

After pulling away from the traffic lights, our pleasant conversation continued along the Valencia stretch, straight to my parents' home beyond Sangre Grande. Later, as she hugged my mother, I took out her suitcases and smiled, mainly because, lingering in my mind was that cherished childhood memory of being part of a spectator crowd, cheering, and waving from that old waving gallery, in dark sunglasses.

That day was priceless, especially as the airplane, taxiing down the runway, lifted off with Auntie Enid in it. In fact, just watching such a big airliner roar to start up and then eventually disappear, as a speck into tinted clouds would forever be a childhood high point for me.

Of course, I have no wish to go back to the past. The present airport is now the new standard and by far, a more spacious and modern facility, but the fond memories of that old waving gallery, jep sting and all, will remain with me forever. Unfortunately, my own children will never experience that old waving gallery. Come to think of it, they haven't experienced a good jep sting either. What a pity.



# Connecting

Sookhlal, from Page 15

We often play makeup games like rapid-fire questions or random quizzes on high school topics, which not only spark laughter but also deepen our bond and create lasting memories. These playful moments remind us not to take ourselves too seriously and to embrace the joy and spontaneity that come with being together. This serves as a reminder that communication in marriage is not always about serious discussions but also about enjoying each other's company and having fun together.

I have found that both verbal and non-verbal communication are essential in maintaining a strong and healthy marriage. My wife and I have encountered various challenges and joys throughout our journey together, and effective communication has been a cornerstone of navigating through them. There have been times when words alone could not adequately express our emotions or convey the depth of our thoughts. During such moments, non-verbal cues such as a gentle touch, a reassuring glance, or a comforting embrace have spoken volumes. These subtle gestures have often brought us closer together and provided reassurance during difficult times. One particular instance stands out in my memory. We were going through a period of financial strain, and tensions were running high. Despite our efforts to communicate verbally about our concerns and fears, it was the simple act of holding hands and sharing a moment of silent understanding that brought us a sense of comfort and unity.

In that moment, our non-verbal connection spoke louder than any words could have. Additionally, non-verbal communication has played a significant role in enhancing our intimacy and connection. Whether it is sharing a loving gaze across the room or exchanging knowing smiles during a shared joke, these non-verbal interactions have deepened our bond and reinforced our emotional connection. However, verbal communication has also been instrumental in resolving conflicts and addressing important issues within our marriage. Through open and honest conversations, we have been able to voice our concerns, express our needs, and work together to find solutions. Verbal communication has provided us with a platform to share our perspectives, validate each other's feelings, and cultivate mutual understanding.

In conclusion, my personal experience has taught me that effective communication in marriage encompasses both verbal and non-verbal elements. While words are important for articulating thoughts and feelings, non-verbal cues often carry an added layer of meaning and emotional resonance. By nurturing both aspects of communication, my wife and I have been able to foster a strong and resilient relationship built on understanding, empathy, and love. Drawing from personal experience with my wife, I have come to appreciate the transformative power of communication in marriage. It has not only strengthened our bond but also enriched our lives in countless ways. As we continue to prioritize open communication, understanding, and love, I am confident that our marriage will continue to thrive and grow stronger with each passing day.



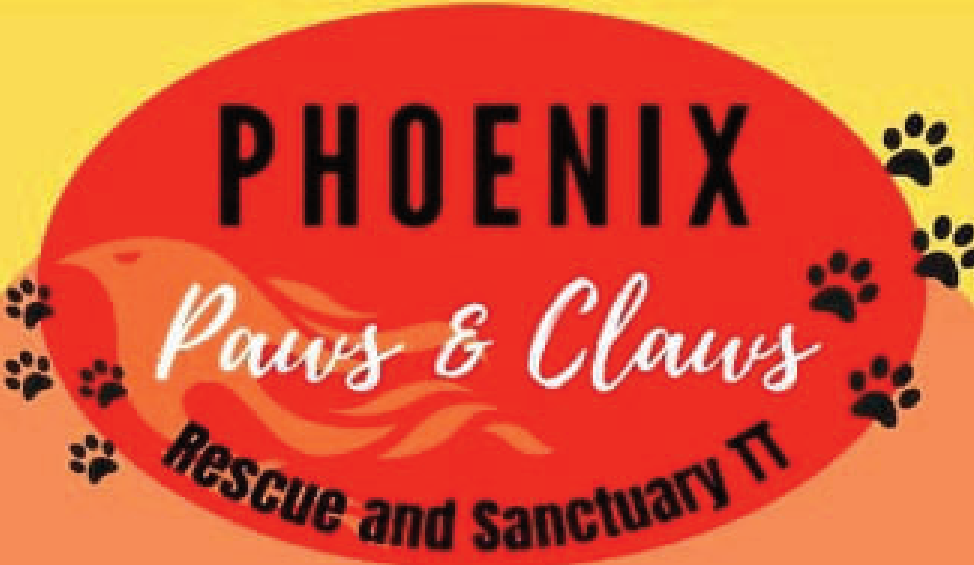
**Philatelic Society of Trinidad & Tobago**

(Founded May 1942)

**PO Box 596, Port of Spain, Trinidad, WI**


**Meetings; 2nd Wednesday, every month**

**at St Mary's College, Frederick St., Port of Spain**



**TO ALL OUR AMAZING FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS**

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- Purina Green bag adult chow
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- Canned puppy food
- Cat litter
- Collars (if cat, quick release)

- Kale
- Lettuce
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- Soap powder
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