

my trinidad

Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow.

August 2024. Issue #08, Volume #15



THE TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
RED CROSS SOCIETY

"Respecting humanity.
giving service to all."



Inside:
Light Tales from the Dark Side

Memories from the 1990 Coup

No Fiction, No Dream

A Part of My Reality

www.mytrinidad.net

my
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:

Dr. Johnny Coomansingh (President)
Raynier Maharaj (Editor)
Margaret Ann Syne (Publisher)
Kin Man Young Tai (Assistant Publisher)

Peter de la Bastide
Reetoo Deonarinesingh
Kathryn Stoltmeyer Wight (emeritus)
Gerard Stoltmeyer Wight
Gerard Pemberton
Dawad Phillip
Dr. Kenneth Ramchand
Motilal Boodoosingh
Yvonne Bobb-Smith
Glenda Jack
Judith Ramsey

Anthony Deyal (Founder)

My Trinidad is a not-for-profit publication graciously supported by the advertisers you see on your pages (we urge you to support them too). As a result, we are not beholden to any corporate sole, shareholders, political parties or big businesses, but instead strive to represent the 99%, as we all deserve a country to live in or claim heritage to, of which we can be justifiably proud.

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

If you wish to receive My Trinidad on your smart device, please subscribe to subscribe@mytrinidad.net. There is no cost to your subscription.

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 Photo: The University of Woodford Square, 1956 by Adrian Camps-Campins, from the National Archives

Coup & Independence

What's Inside! What do you think life would be like in Trinidad if the 1990 coup were a success? Enjoy ten short tales from our



Margaret Syne

Publisher's Note

past of that time. Domestic violence was and still is a big problem in Trinidad, especially as it affects the pure hearted children in the home. A short tribute in Poetry that honors Raymond Choo Kong five years after his unsolved murder. In addition, you can read the goings on of a rural Chinese shopkeeper. What was this mother thinking as she shelled peas knowing that she was excluded from her son's wedding. You may also like the Johnny come lately riding on the ageless donkey; choose wisely people. Always remember that personal

downtime is important for overall health. We introduce an African guest writer with hopes to fulfill the Africa/Caribbean youth connection. On a lighter note be acquainted with three brothers, who had qualities as distinctive as their names. This month's recipe is Coo-coo. I hope it settles well with your menu. Awesome photos from South West Trinidad again for you get to enjoy.

Remember; clean up your immediate environment to prevent Dengue and Floods!

We hope you enjoyed your Emancipation holiday on August 1st

The UN has put 'World Steel Pan Day' on their calendar: August 11th Bravo Trinidad!

Congratulations to our Caribbean neighbors on winning Olympic medals! Well done!

Congrats to SEA, CSEC and CAPE students! Continue in excellence.

Happy Independence Day Trinidad and Tobago August 31st 1962 – 2024



National Pride is on display at a recent Independence Day celebration in Trinidad and Tobago. The country celebrates its 62nd anniversary of Independence from Britain on August 31, and each year there are celebrations which show off the national colours and the country's protective services, like these motorcycle officers with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. This year should prove no different.

No fiction, no Dream

It's part of my reality

It was only in the year 1999 that the Domestic Violence Act (Act 27) came into being in Trinidad and Tobago. For the generations prior to the implementation of this act, domestic violence in all its terror and horror was extant on the landscape like nobody's business. According to the act, "domestic violence includes physical, sexual, emotional or psychological or financial abuse committed by a person against a spouse, child, or any other person who is a member of the household or dependent."



Johnny Coomansingh

Emerging from the Gender and Child Affairs Unit, a preliminary enquiry was conducted titled: Domestic Violence in Trinidad and Tobago Lifetime Experiences. The research found that "...despite increased efforts of advocacy and service provision, Trinidad and Tobago continues to witness the most excessive use of violence against women." In light of this fact, this article portrays a snippet of the turmoil and torment that my family experienced. Below is an adaptation of an excerpt from my book titled: Seven Years on Adventist Street; a part of my story:

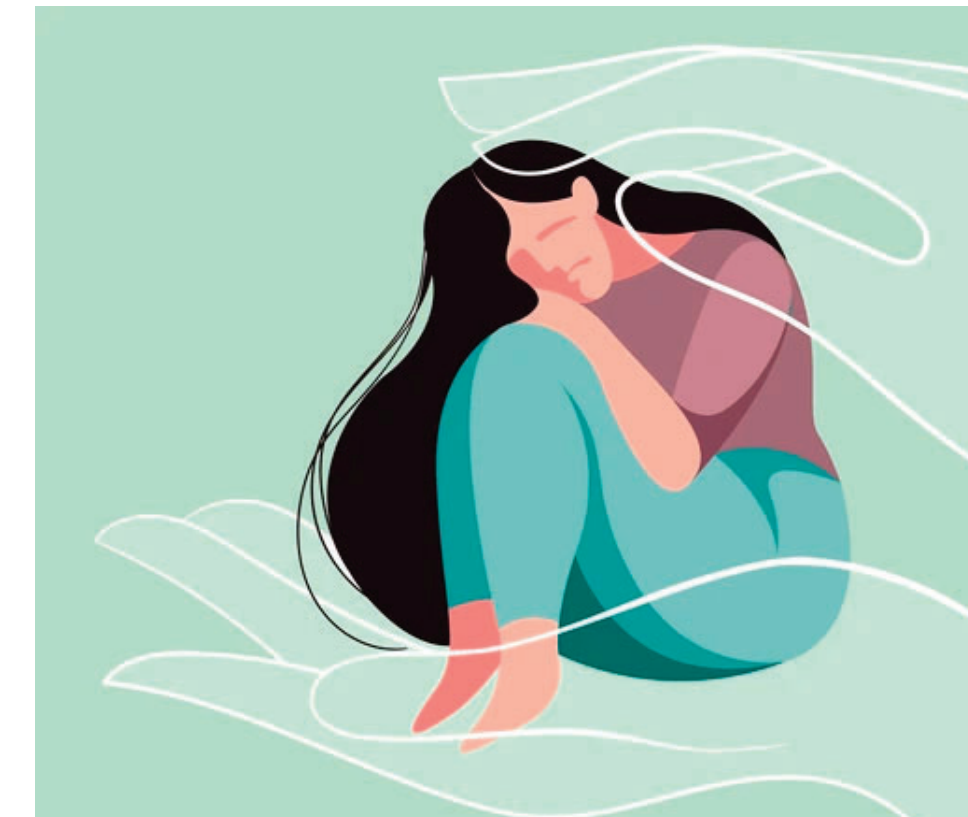
"Infested with fleas and bed bugs, the house where we lived for some of the most trying years of my life was no bed of roses. I reckon that somewhere in the grand scheme of things, an invisible hand allowed me to survive some horrid years as a child. Sadness was always mingled with childhood gladness. (Prior to our abode at Adventist Street, we lived at Picton Street, Sangre Grande).

Words are inadequate to fathom the atrocities meted out upon my mother and her children in this one-bedroom apartment at Picton Street. Sometimes I reflect on what I can remember about my father. It is probable that he was possessed of some foul spirit. At such an early age, my mind could not decipher my father's actions. To me, he was a living nightmare.

There were many nights when I would wake up crying. The noise of a never-ending battle between my mother and father raged on. In fact, all of us cried "mammy, mammy, mammy" while my daddy was beating the daylight out of my mother during the night. My bed of rags on the floor was of no comfort, and the fleas, mosquitoes, and bedbugs did not make my passage through the night any easier.

I did not know why my father beat my mother. No one could intervene or serve as a referee. If she complained, it could mean more "licks" (physical abuse) and verbal attacks. Those were the dark and miserable days for women like my mother who simply 'managed' domestic violence the best they could. In those days, many women in Trinidadian society accepted acts of spousal abuse as normal events. Even today some still do. I guess my mother stayed in the relationship because of us. I cannot see any other reason.

I was too young to understand the incomings and outgoings of elder folk. I could not with my childhood eyes see the wheels that turned in this father/mother relationship. Hearing the rasping push and pull of a Nicholson file in the act of sharpening a cutlass (machete) in the wee hours of the morning outside the bedroom door was enough to make



any child want to stain his undergarments. One night with cutlass in hand, as he pressed to push open the back door, my mother said to my father, "You will have to chop the child first," as she held her last baby above her head. I was very young at the time, but how could anyone ever forget the traumatic moments of such a scene?

This was no soap opera, no fiction, no dream; this was my reality. My father constantly threatened to chop or shoot my mother. Yes, my father had a gun, a 16-bore shotgun. With this gun, he felt powerful. He felt he could bring anyone to their knees in obedience. As we, all are aware, crisis situations require crisis solutions.

The day came when my mother left my father with all of us. He created a pot of the worst smelling soup and told us to have some. That very day he told us that he was going to kill himself and drank some black liquid out of a Milo can. A little later, we learnt that he had tricked us. 'Chin,' the Chinese grocer next door, told us to remind our father to return the Pepsi bottle. He drank a Pepsi from the can and pretended it was poison.

Why would a father do such a horrible thing to his children? What type of spirit guided this man? The Holy Bible says, "Honor thy father..." Is it possible to honor a father of this nature? It's easy to see that the hovel where we lived in destitution was a literal hellhole, a dark patch in my life. Did this scenario during the early stages of my existence make of me a stronger person; a better person?

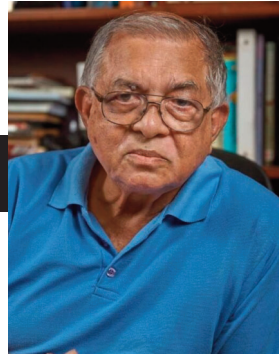
In our backyard, he raised rabbits. Instinctually, the neighbor's dogs would come over, night after night, rip up the wire mesh, and kill a couple of rabbits. My father was always enraged about these 'stray' dogs and the damage they were doing to the hutch and to his animals. He spoke with his neighbors but despite his warnings, they made no effort to control their dogs. One night, without hesitation, he shot the dogs. Such was my father's way of solving problems.

Continued on Page 14

Light Tales from the Dark Side

"Why, then the world's mine oyster, which I with sword will open."
(William Shakespeare in a Midsummer's Night Dream).

On July 27, 1990 what my mother thought was a television play turned out to be a real life drama as a former policeman, Lennox Phillip, now Imam Yaseen Abu Bakr, took control of the national television station



Tony Deyal

while some of his men held A.N.R Robinson, the prime minister, and members of parliament prisoner in the Red House in Port of Spain.

Even in the dark days of the coup, wherever people gathered, there was the inevitable Trinidad tension breaker of picong [From piquant to poke or prick--light comical banter, usually at someone else's expense. It is the way in which West Indians (particularly those in the Eastern Caribbean) tease, heckle and mock each other in a friendly manner] and humor. Here are some light tales from the dark side...a jovial way to remember the coup d'état.

Everyone had 'looter' stories, like the one about the person who stole Scotch whisky only because "whisky eh have no serial number." And for those who stole tyres, it was, as Frank Sinatra sang, "a very Goodyear." There were the horror stories in the tradition of "Apart from that Mrs. Lincoln, what did you think of the play?" There was the story of the man who stole a new set of appliances, so that when the police were due to pass he put all the old ones out on the pavement. He was laughing when he saw them take the old ones, but then they came inside and took the new ones, too.

As we waited in line at a government office to be checked by the metal detector the man in front of me told the guard, "Allyuh wasting time with that thing here. The amount of stove, fridge, washing machine and TV bury in people backyard, allyuh should be using it on them."

I have taken a sampling of some of the talk in town. Trinidadians, like death, respect no one when it comes to picong As usual, heavy on humor; the stories are generally light on truth.

Tale 1. Let Your Fingers Do The Looting: In the rush of looting at the Hi Lo Supermarket in St Augustine, John grabbed a big box and rushed home in triumph, dropping the box on the floor and boasting to his wife, "Look at what I get." Eagerly, he tore it open and found... a whole box of telephone directories.

Tale 2. Board Stiff: With shots ringing out from the looted Computer Supplies Store, the man ran for his life, clutching his loot to his chest. Finally, he ran out of steam and stood trembling, his breath coming in great heaving gasps. The lady of the house in front of which he stood asked him what he had got from the store. He showed her some Bristol board. She was astonished. "Why Bristol board?" she asked. "Well, you see," he said, "In the first rounds we make by the store I take some markers and my little son take the markers and write up all about on the wall.



So he mother make meh go back for the Bristol board."

Tale 3. TV or not TV: Then there was the lady who grabbed the fancy digital television and took it home, plugged it in and pressed the "ON" button. The light came on but no picture. She pressed all the buttons and nothing. Just the light. Totally upset she complained about her luck at having gone to all that trouble for a defective television. She therefore had no problem putting it on the pavement for the police to collect. It is only after the police had left that her neighbor told her angrily, "You is something else, yes. You didn't have to give the police; you coulda give me the microwave."

Tale 4. Food for Thought: While we know about the movie eating Raoul, which dealt with cannibalism inflicted on an individual of that name, the question of eating Dominic came up when the "hostage takers" at TTT, driven to desperation by hunger, offered to trade Dominic Kallipersad for sandwiches. It is said that one soldier vetoed the idea completely. He said, "With this food shortage dey eh have no way I giving up my sandwich. Even Colonel Theodore cyah make meh eat Dominic."

Tale 5. Who's the Boss? The shrewdness of our Government was nowhere more evident than in its arrangements for the facilitation of decision making by the Cabinet of our country in this state of national emergency. Knowing the pressures on all the ministers, particularly since many were absent, a fiendishly clever plan was devised. Winston Dookeran who was already Minister of Planning and Mobilization, was made Acting Prime Minister, Chairman of the Cabinet, Minister of Finance, Minister of the Economy and de facto Minister of Information.

Continued on Page 16

Big Eye, Thin Foot and Broad Mouth

An Adaptation

In a lively village nestled among the tropical landscape of Los Iros, there lived a mother and her three sons: Big Eye, Thin Foot, and Broad Mouth. Each possessed qualities as distinctive as their names, and together, they made for an unconventional yet endearing family.



Joseph Lopez

Life in the village was a vibrant kaleidoscope of colors and sounds, where the scent of exotic flowers mingled with the salty breeze from the sea. However, amidst the hustle and bustle of daily life, the antics of Big Eye, Thin Foot, and Broad Mouth often stole the spotlight, much to the amusement of their fellow villagers.

One sunny morning, the mother entrusted Big Eye with the task of fetching a loaf of bread from the village bakery. Big Eye, with his curious and adventurous nature, set off eagerly, his eyes wide with anticipation and his stomach growling in anticipation.

As he strolled through the winding streets, Big Eye could not help but be distracted by the tantalizing smells wafting from the nearby bakery. The sweet aroma of freshly baked pastries teased his senses, tempting him with promises of sugary delights.

Unable to resist the allure of the bakery, Big Eye found himself stepping through the door, his mouth watering at the sight of the array of treats on display. But as he approached the counter and placed his order, his appetite got the better of him.

"I'll take a loaf of bread," he began, his voice filled with longing, "but could you also throw in a few pastries? Perhaps a pie or two as well?" The baker, taken aback by Big Eye's audacious request, raised an eyebrow in disbelief. "I'm sorry, young man, but bread is all I have to offer," he replied firmly, his tone leaving no room for negotiation.

Frustrated and on the verge of tears, Big Eye's cries echoed through the bakery, drawing the attention of his fellow villagers. Concerned for her son, the mother sent Thin Foot to investigate, knowing that his slender frame would allow him to navigate the crowded streets with ease.

Thin Foot, with his nimble feet and quick wit, swiftly made his way to the bakery, his heart heavy with concern for his brother. However, as he arrived and surveyed the scene before him, disaster struck in the most



unexpected of ways.

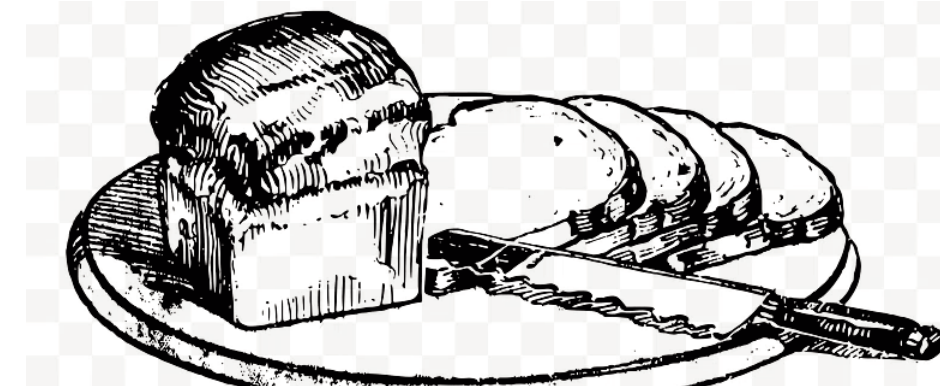
In his haste to reach Big Eye, Thin Foot failed to notice the crack in the bakery floor, his thin feet slipping through the gap and sending him tumbling into the darkness below. The startled cries of the villagers filled the air as they rushed to Thin Foot's aid, their hearts pounding with fear for his safety.

Alarmed by Thin Foot's sudden disappearance, Broad Mouth was dispatched by his mother to uncover the truth, his booming laughter echoing through the streets as he made his way to the bakery.

As he arrived and witnessed Thin Foot's predicament, Broad Mouth could not contain his amusement, his hearty guffaws filling the bakery and causing his mouth to widen with each chuckle until it split at the seams.

Therefore, the three brothers earned their distinctive names: Big Eye for his insatiable appetite, Thin Foot for his slender frame, and Broad Mouth for his infectious laughter. Despite their mishaps, they remained a tight-knit trio, bound by love and the unique quirks that made them who they were.

However, as the sun set on another day in the village, the three brothers knew that no matter what challenges lay ahead, they would face them together; their bond stronger than any crack in the pavement or burst seam could ever hope to be. In addition, with laughter in their hearts and a twinkle in their eyes, they set off into the sunset, ready for whatever adventures awaited them next.



Cornmeal Coo-Coo

Coo-Coo is a very popular Caribbean dish that many think is difficult to make. Made from cornmeal, it is as sure as can be an Amerindian invention. Of course, we as Trinians would have added ingredients to make it what it is today. It is not that difficult, once you focus on the task. Eliminate ingredients you do not like. If you find corn meal too coarse, use yellow corn flour.

Prep time: 20 minutes Cooking time: 30 + minutes

Ingredients: corn meal, ochro, butter, coconut milk, pimiento, chive, celery etc, salt, pepper, water. You will also need: one greased dish (9x13), 2 cooking pots with enough space for stirring, a strong wooden spoon.

In the first pot: (not on the stove yet)

Place 2 cups of Water and stir in:

1 cup Coconut Milk

2 cups of finely sliced Ochro

1 cup chopped fresh Green Seasoning herbs:
celery/cilantro/chive/parsley/thyme



½ cup finely chopped Pimiento Peppers

1 tsp Salt (taste for more if needed)

½ tsp Black Pepper

½ tsp Cayenne or Paprika pepper

Stir and, now, place on a medium heat stove. Bring to a boil. Turn the heat down to low, and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.

In the second pot:

Place on a low heat stove

Add 1 cup (8 oz) Butter and allow to slowly melt.

Add corn meal 1 cup at a time as you alternate with 1/3 of

the liquid mix from the first pot. Do this until all has been used up. Keep stirring as you alternate to prevent lumps.

Do not stop! Keep stirring until the mixture firms up. Spoon into the greased dish. Press down neatly. You may garnish as you please. Parsley or whole kernel corn should be fine. Cut into squares for easy serving.

Enjoy! Bon appétit! All for you!



World Steel Pan Day 2024

The United Nations General Assembly declared last year (2023), that 11 August shall be International Steel Pan Day every year. Trinidad and Tobago's Minister of Culture and Arts delivered a statement to introduce the resolution at the 77th General Assembly, in New York. The resolution was adopted and observed on the Calendar of the UN. On this day, August 11, the Steel Pan, which came into being in



Margaret Syne

Trinidad, shall be celebrated! Pan Trinbago also

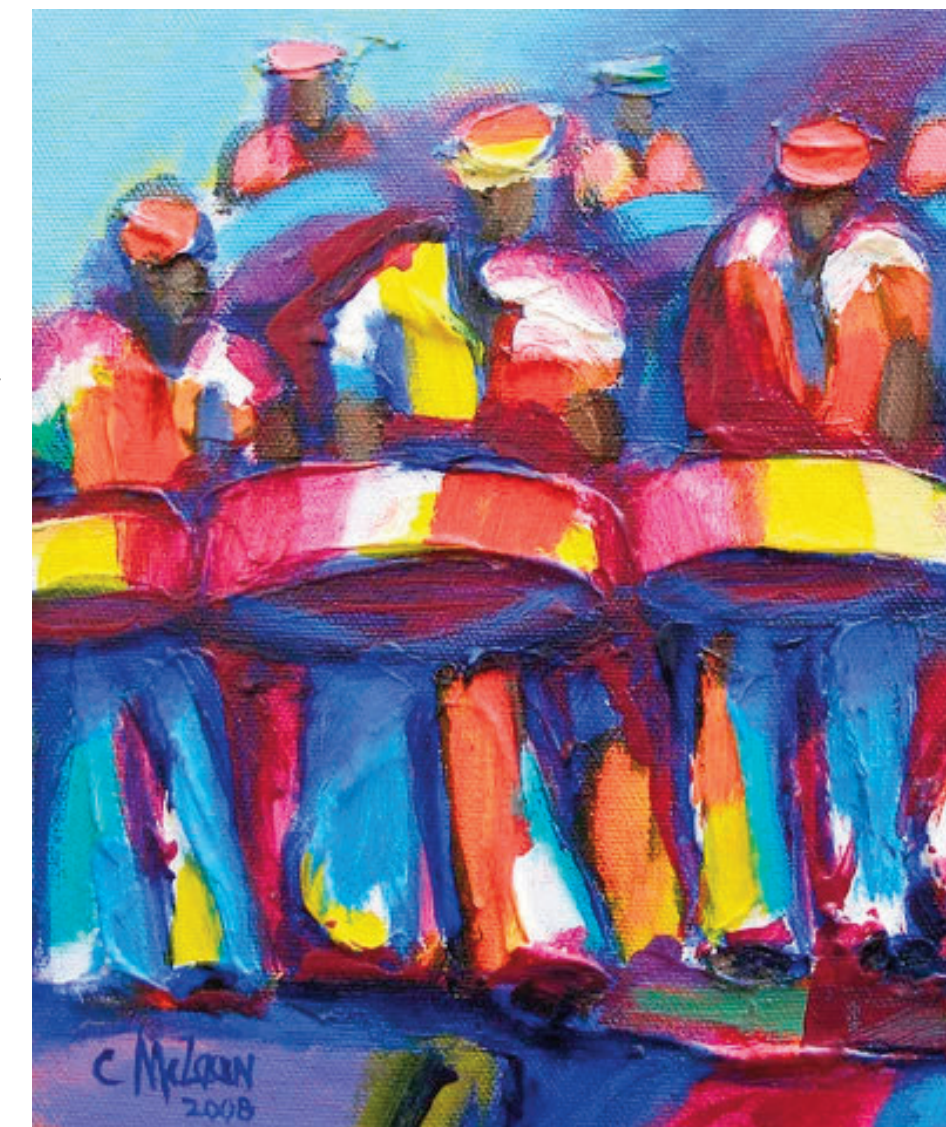
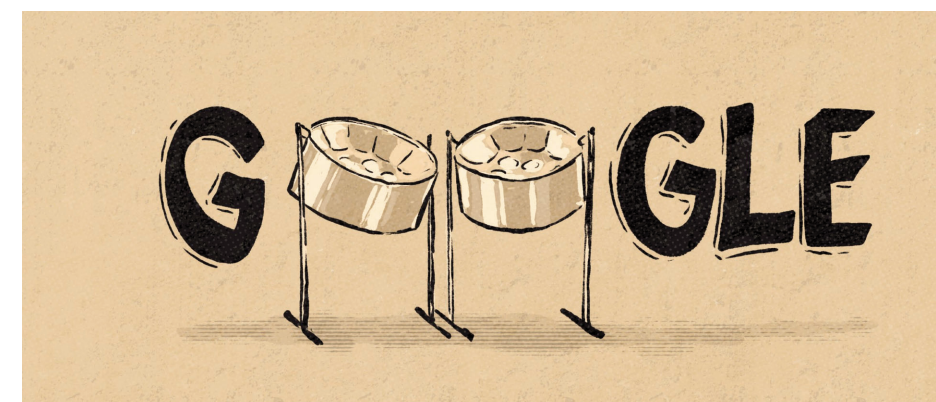
observed Pan in the month of August. Desperadoes Pan Theatre in Port of Spain featured

Steelpan music in a big way to mark the major milestone event.

It all started in the late 1700s, when the French planters arrived in Trinidad. They brought their tradition of Carnival with them. The workers on the plantation copied the festivities and had their own carnival, using the 'Tamboo-Bamboo' as their percussion street music. It was, therefore, just a matter of time that someone would come up with a more versatile instrument.

The steel pan is the only new musical instrument invention in the 20th century. It was quite extraordinary as most of the world was into making instruments electric and high tech in that era. However, in Trinidad, the pan was invented from industrial waste. As the saying goes, 'necessity is the mother of invention'. The grass roots people of this island depended on tin pans, paint pots, biscuit tins, broken auto hubs and lengths of bamboo stems to give them a beat to accompany a particular rhythm. Though there were many brilliant accompaniments, there was no way to be flexibly change musical notes.

In the early 1930s, someone got an empty oil drum, from the oil industry's waste heap. He took a hammer and pounded the surface of the top of the drum. It was discovered that the pounding formed dented shapes, and each shape had a sound of its own. Musical notes were made depending on the size, shape and position of the dent on the drum. Many tenor pans and bass drums were made and used at carnival time. The steel pan provided the music to chip down the road behind the mas bands. This new percussion instrument went down very well with the public. There were competitions and gangs attached to each band. Early in its time, there were fights and cuss outs between bands.



However, with the passing of decades, the pan has evolved in this country to attract people from all over the world: Japan, Europe and the Americas.

The Steel pan is synonymous with Trinidad Culture. It is important in tourism, the arts, entertainment and education. While the steel bands have been known to play calypso melodies, folk, country, pop, Indian and classical music; on the opposite side of the coin, the pan has been adopted by the pop culture world. Prince used pan in 'New Position', The Hollies in 'Carrie Anne' and Spyro Gyra in 'Morning Dance' to mention a few. The movies have also included the pan to make their sound tracks more appealing like: 'Star Wars', 'Along came Polly', 'Cool Runnings', 'Captain Ron', 'Club Paradise' and many more.

According to Prof Tim Wall (BCU), "There is something about steel pan and Caribbean music that resonates with the rest of the world". He said it sounds very exotic when songs are played, even though they have been heard before in the original form. He continued to relate that the pan sounds emanated the feeling of sunshine and holidays, which is so very appealing to the listener.

Wall adds, "It can sometimes have a cruise ship mentality; people think of it as a happy summery sound from Trinidad and the Caribbean islands as a whole, but it is a lot more than that. It's got a very important history."

Ashook's Chiney Shop

When I was a boy, Penal and Debe had their fair share of Chinese businesses. Tim and Loo Fat shops in Debe, Soo Tang in Suchit Trace, Hoy San in Mohess Road, Young Tai in Penal Junction as well as Fong's and Alling's Supermarkets. In Batchyia Village, Robert Luk's Gas station and



Mootil Boodoosingh

Auto parts, and the radio repair shop, owned by his brother Cecil, served the community. Achievement and prosperity came to many Chinese people in my village.

Not so, to Chin Lee Kin Kee Fook who ran a grocery and rum shop on premises he rented downstairs Mrs. Masine located at the junction of Suchit Trace Penal, opposite the Penal Government School. The villagers, mostly rural east Indians, found it difficult to pronounce his name and at first began calling him Shoppy, short for Shop Keeper. One day a drunken customer stammered "Ah Shoppy." Soon this became Ashook and all and sundry began to say Ashook and Ashook's Shop.

Ashook sold everything like the bigger groceries and he had a rum section. Rice, flour, sugar, dhal and salt were sold by the pound. Oil by the bottle and half bottle and there was a small tank that carried pitch oil, used for starting fires, for wood in chulhas and fueling kerosene lamps. Although electricity had come a few years ago to Suchit Trace, many of the houses, ours included, were not connected but Ashook was. Ice from his fridge could be had at three cents a tray. Most of the families bought their weekly foodstuffs from Ashook, and the men as well as the teachers from the Penal Government School regularly frequented the rum side.

Ashook and his Chinese wife were both about forty and had no children, which made them sad, especially Ashook. Ashook also made pepper sauce for sale and raised pigs at the back of the shop. His 'roast pork and his pepper sauce' were great favorites and men came as far as San Fernando and Siparia to buy, especially when they were paid on Fridays. One day, his wife fell down while cleaning the piggens and injured her back. She became bed-ridden and Ashook hired a village girl of about eighteen to take care of her.

Beetia was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sarju. Her father was the brushing cutlass maker and seller in the village, and he sharpened cutlasses and knives for a small fee. He had constructed a contraption with a round grinding stone that was attached to a handle, which spun the stone and would make the knives and cutlasses very sharp. Mrs. Sarju sold cigarettes and sweepstake tickets at the entrance to the Penal market. She had two other daughters beside Beetia, Lorna, sixteen, and Meena fourteen.

When Mrs. Ashook's condition became worse and she died, Ashook asked for Beetia to continue working as a maid. One thing led to another and soon they were living together. Beetia's parents pretended to be outraged at the scandal but were secretly pleased. When Beetia became



pregnant, Ashook was ecstatic, as he had long dreamt of having children.

With Beetia having to care for the new baby, she brought her sister Lorna to help in the shop. Lorna was especially attractive and soon got the attention of Harridath. On the eastern corner of the large yard was a small board hut with a sign that said, "Learn to drive with Dass Bros." Harridath, who was one of the sons of the owners, managed it. There were similar but bigger branches in San Fernando and Chaguanas. Harridath would spend a lot of time in the shop chatting with Lorna and sometimes when the shop closed on Thursday afternoons, she went to the booth where they locked the door. Soon Harridath was drinking in the bar and eating bread and pork for lunch without paying. Lorna was also giving him money. Ashook noticed and once asked Lorna when Harridath will be paying his bill and she did not reply.

Soon Beetia became pregnant with a second child, another girl. Although Ashook wanted a son, he was still very happy. With both babies in the bedroom, Ashook began to complain that he was unable to sleep because of the crying. At night, he told Beetia he will have a busy day tomorrow with the shop, pepper sauce, and pigs and needed to rest. He went to sleep in the living room. From there he would sneak into Lorna's room. He stopped asking questions about Harridath's bill.

After the two children, Beetia asked Ashook to marry her. He promised to do so but kept postponing. She spoke to her mother. Mrs. Sarju said, "He playing smart" and advised Beetia to give her some money from the shop each week and she opened a bank account at Barclays Penal in her and Beetia's name.

One Tuesday after the long Easter weekend sales, Lorna disappeared. She had eloped with Harridath. She also took a bag of money that Ashook kept hidden because of his mistrust of banks. He was angry and berated Beetia about her thieving sister but did not go to the police, as he feared that Lorna would tell of his nightly visits to her room.

Continued on Page 17

The Devil is Dead

Sometimes I sit and think
Of the cramped apartment; the stink
Lives of children on the brink!
Where I found myself



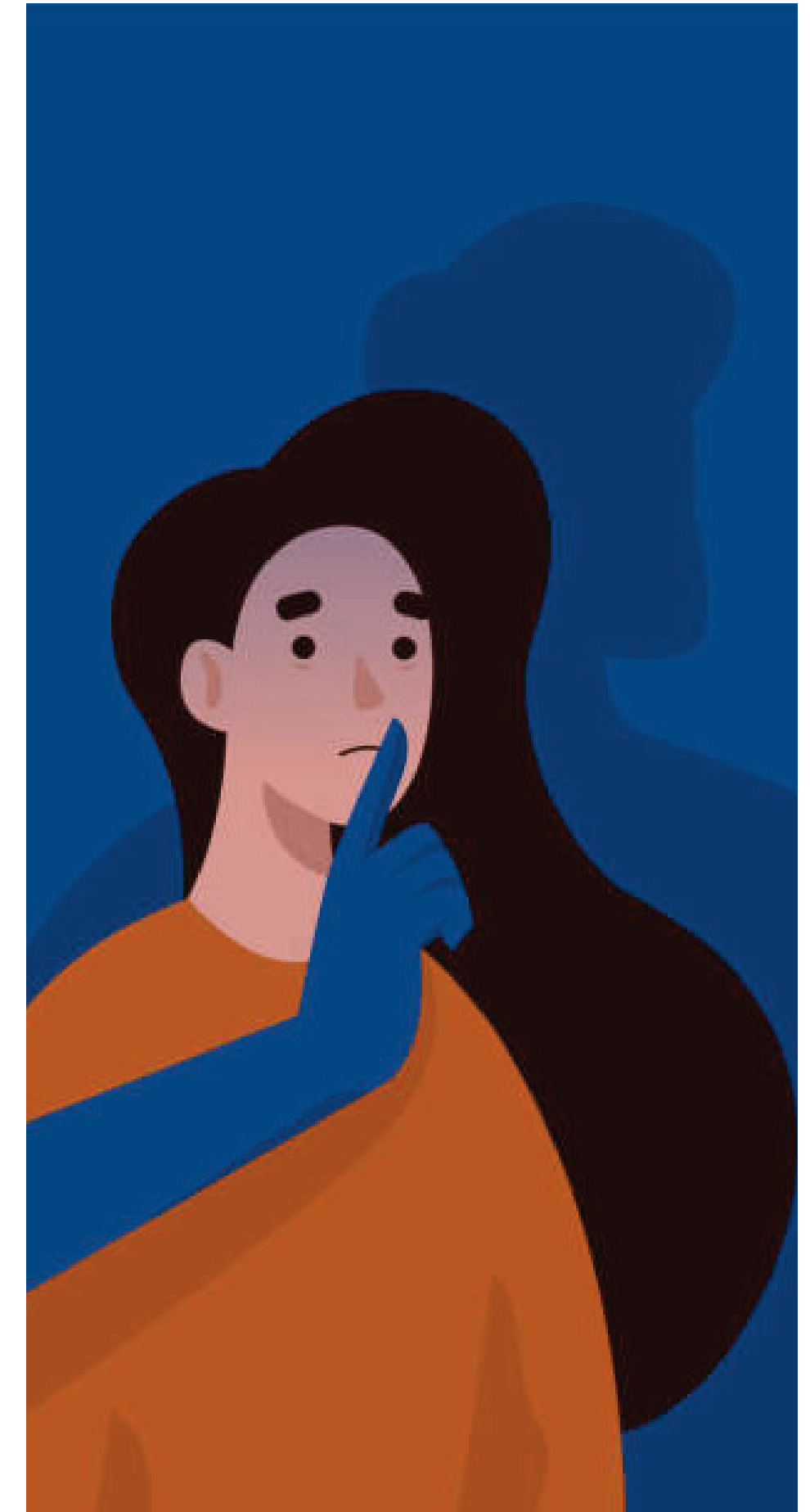
Johnny Coomansingh

Living as a child
In a place so rancid, so wild
Bitten by bed bugs and fleas

No sleep,
no ease

And today I wonder
Was it the precursor
To the television game Survivor?
Just merely three years old
But I found it quite cold

Living in a sick hellhole
The truth must be boldly told
My father was a damned brute!
That's the truth...O God, it is the truth!
Hearing a file rasping on a cutlass
Outside the door; thank God for the clasp
Threatening my mother to slay
To forever take her away
Memories of fears
Every night there were tears
Dripping from my eyes
Hearing my mother's cries
I couldn't understand
The devil's demands
Not only me
But all of us cried
"Mammy, Mammy, Mammy"
While he dished out the blows
Upon her soft and fragile frame
It was like she had no name
This was his mark of fame
That monster had no shame
Some say he had a silver tongue
In the hymnbook he knew every song
But my helpless mother he kicked along
On the ground
With blackened eye sockets
The fists came as rockets
I'm sure that she saw stars
An exhibition of scars
And what was I to do or say?
I lived this every night and every day
A ruthless man; a horrid soul
With shiny shoes with holes in the sole
And for a week he would not bathe
But yet my mother stayed
Until one night he felt the thud
Of a heavy glass vase...blood!
Broken skin



Blood flowed from his chin
Retaliation he could not take
Struck for my mother's sake
He took his toolbox and bailed
To England on a steamer he sailed
My mom he left with children nine
Life was hard but people were kind
And so we survived the horror, the dread
Today the devil is dead!

Embracing Africa

The 2nd Africa-CARICOM Day was celebrated on 7 September 2023 across the African continent and the Caribbean region. It was as clear as daylight to see that there is great need to put more effort in raising awareness among populace across mainland African continent and offshore African islands such as Cape Verde, Seychelles, Madagascar etc. about the existence of Africa-CARICOM Day and the significance of the inter-continental day established through the auspices



Oliver T. Mhuriro

of African Union (AU) and Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Africa-CARICOM Day was established to celebrate the long-standing partnership, shared history and values that bind African and Caribbean people highlighting the importance of unity

and collaboration between African and Caribbean regions.

With the youth population currently being the majority demographic group both in Africa and Caribbean regions, it is very important for the youth from the two regions to be empowered to be a force that drives the Africa-CARICOM initiative as key stakeholders. It is highly important for both African and Caribbean youth to be the leading force in embracing the significance of the establishment of Africa-CARICOM Day. For now from my own observations as a professional Youth Development Practitioner, a very small number of youth across African continent are currently aware of the establishment and existence of Africa-CARICOM Day. The reality on the ground is that overwhelming majority of African youth does not even know what "CARICOM" stands for and what it is all about.

Notable politicians such as former President of Kenya, His Excellency: Uhuru Kenyatta and current Prime Minister of Barbados, Right Honourable: Mia Mottley will go down in history as political leaders who passionately planted the seed of Africa-CARICOM Day and would undoubtedly love to see young people from across Africa and Caribbean regions embracing the importance of celebrating Africa-CARICOM Day. Without both African and Caribbean youth embracing the notion of Africa-CARICOM Day, there will not be notable vibrancy and future sustainability of the Africa-CARICOM Day initiative.

In effort to raise awareness on the establishment and importance of Africa-CARICOM Day, both Africa and Caribbean regions can borrow the special Akan tribe conception from Ghana called "Spirit of Sankofa" which teaches us the significance of having to learn from our past in order to build our future. Our African and Caribbean youth need to be taught about intertwined African and Caribbean shared history, culture and sense of a common identity that was shaped by the Atlantic slave trade era and colonialism. African-Caribbean regions relationship is currently so much "under-invested" while on other end is positively starting to regain its lost luster and zeal. If well empowered, African and Caribbean youth have so much potential to be the "game-changers" in fostering unity and vibrantly connecting the peoples of African and Caribbean regions in a much more progressive way.

Considering intertwined historical connection between African and

Caribbean people, youth from both regions cannot continue to be strangers to each other who are divided by the vast Atlantic Ocean and continue to hold prejudicial attitudes towards each other. For example, some African youth feel that most Caribbean youth view themselves as more special or superior than African youth. It is possible for African and Caribbean youth to constructively use the established platform of Africa-CARICOM Day to break down barriers and prejudices that hold back the youth from getting to know each other as "brothers and sisters" who have so much in common than what divides them.

Currently, the most applaudable platform that connects African and Caribbean youth is the auspice of The Commonwealth multi-lateral organisation various youth development initiatives such as the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC). African Union (AU) and Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has to come up with various youth initiatives that connects, help build lasting bonds and collaborations among African and Caribbean young people. This will help African youth from non-Commonwealth member states not to feel left out in also having a platform to connect and build collaborations with Caribbean youth.

On other end, there is also great need for political will in both African and Caribbean regions to "bridge the existing gap" of air-travel connection between Africa and Caribbean states through introduction of direct flights between key African and Caribbean capital cities. There is quiet considerable number of young people from both African and Caribbean regions who so much want to travel vice-versa to get to know both African continent and Caribbean region who get discouraged from travelling due to lack of direct flights and expensive air-tickets. For example, South African youth who want to travel to Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) less expensive flight will first have to fly to United Kingdom (UK) then to United States and finally at last to Kingstown, SVG.

African and Caribbean youth should not be strangers to each other while allowing the historical aspects such as the slavery, colonialism together with prejudicial attitudes towards each other to carry on dividing them. Increased economic and social cooperation between African and Caribbean youth has so much potential to create lucrative fruitful possibilities that can positively uplift livelihoods of both African and Caribbean regions. African and Caribbean youth need to be reminded that they are stronger when united together and weaker when divided which is supported by a famous African proverb which says; "United we are rock, divided we are sand." In conclusion, as a Youth Development Practitioner, I look forward to see increasing enthusiasm and awareness among both African and Caribbean youth each year as more and more youth from the two regions gradually start to embrace and take ownership of the commendable Africa-CARICOM Day initiative.

**Oliver T. Mhuriro is a Qualified Youth Development Practitioner who holds Bachelor of Arts in Youth & Community Development and Commonwealth Diploma in Youth Development Work all from Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL); Certificate in Professionalization of Youth Work in the Pacific Region & Certificate in Quality Physical Education in the Pacific all from University of the South Pacific (USP-Global) of Fiji. Can be reached at: omhuriro33@yahoo.com*

Johnny, the Prophet

Every now and again, a Johnny comes along singing the same tune, set to contemporary music. Cuatro in hand, hat defying the wind, cutlass at the side, swinging to the rhythm of the tireless ancient cadence of the steps of the donkey. Johnny is not a seer or oracle. He is a good and just man trusted with a mission to speak truth. He speaks math in

conceptual terms. He gives audited accounts of timeless values. He explains the fundamentals of metaphysics in poetry and prose.



Gerard Pemberton

He draws, he paints, and he creates. This is the timeless renaissance mind. He cannot tell of your future except that if you follow the paths of failure, you will trip and fall into the river.

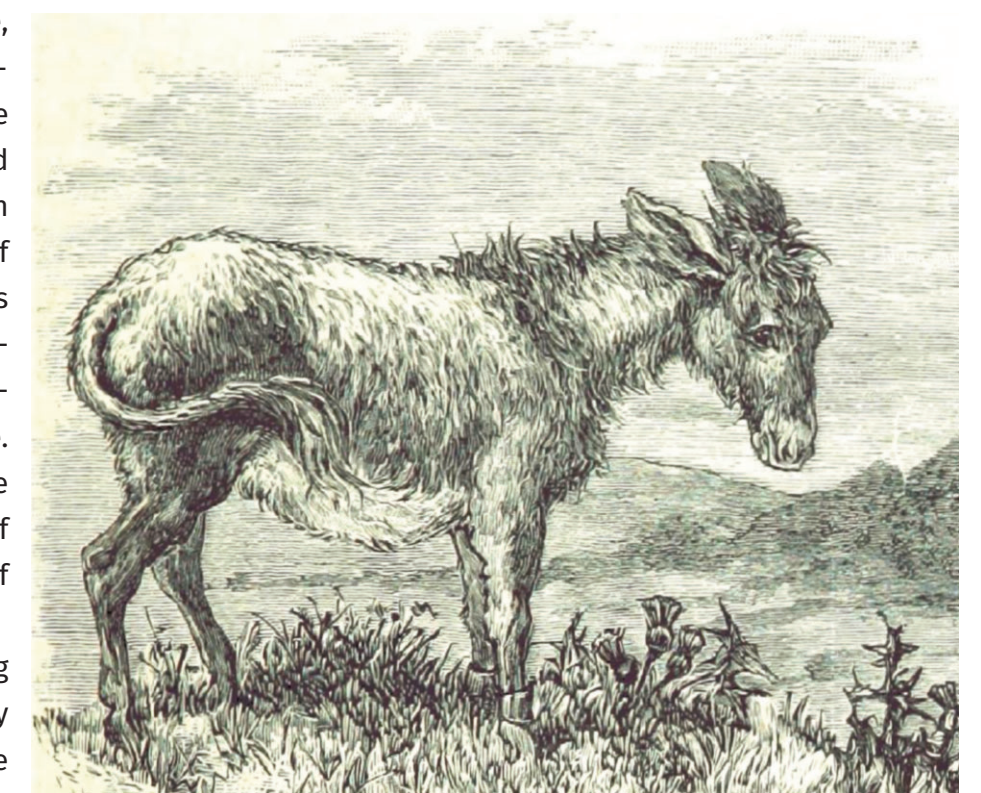
The prophet follows the river as it renews its strength descending from mountain to sea. He sings verses and chorus in music the donkey has known forever. The donkey knows the voice of the prophet whose weight he bears effortlessly. The ageless, timeless donkey, the most important animal in the world, knows the way. The donkey inherited the horse's ability to strategise and plan. The donkey avoids pitfalls, stepping surefooted to complete the journey. Not so, the jackass carrying the "johnny- come lately" who draws humans into lives of illusion and delusion. Johnny, the humble man from San Souci, imbued with wisdom, knows the donkey from the jackass.

A prophet does not forecast the future; he gives us faith and truth to face any future. He warns that we create good futures if we choose wisely. Happiness is the path without worry, San Souci. How do we follow the path? The prophet turns our minds to learning what scientists, regardless of religion, know. Time is eternal, timeless, in fact. Time is merely an artifact of measure devised for human convenience.

Your body's aging cannot defy time beyond your natural measure. Every now and again Johnny comes along from Matelot or up from Grande singing the same tune, delivering the same message. The rains on the mountains derive life from the distant sea. The river floods the banks sometimes. The river flows barely above the stones sometimes. The tide of the distant sea ebbs and rises, not waiting for anybody.

Your body must give up, sooner or later. Your brain, no longer needed to manage your failed organs, ceases to function. Your eternal being moves through time into another space, another state of being. The river of life flows on. Not more than a ripple on the surface will mark your exit. You were here to keep the river flowing. Alex Haley, the author of "Roots," showed us the power of connection and continuity. Weep for the godless who live without Grace; those who Karma sweeps into the darkest depths of the sea never again to see light. Those were humans who had lived in the illusion that their power was of their own making.

The ageless donkey and Johnny with exquisite simplicity, demon-



strate the existential value of Interdependence. Existential means the here and now in a timeless continuum. The strategic mind of the horse, the unique roles of the donkey, the mystery of Johnny and the nature of the river as life. To visualise life, young children must be taught the mathematical concept of integration. They will better understand love as an infinite store of goodness and grace, dispensed without reservation. They will understand that knowledge accumulates globally, from two hundred nations, some with universities flourishing before the Middle Ages. Intelligence is the flexibility to respond to change guided by a moral compass, without losing timeless values and community well-being.

What is the difference between the ageless donkey who guides Johnny and the aging jackass who is the false prophet? The donkey has a mind of its own. Since it makes up its own mind, it can change its mind. The jackass has no mind of its own. Therefore, he is obstinate in his self-professed beliefs until he falls and fails. The donkey has known for centuries that Interdependence is the crucial element of community and continuity. That is how we find happiness, the path of a good life.

First, we move from Dependence to Independence. That cycle brings both peace and strife, both justice and inequality. Then we moved to Interdependence. Then the divisive bray of the jackasses preys on our minds. Division is the cancer that destroys truth, justice, and happiness. Cancer is healthy cells in our body that lose sense of original purpose and their natural being. The cells divide, keep dividing until the community is exhausted, and generations die. Interdependence is the core element of our economic, social, and religious being. Every donkey has known that for centuries. Not so modern jackasses.

Continued on Page 17

Animal Life in SW Trinidad



By Sham Sahadeo

1. The spectacled Caiman looks more like a crocodile than an alligator. They are found in fresh water canals in the Oropouche wetlands south of San Fernando.

2. The Long-winged Harrier is a bird of prey. They are found in grass-



lands and wetlands.

3. Collared Trogon (male). Trogons eat small fruit and small bugs. They perch in the lower part of the forest canopy in Central, South America, and Trinidad.

4. This is a savage Osprey when picking up Sunday lunch. They prefer habitats with plenty of shallow water where fish are plentiful. Many are seen daily in the Gulf of Paria, San Fernando.



Shelling Peas

My mother clears the mahogany dining table. She removes the large white linen table cloth, edged with drawn thread embroidery - daisies, a wedding gift from her mother. She folds it as delicately as an altar cloth and kisses it. She hugs it to her chest, and then rests it on the Morris chair closest to her. Next to it is a coffee table on which a box of cards lay.

Before picking up the box, her eyes pause on a beautiful crystal ash-tray. She reflects: memories of tapping cigarettes to loosen the ash. She sighs. It was her sister's ashtray. Still perfect, still clear, not a chip after a lifetime of chain smoking. One of life's ironies.



Marguerite Lucerne

She picks up the box of cards, box of cards in hand; she opens the box, a gift from her now deceased chain-smoking sister. She pulls out the deck of cards. Examines it, back and front.

She removes the two Jokers that seal the front of the deck. She has had the cards for as long as I can remember.

She pulls one of the dining room chairs to sit down. She is thirsty. She fills a glass with cold water from the fridge, takes one, two, three sips, collects a coaster and rests it on the table.

Every movement requires a pause and a thought, Every thought, a memory.

She collects the deck. Places the two Jokers at the side of the glass and shuffles the deck. One, two, three shuffles...then she begins, her game of Patience

" One, two, three, four, five, six, seven,
All good children go to heaven;
When they die their sin's forgiven,
One, two, three, four, five, six, seven.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven,
All good children go to heaven...
A penny by the water,
Tuppence by the sea,
Threepence by the railway,
Out goes she!

Cards laid out. She begins her game. She plays ten games. Counting, " One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, All good children go to heaven ..." at the beginning of each game.

Winning three out of ten. She laughs, "How can I lose against myself?"

My Mother, June Marie Lucerne Nakhid, was a counter. An occupation she delighted in to relieve her stress. She counted everything (including her money, money she spent) to the last cent. She counted how many shrimps, the number of tomatoes, peppers, ochros, melongene in a pound, whatever can be counted she counted.

She counted the number of ticks she pulled off the dog. She collected each tick and put it into a can of 'pitch oil' (kerosene). She would stay up nights counting how many mosquitoes she swapped. She made it into



a joke. The more things she counted, the more stressed she was. She played Patience until the wee hours of the morning

This story is for her, Part truth. My counting Mother... what happened when the number of shrimps, tomatoes, peppers etc., was less than expected? Know that she was going to complain the next time that she was at market...

Today is her son's wedding day. Whenever she is anxious, she develops a spate of hyperactivity. Her anxiety is proportional to the tidiness of her house. Today she is up before dawn, she says her prayers, makes up her bed, then decides to wash the bed linens. She strips the bed and makes it up again. She sweeps the floor and dusts away invisible cobwebs with a threadbare broom.

By 6:00 am the bedroom is done. She moves into the kitchen, everything must be put away - no cooking today, besides, she has no appetite. By 6:57 am, the dust bags in the bin are changed. The linens are in the washer. The dogs are fed, their thirst is quenched.

By 9:00 am, the linens are hung to dry. She has watered the wilted flowers in the garden. She showers herself and changes into a long flowing kaftan. Then she sits, relaxed, and looks at television, mindlessly surfing the channels; dropping to sleep when a film finally catches her interest.

The change in programme jolts her awake. She has fresh pigeon peas from yesterday's market. She looks at the clock, it is 11:35 am.

Shelling peas is a seasonal mala, "Thank God that pigeon peas are in season." The wedding is at 2:00 pm, at the Church of St. Jude. By that time, she would have shelled and counted the number of peas she got for ten dollars.

Today is her son's wedding day, he still does not know that, she knows.

No fiction, no Dream

Coomansingh, from Page 3

There was this day when my older brother and I received a horrible beating from my father. The horror of this beating event could be likened unto a nasty medieval flogging in the street. I do not think that any human would beat even a dog the way we were beaten. Held by an arrogant, enraged and evil father, two little boys were inhumanely and brutally flogged for sharing a mango bitten by one of our friends. Apparently, my father got into a rage when he lent his heavy crosscut saw to some fellows who went to the recreation ground located on Ojoe Road, Sangre Grande.

As I later understood, they borrowed the saw to build a pair of football goalposts. It is quite possible that they forgot their promise to return the saw as soon as they had finished with their construction project. We saw my father pacing up and down, fuming and mumbling. Then he spied us sitting on the concrete edging next to a fence. It was a bright and happy day for us. We had a juicy mango, and bit into the fruit with glee. My brother was just six years old. I was four.

Enraged, he grabbed two of us with one hand and dragged us into the yard in front of the house. The house was not fenced, so we were exposed to the road for all to see. My father instructed my eldest brother to cut whips to beat us. The whips were not to his liking, so he threw them back at my eldest brother in a rage telling him to cut something better; a stronger and firmer sapling or branch that would not shatter on our soft skin. Mercilessly, he set upon us and flogged us as we squirmed and grimaced in the dust. I must have fainted under the blows, for at one point I did not feel anything. My mother could not have intervened lest she be beaten too. The sting of the whips was unbearable.

After the beating, my mother gave us warm baths and applied some Iodex (a type of liniment) on the wheals. The wheals were horrible; long shameful blue-black streaks all over my little body. They were on my arms, legs, back, belly, and sides; such pain. Surviving this beating at

such an early age framed in me a different concept of my father. I believed that no child should be treated as he treated us. I literally shut him out, and he became an object of hatred. I cannot say it any other way. Was I wrong to engender such resentment?

The longest rope has an end is an adage I have committed to memory. We also have a similar saying in Trinidad. Give magga (meager) goat long rope. The idea is that the goat will be only able to graze as far as the rope extends. Finally, the night came when my father left; his rope had come to an end.

My father really 'woke up' when my eldest brother threw a heavy glass vase at him and cut him on his chin. Not long after that incident, my father made his mind up to leave. With no fanfare, he took his cabinetry tools and left. The only tool that remained was his big and heavy cross-cut saw. The saw had been stored behind the roll-top safe in the kitchen and later fell through the rotted flooring. It was found rusted and covered in mud under the house. I made sure that it remained with me as a solid reminder of my father's arrogance.

There is much more to add to this nasty piece of drama. I could never say that I am proud of my father. It has been said that 'writing heals.' It is almost cathartic. I must at all cost purge myself of my childhood experiences. Sometimes, I ask myself, why did I have to pass through all this horror? Why couldn't my childhood moments in life be happier? Why did I have to manage all this mayhem?

As I write these lines, more and more I am defining my mental construct; the me that is resident inside of me. I am now aware that I was imperceptibly denied the normal pleasantries of sweet childhood. Such pleasantries were daily being replaced by rancor, confusion, and misery when my father dwelt with us. If there were a way to erase childhood memories, I would certainly seize the opportunity to quickly obliterate mine. Do we ever question what happens to a child's fertile and precious mind while growing up under such conditions?"

The Importance of Downtime

In the hustle and bustle of daily life, especially with a demanding life schedule, finding moments of personal downtime is not just a luxury it is a necessity. We often wear many hats: husband, father, son, uncle, and friend. While fulfilling these roles is rewarding, it's equally important to carve out time for ourselves, to reconnect with our inner selves, and to destress.



Ishwar Sooklal

These moments of solitude and joy are vital for our mental health and overall well-being.

One of my favorite ways to unwind is through hiking. There's something incredibly rejuvenating about being in nature, away from

the constant buzz of technology and daily responsibilities. Hiking offers an escape into a world where the only sounds are the whispering leaves, chirping birds, and my own footsteps on the trail. Each step taken on a hike is a step away from stress and towards serenity.

I remember a particular hike through the lush trails of a nearby waterfall. The morning air was crisp, and the sun filtered through the trees, creating a mosaic of light and shadow on the forest floor. As I ascended the trail, my mind began to clear. The beauty of the natural world around me was a powerful reminder of the simple joys of life. By the time I reached the waterfall, I felt a profound sense of peace. These hikes are more than just physical exercise; they are spiritual journeys that allow me to reset and recharge.

Another cherished downtime activity is sharing evening drinks with my neighbors, Roland and Jit. These gatherings are simple yet profoundly meaningful. We sit on the porch, drinks in hand, and talk about everything and nothing. The conversation flows freely, touching on lighthearted mockery, current events, and personal stories. In these moments, the pressures of work and personal responsibilities fade into the background.

Roland often brings out his coconut water and drinks, and Jit, with his endless supply of jokes, ensures there's never a dull moment. These evenings remind me of the importance of community and connection. They're a reminder that while solitude is essential, human connection is equally crucial for our well-being. Sharing laughter and stories with friends can be a powerful antidote to stress, providing a sense of belonging and mutual support.

Cycling with my friend Gary is another beloved escape. The thrill of the open road, the wind in my face, and the rhythmic pedalling all contribute to a sense of freedom and exhilaration. Gary and I often explore different routes, from quiet roads to challenging hills. Each ride is an adventure, a break from the routine, and an opportunity to experience the world from a different perspective.

On one memorable ride, we tackled a particularly steep hill on Boodoo Highway Road that seemed almost insurmountable. With dogs attacking me at the time I was trying to pedal to the top these dogs gave me the extra encouragement I needed to reach the top of the hill and beyond. Cycling, much like life, has its ups and downs, but the journey is always worth it. These rides with Gary are not just about physical fitness; they are about pushing boundaries, building resilience, and finding



joy in the journey.

Sometimes, the most profound form of downtime is doing nothing at all. Sitting on my gallery, simply being with my thoughts, is a cherished ritual. In these quiet moments, I am not an IT professional, a husband, or a father I am just me. This time allows me to reflect, to daydream, and to simply exist without any expectations or pressures.

As I sit in the gallery sometimes, I let my mind wander. Sometimes, I think about the past, reminiscing about good times and learning from the challenges I've faced. Other times, I imagine the future, contemplating new adventures and opportunities. But often, I simply exist in the present moment, appreciating the beauty of the here and now. This practice of mindfulness is incredibly grounding and helps me maintain a sense of balance and perspective.

These experiences hiking, evening drinks with neighbors, cycling, and sitting on the gallery underscore the importance of personal downtime. They illustrate that taking time for ourselves doesn't require grand gestures or significant expenses. It's about finding activities that bring us joy and peace, and making them a regular part of our lives. Even if it's just once a month, dedicating time to ourselves is a crucial investment in our mental and emotional well-being.

In our roles, whether professional or personal, we often prioritize the needs of others. While this is commendable, it's equally important to remember that we have a responsibility to ourselves. We cannot pour from an empty cup. Taking time for ourselves replenishes our energy and allows us to be more present and effective in all areas of our lives.

In conclusion, personal downtime is not just an indulgence but a vital component of a balanced, healthy life. Whether through the tranquillity of nature, the camaraderie of friends, the thrill of physical activity, or the peace of quiet reflection, these moments are essential for our well-being. They allow us to destress, to reconnect with ourselves, and to find joy in the simple pleasures of life.

As we navigate the complexities of our various roles, let's make a commitment to prioritize our own happiness and health. Let's embrace the value of downtime, not as a selfish act, but as a necessary practice of self-care. After all, the happier and healthier we are, the better we can fulfil our responsibilities and contribute to the well-being of those around us. So, take that hike, enjoy that drink with friends, ride that bike, or simply sit and do nothing. You deserve it.



Light Tales from the Dark Side

Deyal from Page 4

On that basis anytime he felt like a holding a Cabinet meeting, since he was already a quorum, he only had to nominate Winston Dookeran as Cabinet Secretary, talk to himself and take notes. So that when you hear in the media, "Cabinet, after its regular meeting today announced...," you know what happened.

Tale 6. Hogging the Airwaves: The hostages would have been freed much earlier except that the phone lines were cut and Abu Bakr, as a fanatic Muslim, declared that he would not put his mouth on any "ham" radio.

Tale 7. Footprints in the Sands of Time: This family went crazy in this downtown shoe store where L.A. Gear, Nike, Adidas, Troop and all the other foreign brands were available. The father went in first, followed by the children. You can say that they were following in their father's footsteps.

Tale 8. Don't Put Off For Later, What You Can Do Now: It was 8.50 pm, ten minutes before it was time for the curfew to begin, when the limers on the block in San Juan saw and heard a car speeding along the road. Suddenly there was the unmistakable burping of automatic weapons and the car swerved crazily, crashing against a lamp-post and coming to a stop. Police ran out from where they had ambushed the vehicle and flung open the door. The driver was dead. Hastily, they searched the car. By this time a crowd had gathered and people were bitterly reproaching the police saying, "Is not curfew yet and allyuh kill the man. That is not right. He wasn't breaking the curfew." "Yes, but," said a policeman, holding up the dead man's driver's permit which he had taken from a blood-stained pocket, "This man living quite in Arima. Dey eh have no way he could ah reach home in time."

Tale 9. Coup Lit: The word "coup" means a stroke or blow. The French have identified all kinds of coups. Here are some of these coups:

- Coup de Grace (If the Archbishop took over)
- Coup d'état (What Bakr tried)
- Coup-on (What Bakr said)
- Merci Beau-coup (What the looters said)
- Coup de feu (Not much support; a handful of rebels)
- Coup de d'oeil (If Bakr had seized Trintoc...an oil company)
- Coup de poing (A ricochet)
- Coup de pied -Couped up

Tale 10. Holy Moses! A Port of Spain drug store was looted of everything but its hair-tonic and stock of contraceptives. Police are looking for a bald-headed Roman Catholic.

Having had a little laughter, we should ponder the attempted coup d'état on a more serious note. The fact that Abu-Bakr staged his coup, captured the parliament, and subjected this nation to the trauma of vi-



olence, of Trinidadians shooting and killing other Trinidadians, is not so much a reflection on our society as it is a reflection on the ego of the Abu-Bakr and the wanton irresponsibility of those people in our society who sought to use him for their own political ends.

Perhaps our silent majority has been too silent, allowing the lunatic fringe and the power hungry to dominate the national agenda. Perhaps the government was too complacent, reacting rather than pro-acting. This has happened and we cannot change it. As the Greek tragic poet Agathon said, "Even God cannot change the past."

While it is true that we must analyze these events in order to learn from them and prevent a reoccurrence of this terrible trauma, yet, in many ways, the past is a foreign country and nothing worthwhile dwells there. We must look to the future and determine where we go from here as a people.

As disturbing as the attempt by the Jamaat al Muslimeen to overthrow the government has been the looting by so many of our people. More people have been directly affected by the looting than by the Imam and his misguided followers. One person I spoke to whose business lies in ruins said that he intends to leave this country. In his way, he is as disillusioned as Abu Bakr.

While we have been assured of drugs, food and other forms of assistance from other nations, none can help us to restore the democracy, which we have cherished, the respect for the rule of law, and the respect for the rights of others. This we must do ourselves.

While there is a need for reconstruction, there is an even greater need for reconciliation, a bringing together of all our resources to deal with our problems. Fundamental to this would be the institutionalization of communication as a way and fact of life in our society.

There will always be the misguided among us. Now, and in the future, the guided must come forth and remain in the vanguard. It is our only insurance and our only assurance that we will not be condemned to repeat the history of the six days while we were under 'siege.'

**Tony Deyal was last seen asking people in the region to think about what life would have been like had Abu Bakr taken over Trinidad and Tobago.*

Ashook's Chiney Shop

Boodoosingh from Page 8

They tried to resume without Lorna but found it very difficult. After much persuasion, Beetia convinced him to let Meena come to help out. They would keep a close eye on her and Ashook bought a box with a lock, to keep his cash. Even when they saw Meena becoming extremely friendly with a taxi driver who stopped every day for a lunch of bread and pork and a coke, they reasoned, "how much he could eat."

Meanwhile Ashook, sleeping on the couch was fantasizing about going into Meena's room. One day he saw Meena giving the taxi man money as change although he did not pay anything. Meena however insisted that he had paid with a five-dollar bill. That night he visited Meena's room and she did not say anything.

Ashook watched his business decline but felt he was unable to stop. Meena had become like an addiction to him. Meanwhile, Beetia was also diverting funds through her mother. Things came to a head when Meena, the locked cash box and the taxi driver went missing. They were

apparently living in Chaguanas.

Ashook was unable to pay his rent. Masine who had long wanted him out so she could give the shop to her daughter, had him evicted. With nowhere to go he, Beetia and their two children started living at his mother in law's place, her house having room, now that her two younger daughters had their own place.

Soon after, you could see Ashook at the entrance to the Penal market sitting next to Mr. and Mrs. Sarju, selling from a basket, Minora razor blades, pens, pencils, sharpeners and shaving sets that he buys from the wholesale vans which come on Saturdays. Mister and Mrs. Sarju continued their sale of brushing cutlasses, knives, cigarettes and sweepstake tickets.

Beetia is happy with the knowledge that she has enough money stashed away to take care of herself and her daughters.

Kin Man Young Tai whose father had a shop opposite the Penal market said: "Ashook is the first poor Chiney I ever see."

Johnny The Prophet

Pemberton from Page 11

For generations, the world has searched for cures for cancer. We have treatments, not cures. The new alpha power people, who are yet children, are learning. They can avoid most cancers. What dysfunctions in our habits and lifestyles cause our cells to want to divide? What prevents our bodies from immediately repairing divided cells? How does emotional regulation and science free us from self-harm? Don't we need preparatory classes for parents as a pre-requisite for registering their children for SEA? How else do we change those well-meaning, loving, mature minds ruled by confirmation bias? Any new experience, new knowledge is transmuted to confirm what they always believed. The river is polluted with stagnant water although the mission of these guardians is to keep it clean and flowing.

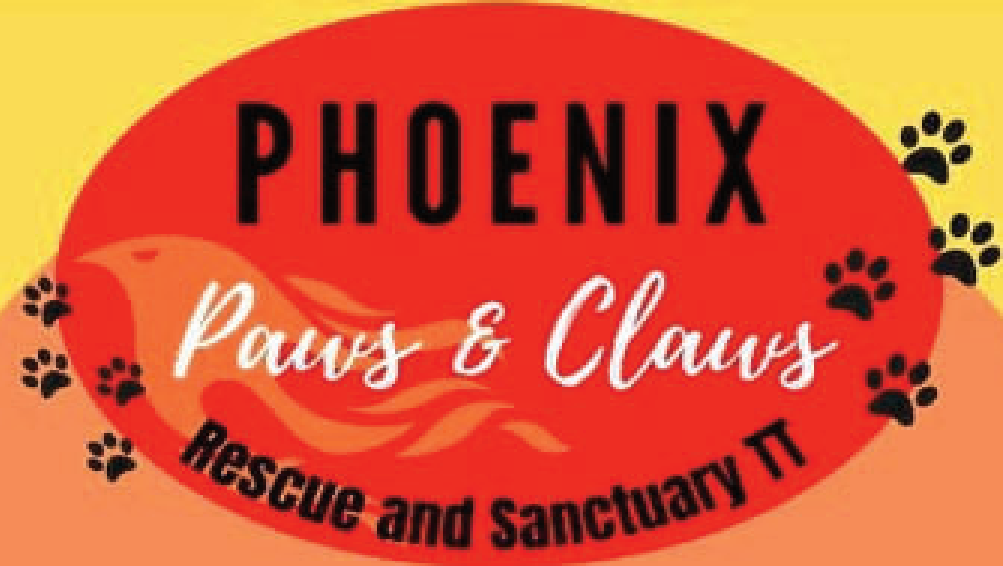
How then do we create connections and community in family and societies to up-lift generations? All well-organized and managed schools focus intently on achieving the well-being of the children. Those schools have teachers trained and minded in modern times to do the job. Principals are leaders, not CEO's. Thank God. They are educators, bringing out the best in teaching staff. They produce priceless results, year after year. Pay them generously with your respect and gratitude.

The best leaders can deal with parents but are not their parents. The best parents, regardless of societal levels, wholeheartedly support and maintain the principles of the Principal. They are one. They are team fu-

ture. Such schools always get satisfactory results. Why? School is about connectedness, community, and generations.


Effective parenting takes time to learn; time to execute; time to assess; time to change course. You do not have the time, the skill, or the means for continuous learning. Johnny learnt from the donkey that has been so for centuries. In the ancient times of Greeks, Romans and in all centres of civilisation. You are not a jackass or deficient as a parent. You simply do not have Johnny's humility and the donkey's guidance. You must observe the cadence and sure-footedness of the ageless donkey. Respect its provenance from the horse, the noblest of animals. What else is Johnny teaching you?

Your sombrero is too big for your head. You cannot see the way. You cannot feel the heat. You are not hearing Johnny's singing or his cuatro. You cannot sense the subtle changes in the river of life. You are not developing enough intelligence to give the world the best from the depths of your mind where the spirit resides. You are not using your God-given talents for your good, the good of your children and the world. Be like Johnny. Bring together all talents, all people, all love. You can sing; you just need to learn how to sing. If you ever heard Johnny riding on a donkey, you know he plays the same three chords in sequence. Love, Truth, Trust. They harmonise in their own key. Yet they lead the world with the same message; Truth, nothing but the whole truth kisses unconditional love to create trust. They create connections and community, generation after generation.



TO ALL OUR AMAZING FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

Funds are very low at the moment, and we have MANY animals in our care, so, if you were thinking of donating to our Rescue and Sanctuary we would be extremely grateful, and could really use the following:



- Purina Blue bag puppy chow
- Purina Green bag adult chow
- Alpo Red bag chow
- Purina Yellow bag kitten chow
- Canned puppy food
- Cat litter
- Collars (if cat, quick release)

- Kale
- Lettuce
- Pak choi
- Callaloo bush
- Master mix rabbit concentrate

Cash donations can be made to

Deposits can be made to:
 First Citizens Bank- West Court
 The Foundation for Heritage Preservation and Legacy Creation
 Chequing Account #2838003

Or Whatsapp message
 Aleeyah Amanda All
 1-868-758-1823

- Soap powder
- Bleach
- Disinfectant
- Dishwashing Liquid/ Laundry Detergent
- Newspapers
- Shredded paper

Phoenix Paws & Claws Rescue & Sanctuary TT is a project unit of The Foundation for Heritage Preservation & Legacy Creation