

Mih Buddybo Mac

Volume 1

**Reminiscences, Public Service Life, Guyana
Broadcasting Service (GBS) Triumphs on/of**

Wordsworth McAndrew

November 22nd, 1936 - April 25th, 2008

**Edited & Compiled by Roy
Brummell**

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MIH BUDDYBO MAC - Volume 1. Reminiscences, Public
Service Life, Guyana Broadcasting Service (GBS) Triumphs
on/of WORDSWORTH MCANDREW

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Published by the Caribbean Press.

ISBN 978-1-907493-77-5



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*“McAndrew was the original Guyanese...He was a folklorist, poet, actor, musician, raconteur, and wore a **dashiki** long before anybody knew the name of the ‘strange’ looking garment...”*

Oscar Wailoo

Acknowledgements:

My sincerest thanks to the following for sacrificing their time to make this book possible with their reminiscences or other contributions: Professor Frank Birbalsingh, Oscar Wailoo, Marc Matthews, Vic Hall, Lorenzo Blackmore, Ken Corsbie, Sir Ronald Sanders, Stanley Greaves (known to me as 'SG'), Oscar Ramjeet, Rosie McAndrew, Margaret Lawrence (my 'Sis'- short for 'Sister'), John Criswick, Dr. Judith Roback, Francis Quamina Farrier, (my 'Brodda'), Joyce Urmela Harris, Dr. John Rickford, Rooplall Monar, Claude Leandro, Eusi Kwayana, Pauline Melville, Dr. Ian Robertson (my 'Mattie') and Margaret Brummell (my wife).

Special thanks to Ian McDonald for his encouraging telephone calls and emails.

Very special thanks to Rooplall Monar and Oscar Ramjeet who, by telephone and email, respectively, responded any time of day or night I called or wrote asking for some clarification on East Indian words or other matters.

A LOUD THANK YOU to John Criswick who, in addition to his reminiscence, provided photographs.

A VERY LOUD THANK YOU to Dr. Judith Roback ('Neighb' to me) for her photographs of Mac, for patiently reading my manuscript, spotting various errors and offering suggestions.

A VERY LOUD THANK YOU to Rosie McAndrew for pointing out technical and grammatical mistakes, and for questioning and helping to clarify some of the historical information on Mac.

A VERY LOUD THANK YOU also to Ingram Lewis, who was able to save a portion of Mac's archive, which he turned over to me knowing that Mac and I were good buddies – letters, pieces of writing, newspapers, copies of *Oooiy!*, and tapes.

Then there were the two Maggies - Margaret Lawrence and Margaret Brummell.

How could I move forward without 'Sis' Margaret Lawrence who has been a close friend, ever since I acted as

her husband, Luke, in James Baldwin's **The Amen Corner**, at the National Culture Centre, in 1986. Whenever I needed to contact someone regarding this book, I turned to my 'Sis' for help and got immediate responses. Those speedy responses buoyed me. It could be very frustrating trying to reach people thousands of miles away but, with someone like my 'Sis' helping, a lot of that frustration never occurred.

Finally, my wife Maggie sat with me performing many technical computer tasks I could not, or trying to teach and re-teach me how to perform them, and I thank her for her tremendous patience. Her constant question: "*Did you save your work?*" or her gentle reminder: "*Always remember to save your work, Roy*" were very helpful prods.

Preface:

I became friends with Wordsworth McAndrew when he was the editor of the Guyana Marketing Corporation's Radio Short Story Series, in the early 1970s. Mac enjoyed reading my stories, set mainly in my village, Dartmouth, because of their Creolese and themes, and he read them on air as if they were his. Indeed, his name will always be mentioned with my short story, '**De Great Jackass Race**', which he read so well that hundreds of listeners wanted to know more about me, and I was invited by the radio station to appear on a one o'clock radio show hosted by a young female. I remember one elderly caller saying that she had been ill, but Mac's reading of my story had made her well.

When the GMC Radio Short Stories Series ended, Mac did not want all of the writers the series had unearthed to disappear into oblivion. He, therefore, suggested that we should form a group. That we did, but the group did not last too long. Nevertheless, my friendship with Mac continued, even after his migration to the United States of America in 1980. We eventually reunited in the 1990's, years after my own migration to the US.

My 'Buddybo Mac' (Brother Mac) as I called him, and he called me, became Guyana's legendary 'Mr. Folklore' by selflessly dedicating more than half his life to collecting folklore and imparting folk knowledge to Guyanese, through radio and other means. Certainly, there were others before him who played their part in preserving Guyana's folklore (Rev. James Speirs, author of *The Proverbs of British Guiana*, etc., Vincent Roth, *Old Story Time*, etc. Celeste Dolphin, folk music enthusiast and producer, Jake Croker, folklore all-rounder), but no one raised folklore to national consciousness in Guyana as much as Mac did. My Buddybo was to Guyana what Louise Bennett was to Jamaica.

Mac was not my mentor, as some people have suggested; he was my good friend whose passionate folklore work I admired, as I am also interested in the field. Before Mac left

Guyana, he gave me some proverbs, among which is: "*Maan dead grass grow a' he do*". My Buddybo's altruism would not allow him to ask for this book, but he richly deserves it so that the grass does not grow "*a' he do*".

Introduction:

I wrote one massive book detailing the admirably productive life of Wordsworth McAndrew, with a large portion of the material being scanned original handwritten, typed and printed documents. However, I was advised that the book would be too large to be bound in one volume. Consequently, I decided to publish the work in two volumes. As much as I would have loved readers to view all of the original documents used in compiling *Volume I*, I was forced to retype them since they were unreadable after a sample copy of *Volume I* with scanned originals was printed. As with *Volume I*, Mac's poems and articles in *Volume II* will also have to be retyped, robbing readers of the opportunity of seeing his original typing or handwriting, but even Mac would agree that "*You can't kick against the pricks*".

Volume I includes the pleasant surprises of a composition Mac wrote as a Queen's College student, his minutes of the British Guiana PEN and his skit on Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow. (The three documents mentioned are examples of original handwritten gems that, sadly, had to be retyped.) There is also arresting information on his early public service life, but *Volume I* is dedicated mainly to reminiscences and Mac's GBS radio life. I asked the writers who contributed to my book to focus on one unforgettable meeting with Mac, or to write a reminiscence which is the summation of all the years they knew him. I'm quite aware that Mac could sometimes be opinionated and difficult to relate to. Therefore, I wanted my contributing writers to write about him exactly as they knew him, and not 'dress him up'. My hope is that the reminiscences, his personal writings in *Volumes I* and *II* and everything else in the two volumes will help readers see a more complex Wordsworth McAndrew than just the writer of the classic poem, '**O! Higue**', or the radio presenter of radio shows such as '**Mac's Magazine**', '**Creole Meche Meche**', '**Focus on Folk**' and '**What Else?**' One of the limitations of this book, however, is that I am not aware of

all of the people who might have a story on the gregarious, charismatic Mac. Further, not all of those I was able to reach were willing or able to write their reminiscences. The reminiscences have not been tightly arranged, but I've placed them in some sort of debatable order beginning with people who knew him first. What might not be debatable is that the reminiscences create a picture of a puzzling, controversial, uninhibited, brilliant, proud, unique man.

Speaking of controversial, Mac had problems with his supervisors from as far back as 1961, when claims were made that his dress, speech and attitude were disrespectful, that he was a disruptive influence among the male staff, and that he wrote poems during working hours. Mac, of course, strongly denied the charges in writing. Indeed, one of Mac's commendable character traits in his early public service life (in his 20's) was that he responded forcefully in writing to what he felt was an injustice against him. (See letters in **Early Public Service Life**.)

There was immediate controversy after Mac was seconded in 1968 from Government Information Service (GIS) (also seen this as Services) to Guyana Broadcasting Service (GBS), when the radio station established a dress code to control radical dressing. Mac refused to obey the code, continued to wear his *dashiki* and rubber slippers and was sent back to GIS (within Ministry of Information). However, he was later recalled.

While I did not see the actual directive outlining the GBS dress code, the article '**GBS Director, Producer in 'dress' clash**' (*Sunday Chronicle*, April 27th, 1969) in the **Storm Then Calm** section of this book, has what was said to be the directive issued by Hugh Cholmondeley, the General Manager and Programme Director at the time. According to the *Chronicle*, Hugh Cholmondeley's code sought to get rid of "*loud sports shirts, crushed and soiled trousers, and floppy slippers...*", although Vic Hall, Ken Corsbie and Oscar Ramjeet have suggested in their reminiscences that it was Mac's insistence on wearing rubber slippers (not other garments, such as his *dashiki*) that got him fired.

Other newspaper articles in the **Storm Then Calm** section reported Hugh Cholmondeley as saying that Mac was fired for speaking publicly about the dress code, which was an internal matter.

Indeed, Mac was one of the pioneers in dressing appropriately to suit Guyana's hot climate, and although he received much support for resisting the GBS dress code, I do not know of any individuals who dared to dress for work as he did.

Mac was tough-minded, honest and unafraid of controversy; he told you exactly how he felt, regardless of whether his abrasiveness bruised you, or whatever he said damaged his friendship with you. It was the latter that landed him in hot water when, in 1975/1976, as he moderated '**Action Line**', a call-in radio programme, he objected to being addressed as 'Comrade' at a time when the government promoted such a salutation by/for all Guyanese. (See reminiscence by Sir Ronald Sanders.) Mac's objection to being saluted as 'Comrade' was probably more than opposition to a nondescript term; he knew that the government claimed to be socialist, that 'Comrade' was a popular socialist salutation for the masses, and felt that socialism sought to produce a nation of conformists. However, his attempt to establish his nonconformity really offended the government and its supporters. '**Action Line**' was overladen with shouts for his head. Mac even received a call at his home telling him he was fired. When he asked to state his case, he was directed to report the following day to the highest office in Georgetown. After waiting for nearly a whole day without being seen, he was dismissed like a school boy by an arrogant school master, but he maintained his position on the 'Comrade' issue. Mac spent a few more years at the radio station before he was finally fired. He says in his Biography that he was fired for political reasons, might it have been because of the 'Comrade' incident? When I asked Mac what he was going to do after being fired, he said he would take the little money he had been offered in lieu of his service but would not beg. Still having the drive and a rich folklore knowledge kingdom to share with the Guyanese nation, he started the folklore manual, *Oooy!* in 1979. (*Oooy!* is included in *Volume II*.)

With writers reminiscing many years later, it is quite possible that two or more of them would remember a specific event or specific events differently. (However, all of the reminiscences are by writers who had direct experiences with Mac.) With this in mind, there is a little disagreement on the 'Comrade' incident. (See Editor's Note at the end of Sir Ron Sanders' reminiscence.)

Though he is no longer alive, controversies continue following Mac. One example is that of Savitri Persaud, a PhD student in Social and Political Thought at York University in Canada, discussing the brutal "*ol' higue murder*" of Radika Singh, in Bare Root, East Coast Demerara, in 2007, and stating that Mac's poem, '**Ol' Higue**', promotes violence against women. (More on this in *Volume II*, but see '**Violence Against Women: Reckoning with Our Ghosts**', *Stabroek News*, October 3, 2011.)

Volume I ends, though, not with controversy, but with Mac's indisputably brilliant work at GBS. While at the radio station, he was involved in or produced a variety of outstanding programmes such as those listed in this **Introduction** (see also the section **A Star Shines at GBS**), but his two most well-received were '**Focus on Folk**' and '**What Else?**'. Judging from the hundreds of letters responding to the programmes, Mac's listeners were largely rural Guyanese who generally saw him as an excellent teacher and friend. The usage of Creolese in Mac's presentations - proverbs, folksongs, narration - could be one good reason for the very large number of 'country' listeners.

Although the reminiscences and letters to his radio programmes praise Mac, he was not fussy about praise; he derived much satisfaction from the accuracy and effectiveness of the information he offered friends or the public. Given another chance at life, Mac would encourage others to pursue highly recognized professions, but he would remain *dashiki*-rubber-slipper-wearer, bicycle and P50 rider, radio producer, steel pan player, poet, keeper of information others readily discard, lover of country and its lore - the one and only Wordsworth McAndrew.

The Biography of Wordsworth A. McAndrew, dictated to the Editor (Roy Brummell) via telephone on 5th May 2005

Wordsworth A. McAndrew, author of '**Ol' Higue**' and many other memorable poems, was born November 22nd, 1936, in Georgetown, British Guiana, birthplace of Martin Carter, Edgar Mittleholzer, A.J. Seymour, Stanley Greaves, John Agard, Walter Rodney and Ivan Van Sertima the Africanist, who was a poet before a great historian.

Wordsworth began his education at Marshall's Prep School, moved on to Christ Church for primary studies, then on to Queen's College in 1948 to prepare for his GCEs which he obtained in 1954.

Then, at the point when the average Guianese student would head overseas to train for one of the professions, Wordsworth turned inwards instead and entered the local civil service.

He quickly discovered that he hated it and the people who ran it, as his poem '**To a Civil Servant**' makes clear. But before he could resign or get dismissed (whichever would have happened first), Fate stepped in on his side: - on the recommendation of a friend who had two job offers and had to give up one, Wordsworth is reassigned from a country district to the city to join the staff of the Guyana Information Services whose Head, A.J. Seymour, is a well-known world poet and hosts poetry gatherings that usually include such poetry stalwarts as Martin Carter, Ian McDonald, Ivan Van Sertima, Alec Best and Henry Josiah.

Who could want for more? Wordsworth excels at the work assignments, shines at the poetry gatherings, finds the after-hours tranquillity of the building perfect for poetry writing and discovers a tremendous treasure trove of Guyanese folklore tapes just sitting there waiting to be listened to and absorbed.

And Fate had one more GIS gift in store for Wordsworth - cultural icon Celeste Dolphin was a frequent visitor to the

GIS, and when she heard Wordsworth's voice immediately offered to train him for the next verse-speaking competition at the music festival, and Wordsworth won the prize more than once under her tutelage.

So in many ways, the GIS proved to be Wordsworth's special kind of Civil Service - the GOOD civil service, where he learnt and enjoyed many good things. 'Ol' Higue' was written during this period; also thanks to Seymour's Wednesday night gatherings, Wordsworth published his very first book - *Blue Gauding* - which he went around selling to friends and to people he knew. This print-your-own-book-and-sell-it-yourself idea was part of the Wednesday night group philosophy, and Wordsworth adopted it wholeheartedly.

All good things come to an end they say, and in the early 1960s the GIS suddenly decided that Wordsworth was not suitable for permanent appointment to any of the three posts he had acted in since 1957. He was thus re-seconded to the normal Civil Service - the one he hated.

In 1963 he resigned and became a feature writer at the *Guiana Graphic* newspaper where he wrote a daily column under the pen name 'Damon'. In 1964, he quit the *Graphic* and joined the *Daily Chronicle*, still doing the same column.

Leaving the *Chronicle* in 1966, Wordsworth was called anew to the GIS (A.J. Seymour had retired, the offices had moved from a 'folk' area to a 'posh' area) to do freelance broadcasting. He accepted, and once again good vibes surrounded him. In very short time, the government, having bought one of the two local radio stations, would be sending radio people to the BBC for training. And when the team left in January 1968, Wordsworth was among them. While in Britain, he fell in love and wrote an entire book of poems to the lady in question, *Poems to Lynn*.

Returning to BG, now Guyana, Wordsworth found all sorts of ways to use his talents and experiences: He had folklore programmes running on GBS and many folk inputs through the broadcast week; he was eventually promoted to assistant programme director of the radio station, and saw to it that folklore and Guyanese Language had a thriving place in the station's output.

One product of folklore research that GIS had encouraged Wordsworth to follow up was *Oooiy!*, a folklore manual he started after GBS dismissed him for political reasons.

The first edition of *Oooiy!* (January, 1979), devoted mainly to Kali Mai worship and ritual, yet found space on its inside pages to carry a list of the forty stages of Typee, as collected and compiled by Wordsworth. This list has been greeted with as much acclaim as any good McAndrew poem.

And Wordsworth's biography ends - not with a dismissal by GBS in the late 1970's - but with the reluctant decision to move to America and seek whatever future remained for him. Landing in 1980, he quickly found proofreading work thanks to his *Graphic* and *Chronicle* experiences and that is the job that saw him through twenty-five years of life in America.

Only two poetic moments happened in all that time - in 1986, thanks to an invitation arranged by Johnny Agard, Wordsworth actually went to London and read some of his poems at the Commonwealth Centre in Kensington - all were well received. Then, in 2000, Jamaica's leading publishing house Carlong decided to publish '*OI*' **Higue**' in one of their anthologies.

Now unable to work because of advancing glaucoma and desperately struggling to survive on Social Security, he hopes some day to publish a few more books of poems - or one big volume called *The Complete Works of Wordsworth A. McAndrew*.

Editor's Notes: 1. Whenever Mac dictated anything for me to write, he was fastidious about his vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, etc. and he had me re-read what I had written for him to approve. Although I might have said some things differently in his Biography, I'm presenting it verbatim to honour my friend.

"Then at a point when the average Guianese student would head overseas..."

Mac had British Guiana in mind, thus "*Guianese*".

"Returning to BG, now Guyana..."

2. When Mac left for the BBC in 1968, Guyana was already into its second year of independence. He, therefore, used 'BG' (British Guiana) retrospectively

3. My book will partially fulfil Mac's dream of *The Complete Works of Wordsworth A. McAndrew*.

The following information from Mac's résumés has been included by the Editor to broaden his Biography.

EDUCATION: Queen's College, Georgetown, Guyana

COMMUNICATIONS:

1978-1980 Freelance journalist/ correspondent *Caribbean Contact*; Editor *OOOY! Caribbean Contact* monthly newspaper published by Caribbean Conference of Churches and distributed in the Caribbean and international West Indian communities.

OOOY! first published January, 1979, is Guyana's first folklore manual.

1968-1978 Guyana Broadcasting Service (state-owned radio): Announcer/Producer (up to 1971), Assistant Programme Director (up to 1975), Acting Programme Director (up to 1978).

As Assistant Programme Director and later Acting Programme Director, duties included:

- a. Preparation of daily programme schedules.
- b. Preparation of press releases.
- c. Coordination of tasks and supervision of announcers, engineers and librarians.
- d. Replying to correspondence from members of the public and other radio stations.
- e. Production of special programmes of folk culture, language and history.

1966-1968 Freelance journalist/broadcaster.

1964-1966 Features writer/sub-editor - *Daily Chronicle* (locally owned daily and Sunday newspaper). Duties included:

- a. Writing daily column on topical and other matters.
- b. Rewriting reporters' copies.
- c. Sub-editing reporters' copies.

- d. Final proofreading of paper before printing.
- e. Constructing stories from annual reports, statistical charts, etc.

- 1963-1964** Features writer, sub-editor, *Guyana Graphic*, (Thomson Company owned daily and Sunday newspaper).
- 1961-1963** Broadcasting Officer - Government Information Services.
- 1960-1961** Press Officer - Government Information Services. Duties included:
- a. Writing of daily press releases on governmental policies and activities.
 - b. Writing of weekly scripts for five main governmental broadcasting talks.
 - c. Attending governmental press conferences and writing press releases.
- 1960-1961** Broadcasting Officer of Government Information Services.

CONFERENCES:

- 1975** (August) Twenty-third Conference of International Folk Music Council, Regensburg University Conference, Regensburg, West Germany.
- 1971** (August) National Folk Music Council Conference, University of the West Indies.
- 1971** (March) Radio trips to Trinidad, St. Kitts and Jamaica to gather interviews and background information for Caribbean Broadcasting Services series '**Budget 1**'.
- 1970** Conference of Press and Allied Media in Munich, West Berlin, Cologne and Hamburg, in West Germany.

1968 (January-July) British Broadcasting Corporation
film, TV and radio training.

MEMBERSHIP IN ORGANIZATIONS:

Guyana Dramatic Club
Theatre Guild
Pelican Steel Orchestra
International PEN Club
National History and Arts Council
International Folk Music Council
Society for Ethnomusicology

PUBLICATIONS:

1979 *OOOY!* (Folklore manual)
1970 '**Guyana: A Cultural Look**' (article written for
Ministry of Information to mark Guyana's
republic status)
1969 *Amerindian Integration* (Book written for
Ministry of Information and Culture)
1969 *Careers in Health* (Booklet written for Ministry of
Health)
1970 *More Poems*
1966 *Selected Poems*
1963 *Forty Meditations on a Theme*
1962 *Poems to St. Agnes*
1961 *Three P's*
1958 *Blue Gauldng*

AMERICAN EXPERIENCE:

- 1989-1993** Proofreader/Specialist, Matthew Bender & Company, Inc. – *Times Mirror* Owned publisher of law books (proofing tax volumes).
- 1988-1989** Proofreading Supervisor, Cable View Publications, New York City (proofreading procedures for company's 50 cable magazines).
- 1981** Proofreader, Unitron Graphics (proofreading heavy flow of books and magazines).

REMINISCENCES

Dr. Frank Birbalsingh: A Supreme Master of Guyanese Speech and Orality

Frank Birbalsingh entered the University College of the West Indies (UWI) in October 1957, and gained his BA degree with English Honours in 1961, after which he taught at Queen's College for one year (September 1961- July 1962) before moving to England. In 1966 he was awarded an MA in English, (University of London), and in 1967 Frank moved to Toronto, Canada, where he still lives. In 1970 Frank joined the Department of English at York University in Toronto and, in 1972, after he obtained his PhD (University of London), he was promoted to Assistant Professor. He later became full Professor, and retired from York in 2003 as Professor Emeritus and Senior Scholar. Frank has edited monographs and anthologies, and written books on West Indian Literature and culture

I first met Mac in September 1951, when Queens College - then a school for boys only - moved from its old building in Brickdam, closer to the Atlantic breezes on its new premises in Thomas Lands. Both of us were then in Form 4B - later re-named the 'Lower Fourth' by our principal V. J. Sanger-Davies. Mac was black and I was Indian. He was short and chunky, while I was short and wispy. What struck me more was that he was a 'town boy' from Georgetown, while I was from 'the country', a term then applied, with snobbish disdain, to any place in British Guiana outside of Georgetown - in my case, the boondocks of Better Hope, East Coast Demerara.

In no time at all Mac attracted attention by generating frequent eruptions of laughter or amused, surreptitious whispering from boys in his vicinity on the right side of our class room where he sat. His snide comments, naughty jibes or irreverent sneers betrayed an irresistible instinct, if not for

mischief, certainly for entertainment. He took a special interest in French, and often exclaimed "*Oh score!*" an expression denoting good humoured surprise or astonishment, especially during French classes. When we saw no reason to justify these exclamations and questioned him, he haughtily dismissed our questions with: "*Is wha' wrong wid yuh, Man? I talking French!*" and with an air that hinted that English was beneath him, improbably claimed: "*Is 'Au secours!' I saying, Man.*" We never asked him why he was calling for help but, in addition to an innate fascination with language, his behaviour suggested a gift for good natured humour, improvisation and histrionic creativity that came to fruition by the early 1960s, when I saw Mac in the leading role of a play in Georgetown. Unfortunately I do not remember the name of the play which had Caribbean characters and fully displayed Mac's linguistic virtuosity and acting talent.

Another memorable incident took place when Mac and I attended a talk given at the Carnegie Public Library in Georgetown by a lady who was either the Consul or another official representing the Indian Government in BG. Her talk urged Indo-Guyanese to retain their ancestral culture in spite of having lost aspects of it during indenture. At the end, Mac asked the following question: "*Is it not better for Indo-Guyanese to adopt a wholly Guyanese culture since their future is in Guyana?*" The speaker was flummoxed by such a direct challenge to her central thesis, but stuck to her guns arguing, with decreasing conviction, that a sounder grounding in Indian culture would help Indo-Guyanese to be better Guyanese. Yet, as danger loomed on a topic still capable of making one's blood boil, Mac's enthusiastic manner and disarming candour ensured an exchange totally devoid of acrimony.

After our Ordinary Level GCE Exams I think Mac left school and joined the Civil Service. Whether it began during 1954 to 1956 while I was in the Sixth Form at QC, or when I did my BA at the University of the West Indies, in Jamaica, from 1957 to 1961, Mac and I corresponded regularly about poems he was writing. Then, in September, 1962, I began teaching at QC and met with Mac frequently, often with John Criswick, for discussion of poetry and politics, while our preferred

rum - Houston Blue Label - freely flowed. In 1962 I left BG first for India, then London, England, and I remained in London until 1967 when I migrated to Toronto, Canada where I have lived ever since. Of Mac's great days as historian, folklorist and broadcaster, during the 1960's and 70's, I have no first hand knowledge, alas, although news did reach me in distant Toronto of his ground-breaking contributions to Guyanese history and culture.

In Toronto, I lost touch with Mac for nearly thirty years, until the late 1990s, when I heard he had migrated to the US. I visited him in New Jersey where he had moved to the home of his daughter, American son-in-law and their son. Mac was not in great shape: he was threatened by blindness since he urgently needed cataract surgery that could not be done because of other health problems. Yet, despite his troubles, he could not wait, during my brief visit, to summon his usual verve and vigour in discussing certain creole expressions that he was then investigating. It filled me with a strange and uncomfortable mixture of awe, joy, nostalgia, sorrow and pity, in the midst of such physical frailty and domestic uncertainty, to see the flame of Mac's passion for Guyanese creole speech blaze so brightly, so far away from home, and so long after our schooldays. But I had a feeling that things were worse than they seemed and, not long afterwards, received a request for donations being publicly raised to relieve Mac from dire economic straits. One or two years afterwards, I even received a phone call from Mac himself asking to come and stay with me in Toronto; but because of problems in my domestic situation, I put him off and, some years later, heard he had died.

Since I had never met Mac's family, I got hold of the email address of his ex-wife Rosie from John Criswick, and visited Rosie and their daughter Shiri, along with Shiri's son Levi in England. I could tell that Rosie who had been separated from Mac for a long time had put such travail behind her. Shiri, however, looked at me as if expecting I would transform into her dad at any moment. It was unnerving. I confessed my shame that Mac had died, no doubt thinking that I had let him down when he needed my help. All I could do was recall as many memories of Mac as I could, and give Shiri some

photos of him from the early 1960's. I was fascinated by Mac's grandson Levi who was a carbon copy of the young Mac and, according to his mother was doing well at school. Again, I confess I felt a bit of an impostor in not being able to report some personal involvement in news about Mac's glory days as a broadcaster; but I at least had photos of Shiri's New Jersey relatives which I passed on to her.

Perhaps Mac's most lasting achievement is his collection, preservation and publicizing of items of Guyana's folklore which confer fresh dignity both on our country's culture and national identity; for language is a basic carrier of culture and nationality, and Mac was nothing if not a supreme master of Guyanese speech and orality. He has done for Guyana what Louise Bennett did for Jamaica, and Samuel Selvon for Trinidad and Tobago: restored a measure of national self-respect to a culture sorely ravaged by centuries of colonial abuse.

August 24th, 2012

Oscar Wailoo: A Remarkable Guyanese

Oscar Wailoo is a Guyanese writer living in Canada.

On April 25, 2008, a remarkable Guyanese died in New York. Wordsworth McAndrew was nearing 72 and virtually blind when he took his last breath in a country in which he had no business dying.

McAndrew was the original Guyanese. He was as original a Guyanese as Louise 'Miss Lou' Bennett was an original Jamaican. He was a folklorist, poet, actor, musician, raconteur, and wore a *dashiki* long before anybody knew the name of the 'strange' looking garment.

I was a lil' boy when I first met him in our home. He had with him a tenor pan, for at that time he was part of a steel band, Pelicans, I think, that played in the neighbourhood. A few weeks later he won first prize for pan solo in the then British Guiana Music Festival. Incidentally, that band included one Eddie Greene, now Dr. Eddie Greene, CARICOM's Assistant Secretary General. But beyond being a champion pannist, Wordsworth fascinated me because he was funny; funny in a Guyanese way. He was Guyanese when only the 'own way' dared to be. He was funny because he spoke always as a storyteller, full of home-grown metaphors, and in a voice of wonderful tonal quality. It didn't matter what the subject was or the circumstances, he was constant; never wavering from a language he spoke and wrote with grace. Yes, Wordsworth came along when we spoke two languages: Guyanese or 'bad English' and English. Guyanese was spoken in the yard with your friends. It was tolerated when spoken in the house, but not in 'polite company'. It was never spoken in school, church or any place where you were supposed to make a favourable impression. In this child's eye, Wordsworth seemed not to be aware of that convention. Now I understand that in fact he was, because he was cut from local wood, the same wood from which the likes of Miss Lou

was cut, and that allowed him to locate the Guyanese self in a British colony that was busy convincing us that it did not exist. For them, it existed only as a subset of a British identity and could only be expressed in 'proper' English. But Wordsworth, the folklorist, clearly understood that in order for a people to be free of a dominant culture, it must first know itself; and that knowledge was locked away in its lore. Once it's located and unearthed, it will resonate only if expressed in the language and cadence that gave it life in the first place. And there was no voice sweeter or more eloquent than the man most people called simply, 'Mac'. So in 1970, he wrote: *"...the folklore of a people is at the root of their being, and to cast it aside is to set oneself adrift culturally - an act which one performs at one's peril."*

Whether or not Wordsworth took on the task to discover the people's culture because he had a calling can best be answered by those who knew him well, but for his entire life he went at it with undiluted zeal, and expressed what he found with an eloquence that made it palatable even to the most conservative.

According to an obituary in the Guyana *Stabroek* newspaper: *"He committed himself to the collection, and celebration of folk life using all the oral, visual, and written media at his disposal - broadcast, drama, poetry, and newspaper articles - to make his case";* and the generosity of spirit with which he went about it, belied the fervour that lay beneath that quest. John Rickford, Linguistics Professor at Stanford University, attests to that generosity of spirit on the many field trips he took with Mac into the nooks and crannies of the Guyana cultural hinterland: *"I ...learned (from Wordsworth), from observation and practice, the importance of lavishing time and attention on people in the course of field work - taking time not only to ask them about the particular things you were interested in, but just to 'lime' with them, take a drink and eat some food with them."*

That dedication has produced a priceless body of cultural material into which future generations can dip in order to discover who they are and what made them what they are. They will find a lot of which to be proud and know that most of it was put in place by a man who was a one of a kind. A man who was Guyanese long before most people knew there was such a thing.

As for me, I will always remember Mac as the man who was the finest speaker of Guyanese. But most of all, I'll remember him in his 'rikitics' when he performed his famous poem '**Oi Higue**'. It was so brilliant that even a second hand account is worth listening to. Nice going, Mac.

September 14th, 2012

Marc Matthews: Exceptional Intellect and Integrity

Marc Matthews, a poet and storyteller, was also one of Guyana's finest stage actors. He and Ken Corsbie formed the dramatic duo, 'Dem-Two' in the 70's. They later became 'All-Ah-We' after John Agard (now a famous poet in England) and Henry Muttoo (Artistic Director of the Cayman National Cultural Foundation) joined them.

Marc lives in England where he continues to perform.

Curry is a subject on this Morning TV '**Breakfast Show**', and I remember Scouta Mac in London when he was here for BBC indoctrination, I took him for a curry in an Indian Restaurant back-in-those days, a rarity.

The menu was a revelation of such variety to Scouta, make he leff it up to me, to order.

"So wuh yu want hot, or medium?"

"I is a Guyanese, hot."

Ah make the bannuh to know Madras hot an' Vindaloo hot hot.

Well youall who know Mac know how he own-way.

"Dem cyan mek um too hot fuh Guyanese."

Well me didn't wan argue.

Ah Order Vindaloo fuh he and Madras fuh me.

When Mac taste the curry, he shout out loud loud: *"Dis is not a prappa curry, not like we curry."*

Me ah watch he eye, start watta, but me boy, allyou know Mac, he aint go give in dat it HOT, nah, not Mac.

He complaining how dem aint know fuh mek curry; is only Guyanese know fuh mek curry. All the while he deh like when Monkey eat pepper, teking a cool mout breath in between de-critizing.

Not till ah tek he to a pub in Nottinghillgate, he seh: *"By-the-way, de-curry did hot fuh true."*

In QC, I didn't know Mac as friend, he was older; I only said "Hi". He was called 'Scouta'. I'd figured because he was a big one in the Scouts which didn't last more than a term.

I became aware of Mac the poet in the middle sixties; can't remember if it was Ken Corsbie or Eddie Kamau Brathwaite who gave me a copy of his '**Ole Higue**', which really excited me, encouraging and confirming my belief in Guyanese as legit language.

So when he came to the UK it was great to buss a lime wit de brodda, and so pleased, dat he wanted to see and experience the alternative culture, the Sheebens, de nite people hangouts, the other side of the street, of the tracks.

At every opportunity he'd be on the scene; he was impressed with the cultural ethnic interacting amongst people. He often reminded me of the nite he was gaffing wit a white frien', when in de middle of de gaff another white man had the other leave de table to, jus like dat, being arrested.

When I landed in GT to work at GBS '69, Mac made sure of my re-culturalization; introduced me to the roots of our culture.

Many a day an evening we'd be drinking, shooting shit in an Albert St. bar/cook shop that served wicked, fried shark cutters.

There was a period for about a year I too lived 3 mins from Mac in David Street and we'd have 5 a.m. cups of coffee an' gaff, politics, writing, share life experiences.

Mac was a folk traditional purist; he expressed disgust often to me, pointing at infringements committed by performers detrimental to tradition. A curious mix of radical and conservative, he was also a wonderful storyteller.

Mac was generous and caring, a Guyanese of exceptional intellect and integrity, a man whose greatest weakness was his love for his country and its peoples, a proud man and overbearing and dogmatic but without vindictiveness.

I will continue to feel gratitude for the intangible gifts and insights he gave me; most of all his COURAGE has helped me endure.

Guyanese in keeping with the tradition of the ancients should locate and designate his cosmic-astronomical presence. "*Scouta Mac there*", points the parent, "*there amongst our constellations, our sky.*"

September 3rd, 2011

Vic Hall: 'Scouter' Mac

*My education began at Comenius Moravian, from where I won a four-year scholarship to Chatham High. Due to my family's financial situation, I could not complete my scholarship, so I began working as an office boy at the **Guyana Graphic**, but continued evening studies at Queens College.*

*I rose rapidly through the ranks at the **Guyana Graphic** - copy holder, sports reporter, general reporter, court reporter and labour reporter - but left the **Graphic** over a salary dispute, to join the **Evening Post** as chief reporter. Shortly afterwards, edging out Rickey Singh, I represented the journalists' union in Brazil. I subsequently attended numerous international conferences and was appointed Director of the Guyana Labour Union. In that capacity, I produced the radio programme '**The Voice of Labour**'.*

*In 1966, I, and others, left for West Germany on journalism scholarships. Learning that I could not be assured of a job in Guyana, I successfully applied for a communications job in Ghana, but the position was withdrawn following Kwame Nkrumah's overthrow. Forced to the US, I found work with the **Baltimore Sun**, covering the Civil Rights Movement and meeting notables like Mohammed Ali, Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Touré), and H. Rap Brown (Imam Abdullah El Amin). Accidentally encountering Ambassador John Carter in Washington, and accepting his invitation to lecture Guyanese school children on Guyana, I met Lloyd Searwar, who advised me to apply for the Embassy's Information Attaché post. Upon selection I went home for orientation. Prime Minister Burnham, though, expressed displeasure at my not returning from the West German scholarship, adding that he knew the **Baltimore Sun** had filed for my visa, but he had intervened and I would have to serve Guyana.*

I was one of his closest, if not the closest friend of Wordsworth 'Scouter' McAndrew. We met in the 50's through rival Boy Scouts' movements, but our bonds tightened although he attended QC and I Chatham High.

Upon leaving school, Wordsworth served at the GIS, but later joined the *Guyana Graphic*, as a columnist, writing under the nom de plume 'Damon' (a leader of one of the many slave revolts in Guyana). How well I remember one of his outstanding articles entitled '**Not Since the Days of Freddy Bandulaw**', extolling the virtues of female masqueraders! Not long after, however, he threw his boots into the office of the editor, Montigue Smith, and stormed out of the *Graphic* for good. Wordsworth was one who had been selected by Editor Smith to go on an overland trip through the Guianas and boots and other equipment had been bought by the *Graphic* for their trip. I do not recall the reason for the disagreement but Wordsworth was replaced by Hubert Williams.

Wordsworth joined the *Daily Chronicle*, while I remained at the *Graphic*, but we were each assigned by our newspaper to cover Guyana's Independence Ceremony in the National Park, which included the lowering of the British Union Jack and the raising of the Golden Arrowhead by Colonel Desmond Roberts. I was lucky to have a seat in the reporters' box very close to Prime Minister Burnham and other dignitaries (and saw Dr. Jagan refuse Mr. Burnham's gesture to join him on stage for the changing of the flag and would later file this in my report), but Mac did not seem to mind, as after we had filed our reports, we hooked up in the early morning hours, riding our bikes and moving from rum shop to rum shop singing '**Dear Land of Guyana**'.

Wordsworth left the *Chronicle* and returned to the GIS, but was soon with GBS radio. Shortly after independence, I and other journalists left on scholarships for training in West Germany. While I was there, a group of broadcasters, including Wordsworth McAndrew left for training at the BBC in London in 1968 and both sets of trainees (excluding me) returned to Guyana only months apart - I had found work in the United States with the *Baltimore Sun*. After I returned to Guyana for orientation with regards to the Information Attaché post in Guyana's Washington Embassy, and was told by Prime Minister Burnham that I could not return to the US; I was seconded to the Government Information Service as Information Officer for Berbice. It was while there that one weekend I was invited over to the Albert Street, Alberttown

home of Wordsworth McAndrew for an exchange of political views. Among those present at this lively discussion were Hugh Cholmondeley, Terry Holder, Cecil Griffith (all deceased) Clairmont Taitt and Ron Sanders. A few days afterwards, I was told to report to Hugh Cholmondeley at a Hadfield Street Lodge location where plans were in progress to launch the Guyana Broadcasting Service. All of the aforementioned gentlemen were present, along with new faces Matthew Allen (deceased) Frank Hammond, Courtney Hardy, and later Oscar Ramjeet.

In October of 1968, GBS was launched. It was during this period that Wordsworth and I had a falling out when I refused to shake his European wife's hand. At that time I was deeply involved in the Black Power Movement. Members of the Movement were not speaking to white people, thus my action. Ironically, however, a few months down the line a very good friend of ours, Claude Boxhill, died, and it was an event that brought Wordsworth and me together again.

As the Black Power Movement through ASCRIA (led by Eusi Kwayana) gained traction, the staff of GBS began dressing too casually, forcing the General Manager to announce a dress code. Among the directives was: "*No wearing of rubber slippers*". Of course, rubber slippers were amongst Wordsworth's favourites, and of course he defied the ban and was fired.

I was lucky to see him perform his classic poem, '**OI' Higue'**, at the Theatre Guild. When I left Guyana for the US in June 1974, Wordsworth was in the midst of compiling a book of Guyana proverbs and may have continued this in the US.

August 20th, 2013

Ken Corsbie: The Defender

Ken Corsbie is a storyteller, dramatist and comedian and was one of Guyana's finest stage actors. He knew Mac for most of his life and worked with him in radio at the Guyana Broadcasting Service. Ken attended RC Primary (Main Street, Georgetown) and St. Stanislaus College (Brickdam). He was an athlete, theatre director, designer, administrator, radio announcer, producer and television presenter ('Caribbean Eye' Series). Ken has received awards from Guyana, Barbados, Trinidad, Cayman Islands and Long Island, New York.

Ken and raconteur/poet, Marc Matthews, performed as the dramatic duo, 'Dem-Two', in the 70's. The group was renamed 'All-Ah-We' after John Agard (now a famous poet in England) and Henry Muttoo (Artistic Director of the Cayman National Cultural Foundation) joined them.

Ken lives with his wife, Elizabeth Barnum, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and continues to perform throughout North America.

At Pancho Carew's Water Street nightclub, Talk of the Town, 'Dem Two' was performing our first and only live on-air show; I can't remember the studio moderator. We were going good until Marc was coming down to the climatic ending of Johnny Agard's story, '**Coconut Vendor**', and he said the exact words that the author had written, instead of milder versions we had agreed to say because of the live broadcast.

Two days later in the newspaper, there was a scathing comment by the late Sir Lionel Luckhoo, accusing us of "blasphemy" and "obscene language". He threatened to sue us and the station, and said he would be monitoring 'Dem Two' for any further similar public language.

McAndrew instantly jumped into the fray, and volunteered to defend us on 'we culture' grounds - that both the language and the sentiments we used were culturally, socially and artistically accurate and therefore legal and entirely

appropriate. Nothing ever came of it, except that the next time Marc and I performed at the Theatre Guild, I started by acknowledging that there was probably a Luckhoo spy in the audience and that I would therefore not use the “r”, “s”, “f”, and “c” words in the show.

Then a few weeks later, ‘All Ah We’ was on stage at the New Amsterdam cinema, the Strand. As I walked on to introduce the show, someone in pit shouted out loud loud, “*Ken Crasbee, allyuh betterhads watch allyuh step or Luckhoo will f... allyuh up.*”

My mind went blank at the mention of ‘Luckhoo’, but my mouth immediately responded to assure the audience that we were not bothered and that they, too, could have fun at Luckhoo’s expense: “*Tell mih something; if a man first name is Fionel, what he last name is?*” I asked.

Three seconds of absolute quiet, then two hundred voices, in perfect unison, shouted: “*F...hoo! F...hoo!*”

It was the best moment of the entire show.

Mac was one of five of us at the fledgling GBS who had done a six-month radio/TV course at the BBC. We produced a daily afternoon programme of up-to-date interviews and comments. Mac was a stickler for detail and accuracy and, like the rest of us, was fast with editing the audio cassette tapes on the hefty tape recorders we used. In those days we did most of the editing by cut and paste, using the quarter inch audio tape. Usually, there would be three or four of us working in a tiny room, but Mac played his audio loudly and spoke loudly (as he usually did). Once, I was making a phone call and said to him: “*Mac, shhhhhhhh!*”

As Paul Keens-Douglas would say “*Is who tell me say dat?*” Mac raised his decibels: “*Shhhhhh? Shhhhhh? I ent no fowl!*”

Once, the management of GBS (Hugh Cholmondeley) told Mac that he should wear shoes and not his flip flops to work. Needless to say, Mac’s reaction was: “*I ent doin that, so you can fire me.*” And he was fired.

Not too long after Mac was in America, my then future wife, Elizabeth, and I visited him a couple of times in his New Jersey apartment. We had to manoeuvre our way over, between and around a jumble of boxes of his archives - scripts, notes, books, magazines, audio tapes, photographs, artifacts -

to get into the living room where there was not enough room for three chairs; he sat on a box. At one time, and perhaps more than once, the landlord threatened to throw him out.

Whatever happened to all that lifework? And what will become of it? We lose that and we lose a significant part of our cultural history. Elizabeth had suggested to Mac that she was sure there would be a university professor who would be glad to acquire and organize his archives and, at the same time, guide him through a Masters' degree with his life experience as several steps up to the process. Mac could not at that time contemplate or act on this.

I don't think any of his archives was ever resourced during his non-life here in America*. So it is when your cultural past, your tap root of who you are, is severed.

August 23rd, 2011

Editor's Note: I now have a portion of Mac's archive, consisting of newspapers, tapes and some of his writings on various folklore topics. Unfortunately, I did not find any of his poetry collections in his archive. Also missing are: his mortar and stick (for pounding plantains into foo-foo), his steel pan, his 33's, 45's and 78's and his hundreds of books.

I hope to convince the University of Guyana to create a Wordsworth McAndrew Centre to house the material I have.

Sir Ronald Sanders: He lived in New York and New Jersey; his Muse spoke to him from Guyana

KCMG, Managing Director of the Guyana Broadcasting Service, Board Member of the Guyana Telephone and Telegraph Company, President of the Caribbean Broadcasting Union, Public Affairs adviser to the President of the Caribbean Development Bank, International Consultant on various issues, Visiting Fellow at Oxford University, Ambassador.

Ron Sanders worked with Mac from 1968 to 1976 at the Guyana Broadcasting Service where Sanders was successively a Broadcaster, Programme Director and General Manager. Sanders went on to several international positions, including diplomatic appointments as Ambassador and election to the Executive Board of UNESCO. He has also held academic positions as Fellow at London University. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II.

Guyana has lost a great poet and a true son who, though he lived his last decades outside of his country of birth and died without again seeing his native land, remained connected to it in spirit and in inspiration. He lived in New York and New Jersey; his Muse spoke to him from Guyana.

The Tenth CARIFESTA returning to Guyana after 36 years would do well to honour him and his outstanding work. The Guyana Ministry of Culture should name the Poetry Session of the great Caribbean festival in celebration of his writings.

To have known and worked with Wordsworth McAndrew was at times an exasperating pleasure and an affectionate frustration. I am perfectly aware that these descriptions could easily fall into the category of oxymorons. But that was the character of the man. He was a remarkable contradiction: brilliant but refusing to let his light shine; capable of great achievement yet devoid of ambition. All Wordsworth ever wanted to do was to write his poetry. And he wrote it in a language and with a nuance that was uniquely his own.

His most famous work is perhaps 'Ol' Higue'. It has been performed countless times by numerous people, but no one could quite capture Wordsworth's deep understanding of the folk tale. His connection to the culture of Guyana was strong - not only to the African culture which one would have assumed was his natural calling, but the East Indian culture as well. Wordsworth was capable of cross-over, long before it became fashionable in Guyanese music.

His radio programmes, first as an Information Officer with the Guyana Information Service, then the Guyana Broadcasting Service, educated a generation about rural life, Guyanese proverbs and sayings, and essentially about the culture of the ordinary people of Guyana.

He wrote much more than he published. Some of that unpublished work is nothing short of superlative. Wordsworth was in the class of Martin Carter without the Marxist undercurrent. He is less recognized not only because of his self-imposed exile from Guyana, but also because he refused to publish.

Visiting London some years ago where I was living, he stayed with me as my houseguest and he carried with him everywhere he went a much battered knapsack. In that knapsack were his wondrous writings, much of it inspired by the Guyana he had not seen for years. I urged him to publish. He said: "*In time.*"

The time was not meant to be his life time. But, I hope that knapsack has been kept by someone. The time has come to open up that oyster so that we can all benefit from its pearls.

While he was staying with my wife, Susan, and me, he composed a poem which he signed as dedicated to us. He gave us the original which I distinctly recall placing among anthologies of West Indian poetry in my Library. We subsequently moved from the house in which Wordsworth was our guest and upon his death I went in search of the poem in our new home but, alas, I could find no trace of it. However, I have not given up hope. I believe that one day that now precious poem will be unearthed from wherever it has been misplaced these past years. When it is discovered as I sincerely hope it will be, one day when time permits going through the Library to shake every book, I will ensure its immediate publication.

I tell now three incidents that reveal something of the complex character of Wordsworth McAndrew. He and I - along with a handful of others - were selected to go to the BBC Training School in London in January 1968. We were to pursue courses in television production for a proposed national television station in Guyana. It did not come to pass and radio remained the only source of electronic media in Guyana at the time. Therefore, we stayed on, to complete courses in radio production. On the flight into London, I sat next to Wordsworth, who had the window seat. The plane descended into London in the early hours of the morning when the sun had not yet risen. It was a rare winter's day - not a cloud obscured sight of the land below. Looking out of the window, Wordsworth beheld for the first time in his life the lights of a European Capital city - a multitude of street lights, building lights, vehicle lights-twinkling against the yet darkened morning. "*Fireflies*", he declared, "*the lights of London are like fireflies.*" Over the many years since then, I have never landed in London without recalling Wordsworth's poetic perception of the Capital City's lights.

Wordsworth of course paid no regard to the vast contrast in the temperatures of England and Guyana or in the necessary difference of clothing. He arrived in England in a *dashiki* and sandals. We were met by a representative of the British Council who must have welcomed students from all over the world. He was unfazed by Wordsworth's sartorial indifference to England's biting winter, but he promptly took him to a second-hand shop to equip him with at least a winter coat and socks. The winter coat, upon which Wordsworth was compelled to settle, was as long as it was inelegant, reaching almost to his ankles and dwarfing him within it. It mattered not to Wordsworth. Throughout that winter, he maintained his *dashiki* and sandals below his ill-fitting coat - that and socks being the only two concessions he made to the season.

He roomed during this period with our colleague the late Cecil Griffith, who by any measure was a man of tailored elegance and modest behaviour. One night it snowed in London for the first time that winter and Cecil Griffith was awakened by a pile of snow on his pillow and an exultant and dancing Wordsworth, who had been out carousing and had

returned to his room with the snowfall. It was a moment Wordsworth treasured - at last he could experience, touch and taste that material that was the stuff of books and poetry about which he had read from childhood. Now he knew it at first hand. It was a discovery that excited him; a connection whose reality he had only imagined until then. Cecil related this event to our group that day with some exasperation; Wordsworth by contrast remained in a state of unrestrained joy.

The third incident I relate reflects the innate sense of independence and freedom of spirit that Wordsworth safeguarded throughout his life, making no allowance that would in any way compromise them in his view. Wordsworth and I never discussed personal political views or persuasions. But, I do believe that up to Guyana's independence in 1966 and some years after, he was inclined to support the People's National Congress under the late L.F.S. Burnham. I provide this background for a better appreciation of the incident I now narrate. I am unsure now of the year but it should be 1975 or 1976. The PNC Government had decided to abolish the distinguishing gender terms 'Mr', 'Mrs' and 'Miss' - everyone was to be addressed as 'Comrade'. Wordsworth regarded this not only as an affront to his individuality but as an assault on his personal choice. One evening he was the presenter on the call-in telephone programme, '**Action Line**' which the Guyana Broadcasting Service (GBS) had launched in 1968 and was widely followed not least by politicians who were the brunt of many callers' nightly offerings. I was the General Manager and Programme Director of GBS and unbeknown to me Wordsworth told a caller who addressed him as 'Comrade McAndrew' not to call him 'Comrade'. The first I knew of this was a telephone call from President Burnham to inform me that "*McAndrew had just told a caller not to call him Comrade*" and should be fired. I told the President that this was not a ground for dismissing an employee and I was not prepared to do so. I further explained that if Wordsworth chose not to be called 'Comrade' that should not only be his right, but that the PNC bore some responsibility for the rejection of the term that had long been associated with the People's Progressive Party of then Opposition leader, Dr. Cheddi Jagan. The President hung up

the phone. I did nothing about the matter and to his credit neither did the President. I demitted office from GBS in early 1997 to take up a post at the Caribbean Development Bank based in Barbados. I lost touch with GBS, but I was to learn that Wordsworth was fired from the radio station for once again asserting the freedom of his spirit and right of choice. Wordsworth left Guyana for the United States thereafter and never returned.

Wordsworth worked as a proofreader for a publisher in New York, though he was capable of much more. His work was precise, correct and dependable. He was not paid what he was worth. On a visit with him, I urged him to return to Guyana. He laughed and refused. He had exiled himself, not from the country, but from his strangeness to it. Yet, he could not love his country more, nor did he ever cease to draw from his memory of its font for his writing*.

His friends and admirers will mourn his passing; those who do not know his work should waste no time in learning it. In his work, Wordsworth McAndrew lives on.

January 23rd, 2014

Editor's Notes: 1. Other than his immortal '**O! Higue**', Mac's writing (poetry, essays on folklore and various other subjects) has not received the attention it deserves. Unfortunately, it was not until his death (as often happens) that some of his work was highlighted. I fully support Ron Sanders' call for people to learn about Mac's body of writing. Additionally, he should be officially recognized in Guyana as a writer and folklore broadcaster of national significance.

2. There are those who respectfully disagree with Sir Ronald Sanders on the 1975/1976 '**Comrade**' incident, saying it was on his folklore programme, '**What Else?**', not the public call-in show, '**Action Line**', that Mac objected to being addressed as '**Comrade**'. Those who differ from Sir Ron do recall '**Action Line**' following '**What Else?**', and very many angry callers yelling for Mac to be immediately fired from the radio station. They also recall Mac telling them about the government's hostility towards him as a result of his '**Comrade**' objection.

Stanley Greaves: A Deep Feeling for and Understanding of Words

I met Wordsworth McAndrew through a mutual friend, Norma Persaud, who lived not far from him. We became friends through shared interests. At the time, 1952, I was teaching at Sacred Heart Primary School and then went to St. Stanislaus College as Art Master. I had been a student at both schools. In 1948 I became a junior member of The Working People's Art Class, founded by E. R. Burrowes, and took part in their annual exhibitions.

In 1963 I attended the University of Newcastle upon Tyne in the UK - to study art and art education. I returned in 1968 to teach at Berbice High School then went to Queens College before becoming the first head of the Division of Creative Arts in 1975 at the University of Guyana and part time tutor at the Burrowes School of Art established by the late Denis Williams.

*I went to Barbados in 1987 and was part time tutor at the Barbados Community College until retiring to the USA after 55 years teaching. I have exhibited in group and solo exhibitions at national, regional Caribbean, South America, the UK and USA throughout the years. My work in art continues. **Horizons** and **The Poems Man** are two books of poems published by Peepal Tree Press. The first won the Guyana Prize in 2002 for first book of poems, while the second was shortlisted in 2012. **Art in the Caribbean** co-authored by Anne Walmsley and myself in a minor role was published by New Beacon Books UK in 2010, to assist in the teaching of art in secondary schools in the region.*

If anyone lived up to his name it was Wordsworth. After knowing him over a period of time I realized how apt it was. He had a deep feeling for and understanding of words, becoming a dedicated folklorist over the years. Mac, who also wrote poems, always entered the verse speaking competition at the Guyana Music Festival. His prize winning dramatic

performance of his poem 'Ol' Higue' one year led to the poem becoming a favourite of performers for several years. I am yet to understand why he was not consulted as a very knowledgeable informant for the Guyana entries in the *Dictionary of Caribbean English*. His expertise was recognized and used by linguists Dr. John Rickford, Dr. Ian Robertson and other linguists at the University of Guyana in the 1970's.

Time has erased the memory of our first meeting in the 1950's. This was through Norma Persaud, a civil servant friend who lived not far from him in Newtown, who introduced him as 'Scouter'. It seems that he had been an enthusiastic scout during his Queen's College student days. I was attracted by his enquiring mind and practice of questioning in great detail statements made during conversations which could last for hours. We had the habit of 'wetting our throats' the old fashioned way...rum in shot glasses chased with iced water to 'fire one' whenever a point was scored or mutually agreed upon. Some of his friends who mixed their drinks found this quite funny. His laughter during such gatherings was whole hearted, his humour infectious. There was no doubt that he was a very perceptive person who did not hesitate to point out the weakness of any argument or proposal. A very large well-used dictionary was always at hand to back up his words or question your usage. You had to be careful when conversing with Mac. The same was true of Martin Carter... "*Define your terms please*".

I had learnt some of our popular folk songs from Donald Locke and Basil Walcott during our membership of E.R.Burrowes' Working Peoples' Art Class in the 1950's. My collection was vastly improved after meeting Mac, listening to recordings on tape made during his research outings. Sunday mornings were often spent interspersing our conversations with such songs where appropriate. Detailed discussions on the origins of folk sayings made me come to the conclusion that they offered a unique opportunity to study the beginnings of a native philosophy leading from perceptions based on everyday life to matters of a more speculative nature. A few of his friends, like Ivor Lynch, singer, sometimes joined the Sunday morning meetings. A very convivial atmosphere, good humour always existed, even when arguments became a bit heated.

For a number of years in the 1970's we would celebrate our birthdays together. He was the 22nd of November, I the 23rd. We would meet with friends on the evening of the 22nd, cook food, have drinks, talk and sing our way into the morning of the 23rd. This was such an enjoyable enterprise that after a few years we decided to hold practice parties to ensure the success of the birth-night parties...as if such a thing was necessary, it was however greeted with great enthusiasm. At the time when farewell parties began to increase in numbers the same principle was applied much to the amusement of some, consternation of a few others regarding the provision of 'eatables' or 'jert'.

Over the years our friendship grew deeper and I came to regard Mac as a 'soul brother' in the finest sense of the word because of the fundamental values we shared. I appreciated the forthright nature of his personality and his dedication to the application of logic to making statements or positions taken in situations involving anything, dray-cart races, masquerade bands, the arts, or politics.

The Guyanese Association of New York must be congratulated for establishing the annual presentation of a certificate in his name to those who have made significant contributions to Guyanese culture. As a true 'Guyanist' (my definition) son of the soil, it is to be regretted that he has not been awarded Guyana National Honours even posthumously.

September 10th, 2012

Oscar Ramjeet: A Lot Can Be Said of My Pint-Sized Friend

I received journalism training in Germany in 1966. Upon my return to Guyana, I worked for five years at GBS and, along with others named below, was one of the pioneers of the Government-owned radio station which started its operation on October 1, 1968.

I began studying law in 1974. After qualifying as an attorney in 1979, I worked at the Clarke & Martin Law firm for seven years then I moved to Montserrat as Registrar/Magistrate. In 1988, I moved to St. Vincent as Solicitor General and acting Director of Public Prosecutions. Six years later, I went to St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands as Assistant Attorney General and was later appointed Administrative Law Judge. In 1998, I left for British Virgin Islands where I worked as an Associate with the law firm of J. S. Archibald & Co. Leaving the latter in 2004, I worked in Florida as an immigration lawyer, but moved to Belize in 2009 as Solicitor General on a two-year contract. In 2011, I served as Belize's Honorary Vice Consul in Florida.

I met Wordworth McAndrew in October 1968 when the Guyana Broadcasting Service (GBS) Action Radio was established. Mac was among the powerful group of pioneers including Hugh Cholmondeley, the Director, Ron Sanders, Terry Holder, Vic Insanally, Clairmont Taitt, Matthew Allen, Christopher Deane, Marc Matthews, Ken Corsbie, Beverly Ann Rodriguez, Cecil Griffith, Vic Hall, Bruiser Thomas, Reds Perreira, et al. We were all cramped in a small building with limited facilities- two phones, two tape recorders, etc., which sometimes caused tension among personnel in the various departments and units because everyone wanted to utilize the inadequate equipment that was available at the same time, so as to meet their deadlines.

After work and sometimes during working hours in the early days of GBS, we would 'cool our passion' at Piggot's

cake shop which was across the road with some cold Banks and during the first week or so I became close to 'Scouter Mac', who I later found to be a genuine friend. Our friendship blossomed following several 'liquid' meetings in the city and later I was assigned to assist him in recording interviews for his programme '**GBS Nationwide**'.

It was an extremely good experience for me to learn about the various villages in Berbice. I interviewed the old folks to compare present-day life with what it was like when they were kids. I also recorded Afro-Guyanese Queh Queh music and Indo- Guyanese drums and *dantal*.

My family was in New Amsterdam and I stayed with relatives while working at GBS in Hadfield Street, Lodge. After I moved from my relatives, Mac offered for me to stay with him and his English-born wife, Rose. I recall one incident of August 1 - Emancipation Day - 1969. Rose told Mac to be home before 7 p.m. because she had invited some of her colleagues from the University of Guyana for drinks and finger food in observation of the abolition of slavery. After work, as was the norm, I jumped on the back of Mac's P50 and we departed the GBS compound. Mac decided to stop in at his favourite bar for a drink. It was just before 6 o'clock, so I told Mac we should take only a quarter to finish and reach home early. We polished off the quarter in quick time and I saw another come on the table. I told my friend that he should not have ordered another drink, but we decided to rush it through and we were on our way. After a few minutes Mac insisted that we should make another stop. We had another drink with a few friends and the diminutive Scouter was in no hurry and chatted from one thing to another. We eventually left about 9.30 and, instead of proceeding home, Mac insisted, despite my protests, that we should continue drinking. We spent more than two hours, heading home around midnight. I got the shock of my life when Mac said he hoped that the guests would have left, grumbling that he did not know why she - meaning Rose - had to invite people who knew nothing about the occasion. In other words, he had deliberately 'killed' time because he did not want to see the guests who were invited by Rose.

When he arrived home, Rose had already retired. Mac then took off his clothes, took a bottle of rum and poured some in a calabash and started to drink. I told him that I was tired and went to bed. About three hours later I woke up to go to the bathroom and there was Mac in the hallway sitting on the floor as naked as he was born murmuring some strange language and sipping the Russian Bear. I asked him if he was not going to bed. He did not respond and continued to speak in a 'foreign tongue'.

Strange enough, he was fresh as a rose at 8 as he started to prepare himself for work. He was a remarkable man.

Contrary to what some people feel, he was concerned about all of Guyana's cultures mainly African, Indian and Amerindian - the indigenous people of Guyana. I recall sometime in the early 1980's visiting my wife's relatives in Richmond Hill, Queens, New York and speaking to Mac by phone a few times. One weekend, while my hosts were having a family get together, they overheard me speaking to Scouta; they knew his name very well from radio in Guyana and told me that, if I wanted, I could invite him. I immediately called Mac and he willingly accepted the invitation. It turned out that my Afro friend was the star of the day! He discussed the Hindu religion at length telling them more than they knew about their own religion. They were astounded by his knowledge of the *Ramayana* and *Bhagwat Gita*, Hindu religious books. Moreover, he sang a few Hindi movie songs and danced to the rhythm of the music much to their entertainment. Of course he partook of the curry chicken, dhal, and Indian delicacies provided. They all had fun and my friend was the talk for the week. The following year when I returned they requested, as soon as I arrived, that I should invite my friend once again but, unfortunately, he was not available.

A lot can be said of my pint-sized friend. He was funny, strange, some say weird. Whatever he was described as he was kind, honest and stood up to his principles. He would not buckle to pressure and concede to a dress code. He dressed as he pleased- most times with *dashikis* and rubber slippers we called 'gun-slingers'. He was hauled in by the management of GBS about his garb and asked to wear shoes instead of slippers, but he refused. The Director, Hugh Cholmondeley,

sent him a letter to comply with the dress code, giving him a deadline, but Mac, as expected, refused to comply, and to add salt to the wound, on the day of the deadline he wore a big sombrero straw hat, much to the amusement of staff members.

His stand on the matter put Hugh in a spot since he and Mac were close friends, but as Head of the Radio Station Hugh was expected to take appropriate action against a staff member who bluntly refused to comply with a directive. Mac was eventually fired, but returned to GBS to have an outstanding career as a radio personality and folklorist.

September 13th, 2013

Lawrence (Lorenzo) Blackmore: ...First Traditional African Wedding Celebration that I knew of...

Lorenzo Blackmore grew up in Georgetown, Guyana. In the 1960's he worked as the recording engineer for the Ministry of Education's radio programme, 'Broadcasts to Schools'. Lorenzo got to know Mac at the Government Information Service (GIS), where 'Broadcasts to Schools' was recorded. He later served for many years at the Guyana Broadcasting Service (GBS), where he again met Mac. While at GBS, Lorenzo independently produced several musical programmes.

I remember well Wordsworth's first marital bliss of the early 1960's. Three of my colleagues, Mr. Rensford Lovell, Mr. Terence Holder, Mr. Samuel Josiah and I, Lawrence (Lorenzo) Blackmore, and a couple of other people were invited to carry his wife in a chair to their wedding reception.

We started at Third Street, Alberttown, proceeding to Duncan Street, Kitty, where Wordsworth lived. Obviously, we had to take turns because of the distance. The reception included the traditional African singing and dancing, known to Guyanese as Kweh Kweh*. Incidentally, we were offered tin cups to drink from, be it alcohol or non-alcoholic beverages. It's been such a long time ago that I cannot remember what variety of food was served; I only remember cook-up rice, my favourite.

This was the first traditional African wedding celebration that I knew of in Georgetown at the time. I was truly honoured to be part of this event.

Wordsworth loved the Indigenous African dance music of Brazil that is similar to the masquerade dance in Guyana with the drums and other instruments he was very fond of. During the first Carifesta event held in Guyana he was summoned to accompany the Brazilian folklore group during their stay, the name of that troupe was 'Cantores de Ebano'.

Last but not least he also loved to dance the Samba, and appreciated the Bossa Nova music (new thing) He undoubtedly was one of my mentors.

February 16th, 2014

Editor's Notes: I've seen the African pre-wedding celebration spelt "Queh Queh", "Kweh Kweh", or even "Kwe Kwe". The latter is more likely used by students of linguistics. Spellers often do not capitalize the first letter. Obviously, as with many Guyanese words, there is no one spelling.

Mr. Blackmore does not remember a large crowd following them carrying the bride on her chair to Duncan Street. I would be stunned, though, if there were not a few hundred 'fast', chirping Guyanese behind the chair bearers, especially knowing who the groom was.

Rosie McAndrew: I Was Immediately Drawn to Mac

Rosie McAndrew (*née* Dexter) was born in England in June 1946. She obtained a Combined Honours Degree in French and Drama at Birmingham University in 1967, followed by a Postgraduate Certificate in Radio, Film & Television at the University of Bristol in 1968. On joining Voluntary Service Overseas to work for Broadcasts to Schools in Guyana, she was given a supplementary training course at the BBC, where she met and fell in love with Mac.

At the end of her year with VSO, she went back to England in September 1969, but returned to Guyana in January 1970, and she and Mac were married in March. For the next few years she taught English, French and drama at St. Joseph's High School. Meanwhile, she published **Plexus**, a short collection of poetry & prose by young Guyanese writers, including John Agard and Victor Dawson, and completed a Diploma in Education at the University of Guyana in 1973. A few months after their daughter Shiri Ayanna was born, in June 1972, she and Mac separated. They were divorced in September 1973, and Rosie and went back to England with Shiri.

There, she worked as a freelance translator and assistant film editor before becoming a teacher of English as a Foreign Language and a teacher trainer, a career that lasted nearly 30 years. By then living in Hastings, she continued her love of drama, acting and directing for the local theatre, as well as singing in a **capella** groups, painting, writing, gardening, and dancing Argentine tango.

She also went on studying: in 1992 she received a Diploma in Garden Design from the Open College of the Arts, and in 2003, an MA in Education (Applied Linguistics) from the Open University.

As well as conference papers, published articles, and embryonic books about language and teaching, she has written and illustrated **Nicola's Flying Bicycle**, a children's book about Shiri. She recently completed a memoir about her life with Mac, called **Wordsworth's White Wife**, which she is hoping to have published in 2015. She re-visited Guyana for the first time in 40 years in October 2013 to renew her love of the country and catch up with old friends, and was very struck by the changes to Georgetown wrought by the intervening years.

When I began my course at the BBC, Mac was coming to the end of his 6-month television training there, with several colleagues from Guyana Broadcasting Service. As it happened, my group shared a lounge with the Guyanese crew, so I was introduced to them all. I was immediately drawn to Mac, and as I had to find someone to interview for a radio project, I rashly asked him if I could interview him. He agreed at once, but asked me, "*What about?*" I knew almost nothing about Guyana then; at my VSO interview I hadn't even known where it was! On discovering it was in South America, my mind went to Aztecs, Incas and Mayas – ancient civilizations I was very interested in – so I said I'd like to interview him about Guyanese culture and folklore. Of course, I could hardly have chosen a subject closer to his heart! He told me all about Queh Queh and Cumfa; I found him fascinating, and as we saw a lot of each other for the rest of that week, I invited him down to stay with my family before he went back home. When I arrived in Guyana, some weeks later, I didn't have to be part of the usual VSO crowd, as I had an open door into his world.

In Guyana, having always loved accents, I immersed myself in Creolese, and who better to pick it up from than Mac? I revelled in expressions like:

"Ah gon kyaan do doh", or

"De people daata", and

"Wordsie deh?" ~ "Yeh, man, 'e deh deh."

He was already an extremely well known and popular figure. Journeys to visit anyone were always interrupted by calls of:

"Mac, Mac, Mac! W'appnin' man? Leh we gaff, na, man?", and it would be hours, sometimes, before we got where we were supposed to be.

I loved hearing him play the steel pan, and he taught *me* to play it, too. I also loved harmonizing to Guyanese folk songs with him and his calypsonian friends in Albuoystown. We flew kites at Easter, went into the bush, and swam in coca cola creeks. I learned to make roti, black cake, pepper pot, garlic pork, mettagee, curry hassa, guana, turtle, and crab soup with calaloo. We always had 'swank', sorrel or five-finger drinks on the go.



Mac was an excellent steel pan player and this photograph (possibly August, 1976) was taken by Dr. Judith Roback at his David Street, Kitty, residence.

At the end of my VSO year, the plan was for him to come to England, but problems at work meant that he couldn't leave the country, so after a few months at home, enfolded by streams of closely written airmail letters, I went back to Guyana, and we were married in March 1970.

The rumours of the famous bicycle ride to our wedding are absolutely true. I laughed out loud, though, when I read Ken Corsbie's description of Mac 'towing' me, without mentioning the *bike*, as I'd forgotten that bit of Creolese! For a moment, it conjured up visions of being towed in a boat, or a broken-down car, or even trailing behind him on the end of a rope! But I used to get a kick out of riding on the crossbar or the carrier!

We actually moved house once with me sitting on the carrier, desperately clutching piles of his treasured 78's! The worst bit about *that* was the running to leap on, with both hands full, dreading that I wouldn't make it, and that the priceless records would be smashed to pieces. What a responsibility!

Anyway, Mac had wanted to keep our wedding quiet, so we arrived at his chosen venue (the Universal Church of Scientific Truth) at 7a.m. one Saturday morning, in order to fit it in before he went off to work! Unfortunately for him though, a colleague of his lived just across the street. He saw what was up, and soon spread the word, so the whole staff were primed to congratulate him when he got to the office, with rum at the ready. To my amazement, the bicycle story was syndicated on Reuters!

The wedding service itself turned into an ordeal for me, though, because when I smiled at Mac during our vows, the Pastor decided that I wasn't taking the ceremony seriously enough, and made me go right back to the beginning and start all over again! I don't think such a thing can ever have happened anywhere else, before or since, and I was stung to tears of humiliation. Mac didn't seem bothered by the Pastor's reaction, and said nothing to stop him. He later announced that he thought I had been crying because I missed my mother... Not an auspicious start to our married life!

Neither was the rest of the wedding day... By the time Mac got back from work (after innumerable rounds of celebratory

drinks!), I'd been waiting for him back at his mother's house for hours. Luckily, Barbara and Stanley Greaves came round to wish us well, and brought a slice of cake, which had to serve as a wedding breakfast, and then we were invited over to Rudy David's, where Janet and Cheddi Jagan were also guests for the evening.

Sadly, as he predicted quite early on, I couldn't always keep up with him, especially at those very late nights in liquor restaurants where the last drop of rum had to be consumed before anyone was allowed to set foot outside. Not being a late-night person or a drinker myself, I used to *dread* the purchase of yet another whole bottle!... And then, at the only Queh Queh he took me to, I joined in the very suggestive dancing with all the other women (feeling particularly white and self-conscious), but it went on for hours, and I fell asleep before the crucial part of the ceremony. He didn't wake me up to see it, and never took me to one again! 'DWD' (done wid dat!) was one of his mottos, and he was not easily swayed!

I spent much of the week after his death re-reading his letters to me. They brought back very vividly the strength of his personality, his zest for life, and his amazing gift with words, both for poetry and for irony; they made his presence very real. I don't know what happened to the love that is almost palpable, there, but for whatever reason, some time after we were married, *joint* outings were few.

"Eh eh? An I got a wife at home? Why I should tek her out?"

The life of a Guyanese wife, with the men in one room (or out somewhere else) and the women in the kitchen - which I tried hard to fit in with for a time; and the *deputy* system - with which I did *not* - didn't augur well for a sustaining marriage though, and after a year or so, my ensuing pregnancy meant that he left me at home for most of the time. All the same, one day, enthralled by the sensation of the baby moving inside me, I risked asking him to feel for the next kick. He gave it about 5 seconds, but feeling nothing, sucked his teeth, and said:

"You en gat one ting to do!"

And when our daughter, Shiri Ayanna, was born, he showed no interest in picking her up, or talking to her, so not long afterwards, we separated and later divorced, and I returned to England.

Although we had heard nothing from him in the meantime, when Shiri was about 13, Mac came over to England for a writers' conference. He made no move to contact us himself, but several friends of ours tried to persuade me that he secretly wanted to. One friend in particular, insisted that he was *desperate* to see his daughter, so I finally agreed to take her up to London for a lunch party, so that he could meet her on neutral ground. One by one, all the other Guyanese guests arrived, but although we waited for five hours, he never appeared. Perhaps he had been waylaid by a wandering pork-knocker exiled to darkest Ealing, with an intriguing life story to tell? Perhaps he was afraid to face her? Who knows? But I wonder if he had any conception of the effect his failure to arrive would have on Shiri – a young girl already undergoing very mixed emotions at the prospect of meeting her father for the first time.

After his funeral in New York, we discovered that he had another daughter, to whom he *did* remain close, which only compounded *my* daughter's sense of loss.

Mac was a unique and special person, and it is a tribute to his extraordinary qualities that he is now being remembered with such affection and respect. I am glad that through the Wordsworth McAndrew Awards, he was made aware of some of this well-deserved recognition for the contribution he made to Guyanese culture, while he was still alive. Wherever he is now, I hope he can see the crowds of people who have come to remember him today, and maybe also the myriad Internet sites on which he is now so warmly celebrated!

Another more personal symbol was very moving to me. As I have said, our daughter Shiri, who now has a son of her own (Levi, the light of her life), never knew her father and he never knew them. Yet when she heard of his death, she went out and bought a weeping willow tree, which she planted in his memory. What a tribute to him, and what a tribute to her!

I have written a couple of poems that encapsulate my feelings for Shiri on her father's death. The title of the first echoes that of his poem '**Lines to a Cartman, Pushing**', and refers to his collection of Hindu terms for love; the second should explain itself:

'Lines to a poet, wondering...'

Among the many,
The many, many
Delicious definitions of love
That you so passionately researched
And recorded
For the entertainment of generations yet to come,
Did you ever discover any,
Did you register any
Of a father's
For his child?

'To Wordsworth – a lasting legacy'

The daughter that you never chose to love,
The one, one day, you didn't dare to meet,
Whose life you chose to leave a thing apart,
Whose joys and pain you didn't care to share,
Can you imagine how she chose to mark
Your absence from the absence that she knew?
I do not think you can. Were you afraid
Of her disdain, of her dismissing you?
She went alone and bought a weeping tree
And planted it, because 'that's what they do'.
And I, who had not wept for you before,
Was overawed at the magnificence
Of such forgiving love as this for you.
And filled my eyes. I've never loved her more.

April 26th, 2013

Margaret Lawrence: In Wonder of this Man...

Margaret Lawrence worked at GBS, performing as producer and Programme Director. She is one of Guyana's most talented stage actresses and has won numerous awards for her performances.

I grew up in Cummings St., Alberttown when Wordsworth lived around the block in Second St. next to Williams' Bakery and he was a great source of fun, frolic and folk every Christmas. Masquerade bands of all form and fashion descended on his house and there they ministered onto each other, pastored by Wordsworth. Most times, his collaborator, British-born John Criswick, Central High School Art Teacher, was there soaking in this exciting folk culture. The neighbourhood looked forward to this treat and would be hanging out their windows to see the bands pass (high as a kite) down Cummings St. into Middle St., by Graham's Bakery and Ramacharran and Twins Drug Store.

I was in wonder of this man who seemed to fear nothing or any one and expressed truthfully and forthrightly whatever his perspective was. Unorthodox was Wordsworth...who else would tow his bride from church on a bicycle?

And wasn't he one of the GBS announcers? (Ask Vic Insanally or Sir Ronald Sanders) who played an April Fool Prank* on Guyanese by announcing that some pork-knockers had caught a masacuraman in the bush and had it on display at the Museum?

Believe me, that commentary was very real and frightening! Does anybody remember it?

No one will ever forget Wordsworth McAndrew!

July 9th, 2013

Editor's Note: Sir Ronald Sanders does not recall Mac playing that particular April Fool Prank.

John Criswick: Wordsie

John Criswick was born in 1937 in England and attended Reading School and Reading University where he studied in the School of Fine Art for four years and took a one year course in Art Teaching.

On graduation he took up the post of Art Master at Central High School, Georgetown, British Guiana (now Guyana) in 1961, teaching for 11 years and bringing his students to Advanced Level at the Cambridge University Examinations.

During these eleven years he was developing a passionate interest in tropical horticulture, bought an acre of land and began to get some experience in cultivation. He also read extensively and joined societies such as the International Palm Society and assembled a collection of rare plants grown from seed which he imported from Thailand.

At this time he decided to take up horticulture as a means of livelihood and moved to Grenada in 1972 to take advantage of its soil, climate, rainfall, etc. He started the first privately-owned nursery in Grenada and called it St. Rose Nursery. It has been described by the American Horticultural Society as the most extensive nursery in the Caribbean where variety is concerned and is now forty-one years old.

For some years now John has been a member of the Grenada at Chelsea team, which exhibits yearly at the Chelsea Flower Show in London, and is a major contributor of plant material. The displays have been awarded a gold medal on ten occasions.

John has developed an extensive network of contacts among plantsmen in the tropical world and has had two plants named after him, 'Heliconia Criswick' and a croton called 'John Criswick'.

"Wordsie!" I can hear his mother saying it now. We mostly called him 'Mac'.

And Mac called his mother "Phillips". I asked the reason why but now I've forgotten the answer. I guess it was her

maiden name. Perhaps, for all I know, Mac's father never married 'Phillips'. Come to think of it, I have no idea who Mac's father was, nor have I any recollection of Mac ever speaking of him. Something tells me that his father must have been a remarkable man, though.

I arrived in Guyana in 1961 at the age of 24, having grown up in England, where I studied art, and as soon as I qualified, I was offered a post as Art Master at Central High School, Smyth Street, Werk-en-Rust, Georgetown. Having set myself up in a rented cottage in Campbellville, I began associating with friends I met through Alfred Downer, who studied Agriculture at the same Reading University, and who had become a good friend of mine. We used to drink rum, so much of it! This was after school hours, in various drinking spots. In those days we had little idea of health as we perceive it today, of the dangers of smoking cigarettes or drinking alcohol to excess. If you could 'hold your drinks', you earned respect.

How Mac and I came to meet I no longer recall, but I was drinking with some of his schoolmates from 'QC', i.e., Queens College, Guyana's most prestigious secondary school. One such was Frank Birbalsingh, from Better Hope village on East Coast, Demerara. Not long after this, Frank left for England. Eventually he became a professor of English Literature at York University in Toronto. I remember Frank telling me that at QC Mac was looked upon as a person who would always be ready to assist friends in any way possible. As an Indian in a largely black Georgetown society where he was not too well received, Mac's disregard of race must have meant a lot to him.

But somehow or other Mac and I did meet, and soon became very firm friends. In fact, we were constantly to be seen together, which must have been an odd sight, as I was so tall and Mac was undeniably short. It was something that we discussed and Mac told me that what he hated most about being short was that men would be inclined to pat him on the head, as an affectionate gesture, but a tactless one. I think also that Mac must have been aware that his lack of height meant that he was not attractive to most women, although he did not mention this aspect to me.

Clearly Mac was very much attracted to women, and one of the things that made me squirm sometimes was when, in talking to a woman from Europe or the USA, he would shower her with compliments and flattery in the way he was used to doing with Guyanese women. I knew, and could see, that this immediately placed him at a disadvantage, because in their societies they would regard such behaviour as an insincere ploy designed to trick a woman. We talked of this but it was a habit hard to overcome.

The first of his talents I was to become aware of was writing poetry. Mac had published a little pamphlet of his poems. It had a purplish red cover and this colour was echoed in one of the poems in which he likened a young woman to a ripe jamoon. I think the line was, "You came to me like a ripe jamoon."

But the most outstanding of Mac's poems was 'Ol' Higue', about the mythical (but very real to a great many Guyanese) figure of the human who becomes a type of vampire. This poem is really remarkable, and Mac told me that writing it was almost effortless and it's the only time when he thought that something else was pushing the pen. We decided to collaborate on producing a publication of the poem consisting of a single sheet of white card folded in half. On the cover was my pen and ink drawing of an old woman with a head-tie being taunted in a village street by little boys, and on the inside was the poem. It sold very well.

Mac taught me about the joys of 'backdam fishing'. We would go to a part of Campbellville close to the Lamaha Canal bordering the Botanical Gardens, and parallel with the canal was a small trench which abounded with fish. Having dug for earthworms beneath Phillips' kitchen window, where she would throw all her peelings on to the ground below, we would find thickly clustered, wriggly, red earthworms which we placed in an empty condensed milk tin. Then we would set off on our bicycles, with small rods which were simply sticks, and fishing line, hooks and corks. With a razor blade we would slit down one side of a cork and the fishing line would fit inside that slit, so that we could slide the cork up and down the line to adjust the height at which the baited hook would be suspended.

The first fishes to be caught would invariably be patwah, but it was much more exciting when we would see the cork gradually descend below the surface, unlike the sudden little bob of the cork caused by a patwah bite. Waiting until the cork was almost out of sight, we would suddenly strike upwards, and there on the line would be a luggah-luggah, a comparatively large fish with a strange appearance almost like an eel, but very good to eat !

On moonlight nights we used to cover the top of the cork with the silver paper from a packet of cigarettes, to make it visible. Of course we smoked all the time, and no-one then had ever heard of lung cancer. However, it was on a daytime fishing expedition, in 1963, that we became aware of a huge column of billowing grey smoke towering above central Georgetown. Jumping on our bicycles, half naked and wearing flip-flops, we pedalled towards town. As we got close we could feel the tremendous heat of the fire. People were pouring towards us carrying stoves, fridges, table lamps, radiograms and so on, which they had looted from stores. We had no idea at that time of the political implications of this disturbance.

Before this incident another event in our lives had taken place which was greatly to cement our friendship. I had taken a trip to Trinidad on a ship carrying bauxite ore to Chaguaramas, as a cheap way to getting to Trinidad. (My monthly salary at Central High School was about 320.00 Eastern Caribbean dollars, with a fixed rate of 4.80 dollars to the pound Sterling. On this I was able to buy a second hand car and run it!) While in Port-of-Spain I heard of a Shango ceremony which was to take place in Laventille Success, a poor area on the hills overlooking Port of Spain. I went there that night, found the place, and remained there until dawn. What particularly fascinated me was the phenomenon of 'catching the spirit' when certain devotees or even just onlookers might be seized by the rhythm of the drums and enter a trance, which I was seeing for the first time. I couldn't wait to get back to Guyana and tell Mac what I had seen.

On my return I learnt that Mac had begun an affair with my maid Soomintra. I was not upset by this as I was not having such a relationship with her myself and Mac knew

that. I was quite happy for the two of them to enjoy each other. Much later Soomintra was to bear Mac's son Arnold, and much later again I was to hear of Mac's daughter being born.

Mac very enthusiastically received my news of the Shango ceremony and through talking to people I learnt that something similar called Cumfa was going on in Albouystown. Through a man called Walter Carew I came to know his neighbour, Nellie Burke, who enjoyed the status of 'mother' in what was being called The Spiritual Church of British Guiana. I never heard any of the adherents of this religion use the word 'Cumfa' although that is what it undoubtedly was. I took Mac to meet Walter and Nellie and that was the beginning of Mac's career as a folklorist with his own radio programme. The first event was a 'service' to be followed by, on a subsequent day, the 'jollification'. The service was Christian; the jollification African.

Mac bought a tape recorder and soon we were travelling all over the place in my Austin car, going as far afield as Berbice and West Bank Demerara, wherever a 'wuk' was being held to which we were invited. Mac would record the songs and the drumming and he would interview the drummers.

During all this time, of course, our rum-drinking continued. Mac had a very favourite rum, Houston's Blue Label. Some other popular rums he would condemn as having just a suspicion of the taste of 'lees water', the water left behind after all the alcohol had been distilled. This would then be thrown out into the estate drains, where it would develop a fearful stench. Mac was a purist, like myself. He cherished all that was most genuine in Guyanese culture. Houston's Blue Label embodied for him the very essence of Demerara fruit-cured rum. He was dedicated to identifying and preserving all that was most authentic and uniquely Guyanese. It was his whole life.

Our late night drinking would take us to some extremely authentic whore houses in Water Street, where Mac would like to talk to the prostitutes, although I don't ever remember him engaging their professional services. Driving home we would often stop at particular favourite roadside spots where cook-up rice was being sold. It had to be genuine, authentic,



In this photograph, John and Mac are looking at a statuette of the Shango deity, Ogun, made of wrought iron, which John had just brought back from Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. The picture was taken at John's Kitty house in 1968.

and the best. Mac taught me to appreciate the tripe in it, and the different kinds of sheep's tripe, the 'book' and the 'towel', etc. Also ochroes were a must. One such cook-up rice spot was near Bourda Market.

In music too, Mac was just as discriminating. When I first met him, freshly arrived from England, I had a 45 rpm record of the '**Banana Boat Song**', not for the song, but for the fact that a Jamaican friend of mine had modelled for the cover. Mac seized on this to pour all his scorn on Harry Belafonte and the '**Banana Boat Song**', which was being touted as calypso and which virtually all North Americans thought was calypso. It was launched in an album called "*Calypso*" although of course calypso was not a Jamaican art form, but Trinidadian. It had been composed by a Barbadian living in North America called Irving Burgie. All this proclaimed, to Mac, "*false*", "*fraudulent*", "*fake*".

Mac was devoted to calypsonians such as Lord Kitchener and Sparrow, and he also could play first pan. He introduced me to his pan tuner friend, Popeye, who made a first pan for me which I painted in the colours of an Amazon parrot. Mac also revered the Jamaican singer and folklorist Louise Bennett.

Time moved on and he decided to marry his girlfriend Sheila Hinds. I was on very good terms with her. However, the marriage was not to last long and ended very bitterly. By this time, he and Phillips had moved to Queenstown.

I remember when Mac was sent to do a course in broadcasting with the BBC in London. We wrote very long letters to each other and I particularly remember his description of his first morning in Britain, having arrived the night before. He had been given a hotel room which was in a basement, so that when he looked out of the small window, he found his eyes were level with the pavement, and there to his astonishment were the shoes and legs of a young white man who was lifting a dustbin and tipping the garbage into a truck. It was the first time he had ever seen a white man doing menial work. In the West Indies such a thing would be unthinkable.

During his time in England, at a time when the phrase, "*No blacks need apply*" was commonly seen in rental advertisements, Mac told me he encountered no prejudice. In fact he

developed a very warm relationship with the landlady at his lodgings. This was sharply at variance with the experience of many of my Black Guyanese friends, and I put it down to Mac's warm, outgoing nature and undoubted charm, which won out over feelings of prejudice. He had the ability to be an individual rather than a representative of his race. He wasn't looking for prejudice and he didn't find any. Others, who had become soured and suspicious when dealing with white Britons, were expecting prejudice and surely did find it.

Towards the end of his course in London, he met a young English woman named Rosemary. Everything went well and they decided to marry. I think it was Mac who fondly called her Rose, but anyway, that is what she came to be called. At first they went everywhere together, but eventually the typical behaviour pattern of the West Indian husband prevailed, and Rose was left alone at home while Mac was out, usually drinking. Unfortunately, Mac had taken to very frequent drinking and the marriage became another disaster, and as time passed I was beginning to see less of Mac. Our paths were beginning to diverge.

By now it was 1971 and I was making preparations to move to Grenada, since I wanted to give up teaching and make the growing of plants my means of livelihood. I did not see Guyana as being a good place to do this, as the horticultural conditions in the coastlands, where the main population is, are not good. In 1972, I left Guyana and took up my new life in Grenada, and am sorry to say that eventually I lost touch with Mac, only to get a telephone call from him nearly 30 years later, when his health and financial position were both failing. However, we were never to meet again. By the time I made my first visit to New York in 2011, Mac had already died.

August 19th, 2012



*"...and I put it down to Mac's warm, outgoing
nature and undoubted charm..."*
John Criswick.



John Criswick shared these 1963 photographs of the charming Mac. Mac wearing the straw hat could have been taken either at John's Campbellville house or Mac's Kitty house, while Mac with the pineapple was taken in John's Campbellville garden. Claire Goring forwarded the pineapple photograph.

Editor's Notes: Refer to photograph of Mac playing a steelpan, but I'm not sure whether it's a 'first pan'.

Mac explained to Rosie that his pet name, 'Phillips', for his mum arose out of a temporary mistaken assumption that, because his Uncle Freddie's surname was Phillips, she must be called that too, even though he knew very well that her real surname was Smith. Having once coined the name, though, he liked the sound of it, and continued to call her by it.

The first time Mac went to England (and the only time he attended a training course at the BBC), was in 1968, the year he and Rosie met, although he visited London again, briefly, on his way back from a trip to Germany in October 1970. He also went to England some years later, to attend a writers' conference in about 1986, when he is believed to have stayed with Keith Waite. It may be during this same conference that he stayed with Ron Sanders (see his reminiscence). Mac's son, Laurens Kwabena, as he was then known, was born to his first wife, Sheila Hinds, whom he married in 1964. Around that time, however, he had two other children, Arnold and Roseann. He stayed with Roseann and her husband Joe for several months in New Jersey during his last years. His daughter Shiri (with his second wife Rosie) was born in Guyana in 1972.

John suggests that Mac's folklore career began after he met Walter and Nellie, the Cumfa practitioners of the Spiritual Church of British Guiana, but Mac could have been influenced by the folklore tapes he discovered at GIS, as stated in his Biography.

Dr. Judith Roback: Finding Words

*As a graduate student in Socio-Cultural Anthropology at Montreal's McGill University, I did research in 1966 for my MA, in Mackenzie-Wismar, Guyana and returned in 1969 for a one-year stay to conduct research for a PhD. My focus of interest was the Jordanites, and within a few days of my arrival I went to the Guyana Information Service (GIS), as it was then called (now GINA), to seek information. I immediately met three staff members willing to help, but all three said "**You must speak to Wordsworth McAndrew!**" I was able to meet him a few days later, and the rest is to be found in my contribution to Roy's text.*

I returned to Montreal in 1970, and visited Guyana three times after that-July-August 1973, to conduct research, December 1973, and August 1976, for research, and quite candidly, to spend time with Wordsworth.

We corresponded for many years after we first met, but that lapsed in the mid-late 1980's. When I became 'computer-literate' in the late 1990's, I began to search online for news of Wordsworth, and learnt of his poor health state. I was able to find email information for Ken Corsbie, who put me in touch with Wordsworth's good friend and amanuensis, Roy Brummell. On May 5, 2008, I read online of Wordsworth's death on April 25, and shortly after, began a lively, continuing, and wide-ranging email conversation with Roy.

After my return to Montreal in September 1970, I wrote my PhD Thesis, submitted it, held teaching positions at several universities in different provinces, between 1973 and 1980, and then found myself unemployed for several years. I moved to Toronto in 1983 and in 1987, found a position at the vast Toronto Public Library system, where I still work.

While I do not have any one amusing, significant 'story' about Wordsworth McAndrew, I do have a great many mostly-fond memories. As all who knew him know, he could be charming, engaging, funny and warm, and also opinionated, argumentative, pontificating, hectoring, difficult and infuriating!

On September 7, 1969 I left Montreal to conduct research for a doctorate in anthropology at McGill University. I had chosen to study the Jordanites, and as there was very little information publicly available, I had written to the Guyana Information Service (GIS) asking for information, and had received a letter and a sheet of basic facts and history. On September 11, I went to GIS in Brickdam, hoping to find the person who had composed the sheet.

I learnt that the source of the fact sheet had gone to do graduate work in the United States, and that she had interviewed the Jordanite leader, Elder Klien, for the purpose of the brief history sent to me. I met Norma John and Henry Josiah (Josh), who told me that a Mr. Croker, also at GIS, was knowledgeable on the subject, and that I should speak to a Wordsworth McAndrew, who was interested in the folklore of Guyana, travelled the country collecting it, and was also working on a Creolese dictionary. Josh had personal knowledge of the Jordanites, having been a member in childhood, travelling the country, reading and reciting scriptures when his father preached. I did meet Jake Croker that day, and he was indeed both knowledgeable on and interested in the topic, and said that I might drop in at GIS any midday to speak further. Jake Croker was a lovely man, whom I corresponded with for several years from 1970 on, and always looked forward to seeing again on my return visits to Guyana. Two 'it's a small world' coincidences here - Jake was cousin to the wife of Raymond T. Smith, an important anthropologist in Caribbean studies, and author of many excellent anthropological studies in Guyana, including the best known, *The Negro Family in British Guiana*, one of the earliest anthropological works to focus on Village Guiana, rather than on Amerindians. The second coincidence surfaced 40 years later, when I learnt from Roy Brummell that Henry Josiah was his wife's uncle.

Accordingly, on Saturday, September 13, I went again to GIS, to speak with Jake Croker, and that was when I met Wordsworth McAndrew, whom I describe in my notes as 'a small bearded, slightly frenetic looking chap in a *Dashiki!*' I was, of course, almost immediately drawn to his dynamism, intensity, enthusiasm, and intelligence - his charisma, in the

true use of the word. And then there were his charm, and his smile! In short, he was difficult not to warm to. He offered to take me the next day to look for an outdoor meeting regularly held Sundays at La Penitence Market, mentioned also by Josh on September 11. Early Sunday morning Mac, as I soon came to know him, collected me from my hotel, and we rode on his Velo Solex to La Penitence Market, which was conspicuously lacking in Jordanites. Mac rode on to Agricola, and I was introduced to Elder Klien, Nathaniel Jordan's successor. I explained my interest in learning about the Faith, and Klien made an appointment with me for the next day. So, it was through Wordsworth that I was able to be introduced to the churchyard, and to begin an enjoyable year of research!

On the Monday, Wordsworth again collected me and took me out to Agricola, where I interviewed and learnt from the Elder. At each of our meetings, Wordsworth too had given me much useful information on the history of the Jordanites, I shared his interests in Guyana's culture, folklore and language, and I learnt much from him, including proper use of local foods! He laughed at me when, very early in our acquaintance, likely on one of those trips to Agricola, he bought me a water coconut and I asked for a straw. I had tried once to drink from the hole in the top, and the liquid had dribbled down my face and dress! I asked because I had seen young women in bank and government uniforms at lunchtime around Stabroek Market using straws. Because it was early in our acquaintance, and because I had always been (and am still) very sensitive to criticism and 'tantalize', I was hurt by his laughing at me. And I never did learn to drink from a water coconut!

Over time, Wordsworth McAndrew became important to me as far more than merely a 'source', resource, or anthropologist's 'informant'. Myriad personal complications and entanglements on both our parts prevented our friendship from going further then. Some time after I returned to Montreal in September 1970, we began corresponding, and when I returned to Guyana in July 1973 to do further research, we began the relationship we could not have had in 1969-70. I remember being very, very happy most of the two months I

spent then, and I returned in December 1973, and again for one month in 1976. For all his non-conformity, I fear his views on male-female relative status in relationships were close to the Guyanese male view of his time (as Rose and several others have attested here). Nevertheless, I spent much happy and interesting time with him and his literary, artistic, and academic friends. I also had the privilege of watching him broadcast some of his many radio programmes, and he even interviewed me on my Jordanite research! He took me to one of Mother Dora's Kali Mai Puja ceremonies at Better Hope, East Coast Demerara for a fascinating afternoon among warm and welcoming people, and her daughter wrote to me for months afterward.

Wordsworth/Wordsy/Mac was often a figure of ridicule or disdain for the many still-colonially-minded Guyanese in the 'Establishment', and in the general citizenry, who, even three and more years after Independence, undervalued, underappreciated, and failed to grasp the uniqueness, richness, and importance of Guyana's language, proverbs, songs, stories, beliefs and rituals. "*The proverbs are never wrong*", he would say, before delivering some observation or 'lesson', or before hammering home the final nail in an argument. "*Civil servant, with a tie for a brain*", he wrote in a poem. He was mocked for his unconventional attire - African-style shirts or 'vests' (T-shirts) rather than Shirtjacs, leather or rubber slippers on sockless feet, rather than shoes and socks, for his unconventional and unpopular interests - in Guyana's language and lore, from all Six Peoples - and for his unconventional 'own-way' ways. It was, in fact, this unconventionality in still-straitlaced Guyana, which was part of his appeal and attraction for this 1960's-era (though more quietly unconventional and Canadian) in addition to his engaging personality, which drew me in at first meeting.

His disdain for rules and routine did not extend to his work, where he was disciplined and diligent in preparing his radio programmes, leaving other activities - not excluding me - aside until work was finished. His methods sometimes belied this rigour, as witness his practice of noting information on his always-present Broadway cigarette packets and on the palm of his hand! The latter is a practice I have followed on



In this 1976 photograph, taken at Mac's David Street house in Kitty, by Dr. Judith Roback, the disciplined and diligent radio broadcaster and folklorist is packing his bag for work.

very rare occasions that I walk without scrap-paper-filled pockets.

He was an avid reader and absorber of information from books, many of which I plied him with, or which he requested from me over a period of 10-15 years. He was not, however, always a critical reader, and though opinionated and argumentative as a rule, he sometimes accepted positions, especially on Africanist topics, which seem, at best, 'fringe' hypotheses. I did feel he would have derived great benefit from a university education, in anthropology, linguistics, folklore and/or ethnomusicology. On the other hand, he might have been too set in his long experience of independent researches, and his 'own-way' tendencies, to submit to the discipline of the undergraduate courses required before he would qualify for the more independent culture of graduate work.

Late in 1979, with no paid work, and with the forces of the Burnham regime allied against him, he slipped out of his [once-] beloved country and made his way to the United States, where, from all accounts, including his own, he was totally unable to find a place for himself. We continued our letter-writing and occasional telephone conversations, but I saw him only once more, though there was one attempted meeting which went comedically wrong. I was living about a one-and-three-quarters hour bus trip outside Toronto then, but made visits to that city and almost always went to Third World Books and Crafts, which I touted to Wordsworth, usually purchasing some Caribbean-related materials, and having long conversations with one or both owners. Wordsworth suggested that he could travel by bus from New Jersey and we might arrange to meet at the bookstore. I duly made the bus trip, and went to the shop, where I waited, and waited, and waited... A few days later I learnt from Wordsworth that he had asked near the bus station how to find the shop, and had been [mis-]directed to The World's Biggest Book Store, very near the bus terminus, but entirely the wrong store! (He wrote some time later that he had at last visited Third World Bookshop, and that he endorsed my recommendation of both shop and owners.) Several years later, I had moved to Toronto, and he visited friends one August weekend during Toronto's 'Caribana' which marks a holiday.

very important to him, "August Maanin"/Emancipation Day and we had an extremely fleeting meeting when, with a car awaiting him out at the curb, he stopped long enough to give me a book he had brought for me, and we exchanged a quick hug.

While he seemed never to have entirely given up hopes and plans for our having a life together, practicalities and time prevented it. I doubt it would have worked out or lasted, had it been practically feasible, but, as I wrote upon learning of his death in May 2008, it would have been an adventure! And perhaps, just perhaps, he would have fared better in Canada with its perhaps less hostile racial situation, and its free universal health care? I sometimes regret my cowardice. Another of his sayings was "*the past is past, and useful only to the planners of the future*". I did not agree then, and now I do wonder "*what might have been*". There was one more letter, unsent. When I learnt through my internet searches of his growing health problems and attendant financial difficulties, I was able to make email contact, via Ken Corsbie, with Roy Brummell. Roy, serving as amanuensis, sent me an email dictated by Mac. Its intensity and seemingly unwavering certainty and assumptions unsettled me, and, forever 'nervous' about change, I began but did not send a reply.

Though a total non-believer in matters supernatural, I was always somewhat unsettled by his repeating of an obeahman's prediction to him years before that he would "*go to [his] grave at age 40*". It is startling to realize that when we met, he was just 33! While he did live far beyond that 'predicted' age of 40, he should have lived long enough, and in sufficiently good health, to be able to organize, compile, edit, and make available the fruits of his many years of Guyanese research as well as his other writings. He will, of course, be greatly missed by the many of us to whom he meant so much, and who loved him. However, I believe that those Guyanese who did not know him directly, but whose lives he has enriched through his tireless effort to make them know, cherish, and preserve Guyana's language and culture, will come to appreciate what they have lost.

September 18th, 2012

Francis Quamina Farrier: He was now the 'Sultan' and not Wordsworth McAndrew

Francis Quamina Farrier was born in Georgetown, British Guiana (independent Guyana) and grew up on the East Bank of Demerara. By age 25 he had already travelled to all four corners of the country. Over the years, he has visited North and South America, all the CARICOM countries and Europe, Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Farrier studied Theatre and Journalism at the University of the West Indies, the University of Alberta, Canada, and the University of Middlesex in England. He has written over two dozen plays for stage and radio as well as the screenplay for the movie 'Operation Makonaima'. As a trail blazer, Farrier wrote Guyana's first ever radio soap opera, 'The Tides of Susanburg' and the sequel, 'The Girl from Susanburg'. He has received many awards including Guyana's National Award, the Medal of Service. He was also awarded the Bishops' High School Parent of the Year in 1987. Farrier met and was befriended by Wordsworth McAndrew during the early years of the Theatre Guild in Georgetown, and they remained friends until Mac's passing. Farrier continues to produce news features for television and also to write for and perform on stage.

I was a member of the audience at the Theatre Guild Playhouse on Parade Street in Kingston, Georgetown, when a young Wordsworth McAndrew burst onto the stage and did what, I believe, was the very first public performance of the iconic folk poem, 'Ol' Higue'. He was an instant success. A short time later, Mac was cast in the one-act folk play 'Porkknockers' by Sheik M. Sadeek, also at the Theatre Guild. I was in that play performing a small role. Mac was in the starring role of 'Sultan', one of the principal characters in the drama, which was set in the gold and diamond fields of hinterland Guyana, and recorded the adventures of two of the country's most famous and feared porkknockers, Sultan and Tengar.

The play was one of two productions being presented. **'Porkknockers'** was scheduled to be the second on stage. On the opening night the Governor and his wife were among the VIP's and others who packed the Playhouse. Well before curtain time, the actors and actresses of both plays had arrived; all but Mac...No one was concerned. There was time...Mac would arrive in a short while. In any case, he was in the second play.

The first play commenced, continued, and ended. No Mac in sight. Not to worry too much, the interval was to be about twenty minutes. Mac would get there before it ended. The bar was doing good business and patrons, including the Governor, were enjoying the liquid refreshments and each other's company, principally discussing the merits of the first play.

As audience members began returning to their seats, and Mac was not in place, the stage manager and the other players of **'Porkknockers'** became very concerned, even worried. The action of the play commenced with the characters of Sultan and Tengar. And even if it did not, how could the play be started if the actor playing the principal character was not there?

There was no understudy for Mac and disaster was looming.

"I hope Mac didn't get into an accident," someone said.

"I hope he's not sick," said another.

"He was okay at the dress rehearsal last night," a third person stated, trying to settle the tense atmosphere.

The decision was taken to telephone Mac, even as someone was dispatched to stand guard in front of the Playhouse to usher Mac in as quickly as possible when he arrived.

The result of the phone call was that Mac was well and at home. He was awaiting a taxi to get him to the Playhouse. It was not a taxi which Mac had called; it was a taxi which Mac was of the view should have been sent to his home by whoever, to get him to the Playhouse...Horrors!

Time was running out. In fact, time had run out. Everyone was back in their seats in the Playhouse auditorium. But the second play, **'Porkknockers'**, was not about to start. A taxi

was dispatched to Mac's home. The other performers in '**Porkknockers**' were as anxious as porkknockers who are about to strike it rich, but who had run up a high unpaid bill at the 'bush' shop.

The scheduled twenty-minute interval had extended to almost one hour when Mac arrived in the taxi. He calmly walked into the dressing room and donned his costume. He was now 'Sultan' and not Wordsworth McAndrew. He wowed the audience with a masterful interpretation of that iconic real-life Guyanese folk hero, Sultan.

By the end of the performance, word had leaked out to a few members of the audience, including the Governor, that it was the late arrival of Wordsworth McAndrew which had caused the late start of the second play. Somehow, everyone seemed not to care too much after having just enjoyed Mac's dynamic performance. Well, not exactly everyone. I heard the Governor say to the director of the play, in a crisp English accent: "*You should sack him.*"

Suffice to say, Wordsworth McAndrew arrived early for all the remaining staging of '**Porkknockers**', and delivered dynamic performances every time. He was very creative in the role of Sultan, even changing words here and there from the written script. For example, in the song '**Blow de Man Down**', Mac changed the lyrics from "*Blow de man down wid a bottle of rum*" to "*Blow de man down wid a piece a cow dung.*"

September 26th, 2011



In the picture above, Mac, with his hand raised, performs on stage (possibly at the Theatre Guild in the early 1960's in Roderick Walcott's 'Benjie'). Claire Goring sent me a copy of the photograph, but Ken Corsbie provided this picture and its historical information.

Interview with Joyce Urmela Harris at her home in Brooklyn, NY: Mac Pumpin Me saangs

Joyce Urmela Harris, born in Good Hope Village, Canal Number 1, West Bank, Demerara, is one of Guyana's legendary singers. She is a symbol of the country's two dominant races (population-wise), being the child of an African Guyanese father and an Indian Guyanese mother.

Joyce's parents were singers and, influenced by them, she began singing at an early age. She composes all of her songs and each tells a story. Some of her songs have both English and Hindi- the latter she learned from her mother. Singing in a rhythm sounding much like Guyana's folk songs, Joyce's songs were called 'blend tunes' by Wordsworth McAndrew. Joyce Urmela has won numerous musical awards, including four Mashramani titles.

*In the 70's Joyce's music was regularly played on Wordsworth McAndrew's folk programmes. The song that made Guyanese take note of her was '**Taxi Driver**' based on her cheating husband. Other popular songs were '**Sweet is Mih Name**' an '**Bowjee Gyaal**'. Joyce continues to sing for parties, weddings, funerals, and Muslim, Hindu and Christian religious functions.*

R: How you meet McAndrew?

J: OK, well, I always go at '**Teenagers' Choice**' and '**Teens' Ville**' an important programme wit' Ishri Singh an so. An he saw me an he heard my song playing on Ishri Singh programme. An he like de voice, he like de song an he seh: "WAW, come, what's your name?" He sang wit' me an la-la de song. He seh: "A want you on my programme an you betta be dere." Was a Wednesday night programme an is only me sang play becaas nobody doesn't gat local dat time.

R: O.K., you rememba de name a de programme?

J: It... it like '**What...What wit'McAn.**' How yuh caall he name 'McAndrew?' How yuh caall de name, maan? Like me foget dis maan name.

R: Wordsworth?

J: (exclaiming): Yees maan, you know de ting.

R: Every Wednesday night?

J: Every Wednesday night.

R: You want me tell you wha de programme bin name? De programme bin name '**What Else?**'

J: (jocularly) '**What Else?**' But dem na get no mo else; only Jaice, Jaice deh in. Soh every week people can hear a differen song from me.

R: O.K., Wha kin' sang you used to sing?

J: Well, I does sing like calypso, soca an chatney.

R: At de time you were singing soca and chatney?

J: Yes.

R: O.K., Soca an chatney?

J: Em hm.

R: Mac use to caall you saangs "*blen chune*", wha mek he use to caall dem soh?

J: "*Blen chune*" becaas when Ah sing de piece wid de Hindi, Ah put de piece wid de English. You andastaan? So, if you now who don' andastaan de Hindi piece, Ah bring back de choras wid de English.

R: Soh wha mek yuh use to put in Hindi?

J: Aaaaai, da de Creolese deh does caall it.

R: Soh yuh gat to put in de Creolese... Yuh still gat any a dem saang da?

J: Yes, maan people want dem da mo' dan dem want dis. (Referring to one of her new CD's.) All de songs are good songs. Well da time was a saang name '**Taxi Driva**'. Da de fus recard mih bring out baai. My husband was a taxi driva. (Singing a line: "*Neva let yuh husband drive a hire kyaar.*") Da does wake up people five a' clack in de maaninin, to', baai, wid Sonny Mahammed.

R: '**Taxi Driva**'.

J: Em hm. An put '**Bowjee Gyaal**'.

R: De saang name '**Bowjee Gyaal**'... Da is anada waan ar de same '**Taxi Driva**'?

J: Flip side... Da time was dem lil ting, roun ting... Farty-five yuh caall it, nah?

R: Oooo... Mac had anyting fo do wid you becomin famous?

J: Da same maan McAndrew... Mac pumpin me saangs; pumpin me saangs. Whey he deh now?

R: You na know de maan dead?

J: He dead?

R: He died 2008 in New Jersey.

J: Aall de artiste- Lady Guymine, Eddie Hooper an mih good frien Neisha Benjamin- dead, only me lef'. Me meet Mac in Queens right at Liberty Avenue. He recanize me an we hug.

R: Wha you an he taak bout?

J: He like it here, but say de place col' an he want to go back.

R: Did he ever come to your home on the West Bank?

J: No, but I went to his home an he like he local wine, like jamoon wine.

R: De fus time yuh goh a he house, wha yuh notice?

J: I notice dat de antiques an ornaments different- de chair look like basket. He had he own taste an people; he like Mannie Hanniff.

R: Jaice, yuh eva sing any saang Mac did not like?

J: No, mih know wha fo give he yuh know. He had he own way, whereva he come fram. Me like McAndrew. He had it up here (pointing to her head), no matta de moto'bike, no matta he look so ordinary.

May 20th, 2013

Editor's Notes: Some of my questions were repeated to see whether Joyce would maintain her previous answers.

I didn't know Mannie Hanniff, personally, but I once saw him dance with a snake on the Covent Garden High School stage, when I was a teacher there in the early 70's. I believe Mannie was also a tight rope walker.

Dr. Ian Robertson: Facing up to Mac's Challenge

Dr. Robertson is an academic at the University of the West Indies.

My Mac experiences would fill volumes. I was impressed very early by his cautious acceptance of people. Once, a friend asked me to get Mac to document his vast store of information. When I summoned the courage to broach it with him the response was typical, though not expected. "*Da ting wa deh a turkey head, hat wata ga fu tek am out*". Mac went on to justify his skepticism with a range of experiences with academics. These would have left any but the most simple minded not trusting the breed of academics. In short he felt he had been 'used' and then discarded by many of the group.

This happened after I had won his confidence in this academic. The road was not easy. He would always test me and challenge my claims to being a 'country boy'. "*I have a proverb for you,*" he said one day; "*you say you are from the country.*" I submitted that I was and accepted the challenge.

"*A rispeck wa duck gat fu carrion crow mek he naa eat a plate.*" I smiled and he responded: "*You seem to know what this is about.*"

I submitted that I thought I did and explained that we kept ducks in our yard and I was familiar with the indecent exposure which occurred when a duck, because of its flat beak, tried to eat from a plate. I also indicated that I was aware of the favourite point chosen by the carrion crow for entry into the carcass.

His response was: "*You inside.*" I thought he had now approved my bona fide interest in the ways of the folk. Then I got careless. One day in casual conversation I said to him that Sparrow was my best calypsonian and hinted that Kitchener was a limited calypsonian. Mac went silent. He had a passionate aversion to Sparrow on public behaviour and not on competence grounds. He swore that he would never attend a Sparrow concert again. He invited/threatened (in his

own way) me to come to his house at any time of the day when I had time and he would prove to me that Kitchener was anything but a limited calypsonian.

Sometime after, I arrived at his David Street house at about nine in the morning and indicated that that was the day of proof. He said: *"Mek sure you have time before we start."* Mac put about a dozen eggs into a pot, poured water and lit the stove to boil the eggs. We went into his 'backroom' and he opened a large wooden trunk. He was careful to explain that once in England he found a man selling a set of old West Indian music records (78 rpm) and he bought a range of them. Included in these were a number of Kitchener's songs. The old record player on the floor was soon belting out Kitchener calypsos. This continued for hours. I got out my cassette recorder and made copies of some of them, especially since many were damaged and were unlikely to be heard again on any record player.

Mac would not allow me to play anything else but Kitchener. For me the signal tune and turning point in the experience was the calypso '**Black and White**':

Your father may be Norwegian
Your mother may be African
You pass me wouldn't say "goodnight"
Thinking you are really white.
And yet you speak to Mr. B
Who doesn't want your company.
In every way you endeavour
To show yourself superior.
No you can never get away from the fact
If you are not white you're considered Black.

This was vintage stuff. I think Mac was the first person I heard use that term to describe the classics of Caribbean composition. The term is often used today by persons who have no idea of its origin.

By this time it was more than fifteen hours later. The eggs had all been eaten. The dhal was history. And I was more than slightly inebriated from the volume of good Guyana rum we had consumed. Indeed, some years later I loaned the

recording to a close friend who had been seeking a copy of one of the tunes I recorded that day, and he later asked me which 'rumshop' we had done the recording in.

But I was sensitive enough to begin to worry about my exploitation of my wife's patient generosity. This time I knew I had overdone it.

I apologized to Mac; I acknowledged Kitchener's greatness, and was finally allowed to leave more informed than I was when I entered. And as White Wordsworth would have said:

"The music in my heart I bore
Long after Mac could be heard no more"

April 30th, 2013

Dr. John R. Rickford: Waka Bunu (Walk Good)

John Rickford is J.E. Wallace Sterling Professor of Humanities in the Department of Linguistics, and by courtesy, Education. He is also a Pritzker University Fellow in Undergraduate Education, Stanford University, Stanford, CA.

Although I certainly knew of him as a media personality before then, I got to know Mac personally from 1974 when I returned to Guyana to teach at the University of Guyana (UG) and to do fieldwork in Better Hope and elsewhere. He accompanied me on several occasions, joining in the interviewing about language, folklore, folk life and culture with great interest and delight, and branching into other areas (like the Kali Mai Puja ceremonies at the house of Dora, an East Coast legend). Some of that material found its way into his wonderful radio show, **'What Else?'** and into his slim but informative *Oooiy!* magazine.

Mac also participated in the **'Festival of Guyanese Words'** conference we held in 1974, featuring research presentations by UG students and faculty and others, but with valuable feedback from non-academics whose expertise as farmers, stevedores, or just native Guyanese qualified them to extend and challenge our findings. He contributed a paper on Guyanese folksongs, with a short example from each 'chapter' of the folksong book (**'Representational', 'Congo', 'Queh-Queh', 'Pork-Knocker', 'Ring Play', 'Cumfa'** and **'East Indian Rhyming Song'**), and he helped us proofread and sell the resulting book on Georgetown street corners. Although he was a gyaaf-man and joke-man in personal interaction, he was deadly serious about work, proofreading by reading every word backwards.

I learned a lot from Mac over the years. He had an absolute love for Guyanese 'culchuh' as he put it - and an infinite

interest in every variant of every tradition (queh-queh, obeah, cumfa), song, story, game, way of cooking, eating, celebrating, and so on that Guyanese of every ethnic group had inherited and transformed. I learned a lot from him about how to do fieldwork well, lavishing time and respect on the people whose linguistic and cultural riches you were mining.

As a folklorist, culturologist, poet, performer, and radio personality, Mac was unparalleled, and his gifts to Guyana considerable. I hope his copious recordings and notes and articles find their way into the University of Guyana or a similar archive for future generations of Guyanese scholars to study and future generations of Guyanese to enjoy. For now, I will merely say to Guyana's greatest folklorist, "*Walk good, my friend,*" or as our Surinamese neighbours say, "*Waka bunu.*"

July 20th, 2013

Rooplall Monar: Mac embraced all cultures; Mac embraced all customs; Mac embraced everybody...

I was born in 1947 on Plantation Lusignan but, aged seven when at Lusignan Government School, my family moved to Annandale where we built a house. Later, I attended Cove and John High, leaving after two years, as my father died and my mother couldn't pay the fees. Consequently, I attended Buxton Congregational, where I wrote my School Leaving Exam but couldn't find work. Nevertheless, I absorbed myself in reading - especially suspense novels and geographic material. Luckily, there was a monthly competition at the Lusignan Centre to spell and locate places on a Guyana or international map. Avid reading of geography helped me win many times. The prizes were always books and a 'sweet drink', sometimes. The books further motivated me.

Developing the urge to teach and, encouraged by friends who loaned me texts and syllabuses, I studied privately for the General Certificate Examination. Taking the GCE twice, I passed four and two subjects, respectively. Following my GCE success, I taught at Dr. Balwant Singh's Gandhi Educational Institute for one year, before leaving to do clerical work at the La Bonne Intention (LBI) Sugar Estate. I then returned to teaching at Maha Sabha Secondary, headed by Rajkumarie Singh. While teaching at the latter, I met different writers and developed a keen interest in writing poetry, winning Youth National Poetry Competitions in 1968, '69 and '70, a National Poetry Prize and the Gandhi Youth Memorial Poetry Prize in '72 and the Lenin Poetry Prize in '73. In 1998, I was awarded the Golden Arrow of Achievement.

*To date I have published: **Koker**, a poetry collection, **Backdam People, High House and Radio, Estate People and Ramsingh Street**, short story collections, and **Janjhat and Tormented Wives**, novels.*

I owe Mac a deep sense a' gratitude, because Mac is the person who encourage me to write short story. Mac had dis

weekly short story programme on GBS, and he said: "*Buddy* (That's what he used to call me.), *try your han at short story.*"

I seh: "*Maan, what to write?*"

Mac seh: "*Choose a theme that yuh like aar yuh know.*"

So a taat fly to me head an Ah seh: "*Maan Ah know dis ol' higue ting fram ol' people.*"

He seh: "*Well goh story it.*"

An I write dis story in dialect, an I show Mac de story a week after, an Mac like de story. Mac did some changes in de story an use de story on the GBS short story programme. Then I had this feeling that maybe Mac came into my life to put me on the road to prose writing, creative prose like short story writing. So again, I owe Mac dis deep sense a' gratitude.

Now, fram den aan me an Mac had a lat a' wandaful experiences, where we meet, where we gyaff, tek a lil beer now an again, smokin in between. Mac invite me to his house, an de friendship become deepa. Den Mac seh: "*Look Buddy, Ah gon do waan a' yuh story each mont, soh get on de route.*"

Soh Mac use to do waan of my story each mont, and dat use to help me financially, to'. Ah neva watch Mac as a blackmaan aar a coolie maan; I see Mac as a frien. De friendship eclipse dis racial or dis et'nic kind a' sensibility. Now, Phagwah, March, 1977, Ah tell me wife Ah want bring Mac Mud an Waata Day (day before Abeer Day) an, and she said OK. Ah tek a kyaar an goh, an soh happem Mac was home. Ah tell e Ah want e come by me fo Mud an Waata Day, an if e want e kyan spen de night, and de nex day. Mac seh no big ting an e staat up e scoota (P50), an Mac an me come down. Wen we meet Annandale, fram de public road to whey I live, dem baai playin Mud an Waata. Afta me tell dem was McAndrew wid me, becaas a lat a people know Mac t'rough his programmes, dem seh: "*McAndrew, McAndrew.*" An dem baai hug e up, an t'row powda pan e. 'E couldn't 'a ride, soh e waakin an pushin de scoota. An Mac reacted waaarmly to dese people; 'dough e na waak wid powda, dem give e powda, an e staat to t'row am back pan dem to' and caall dem "*buddy*". Mac neva taat dat e's a black maan; 'e tink dat dis is e culture.

Wen we went by we, de ol lady welcome Mac, and straightaway Mac didn't caall her her name, Mac seh "*Maai*". Den waan an two friens come in. Wen dem fin' out was Mac dem seh: "*Mac come by we place nuh maan.*"

Anyway, waan a mih broda-in-law come an bring ova e frien. Dem baai a play Phagwah an drink dem rum in between; Mac a drink straight wid dem, to'. Phoulourie a come up; Mac a eat de phoulourie. Dem a discuss dis ting, da ting.

Mac staat to caall dem baai "buddy", to'. Aall dem ol' people come ova, Mac a caall dem "Chaachie", "Bowjee", "Mowsie", "Aajee", "Aajah", de Hindu ting fo family. I thought Mac was a Hindu; e hug dem up an greet dem. Soh dis ting shack mih; it made me see Mac in a different light- that Mac embrace every ada culture, every ada custom; that he is beyond those cultures...e is a humanist in waan way.

Now in de evenin time, t'ree people fram t'ree differen street want Mac goh by dem. Soh waan house gat bout t'ree gyaal...nice Indian girls an so. Dem a beg Mac fo goh. Mac seh maan matta a' respect le' abih [version of 'awih'] goh, soh me an Mac abih lef dem baai at me. Soon as Mac go in de place dem gyaal an soh, hug up Mac, an t'row powda pan Mac. An den dem bring phoulourie an bhaiganie fo Mac, treat Mac lekka family memba. Dem feel priviledge to have Mac in dem house an ting. Mac seh dat we kyaan stay laang, becaas e gat two ada people to go to. Dem andastaan da, soh e only stay about half owa by dem. Wen we ready to lef, dem an Mac hug up.

Wen we go by ada people, de same treatment Mac had an Mac spen de night by me. De nex day Abeer Day, abih kill a duck. Mac help mih kill de duck; was a big duck. Den couple people come ova, becaas Phagwah friens does come ova an yuh kyaan tell dem no. An Mac...yuh kyaan know; yuh kyaan know; yuh tink is a Hindu maan dis. If somebody seh: "Mac."

"Yes, Chaachie."

"Mac."

"Yes, Aajee."

Yuh kyaan know dat e is a black maan, if yuh na watch e hair. E a taak Hindi; e know lil Hindi slang, to', an in between e a seh: "Bhai", "Bhain", "Beta". Da day, we play Phagwah, eat dhaall phourie, duck curry an everyting. We went to waan an two friends; de same treatment dey give Mac. People see Mac didn't pretend; he was just natural; embrace yuh in a lovin way, respec yuh culcha, respec you, an dat was how Mac operate. So da Phagwah, I (na me alone, but everybody who

interact wid Mac in Annandale) see dis maan Mac, Wordsworth McAndrew, nat t'rough a racial eye, but as a human being, as a maan.

Like t'ree year afta, my ex-wife broada was getting married. Soh de Monday now, Mac come becaase we invite e. De Monday is de day wen dem cook de meat an dem ting. As soon as Mac waak een de place soh, e staat caall people very respectful "*Chaacha*", "*Aantie*" an "*Uncle*". We had spoo't; we dance; Mac dance an Mac happem to like one of my ex-wife sista. She hug up Mac; mac a hug up shi, and was not'ing to de ada people. Dey jus see Mac as an Indian maan; dey couldn't see Mac in any ada eye, excep as an Indian maan, becaase Mac a help dem, to'. If dem gat anyting to be done like to bring mo' rice an dem ting an so, Mac a help wid de feeding. Mih ex-faada-in-laaw seh: "*Mac wih want to cook some mo' mutton baai.*" Ear Mac: "*Yes, daaddy, me a come.*" Yuh couldn't see Mac in any way excep dat he was part of dat househol dere; he was like family member dere.

So wan nex ting now, where we had Rajkumarie Singh place every Satday or every secan Satday night, fo a little drink an reading poetry, writin poetry, gyaaffin an so. Soh a lat a would-be writers use to be dere an Mac use to come. Raj school use to gat evening class an becaase me use to do evening class to', me use to stay a' Raj house; Ah does only goh home on weeken. So some weeken now, wen Ah know we gat we writer circle ting in de evenin, Ah does tell Mac, an waan an two ada people use to come but na regula...people like Robert Narine, Ken Corsbie, Gora Singh, friends of Gora Singh, Michael Leighton, Henry Muttoo, Jasoda Kishore, Sheik Sadeek and Janet Naidoo. De regulas was me, Mahadai Das (becaase she teachin at de school an livin at Raj) Raj an Gora Singh. Mac tun a regula becaase e an Mahadai had someting goin. Soh de meetins happen fo ova a year, but stap when we went to National Service.

Soh to en', Mac was a man who embrace every ada culture, every ada custom. He showed no discrimination in his personal life and his folklore research and presentation.

October 26th, 2013

Editor's Note: I interviewed Rooplall Monar for his reminiscence, which I recorded and later transcribed.

Prince Maison: A positive influence on my life as my immediate supervisor...

Prince Maison was born in Golden Grove Village, on Guyana's East Coast of Demerara. He secured Certificates in Management Studies and Caribbean Studies and a B.Sc in Public Communications from the University of Guyana and the University of the West Indies. Currently, he is a double Ph.D. student – Kansas University, Medical Anthropology, and American University, Cultural Anthropology.

Prior to migration, Prince served Guyana as a clerk, high school teacher of a range of subjects, and in the roles of Broadcaster, Programme Moderator, News Writer/Producer, Director of Current Affairs, Assistant Programme Director and Programme Director. Wordsworth McAndrew, as Acting Programme Director, supervised Prince when the latter was one of the producers of the 'Today' programme in 1977.

Outside of Guyana, Prince has served radio and television stations in various capacities, winning the Crystal Award – a national award for outstanding contribution to broadcasting. He has also served at American University as a research assistant and George Mason University and Howard University as an instructor.

Among the many highlights of Prince's career are: radio correspondent for Radio Antilles (Montserrat), broadcaster on assignment with the late President Burnham as he travelled internationally, correspondent for the United Nations radio and television in New York, and radio correspondent for the BBC in London.

It's not often that a chance meeting on life's busy corridors sets in motion profound changes in the intended courses of the lives of individuals. However, an unexpected meeting with my late colleague and friend, Wordsworth McAndrew, set me on a course that I thank him for.

I was a recent addition to the GBS Newsroom and was on assignment at the Department of Culture for an interview

with the Director, Billy Pilgrim, when from an adjacent room I heard this young man, who would later become a celebrated icon of Guyanese culture, reading his poem, 'Ol' Higue', and my interest in folklore soared. (By then, I had already served as a 'Civil Servant' at the Ministry of Agriculture, and a secondary school teacher. Now, I was involved in the performing art of broadcasting.) Captivated by the poem, I waited and, when he was finished, I introduced myself. How was I to know that a couple of years later, he was to be the Acting Programme Director at GBS, and a further positive influence on my life as my immediate supervisor?

I was promoted Head of Current Affairs which meant that I had a strong and abiding relationship with the Newsroom, but I still covered, edited, and presented news programmes; this explains my news orientation and affiliation. As Head of Current Affairs, I was responsible for the production and presentation of Current Affairs and News Magazine programmes such as 'Today', and 'Horizons'. It was a love/hate relationship, sometimes toxic with departmental rivalry and the constant clash of production styles and personalities, but healthy none-the-less. Yet, one programme tended to feed the other and there I was, with a three-man staff, caught in the middle. But one of the people I drew inspiration from was Wordsworth McAndrew.

Mac was strong-willed, independent, self-confident, but not in a vituperative or self-indulgent way. I suppose an awareness of culture makes one amenable, understanding, humble and sincere – these are qualities Wordsworth took with him into programme administration. We counselled often; held daily programme meetings on format, substance, and approaches. Sometimes, we argued and fought, but always over ideas never over personalities.

Mac produced a series called 'Proverb for Today' and chose 'Goady' as a sub-segment. The first programme in the series included a definition of 'Goady'. It was hilarious. I remember earning his profound respect when I contributed a proverb from my mother about every 'goady' finding its suspender. Mac was ecstatic, spending about three weeks on that single proverb and the responses from his audience; and for the first time he acknowledged me as a real 'country man'. I had earned

so much of his respect, that when my Mom passed, Mac jumped on his P50 and rode all the way to my village, Golden Grove, on the East Coast Demerara, to attend both the wake and the funeral. Then I, too, developed a new respect and admiration for him.

His relationship with the radio station deteriorated over time, and he could not perform as he was capable of. Finally, the long drawn out impasse with the directorate of GBS ended with him being fired. I watched him slowly and reluctantly pack his tapes and programme material and left.

Sometimes on the busy concourse of life a 'hello' and 'goodbye' are all you need for someone to leave their indelible mark on your life. Mac had left his on mine. He arrived in the US a few years before I did. We spoke on the telephone, but that was never the same as meeting and talking with a friend and colleague in person.

Who could have known? I worked for the World Bank in Africa and the Caribbean on 'HIV/AIDS Awareness', and 'Social and Behaviour Change', with the main premise of those programmes being culture. Today I am a Medical Anthropologist, thanks in part to that Department of Culture encounter and all that followed with Wordsworth Mc Andrew.

You would never know, my friend, who else **you** may have influenced.

April 2nd, 2014

Claud Leandro: Remembering Wordsworth: An Enigma of a Man

*After being schooled at Central High, the Government Technical Institute and the University of Guyana, poet/playwright/thespian Claudette 'Claud' Leandro worked at the Guyana Broadcasting Service, first as assistant to Guyana's foremost folklorist Wordsworth MacAndrew, who taught her about 'excellence and permanence', a theme that continues to be her guidepost. She moved to Montserrat when she was handpicked as the first Guyanese announcer/producer to be employed at Radio Antilles. When she returned home, Claud worked at Ainlim before moving to Antigua where she lived and worked for 10 years. She then migrated to the United States and worked on the editorial page at New York **Newsday** while attending the Center for the Media Arts and continuing her work in the broadcast industry, most recently as Programme Director at One Caribbean Radio. She is currently an independent audio and copy editing consultant. Claud Leandro is the recipient of awards from the NYABJ (2013) Best Public Service Radio Series (Audio Editor); and Our Time Press (2010) Women in Media.*

They say he was named for William Wordsworth - a literary icon of the last century but think about it, and you will agree that famous British poet can't compare to our Wordsy.

Mac changed how we perceive Guyanese Creolese; he warned us about Ol' Higue and the coolie and Dutch jumbies and tantalized our senses with the many stages of typee.

I often wondered if Mac became who he was to live up to his name or did his parents sense from his first breath what he was to be and named him accordingly.

I was a teenager when I became his awed production assistant.

He'd had others before me but there was always the question of compatibility because Mac was not the easiest-to-

get-along-with personality—no eccentric yes, unorthodox, nonconforming, pedantic—he was all that, stickler—definitely.

I remember he sent me back 3 times to staple his two-page letter to the GuM-PuD, at an angle of 45 degrees!

Why? Well, because that was the only way to do it correctly.

(GuM-PuD was a word he coined at GBS for the General Manager/Programme Director—GMPD)

Mac told me that when Guyanese say bambai, as in, “*Ah leffin back the rest o’ me food for bambai.*” That’s actually a contraction of the term ‘by and by’.

And, yes, he towed his wife to their wedding. “*But not on a bicycle,*” he would point out angrily, “*was on a volo solex Ah tow she.*”

He fed me proverbs incessantly—“*de proverbs never wrong*”—and I relished it because in my home, at 163, I was only allowed to speak properly.

So Mac with his rubber slippers and his boiled eggs and his *dashiki* became a kind of university for ‘Excellence and permanence’.

When I worked for New York *Newsday*, and even more recently, I’d often call Mac to help me with this or that and he would remind me: “*A ting cannot be more or less than 100% of itself.*”

And I can tell you this: Ask Mac a question and you’re likely to end up with far more information that you thought was inherent in that question; he had to supply you with the wherefores and the whys, the background and origin.

Wordsworth was a linguist who played with languages like little.

He schooled me in nuances, warned me to “*Dance a bottom watch a top.*”

He even wrote me poetry, which I’ll share with you eventually...maybe.

Mac lived in these United States but he never called here his home—“*home is whey you navel string bury*”—and he would never have stayed here if he’d felt that his countrymen would embrace him...again.

So why would this icon who has taught and expended and given as much as he not be held aloft in his native country?

You can't say he had no ego, yet he often subjugated himself.

You can't say he was modest, yet he shunned the accolades of recognition, this intellectual who was unencumbered by self-importance, an unpretentious, complex man who was one o' we.

How can a man be as brilliant as a star yet so loathe to let it beam? An eccentric...

How can this man, so impeccably knowledgeable, refuse to have his wisdom published? A non-conformist...

How can a man who knew the importance of legacy be so reluctant to chronicle his? An enigma...

If you were to ask me what I treasure most about my relationship with Mac, it's this: In recent years, he sought my opinion, asked my advice, from time to time. Me, a mere small fry, comparatively. And despite being a middle aged woman *that* always sparked me as if I were still his teenaged assistant.

But that was part of the uniqueness of the man: He knew that he knew, but he also knew that in this place, in this space, there was so much more he wanted to know.

Research, research, research, that was his mantra, but I did none of that for this piece because having had the honour to experience the man, I didn't have to research him.

Wordsworth Albert McAndrew was someone whom we all knew...to varying degrees.

Yet if we were to put all those degrees together we would discover that we still don't know the total Wordsy for such an enigma of a man was he.

As for the poem he wrote me. I came back from lunch one day and this was on my desk:

When you go away
For lunch or home or anything
Zoom goes the sky
The sun goes in
And all is cloud and gloom.

But soon
On a good day
Brown hips sway
Luscious legs shuffle
Geisha-style around the bend
And gloom is at an end.

That was the kind of imagery this master wordsmith could pen in less than an hour. Thank you Mac. I'm missing you.

September 14th, 2011

Eusi Kwayana: The Keeper

Eusi Kwayana is a teacher, culturalist, politician, poet, and historian.

Wordsworth McAndrew is no longer with us in the body. His artistic creations and the works of his vigorous and active mind, however, ought to be available to the extent that they are discovered.

For years in his own country, he bore the triple prize of dramatist, poet and folklorist, but he was also a grassroots linguistic practitioner. Apart from his folklore, he may be best remembered for the way he kept the country informed on the formation and reformation of words and in use and misuse.

In offering sympathy to his relatives and his close friends, I venture to guess that he will never be silent in the Gallery of the Spoken Word.

July 24th, 2013

Pauline Melville: ...Mischievous and Light-Hearted and Deeply Serious About His Work

Pauline Melville is an actress and author.

I last visited Wordsworth in New Jersey and he was not in a good state - mainly due to the High Wine, bottles of which he proudly displayed to me. He was sitting surrounded by mountainous reels of tape recordings in their metal cylinders which he told me he had smuggled out of Guyana via Suriname when he left. I often wonder what happened to all that wonderful folk history that he collected. He told me (if memory serves me well) that he had left Guyana for Suriname by boat with the recordings. But when he flew out of Suriname - presumably to the States - the plane touched down in Guyana and he ducked down so as not to be seen. Clearly he felt threatened by those in authority at that point.

To me he seemed somehow dislocated - he belonged in the rich folklore atmosphere of Guyana and New Jersey felt arid to him. He complained that he was struggling to keep down two jobs and was exhausted. I had known him many years earlier in Guyana. I remember one particular party with Stanley Greaves playing guitar and Wordsworth entertaining the assembly with stories. His knowledge of folklore from all the different Guyanese communities fascinated me.

My sister knew him better than I did. I remember him taking her to a mysterious Kali Mai ceremony somewhere and they were enthusiastic correspondents for many years. In England we would wait for the blue airmail letter to flutter through the letter-box with Wordsworth's witty and enlivening descriptions of what was happening in Guyana. He was mischievous, light-hearted and deeply serious about his work.

Do I remember seeing him in a play at the Theatre Guild?
I'm not sure but I think so. It would have been typical of him
to join in any of the artistic projects current at the time.

May 3rd, 2013

Roy Brummell: Mac Never Lost Mental Sharpness and Eagerness

Roy Brummell is a teacher, storyteller, and folklorist.

As already mentioned in my preface, Wordsworth McAndrew and I became very good friends in the early 70's in Guyana. However, in the United States we became even closer, with him relying on me, due to his near blindness, a bad hand and lack of a computer to write his dictated letters to his other friends such as Vic Insanally, Keith Waite, John Criswick, Ron Sanders, Colin Cholmondely and Judith Roback.

After Mac left Guyana in 1980 for the US, I heard from him twice between that year and 1988, the year my family and I migrated to Texas. When I began teaching in New York in 1990, we scantily communicated by letters and telephone but we met in 1993. After that, I didn't hear from Mac until 1998, when my wife met Joslyn Small (former GBC radio engineer) by chance and he told her Mac wanted to see me. By the time Mac and I reconnected in 1998, he was experiencing difficulties. I was delighted to meet him, but very sad to see him with a broken hand in a cast and obvious bad eyesight. Although he did not say how he had got a broken hand, someone reliable told me that he had fallen as he was not seeing well. Later, from corresponding with Vic Insanally on Mac's behalf, I became aware that Vic had arranged for him to meet with a Guyana-born doctor in Queens where he lived regarding his sight. For various reasons, Mac kept only some of the appointments the doctor gave him.

Mac spent some weekends with me, my wife and two daughters at our home. When I drove him back to Queens where he lived, he never wanted me to take him directly to the apartment he rented; he would have me leave him at some intersection. It was extremely distressing for me to leave him with a broken hand and bad eyesight at a street corner.

Finally, I asked why he didn't want me to take him to his apartment, and he answered that the landlord wanted him out and was trying to harm him, although he was prompt with his rent. (I later saw his receipts which supported his statement.) Mac said that, as soon as he entered the basement apartment, the landlord began moving furtively on the floor above him. This was followed by smoke flowing into his apartment. To thwart the landlord's plan, Mac regularly entered his apartment early in the morning when he thought the landlord was asleep, or he sometimes tried to stay at his sister who lived not too far away. The problem was that she was not a willing keeper.

I asked Mac a few times to take me into the apartment with him, but he was not keen on it. Later, though, while in conversation with someone who was a friend to us both, he mentioned that the smoke Mac thought he was seeing might have been an effect of glaucoma. I thought my buddybo might be having a mental breakdown, due to the broken hand, bad eyesight and being out of work. My mental breakdown theory was not far off, as shortly after leaving New York for New Jersey in 2001, policemen took Mac to a hospital after noticing him behaving oddly in Manhattan. Luckily his daughter got him from the hospital and he lived with her for a few years.

Prior to Mac's moving to New Jersey in 2001, he and I had spoken several times by telephone about the possibility of him moving to that state where he was likely to find a cheaper and more spacious apartment to house his archive. Never having gone into Mac's apartment to see all that was there to move, it was most difficult to estimate by telephone conversations what size U-Hall truck he needed, but he wanted me to give him an idea. He also mentioned that a friend would offer his truck, if necessary, to help with the move. Not trusting Mac's eyes and judgment, I told him to take a medium-sized U-Hall and his friend's truck, and we agreed that that was the plan for whenever that moving day was.

The two trucks were stuffed mainly with Mac's archive. Different helpers, coming and going, and I, began packing around 9:00 a.m. and finished after midnight. Mac wanted me to go to New Jersey to make sure his archive was secure,

but I could not, having to be up for work in a few hours. A few weeks later, though, I met him at his daughter in New Jersey and we went to the warehouse where his archive was stored to address a major concern he had talked to me about by telephone several times - his old 33's, 45's and 78's. Once at the warehouse, I cleared out nearly the whole compartment to find his records in a cardboard barrel (Mac could not help as he still had a bad hand); he was thrilled that the records had not been damaged by weight on them.

As Mac continued living at his daughter, he was forced by rapidly deteriorating sight to seek help, and his patient, sensitive White son-in-law drove him all the way from New Jersey to Queens to meet with the doctor Vic had got for him. Often on their way back to New Jersey, Mac insisted on stopping by my house for up to two hours of chat.

Mac's stay at his daughter lasted about two years before, very surprisingly to me even with his 'ownwayness', he could no longer relate to his wonderful son-in-law. So, Mac moved into a one-room apartment by himself around 2005. That would have been the ideal for such a fiercely independent man if he were in good health, but with a hand recovering from injury and very weak eyes, I had lots of doubt. Around this same time, Jeremy Poynting of Peepal Tree Press contacted me about his desire to publish a collection of Wordsworth McAndrew poems. I in turn relayed the information to Mac, who was keen. One problem was that all of his writing was locked away in the warehouse. Nevertheless, Mac said he could rewrite his poems. After discussing the matter with Professor John Rickford, he offered a computer and printer. These I collected from John in Manhattan, when he was passing through New York from California, headed to the UWI, I think. A few days later, I drove to Mac's apartment in Newark and spent the day setting up the two pieces of equipment, and answering, not unexpectedly, all of his questions about their operations. In addition to typing, he longed to surf the internet, and was disappointed that he first had to have an internet provider. (Naturally, we chatted about other matters.) Although he looked physically weak and could hardly see, it was my pleasure that he was still mentally sharp and wanted to keep pace with the dynamic world.

I left Mac expecting many calls on the computer and printer, due to his near blindness, and those calls came. However, I also knew he would need someone sitting with him for him to be able to type. In the end, he did not begin the poetry project for which Jeremy was willing to offer some money that Mac needed, up front.

As Mac's health declined, it became more difficult to understand him during our telephone conversations, due to problems with his dentures, but we looked forward to greeting each other with "*Oooi Buddybo*", and having a good 'gyaaff' on politics, literature, culture and sports. He was fond of talking about radio news stories and words, sometimes asking what I knew about a particular word or term. The questions on words were spontaneously asked during conversation on any topic, but I had to be at my sharpest when we talked about cricket. This was because the game was constantly changing and he didn't want to be left behind not knowing terms such as 'Duckworth-Lewis', 'free hit', etc. Regarding sports, Mac loved cricket and swimming. His favourite West Indies player was Shivnarine Chanderpaul and he regularly asked me: "*How we baai doin'?*" Mac became angry when he remembered the 1975 West Indies Tour of Australia and some of what he called questionable decisions against the West Indies. He delighted in recalling his days swimming in Georgetown's Lamaha Canal and regretted not having the opportunity to swim in the USA.

In 2007, after going to a hospital and spending some days, Mac said the doctors had found 'something', and taken care of it and had sent him home. I wondered whether Mr. Ownway had discharged himself! In 2008, he said he was returning to the hospital and Ingram Lewis would keep me posted. After hearing from Ingram in April of 2008, I went to meet Mac in the hospital on April 23rd. I met one of his brothers and a sister outside the hospital leaving, but they came back in with me. When we got to the room, I could not believe my eyes! There he was as gaunt as a twig, hooked up to all sorts of tubes and motionless! "*Buddybo*," I called out emotionally.

He opened those large eyes, but I don't know if he saw me, and knowing the end was near, I spontaneously burst out singing:

“Ah goin ova Canje waata
See maan o’ dey
Ova Canje waata
See maan o’ dey
Away santie la la laaa
See maan o’ dey...”

For a fleeting moment the life returned to him, as he tried vainly to rise and sing. But alas, the loud folk-song-singer-stomper, who could bore holes in the ground and smash your living room floor with his bare feet when dancing Queh Queh, could make only slight windy sounds.

Mac’s sister and brother said he had not communicated with anyone for a few days, and that I was probably one of the last persons he would connect with. Mac died two days later, on April 25th, 2008. My only joy was that my Buddybo had recognized my voice and that the folk song had uplifted his spirit.

April 25th, 2011

PLEASANT SURPRISES!

Pleasant Surprises!

Two of Mac's lovely writing surprises that I found are his undated essay '**Changes in Georgetown during the Past Twelve Months**' and his minutes of the British Guiana PEN Club's inaugural meeting dated 24th February, 1960. The essay, written when he was a 5A student at Queen's College, has information which may catch the attention even of people who did not live in Georgetown at the time. I have included all of the information I found on the British Guiana PEN to make his minutes more meaningful.

Based on Mac's '**Extract from the Wordsworth McAndrew Bibliography**', he wrote the play '**Freedom Street Blues**' in 1970. Although I did not find the play in his archive, I saw his skit on Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow and thought it would be a useful addition to his history being told in this book. I don't know whether the skit was ever performed, but Mac, the theatre actor, would have relished playing Critchlow, who was a man like him - unbowed and unapologetic for what he strongly believed in.

I really wanted readers to be able to look at samples of Mac's handwriting. While he was at QC, his handwriting could be easily read. However, I regret that readers will not have the exciting challenge of trying to read his handwriting when he wrote the PEN Minutes and the skit on Critchlow.

English

Changes in Georgetown during the Past Twelve Months

During the last eight or nine years, Georgetown, the capital city of British Guiana, has been ravaged at fairly regular intervals by fire. Notable fires of this period are the Black Friday fires, the first of which, in February 1945, devoured the greater part of the city's shopping centre. Two other such fires followed in succeeding intervals, both of them damaging the shopping centre, and both of them occurring on Fridays.

As a result of this fire period, the face of Georgetown was completely altered, and for some time it was usual for the tourist to the colony to see large expanses of debris in the greater part of Water Street.

In the past year, however, vast changes have taken place. New buildings which had been gradually growing seemed to spring up overnight. The majority of these are lofty, imposing edifices, built of stone to withstand further attacks by fire, and are equipped with all modern fittings.

A good example is Bookers Universal Store, a long, rambling edifice of pink stone with a lofty tower in the centre. Inside there is an elevator, a snack bar, not to mention innumerable shopping departments and counters, and the bright cheery atmosphere which is due to an ample use of glass and electricity. The architect whose brainchild this building is is indeed praiseworthy.

Ferreira and Gomes' is a similar stone building, but the inside is not as cheery as that of the previous building. Together these two buildings take up about a quarter of a block, and really enhance the appearance of the city.

Many more examples can be cited, chiefly Fogarty's, the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society's building (in which the Georgetown Museum is also housed), Sandbach Parker's, D. M. Fernandes', Geddes Grant's, and S. S. Khouri's. All of these buildings are similar to the first one described, and altogether they almost completely regenerate the piece of flesh bitten out of the city by the sanguinary fires.

But other changes have taken place. There has been a steady influx of bigger, better and more charming houses, with the accent on stone and on pastel colours. The most outstanding of these can be found at the corner of Lamaha and Peter Rose streets. It is a two-storeyed stone building painted in cream, with black corrugated iron fittings. Built to face North-East, directly into the wind, it is most handsomely decorated with antique and modern furniture arranged very sensibly.

Lastly, three roomy, comfortable new stone cinemas have been built. Their chief feature is the lovely pastel shades that have been employed in painting them, and in addition, two of them are the first cinemas in the colony to be equipped with comfortable chairs in the stalls. Needless to say, they have gained many patrons.

On the whole, the city of Georgetown has been growing into a bigger, better, pleasanter-looking metropolis during the last twelve months, and it is to be hoped that it will keep on doing so.

Editor's Notes: PEN originally stood for Poets, Essayists and Novelists. Apparently, though, the organization now has writers of any form of literature, including journalists and historians.

I have included all of the British Guiana PEN information I found in Mac's archive to help readers get a good grasp of how the organization functioned and, as already stated, to make his Minutes of the inaugural, February 24th, 1960, British Guiana PEN Meeting more meaningful.

Rules of the British Guiana Centre of the International PEN Club

Name

1. The name of the Club shall be "The International PEN Club, British Guiana Centre.

Objects and Aims

2. The International PEN Club is a world association of writers and others closely associated with the profession of literature. It was founded in 1921 by Mr. C. A. Dawson Scott and its aim is to promote and maintain friendship and intellectual co-operation between men of letters in all countries, in the interests of literature, freedom of artistic expression and international goodwill. Without goodwill between nations the spirit of man finds itself held up and turned back at national frontiers. And without the fullest freedom of expression the intellect cannot attempt its work of rendering harmless these frontiers.

The PEN does not concern itself with State or Party politics, and may not be used to serve their interests. It stands for humane conduct and within the framework of its organization is always ready to testify to its faith.

The PEN lays stress on the interlocked interests of writers and all those who believe in the writing and dissemination of good books, for though these will vary with the mental climate of the world, they can never be in conflict.

The following extracts from its resolutions clarify the attitude of the PEN towards certain important questions: -

- (a) Literature, national though it be in origin, knows no frontiers and should remain common currency between nations in spite of political or international upheavals.
- (b) In all circumstances, and particularly in time of war, works of art, the patrimony of humanity at large, should be left untouched by national or political passion.

- (c) Members of the PEN will at all times use what influence they have in favour of good understanding and mutual respect between nations.
- (d) That so far as is consistent with international standards of decency, we declare for a free press and oppose arbitrary censorship in time of peace. And, since freedom implies voluntary restraint, we pledge ourselves to oppose such evils of a free press as mendacious publication, deliberate falsehood and distortion of facts for political and personal ends.
- (e) That we of the International PEN Club will do our utmost, with that great power of the written word, to dispel race, class, and national hatreds and champion the ideals of one humanity living in peace in one world. The PEN maintains its independence in all circumstances and affiliates with no other organization, though it keeps the friendliest relations with all.

Officers

3. The British Guiana Centre shall appoint four officers annually, or re-appoint those already holding office, as follows: President, Vice-President, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. Such elections will take place at the Annual General Meeting. Candidates must be nominated by two members and their consent to serve must be obtained previously by the nominators.

An auditor shall also be appointed, who need not be a member of the organization.

Committee

4. There shall be an Executive Committee which shall consist of the officers and three or more persons elected yearly by vote at the Annual General Meeting or, if necessary, at a special General Meeting. Candidates for such election must be nominated by two members of the Centre and their willingness to serve must be previously ascertained by the nominators.

The executive Committee shall meet quarterly, or more often if necessary. It shall have the power to appoint sub-committees. Persons not members of the Club may be co-opted to serve on such sub-committees. At meetings of the Executive Committee the quorum shall be four. If a member of the Executive Committee does not attend meetings for a period of one year he will forfeit his membership of the Committee and will not be eligible for election in the following year, unless a satisfactory reason should be given for his inability to attend.

Accounts

5. All money received shall be banked in the name of the Centre, and cheques shall be signed by any two of the following three officers: the President, the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurer.

Subscription and Entrance Fees

6. On election each member shall pay an entrance fee of three dollars. Subscriptions of five dollars annually shall be due on February 1. Members who have not paid by August 1 shall be liable to forfeit membership. Subscriptions may be paid in installments with the approval of the Executive Committee.

Members who join during any part of the first half of the Club's year shall be required to pay the full year's subscription. Members who join during the second half of the year shall pay half of the year's subscription.

Membership

7. Members shall be persons who are writers, editors or translators of standing in any branch of literature. Persons under twenty-one years of age, and those who have ceased writing for a long period, shall not be eligible.

An applicant for membership must be sponsored by one member who is acquainted with his work. Applicants are required to sign their agreement to the Charter of the PEN

attached to the application form. Election to membership shall be at the decision of the Executive Committee.

Resignation

8. Members desiring to resign from the Club shall give notice to this effect in writing to the Secretary who will report it to the Executive Committee at the next meeting. All outstanding subscriptions shall be paid by a retiring member.

Honorary Members

9. The Executive Committee shall have the power to elect honorary members who may be resident in British Guiana or abroad. Honorary Members are not to be liable for the payment of subscriptions, nor eligible to serve on the Committee or vote at the General Meetings.

Associate Members

10. The Executive Committee shall have the power to elect as Associate Members persons who are in sympathy with the literary aims of International PEN, but who, for one reason or another, are not qualified for full membership. Associate members shall be required to pay the same membership fee as full members, but shall not be required to pay the entrance fee. They shall not be eligible to vote, but shall have the same right to speak as a full member.

Amendment to Rules

11. Amendment to the rules proposed by members shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least two weeks prior to the date of the Annual General Meeting

Annual International Congress

12. Official delegates to the Annual International Congress of the PEN Club shall be chosen by the Executive Committee.

Resolutions

13. Proposals for resolutions, motions or proposals to be submitted to the International Secretary by the British Guiana Centre for inclusion in those to be submitted to the Annual Congress, shall be sent in writing to the Honorary Secretary for consideration by the Executive Committee of the BG Centre, and shall be approved in General Meeting.

Meetings and Activities

14. The Club's year shall begin on February 1 and the Annual General Meeting shall be held no later than February 28 of any year. No guests are permitted at the Annual General Meeting, but at PEN dinners each member shall have the right to invite one guest in addition to the official guests of the Club. Members are responsible for the costs of their guests. Club guests are paid for by the Club. In addition to the Annual General Meeting, meetings shall be held once per month, or more often if this is deemed necessary or desirable. Members may invite guests to these meetings, but guests should not participate in literary discussions unless invited to do so. Arrangements for meetings shall be in the hands of the Executive Committee. A Special General Meeting will be arranged at any time that this may be deemed necessary, following a written application to the Secretary from a member. With the consent of the Executive Committee, all members will then be notified in writing by the Secretary of the date, time and place of the meeting.

Entertainment of Visitors

15. In keeping with the practice of the other centres of the PEN the British Guiana Centre shall endeavour as far as possible to entertain at meetings, or individually in a private capacity, any members of the PEN who are visitors to this country, or any other writer or person of prominence in any literary or associated field when such instances occur, although preference shall be given to members of the PEN.

Correspondence

16. In keeping with the practice of other centres of the PEN the British Guiana Centre shall enter into correspondence with any other centre or with members thereof as shall be deemed desirable or necessary for the promotion of matters of interest and importance between them.

Letters of Introduction

17. Letters of introduction to the secretaries of other centres will be given by the Secretary of the British Guiana Centre to any member who intends travelling to any country where a centre of the PEN is situated, in order that every facility that the member may be able to derive from such contact will be available to him.

Minutes of the inaugural meeting of the British Guiana Centre of PEN

PRESENT WERE: Mr. A. J. Seymour, who acted as Chairman;
Mr. W. A. McAndrew, who acted as Secretary;

Mr. Roy Savill	Miss Janet Hackett
Mr. Martin Carter	Mrs Rajcoomari Singh
Mr. L. D. Cleare	Mr. Ramjas Tiwari
Mr. Milton Williams	Mr. Clarence Hall
Mr. Kenneth Taharally	Mr. Malcolm Young
Mrs. Sheila Holder	Mr. V. L. C. Forsythe
Mrs. Cecile Nobrega	Miss Celeste Dolphin
Mr. Frank Thomasson	Mr. Sheik Sadeek
Mrs. Mary Woods	Mr. Ian McDonald
Mr. Allan Young	Mrs Florence Caviglioli

a total of 22.

BUSINESS: Everyone present (except Mrs. Woods) signed the certificate of subscription to the PEN Charter before the beginning of the meeting, which was called to order at 6:25 p.m.

The Chairman began by welcoming the gathering formally, and went on to give a brief resume of the beginnings of PEN in British Guiana and the steps taken between the idea of a BG Centre and its realization.

Then he called upon the Secretary to read out the Charter of the International PEN, and asked members to indicate by show of hands that they subscribe to its aims. Twenty-one hands went up, only Mrs. Woods abstaining.

Next item on the agenda was a final ratification of the rules as amended at the last general meeting on November 25, and Mr. Thomasson brought up the question of non-payment of entrance fees by foundation members. He felt that as the Club was just being born it would need as much of a grub-stake, so to speak, as it could muster, and for this reason he thought that no-one should be exempt from

payment of the entrance fee. Mr. Carter was of the same opinion, and the Chairman explained that the present rule was based on the practice of the English Centre. Mr. Savill thought that the foundation members could be asked to make a donation over and above the first annual subscription, in lieu of the entrance fee - in other words, that the entrance fee be made optional for foundation members.

The question was put, and Mr. Thomasson's suggestion was ruled out by 9 votes to 7, in favour of Mr. Savill's.

Mr. Thomasson then pointed out that the rules as circulated to the house in cyclostyled form, did not stipulate the amount of the annual subscription and this was inserted.

Mr. Thomasson then moved the final ratification of the rules, and Miss Dolphin seconded.

The Secretary then read the following resolution:

"We having gathered together here on this 24th day of February, 1960, for the purpose of inaugurating the British Guiana Centre of the International PEN, do hereby declare that we subscribe to the Charter of the International PEN and do now agree to become the foundation members of the British Guiana Centre."

All present agreed by show of hands to associate themselves with this resolution and the names of the 22 bona fide professional writers who formed the Club were then read out.

The Chairman then called upon the Secretary to read out the three cabled messages received from the following persons abroad who are interested in the inauguration of PEN in British Guiana:

Mr. David Carver, International Secretary of PEN; Mr. Louhichtveld, Member of the Netherlands PEN, and Chairman of the Conference of Information Officers in Suriname where the idea of a BG Centre was first mooted; and Mrs Qumsby-Marshall, Secretary of the Jamaica PEN.

The meeting then moved on to its final stage - the election of the first officers and Committee Members.

For each of the first four posts, viz, President, Vice-President, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer, there was no contest, the following persons being duly declared the officers:

President - A. J. Seymour
Vice-President - Mr. Allan Young
Honorary Secretary - Mr. Roy Savill
Honorary Treasurer - Mr. Frank Thomasson

Five persons were nominated to sit on the Committee: Mr. Martin Carter, Miss Celeste Dolphin, Mr. Ian McDonald, Mrs. Mary Woods and Mr. W. A. McAndrew.

The rules call for 'three or more' Committee members, and rather than have the seats contested it was agreed on a motion by Mr. Thomasson that Committee Members should be five in number.

The rules also provide that an auditor shall be appointed, who need not be a member of the Club, and it was thought to elect him there and then, but Mr. McAndrew pointed out that this should be a job for the Committee and this was agreed.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Mrs. Nobrega wondered whether the Club would provide any outlet for the sporadic writings of members, and the President assured her that it would.

Mr. Thomasson mentioned for the information of those present that the Theatre Guild had decided to hold its plans for a Playwrights' Group in abeyance until it could be seen whether or not the two bodies would overlap in their scope of activities.

Mr. Tiwari wanted to know how it was that would-be Associate Members had been allowed to vote at the inaugural meeting in spite of the fact that Rule 10 withholds the vote from Associate Members. The Chairman explained that this was only the inaugural meeting and therefore everyone present was a 'foundation member' and not yet a 'full member' or an 'associate member'.

Mr. Thomasson then asked permission to thank Mr. Seymour on behalf of all present for the good work he had done in pushing PEN in BG from idea to reality, and the latter acknowledged the thanks of the house.

Then at 7:11 p.m., the President declared the inaugural meeting closed.

Mrs. Woods argued the certificate of subscription ...

Editor's Note: Perhaps, Mac felt no further need to document Mrs. Woods' argument, which ends abruptly, since the meeting had ended.

Skit

(Mac's unnamed skit is based on Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, the 'Father' of trade unionism in Guyana.)

Critchlow comes in as chorus (or participant narrator)

I was de one dat start it...Me Skibby. I start it way back in 19...leh me see now... Well yo see de hard part is to decide which year it really start. So ah tink we gon gat to go back-back to de year when I call de fus strike dey ever had in dis country.

Duh was, leh me see-nineteen hundred an five, if Ah remember right. Duh was jus couple years after de old Electric Company open an de tramcars start to run. Was also couple years after de East Coast train line open right up to Rosignol. Anyhow, duh is just to gie yo a idea how long ago it all happen. But de year I talkin bout is 1905. Now duh was a time when men in dis country use to work 10 ½ hours a day - which mean dat when dey lef home early in de morning fo seven o' clock wuk dey ain comin back till night. Hmm I tell yo, children never use to see dey father till weekend, yeh. An doan talk bout de workin conditions!

Nowadays, you all does row if de paymaster forget to put in yo ovatime - OT as dey callin it now. But leh me tell you, yeh. In dem days wuh I talkin bout dey din invent duh yet. Wuk was wuk an time was time. When de boss seh wuk on, yo wuk on. An if yo mek yoself stupid seh yo want OT or better workin conditions is out yo gone. An in dem days if yo get lay off is lay off wuh dey use to call 'de quarter-day system'- which mean all yo kyarrin home fo duh day was a quarter day pay. Sound like no big ting, eh? But when I seh a quarter day pay yo gat to ask me how much was a day pay. Yo know how much? A conductor pon de tramcar use to get 5 cents an hour till after he wuk a year. Den a increment of a cent- one God cent in e second year- which kyarry e to 6 cents an hour.

Pon de sugar estate was a shilling a day if yo was a canecutter or shobelman or so, 36 cents if yo was a porter in de factory, an if yo was a sugar curer well den yo get 40 cents a day.

Pon de waterfront now was two shilling a day if yo was a boy - in other words, if yo pushin truck. If yo ain pushin truck well den yo getting 64 cents a day - seh if yo was a sugar packer. But if yo was a stevedore proper well then you was half-a-chibat, cause stevedore money was ninety cents a day.

Anyhow duh was de set up in 1905. Duh time I was only twenty-one, yo know, but as a young man Ah had a lot of guts - which was scarce ting in dem days.

So as a dock worker meself I really coun siddown every God day an see de stupidity wuh gine on. How de older men coulda tek it I really doan know- muse because most o dem had wife an chilrun. But Buddy Bo I ain had a chick nor chile, an as Ah done tell yo aready Ah had de guts.

So guess wuh I do nuh? Ah wait good a day till dey had whole six big ships in de harbor waitin to unload - was November month, if Ah remember - de 28th, comin on to Xmas so yo could understand how Ah time de move good. An wuh Ah do? Ah call de boys togedder. (Beckons to comrades off stage. Enter Stevedores, water woman, one with Sandbach Parker & Co. Ltd placard, which he sticks up.)

Skibby (to Stevedores): Hi, dis is de chance we did waitin fo, boys. If we down tools now, we gat dem!

1st S (scornfully): Gat dem? How you mean gat dem? Yo mean we gat weself. Look I ain know bout de res o yoall (looking at the others), but I gat a woman and four hungrybelly chilrun fo mind, an Xmas jus roun de corner - me ain tekkin no knockoff today!

2nd S: But wait an hear wuh Skibby ga fo seh fus, nuh boy? (Sucks teeth.)

1st S: Hear wuh Skibby ga fo seh? I done know wuh Skibby ga fo seh: e seh it enough times aready. "*Leh we down tools boys, an dey gon ga fo increase we pay!*" Increase me big foot! Look, I warnin youall yeh! Dis boy hay gon mek all youall out of a good job fo Xmas. E gon tek bread out o yoall mout an kyaan even gie youall biscuit, an he ain gat a chick nor a chile!

Skibby: Awright you done talk? Well gie me a chance fo talk now. (Concentrating on the other 2) Hear boys, dis is me idea...Right now yo gat six ship out deh-yo know wuh is six ships? Six times de money fo dese bloodsuckin bitches dat we starving fo, day in day out. Six times de money so Mr. Sandbach an Mr. Parker would rake back behind dey moto car an puff dey big cigar and dream bout White Xmas in England!

So if we gon mek any move at all, NOW is de time.

3rd S: Move an do wuh, Skibby? Move an do wuh?

Skibby: Well de fus ting we ga fo do is down tools. Den we stan up an wait till de foman come fo find out wuh gine on.

1st S: An wuh we gon tell e den?

Skibby: How yo mean wuh we gon tell e? We gon tell e dat we stop wuk because we want pay. Duh's wuh we go tell e!

1st S (laughing derisively): O duh's wuh we gon tell e. An wuh you tink he gon seh? Wuh you tink he gon seh?

2nd & 3rd S: Yes, Skibby wuh you tink de foman go seh?

Skibby: E could seh wuh e like. If we stick togedda e kyaan knock off all o we. So e gon gat to refer de matter to de owners dem.

1st S: An den wuh?

Skibby: Den we gon put we case to de boss. Or youall frighken?

1st S: Put wuh case?

Skibby: Dat we want mo pay, 16 cents a hour instead o wuh we getting now!

2nd S: Wuh? 16 cents a hour! I deh in duh, boy!

3rd S: Me too!

(Everybody looks at 1st S.)

1st S (reflective): Well...ahmm. Me'n tink dey would ever gree to something like duh. But anyhow if everybody else willin - awright, count me in, Skibby. Ah deh wid yuh!

Skibby (smiling): Good. Well doan do nutten till I give yoall de signal.

1st, 2nd & 3rd S: Right, Skibby. We waitin pon yuh.

EARLY PUBLIC SERVICE LIFE

Mac's Early Work Life

I was lucky to find several letters in Mac's archive regarding his public service employment. However, I would have loved hearing Celeste Dolphin, A. J. Seymour, Jake Croker, Henry Josiah (my wife's uncle) and others with whom he served at GIS talk about their work experiences with him, but they're no longer alive.

The letters written to Mac by government officials had the note "IN REPLYING QUOTE DATE AND No." in the top left corner, though I retyped it only on the September 30th, 1963 letter. Thus, readers will observe lots of dates and reference numbers (like lawyers arguing cases) in the exchange of letters between Mac and his supervisors.

Readers can make up their own minds about the tightness or cumbersomeness of the bureaucracy, but the salutation "Sir" and the valediction "I have the honour to be Sir" remind me of military rigidity.

Mac's responses to charges regarding his mode of dress, inappropriate behaviours or inefficiency at work and his battle to be appropriately paid were typical of him. His fight for his correct salary (letter of 2nd August, 1967) is an excellent example of the principled man I later got to know. The salary fight, by a remarkably young Mac, was not as much about more money, as it was about what was wrong and what was right!

Editor's Notes: The 'Sir' addressed in this letter was the President of the British Guiana Civil Service Association, thus "Therefore, the mediation of the Association..." in the final paragraph.

Mac's letter does not have a specific day, but in British Guiana (now independent Guyana) the day usually came/comes before the month and year, when writing a formal date, as opposed to the USA where the month leads the day and year.

Ministry of Labour Health & Housing
Brickdam, Georgetown
January, 1962

Dear Sir,

I beg to draw your attention to the following case of unfair treatment by a Head of Department: -

(a) I am a Class II Clerk of nearly seven years standing, having joined the Public Service in that capacity on April 1st, 1955.

(b) On September 28th, 1960, after a three-year period of secondment to the Government Information Services, I was posted to the Ministry of Labour, Health and Housing, under the then Acting Permanent Secretary, Mr. E. S. Drayton.

My duties then were mainly those of Accounts Clerk to the Ministry in addition to which I was called upon to file work separately and in conjunction with one or more of the Charge Officers.

(c) About one month before my increment fell due (i.e. in late February or early March), Mr. Drayton, who was then Acting Principal Assistant Secretary, spoke to me at length about what he termed my "gross inefficiency". He claimed briefly that (i) I didn't have enough work to do; and

(ii) what I did do was not well done

and he warned me that I might have cause for regret if I did not “pull my socks up”.

(d) Subsequently, my increment fell due and I was informed by him that he was not at all satisfied with my work, especially in a newly integrated Ministry, and could not, in all fairness to himself and to me, approve my increment.

(e) The Permanent Secretary, who had never worked with me before his resumption of duty in January, 1961, concurred with the Principal Assistant Secretary’s findings and I was informed that my increment would be withheld for six months, pending a further appraisal of my work. The Secretary, Public Service Commission, was informed of this by the Ministry and the report was passed on to me.

(f) In July, 1961, my accounting duties were transferred to the Accounts Branch of the former Medical Department and I was transferred to the Personnel Officer’s Staff ostensibly to do work of an administrative nature.

(g) On September 19th, 1961, I submitted to the Permanent Secretary an application for six months vacation leave with effect from November 1st, 1961.

(h) By October 30th, 1961, I had heard nothing further of the application and I submitted a further letter asking for an early reply.

(i) In November, still having heard nothing about my leave, I minuted the Permanent Secretary through the Personnel Officer enquiring the position regarding both this and the restoration of my increment, which was now very much due.

(j) Still hearing nothing, I called to see the Principal Assistant Secretary (Health) (Mr. Drayton) who once more took the opportunity to tell me how dissatisfied he thought my services were, etc., etc. He stated too that he had been informed that I was a disruptive influence in the Personnel

Section and was encouraging younger officers than myself not to pull their weight. He ended up by asking me to submit a list of my duties, as he was not aware of what work I was doing in the Personnel Section. Upon receipt of this, he said he would have to discuss the matter with the Personnel Officer before a decision could be made as to my incremental fate. I was told nothing whatsoever about my leave application, and I got the impression (subsequently proven to be the true position) that nothing at all had been done about it.

(k) On December 30th, 1961, I was summoned to the office of the permanent Secretary who informed me verbally that he had received a report from the former Personnel Officer (now Charge Officer (Housing)) stating that I need very close supervision in the performance of my duties and that the volume of work which used to be at his desk precluded him (the Personnel Officer) from exercising such supervision. The Permanent Secretary further stated that on the strength of this report, and also because:

- (i) being of an artistic temperament he finds me to be a square peg in a round hole;
- (ii) my manner, dress, speech and attitude are to his way of thinking, disrespectful;
- (iii) he understands that I am a disruptive influence among the male staff of the Personnel Section;
- (iv) he feels that I have made a mess of my duties; and
- (v) he is of the opinion that I usually write "odes" during working hours; he has decided that my increment (to use his own words) "*Cannot be granted – at least not yet*".

I asked him why, if it seems that I will never be able to give him satisfaction, he does not have me transferred to some other department, and he replied that if this was what I wished he would do so. Finally, I enquired about my leave application, to which the reply was "*I haven't considered it yet*" (and this after four months and two reminders!)

2. From the foregoing facts, it should be clear why I have submitted this matter to you for your earnest and

sympathetic consideration and your official intervention on my behalf.

3. I believe that both the Head of Department and the Principal Assistant Secretary have been grossly unfair and discriminating in their actions towards me, and will continue to be so until they have succeeded in running me out of the Service. Even if I am transferred, as now seems quite possible, I am sure that the report which would accompany me would be such as to render me a "marked man" from the start

The remarks by the Permanent Secretary mentioned in (k) of paragraph 1 should alone be illustration enough of the kind of spurious mentality and outlook which I am up against in this Ministry, and which seems bent on embarrassing me financially (by loss of my increment) and also by the loss of my earned vacation leave.

4. It would take too long to refute here all the many charges made against me by the Administration in support of their decision not to approve of my increment, but I can assure you that I do my work as well and as conscientiously as the next man and have never lost an increment in my past six years of service.

5. I should point out, too, that since my transfer to the Personnel Section in July, 1961, I have been called upon to carry out an impossible volume of work, as the attached list of duties will show, and I have done this without murmur or complaint until now. All these duties (except in a few cases, applications under D) are performed by me without any need for, or possibility of supervision by the Personnel Officer (c.f. the ex-Personnel Officer's report mentioned at (k) of paragraph 1)

6. I am at present drafting a letter of appeal to the Secretary, Public Service Commission, in accordance with G. O. 192, but do not hold out much hope for justice, since it seems to be an established rule in matters such as these that the Head of Department is always right (or at least, must be supported

even if he isn't). Therefore, the mediation of the Association is the only hope left to Junior Officers, and I hope and trust that you will represent me in this matter as well and as early as you can.

Yours sincerely,
W. A. McAndrew

Editor's Notes: Given the conventional way of writing a date in British Guiana/ Guyana, 1. 5 63, is the first of May, 1963. One might consider "Monday, Sept. 16, 1963" unusual. Also unusual is "Newtown, ECD" (East Coast, Demerara). Newtown is regarded as a part of Kitty, and Kitty is on the outskirts of Georgetown. Was Newtown a part of the East Coast in 1963? Knowing Mac, it would be a question worth researching.

Observe that Mac was at the Ministry of Agriculture, not the Ministry of Labour Health and Housing.

36 De Andrade St.,
Newtown, ECD.
Monday, Sept. 16, 1963.

Sir,

I resigned from the Public Service of British Guiana with effect from June 3, 1963 (vide my letter dated June 2, 1963).

2. During my period of service, I was a contributor to the New Widows' and Orphans' Fund, the rules governing which state, inter alia, that a bachelor or widower without children of pensionable age is entitled, on leaving the Service, to the refund of his contributions with compound interest at 2 ½ % per annum.

3. I shall therefore be grateful, since I am – and was at the time of my resignation – a bachelor, if you will make early arrangements for such a refund to be made to me.

4. I shall also be grateful if you will make arrangement for me to be paid the amount due me as salary for the period 1. 5. 63. to 5. 5. 63, during which I was on full pay vacation leave prior to resuming duty on 6. 5. 63.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. A. McAndrew

Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Lands
The Permanent Secretary

Editor's Notes: Observe conventional ways of writing and acknowledging dates. Observe also "New-town, Kitty" (with Kitty underlined by the writer), not "Newtown, ECD."

I could not tell from the signature who signed for the Permanent Secretary.

IN REPLYING QUOTE DATE
HEREOF AND No.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTS & LANDS
P. O. Box 256,
Georgetown,
British Guiana,
30th September, 1963.

Sir:

Thank you for your letter of 16th September, 1963.

2. It is confirmed that salary is due you for the period 1st May, 1963 to 5th May, 1963, inclusive.

3. I am afraid, however, that preparation of the necessary paysheet is being deferred until notification is received from the Commissioner of Inland Revenue as to your Income-tax liability.

I have the honour to be
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
For Permanent Secretary

Mr. W. A. McAndrew,
36, DeAndrade St.,
New-town,
Kitty

Editor's Notes: I could not tell the Secretary's name from the signature.

Observe that this response acknowledges Mac's address as it was given: "...Newtown, E. C. D."

NEW WIDOWS & ORPHANS' FUND,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown, Demerara,
British Guiana.
19th February, 1964

Sir,

I have to inform you that contributions to the New Widows and Orphans' Fund are refundable to you.

However, in order to refund your contributions to you it is necessary that all your contributions to the Fund up to the time of your resignation be received.

In the circumstances, I would suggest that you uplift the balance of your salary due and payable to you by Government in order that your contribution may be deducted therefrom and credited to the Fund.

Yours faithfully,
Secretary,
New Windows & Orphans' Fund

Mr. W. A. McAndrew,
36, D' Andrade Street,
Newtown, E. C. D.

Editor's Note: The spelling "connexion" might not very popular, but it is another way of spelling "connection".

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown,
Guyana.
1st September, 1966.

Dear Sir,

I am directed to inform you that approval has been given for your employment as a Temporary Information Officer with effect from August 9th, 1966, until further orders, in connexion with the publicising of the Development Programme..

2. You will be paid a salary of \$225 per month chargeable against the allocation made to this Ministry from Division VII Ministry of Economic Development, Sub-head 3 Development Programme, publishing and publicising by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Economic Development (Inter Departmental Warrant No 27/66 refers.)

Yours faithfully,
Permanent Secretary. (ag.)

Mr. W. McAndrew,
c/o Guyana Information Services,
Brickdam.
c. c. Accountant General
D/Audit Chief Information Officer.

Editor's Note: I could not tell the Acting Permanent Secretary's name from the signature.

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown,
Guyana.
12th October, 1966

Dear Sir,

I have to inform you that approval has been given for the utilization of your services in the Guyana Information Services, Office of the Prime Minister in connection with publicising of the Development Programme with effect from 9th August, 1966, until further notice.

2. During the period of your employment, you will be paid a salary of \$225 per month, chargeable to Division VII, Ministry of Economic Development, Sub-head 3 Development Programme, publishing and publicizing.

3. My letter of even number dated 1st September, 1966, is hereby withdrawn.

Yours faithfully,
Permanent Secretary (ag.)

Mr. W. McAndrew,
c/o Guyana Information Services,
Brickdam.

c. c. Accountant General
Director of Audit
Secretary to the Treasury (Est.)
Chief Information Officer.

Editor's Notes:

G. O. – Government Order

I. O. – Information Officer

P. S. C – Public Service Commission

w. r. t – with respect to

P.S.,

We spoke w. r. t. the anomalous and untenable financial position in which I have been placed by the issuing of G. O. No. 286/5/4 Vol. II dated 6. 7. 67, which authorises the payment to me of salary at the reduced rate of \$ 230.00 per month in the scale A20 (\$2760-\$4224 P. A.).

2. Briefly the position is as follows:

(a) On 9. 8. 66, I was appointed a Temporary Information Officer with salary of \$255.00 per month chargeable to Division 7 Ministry of Economic Development, Sub-head 3, Development Programme, Publishing and Publicising (letter No. M286/43¹¹ d. d. 12. 10. 66, from the Prime Minister's Office refers).

(b) Subsequently, correspondence was initiated by this Ministry with a view to having me placed on the Permanent Establishment. It was, I understand, pointed out by the Ministry in this correspondence that my aptitudes, past service, and previous G. I. S. experience (1958-60) made me a very suitable candidate for permanent – rather than temporary – employment.

(c) In any case, the Ministerial proposal was that I should be placed "at an appropriate point" on the Information Officer's scale – which clearly meant that I should go onto the Permanent Establishment at the \$263.00 p. m. incremental point.

(d) But instead of this, what has happened? After one year of unstinting service, I have been ordered to accept a salary cut of \$25.00 p. m., and for no stated reason except that "the P. S. C. has so directed".

3. Sir, it puzzles me to understand how the P. S. C., in the light of this Ministry's recommendations, could have issued the directive contained in the G. O. under discussion. After all, it is an unwritten rule of the Service that an officer is not to be penalised financially except for disciplinary reasons: and even then, he has to be told what he is being penalised for.

4. Again, it puzzles me to understand how this Ministry, after its glowing encomiums on me and my work and its request for me to be put on the I. O. scale at "an appropriate point" could leave the matter where it was from the time the G. O. was received and wait a whole month for me as the aggrieved party to query this latest bit of administrative injustice. Perhaps the fact that nowhere in the world does a man work a whole year for a drop (rather than a rise!) in pay was lost sight of.

5. I view this whole matter very seriously and hereby request immediate action by this Ministry to have the situation clarified by the P. S. C. And since, for fear of setting an irrevocable precedent, I have not yet thought it wise to collect my reduced "salary" for the month of July, I shall be glad if a definitive statement can be made by August 8, the day on which I shall have completed one full year of service.

6. If no clear statement is forthcoming, and in good time, I shall have no option but – albeit regretfully – to:

(a) Collect my salary at the new rate under severe protest; and

(b) tender my resignation from the Service, to which I shall have given a wasted year of my life.

7. The substance of sub-para. (b) of para. 6 has already been communicated to the Hon. Minister.

W. McAndrew
Temp. Information Officer.
2. 8. 67

Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Information
Information
Secretary, Public
Service Commission
4th August, 1967

MI: M-6/1
Mr. W. A. McAndrew - Appointment
as Temporary Information
Officer

Please refer to previous correspondence on the abovementioned subject ending with Government Order No. 286/5/4th of July 6, 1967.

2. In my predecessor's memorandum of even number dated 5th May, 1967, it was pointed out that Mr. McAndrew's educational qualifications were supplemented by the experience he had gained as a Broadcasting Officer, now redesignated Information Officer, in the Guyana Information Services from February 1958 to September 1960.

3. In the light of these considerations, it would appear that my predecessor did not only regard the post of Information Officer as "Professional-by-Experience" (and quite rightly too), but that in approving salary of \$255.00 per month, he was influenced by the clear need to attract and retain Officers of Mr. McAndrew's calibre in the Ministry of Information.

4. It is evident, however, that \$255.00 per month is not an appropriate point in the salary scale A20: \$2,760 x \$132 - \$3,552/\$3,720 x \$144 - \$4,224; but is nevertheless permissible under Regulation 12 of the Regulations governing acting appointments and acting allowances to Public Officers which stipulate that:

"When a person not in the Public Service is appointed to act in an office rendered vacant by any reason, he shall be remunerated at such a rate as the Governor (Commission) may decide."

5. After careful consideration of all the circumstances, I recommend that Mr. McAndrew should be appointed to act at \$255.00 per month and that payment at the rate of \$263

per month could be pursued if and when Mr. McAndrew is permanently appointed.

Sgd. E. S Drayton
Permanent Secretary

c. c. P.S., Public Service Ministry

P.S.,

We spoke about the anomalous and untenable financial position in which I have been placed by the issuing of GO No. 286/5/4^{II} (d. d. 6. 7. 67).

2. This GO authorizes payment to me of salary at the rate of \$230.00 p. m. in the scale A20: \$2760 - \$4224 p. a. – a reduction of \$25 p. m. on the \$255 p. m. authorised by my letter of appointment (which salary I have been in uninterrupted receipt of since 9. 8. 66).

3. Today, 10. 8. 67 - yesterday, incidentally, having been the anniversary of my appointment – I have, under very severe protest, taken receipt of my salary at the reduced rate for the month of July, 1967.

4. I assume that in due course the whole situation will be satisfactorily clarified and that at such time I will be fully compensated for the pecuniary issues to which I am now being subjected.

W. A. McAndrew,
Temp. I. O.
10. 8. 67

Editor's Note: T. O. Holder could have been the late Terence Ormonde Holder (Terry Holder). Terry, I believe, also attended Queen's College and was at one time General Manager of GBS, while Mac was an employee there. Terry was about six years younger than Mac, but they were good friends.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION,
18 Brickdam,
P. O. Box 108,
Georgetown,
Guyana
15th August, 1967

Dear Sir,

With reference to your note dated 10th instant regarding the anomalous and untenable position in which you have been placed by the issue of Government Order No. 286/5/4^{II} dated 6th July, 1967, I have enclosed herewith, for your information, a copy of a self explanatory memorandum which was forwarded to the Secretary, Public Service, with c. c. Permanent Secretary, Public Service Ministry.

Yours faithfully,
F. Johnson
Permanent Secretary

Mr. W. A. Mc Andrew
Temporary Information
u. f. s. Mr. T. O. Holder,
Information

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION,
P. O .Box 224,
Georgetown,
Guyana
20th September, 1967

Sir,

I am directed to offer you appointment to a pensionable post of Information Officer, Ministry of Information in the salary scale A20: \$2,760 x \$132-\$3,552 // \$3,720 x \$144 - \$4,224 per annum.

2. The appointment is subject to Colonial Regulations, General Orders, Financial Regulations, Stores Regulations, other local Regulations and Departmental Rules, which may be in force from time to time.

3. You will be required to pass a Medical Examination for admission to the public service and to serve on probation for a period of twelve (12) months. Confirmation in the appointment will be subject to satisfactory work and conduct during the probationary period.

4. I shall be glad if you will inform me early through the Permanent Secretary of your Ministry whether you accept the offer of appointment.

I have the honour to be,
Sir
Your obedient servant,
Sgd. R. Singh,
For Secretary,
Public Service Commission.

Mr. W. A. McAndrew,
Temporary Information Officer,
Ministry of Information
(u. f. s. P.S., Min. of Inf.)

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION,
P. O. Box 224,
GUYANA.

IMMEDIATE

4th December, 1967

Sir,

Offer of Appointment as Information Officer

I am directed to refer to my letter of even number dated 20th September, 1967, (a copy of which is attached for ease of reference) in which you have been offered appointment to a pensionable post of Information Officer, Ministry of Information and to ask you to inform me as soon as possible, but not later than the 15th December, 1967, through the Permanent Secretary of your Ministry whether or not you accept the offer of appointment.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

..Your obedient servant,

(M. H. ALI)

for Secretary,

Public Service Commission

Mr. W. A. McAndrew,
Temporary Information Officer,
Ministry of Information.
(u. f. s. P. S., Min. of Information)

URGENT

P.S.

We spoke about the question of my acceptance of the permanent appointment as Information Officer offered me by the P. S. C.

2. Attached please find 2 copies of the letter indicating my terms of acceptance, which I shall be grateful if you would forward to the Secretary, P. S. C., with your supporting recommendations.

W. A. McAndrew,
Temporary Information Officer
14/12/67.

Editor's Note: G. P. O. Building: General Post Office Building.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION,
18 Brickdam,
Georgetown,
Guyana.
14th December, 1967.

Sir,

Thank you for your letter No. 286/5/4^{II} dated 20th September, 1967, offering me appointment to a pensionable post of Information Officer, Ministry of Information, in the salary scale A20: 2,760 - \$4,224 per annum.

2. I hereby accept the appointment offered, provided that:-

(a) I be paid salary at the rate of \$263 per month (\$3,156 per annum) as recommended by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information, in his memorandum (No. MI: M-6/1 dated 4th August, 1967) addressed to you as a result of previous correspondence on this matter; and

(b) payment of salary at the above rate be made effective from August 9, 1966, the date on which I assumed duty as Temporary Information Officer.

I have the honour to be,
Sir
Your obedient servant,
W. A. McAndrew
Temporary Information Officer.

The Secretary,
Public Service Commission,
G. P. O. Building,
GEORGETOWN.

GBS WORK NOT SO WELL-KNOWN

GBS Work Not so Well-Known, 1968-1969

The retyped Hugh Cholmondeley memo shows that Mac produced a farm programme (unaware of name) in 1968. He also produced the programme '**The Nation in Your Corner**' in 1969, and appeared with a panel on the weekly Ron Sanders' show, '**Thursday People**', to discuss Caribbean writers and their art forms. This information is based on a *Sunday Graphic*, January 5, 1969 listing of radio programmes, under the caption '**get the listening habit with G.B.S.**', which was among the newspaper articles that could not be printed in their original forms.

Sir Ron Sanders, whose '**Thursday People**' covered a wide range of subjects, could not recall how many discussions there were on Caribbean writers and their art forms and whether Mac was on the panel more than once.

From: DIRECTOR
To: Sales Manager, Operations Manager, Senior
Producer, Senior Technician, Wordsworth
McAndrew.
Dated: 28th October, 1968

**SUBJECT,
VEHICLES.**

As from tomorrow 29th October, the jeep, number PK 701, will be specifically allocated to Mr. Wordsworth McAndrew.

The reason for this, as we all know, is to enable Mr. McAndrew to put a lot more variety into his farm programme and also to help him provide us with material collected from all parts of the country.

Until such time as the additional GBS vehicles arrive, and a reallocation of duties, responsibilities and vehicles can be made, Mr. McAndrew will report directly to me on his activities.

In the interim also PZ 2119 is to be used by the News and Production Department. The Operations Manager will be responsible for the movement of this vehicle, and all requests for it must be channelled to and approved by him.

STORM THEN CALM
1969-1977

Storm then Calm, 1969-1977

After being fired from GBS for defying the dress code directive (or for speaking publicly about the code, according to newspapers) Mac received support from newspapers, ASCRIA (African Society for the Cultural Relations with Independent Africa, founded by Eusi Kwayana), and individuals in the society for the stance he took. The imposition of a dress code was bound to infuriate a man who believed a *dashiki*, a pair of pants and a pair of slippers were appropriate for steamy Guyana.

Mac's Biography does not name the specific year that he was seconded from the Ministry of Information to GBS (but likely late 1968, bearing in mind Hugh Cholmondeley's memo on the farm programme). However, his attorney's letter states that he was fired from GBS in April of 1969. After being fired, Mac returned to the Ministry of Information where he received the GBS invitation to attend Roy Dunlop's farewell party. Mac eventually went back to GBS either late 1969 or some time in 1970. The only memo I found shows his firm Guyanese consciousness towards programming.

The letter by Patricia congratulates Mac personally and other GBS individuals but, as the Acting Programme Director, Mac would also have been partly responsible for the other individuals' programmes.

Retyping all of the newspaper articles for this section meant losing a passport-size or full-size picture of Mac, in a few instances.

Sunday Chronicle, April 27th, 1969

'GBS Director, Producer in 'dress' clash'

by Thelma Payne-Barrow

The question of dress in Guyana has always aroused much controversy whenever it is raised. Now the Director of the Guyana Broadcasting Service has stated quite clearly just how he expects members of his staff to be apparelled. And it looks as though he has stirred up a hornets' nest in the process, so far as one of his Producers is concerned.

In a directive issued to "All Staff" on Monday, April 21, Director Hugh Cholmondeley, said: "The wearing of apparel of several members of this staff while on duty leaves much to be desired. The loudest of loud sports shirts, crushed and soiled trousers, and floppy slippers are, I am afraid, not conducive to a businesslike approach to work.

The Service is most liberal in its attitude to dress. All we insist on is a clean shirt (a tie is really not necessary), a decent looking pair of trousers (not dungarees) and a pair each of shoes and socks."

Opposing the "shoes and socks" stand is Producer Wordsworth McAndrew, that well-known Guyanese folklorist. He stated quite emphatically that he is not going to wear "shoes and socks" in this our tropical climate.

Thus, there is going to be a clash of wills tomorrow morning when the directive becomes effective.

For Mr. McAndrew stands firm in his decision not to depart from his mode of dress and the Director, too, expects his staff to be apparelled.

Mr. McAndrew says he will turn up for work tomorrow morning in his slippers as usual – and he has been so dressed for at least the past decade.

A Guyanese who maintains his identity as an individual, shirt out of trousers, a pair of rubber slippers and sometimes a straw hat, he often tells people he will adopt no other style of dress for his is the one required for our climate.

What the Director will do in the face of such blatant opposition is not known.

Mr. McAndrew, who underwent an eight-month course in the United Kingdom last year, is under contract to the Service for three years.

Some time ago, ASCRIA activist Rudolph Grant lost his job as a draughtsman with the Sugar Industry Welfare Fund as a result of his refusing to wear a tie to work. Grant was then on probation.

Editor's Notes: A picture of Mac in *dashiki* and rubber slippers accompanied this article. It is clear that Hugh Cholmondeley's directive was against rubber slippers, but I'm not clear whether it was also against *dashikis*.

It would be interesting to know why Rudolph Grant refused to wear a tie (Tropical climate?) and whether he wore a *dashiki* and sandals or slippers to work.

See reminiscences by Sir Ron Sanders and Rosie McAndrew (Mac's former wife) for information on Mac in the United Kingdom.

Kwame's Letter of Support (Undated)

N Bent St.
Georgetown

Hey Mack,

So you about to lose your work. Have no illusions. Insecurity and manhood do not coexist. Pettiness is after you. It fears your size, the size of your imagined public image. You cannot stop middle class envy Mack. It will get you.

Our National assembly has approved sensible clothing for our type of heat. I thought that champions of western democracy would not dictate the colour of an individual's footwear. A man – a man – allows even his wife that. A vestigial clot stops the blood of modern intelligent opinion.

What does this demand for certain traditional types of dress show? Usually it appears to require cleanliness. Really, it rejects not ordinary clothes but the people who wear them, ordinary people. It feels repulsion at the sight of ordinary people. If you remain an ordinary man you will be considered out of place in some places.

Now I hate the fact that the Government's broadcasting station is one of these places.

Kwame

Oh, I almost forgot. Can you investigate and expose, on gaff-box, before you get put off it, the endless, inhuman torment which, every livelong day, some female tyrants in staff-nurse uniform at P. H. G. inflict upon the souls of young male students there?

<p>Editor's Note: P. H. G. is Public Hospital Georgetown, while 'Gaff Box' (gyaaff box, meaning talk box) was a radio programme. I do not know whether Mac presented it alone or was part of a team.</p>

Guyana Graphic, Tuesday, April 29th, 1969
'GBS terminates MacAndrew's services'

The Guyana Broadcasting Service has terminated the services of Guyanese folklorist and producer, Mr. Wordsworth MacAndrew, on the grounds that he had violated his contract.

The row between Mr. MacAndrew and the management of GBS is reported to have resulted from the producer's refusal to abide by a ruling from the director of the radio station on how he should be dressed, and stipulating that he should not go to work in slippers.

Mr. MacAndrew said that he could not adhere to the ruling, and, according to an informed source, GBS management decided that since he had publicly expressed his views on a matter involving the station, he had acted in a manner contrary to the terms of his contract.

But Mr. MacAndrew has taken the view that "there is more in the mortar than the pestle," stating that now he was back in the Government Information Services from where he was seconded to the GBS, he preferred to make no comment.

Editor's Note: The correct spelling of Mac's last name is "McAndrew", not "MacAndrew", as it was spelt in this article.

Sunday Mirror, May 4th, 1969
'High-handed action at GBS questioned'

The People's Progressive Party yesterday strongly protested the dismissal of noted Guyanese poet Mr. Wordsworth Mc. Andrew from Radio G. B. S. and declared that in the interest of fair play he be re-instated.

In a statement at the P. P. P. weekly press conference, Mrs. Janet Jagan, General Secretary of the party said: "The P. P. P. deplors the high-handed action by Radio G. B. S. in dismissing noted Guyanese poet Mr. Wordsworth Mc. Andrew from his specialised services with the station because of his mode of dress. This is really going too far.

"As we understand the issue, Mr. McAndrew was dismissed mainly because of his refusal to wear socks and shoes and his firm decision to wear sandals. He has made the point that the use of sandals suits our tropical climate and with this point of view, it is hard to find an area of disagreement unless one is so rigidly tied to Northern and Western ideas which have dominated our mode of dress for over a century.

"One hears the governing party spokesmen talking profusely about "decolonization" and moving away from colonial customs imposed on our people during the British colonial era. Yet these very people who run G. B. S. are victimising avant garde members who are throwing off these customs.

"Mr. McAndrew is a local poet who has captured the essence of Guyanese folk lore and has an artistic contribution to make. If in some way there was disagreement over the substance or quality of his contributions, one would understand his removal. But apparently his work is not under fire, and thus it becomes almost unbelievable that his dismissal on such trivial grounds could be countenanced.

"The P. P. P. strongly protests Mr. McAndrew's removal and, in the interest of fair play, calls for his re-instatement."

Editor's Note: The PPP was a little off, in saying Mac wore sandals; he wore rubber slippers.

A passport-size photograph of Mac in a dashiki accompanied this article.

Guyana Graphic, May 4th, 1969
'PPP attacks GBS in MacAndrew affair'

THE OPPOSITION People's Progressive Party yesterday condemned the decision by the Management of Station GBS to terminate the services of Mr. Wordsworth MacAndrew because of his mode of dress, and called for his reinstatement.

Since the termination of his contract with GBS, Mr. MacAndrew has returned to his old post at the GIS.

In a prepared statement read to newsmen at yesterday's weekly Press conference at Freedom House PPP General Secretary, Mrs. Janet Jagan said in part: "As we understand the issue, Mr. MacAndrew was dismissed mainly because of his refusal to wear socks and shoes and his firm decision to wear sandals. He has made the point that the use of sandals suits our tropical climate and with this point of view, it is hard to find an area of disagreement unless one is so rigidly tied to Northern and Western ideas which have dominated our mode of dress for over a century.

"One hears of the Governing party spokesman talking profusely about decolonisation and moving away from colonial customs imposed on our people during the British colonial era. Yet these very people who run GBS are victimising avant garde members who are throwing off these customs..."

Asked for his comment to the PPP's statement, Mr. Hugh Cholmondeley, Managing Director of GBS, said he would prefer not to make any public statement on the matter. However, the *Graphic* was told by sources close to the radio station that Mr. MacAndrew's dismissal had nothing to do with his mode of dress but the fact that he divulged to the Press a matter that was domestic, and in so doing had violated his contract.

Mr. MacAndrew had expressed, in a section of the Press his disagreement with a plan by the GBS management on the mode of dress.

Editor's Notes: Mrs. Jagan's statement in the *Mirror* has Mac's last name correctly as "McAndrew", but the *Guyana Graphic* quoting that statement spelled Mac's last name as "MacAndrew".

The *Mirror* also reported Mrs. Jagan as saying: "One hears the governing party spokesmen talking..." On the contrary, the *Graphic* quoted her as saying: "One hears of the Governing party spokesman talking..."

Nevertheless, might one say that the *Graphic* was showing its broad-mindedness by quoting Mrs. Jagan? Also, to its credit, the *Graphic* asked Hugh Cholmondely to react to Mrs. Jagan's statement.

Editor's Note: The *Sunday Chronicle* of May 4, 1969, quoted Mrs. Jagan's full statement on Mac being fired. By 1969, the *Guyana Chronicle* would have been strongly supporting the People's National Congress (PNC) Government of Mr. Burnham and having little to do with the PPP. Quoting a high PPP official on this occasion, without acrimonious jabs at that official, was notable. Also on May 4, 1969, the *Chronicle* carried the editorial which follows, calling on GBS to rehire Mac.

I think the *Chronicle* meant "Guyana Broadcasting Service", not "Guyana Broadcasting System", and I'm surprised that the *Chronicle* did not name the "Producer".

Sunday Chronicle, May 4th, 1969
'About Dress & GBS'

At last, Guyana's Members of Parliament will discard their coats and ties in the House. The shirt-jacket recommended by the committee headed by the Speaker has the distinction of combining comfort with decorum. This break with tradition is a halfway one: the new dress will be worn at working sessions, while on ceremonial occasions Members will still wear their coat and tie. These latter items of apparel, then, remain formal wear, and we can see this being reviewed after we have had time to "take in" the recent changes.

In many respects, this half-heartedness is good even in a country like Guyana which needs to take the "leap...onto the wide streets of tomorrow." The reaction to the committee's recommendations, and the recommendations themselves, have shown that we are not afraid to revolutionise our institutions; at the same time, revolution without responsibility is hardly sensible, no matter how dramatic. Thus, it is good that the Speaker is sticking to tradition, at least for a while, for we can forget too early the seriousness of his office and the Assembly as a whole. Further, we like the Committee's suggestion that the dress should be optional; our law-makers clearly realize that, though the society must change, this change will witness tolerance and understanding.

On this note, we deplore the stand taken by the Guyana Broadcasting System (GBS) to dismiss one of its Producers who refused to follow a circular demanding that "shoes and socks" be worn to work. In a petty attempt at being clever, GBS made their decision on the ground that the Producer had given the press "confidential information" – or some such silly statement. This is dastardly and can fool no one. The issue is clear, and we do not expect Government bodies like GBS to attempt to shirk national issues in this foolish way. We shall deal with this entire question shortly – but we hope GBS will show some wisdom, as distinct from smart-alec thinking, and restore the Producer to his post before we again voice our comments.

Editor's Note: "leap... onto the wide streets of tomorrow" is a paraphrase of lines in the first stanza of Martin Carter's poem '**I Come From The Nigger Yard**'. I wanted you first to read the line, before I commented.

Editor's Note: Mac received this invitation letter after he had been fired by GBS and had returned to Government Information Services (GIS), from where he had been seconded to the radio station. One significant point about the letter was that Hugh Cholmondeley held no personal grudge against Mac. In fact, they were friends (See reminiscence by Oscar Ramjeet), but Hugh was forced to act in his attempt to control what he considered 'radical' dressing.

Another important point about this letter is that it could be viewed as the first step towards reopening the GBS door for Mac. Hugh later wrote Mac a letter acknowledging his contribution to a specific GBS programme ('**Viewpoint**'), and he also expressed the hope that the public would soon benefit from Mac's knowledge.

Guyana Broadcasting Service
28. 5. 69

YOU ARE INVITED TO A DRINK IN THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
ON SATURDAY 31ST INSTANT AT 12.15 P. M. TO SAY
FAREWELL TO MR. ROY DUNLOP.

Messrs. George Nurse,
 George Lee
 Asad Rayman
 Cecil Griffith
 Ken Corsbie
 Ricardo Smith
 Cecil Thomas
 Ron Savory
 Hugh Cholmondeley
 Ron Sanders
 Terry Holder
 Rudy Fung
 Wordsworth McAndrew

Editor's Note: Roy's original letter with beautiful handwriting could not be printed, due to poor resolution.

BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION
GEORGETOWN
GUYANA

31 May, 1969

My Dear Wordsworth –

Here it is – a mere three days before I leave Guyana and I have not seen you for many days. Like you, I expect, I am unhappy about the trend of events that has caused the severance with radio, where I really believe, you belong – if you are to have the widest opportunity of making your valuable contribution to the cause of understanding & the spread of useful knowledge in Guyana. My sincerest hope, in leaving, is that you and Hugh will each meet each other more than halfway & bury the hatchet – for the good of Guyana.

May I also hope that you will write some lyric work that will bring you even more fame & fortune. If I were to be staying here I would nag you until this happened.

It has been more than a pleasure to know you even in a small way & it has been a valuable experience for me. Let us hope we can meet again another time in another place – with more time to get together.

My warmest good wishes, ever.

Roy

Editor's Notes: African Society for Cultural Relations with Independent Africa (ASCRIA) was co-founded by Eusi Kwayana, formerly Sydney King, and others.

I did not type the entire article which follows, but the rest of it was about another ASCRIA release condemning the banning of Stokely Carmichael by Jamaica, Trinidad, Antigua and other West Indian Governments, calling for the ban to be lifted and inviting Stokely to visit Guyana at his earliest convenience.

Sunday Chronicle, June 1st, 1969

'ASCRIA hits at dismissal of MacAndrew'

By THELMA PAYNE-BARROW

YET another voice has spoken against the dismissal of Producer Wordsworth MacAndrew from the staff of the Guyana Broadcasting Service because he refuses to wear shoes and socks to work.

This time it is ASCRIA who is calling on the Government to set out in clear terms just what its new ideas on this recurring 'dress question' are. The organization views Mr. MacAndrew's dismissal with disfavour and would like to see an end put to what it terms the harassment of "workers who attempt to decolonise their dress" by "senior officers and headmasters." ASCRIA made its views known yesterday in a press release which read: "ASCRIA protests the dismissal of Wordsworth MacAndrew from Radio G. B. S. during an incident arising out of his refusal to stop wearing slippers. ASCRIA calls upon the Cabinet to issue a regulation setting out its new ideas on dress, making it clear that senior officers and headmasters are not free to harass workers who attempt to decolonise their dress."

The Director of G. B. S. some weeks ago issued a directive in which he referred to the "liberal attitude" of the Company towards dress, and insisted that the male members of staff wear clean shirts, trousers (not dungarees) and a pair each of shoes and socks.

Mr. MacAndrew, a well-known Guyanese folklorist, poet and writer, refused to dress in shoes and socks "in this tropical climate," and was dismissed. He is now back at the G. I. S. from where he was seconded.

Editor's Notes: Mac received this copy of the following petition with the handwritten words at the bottom:

"Mac,

"You have supporters in high quarters never mind the non permission for use of your poems! "

Unfortunately, I could not clearly read the full signature of the person who signed the note, but what I am able to read looks like "Elsie".

To: All Members of the University of Guyana
Staff Association.

Date: 21st June, 1969

Subject: Mr. Wordsworth McAndrew

Dear Member,

We wish to call your attention to the petition which is in the possession of the Switchboard/Operator, and which relates to the recent dismissal of Mr. Wordsworth McAndrew from the Guyana Broadcasting Service.

Copies of this petition will be sent to the Director of the Guyana Broadcasting Service and the Press.

We urge you to give us your signature, as we are sure you will sympathize with the aims of this petition.

Editor's Note: Lucian sounds like a pen-name to me.

Lecturing The Lecturers – LUCIAN Says June 30th, 1969

EVERY UNIVERSITY is sensitive to its autonomy and is ready to resist any attempt to tell it what it should teach and how it should teach it.

The University of Guyana shows this sensitivity and, in its short existence, it has been known to resist dictatorship from any quarter—the Executive Government included.

Yet, by a strange paradox which, at the same time, is consistent with the contradictions of Turkey, the lecturers of the university have signed a letter and sent it to the Prime Minister, asking him to investigate the circumstances of the dismissal of an employee of GBS with a view to having the man re-employed.

I am not concerned with the circumstances of the man's dismissal, but only with the vital principle that he was dismissed by the Managing-Director of GBS, and any attempt to have him re-employed, other than by the free decision of the Director, is an attempt to interfere with the internal administration of the GBS.

I can imagine the look of horror on the faces of these Lecturers if the Executive Government attempted to interfere with the administration of the University of Guyana. Yet interference is precisely what they are asking the head of the Executive Government to do by inviting him to investigate a problem that he has already settled.

"Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." Since these Lecturers would resist any attempt at tampering with the university's autonomy, on what ground do they essay to invite the Executive Government to tamper with the autonomy of the Director's department?

The presumption persists with me that it is on the ground of their allegedly exalted intellect. They seem to fancy that they are so wise in their own conceit that they can talk down to the Executive Government and tell it that it should investigate this incident and that incident.

If this is their motivation—if this is the coma of hallucination into which they have self-mesmerised themselves—then it is time for them to be told to wake up and recognise their mortality.

I say to them that just as they are jealous of the autonomy of their university, heads of departments are jealous of their autonomy. Just as they wouldn't like the Executive Government to tell them what they should lecture on, the Managing Director of Station GBS would not like to be told how to administer his department.

I would advise these lecturers that they shouldn't believe that the climate at Turkeyen has the power to overawe the government. The mortar-board has never transfigured any mortal into an intellectual demigod.

If the illogical behaviour of these gentlemen indicates the spirit and intellect which Turkeyen will give to the society—then God save us from the tyranny of Turkeyen.

Gentlemen, deflate your chests. The Executive Government can no more tolerate being dictated to by you than you will tolerate being dictated to by it.

Moreover, the Cabinet, as far as I know, is manned by people as intellectually exalted as you are.

When the university champions freedom it champions the principle of the thing, not merely the insular application of the principle to itself.

UG lecturers reply to Lucian – POST BAG July 7th, 1969

IN HIS articles of June 30, (Lecturing the Lecturers) Lucian deliberately avoids the issues which we raised in our protest against the dismissal of Mr. Wordsworth MacAndrew from GBS. In ordinary circumstances we would agree that the internal administration of any organization, private or public, is no concern of outside commentators, whether lecturers or Lucian. However, there are times when the actions of such organizations arouse issues of principle which affect society in general, and which are therefore legitimate matters of public concern.

Let us suppose, for example, that Lucian had been dismissed from the *Graphic* for his recent comments on duty allowances for which an apology was demanded by the Speaker and Member of Parliament, would he not regard this as such an issue of principle? Would he then have censored the comments of lecturers, whose voices (however much they might disagree with him on other matters) would have been energetically raised in his defence?

But the MacAndrew issue is precisely similar, for this too concerns the freedom of a commentator to criticise public issues—in this case regulations which impose on public servants a mode of dress which many Guyanese feel is one of the relics of the colonial era which they are trying to abolish. Is this the issue that Lucian wishes to avoid? Or does he genuinely believe that acts of administration are acts of God not to be “tampered with” by mere mortals? Does he really suppose that “looks of horror” would appear on our faces if the Executive Government commented on the unjust dismissal of a lecturer over an issue of principle? If so, he must be extremely unfamiliar with academic attitudes. Where genuine issues of principle are concerned in the University we welcome comment from any quarter.

Lucian further tries to obscure the issues by accusing us of “dictating to the Executive Government.” This accusation is wholly ridiculous. We are in no position to “dictate” to

anyone, nor do we wish to do so, nor have we attempted to do so. A polite request is not “dictation” — this is just playing fast and loose with the meanings of words. We have no right to dictate, but we do have a right to comment on what we consider matters of public concern—a right which is shared, needless to say, by Lucian and by everyone else who lives in a free society.

Lucian, in common with many other critics of universities, tries to have it both ways. If university lecturers refrain from involving themselves in public issues, they are accused of living in an ivory tower, regarding themselves as a class above and apart from the people; if, on the contrary, they do thus involve themselves, they are accused of intellectual annoyance, of “interfering” and “dictating.” These critics had better make up their minds which they want—an ivory tower, or a body of people who will work for the betterment of society as a whole. It would seem that they want neither, but as long as a university exists, they will have to settle for one or the other.

U.G. LECTURERS

Editor's Note: One might consider the following letter Hugh Cholmondeley's second reopening of the door for Mac to return to GBS, the first being the invitation to Roy Dunlop's farewell party.

Gbs Guyana broadcasting service
68 HADFIELD ST., GEORGETOWN, GUYANA
TEL. 3000 CABLES. 'GUYCAST'
HNJC:pk

Our Ref: 18/4

11th
July,
1969.

Dear Sir,

I take this opportunity on behalf of the Service of thanking you most sincerely for contributing to our recent '**Viewpoint**' series.

I am positive that our listening public has benefited considerably from the frank and straightforward manner in which you have expressed your views throughout the series.

I would like to think that sometime in the near future we will again have the pleasure of your informed opinions on the station.

Enclosed please find your honorarium for the series just ended.

With sincere thanks,

Hugh Cholmondeley Jr.
(DIRECTOR)

Mr. W. A. McAndrew,
c/o Ministry of Information
18 Brickdam,
GEORGETOWN.

Cheque # 20228 – amount \$ 24.00

DIRECTOR Hugh Cholmondeley Jr.
SALES MANAGER Ricardo Smith

Editor's Notes: I'm assuming that this letter was addressed to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Information which controlled the Government Information Services (GIS) where Mac served.

It is interesting that Mac kept, or was allowed to keep his GBS title, after he was sent back to the GIS from GBS.

Mac Questions His Salary

P.S.

Subsequent to my alleged "dismissal" from the Guyana Broadcasting Service on April 28, 1969, I was assigned duties in this Ministry at the reduced salary of \$255 per month.

As you are aware, my salary as a G. B. S. producer was \$400 per month - \$145 more than my present emoluments.

In the circumstances, I shall be grateful to be informed:

- (a) What authority this Ministry had for ordering a reduction in my salary;
- (b) Whether it is proposed to have me revert to my G. B. S. salary at some future date (and if so when?);
- (c) Whether at such time I will also be reimbursed for the continuous pecuniary loss to which I have been subjected since May, 1969.

- a. W. A. McAndrew
- b. Producer, G. B. S.
- c. 6. 11. 69

Editor's Note: The following was undated and unsigned, but a handwritten note on it said it had been copied to: the GBS Director, the PRO Ministry of Information, all papers and Radio Demerara.

Support from the Undersigned

We the undersigned wish to protest against the apparent banning of Mr. W. A. M. from the GBS radio service. We are aware that Mr. M. was dismissed from Regular employment with GBS recently, and we wish also to protest against the alleged grounds for his dismissal – that he had commented publicly on dress regulations imposed on GBS employees. We regard it as paradoxical, to say the least, if it is true, that an employee of one major medium of public communication should be dismissed for employing another communication medium to state his views. Moreover, the dress regulations concerned are a gross anachronism in an allegedly independent society, in which the criticism of such regulations should surely be regarded as a public service.

But even more serious than the dismissal itself is the fact that it has kept off the air one of the few genuinely independent voices in Guyana, and has thereby deprived Guyana of the kind of objective social analysis which it so badly needs. Mr. M. has on many occasions fearlessly attacked abuses in the society, and in particular, survivals of that colonial mentality which has claimed him as a further victim.

We therefore request that his case be reopened at the highest level and that he be reinstated as soon as possible.

10th December, 1969

The Director,
Guyana Broadcasting Service,
Hadfield Street,
Lodge.

Dear Sir,

I act for Mr. Wordsworth McAndrew of Lot 236 Albert Street, Queenstown, Georgetown, Demerara.

My client had consulted me about 2 months in connection with his relationship with the Guyana Broadcasting Service which you purported to terminate during the month of April, 1969.

As you are aware while he worked as a Producer at the Service he was paid \$400.00 per month. Subsequent to the purported revocation he has been receiving \$255.00 (two hundred and fifty-five dollars) per month as a Temporary Information Officer in the Ministry of Information.

I have obtained Counsel's written opinion on this matter and I had proposed as advised to institute legal proceedings in the High Court on my client's behalf.

Before this stage could have been reached, however, he informed me that you had offered him a new appointment at the same salary.

My client is willing to accept this appointment. I would therefore be much obliged if you will let me know within 4 (four) days whether you are willing to discuss with me the question of the payment of compensation to my client for the pecuniary loss which he has and still suffers as well as the terms of the new appointment.

It seems to me that such an amicable course would be eminently desirable as it may obviate unpleasant litigation.

Yours faithfully,
(Sgd.) M. A. A. McDoom

Desiree Jessimy
10/12/69

MAAMcD/sj.

Editor's Notes: I changed only the double spacing of this letter, so that it would fit on one page. Mr. M. A. A. Mc Doom's letter to GBS significantly marked the end of an uncertain period of Mac's professional life.

Based on the lawyer's letter, the new GBS offer was made some time before December 10th, 1969, when Mac was at the GIS. However, I'm not clear when Mac returned to GBS (a line in the attorney's letter says: "My client is willing to accept this appointment..."), but Guyanese were lucky that he did, since he produced years of educational programmes for Guyanese radio audiences.

68 Hadfield Street
Lodge
Georgetown
April, 1973

Dear Sir,

I hereby make application for the post of Assistant Programme Director of the Service, which duties I have been performing in an acting capacity since November, 1973.

I have already intimated to you, verbally, certain reservations in my mind regarding the duties attached to the post – reservations which you assured me you were quite willing to remove.

There is, however, one other matter I feel I should mention, viz, the fact that the vacancy notice advertising the post was silent on the quantum of salary involved.

My own feeling is that there are sound reasons why the last known salary scale for the post should be reviewed upwards, and I should therefore like to intimate at this stage that should I be the successful applicant I would wish to pursue at an early stage the question of a proper financial grading for the post of Assistant Programme Director.

Yours faithfully,
WORDSWORTH McANDREW

General Manager/ Program Director
Guyana Broadcasting Service
68 Hadfield Street
Lodge
GEORGETOWN

Editor's Notes: Mac probably meant that he had been acting as Assistant Programme Director since November, 1972, not November 1973. (Observe date of letter and acting Assistant Programme Director date.)

Editor's Notes (cont.): The General Manager and Programme Director in 1973 was Ron Sanders. Most likely Hugh Cholmondeley had moved on to a higher position – if not in Guyana, somewhere in the Caribbean.

Do you recall Mac's previous salary challenges? He obviously was a man who believed he should be paid what he was worth.

Mac's Memo

TO: PRINCE MAISON & CHRISTOPHER SHEPHERD
FROM: PROGRAM DIRECTOR (AG)
DATE: FEBRUARY 1, 1977
SUBJECT: "TODAY"

With effect from Today, as you know, the "Today" programme is to be lengthened and revived.

2. Please see below the guidelines – conceptual and otherwise – which I expect to be strictly adhered to from now on:

- (a) The programme will be strictly about current events in Guyana, and will deal with events in the Caribbean or elsewhere ONLY WHEN THEY HAVE A DIRECT BEARING ON GUYANA.
- (b) The latter kind of item, when carried, will obviously be tasted lower than hard items directly concerning Guyana, UNLESS THE INTERVIEWER OR PRESENTER IS A GUYANESE (e. g. Shirley Field-Ridley reporting back on Festac).
- (c) An item from Berbice (at least one) MUST be carried every day, provided Seeram can supply one.
- (d) Scripts must be crisp and un-flowery, must not ramble or be personalized, and must be submitted to me for vetting NO LATER THAN 4. 30 P. M. EACH DAY, ALONG WITH A TYPEWRITTEN RUNNING ORDER SHOWING DURATIONS.
- (e) NO LATER THAN 11. 30 A. M. EACH DAY, a list must be submitted to me stating at least tentatively what items are planned for the day's programme, including alternative items to cover those cases where an interview falls through.
- (f) The target duration of the programme shall be 28' 30, and no excuse for underlength editions will be accepted.

(g) Ideally, there should be 5 or 6 items, NONE OF THEM LONGER THAN 4' 30, sensibly interspersed with Promos and with commercials (if any).

(h) Items recorded via the telephone should be kept to a minimum, and so too should straight pieces by pseudo-experts.

3. Kindly read, digest, and comply; and feel free to raise with me or the GM (ag) at any time any problems with which you might find yourself faced.

A. Manraj
f Wordsworth McAndrew
Programme Director (ag).

c.c. GM (a.g.)
APD (ag)

Editor's Note: I understand 28' 30 and 4' 30 as 28 to 30 minutes and 4 1/2 minutes, respectively. The late Shirley Field-Ridley was a Minister in the Burnham Government in the 1970's.

Patricia's Undated Congratulatory Letter

Hello Mr "Wordsworth" McAndrew,

I do hope this letter reaches you in good health and that goes too for the whole bunch of you down at "G. B. S". You know Mac (may I call you so?) you and the whole staff of G. B. S. do a fantastic job at the start of each day, and I think you should know it. I am sure I have the agreement of all Guyanese when I say quite sincerely, that G. B. S. is the most wonderful Broadcasting Studio, managed by a team of equally wonderful people. You do make the days much happier, for there is always something lovely to listen to on your programmes. There is you and your "Proverbs for today" "My life my music and me" etc. and they are all enjoyable delightful programmes, you are really nice to listen to and it's appreciated. There is also that dear lady "Joan Green", and her lively and interesting "Mainly for women" it's good to hear her advice and hints and we do enjoy her recipes and interviews. She's doing a swell job. Then there's Christopher Dean, his "Light and Easy" (may not always be light and easy) laugh, but it is a wonderful programme which we all take part in with enjoyment and look forward to, Bravo Chris, well done. Not forgetting "Road Talk" and Balwant Sing, it's educational and humane, and it's good to hear the public's opinions, (though not always pleasant) he's a brave chap, is Mr. Singh, hats off to him. Then there is that guy with the (Super) voice, Roland Philips, I always listen to his programmes especially "Getting to know you" and I think it's a nice idea meeting and mixing with the people exchanging life's little experiences and sharing their hopes and aspirations, it is a warm-hearted idea, you reach out to the people, and in return they reach out to you, wonderful, Roland you're a winner. There is Pancho Carew and his "Best by Request" a favourite all the way, belting out requests time checks, and what not, Blast on Reverend you're good to listen to. Last but not least there is our own dear Matthew Allen and his ever popular "World of Music", you

know Mac, this particular programme is really fantastic, I know of many people who love it, the old and the young. I know a dear old lady who gives up her early sleeping just to listen to "World of Music" you should see her, she sits there rocking, and a look of sheer pleasure on her face, for these songs remind her no doubt of her girl-hood days so you see you at G. B. S. are even loved and appreciated by the old folks who are so dear to us, and this is nice, real nice so a special thank you to Matthew, and I'd like him to know we are always there with him every Thursday night till sign off time, enjoying every moment of it. There are so many other programmes, that I cannot mention all, but they are all delightful and enjoyable. So once again I'd like you to know (and I am sure this is the view of many) how much we appreciate and enjoy your programmes each and every day. Keep up the good work, you and the lovable staff of G. B. S. Well Done.

As I close I'd like to say "God bless you all and long live G. B. S".

P.S. Please convey my thanks to your fellow worker thank you

A tribute To G. B. S. and staff
Because you brighten up the days
With programmes full of pleasure
And make the nights enjoyable
Our radios are a treasure

Because we think you're wonderful
And know you do your best
We thanks we say "God bless you all"
Long live our G. B. S.

End

To you and staff from a
A happy listener
Patricia

Editor's Notes: I resisted punctuating Patricia's letter and organizing it into paragraphs, since I wanted to present it like the others – verbatim. Forgetting her excessive usage of commas and lack of paragraphing, though, her writing is unambiguous.

I don't know about Joan Green and Balwant Singh but, sadly, the Grim Reaper, has harvested Roland Phillips, Pancho Carew, Christopher Dean, Matthew Allen and, of course, Wordsworth McAndrew.

A STAR SHINES AT GBS

A Star Shines at GBS



This July 10, 1973 photograph of Mac at work in a GBS studio was taken by Dr. Judith Roback.

Mac produced outstanding radio programmes such as **'Views in the News'**, **'Mac's Magazine'**, **'Creole Meche'** **'Meche'**, **'Proverb for Today'**, **'Focus on Folk'** and **'What Else?'** His latter two folk programmes in particular were listened to all over Guyana and some parts of Suriname, with **'What Else?'** being his most popular by far, judging from the hundreds of letters in his archive. Nearly all the letters were written in response to a challenging quiz he teased the public with during each show. In addition to answering questions, the letters were full of praise for **'What Else?'** Some writers did not try to answer any of Mac's questions; they wrote just to thank him for his wonderful programme or/and to voice a mild disagreement. This section contains two such letters.

Mac wrote a note that **'What Else?'** began in 1973 and lasted until 1978. Although letters to **'Focus on Folk'** in Mac's archive were written between 1975 and 1978, Dr. Roback made tape recordings of the programme from 1973. I'm not sure when any of the other programmes began and ended. During the **'What Else?'** years, the writing public addressed him as: **'Dear Sir'**, **'Dear Announcer'**, **'Hello Radio Announcer'**,

'Dear Wordsworth', 'Sir Mack', 'Mr. McAndrew', 'Dear Mac', 'Hello Uncle Mac', 'Dear Brother Mack', 'Good Morning Mr. McAndrew' (Never mind the evening programme!), 'Dear M. J' (What was this one person thinking?) and 'Dear Sir or Madam'. (Really? Whose voice were these few listening to?) However, some letters to '**What Else?**' and '**Focus on Folk**' between 1975/'78 addressed him as 'Comrade', perhaps much to his chagrin, since he resented being saluted in that generic manner, seeing himself as a unique person, poet or folklorist. In any event, some of the letters sent to him at the radio station were for his personal attention and he would not have read them on the air. For example, one 'Comrade letter' was from St. Lucians at Mahadia informing him of their Annual La Rose Celebration, while another was from a religious organization inviting him to a ceremony.

I have included a letter mocking him as a 'monkey'. The 'monkey letter' intended as an insult is more of a joke, but the writer's threat to go to Mr. Burnham about Mac does illustrate a trend of the time.

The system for selecting a '**What Else?**' quiz winner was apparently to randomly choose some letters from a pile until a winner was found. Given the programme's variety and time restriction, Mac would have been able to open and read only a few letters each week. To win, a writer first needed some luck, as he/she might have had the correct answer but his/her letter was not drawn. If a letter was lucky to be selected, it next had to pass the McAndrew Precision Test. Two letters to the initial '**What Else?**' quiz with what seemed to be the same answer (and there were others) are included here. Upon closer examination, though, the winning letter says: "...*The chairman into the disturbances that took place on Black Friday 1962 is Sir Henry Wynn Parry...*". The other also names Sir Henry Wynn Parry as the Chairman but says: "...*appointed to look into the February 16, 1962 disturbances in the then British Guyana...*". The second letter may have been rejected by Mac because it did not specifically state 'Black Friday' and it also said 'British Guyana' when it should have said 'British Guiana'.

The letter naming Mac as the Chairman of the Committee into the Black Friday disturbances amuses me, and might amuse readers as well.

Editor's Notes: The 'What Else?' introduction, outline and feature material presented are from the very first programme.

One disappointment in having to retype all of the letters in this section is that I cannot show my readers the very neat handwriting of Harrichand Ramdass, Patsy Arjune and Shirley Mearns. Most of all, I would have loved for my readers to see the beautiful penmanship of Phillip Thompson, who wrote like a man learned in primary school handwriting lessons on the full flowing formation of letters, while adding his personal artistry.

Mac's 'What Else?' Outline

Further to my minute of 7. 2. '73 (February 7, 1973) re **'What Else?'**, please see below a resume of what tomorrow night's initial programme (February 13, 1973?) will contain:

'What Else?' (Initial programme)

Theme: 'Down in Guyana' (E. Hooper)

Music: **'West Indies Boys Are Marching'** (P. Castagne)

Vox Pop: Why do Guyanese Boys fly Kites before Easter?

Interview: **'Phagwah-What it's all About'** (Reepu Daman Persaud)

Music: **'1962'** (East Indian Rhyming Song)

Feature: Black Friday, February 16, 1962 -

- (a) Excerpts from Commission Report on Disturbances
- (b) Martin Carter Poem on Black Friday
- (c) Racial Togetherness since 1964 (Pat Robinson)

Music: **'All are Guyanese'** (Guitar Levans)

Quiz and theme

Mac's 'What Else?' Introduction

Yes, dis is de programme dat tek de name from de soup wuh yo does put a lil o' everyting in - '**What Else?**' So yo gat music, yo gat talkin', yo gat information, yo gat education and 'What Else?' Yes, yo even gat a two poun' note somewhere in de pot. So siddown an leh me dish out fo yo.

Initial 'What Else?' Feature

Well since 1964 I think we have been moving slowly closer together. But this is not really a pattern that started in 1964 - it's been going on for long years. And this is partly why we came into conflict between 1962 and 1964.

You see if people are living completely separate lives, then they are unlikely to come into conflict at any point of time. Where they are moving together, where they are beginning to demand the same things, then you can get them conflicting with each other. If I want what you've got and vice versa, then we fight. If I have got my own, and you have got your own, we don't want what each has got, then there's no point in fighting at all.

When the first Indians came to Guyana, for example, Indians came as Indentured workers, and to a certain extent they replaced African sugar workers. Now you see the Africans wanted to have a position where labour had the whiphand - where they could bargain for wages. And the planters were equally determined that the Negroes would not be able to bargain for wages.

Therefore you bring in another group of workers and you can keep wages down, because you've got a supply of workers, part of the cost is being met from Colony revenues, so that the individual planter doesn't have to find the money for bringing the indentured immigrants out of his pocket immediately.

You can then also use the two groups against each other. When the Indians, for example, begin to say they don't like the conditions of indenture then you can bring in Negro police against them, and when the Negroes bargain for more wages you can use the Indians against them to keep down more wages. So that for some time the groups are kept in an antagonistic position.

But of course Indians don't remain as indentured labourers indefinitely- they leave the plantations, some settle on new lands, and inevitably they're being brought more and more into the general community.

Now once Indians, like Negroes, begin to demand their fair share of education, for example, their fair share of the jobs in the community, not just sugar jobs, then you must get a conflict between all the people who are competing for the same job. And if this conflict takes place in a society where people are very conscious of race - and we have always been conscious of race - then the competition takes on racial terms.

I say we've always been conscious of race in that if you go right back to the time at which our society was founded, Europeans came, and they very clearly distinguished themselves from the native Amerindian population, and then they bring Africans as slaves and they distinguish themselves from Africans, not only on the basis of 'slave' and 'free' but also on the basis of black and white. If you go back in the past history of the Caribbean you'll find that for a long time to speak of a slave meant...a Negro, and you could speak of the number of Negroes' you had and everybody knew you meant slaves, nobody would think you meant free workers. In fact whenever there were white workers they were clearly distinguished from African slaves. In the Caribbean for example you've had white indentured workers and they're always distinguished from African slaves - they're not the same.

So the society was distinguished on the basis of race. We've been very conscious of race. And when Indians come in then they are clearly different, when Portuguese come in again they're different. A European, for example, finds it very peculiar that in Guyana we speak of Europeans and Portuguese, or 'Putagee', as we like to say. They cannot understand the distinction. We can very well, because Portuguese again came as indentured workers, not as a master class. And we talk about the Chinese, the Portuguese, the Amerindians, the Indians, the Africans - we distinguish everyone in our society. People from outside may not make the same kinds of distinctions. They may for example talk about coloured people and mean all coloured peoples, not just Africans; whereas we tend to mean Africans, or even more specific people of mixed African and white blood. When we speak of mixed, for example, again it often refers to people of black and white blood. And we make these kinds of distinctions

which other people, coming from a different kind of society won't necessarily make. We are conscious of race, so that when two people are in competition, then we distinguish again on the basis of race.

Now this coming together as I'm suggesting has gone on for a long time. The 1960's I think marks the point where you have the in-house competition and open conflict.

Now this of course was encouraged for a number of reasons - you got political encouragement, this undoubtedly heightens the conflict. Now after 1964 we might not be openly fighting, but we are still in competition and it is still expressed in private circles. We no longer talk about doing down somebody because he's black or because he's coolie. But in private life we still do express these prejudices - they haven't all gone. And people are aware of them.

So when we talk about harmony, it's surface harmony, with the conflict - the competition - still there. It's still latent, in all that we do. It still could be exploited.

I think eventually you will get genuine racial harmony, if the society maintains itself as a unitary slate. If we split into two groups, if we encourage separatist movements, then there's a possibility of hardening of attitudes. If we continue to live and work together, then I think we can overcome these kinds of racial differences. But it's going to take a long while. I don't expect we're going to get it next year or the year after, whatever politicians may say. I mean politicians have their own reasons for talking about racial harmony. After all it reflects very well on your administration if you can say there's no conflict. In actual fact there is conflict. It may not be the kind of recent burning-down-yo-neighbour-house that took place '62 to '64. But it is still there, and people are still prejudiced and they still react against other people on the basis of race, although we've reached a point where we may not be so willing to do it openly. I am not a very old person, but I can still remember the time when it was quite acceptable to talk about a coolie. Now we think twice before we say this. You might do this within the private circle of your acquaintance but you don't do it openly. Nor do you speak of a nigga openly. Although again you might do it within a private circle. Or if you are African you can talk about

nigga and if you are Indian you can talk about coolie. But you don't do it across the racial boundary. And this is the situation where we've reached. We are not prepared to be blatantly prejudiced, or blatantly hostile to another racial group which is perhaps an advancement.

But to speak as if there is no prejudice, and there's no conflict, and there's no hostility is to be optimistic at the present time.

Editor's Notes: 1. E. Hooper, the singer of the theme song '**Down in Guyana**' is the late Eddie Hooper, one of Guyana's well-known singers who was also a composer.

2. Guitar Levans is the late affable folk song composer and guitarist.

3. From what I've read, Pat Robinson was a University of Guyana lecturer, while P. Castagne - '**West Indies Boys Are Marching**' - might be the late Patrick Castagne, a composer. His biographical information says he was born in British Guiana in 1916 to Trinidadian parents but moved to Trinidad while quite young. He is probably best known for the Trinidad National Anthem.

Ministry of Local Government
22 Brickdam, Sendall Place,
Georgetown.

What Else (Programme),
G. B. S.
68 Hadfield St. Lodge.

Dear Sir,

The chairman into the disturbances that took place on Black Friday 1962 is Sir Henry Wynn Parry.

I find your programme interested and somewhat knowledgeable for I have learned several things educationally. I enjoyed listening to the folk music which for me is entertaining.

Guyana on the whole should listen to this programme from which many things could be learned about Guyana. In this way they could hear peoples' views on topical subjects and if some think contrary in those fields an opportunity should be given to them in order that they might express their views.

I remain,

Yours truly

Harrichand Ramdass

88 Public Road
Henrietta Village
Essequibo Coast
17th Feb. 1973

Dear Wordsworth,

The answer to last week's question in your programme "What Else" is Sir Henry Wynn Parry. He was leader of the Commission of Inquiry which was appointed to look into the February 16, 1962 disturbances in the then British Guyana.

Thank you.

Yours

Phillip Thompson

"What Else"
c/o Station G. B. S.
High Street
Georgetown

Editor's Note: Observe that there was no mention of "Black Friday", although a date was given. The writer also incorrectly said "British Guyana."

Tiger Creek,
...Tumatumari,
Potaro River.
16th Feb. 1973

What Else,
c/o Guyana Broadcasting Service,
68 Hadfield Street,
Lodge,
Georgetown, Guyana.

Dear Sir,

I was interested on the debate you had on the 14th Feb, 1973 which was taken from "What Else", The answer for the question is printed blow,

"The chairman who took commission on black Friday is Mr. Words Worth Mac Andrew."

Yours faithfully,
Ebenezer Harris

Editor's Note: "blow" is not my typo.

22nd FEBRUARY, 1973

P.D.

The first "What Else?" quiz winner (programme of 14/2/73) was MR. HARRICHAND RAMDASS, c/o Ministry of Local Government, Brickdam.

Wordsworth McAndrew
Asst. Programme Director (Ag.)

cc: John Bacchus

Editor's Note: P. D. is an abbreviation for Programme Director. I was informed by Sir Ron Sanders that he was both the Programme Director and General Manager of G. B. S. in 1973.

51, Houston Housing Scheme,
Greater Georgetown
25th March, 1976

Dear Mr. Mac Andrew,

It has given me the greatest pleasure to be writing for the first time to "What Else" this wonderful programme of which I am a regular listener. Over the past weeks I've arrived to the conclusion that there seems to be some misunderstanding between the listeners as to whether or not requests should be kept. I think that from some of the letters you've read, the people were very doubtful about their opinions. However, I think that you should not get rid of some But all of these requests. I wish that the person, before writing to "What Else" just to send a request should take that same time and send it to some other programme. "What Else" is not a request programme and should not be turned into one. These requests not only take up but waste important time, they should be stopped before it's too late. If these requests are accepted, what's going to happen when everyone started sending petty, foolish requests?

They also take away the spice that "What Else" offers. Keep the good job going, you're doing well.

Sincerely Yours,
Miss Patsy Arjune

Editor's Note: Patsy made a little mistake with "weather".

Shirley Mearns
412 East Ruimveldt,
Housing Scheme,
Greater Georgetown

Dear Wordsworth,

I must congratulate you at this stage for having such an educating yet interesting programme. I enjoy listening to it and in fact all the programmes on the station.

Your programme is heard very loud and clear in my area and at this stage I have no comment to make. What I like most is the folk songs because I never heard them before. I think they are very unusual and would like to hear more of them.

I do hope you will keep the good work up and What Else keep the pot boiling.

Yours Always
Shirley

Land of Canaan,
East Bank,
Dem.,

Hello Mr Mack Andrew,

THIS IS to let you know THAT you read a Letter last week that some one wrote you, saying that you is a monkey an you have janga on you, But Let I tell you something only a monkey a man ho have janga on him will read letters like how you is reading it, an ask does question what you is asking, I am a Black man just like you, an I think if you go an Clean Burnham Hog Pen you will do an 100% better, than to go an talk piss over the air.

Next you read a letter that someone wrote you saying that you is a monkey, But let I tell you something you is not far from that. A monkey will do 100% better than you Mr Mack Andrew;

Next you also red a few letters saying that a few records want to Ban, By some people. But let I tell you something, I am a black man just like you, An I think that no record don't want to Ban, you Mr Mack Andrew want to Ban for life time. Next it also have two monkeys at Radio Demerara, The man that Be at the mike on the Good Morning Guyana every morning he is making him self like a big monkey too. But I am going to Burnham right now about these monkeys over the air. One is Mr Mack Andrew, two is Mr Roven , an three is Mr. Mykal. The three of youall is three big monkeys ho want to Ban from over the air, an Send to Clean Burnham hog pen; p. t. o.

please turn over.

Please read this letter over the air that that the peoples in Guyana will know that you all is monkeys, An you all inten to leave the air to go an Clean Burnham pig pen: yes I think if you read the letters in the right way, no boady will not have to call you a monkey, But is because you is reading it like a monkey, An you going like you have janga on you, Make the peoples have to call you a monkey, An say that you have janga on you. Next the man that wrote you an say that you is

a monkey, He make's you look small. An also say that you have janga on you, he make you look shame in front of the public, An also over the air. That man he said that you is a monkey, An you have janga on you, I give him Credit. Also I think that if the Prime Minister put a monkey to speak over the air it will do 100% better than you Mr Mack Andrew. Burnham will have to tell me if he is not getting no people to go an speak over the air, than before he have to put you Mr Mack Andrew, ho is a monkey. An Roven, An also Mykal, ho is two monkeys too at Radio Demerara. I think if he put three monkeys to speak over the air, he will do 95% better, An send the three of you to go Clean his pig pen.

Your truly
R. George.

Thank you
A Black man
Just like you
Wrote you this?

Editor's Note: The "Roven" and "Mykal" Mr. R. George referred to might have been Rovin Deodat and Michael Archer.

I believe R. George's "Land of Canean" is really "Land of Canaan".

'FOCUS ON FOLK'

'Focus on Folk'

I have been able to find only what appears to be Mac's undated introduction to **'Focus on Folk'**. If one were to use letters in Mac's archive to pinpoint beginning and ending dates, the programme was aired from 1975 to 1978, but Dr. Judith Roback made 1973 tapes recordings of it. Three of those letters, mainly congratulating Mac on the excellence of his programme, are in this section. The letter that wishes the rest of the Caribbean were as interested as Mac in folk sums up Mac's folk passion.

Mac dealt with only a few songs on the specific **'Focus on Folk'** programme listed in this section. However, this section includes a list of songs he might have played over time. The songs, which he researched, are a tribute to him and knowledge for learners who may find some of them not so familiar. (Note that his list has **'August Morning...'**, **'Na Wake Me Foreday Mornin'** and **'Over Canje Water'**, songs I mention in this brief discussion.)

Folk music was one of Mac's favourite areas, and he delighted particularly in Queh Queh Songs which he sang with spirited loudness while stomping his feet. Mac's knowledge of folk songs, which he began collecting in the 1950's, was extensive and he organized them into different chapters. (See his **'Guyanese Folksongs'** in John Rickford's *Festival of Guyanese Words*.)

Although Mac named the singers of **'Over Canje Water'**, **'Ya-ous-ay'** and **'This Time Na Lang Time'**, I was not able to track the songs. Even if I were able to record their words, I would still be aware that folk songs have different versions, depending on where in a country they are sung. With the latter in mind, I'm sharing versions of the songs named in Mac's programme with my readers; I think that Mac, a believer in research and strengthening people with knowledge, would want me to do that. Brother Eusi Kwayana gave me three versions of **'August Morning'**, with a reminder that folk songs represent sentiments that were there before the songs were created; that folk songs do not always spell

out their themes, and the audience is left to grasp their subtleties.

My reminder to my readers is that many folk songs are very short - one or two lines which are repeated. Words are often substituted (ad libbing) as lines are repeated. Maybe, the songs began with many lines but, over many years, words were lost as the songs were never written.

Here are Brother Eusi's three versions of '**August Morning**':

1. Fus a August come again
Black bird get up an' shake he tail.
2. Fus of August come again
Hurraat me ginja.
3. Emancipation bill guh pass
Bakra man sah eat long grass.

This is '**August Morning**' as I know it (similar to Mac's, except for his second stanza):

Aagas maanin come again
A-we goh rack dem moto, hay gangaram
Hay hay hay gangaram
Rack dem moto hay gangaram.
(Bruk dem moto/ knack dem moto/etc., as the song is repeated.)

I'm presenting two versions of '**Over Canje Water**'. The first version was shared with me by Kenton 'Drum Maan' Wyatt. (Remember him? He made regular appearances teaching drumming on my radio folklore programme '**Ganga Time**' of 1980-1993.) 'Drum Maan' learned that his version is based on a famous ballahoo (type of sail boat) that was used to take people across the Canje. I learned the second version from hearing different people sing it. My version is closer to Mac's:

Ah goin ova Canje waata
Swim am no day
Sail Canje ba la la
Swim am no day
Ah goin ova Canje waata
Swim am no day
Away Canje ba la laaa
Swim am no daaaay.

2:
Ah goin ova Canje waata
See maan o' dey (over there)
Ah goin ova Canje waata
See maan o' dey
Away santie la la laa
See maan o' deeeey.

'Ya-ous-ay'

I found one version of a song about a young woman leaving the comfort of her parents' home to go with her husband. However, this may not be 'Ya-ous-ay' that Mac played on the 'Focus on Folk' under discussion:

You a lef yuh mamma chamba
Foh goh live a yuh own chamba.

'Dis Time Na Lang Time'*

This is not necessarily the version of 'Dis Time Na Lang Time', which Mac played on his programme.

Chorus:

Dis time na lang time
Dis time na lang time
Dis na day befo' time. (Repeat)

Lang time gat am lang lang logie
Now yuh gat am bungalow. (Repeat)

Chorus

Lang time gat am donkey kyaat
Now yuh gat am Desoto. (Repeat)

Chorus

Lang time gat am bicycle
Now yuh gat am moto'bike. (Repeat)

Chorus

Editor's Note: *Singers of this song can keep adding verses (ad libbing) as the singing continues.

I'm sure the final song '**Don't You Wake Me Foreday Mornin'** also has versions (I've heard people say "*Alnora*" instead of "*Ah Nora*"), but I'm offering one version. Like so many folk songs, this is another where I'm sure singers add verses as the singing continues.

Chorus:

Ah, Nora daalin, don't yuh wake me fo'day maanin
(Repeat three or four times)

Me goh gi yuh palish furniture
Me goh gi yuh pressure cooka
Ah, Nora daalin, don't yuh wake me fo'day maanin.

Chorus

Mih goh gi yuh fancy bed gyaal
Me goh gi yuh diaman ring gyaal
Ah, Nora daalin, don't yuh wake me fo'day maanin.

Chorus

Editor's Note: Mac typed this discussion for one of his 'Focus on Folk' radio shows, but I retyped it to improve the quality of the print.

A FIFTEEN-MINUTE PROGRAMME OF GUYANESE FOLKSONGS (WITH EXPLANATIONS)

McAndrew: Guyana is a country rich in folklore, thanks mainly to the fact that its present-day population is heavily descended from African slaves and East Indian indentured immigrants, all of whom came – or, rather, were brought – to the country between the seventeenth century and the twentieth century to work on sugar plantations. Hence, our folksong book is a rich repository of information about Guyanese life and Guyanese history.

And so, to begin this programme, a folksong from the days of slavery in Guyana...a song from the oldest section of the Guyana Folksong Book.

On the 1st of August, in the year 1834, there was partial emancipation of the slaves, those six years old and under being set free, and the rest, the older ones, being made Apprentices – a special name they gave them – and being bound to serve their masters for a further period of six years. Now this apprenticeship time was eventually shortened from six years to four, and in 1838, again on the 1st of August, all remaining slaves in the country were set free by Act of the British Parliament.

This, then, was the true Emancipation Day for the Guyanese slave ancestors. And, to commemorate it, they made up a bitter-sweet song in which they underlined the fact that freedom had missed them the first time around and they made a vow – in the words of "A-we go rack dem moto, ay gangaram", which you'll hear as the sort of chorus line of the song – they made a vow that they would give their former masters hell for having made them wait so long to have their

chains removed. In fact, it's a vow that I don't think they ever kept, but it was a vow, nevertheless, if we look closely at the words of the song.

Let's hear the song, now, which is called – quite fittingly – “AUGUST MORNING COME AGAIN”.

OPR: PLAY TAPE (“AUGUST MORNING COME AGAIN...”).

McAndrew: “AUGUST MORNING COME AGAIN”...a song that documents the fact that there were in fact two Emancipation times for the old Guyana slaves – the first one in 1834, which was only partial; and then the final and complete Emancipation on the 1st of August, 1838: 1st of August being the operative word in both cases, hence the word “AUGUST MORNING” and the name of the song, “AUGUST MORNING COME AGAIN”...

Lovely music from the Representational Chapter of the Guyana Folksong Book – that special section of the Representational Chapter where we have songs that date back (just a few exist) definitely to the days of slavery.

The other songs we'll hear all come from fairly later times, except the next one, and to know what it's about, we must go back to mention that the 1763 slave rebellion, during the time of the Dutch administration of Guyana, is a famous landmark of Guyanese history, as you know! And a special symbolic monument, featuring the slave Cuffy who led the rebellion in Berbice in 1763 was erected in our capital – in Georgetown – as part of the local celebrations of the 10th Independence Anniversary.

However, the Canje River in Berbice, where the revolution began was noted in slavery times not for revolutionaries like Cuffy, but for fairmaids - those powerful supernatural beings who live underwater and whose worship gave Guyana its CUMFA cult: the local equivalent of Haitian VODOO, Cuban SANTO, Jamaican KUMINA, and so on.

The belief in those days, back in Berbice, was that the Canje River was full of fairmaids and that, for that reason, slaves on plantations bounded by that river should be careful not to jump inside, because something bad would happen to them,

And that was why lots of slaves living – in slavery – on estates that the Canje River was the sort of back boundary of were afraid to jump in that Canje River and swim across it – even though they knew that freedom lay as near as the opposite bank. In other words, all you had to do, to get away from the slave master, was jump in and swim across – just across there, where you could see!

But nobody wanted to do it, because they were afraid of these plentiful fairmaids that they believed existed in this very special river – the Canje River, or Canje Creek, as some people call it.

And the next song, from the CUMFA Chapter of the Guyana Folksong Book, documents for posterity the first words uttered by one very brave slave named Sandy, who took the plunge one well-remembered day and got away from the slave owner's hunting party, because he was on one of these estates where the Canje River was the boundary, you see?

And he decided, unlike the others (his friends and colleagues), that freedom was more important than fear of fairmaids. So he jumped in the Canje River, and he swam across...and he got out on the other bank, and he looked up at his friends as he climbed out – they were in the hunting party, you see, waiting, coming with the dogs and the whatnot and the slave master, to catch him. He looked up at them, and he waved...And the song says what he said to them at that time...

It's called 'OVER CANJE WATER", and it's sung by the Republic Singers of Guyana...OPR: PLAY TAPE ("OVER CANJE WATER").

McAndrew: Another look at another chapter now, of the Guyana Folksong Book, and we're looking at the most unique aspect of Guyanese folklore - that is to say, the popular pre-wedding sing-song known locally here as the QUEH-QUEH or QUEH-KEH.

QUEH-QUEH almost certainly had its origins in Africa. But so far, ethnomusicologists have been unable to trace it on that continent – which makes Guyana the only country in the world where QUEH-QUEH can still be found. And so the

QUEH-QUEH Chapter of the Guyana Folksong Book is one of our most valuable.

This song features singers reminding the bride – her name is Doris, you’ll hear the name from the very beginning of the song – that she will shortly be leaving the security of her parent’s home to go and live in her new marital abode with her new husband George.

This is, then, a QUEH-QUEH song from the QUEH-QUEH CHAPTER of the Guyana Folklore Book, and it’s called a very strange name – “Ya-Ous-Ay” – which is difficult to spell, and it’s a set of Creolese words which mean something like: “Away from this house...”

And it’s all underlining the fact that you’re moving out from your parent’s home and you’re going in your husband’s house. So let’s hear the Halagala Box Gang and “Ya-Ous-Ay” ...

OPR: PLAY TAPE (“YA-OUS-AY”).

McAndrew: For the final two Guyanese folksongs, we turn to the back of the Guyana Folksong Book...to the chapter that’s been put at the end precisely because it is still being added to, as the folklore developed by the East Indians immigrants and their descendants gradually moves out of the sugar estate areas and begins to cross-fertilize with the older, more universal folklore created by the slaves, the freedmen, and their descendants.

This is the East Indian Rhyiming Song Chapter (what I call the EIRS), and it features folksongs with simple four or two-line verses, coupled with simple but tuneful original melodies gleaned mainly from Ragas and Bhajans (Hinduism, of course, being the most followed non-Christian religion in Guyana).

The first song we’ve chosen is one in which the singer compares life today, for the descendants of the East Indian immigrants with life as they knew it back in the days when Guyana was still a colony.

It’s a song about progress, if you like, and its taken from the later Kempadoo collection. The singer is an East Indian market vendor known simply to her friends as Betty, Listen now to her rendering of “THIS TIME NA LANG TIME” ...

OPR: PLAY TAPE (“THIS TIME NA LANG TIME”).

McAndrew: “DIS TIME NA LANG TIME” ...And now for our final song – still in the EAST INDIAN RHYMING SONG CHAPTER of the Guyana Folksong Book.

This is one that forcefully underlines the cross-fertilization of cultures that we mentioned a moment ago, because it actually uses lines borrowed from a much older QUEH-QUEH song...“NA WAKE ME FOREDAY MORNING” ...

OPR: PLAY TAPE (“NA WAKE ME FOREDAY MORNING” ...

Wordsworth McAndrew's Collection of Folk Songs of British Guiana

1. 'Madeline'

Oh Madeline, sweet, sweet Madeline
Tell me wher you get da belly from.
Oh Madeline, sweet, sweet Madeline
Tell me wher you get da belly from.

2. 'Johnny Fernandes'

Johnny Fernades was a Putagee man
Blow, blow, blow de man down
Blow de man down wid a bottle o' rum
Gie me some time to blow de man down.
Johnny kyaan read, Johnny kyaan spell
Blow, blow, blow de man down
Blow de man down wid a piece o' cow dung
Gie me some time to blow de man down.

3. 'Ring Down Da Rumour'

God mek a black man
'e mek am in a day
Foget to paint am white
So bye-bye me honey
For de ting is gettin' funny
Ring down de rumour till morn.

Refrain

Ring down ring down ring down da rumour
Tell all de people to come
So bye-bye me honey
For de ting is getting' funny
Ring down de rumour till morn.

Verse 2

God mek a white man
'e mek am in a night
Forget to paint am black
So bye-bye me honey
For de ting is getting' funny
Ring down de rumour till morn.

Verse 3

God mek a coolie
'e mek am out o' troolie
Ring down de rumour till morn, etc...

4. 'Uncle Joe'

Me been a rice field go walk
Me nah hear when marnin' train pass
Me been a rice field go walk
Me nah hear when marnin' train pass
Uncle Joe gimme mo' leh me go
Uncle Joe jimme mo' leh me go.

5. 'Bamboo Dam'

Me been a de bamboo dam
An' de bamboo jook me yah so
Me been a de bamboo dam
An' de bamboo jook me yah so
Lay down gal leh me put in me han'
Lay down gal leh me wash out you pan
Lay down gal leh me... (Adlib)

6. 'Chicken Born Widout a Fedder'

Chicken born widout a fedder
Waitin' for de rainy weather
Come come me yalla gal it's time for us to go
Heave away, heave away oh.

7. 'Timber Man'

Timber man me ah hear you fame) **Twice**
Yay ay sea punt ah come-o)
Timber man seh haul away.)
Haul timber timber halla groong! groong!
Yay ay sea punt a come-o
Timber man seh haul away
Draw timber timber halla gree! gree!
Yay ay sea punt a come-o
Timber man seh haul away.

8. 'Independently'

When me go me go'n tell me mumma

- Independently

White man come an 'e bam me Netta

Red Man come an 'e bam me Netta

Black man come an 'e bam me Netta

Putagee come an 'e bam me Netta

Chinee come an 'e bam me Netta

Coolie come an 'e bam me Netta

Buck man come an 'e bam me Netta.

9. 'Cove & John'

Please tell me where daddy gone) **Twice**

Daddy gone to Cove and John)

Daddy gone daddy gone

Daddy gone to Cove and John

Daddy gone daddy gone

Daddy gone to Cove and John.

10. 'Clap han' for Mammy'

Clap han' fo' mammy

Till daddy come

Daddy bring cake an sugar plum

Gie baby some.

11. 'Pretty Little Butterfly'

Pretty little butterfly

What do you do all day

Run about at Sunday school

Nothing else but play

Nothing else but play me darlin'

Run butterfly run butterfly

Waste yo' time away.

12. 'Early in De Marnin'

E in de marnin' - - hm, hm

A who go buy me plantain - - hm, hm

Buy me eddo - - hm, hm

Me big fat chinee eddo - - hm, hm

Buy me tannia, etc.

13. 'Lilli Gal'

Lilli gal, lilli gal, lilli gal, lilli gal
Wha mek yo brazen so?
Dis mek me brazen, dah mek me brazen
Dis mek me brazen so. (**Repeat**)

14. 'Sunna Come leh we Go Way'

Refrain: Sunna come leh we go 'way
Nobody nah go know
Sunna come leh we go 'way
Nobody nah go know.

Verse 1

You hold me you kiss me
You bruk me tillari
Sunna come leh we go 'way
Nobody nah go know.

Verse 2

You han' full o' silver
You mout' full o' gold
You just like a angel
You steal away me soul.

15. 'Magalena'

Lululu Magalena oh Lulu
Lululu Magalena Lu
Lululu Magalena oh Lulu
Come back tomorrow night
We sah do di ting.
Seven long years we nah do dis ting Lulu
Seven long years we nah do dis ting
Seven long years we nah do dis ting lulu
Come back tomorrow night we sah do dis ting.

16. 'Lancelina'

Dollar han' a 'alf is a boat han' pay me bully
Blow Lancia blow Lancelina my dear
Lancelina dear won't you come along with me
For a dollar han' a 'alf a day 'igh low.

17. 'Ol House Ah Bu'n Down'

Ol' house a bu'n down - fire below
Awe wuk am tonight whole night -
Fire below.

18. Not Named

Men: 'Ooman gone away me nah kay
'Ooman gone away me nah kay
'Ooman gone away me nah kay
But me gat me cabane ah wait am deh.

Ladies: Man gone away me nah kay)
Man gone away me nah kay
Man gone away me nah kay
But me gat me bedstead ah wait am deh.
(**Mac's Note:** Ladies sing twice.)

19. 'Call Tappin'

Call Tappin fe go help Peckhoo
Call Tappin fe go help Peckhoo
Tappin Tappin Peckhoo bul away)
'E seh mud too deep.) **Twice**

20. 'Tu'n Back Cart Man' (*to be spoken*)

Tu'n back cart man- - dem deh pan am
Tu'n back cart man dem deh pan am.

21. 'Bowman'

See de bowman standin' at de bow
Glad 'e send his paddle to save our lives
Over danger pull we over danger) **Twice**
Over danger rock and fall.) **Twice**

22. 'Roundfoot Man'

Roundfoot man kill Craboonaackoodel
Cut out she guts an' put it pon de bed
When 'e done 'e say
When 'e done 'e say
Looka Roundfoot man kill Craboonaackoodel.

23. 'Miss Mary Big Foot'

Miss Mary Big Foot shine so bright
That you tek am fo' silver
Miss Mary Big Foot shine so bright
That you tek am fo' silver.

Refrain

Doan walk deh doan walk deh
You go'n kyetch de junja
Doan walk deh doan walk deh
You go'n kyetch de junja.

24. 'Fan Me Soljer Boy'

Fan me soljer boy fan me
Fan me soljer boy fan me
Fan me soljer boy fan me oh
All me character gone.
Dickie dickie jump ah want fo' do-do
Dickie dickie jump ah want fo' do-do
Dickie dickie jump ah want fo' do-do
Dickie dickie jump ah want fo' do-do.

25. 'Ovah Canje Watah'

Oh me ovah Canje watah-Simanoday
Ovah Canje watah-Simanoday
Away Sandy ballala-Simanoday
Away Sandy bololo-Simanoday.

26. 'Come Ladies Come'

Oh you come ladies come
Wid you cakes an' you plum
Heavy collection boys over there
When we go to war we will carry the flag
B. G. boys forever.

27. 'August Mornin''

August mornin' come again
A-we go rack dem moto ay Gangaram
Ay ay Gangaram
Rack dem moto ay Gangaram.
Slavery time done again
A-we go rack dem moto ay Gangaram

Ay ay ay Gangaram
Rack dem moto ay Gangaram.

28. 'German Man'

When me go home ah go'n tell me mumma say)
Victoria married to German man) **Twice**
German man buddy German man
Victoria married to German man
German man buddy German man
Victoria married to German man.

29. 'Ga One Coalpot'

Me ga one coal pot in me belly) **Twice**
Tek am out leh me see)
Me ga one coal pot in me belly)
Tek am out leh me see)
Chee-ai-ay bap bap- One!
Chee-ai-ay bap bap- Two!
Chee-ai-ay bap bap- Three!
Chee-ai-ay bap bap -Four!
Chee-ai-ay bap bap- Five!
Chee-ai-ay bap chee bap chee bap
Chee bap chee bap bap.

30. 'Na Wake Me Foreday Mornin'

Na wake me foreday marnin'
Na wake me foreday marnin'
Oh Nora darling
Nah wake me foreday marnin.

31. 'Gone to America'

Hooliah hooliah
Hooliah gone to America
(Repeat and Adlib)

<p>Editor's Note: For songs numbers 7 and 29, I've heard the individual lines with a bracket at the end sung twice, and I've heard all the lines sung twice as a chorus.</p>

Editor's Note: All of the letters in this section were retyped verbatim. I wish that my readers could see Jennifer Bakker's very neat writing, which was like typing cursive with a pen.

Mahaica Village
East Coast Demerara,
13th January, 1975

Hello Mr. Mc Andrew,

Greetings. My name is Jennifer Bakker and I live at the above address. I am an avid listener of your programme 'Focus On Folk'. Because of this I am at this point in time interested to learn more about Guyanese Folk Cultures Culture In General (Music and Songs). I would like to know something about its origin which would involve some history, its development through the years, its impact on our Guyanese society and information of that nature.

I would be grateful to you if you could tell me as much as you can and even to recommend any reading material which would be of immense help to me.

I am anxiously awaiting a reply so please don't disappoint me. Do keep up the good work.

Thank you.

I remain,

Your avid listener,
Jennifer Bakker.

Editor's Note: An image of what looks like either a small cave with a bright-eyed animal peeking out or a huge turtle shell sheltering a small animal is at the top of the paper Dick used to write his letter to Mac. The folksy image reminds one of the setting for a folk tale.

from Dick's den (missing image)

Dear Sir,

Allow me to correct yourself and Thelma Henderson, on your programme Focus on Folk on Sat. 2nd October 1976, Madam Henderson mentioned that the radio stations in Trinidad do not play enough calypso music, apparently she does not listen to the stations.

Every day and throughout the day and mainly on evenings on Radio 610 (Rollin-Home) calypso even more.

Your programme was very interesting other wise. If other islands in the West Indies could take such an interest in Folk as you have this could mean something for our West Indian culture.

The names mentioned in this letter might not be correct.

I was at my room in the Pegasus listening to your interesting broadcast.

Good luck

Dick wills

Trinidadian

gbs guyana broadcasting service
68 HADFIELD ST.* GEORGETOWN* GUYANA* TELS. 69231/5*
CABLES: 'GUYCAST' P.O. BOX 560
WMCA: am

Oct. 11, 1976

Dick Wills
20 Cascade Road
Flat 16
Cascade
Trinidad, W. I.

Dear Dick,

Thank you for your letter from "Dick's Den" and the useful comments you make in it.

It's certainly a rare pleasure to get this kind of feedback from listeners resident in the Caribbean, since only a few of them hear us, and even fewer – like you – ever take the trouble to drop us a line.

I am pleasantly surprised to hear that you disagree with Thelma Henderson's claim that calypsos are hardly played on the radio in Trinidad except during the Carnival season, particularly since it was not in fact the first time I had heard such a claim. My congrats to 610!

Thanks especially for your kind remarks about the essential goodness (or is it rightness) of what we in Guyana are trying to do for the preservation and revaluation of West Indian folklore and folk culture via such programmes as Focus on Folk.

Heartened by your congratulations, I, for one, will try my best to keep things going full steam ahead at this end.

Hope you enjoyed your stay in Guyana, and do accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,
Wordsworth McAndrew,
Asst. Programme Director

RONALD M. SANDERS General Manager, Programme Director

Editor's Note: Sir Ron Sander says that "WMCA: am" was a filing system. "WM" is Wordsworth McAndrew, while "CA" pertains to the correspondence and some part of the filing; "am" is the secretary who typed the above letter.

H. E. ELSTAK
RONALD STRAAT 42
DISTRICT SURINAME
SURINAME

November 28th, 1977

Dear Mr. Mac-andrew,

This will be the first time I shall write a letter to G. B. S. but it is not the first time that I am listen to your radio station.

One of the programs that I am interested in is Focus on Folks. The songs and the explanation of you and the other fellow-workers are excellent.

I get a clear reception of G. B. S. during the daytime, but at night I have too much troubles (back-sound). But let us go back to Folks songs. The lady, who gave all the comment is from Trinidad as I understood. My question is how can I contact her, and is she willing to send me some booklets or other information about folks-songs from T. T.?

An other thing that borders me is, is that we have no place in Suriname were we came buy some of the beautiful songs from the Caribbean area. Perhaps I must ask you if you know of a place in Georgetown Guyana were and how I can buy those folks songs you are playing during that program on saturday afternoon. I like to have some records and booklets or books of our own folks-songs. I hope that you can help me in finding something. Because I have a record (L. P.) of folks-songs but from U. S. A. and other parts of the world, not from our own region yet!!

Hoping you can help me with a small fraction of what I am asking. I remain respectfully yours,

H. E. ELSTAK
a listener

MAC SERVES PROVERBS

Si' Down Le' Mih Dish Out fo' Yuh (one of Mac's favourite sayings)

Mac's programme '**Proverb for Today**' was one where he discussed one specific proverb, attending to its formulation, abstract nature or imagery, meaning and application. Each presentation lasted five to seven minutes. He was not dogmatic and encouraged listeners to write him if they disagreed with anything he said. Based on available information, '**Proverb for Today**' ran from June to October, 1976, but I'm publishing only three of his discussions.

Mac used informal spelling and grammar in presenting his radio discussions on proverbs, as the informal tone suited the topic and audience.

The words "imagy" and "abstracty" (second proverb, 7/9/76) and "stirrer-upper" (third proverb, 8/10/76) were coined by Mac, who enjoyed doing such.

A "kachar" (also "kochore") in Guyana is someone who secretly and deliberately gives out damaging information against other people.

Editor's Note: I wrote the dates of the following three proverb discussions in parentheses, so that they (particularly 7/9/76 and 8/10/76) are not read as if they were USA dates.

PROVERB FOR TODAY – Saturday, 28/8/1976 (28th August, 1976)

When is a proverb not a proverb? That's the question that the thing we'd like to look at today – I'd like to say our "Proverb for Today", but it's not a proverb, really – brings to mind.

I would say it's not a proverb when it's an idiom – when it's just a way of describing a situation or whatever, but doesn't seek to give advice about how to live, what to beware of, and so on. I would say that at that point you're almost sure that it's not a proverb, even though the actual words in the given formation may make you think that it's a proverb.

Well we'll get a better idea of that now when we come to our example today. This is again from the lovely list given me by our friend Mr. Craig from Suriname, and it's one that says (a Taki-Taki thing): "Lee hati moro soro!" Got it? "Lee hati moro soro!"

Well "moro" is "more", "soro" is "sore", "lee" is "lie", "hati" is "hu't". So "Lie mo hu'tful than sore!" Got it! "Lie mo hu'tful than sore!"

Well let's look at that. You know what a sore is, of course. And the point being made in this particular formulation – which, as you notice, we're not calling a proverb – is that if you have a sore, or if you've ever had a sore, you know how hurtful (in the sense of painful) that could be – particularly if it's healing up nicely and one day by accident you jam your foot, or wherever it is, against something, and even the scab comes off, then you've got a problem and you really feel some pain for a while. So that's a set of pain, there, that is frozen in your mind – you have a memory bank that says that if you've got a sore it hurts x amount.

Now the point being made in the formulation that we're looking at is that a lie is much more painful to you than

having a sore and getting the kind of pain that a sore can give you. And when we say a lie, we're talking not just about you lying; we're talking about when people tell lies on you. O. K.? If somebody tells a lie on you, and particularly if it's something that affects your job, your character, your pride, your whatever, it's really a very hurtful, a very painful thing. And that's what this formulation seeks to embody in a set of words that actually look like a proverb: "Lee hati moro soro" – "Lie mo hu'tful than sore!"

But, now that we've seen what it's trying to say and how it goes about it, we can now look again at it to see if there's any advice there. If there's no advice, then we know that even though it looks like one it is not, in fact, a proverb for today or for any time.

Right...So, "Lie mo hu'tful than sore!" What's that saying? It's saying, as we said, that one of the most hurtful things in this world – most painful, embarrassing, and vexing – is to be lied on by someone. I remember, even as a boy you didn't mind if somebody told a lie. But if somebody told a lie on you, then that was a big difference. It's like being thought of as a thief – you really can't take that, really could get a gun and shoot up everybody, and so on. Well, you get that same feeling when somebody tells a lie on you – particularly, as I said, if it's the kind of lie that can affect you at your job, that can affect your character, your good name, and so on. It's something we don't like in this community, but it happens. And that's why the old people somewhere in Suriname took this particular fact of life and put it down in these words.

But, even though that's come about, I'm saying there's no advice there, in this formulation, no attempt even to advise: it's just a plain description, frozen in time, of that particular situation, that particular pain you feel, when somebody tells a lie on you.

So it's not at all a proverb, O. K.? But it's something I think was well worth looking at, because people keep asking me: "How are you sure when a proverb is a proverb?" Well, the answers are fairly broad answers, but we work into it, we feel part of it, we get the whole texture of the thing, and eventually we work it out. But that's certainly the main rule, if you like. I don't like the word "rule", but that's the main

thing that differentiates the proverb from the mere expression or descriptive statement or idiom.

And so, if there's no intention to advise about life it's not a proverb – as in the one we've looked at today: "Lie mo hu'tful than sore!" or "Lee hati moro soro!"

PROVERB FOR TODAY – Tues. 7/9/76 (7th September, 1976)

Yeah...it's a long time we haven't had a look in this book. And I'm talking about the lovely book issued in 1902 by the Argosy Co., Ltd., compiled by a man called Rev. Speirs. Lots of lovely, old things in here, and there's no way at all to find out what they mean exactly, O. K? So we can only go by this kind of psychic guesswork we've been using – it's been satisfactory so far. But there's nothing else we can do, so if you disagree with what I say now, do drop a line and let me know if you've heard this. I doubt if you would have, because it has age with it. You can feel the age of it, even the way how Rev. Speirs writes his words, you know?

So the first word is CLAT – which is cloth, of course. And he has C-L-A-T', you know? That sort of thing. Anyway, to cut a long story short, let's look into Speirs, we're on page 14. And he says: "CLAT' EASY FO DUTTY, BUT HARD FO WASH!" Got it? "CLAT' EASY FO DUTTY, BUT HARD FO WASH!"

Lovely image, I think. A lovely, direct-to-the-point little proverb here, even though I don't know why it's gone out of use. I've never heard it in 39 years. Anyway, CLAT', as we said, is "cloth"; EASY FO DUTTY, well we know what that means, yo could dutty cloth without much trouble – it's a simple thing to get any cloth dutty; BUT HARD FO WASH.

It's not much of an image, as you can see, not very imagy. It's more abstracty. But we can see functional living, functional behaviour, in it. Because here's a piece of cloth, clean, a clean sheet perhaps, or a new shirt, just washed and pressed or whatever. And you go on the road, if it's the shirt, and a very good friend comes up to you and claps you on the back. Next thing you know, you go to where you really were going, and somebody says: 'Man yo gat a nice shirt, man, but how it get mess up at de back?' And then you remember: "Oh hell! Yo know..." That sort of thing. Or if it's the sheet, well so many things can happen to a sheet to get it dirty. For instance your little boy comes home with a new fountain-pen, showing off. "Mammy, mammy, look me pen!" And next thing you know, there's a drop of ink on the sheet.

That's the kind of image here: that it's easy to dutty the cloth, but hard to wash it. And that is so true, but that's not the message here. The message is a little bigger than that. The message is that, just as it is easy to dutty a clean piece of cloth and hard to wash it, it is much easier to cause trouble, to spoil something, than to rectify the trouble that you have caused. You know what I mean?

So many times in life it happens that somebody is of the type – I don't know why – that we call "fast" (there's no English word for this). And through his fastness he goes and he interferes with the best-laid plan you can have, the best-worked-out project you can have. He comes along, and just through sheer fastness he goes and pushes a button, or he presses something, or he makes something fall down, and so on – and next thing you know the whole kit and caboodle is in complete confusion, because the whole thing has been spoiled, and there is no shortcut to getting it all fixed up again. Right?

So that's the kind of thing to guard against. That's the message here. Don't be that kind of person who causes trouble wherever he goes, particularly when things are neatly laid out, and so on, and you go and spoil it. Don't go and spoil things. That's what the proverb means when it says that "CLAT' EASY FO DUTTY, BUT HARD FO WASH!" And it's the kind of message that can be applied to all kinds of areas. It need not have to do with an actual laid-out set of objects or so, or that kind of project or plan, or with pressing the wrong button on a tape recorder and erasing the tape (all that's included) but it could do simply with gossip, "dem seh, she seh", you know the kachar type of person, some friendship going good, and so on, and this man comes along and just for fun, just for sheer fastness, he drops a little whisper into the ears of one person – completely untrue, but he does it so well, the man believes. And perhaps he goes and he drops a different whisper in the other ear. And right away the friendship begins to sour, people begin to look at things and begin to put 2 and 2 together (getting 4, but not even realizing), and suddenly two friends who were very good friends start to look at one another with enmity (husband and wife it can happen with, too), and so on and so forth.

That's a dangerous practice, and it's one that you should try and avoid. And if you know anybody who is that type, you should try and avoid them, too. If you have a friend like that, cut him out from your friendship because: "CLAT' EASY FO DUTTY, BUT HARD FO WASH!"

PROVERB FOR TODAY – 8/10/76 FRIDAY (8th October, 1976)

Yah! Once again what I like to call a “personal proverb”. This one I got from a very good friend, Sonny Ross. We’ve had before quite a few of these proverbs that I classified as “personal proverbs” on the ground that they were proverbs made up by the men who told me about them, and there was nobody else around the place who was actually using them, for the simple reason that the man made it up himself and uses it for his own purposes when he wants to. The moment – and I don’t know when this would happen: it could – that a whole lot of people pick it up and start to use it, then it begins to metamorphose, if you like, to change from the status of being just a “personal proverb” to the status of being a true proverb. Because we must get this what we call “mouth-to-mouth propagation”, this handing down from father to son, friend to friend, and so on, before it can be a true proverb.

So here’s one that could well be a true proverb in years to come – one that’s now a “personal proverb” from the book of Mr. Sonny Ross. And he says: “SNAKE AH LIE DOWN, E NA DEAD!” Got it? “SNAKE AH LIE DOWN, E NA DEAD!”

Well at first it sounded a bit sexual to me, so I asked him what it meant, and he gave me an example. Here’s a man who likes to beat his wife. We have lots of men like that in Guyana, mind you. In fact, the women – certain women – like it so much that they have made a proverb of their own (it’s not really a proverb, it’s an idiom). They say: If me man ain beat me, e ain love me!”

But to come back to the Sonny Ross example. Here’s a man who likes to beat his wife. And for some reason or the other, after time goes by he decided to turn over a new leaf and stop beating her. Now that’s lovely! Her skin gets a rest, his hands get a rest, everybody gets a rest, and peace and love can prevail in that marital home once again. Lovely! But then what happens? One day, the wife does something of the type he used to beat her for. O. K.? And he looks at her with a stern eye and says to her: “Gal, snake a lie down, e na dead!” In

other words, “Not because I’ve stopped beating you you should go back doing the same things you used to get licks for, because it doesn’t mean that I can’t start beating you again. So don’t encourage me to break my resolution!”

Quite an interesting thing, I think, and I think that explains it quite nicely. Obviously it is such a formulation here (“SNAKE AHLIE DOWN, E NA DEAD!”). Here’s a snake lying on the ground and if you trouble it it might well wake up and bite you – spring at you. O. K?

It’s difficult, then, to spread it to too many other areas of life, I would say. Except to say that we can extract what seems to be the main principle here. That principle being that you should not believe that because a situation is dormant that it cannot be persuaded, if you like, to erupt, and once again come back to a damaging kind of force. Now that’s the whole point. In other words, as one true proverb says: “Ting ah sleep, na wake am!” Right? That’s the advice here.

So it is a “personal proverb” with advice, and that’s the advice. And as I said, it’s one that we need to think about. In fact, you can help Sonny to make his “personal proverb” become a real proverb by liking it, picking it up, starting to use it in your conversations, and whatnot. Because as he says, “SNAKE AHLIE DOWN, E NAH DEAD!”

And that’s such an important thing for us to remember. Very often we go and poke at trouble, at a situation that had trouble in it only potentially, but was waiting for somebody to stir it up. The moment you are the stirrer-upper, then you go and get in problems. So don’t stir up things, leave them as they are. “Ting ah sleep, na wake am!”

And, in the “personal proverb” from Sonny Ross, “SNAKE AHLIE DOWN, E NA DEAD!”

GLOSSARY & BIBLIOGRAPHY

Glossary

This glossary is mainly for international readers. The East Indian kinship terms and other words are kept as a group.

Ah gon kyaan do duh: I wouldn't be able to do that.

ASCRIA: African Society for Cultural Relations with Independent Africa.

backdam: usually agricultural lands behind a village/town.

bakra: name for white sugar plantation owner.

Bakra man sah eat grass: will have to eat grass.

bannuh: boy/man- Ah mek the bannuh to know- I told the man/I made the man know/aware.

betterhads: better had/ I had better.

big one: big shot.

BG: British Guiana, now independent Guyana.

BGBS: British Guiana Broadcasting Service, the Sister station of Radio Demerara. BGBS became **GBS** (Guyana Broadcasting Service) in May, 1966, when Guyana became independent. Up to that point, Radio Demerara and GBS were still both owned by the Thomson (UK) group. GBS was bought by the Government of Guyana and operated separately from Radio Demerara from October 1st, 1968. (*Courtesy of Sir Ronald Sanders*)

buddybo: brother- Oooi buddybo-Hello brother.

buss (burst) a lime: doing nothing in particular/ hanging out.

cook-up-rice: usually rice boiled in coconut milk, with peas, meats, vegetables, spices, etc.

coulda tek it: could have taken it.

Creolese: national language/nation talk, similar to what Jamaicans speak.

deh: there - Ah deh wid yuh (I'm backing you.) Additional usage: 1. De ting deh deh (The thing is there.) 2. Mih deh hey (I'm here).3. De two a dem deh (The two of them are in a romantic relationship.)

dem baai: those boys.

dey: they/their.

fast: curious/snoopy.

gaff/gyaff: talk - Leh wih gaff/gyaff.

GIS: Government Information Service, now GINA, Government Information Agency.

goady/godie: very popular Guyanese word for excessive and very visible enlargement of a man's testicles - hydrocele of the testicles.

gon ga fo increase we pay: will have to increase our pay.

GT: Georgetown, Guyana's capital/also used to mean Guyana.

half-a-chibat: half-a-big shot.

I deh in duh: I'm there in that/I'm in that/ I'll be part of it.

kyaan: can't.

kyaar: car.

leh: let.

lekka: like a.

mattie: friend/workmate/clubmate/- Wen yo mattie beard binna bun- when your friend's beard was burning/when he was in trouble.

me'n tink dey: I don't think they.

mus'e because: must be because.

nuff: a lot.

patwah: fish looking like a tilapia, but does not grow as large.

porkknockers: name for gold and diamond seekers, but not as popular as many years ago - debatable whether name developed from salted pork being a major part of their diet.

pushin truck: cargo loaded on hand trucks with wooden frames, horizontal bands and two wheels and pushed, thus "pushin truck".

QC: Queen's College-Guyana's premier high school. It began as a school for boys only in 1844 but became co-educational in 1975.

Queh Queh: Afro-Guyanese pre-wedding celebration – singing, dancing, drinking, eating.

seh: say.

shobelman: shovelman.

spoo't: sport, as in having a grand party.

tek it: take it.

Wordsie deh?: Is Wordsie there? Yes man, e deh: Yes man (although it could be a woman responded to) he's here.

whēh: where.

wuh gine on: what is going on.

wuk: work/also non-traditional spiritual service.

East Indian Kinship Terms and other Words:

Aajah: grandfather (father's father).

Aajee: grandmother by father's side, also grandfather's wife-your grandma-as a show of respect.

Abeer Day: A Phagwah Day (Hindu celebration) when participants are bathed in/sprinkled with dry red/bold pink powder or powder mixed with water. In recent times, participants have used yellow, blue and green powders. The term "Abeer" comes from mixing water with powder.

Abih: version of "awih", our/us.

Bowjee/Bhoujee/Baujje: brother's wife.

Beta: son.

Bhai: brother/also respectful greeting.

Bhain: sister/respectful greeting.

Bhaiganie: egg plants stuffed with ingredients and spices and baked or fried.

Chaacha: uncle (father's brother).

Chaachie: father's brother's wife.

Maai: mother.

Mousie/Mowsie: father's sister.

<p>Editor's Note: For the curious, Nana and Nanie are someone's grandfather and grandmother on his/her mother's side. You may also look up CARIFESTA.</p>
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ABOUT THE EDITOR



Roy Brummell was born in 1949 in Dartmouth Village on Guyana's Essequibo Coast. He graduated from Teachers' Training College, University of Guyana and City College, New York. Roy taught for nineteen years in Guyana at four high schools – Covent Garden, East Ruimveldt, St Rose's and Bishops'. He retired as a Bishops' High School Senior Master in 1987. Roy migrated to the United States in 1988, and served as a New York City educator in various capacities for twenty-three years before retiring in July of 2012.

While teaching in Guyana, Roy also wrote the Sunday column, '**A Word with You, Please**' (two years of analysis of the Caribbean Exam and the London Advanced Level English syllabuses), for the *Guyana Chronicle*; wrote short stories for the same newspaper and radio; performed as a story teller, and produced '**Ganga Time**', a weekly folklore programme, from 1980-1993 – the last five years while living in Brooklyn, New York, where he still resides.

