

# Carriacou Historical Society (Museum)

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*Preserving the heritage of Carriacou and Petite Martinique*

## Celebrating Clemencia

*37 years of service to Carriacou Museum*



After serving for 37 years Clemencia Alexander has truly become a pillar and support for the Carriacou Museum. To many who visit her over and over again she is indeed an icon and an inseparable link to our rich cultural heritage. And rightly so, her father Canute Calliste, is a household name in Carriacou for his unique art and music. Clemencia had the opportunity to accompany him for and on behalf of the Museum to receive several awards in Washington, New York, London and Bridgetown.

From humble beginnings, providing domestic services two days per week for founding member of the Carriacou Historical Society, Frances Kay Brinkley, Clemencia has grown with the Museum. She witnessed the first day the Museum opened its doors at the coffin shop in 1976.

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## News & Events

### Upcoming Events



Art Exhibition: An Artist's View of Carriacou – Opening March, 1 2013, Carriacou Museum

### News



Literature lecturers from The University of The West Indies visited Carriacou during Carnival as part of research on a book being written on 'Shakespeare in the Caribbean'.

The lecturers were particularly interested in the Shakespeare Mas traditions in Carriacou. The Museum will receive a copy of the book once published. Thank you to all who participated in this research.

**... DIARY DATE ...**  
**AGM on 7 March 2013 at**  
**Carriacou Historical Society**  
**(Museum) starting at 5.00pm**

## Welcome Message from our President



Let me welcome our readers to this first issue of our newsletter for 2013. In so doing, I wish to convey to our members a message of hope and optimism for this New Year.

As the tri-island state of Grenada celebrates its 39<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence from Great Britain, we at the Carriacou Historical are proud to celebrate the 37<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Society and Museum. As the feature article in this issue indicates, we are equally proud to celebrate our museum manager, Clemencia Alexander, who has been with the museum through its many years of trials and setbacks.

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## Art Exhibition: Carriacou through the Eyes of Young Artists



*Look out for the next  
Art Exhibition at The  
Museum*

*"An Artist's View of  
Carriacou"*

*Opening:*

*1 March 2013*

Inspired by the overwhelming student attendance and interest in the exhibit, "Canute Caliste, a Celebration of His Life and Art," and a \$1,500 EC contribution from Grenada Cooperative Bank, the Outreach Committee was granted the opportunity to sponsor a contest and exhibit with Bishop's College and Hillsborough Secondary School. Ten students from each school were selected by their art teacher to participate. Each school was granted \$500 in art supplies. As Caliste's works were his depictions of his environs, the young artists were asked to express their visions of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Thanks to the guidance of their teachers, Allison Mapp, Hillsborough Secondary School and Akida Mueller, Bishop's College, the students' submissions were judged on November 27<sup>th</sup> by an esteemed panel of judges who flew from Grenada to spend the day judging and meeting with CHS officers and members, and the two teachers.

The Society was honored to host Oliver Benoit, President of the Grenada Arts Council, Susan Mains, Grenada artist and

owner of Art & Soul Gallery, and Bryan Bullen artist and principal architect at COCOA, Grenada.

The exhibit opening was held on Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> from 3PM to 6PM in what is now known as the second floor gallery. Mr. Marquez McSween, Manager, Grenada Cooperative Bank was impressed by the paintings on display. He congratulated the artists for their vibrant, exuberant works and bestowed prizes to the winners: Perez Patrice, "Best in Show," \$200, Petra Patrice, 1<sup>st</sup> place, \$150, Ray J. Joseph, 2<sup>nd</sup> place, \$100, and Curt Stewart, 3<sup>rd</sup> place \$50.

A reception for the students, and parents, and Society members followed. In addition, TAMCC Student Rene Wilson received \$50 in art supplies from the Society and displayed her visions of Carriacou in the exhibit.

As a result, the Society is pleased to have received requests for another exhibit during 2013 from artists who are not students, so they may display their works at the Museum.



## Heritage is More Than Ruins: It's also Memories

Five board members —Valerie Joseph, Carolyn Alexander, Patricia John, Maria Hamlet and Gloria Phillips-Smith – travelled to three heritage sites: the Doctor's House and Compound in Belair. The Dover Ruins and Ningo Well in Tibeau. The purpose was to re-acquaint the board with heritage sites important to the island.

One of the more striking aspects of the first two sites were the ways that the plant life had insinuated itself into the very structure of the buildings. It was easy to see how buildings crumble – literally broken into pieces by the roots, trunks, boughs and vines that slowly reclaimed the landscape. Various community groups had, over the years, done some management of the ruins, but none recently.

A conversation began about the Doctor's House which had served as a military base for the People's Revolutionary Government. The remembrance of this fact sparked a spirited discussion about the Revolution, how it manifested in the lives of everyday people and the various meanings the Revolution had for everyone – positive and negative, complex and meaningful.

For some, 1979 to 1983 was an exciting time. It is important to note that those in opposition to the government had no such feelings of excitement (the events preceding, during and after that time are far too complex to discuss in this short article). Still, when journalists came to Carriacou, board members report that they were surprised at the level of knowledge the people had about history and current events. This was because the Revolutionary Government had prioritized education

that had a critical political awareness. This educated awareness was reinforced by people's analysis of the media messages emanating from the United States. Some news stories were blatantly untrue.

Board members also talked about the failings of the then government, attributing many of those failings to the youthful hubris of those in charge. The leaders were so certain of their actions that they listened to none of the elders who advised them that they were going down the wrong path. Whether people supported or were against the government, the population was, nevertheless, thoroughly devastated by the events of 19<sup>th</sup> of October 1983 when Bishop and some members of his cabinet were executed. This event amounted to a perceived betrayal that was so brutal in its impact that many people suffered great emotional devastation —how could their leaders commit such violence? What happened to the high ideals of the Revolution?

The conversation that board members had that day about relatively recent history was a significant one because of the way it illustrated the importance of telling compelling and important stories about our heritage. The ruins in Belair are part of a living breathing heritage that most people over the age of forty remember very well. Because of these ruins, we are reminded of another reason that while Carriacou, Petite Martinique and Grenada may comprise one small country, it is nevertheless an important geopolitical historical location. These islands are where the United States asserted its vast military might to fight the Cold War against the Soviet Union. The desire to preserve our island's ruins is not just for preservation's sake but for the way they also serve to connect us to a still vividly remembered and important part of our and the world's past.

### **“Celebrating Clemencia” Continued from Page 1 .....**

When the building along with valuable artefacts was destroyed in 1982 from hurricane sea surges, she was part of the brave team that saved what they could. The Museum re-opened at the 'old police station' in an 8'x8' room; she was again the lone curator providing service to the public twice per week. In the interim, she joined Ms Brinkley, Janet Wall and others on dig expeditions in Sabazan, Bayeleau, Grand Bay and Beausejour. On other days she spent countless hours cleaning and classifying artefacts for display or storage. By 1985, members thought that this was too much work with seemingly no reward. The call went out, 'time to close down.' She was present to hear life-time/founding member Edward Kent say, "not as long as I live. Let's give it another try." So she witnessed brighter days when the Society purchased property on Paterson Street and opened its new doors in 1987. Thereafter, a UNESCO representative touring the Caribbean described the Museum as "the best little Museum in the Caribbean." From that point onward through many trials and setbacks she has been an invaluable asset to the Museum conducting tours for the community residents, primary, secondary, and university students, Government Ministers, the Governor General, the Secretary General of UNESCO, archaeologists, renowned historian Dr. Lennox Honeychurch, a UNESCO team in 2001, cruise ship passengers, and visitors from around the world.

Both her legendary father and husband have passed on. But she continues to welcome all with her enchanting smile. Her three girls and three boys are her pride and joy with one still studying, one a Medical Doctor while another is doing well in the Tourism Industry in Barbados. Unknowingly, and without formal academic experience Clemencia has become one of the most knowledgeable persons in Archeology and Anthropology for the Society. The Executive Board of the Society takes this opportunity to salute her interpersonal skills, affable personality, and distinguished career with the Carriacou Museum.

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## **Our Membership Fees**

Junior: EC\$10  
(under 16)

Member: EC\$25

Friend: EC\$100

Patron: EC\$500

Sponsor: EC\$1,000

If you wish to join the society  
or make a donation then  
contact:

[carriacoumuseum@gmail.com](mailto:carriacoumuseum@gmail.com)

or

tel: +1-473-443-8288



## Welcome Message from our President Continued from Page 1 .....

The past year was indeed a very challenging one but in spite of the many difficulties we remained focused and met those challenges with a vision reminiscent of those that the founders of the Society had many years ago. The Society was built on the commitment, determination, and resolve of its founders to preserve the rich heritage of Carriacou and Petite Martinique; it took their courage and selflessness after many setbacks to bring the society where it is today. So those of us who followed in their footsteps are encouraged and equally dedicated to continue with the same commitment, determination and resolve to build on the legacy that the founders left behind.

The Society depends largely on membership subscriptions and visitors' contributions to the museum for its financial sustainability. As we all know too well, the impact of the Global slow-down has wide ranging effects on all sectors of economic life, and non-profit organizations as ours are not immune. In the past few years, the membership has taken a nose dive and the number of visitors to the museum has plummeted. We were fortunate, however, to have the support of dedicated volunteers and some corporate citizens who have stepped-up to the plate and come to our rescue. For three successive years, we had government subventions to help with our financial stability -- the very first time in the history of the society. However, as the government itself was faced with financial hardships that help was not available in 2012.

These difficulties did not deter our determination and resolve to remain focused on the vision: "To be the Champion for preserving the heritage of Carriacou and Petite Martinique and to heighten public awareness through effective management and education." With the continued commitment and dedication of the board of directors and volunteers, we embarked upon a number of initiatives to bring awareness to the public and visitors of our rich heritage.

In 2011, the Society restarted its Community Outreach Program, which had been dormant for a number of years, taking our vision into the villages to bring awareness of the need to preserve our rich heritage. The responses to the program were so encouraging that the board of directors saw it fitting to establish an Outreach Sub-Committee dedicated to continue with the community outreach program.

The achievements of the Outreach Sub-Committee are discussed in a separate article, so I will just mention some of the main initiatives of the Society during the past year. In August last year, the society organized an exhibit to recognize the life and works of one of Carriacou's artistic icon's, the late Canute Calliste. The exhibition brought many persons to view the exhibits. On the backdrop of that exhibit a students' art exhibition displaying the work of students from Bishop's College and Hillsborough Secondary School was also organized.

As the society prepares for its Annual Membership Meeting (AGM) scheduled for March 7, 2013, I urge the new board of directors to keep focused on our vision and to continue with the commitment, determination, and resolve of the founders to preserve our rich heritage.

I take this opportunity, once again to welcome all of you readers to this issue of our newsletter and in closing, I will leave with you this quote by Majjihima Nikaya:

*"If you want to know the past, to know what has caused you, look at yourself in the present for that is the past's effect. If you want to know your future, then look at yourself in the present for that is the cause of the future."*

### Board Members 2012

Stephen Alexander – President; Cosnel McIntosh – 1st Vice President; Patricia John – 2nd Vice President & Treasurer; Sharlene Cornelius – Secretary; Maria Hamlet – Assistant Secretary; Eileen Measey – Chair of Museum Committee; Tevin Andrews; Rosemary Ballen; Randy Cornelius; Pat Hollingsworth; Valerie Joseph; Wallace McLeod; Georgina Ray; Wilfred Simon; Gloria Philips Smith; Hilda Stiell;