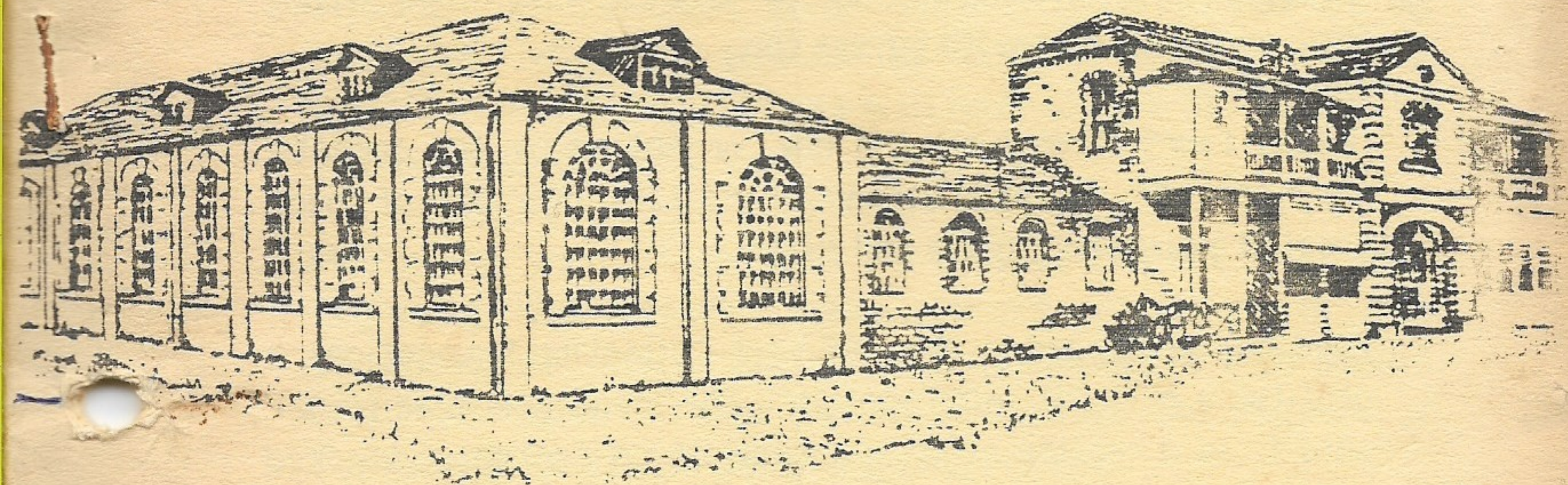


NEWSLETTER

THE BARBADOS MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1992



4TH QUARTER 1991

NO 38

FINE CRAFT FESTIVAL

The vagaries of the weather and anxiety about the economy lent some uncertainty to our hopes for the Craft Festival.

Fortunately, the day was bright and sparkling. Exhaustive (and exhausting!) preparation paid off, as did a PR blitz exhorting the public to buy local for Christmas.

Textiles, basketry, ceramics, woodwork, jewellery, wearable art! Again and again, one heard the delight and astonishment of visitors and locals, that such a variety of high calibre craft was available in Barbados. Proof of the pudding: artisans sold over \$20,000 in crafts, and many made follow-up contacts with buyers too.

Guided tours throughout the day, organized by our docents, were packed. A steady stream of visitors, over 800 of them, created a pleasant hustle and bustle.

Food was organized by the ACF (Art Collection Foundation), a profitable cultural joint venture. The menu was traditional, sold from a replica of an old-time Bajan cookshop, stocked with local preserves, conkees, pudding and souse and traditional sweets. The coalpots couldn't keep up with the demand for fishcakes!

So, thank you to supportive friends and members who helped, sent books and plants, attended, brought friends, and bought your Christmas presents.

PROGRAMS AT RISK

Children are always the most poignant victims found in the economic wreckage. Recent damage from the increase in busfares includes that done to the Museum's Schools Program, until last term serving a thriving clientele of 5000 schoolchildren. Example: in November 1990, we could not service all the school groups who wanted our gallery classes, and booked them ahead into January and February. In November 1991, we had three school visits.

However, a stubborn Education Curator and a dedicated core of docents refuse to pronounce the pathetic little corpse dead. We are using this term to develop alternate strategies for our schools. In the short term, we are going to market an intensive "walk-in" service to schools within walking distance. In the long term we will have to look for funding to bus in school groups.

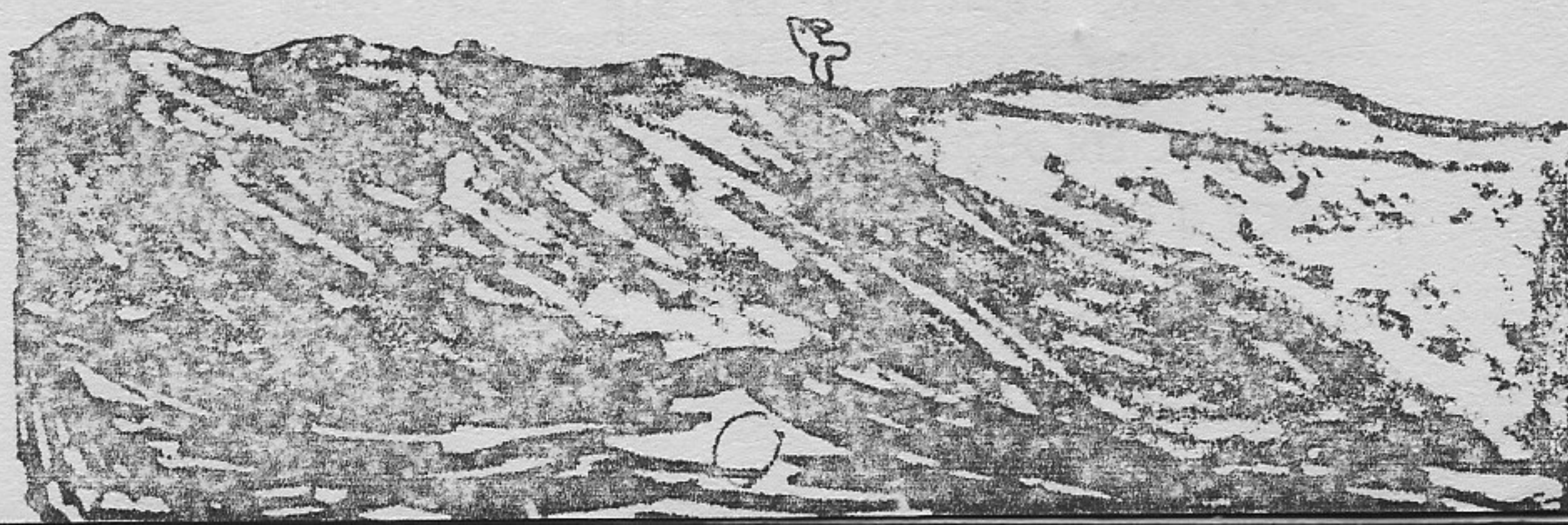
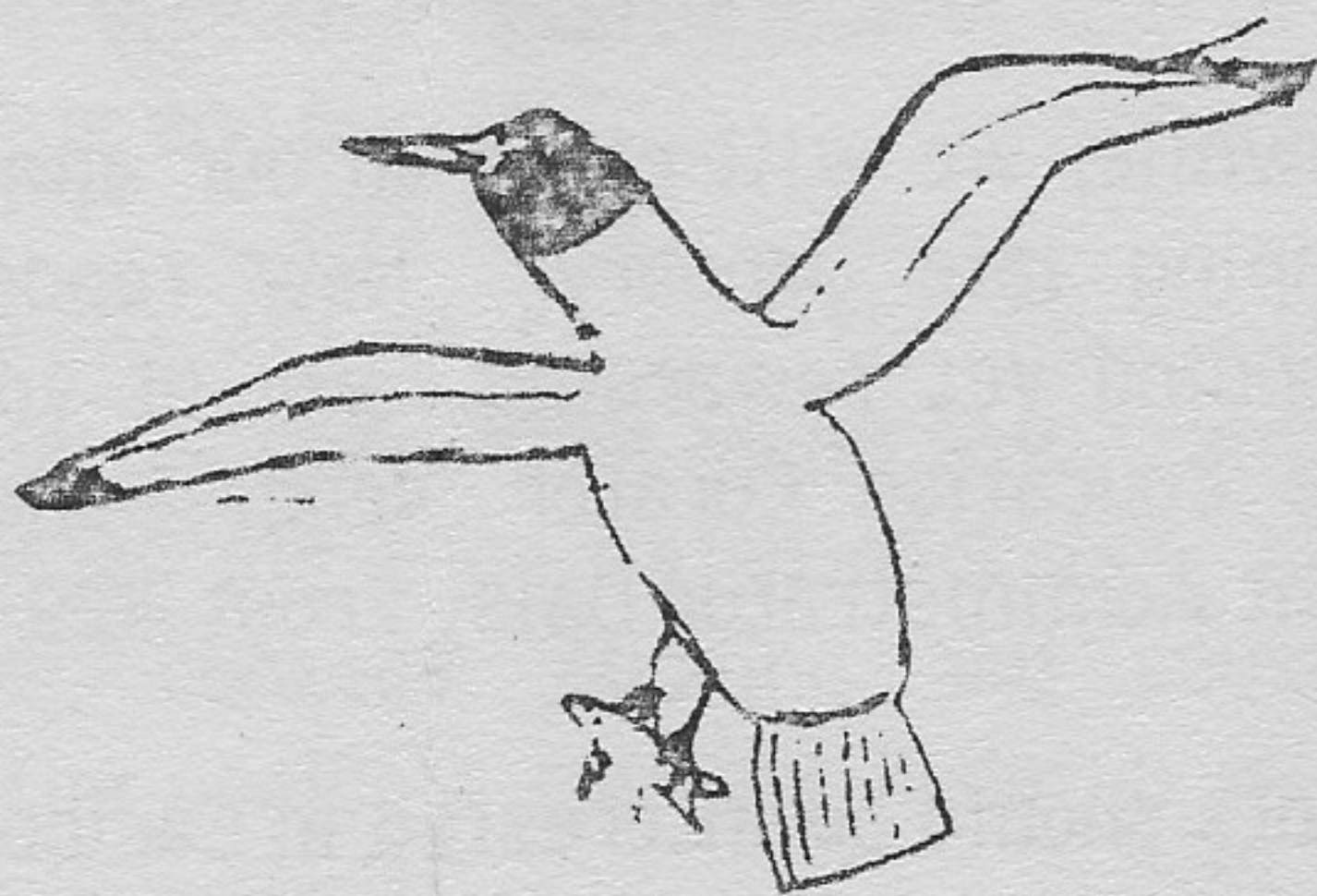
Meanwhile, we will carry on our **annual Docent Training**, beginning late January. New readers interested in this demanding yet rewarding form of volunteer service should phone Education Curator Wendy Donawa at the Museum or Docent Administrator Daisy Frost 429-2928.

Docents should be interested in Caribbean History and Culture and in young people. An initial intensive two-day training is provided, followed by six two-hour seminars over the following weeks. Trained docents are asked to give a session a week throughout the school terms, and to attend seminars once a term.

St. Gabriel's School
July 2nd

Dear Mrs. Sweetly, Thank-you for

helping us learn about
natural history the thing I
like the best was the birds



Joining our docent team could be a rewarding position for active, flexible retired folks, or homemakers with time for an intense, part-time commitment, or unemployed people who want to stay intellectually active.

CHILDREN'S GALLERY: VOLUNTEERS, PLEASE

The Children's Gallery still trudges towards its completion date, despite scheduling setbacks caused by the fundraising efforts of the past two months.

We are now soliciting volunteer help for a number of short-term, self-limiting tasks. Perhaps readers who were unable to make long-term commitments may be interested in giving a hand. Sample work:

1 Half a dozen model ships, most with rigging, need cleaning, touch-up painting, minor repairs.

2 Standard model-kits of a 747 and a helicopter need assembling. Can some keen Junior Member take this on?

3 For nostalgia buffs: replicas of old-time, home-made toys: sardine and corned beef can "tractors", tops, "rollers", kites, using traditional materials and methods.

4 Handy with a sewing machine? Can you make replicas of the 19th century children's underwear in our collections?

Interested? Ring 427-0201/436-1956.

RINGING IN THE NEW

As the financial blows fell one after another, staff were brainstorming fundraising ideas. So, before the dust had settled from the Craft Festival, staff were immersed in the multitude of tasks for an Old Year's Night fundraiser.

The idea originated among the support staff, that Barbadians should be able to enjoy an inexpensive, safe Old Year's in an attractive setting. It was zero-based budgeting: ticket prices were deliberately kept low, much of the food and services were donated; staff all worked voluntarily.

Well, do you want the good news or the bad news?

The good news is that it was a wonderful party. The Warmington Galleries were lit by candlelight, and guided tours offered till suppertime. The stars shone, the candles glowed, over 200 guests from the whole spectrum of Barbadian society danced the night away. It was a fine convivial event, like a big house party.

The bad news is that to focus the Museum's entire human resources on fundraising is not justified by the amount of funds raised. When schools and service clubs do this sort of thing, they work from a huge base of members, staff, PTA's, hundreds of children selling tickets and so forth.

With the Museum, the same small handful of people take on massive work and responsibility in addition to trying to keep up with their professional responsibilities.

Most of the staff worked through weekends, through the Christmas holidays, and throughout Old Year's Night. We are burnt-out and exhausted, with weeks-long backlogs of research, exhibit development and other professional tasks (including this Newsletter, which is late for the first time in years).

You might say that the operation was a success but the patient is still in critical condition.

It was a good learning experience. It provided a happy and inexpensive respite from the gloomy realities that face us. But it also led us to conclude that **if the museum is to survive, it must have a community and a membership committed to providing its financial resources.** Over the next few months, and certainly by the next Newsletter, the Council will have mapped out clearly the survival strategies to be followed.

What do we mean by **support**? It may mean, for a member, renewing your subscription and encouraging visitors, colleagues, friends and employees to visit, and/or become members. It may mean you have some technical or professional skill you can volunteer. It may mean that you can use your legal, business, social or political contacts to raise the Museum's cultural profile, or take on a fundraising project to counteract our increasing deficits.

UPGRADING MUSEUM STAFF: THE ICOM WORKSHOP

The BMHS became a classroom once again for 14 Caribbean museum workers from Belize to Trinidad. Under the sponsorship of ICOM (International Council of Museums) and funded by UNESCO, the course provided two weeks of intensive training in museum basics. Barbados' participants included our Special Events Manager, Chris Chandler.

ICOM was fortunate in obtaining the services of Dr Karyl Robb, of Texas Tech University Museum. Dr Robb's Latin American experience (particularly in Costa Rica) analysing the role of museums in national development, made her particularly aware of the needs of small museums in developing countries.

This workshop has taken over two years to organize, and is the first in a series planned by ICOM. Participants responded eagerly to this opportunity, which provided a thorough overview of the museum field, while at the same time offering the flexibility of smaller study sessions. The Museum's curatorial staff contributed to the informal workshops, and Professor Woodville Marshall provided a general overview of Caribbean History.

Perhaps the most rewarding result of the workshop was the evident bonding amongst the participants, and their commitment to working towards the professionalization of Caribbean museums.

BARBADIAN CURRENCY AND ITS HISTORY

Numismatic enthusiasts will at last have the opportunity to view part of the Museum's coin collection in the long-planned (since '86) exhibition at the Central Bank of Barbados.

Researched and designed by the Museum's curatorial staff, the exhibit outlines Barbados' monetary history, from a 17th century barter system, through the Crown's struggles to regulate colonial currency, to the development of currency as an emblem of national independence.

The exhibit was recently installed in the entrance hall of the Bank, and is easily accessible to schoolchildren and visitors. The Museum is grateful to the Central Bank for commissioning this exhibit, thereby supporting the development of new cultural and historical resources in Barbados.

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Thanks to members who responded to our request for foreign language guides. We now have, in addition to French and Spanish guide booklets, a German booklet, translated by Ms M Hawkins. And I daresay we are the only Caribbean museum with a Finnish guide in the pipeline, being translated by Ms Sikku Wahlberg.

MAC MEETING IN NEVIS

Over 40 Caribbean participants took part in the 3rd Annual MAC (Museums Association of the Caribbean) Meeting held in Nevis, November 14-16. The BMHS was represented by the Director and Education Curator.

The local organizers, Dave and Joan Robinson, of the Nevis Historical and Conservation Society, are no strangers to most of our members. They spent two productive years here as Peace Corps volunteers, 1983-85, helping train the then-new curatorial staff. The success of the MAC program is due almost entirely to their dedication and commitment to improving the quality of contemporary Caribbean museums.

Opening speeches stressed the need for Caribbean museums to play a much larger role in community development, both locally and regionally. The program that followed examined ways in which museums generate income, including project and program development, planning museum shops, and involvement in eco-tourism.

A three-year development plan was discussed and approved at the business meeting, and Director Alissandra Cummins was elected for her third consecutive year as President. The regional approach was underlined by the offer from the Martiniquan delegate, on behalf of her country, of Martinique as the host country for the 1992 MAC meeting. Needless to say, the invitation was enthusiastically accepted.

THE CROCUS SERIES: SHARON ORAN EXHIBIT

Sharon Oran's first local, one-woman show, **The Crocus Series**, will open to the public January 9-February 2.

Sharon is perhaps best known for her paper making and assemblages. However the main focus of this exhibition is a series of detailed pastel drawings of the crocus flower in what Sharon describes as "Literal interpretations of the crocus in various environments." Some 20 pieces will be on display, ranging from thought-provoking micro woodblock assemblages to pastel flower drawings five feet high.

Viewers will not be disappointed by her shift in artistic interpretation. This new format and style, seen in both the sensitively translated pastels and the woodblock assemblages, readily demonstrate that she possesses yet another dimension of expression.

FEBRUARY EXHIBITION: LILLIAN NICHOLSON

Between Heaven and Earth will consist of 50 works in oil, watercolour and mixed media by Lillian Nicholson. The work focuses on the local landscape--windswept images of the East Coast, for example, which inspired the artist to capture the nuances and surprises that are peculiar to Barbados.

WHITHER PERESTROIKA? AN UPDATE

A year ago, many readers enjoyed an unusual pair of lectures by Dr Janet Vaillant, then re-visiting Barbados, the locale of her 1960's teaching stint at Queens College. Dr Vaillant, who had then recently published a highly acclaimed biography of Leopold Senghor, is Assistant Director of the Soviet and East European Language and Area Centre at Harvard University.

One of her lectures dealt with Senghor, the other with the implications of Perestroika for Soviet multiculturalism. She has recently (last month) returned from another visit to that fascinating, turbulent region.

Dr Vaillant will offer the public an update of the Soviet scene on Wednesday, January 22 at 7:30. (This lecture is being finalized around shifting plane schedules. Please phone early in that week to confirm date).

LIBRARY NEWS

Librarian Betty Carillo-Shannon has recently assisted Sandy Lane Hotel in her free time, setting up a library.

Fifty-six local and overseas researchers used the Shilstone Memorial Library over the last quarter. One reader donated \$50 to the collection.

The Library was closed October 8-21st while the Librarian was on vacation leave.

The Library continues to gather and preserve appropriate articles and books for its collection. New titles received include: **Roaming Through the West Indies** by Harry A Franck and Sir John Stow's **Times Remembered in Africa and the Caribbean**.

ARCHEOLOGY UPDATE

Another old friend of the Museum, Steve Hackenburger, is back. Steve and Loran Cutsinger, his wife, worked at the Museum as Peace Corps volunteers 1986-87.

Steve is now Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin Centres, and is here investigating Amerindian house occupation at the Chancery Lane site. The project is being conducted in conjunction with the Museum and Earthwatch (a non-profit organization dedicated to research and conservation of natural and cultural resources).

Steve will speak on Eastern Caribbean Archeology at the Museum on Saturday, January 18 at 10:00. Following this, he will conduct a tour of the Chancery Lane site. Bring lunch and water. It would be nice if those with cars would share rides.

Museum volunteers interested in hands-on work are encouraged to join the Earthwatch volunteers, who are working on the site till January 24. Work will continue throughout the Jan 21 bank holiday.

Interested volunteers can call Steve at Bellairs Research Residence 422-2034, or come to the talk and tour.

CALENDAR

Jan 8 7:30 Philatelic Society
Jan 9-16 Sharon Oran Exhibition
Jan 18 10:00 Lecture/tour Amerindian Archeology
Dr Steve Hackenburger
Jan 21 Museum closed
Jan (date tba) Docent training begins
Jan 22 7:30 **Soviet Union update**
Dr Janet Vaillant
Feb 12 7:30 Philatelic Society
Feb 22-Mar 20 Lilian Nicholson Exhibition
Feb 28 Alliance Francaise Wine and Cheese Party
March 12 Philatelic Society

NEW MEMBERS

Mrs Susan Bain
Mr and Mrs David Barker
Mr and Mrs T Carroll
Mr Denis Nardin
Mr and Mrs Randall Pasley
Mr John C Skinner
Mr Christopher Skinner
Mr Michael James Walcott
Dr Marvin Will

JUNIOR

Mr Richardo Trotman
Miss Eva Simone Jordan

THE BARBADOS MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ST. ANN'S GARRISON, BARBADOS, W.I.

Telephone 427-0201
436-1956

HELP!

Your membership subscriptions help keep us afloat

Annual membership subscriptions are now due.

Please settle them now, and save the Museum the costly mailing of reminders.

Please note that we will be unable to afford Newsletter and other mailings to lapsed members.

Annual membership	\$45
Joint annual membership	\$60
Corporate membership	\$200
Life membership	\$600
Junior membership	\$5

ST. ANN'S GARRISON AND ASSOCIATED SOCIETY

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Telephone 427-0201
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ON SERVICE

Mrs. Cheva Thompson
#96 Rock Dundo Park
Cave Hill
St. Michael

