

## NEWSLETTER

NO. 41

3rd QUARTER, 1992

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Barbados Museum is a non-profit institution. Its mandate is to collect, document and conserve evidence of Barbados' cultural, historical and environmental heritage; and to interpret and present this evidence for all sectors of society.

#### PATRON

Dame Nita Barrow,  
G.C.M.G., D.A.  
Governor-General of  
Barbados.

#### COUNCIL

##### President :

Dr. Trevor Carmichael

##### Senior Vice-President :

Mrs. Jean Goddard

##### Junior Vice-President :

(Vacant)

##### Ordinary Members :

Mr. Warren Alleyne

Mrs. Joyce Gale

Mrs. Joscelyn Gardner

Dr. Albert Graham

Prof. Woodville Marshall

Mr. Elton Mottley

##### Government Appointees :

Miss Camilita Archer

Dr. Hilary Beckles

Mr. Evans Jordan

Dr. Elliott Parris

Mr. Erskine Rose

##### Immediate Past President :

Mr. Jack Dear, Q.C., C.H.B.

##### Director (Ex-Officio):

Ms. Alistandra Cummins

### "ART OVER SUGAR"

#### A TRIBUTE FROM THE MUSEUM

The afternoon cloud burst was just finishing as we sloshed through Vacluse Plantation yard and ducked into the cavernous, defunct factory. **Art Over Sugar**, Gail Hermick's pre-Kadooment cultural brainstorm was getting under way.

The disintegrating roof let in drizzle and dazzling shafts of sunlight, so at first it was hard to see past the abandoned machinery lurking hugely in the gloom. Then gradually, the art emerged: murals by Akyem and Ishi, huge banners by Jean Leslie, Bill Grace et al, hanging from the rafters (thanks to Bartel trucks!); 8 foot floral arrangements, Goldie Speiler's ceramic tribute; Gail's welded metal sculptures (that doubled as seating).

The crowd drifted beneath the banners, around the machinery and art. Then necks craned as saxophone music flowed from above, where Arturo Tappin was perched atop the boilers. Abandoned sugar factories have wonderful acoustics!

Attention returned to the floor as Barbados Dance Theatre drummers

and dancers performed a rousing cropover dance. From another niche came Jeanette Springer's sombre readings, echoed (again, from atop the machinery) by Geraldine Archer's plaintive woodwind selections.



Friendly and unfriendly ghosts were there; sweet and bittersweet meetings of art and history. It was culture as weapon, creativity expressing in art and poetry, dance and music, the rage and sorrow felt at what has happened to Barbados.

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Winston Farrell read with a fine passion; But the image that stays and haunts is the final "happening"; Colin Hudson, attempting to sing the National anthem and recite sugar statistics was shrouded in layer after layer of cloth, wrapped and tied by Annalee Davis. At the end, we saw a bound, immobile, faceless bundle, and we heard, muffled and almost inaudible beneath the shroud... "these hills and fields beyond recall are now our very own..."

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### NIGHTTIME MAGIC

Natural History Curator Philippa Newton was judged hero of the hour at dawn on July 18th when she extricated two 10-year olds who had managed to lock themselves in the lavatory.

Education Curator Wendy Donawa, on the other hand, was found wanting, being unable to make identically sized pancakes for the 18 ravenous 8-12 year olds clamouring for breakfast.

It had been an altogether "interesting" night. Delivered by parents the previous evening, the kids had explored the night skies through Leo Branch's marvellous 10" telescope. Later they took a spooky torchlight tour of the museum, followed by a coalpot barbeque of breadfruit and fish.

Bedrolls were made up in the courtyard, but it would be a mistake to say that sleep followed. The last small head drooped about 3.30 a.m., leaving a few minutes of curatorial slumber before breakfast duty called.

We finished off with a wake-up swim at the Drill Hall Beach. Parents appeared, looking very refreshed, and we staggered home to bed!

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### TRAINING COMPLETED

After five years of study and research, Education Curator, Wendy Donawa has completed her Diploma in Cultural Resource Management. The Diploma, given by the University of Victoria, is designed for museum professionals who can only train in short intensive bursts, and who are willing to do a good deal of the work in their home institutions.

It has been a challenging undertaking, including courses in Collections Management, Curatorship, Exhibit Design and Heritage Conservation. Wendy's 1990 thesis was the design for our newly opened Kidd Gallery for children.

### SUMMER PROGRAMME

Grown-ups need playtime too!

Our weekly summer programme was not quite shoes and ships and sealing wax - but it was certainly varied: ships (model) and video (Caribbean), music (folk) and silversmithing (international).

A small but appreciative group enjoyed Geoffrey Badley's modelmaking lore and marine reminiscences, including that of a freak wind that sent 50 fishing boats scudding down to St. Vincent earlier in the century.

The wit, gaiety and exuberance of **Guataka's** folk music on July 19th was contagious, and the capacity audience clamoured for encores. The next week, a showing of Michael Gilkes' **Sargasso** was followed by Nan Peacock's touching and perceptive commentary. Nan was accompanied by Patrick Foster, who played the devious Rochester.

A good deal of thoughtful audience participation was generated.

The programme concluded with a silver lining. Silversmith Pat Byer conducted a workshop entitled **The Silversmith's Art**, discussing techniques both from the museum's collection of antique silver and from her own award-winning work.



## JUNIOR CURATORS PROGRAMME

Friends and members visiting us this summer could hardly avoid seeing three energetic young women in the thick of the action. These were the three interns on our new **Junior Curators Programme**. Melanie Springer (20), Julianna Inniss (17) and Cheryl Mapp (20) were already seasoned tour-guides from previous summers.

This Junior Programme was funded through the generosity of CIBC and CARNEID. It enabled us to hire three young people.

interested in heritage conservation, and to train them intensively in basic curatorial skills.

They helped with research and fieldwork in social history, natural history and archaeology. They gained an understanding of the exhibit production process, and assisted in exhibit maintenance. They ran the whole Summer Tours programme, interpreting the museum for over 2500 visitors.

It is a thoughtful reminder that only through the drive and energy of the next generation will our cultural heritage survive and thrive. These three make us feel optimistic!



## JOURNAL 1992 NEWS

Members who may be eagerly awaiting their copy of our 1992 Annual Journal, will hopefully not have to wait much longer. The printing of this publication has been delayed for a number of technical reasons which will hopefully be resolved by the end of the month. Members may therefore expect to receive their copies approximately 6-8 weeks afterwards.

While we do apologize for the long delay, we promise you it will be well worth the wait with a variety of articles appearing on a number of topics including the 1937 Riots and the birth of the labour unions, Butterflies of Barbados 1988-1991, the Almshouse Test, the Birth of our Constitution, the Evolution of a Barbadian Literary tradition, the Configuration of Fortification and Signal Stations, and Diversification in Agriculture amongst others.

## DONATION TO CHILDREN'S GALLERY

In August, a generous and deeply appreciated donation of \$2,000 was made to the Children's Gallery. The gift was given by Mr. Paul Peralta Ramos in memory of Kim Leighton McFarland.

Though the Children's Gallery  
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## A NEW BROOM

It was a hot overcast afternoon when the "gang" from Transport and Works swooped down on the Museum in gallant response to our cries for help. Our front entrance had become not only an embarrassment, but a potential obstacle course to visitors (who took out danger money and bets before negotiating our driveway).

The ministry's response came within two weeks of our request to help handicapped visitors safely to our door. Council and staff of the museum wish to thank publicly the co-operative spirit of this department.

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## TOURISM AWARD FOR MUSEUM

Members and friends may have seen a brief reference to the Barbados Museum in publicity surrounding this year's Ministry of Tourism awards. On Sunday August 16th, 1992 at the Frank Collymore Hall, the Director was the recipient, (on behalf of the museum's staff) of a special Certificate of Appreciation given in recognition of the museum's outstanding contribution to the Tourism Industry.

The staff have proudly displayed the said certificate in the Orientation Centre at the front entrance of the museum. We feel that we have come a long way to

receive such recognition and will continue to strive for excellence in the future.

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## LECTURES

Our series of occasional lectures continue to draw new people to our door to participate in the lively, sometimes controversial, always enlightening discussions which take place at these times. On the 19th August Dr. Lindley Butler tantalized a small but enthusiastic audience with his revisionist view of American history in his lecture on **"The Historical Significance of Charles Towne on the Cape Fear to the Caribbean, North America and North Carolina"**.

Dr. Butler was discussing the work being carried out by the University of North Carolina team at a site on the Cape Fear simultaneously with their investigations at Codrington College. The UNCW team are confident that exploration of Barbados, as the centre of the 17th century English colonial world, will lead to revelations about the North Carolina site, and ultimately about the early settlement and history of North America in general.

French Architect, Martine Gaumé, was the speaker on September 4th on "Vernacular Architecture of the Caribbean". We were thrilled at the response to our very hurried publicity as Barbadians turned out in great numbers to hear her speak.

Guamé's slide lecture elucidated the different features of Caribbean

traditional architecture, which adapted various forms from both European and African models. The audience was obviously electrified and the adrenalin began to flow. Members of the audience expressed varying degrees of dismay and displeasure at what was described by some as "characterless" buildings and by others as a "visual catastrophe"! Controversy ranged over the use of airconditioning and other modern "necessities", while others defended the positive nature of Bajan architectural trends. Whichever side of the fence you were on, clearly Barbadians are concerned.

Co-sponsors of the event, the Barbados Institute of Architects, the Barbados National Trust, the Caribbean Conservation Association, as well as the Barbados Museum, have taken note of the nerve we have touched. Clearly there are issues which require further debate.

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## CYNTHIA CAVE

Museum staff members and volunteers were all saddened to learn of the recent death of Mrs. Cynthia Cave who was involved in museum life since coming to live in Barbados.

We all enjoyed Cynthia's willingness to share her talents as

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an artist; our Natural History Curator, Philippa Newton, particularly welcomed her assistance in preparations for the exhibition "Born of the Sea" in 1988. The realistic back-drop for our mangrove swamp diorama was reproduced from an oil painting she did after many trips to the swamp. It will remain a memorial to her work.

We will miss her enthusiastic commitment to the museum.

## "ALL AH WE IS ONE"

### CARIFESTA '92

It was unfortunate that equal numbers of Caribbean travellers who would choose to flock to North America for the holidays could not, or did not, make it their business to attend Carifesta'92 in Trinidad and Tobago this year.

It was a cultural explosion - Junkanoo dancers, Moko-jumbies and Stiltwalkers; drama, mime, performance art, musicals, story-telling, pantomime, dance; zouk, chutney parang, calypso, chorale music, folk, jazz, pan, bamboo-tambo, tassa; art by "the masters" and the "new guard"; art that reinforces, defies, astonishes and in some cases offends the conventional sensibilities; film festival, book fair, craft market, symposia, textile exhibitions; architecture,

cuisine, jump-up and without fail, liming!

The scope and richness of all of these elements, underlined quite naturally, by the magnitude of coordinating all facets of the festival, was overwhelming not only to the organisers, participants and visitors, but to the public at large. There was an uneven quality to the whole thing. Some events came off well, while others were a disappointment. Highly visible and prestigious groups held sold-out performances, while others opened to a handful of supporters. In addition, the logistics of hosting over 2,500 visiting participants and officials in a country unequipped to foot the bill, were horrendous for the hosts.

Meanwhile, the air in Trinidad was pungent with allusions to mismanagement, political patronage, opportunism and poor form! In spite of this, the cultural and personal frictions that abound gave rise to "alternative" festivals and exhibitions both dynamic and controversial in their defiance.

### BOSTONIAN YOUTH TO LEARN ABOUT BARBADOS

Harriet Kennedy is assistant Director and Curator of the National Centre for Afro-American Artists Museum in Boston, Massachusetts.



She is currently attached to the Barbados Museum as the IPAM exchange partner for a duration of 4-6 weeks.

The programme allows museum professionals throughout the world to visit their counterpart institutions to undertake research and collect data which would be of direct assistance to their professional work and programme activities.

The NCAAA is in the process of developing a new unit within its "Introduction to the Caribbean For Youngsters" focussing on Barbados. Boston, with its historical linkages to the Caribbean, as well as a portion of its local population being of West Indian descent, provides a ready forum in which the NCAAA can foster through its educational programmes and exhibitions, a greater understanding of Caribbean culture and history.

To this end, Mrs. Kennedy will be researching the Barbados Museum's collections, interviewing relevant specialists in the arts and academia, and acquiring artifacts and materials which will be useful in the development of a new object-based Caribbean curriculum. We welcome this latest example of cross cultural exchange.



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construction is complete, it is much-used by children, and the ongoing maintenance costs are higher than those in the other galleries. This thoughtful gift will enable us to repair and replace the children's try-on costumes as they wear out.

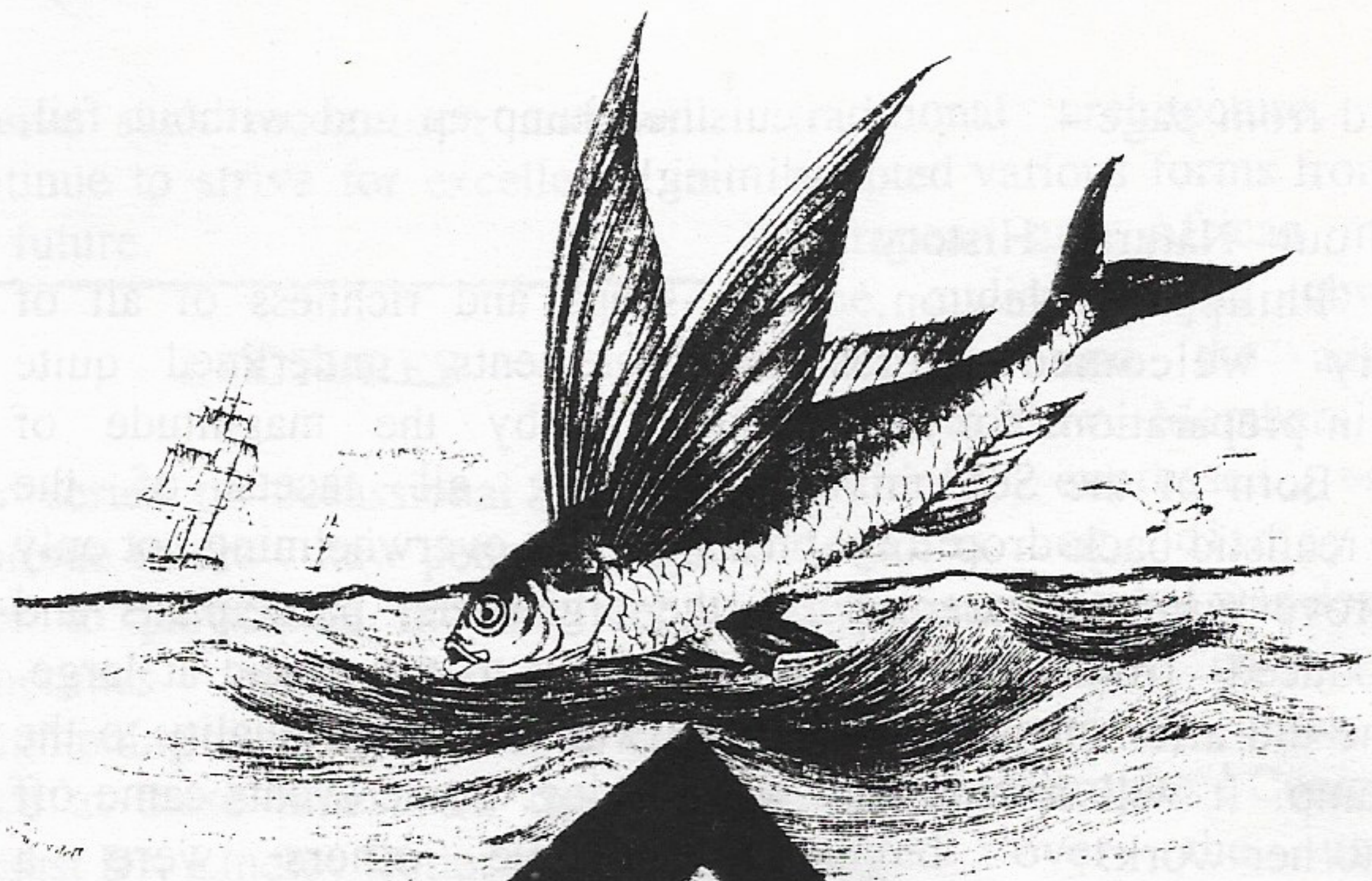
## SHOP TALK

### CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Our Christmas cards are now available at the museum shop. This year we have produced three fine cards which should meet all your requirements for festive greeting.

In addition, to reproductions of a coloured lithograph of the West India Regiment and Officers by R.Sinkin, 1871, and a tinted engraving of a flying fish by Stewart in the 19th century, we also feature a delightful rendition of the Savannah reproduced from an original painting by Jean Leslie, 1991. The latter is from the collection of Mrs. Isle Morris.

We do hope that you will support us by purchasing all your christmas cards at our shop. The cards are available with or without greetings. Purchase of these cards supports the acquisition of artifacts for our collection in the future.





## NUCLEAR TRANSPORTS THROUGH THE CARIBBEAN SEA

At the recent Annual General Meeting of the Caribbean Conservation Association held in Trinidad, Caribbean nationals were alerted about the transportation of radioactive materials through the region. This alarming information was provided by a representative of Greenpeace International.

Greenpeace claims that "cargoes range from material of lower radioactive content bound for reactors around the world, to highly radioactive nuclear spent fuel and waste, to special nuclear materials with which nuclear weapons could be produced".

While cautioning that no radioactive material should be transported through the Caribbean Sea, Greenpeace is particularly concerned about the transportation of irradiated nuclear fuel, plutonium and high level nuclear waste. The organisation claims that the design and testing criteria of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) "are completely inadequate to guarantee that the containers or casks will not rupture or otherwise lose their integrity during a serious maritime accident".

Greenpeace noted that concern about the inadequacy of these containers is so great that strong

action has been taken on international and national levels. The US House of Representatives has passed legislation which bans the upcoming plutonium shipments from all US waters unless new and demanding tests are undertaken. Similar bans have been announced by Indonesia, South Africa and Hong Kong.

In addition to the potential danger associated with a maritime accident involving these nuclear materials, there is also the possibility of "sabotage or attack by terrorists". The US Defense Department, in a 1987 report, categorically stated that ".... even if the most careful precautions are observed, no one could guarantee the safety of the cargo from a security incident".

The CCA is now spearheading a drive to inform Caribbean residents and governments about the shipments which are expected to increase significantly over the next few months.

Further information is available at the Barbados Museum on this matter. There is also a petition document circulated by the CCA which members of the Museum and the general public may sign in order to protest the shipment of these materials through the Caribbean.

### LIBRARY NOTICE

Members of the Museum and the general public are reminded that the library will be closed from 6th October to 1st November.

## OF WHALES AND DOLPHINS

The recent beaching of two whales and a dolphin on the island's beaches have caused our Natural History Curator and the staff of the Fisheries Department, Bellairs Research Institute and the Folkestone Marine Museum to go scampering over cliff and beach in response.

Research is continuing, but it does seem unusual that the three cetaceans should wash ashore within a few months of each other.

Because of its advanced state of decay, it was not possible to identify the whale which beached at Tent Bay recently. The Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) however, which appeared at Cattlewash on 15th July was still breathing when first sighted in the nearshore.

The most recent occurrence was of a Sperm Whale (*Physeter catodon*) at the Landlock in St. Lucy. This whale, like the one at Tent Bay, was very decayed by the time it reached the rocky bay on 10th September. Residents of the surrounding area reported that they got "whiff" of it a few days earlier.





# UPCOMING EVENTS

## OCTOBER

5 Oct	MUSEUM CLOSED	Bank Holiday
9 Oct - 6 Nov	Royal College of Art Print Exhibition Co-hosted by the British High Commission	Temporary Exhibition Gallery
24 Oct; 6:30 p.m.	Oliver Jones Jazz Concert Hosted by the Barbados National Trust \$25: Lower Courtyard; \$15: Upper Courtyard	

## NOVEMBER

24 Nov; 5.00 p.m.	Annual General Meeting	Temporary Exhibition Gallery
30 Nov	MUSEUM CLOSED	Independence Day

## DECEMBER

6 Dec; 12.00 - 6.00 p.m	Museum Fine Craft Festival Adults \$5.00 - Children \$2.00	Museum Grounds
25 Dec	MUSEUM CLOSED	Christmas Day
26 Dec	MUSEUM CLOSED	Boxing Day

## JANUARY

1 Jan	MUSEUM CLOSED	New Year's Day
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The Barbados Museum and Historical Society  
St. Ann's Garrison, St. Michael, Barbados, W.I.  
Tel : (809) 427-0201 or 436-1956  
Fax : (809) 429-5946

Gallery and Shop Hours : 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Saturday.  
Office Hours : 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.  
Library Hours : 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday to Friday.  
Closed on Sundays and Public Holidays.