

As Time Marches On

By Holly Morgan

Christmas in Guyana has changed significantly. I remember the days when there was excitement at Christmas time. I would go into town and walk through the stores, looking at the decorations, listening to the carols that rang through the air. I would take my nieces along when they were small. We would go to the toy section and admire the variety of toys. We got a feeling of happiness and liveliness. Then there was window shopping, particularly, in the evenings. There were competitions for the stores; one of the prizes was awarded for the best decorated show window. That doesn't happen now.

The atmosphere is different these days. Christmas is now commercialized. Even the masquerade bands are different. The music is not the same, the drums are not the same and there is no fife music floating by. The bands play mostly in areas which are busy and where they can collect money. No longer do they go through the wider community, encouraging people to leave what they are doing just to enjoy their show.

Carol singing organized by the Bishops' High School Old Students' Association (BHSOSA) has changed as well. I remember the times when we met at someone's home, most recently that of Derry Harry. I had fun heckling the "Choir Mistress", Magda, as she tried to have us fine tune our voices. There was a feeling of frivolity, much less formal than the last time I participated.

I look forward to the activities organized by the Seniors Committee. They give me a focal point. I often tell myself that I'm going to do this and going to do that and just don't seem to get moving. With these activities, I know I have a definite appointment and I get ready to go. It's really a pleasant experience.

The Seniors Programme is definitely answering my idea of what BHSOSA is all about. It brings to life the words of the School Hymn – "May each to each prove ever, True comrade and true friend."

I would like to see BHSOSA focusing more on providing support for extra-curricular activities such as music (e.g., providing musical instruments) and on recognizing the achievements of and giving support to sports figures such as Brittany Van Lange and Chelsea Edghill. I think it is also important to assist students at the university level through scholarships and bursaries. I know of some alumni who have completed the law programme at the University of Guyana but cannot afford to attend the Hugh Wooding Law School. Let's really reach out to persons like these.



MESSAGE FROM A MOTHER TO HER DAUGHTER

My dear girl, the day you see I'm getting old, I ask you to please be patient, but most of all, try to understand what I'm going through. If when we talk, I repeat the same thing a thousand times, don't interrupt to say: "You said the same thing a minute ago"... Just listen, please. Try to remember the times when you were little and I would read the same story night after night until you fell asleep.

When I don't want to take a bath, don't be mad and don't embarrass me. Remember when I had to run after you making excuses and trying to get you to take a shower when you were just a girl?

When you see how ignorant I am when it comes to new technology, give me the time to learn and don't look at me that way ... remember, honey, I patiently taught you how to do many things like eating appropriately, getting dressed, combing your hair and dealing with life's issues every day... the day you see I'm getting old, I ask you to please be patient, but most of all, try to understand what I'm going through.

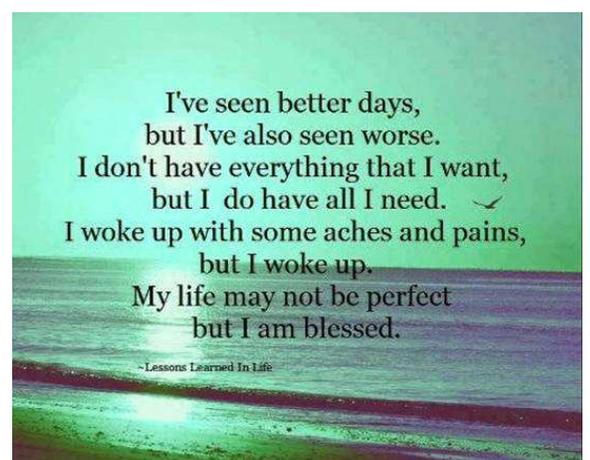
If I occasionally lose track of what we're talking about, give me the time to remember, and if I can't, don't be nervous, impatient or arrogant. Just know in your heart that the most important thing for me is to be with you.

And when my old, tired legs don't let me move as quickly as before, give me your hand the same way that I offered mine to you when you first walked. When those days come, don't feel sad... just be with me, and understand me while I get to the end of my life with love. I'll cherish and thank you for the gift of time and joy we shared. With a big smile and the huge love I've always had for you, I just want to say, I love you ... my darling daughter.

It's the Best Medicine

Advertisement in a Long Island Shop	Guitar, for sale..... Cheap.....no strings attached.
Ad in Hospital Waiting Room	Smoking helps you lose weight ... one lung at a time!
On a bulletin board	Success is relative. The more the success, the more the relatives.
When I Read about the Evils of Drinking,	I gave up reading.
Sign in a Bar	Those of you who are drinking to forget, please do pay in advance.
Sign in Driving School	If your wife wants to learn to drive, don't stand in her way.
Sign at a Barber's Saloon	We need your heads to run our business.
Sign in a Restaurant	All drinking water in this establishment has been personally passed by the manager.
Sign at the door of a gynaecologist's office	PUSH, PUSH
Sign at the Funeral Home billboard	Drive slowly, we will wait for you.
Warning Signs	Getting caught is the mother of invention.
	Laugh and the world laughs with you, Snore and you sleep alone.

Words from the Wise



Meet the Seniors

Elise Arno

Elise Arno gained her primary education at St. George's Anglican School where her father, William Arno, was Headteacher. She gained entry to the Bishops' High School, joining her sister, Daphne; another sister, Lucille Cholmondeley, preceded them at the school.

Among Elise's early classmates were Beryl Annamunthodo Abdool, Carmen Peterkin Jarvis, Barbara Owen Osman and Jocelyn Wan-Ping Sue-a Quan. These young students behaved like sisters, some remaining friends to this day. The Headmistress at that time was Ms. Vera Wearn and the teachers were all European.

A member of Mary House, Elise enjoyed being a representative in sports. She recalled being the wheel while Joyce Baxter Williams propelled her to win the wheelbarrow race one sports day. She was also a member of the Mary House and Old Girls netball teams. Her enjoyment of physical activity extended to lawn tennis and table tennis which she later played at the YWCA where she was an active member.

Elise completed her secondary education at St. Joseph's High School, obtaining the London Senior School Certificate. This occurred because her father wanted her to be under the watch of her sister, Stella, who was a member of staff there.

To gain experience, Elise first taught an Infant class at St. Mary's Roman Catholic (RC) School. Her foray into the field of formal education lasted just one year. Before she could write the End of Fourth Year Teacher's Examination, she was offered a job in the Local Government Department. That was the beginning of a series of positions in the civil service; the duration of those positions lasted from as little as two weeks to as many as seven years.

Elise was obviously a proficient, diligent and resourceful worker. She gained experience as a typist/clerical officer and later secretary in offices such as the Public Works Department, Chief Secretary's Office, the Land Development Department and Queen's College. She is fondly remembered for the service given to her alma mater as Secretary at Bishops' High School. She recalls that during the August holidays after the books arrived from the UK, some of the older students came on Saturdays to assist with their distribution since it was a mammoth task.

One of the very significant experiences of her long career is working day and night in the Secretariat for the first Carifesta in 1972. The Secretariat, headed by Lynette Dolphin, was a hub of activity. Elise remembers the volume of correspondence which had to be prepared and dispatched, the numerous local and overseas telephone calls which were made and received, the progression of local artistes through the office and the construction of accommodation in Festival City. She noted that the camaraderie in the Secretariat contributed to Carifesta's success. She still has related documents which have historical value.

Elise used her earned 6-months vacation to travel abroad. She particularly enjoyed a tour of Europe which took her to countries such as Belgium, France, Germany and Switzerland.

After her retirement from the public service in 1979, Elise worked at the YWCA, C. A. Liburd and Partners (the company engaged to develop the MMA Scheme) and later in the Diocesan Office of the Anglican Church.

Music is still a favoured part of Elise's life. She plays the piano, first being taught by her sister, Josephine and later by Ellen Scotland-Yaw who could not convince her to sit examinations. She is a founder member of Woodside Choirs MS along with others such as Elaine Murray and Magda Pollard. She enjoyed success at several Music Festivals as one of the second sopranos in the choir as well as a member of a trio along with Sheila Bacchus Lampart and Joyce Griffith.

Elise is a member of the Government Pensioners Association of Guyana; the last position she held was that of Assistant Secretary. Elise celebrated her 90th birthday in January 2014.



Erma Loette Walks née Alexander

Erma Loette Walks née Alexander was six years old and living in Berbice when her mother, Winifred Babb-Alexander who was a Deputy Headteacher, decided that Erma should be trained to win a scholarship to a secondary school. At age eight years, Erma moved to Georgetown and attended St. Stephen's Scots School. There, she became one of four scholarship winners in her class. She followed her cousin, Stella Boston née Benjamin, to the Bishops' High School (BHS).

Erma attended BHS from 1943 to 1950. A member of Mary House, Erma played netball. She noted that she was anything but a first-stringer on the House netball team.

Erma enjoyed her stay at BHS. One of her early experiences occurred when the Headmistress, Mrs. Aileen Allen, thought that she was the sister of two other students named Alexander. Even though Erma attempted to set the record straight, Mrs. Allen promptly told her, "I am going to be your headmistress" which, no doubt, was a stamp of authority.



In 1943, Erma was diagnosed with malaria which caused her to miss several days of school over the course of several terms. Fortunately, Mrs. Allen took an interest in her welfare and ensured that the maid at the school, fondly called "Nanny" by everyone, took care of her whenever malaria reared its head. Erma remembers Nanny opening an umbrella over her and putting salt in her hand when she had ague. She recalls that Nanny lived in a room under Oswald Parry Hall.



Several teachers made an impact on Erma. Miss Lilian Dewar, who taught Latin, was her favourite teacher; if Miss Dewar looked in anyone's direction, that student was elated for the rest of the day! Mrs. Nobbs taught Current Events. One day, Miss Graham, the science teacher, retrieved a dead dog from Murray Street and had the students clean off its flesh. Erma says that if the skeleton of a dog is *still* in the biology lab, she had a hand in its preparation!

In Erma's class, Megan Anderson was the tallest girl, next came Gwen Stephenson Mitchell then Erma. Yvonne King Eastman and Dawn Elvis were her best friends. She viewed Belle Thorne Tyndall as her little sister.

Erma earned seven credits at the Oxford and Cambridge examination in 1948. Mrs. Allen encouraged her to enter the 6th form where she acquired passes in English, French and Geography.

Upon leaving BHS, Erma taught Shakespeare at British Guiana Education Trust, becoming a sixth generation teacher. In 1952, she began teaching at Kildonan Scots School, on the Corentyne, Berbice. She then taught on the West Coast Demerara, eventually transferring to and working at her alma mater, St Stephen's from 1954 to 1959. Erma married Ivan Walks in Guyana and subsequently moved to the United States, settling in California in 1959.

In 1961, Erma was accepted to the University of Southern California and was awarded the Layne Foundation Scholarship. Upon graduation, she continued her studies obtaining her teaching credential from the Claremont Graduate School, now Claremont Graduate University. While attending school, she gained employment, first as a cataloguer, then as secretary to the Dean and later as an editor for professors at the School of Theology in Claremont, California.

Erma began her teaching career in Pomona, California in 1970 and retired from the Pomona Unified School District in 1993. During that time she made a major impact, not only in the classroom and her school but also in the school district. She devised a model of education which was adopted by the school district. She got support from the school board to introduce initiatives, such as taking educational fieldtrips to places like Washington, DC and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. One of the schools where she was an Administrator had three choirs which gave performances of a high caliber and generated funds to support the school trips. Her innovative spirit, drive and energy attracted persons from the community who wanted to collaborate with her; for example, the Director of the Claremont Symphony sought to be involved with the music programme she initiated.

After retirement, Erma became an adjunct professor at the Claremont Graduate University. She was an active member of several organizations including Pomona Valley Soroptimist International, serving as President in 1979. She was a member of the board of the Salvation Army, Pomona, California chapter. She also served as Vice-Moderator of the Presbytery of San Gabriel Valley in 1987. She was a founding member, and the first President, of the Bishops' High School Alumni Association California Chapter.

Erma and the late Reverend Ivan C. Walks were married for 50 years before his death. Together they raised seven children and fourteen grandchildren. Erma is the proud great-grandmother of Vivienne Noelle and Jalayna Ariel.

