



### Time to Meet and Greet 2013

By Annette Mc Lean née Persaud

We were blessed on Saturday, September 7 with beautiful weather, quite unlike what prevailed in previous days of constant downpours and thunderstorms, and much to the delight no doubt of all who attended the afternoon's gathering held at the residence of BHS alumna, Dr. Claudette Harry. Here was another opportunity for senior BHS alumnae still resident in Guyana, or visiting from abroad, to catch up with each other, exchange stories and tales, whether good, bad or simply juicy.

As understood in our local context, arrival and departure was flexible, although our hostesses indicated a starting time of 4.00 pm, with no invitee quibbling about this. The last guests arrived about 5.45 pm.

Upon arrival we were offered a cold beverage and greeted with nods and smiles of welcome from those guests already present. Comfortably seated, chit-chatting with whoever was in proximity, savouring choice beverages, tasty pies and petits fours, we enjoyed the tête à tête in these pleasant surroundings. Wine later served was the "pièce de résistance".

Midway into the afternoon, we were unexpectedly afforded an address by alumna, Janice Maison née King. After a few minutes of enlightenment on the external signs of good "Health and Nutrition", the topic of the presentation, she was courteously interrupted by one vociferous group who felt uncomfortable with some of the disclosures. Murmurs from several seniors led Janice to recognize that some of the information did not fit **their** actual physical attributes or their life-style. Moist and smooth skin, white pearly teeth, firm muscles as signs of good health? As one senior said, "At our age if we can identify at least one of the signs we should feel great."

Janice paused to listen to and digest the arguments and clarifications of those who wished to highlight their positions. Satisfaction now reigning, frustrations tempered, she continued with her talk and at the end generously distributed a leaflet on dietary guidelines to all desirous of having one.

Then it was time for the Bingo enthusiasts to enjoy the fun of the games. Lucky winners were happy and did show it. One player won three times in a very short period. At my table, Megan could have won more had she remembered to use the centre free counter, so long a lapse she must have had since she last played. Some of the ladies proudly displayed and used more than one card. Prizes included stationery, beauty products and more.

At the close, the seniors bid au revoir to each other, no doubt looking forward to next year's social.



**THIS IS HAPPENING RIGHT HERE IN OUR OWN COUNTRY and WE MUST STOP THIS IMMEDIATELY!**

Have you noticed that stairs are getting **steeper**? Groceries are **heavier**? And, everything is **farther** away? Yesterday, I walked to the corner and I was dumbfounded to discover how **long** our street had become!

And, you know, people are less considerate now, especially the young ones. They speak in **whispers** all the time! If you ask them to speak up, they just keep repeating themselves, endlessly mouthing the same **silent message** until they're red in the face! What do they think I am a lip reader?

I also think they are much younger than I was at the same age. On the other hand, people my own age are so much **older** than I am. I ran into an old friend the other day and she has aged so much that she **didn't even recognize** me.

I got to thinking about the poor dear while I was combing my hair this morning, and in doing so, I glanced at my own reflection. Well, REALLY NOW - even **mirrors** are not made the way they used to be!

Another thing, everyone drives so **fast** these days! You're risking life and limb if you happen to pull onto the freeway in front of them. All I can say is, their brakes must wear out awfully fast, the way I see them screech and swerve in my rear view mirror.

Clothing manufacturers are less civilized these days. Why else would they suddenly start labeling a size 10 or 12 dress as 18 or 20? Do they think no one notices? The people who make bathroom scales are pulling the same prank. Do they think I actually 'believe' the number I see on that dial? HA! I would **never** let myself weigh that much! Just who do these people think they're fooling?

I'd like to call up someone in authority to report what's going on -- but the telephone company is in on the conspiracy too: they've printed the phone books in such **small** type that no-one could ever find a number in there!

All I can do is pass along this warning: **WE ARE UNDER ATTACK!**

**Unless something drastic happens, pretty soon everyone will have to suffer these awful indignities.**

**SIGNS AT THE WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE**

Behind every great man,  
There is a surprised woman.

**GETTING OLDER**

A distraught senior citizen phoned her doctor's office. "Is it true," she wanted to know, "that the medication you prescribed has to be taken for the rest of my life?"

"Yes, I'm afraid so," the doctor told her.

There was a moment of silence before the senior lady replied, "I'm wondering, then, just how serious is my condition because this prescription is marked 'NO REFILLS'."

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An older gentleman was on the operating table awaiting surgery and he insisted that his son, a renowned surgeon, perform the operation. As he was about to get the anesthesia, he asked to speak to his son.

"Yes, Dad, what is it?"

"Don't be nervous, son; do your best, and just remember, if it doesn't go well, if something happens to me, your mother is going to come and live with you and your wife...."

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Aging: Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it. This is so true. I love to hear them say "you don't look that old."

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You know you are getting old when everything either dries up or leaks.

**Technologically Challenged?**



## Meet the Seniors

### Eileen Cox

At 95 years of age, Eileen Cox is indisputably one of the oldest living alumni of the Bishops' High School. Although Eileen, because of her advanced years, is understandably somewhat sketchy on the minutiae of her sojourn at Bishops', a gentle smile wafted across her face, when she was told that the information being sought was for the Senior Class Notes.

Eileen entered BHS in 1928 and was a member of Mary House. By the time she left some eight years later, she had established herself not only as someone to be reckoned with in the field of academia, but also as a person who, even at that age, was determined to explore all avenues that presented themselves and to make a name for herself.

Her daughter Sharon confirmed that her Mom was fiercely competitive in sports at school but her academic studies did not suffer in any way as a result. As Head Prefect from 1935-36, Eileen honed her leadership skills at an early age and was much acclaimed when she was *proxime accessit* for the vaunted Guyana Scholarship, an achievement which did not go unnoticed. In fact, not only at the time but also for many years after, it was strongly argued that she had rightfully won the award, but that "out of nowhere" a young man emerged to claim the coveted prize – a "sign" some claimed, "that women's achievements were not greatly valued at that time."

Who knows what might have unfolded had Eileen proceeded overseas to fulfill her ambitions. An outstanding lawyer or doctor would not have been a farfetched conjecture. As it was, on leaving school, Eileen managed to turn what for many would have been a humdrum existence in the public sphere into one in which "public" and "service" in relation to women achieved new meanings.

Appalled by what she observed to be the subservient role to which women in the public service were relegated, Eileen had hoped to use her position as a Founding Member of the Guyana Public Service Union (GPSU) to redress this situation. In the end, she had to accept that many indomitable challenges existed, including the fact that the women themselves were unable or unwilling to buck the system.

Perhaps, it was this that triggered the formation of what may be termed Eileen's lasting legacy - the Guyana Consumers Association (GCA) which she, along with the then First Lady, Viola Burnham, founded in 1970 and of which she was the President and leading voice for many years. It was the first such organization in Guyana formed to deal with consumer issues and, in particular, the status of women in the workplace. Eileen was integrally involved in discussions between the GCA and government agencies, which resulted in significant policy changes.

In 1971, she began contributing articles to the daily newspaper, Guyana Graphic, and was responsible for a 5-minute programme on the radio station, Guyana Broadcasting Corporation. She continued contributing articles to Stabroek News under the caption "Consumer's Concerns up to 2011.

Eileen served for many years as Editor of the Verbatim Reports of the National Assembly and its Committees. During the period 1999-2000, she served as Editor of the Verbatim Reports of the Constitution Reform Commission.

Eileen's work has been recognized by different entities. She received the Medal of Service and the Arrow of Achievement from the Government of Guyana. In April, 2013, GPSU honoured Eileen for her decades of service.

Today, Eileen has relinquished the GCA mantle but her work lives on. She is the true embodiment of the school motto: "**Labor omnia vincit**"

Eileen's daughter, Sharon, also attended BHS.



## **Beryl Rosetta Abdool née Annamunthodo**

Beryl describes her life as having no outstanding or remarkable events. She sees it as “just a simple life dominated by constant, loving feelings towards everyone - relatives and friends.” For many alumni of the Bishops' High School and others, hers has been and continues to be a significant presence.

Beryl was born on July 29, 1926 in Dartmouth Village on the Essequibo Coast. Her parents, George and Rosalind Annamunthodo, were both known for their constant kindness and generosity to everyone. She attended Sunday services at St. Barnabas Anglican Church which was situated obliquely opposite to her home or walked to Bounty Hall to attend the children's Sunday school classes held at the Brethren Church.

In 1937, while attending St. Barnabas Anglican School, Beryl was awarded one of the three Government County Scholarship based on the result of an examination comprising of English, Arithmetic, Geography and History. She received scholarships awarded to students in Essequibo and was the first East Indian girl to gain this award. As a result, she attended Bishops' High School. She was successful in the Junior and Senior Cambridge and the London Higher School Certificate examinations.

Originally a member of Mary House, Beryl was moved to the new Elizabeth House which was formed by taking students from each of Mary and Victoria Houses. She was elected Head of Elizabeth House and later Head Prefect. On the recommendation of the staff, she was awarded the Fidèle Collier Medal, being considered most helpful in school activities as well as being a good student in the classroom. Beryl became leader of the Red Indian Section of BHS Girl Guides Company 5 and gained several badges. Later, she became a Ranger. Subsequently, she was elected Brown Owl, leader of the Brownie Group at St. Gabriel's School, Convent of the Good Shepherd.

After completing school, Beryl was denied a scholarship to study nursing in England, since she was two inches below the required height. She then accepted a temporary job teaching at St. Rose's High School. In 1945, she was appointed Assistant Secretary at Bishops' High School. In 1954, Beryl married Sydney Norman Abdool (Jnr); since married women were not allowed to work in the Civil Service, she had to leave the job.

In Guyana, Beryl worked in the Rice Development Office of the Agriculture Department, the Sugar Producers' Association, the American Consulate Library; she also returned to BHS where she worked in the office then managed the second-hand bookstore. After emigrating to Canada in 1971, she worked in an Endocrinologist's office and then at the Concordia University Library. On account of severe illness – Guillain-Barré Syndrome and Bell's Palsy, Beryl had a year's leave of absence then ceased working.

Beryl became interested in and enjoyed classical music since she was a little girl living in Dartmouth. At the time, she and her brothers were taught music at their home. She continued music lessons in Georgetown, succeeding in examinations of the Associated Board of Music, England up to Grade 6. She also enjoyed baking and knitting in her younger days, and loved welcoming the newborns of relatives and friends with specially knitted blankets, bonnets or booties.

Beryl stated that, at this stage of her life, and until the roll is called up yonder, she is appreciating a quiet retirement lifestyle in Ajax, Canada. She attends social functions of the BHS Alumni Association, especially the Tea Party, where she enjoys mingling with old friends and classmates. She and her husband also attend similar gatherings organized by their Condominium Residence Social Committee.

Beryl's three daughters, Wendy Atkins, Sabrina Persaud and Karen Horton who were born between 1955 and 1959, all attended BHS for a while.

Beryl and Sydney have enjoyed very happy times visiting their daughters' families which include six grandchildren. They have also made enjoyable trips to other parts of Canada, the USA and the Caribbean, as well as to their homeland, that Dear Land of Guyana.

