

SIREN

VOL 16 NO 3 & 4
1994

PRICE
JS20



INSIDE

St. Thomas leads the way...

SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

BARREL CHILDREN...

International Year of the Family

SISTREN

Sistren Out Deh!

Sistren's now well known, and latest production **Kulchafushan** was viewed by participants of the **Japanese Peace Boat "Shin Sakura Maru"** at the **Jamaica School of Music in August**, when they visited Jamaica as part of its world tour to inform themselves of the social, political, environmental and cultural issues which affect humanity. The play was performed for them to get a better understanding of Sistren's work. **A second performance was held on September 4** with a second set of students from the Peace Boat. They presented Sistren with gifts and Sistren was allowed to tour the Boat.

In **mid August** Sistren led a series of **Gender Workshops** involving **Ancillary Workers at the College of Arts, Science and Technology (CAST)**. The focus was on traditional gender roles in job performance. The workshop was led by **Sistren's Myrtle Rose, Joy Erskine, Lillian Foster and Maxine Osbourne**.

Beverly Hanson and **Pauline Matthie** attended the month long **Play Writers' Conference** in **Australia** which started on **August 18**. They worked on how to develop script writing. On returning they did a follow-up workshop with eight Sistren and other organisations members.

From **August 9-19** the annual **Schoolers Workshop**, organised by **Myrtle Rose** was its usual success. **Fifty children** from the **Maxfield Park Children's Home**, the **Musgrave Girls' Home** as well as privately run homes attended. The activities included visits to educational institutions, the designing and printing of "T" shirts and tie-dye. They were awarded **Certificates of Participation** on completion of the Workshop. Sistren thanks **UNICEF** and **various business places** for their sponsorship.

On **August 22**, the **Kellogg Workshop** was held at **Sistren's Headquarters** and led by **Myrtle**

LET'S GET

Rose, Jerline Todd, Joy Erskine and Marion Bernard. The theme was **Structural Adjustment, IMF and its Effect on Women and the Economy**. **Twenty participants from the US** were involved. The Sistren stop was a part of their tour of several Caribbean islands.

On **August 31** **Myrtle Rose, Joy Erskine, Maxine Osbourne and Jerline Todd**, along with two children from the **Musgrave Girls Home** performed a skit on **"How Communities can Help the School, Teachers and Students to Develop Better Relationships."**

The **Population Conference** held in **Cairo, Egypt** was attended by **Myrtle Rose** representing **Sistren** and **Marion Bernard** and **Carol Narcisse** representing the **Association of Development Agencies (ADA)**. **Myrtle, Marion and Carol** conducted a **workshop on how participants can overcome language barriers**.

The **Council for the Aged** during the week ending **September 30** celebrated the **Aged**. **Jerline Todd and Joy Erskine** did a **cultural presentation of readings from Lion Heart Gal and Solo drumming**. The Aged expressed deep appreciation for the performance and invited Sistren to return.

In **Annoto Bay, the Mount Caramel Women's Cooperative** benefited from a **workshop** on building **Group Dynamics**. It was conducted by **Joy Erskine, Jerline Todd and Myrtle Rose**. The performance of a skit, general discussion and other drama techniques were used in the process.

Children and parents from **Corporate Area schools** were treated to a **cultural presentation** on **"Women the Head Corner Stone"** at the **African Caribbean Institute** on **October 19**. **Miss Todd, Erskine and James** conducted the workshop.

Sistren recently had its biannual hosting of the students from the **School for International Training, Vermont U.S.A.** who participate in a

15 week programme on **Women and Development in Jamaica**. They are undergraduate university and college students from the United States.

SISTREN

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Sistren is produced three times a year by the Sistren Theatre Collective as part of its ongoing efforts to highlight issues of concern to women in the society. Sistren is a non-profit collective of women whose activities include theatre, workshops, and research. Contact: 20 Kensington Crescent, Kingston 5, Jamaica, West Indies. 92-99247/92-96171.

A C Q U A I N T E D

SISTREN PROFILE



Jean Small performing A black Woman's Tale - she represented Jamaica at the Ninth International Amateur Theatre Festival in Aruba. There she was described as an ambassador and cultural treasure of Jamaica.

“Sistren not pure theatre but politics...”

Jean Small is the Administrative Director of the Sir Phillip Sherlock Centre for the Creative Arts at the University of the West

Indies. She is creating waves by providing a full agenda of educational and entertainment activities for the Centre. She sees theatre as a practical way of teaching and is doing an excellent job in introducing all sorts of innovative concepts; blending language and theatre; working with different departments to visualize their issues;

PERSONAL NOTES

WELCOME

To CUSO's cooperant **Wendy Gush** who recently joined **Sistren Research** for an initial period of two years. She will train **Lillian Foster** in documentation and also develop the Research Area into a fully equipped centre.

CONGRATULATIONS

Sistren was awarded the **Special Nanny Award for Outstanding Performance in the Field of Culture at the Nanny Awards Ceremony at Above Rocks on November 12.**

GOOD LUCK

After years of working with **Sistren**, first in the Research Department and then as General Manager **Marion Bernard** has moved on. **Sistren** wishes her all the best for the future.

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plans to “take the university”, people like Professors Rex

continued on page 32.



FEATURES

Editorial: laments the break down of family structures and pleads Society must Fight Back as Families Come Under Attack 5

St. Thomas leads the way in integrating family services ... "The idea is to improve the delivery of social services in light of dwindling resources for development projects" 6

BARREL CHILDREN need assistance ... In most instances there are no services to which these children or parents can turn to and a new wave of pain greets the child when they rejoin parents abroad... says Dr. Crawford-Brown and Melrose Rattery 13

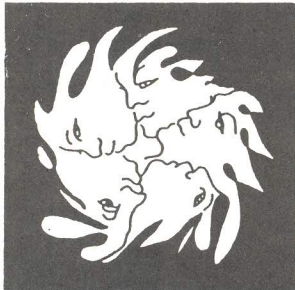
Family: Many Forms... the family has taken on many formsC/S

Drop-in centre coming for Street Boys ... this is one aspect of the proposals to ease the problems facing this sector of our children Dian McIntosh of the Ministry of Youth explains 25

MARSON... Her Isolation ... It is precisely this isolation that undercuts her voice, makes her falter... Honor Ford-Smith continues to explore Marson's character..... 29

Some Laws which Benefit the Family ... Jennes Anderson enlightens our darkness 31

Fathers Inc. promoting positive fatherhood Barry Chevannes describes the activities of the organisation which is dedicated to promoting positive fatherhood 37



SPECIALS

Survival Strategies Under Structural Adjustment ... people from all walks of life are devising measures to cope and keep their families intact ... Imani Tafari-Ama reports on their triumphs 8

Stability of the family is threatened ... What is promoted in the media is the sub-culture of gun, drug and music dons ... socially unacceptable but rewarded with media promotion ... summary of Dr. Elsa Leo-Rhynie's 1993 Grace Kennedy Foundation Lecture 18

Joan in retrospect.. "I would never cry again." ... Verna Lee Davis-Daly continues to explore the relationship between a domestic worker and her female employer who are both 40 years old 23

Respec due... Once upon a time if yu was a teacher, nurse or policeman everybody respec yu ... by Janice Scott-Walker 28

International Year of the Family 1994 ... report on the activities and plans for the future 35



REGULARS

Profile: features Jean Small teacher, actress, writer and director who says Sistren is not pure theatre but politics 3

Women in the Arts: Marjorie Whyllie shares with Janice Scott-Walker her all inspiring thoughts... Music is not a soft option. It requires hard work and dedication..... 11

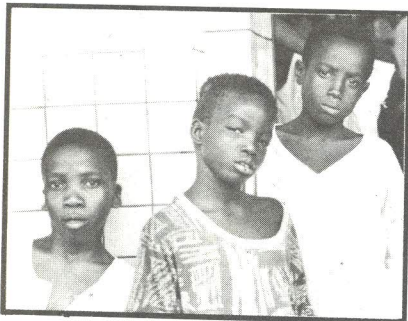
Health Update: Communication is the Key to Preventing AIDS 22

Can I Call You Sister? ... Takiema Bunche talks about Black Women and their hair. 39

SOCIETY MUST FIGHT BACK AS FAMILIES COME UNDER ATTACK



Traditionally the Jamaican family has been characterized by a sharing and caring network. No matter the pattern, whether married, common-law or visiting; the extended family, often led by the grandmother, played a central role in the care and transmission of social values to children. The child in days gone by belonged to the whole community. The family patterns and structure of networking which emerged in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean retains elements of our West African heritage as well as the adaptations which were necessary for survival under slavery. Today these institutions are under attack. The role of mother is reduced as she moves to fill the gap created by the social and economic pressures of structural adjustment. The role of grandmother is almost eliminated, certainly in the urban centre, as she too becomes younger and younger and is herself a worker on the job market.



The pressures on the health and education system puts more demand on mothers as they substitute for care givers and have to deal with the problems of delinquency resulting from students rejection of the deteriorating education system. At the same time they must compete with the idealization of the sub-culture of gun-violence, drug abuse and trafficking and the attainment of "Don and Donnette ship" as success stories achieved without the demands of attending school and working hard at a steady job.



The forty per cent of households which are now headed by women are often deprived of their presence as they are forced to migrate and become entrepreneurs. Their absence not only deprives the children of much needed love and guidance but results in more street children and teen pregnancies as children are subject to abuse resulting from a break down in their shelter arrangements.

For every unwanted child, for every child who is lost to the street, for everyone one who drops out of school not understanding their

sexuality, turning to a life of drug abuse, the society drives one more nail in its coffin. It seems clear therefore that the solution has to be one involving the entire community.

At the level of government more must be done to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the limited resources we have. St. Thomas provides a good example of how the integration of services dealing with the family needs to work. This is an immediate and short term solution; the revision of the school curriculum to ensure that Family Life Education plays a leading role in teaching students about their sexuality and educate them on health and family planning matters must be undertaken with urgency; increased parenting education, counselling and mediation techniques to reduce domestic violence must be facilitated through established Citizens Associations, Parent Teachers Associations, Neighbourhood Watches, Church groups etc.

With this urgent need in mind this issue of SISTREN magazine re-looks at the characteristics of the family; the issues which are bringing greater pressures onto the family but more importantly point the way to solutions. To encourage positive ways in which the nation needs to harness its history and tradition of community caring and sharing to save our families. As you read the articles I hope you too will find reinforcement and support for the measures you have already taken or learn about something that you can do to help. These efforts become critical in this the International Year of the Family. As a nation we are challenged and need to respond from the compassion we feel but also from the knowledge that the grills cannot save us nor the destruction of a single offender today as two more will rise up to take their place tomorrow.

The magazine not only focuses on the family but retains its usual features, Health Update - on AIDS; Women in the Arts, featuring Marjorie Whyllie; Ansa and Granny; Una Marson series continues and Joan the Missus reflects on her 40 years of existence.

Happy reading and have a merry Christmas and a very happy new year.

St. Thomas leads the way

As the concern for the break down of family values, structures and support systems increasingly concern the nation residents of St. Thomas are leading the way in cooperation for improvement as their contribution to the IYF campaign. Read about the measures they have used and try to emulate and improve on them. (Ed.).

The International Year of the Family Committee (IYF) has started a pilot project in St. Thomas to bring together government, non-government and private sector organisations which are involved in the solution of family problems such as child abuse, incest and domestic violence.

The idea is to improve the delivery of social services in light of dwindling resources for development projects. The St. Thomas pilot project, which was launched in August of this year, has resulted in a whirlwind of activities which have connected the agencies serving the family in the parish.

Chairperson of the newly formed committee is Claudette Wilmot of the organisation Dedicated to the Development of the Disabled, known as the 3D Project (located in St. Thomas). She explained more about the progress of the Integrated Family Services project.

Integrated Family Services project

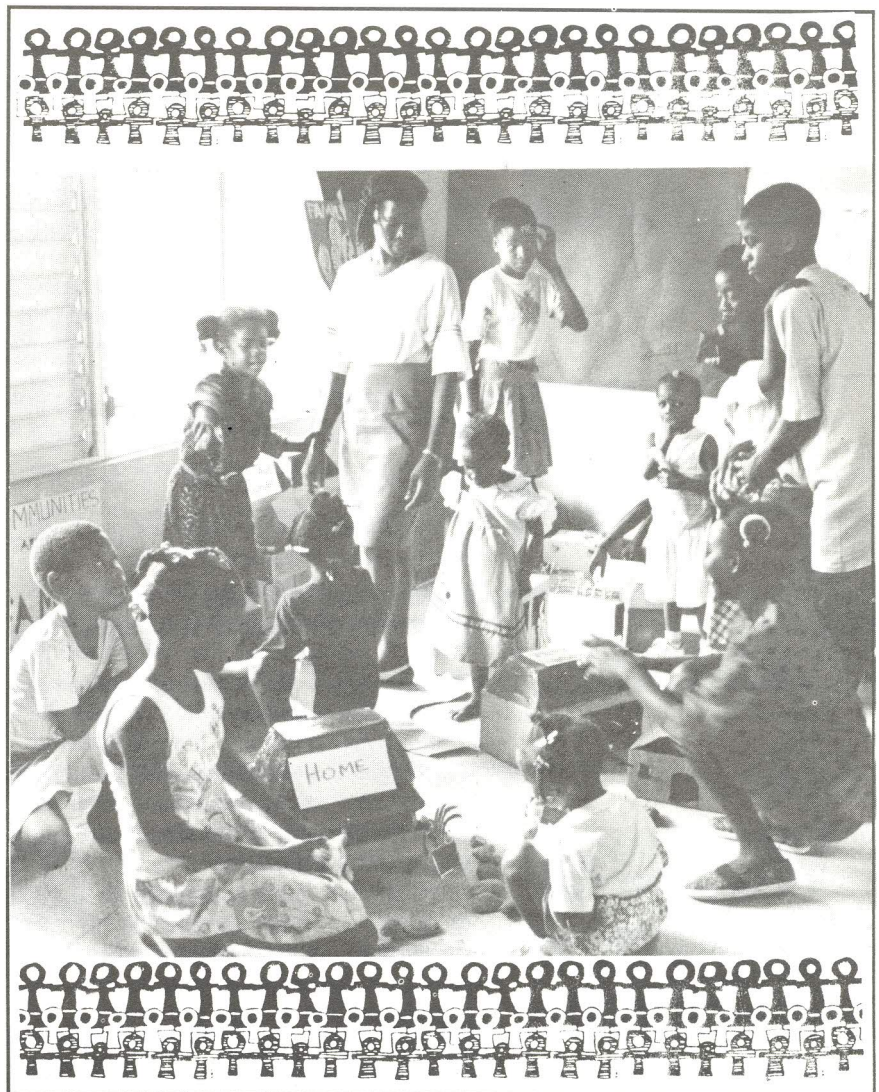
"I was invited to attend a meeting on the Family which was organised by the Child Support Unit and the IYF Committee. We were asked to share our dream of what we would like to see for St. Thomas.

"Most people said that they wanted better family lives, more positive role models, more services. I wanted to see more integration of people with disabilities into the

society at all levels.

"At the end of that meeting, we had an action plan which targeted audiences such as schools and

clinics in order to start to change the nature of existing services for people in St. Thomas. We realised however, that these were long-term



Students at the Family Expo in St. Thomas viewing the ideal homes they designed

in integrating family services

goals and that we had to deal with some short-term objectives especially focusing on children.

“For me it was really great because we were getting the feeling of networking which wasn’t really there before... It no longer felt as if I were in a strange place.”

“It was summer and the library and basic schools were having camps,” Claudette continued. “I thought that it would be nice to integrate children with disabilities. The reception to this idea was very positive; about twenty-nine disabled children attended the library summer camp. “We had a child-to-child programme, orienting the youngsters about disability and exposing the able ones to the disabled. Eventually we placed them together in a setting in Morant Bay. It worked beautifully. After that there was another one-week camp at the Morant Bay All Age School where children explored themes concerning the family. Emphasis was placed on the family being the base of the community and debating the responsibilities of parents and so on.

“We then had a children’s Expo at the Morant Bay Church Hall. It was divided into sections, one dealing with Family where they built a model village. They had participatory activities where people drew positions from a hat and became different members of the community. They then talked about their roles and how they should live together. The children also made

charts of information they learned from the camps as well as displays showing the different stages of development through which children pass. The Expo ended with a big Fun Day and a parade through Morant Bay.

We felt very positive

“We felt very positive because most people had done what they wanted to do,” Mrs. Wilmot continued. “For me it was really great because we were getting the feeling of networking which wasn’t really there before. It also helped in other aspects of my own work. I started getting referrals from other agencies. It no longer felt as if I were in a strange place.

“At these meetings we had representatives from the Probation office, 3D, Poor Relief, the library and schools, a member of the IYF Committee as well as the Child Support Unit. The IYF Committee and the Child Support Unit facilitate us with resource persons to address our long term goals. One of the main goals we identified was the need for mediation because there are too many matters coming before the courts. We also saw the need for Family Counselling to address some of the issues which we had raised in our first meeting.”

“The diverse group of committed community activists decided to organise action-oriented sub-committees to deal with particular issues and plan and execute training.”

In fact,” she smiled ironically, “we did not identify an Executive until the September meeting; things started to happen so rapidly. For

example, 3D identified November 3-9 as Disabilities Week; the Council for the Aged and the Family Planning Board identified the month of November as the month for the aged and also a family planning week. Ordinarily, these activities would not have taken place. It is a preventative, community based approach which is working towards having services located in a central area.

Family counselling and mediation

“In addressing family counselling and mediation, we chose people from various areas in the community. Not just the usual stereotype of a pastor but people like a taxi-man, a school teacher... people who have already proven themselves to be leaders in their communities. People who others respect and will go to for help. Eventually we expect these people to themselves become trainers.

“It is a preventative, community based approach which is working towards having services located in a central area.”

“Family Counselling is the first training that we have completed. The group decided that they wanted to continue meeting once per month. There are twenty-six participants, including guidance counsellors, a bank manager who is also very active in her church, a number of pastors, housewives... people who other people normally go to for advice. Family Life

continued on page 15

SURVIVAL STRATEGIES UNDER STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT

by Imani Tafari-Ama

A great proportion of Jamaican families consist of a woman (40% of households) and her children who might or might not have the support of their father. This situation demands tremendous creativity to ensure the survival of the family.

Then again, there are many men who want to provide for their families but are experiencing severe marginalisation, especially of an economic nature and so are unable to provide for their families even when they're are inclined to. Sistrén asked a number of Jamaicans how they manage to survive?

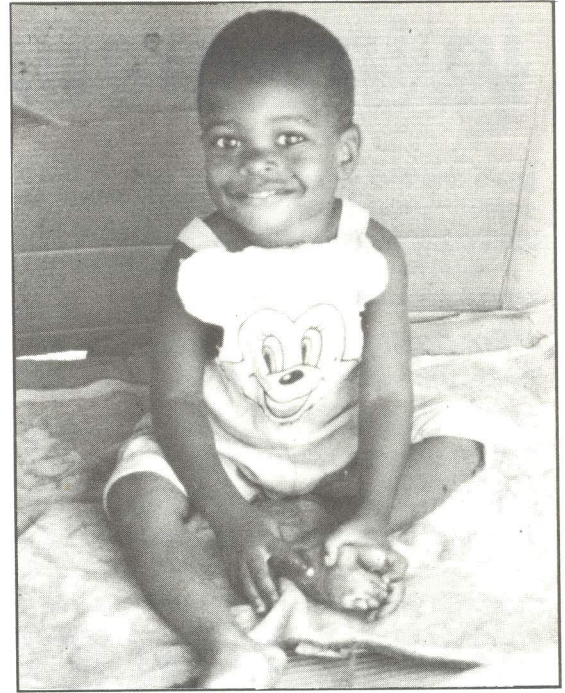
I walked up to the lady selling at the bustop to buy a couple icy mints. She invited me to help myself to the item included in the attractive layout on her tray and I passed her the money. She smiled and said thank you. I took a second look at her and was encouraged to ask her a couple of questions with my article in mind.

"Do you do a good business

selling here?" I began.

"I don't really do a good business all the time," she responded readily, "but at least I know that when I sell if is even \$2 it is mine. To tell you the truth, I was working out at the [Kingston] Free Zone at one time but that time it was too much problem because I have a baby and it mean that I had to take him to the nursery before I go to work. That mean that I have to get up that much earlier to get ready and get him ready. And of course, I have to buy certain things for him that the creche require. And still him get sick from what they give him and that cost me a lot. Plus I had to spend bus fare and lunch money to go to work and the salary wasn't much. So now that I do the selling I find that I am better off because I can get up when I want. I can eat when I want and feed my baby when I want and look after him as I like to look after him."

I looked at her somewhat puzzled. "Where is your baby?" I asked.



Away from the prying eyes he is content to occupy his little world behind the bustop. The love and care of his mother is what keeps him.

She led me to the back of the bustop and showed me a makeshift room she had created with cardboard to shelter her infant from dust, the sun and possible prying eyes.

"I feel better knowing that I can watch him and I can know that he is clean and eating right. And he doesn't get sick like when he goes to the creche. It is much cheaper for me too. I have two other children who are 12 and 9 and because they are bigger, they can take care of themselves until I come home so I don't have to worry. I am much better off than when I was working out because I am independent and I have peace of mind.

"And do you know," she continued, "that when I was sewing at the factory, the amount of work that I used to do for the little pay, it wasn't worth it either. You just have to be going going going all the time and you can't

see what you getting out of it. I would just like to have the chance to have a machine of my own and then I could buy material and sew and sell wholesale. If I could work so hard for them I could work just as hard for myself. But till such time, I am just continuing with the selling."

Another day, I was forced to take a taxi because my car was in the garage and I was in dismay at the crowd of people waiting for the bus.. I struck up a conversation.

"Do you make a good living being a taxi man?" I asked him as we drove off. "I can live," he replied.

Westmoreland so I was up and down all the time. Is a good thing too that I worked in a garage for three years because this car give me a lot of problem and I fix everything on it myself. First time I would be into a lot of spreeing, spending all \$1000 in one night. But I decide to stop that and just put it away. Really though, although you see me is a baldhead me a Rasta and is just because of the faith why I have been able to go through because from you say Rasta, nothing can't go wrong for you really and truly.

All you have to do is have the faith."

"It really put me under a lot of pressure," he confessed, "but what to do. It is just the system and you have to survive. If I should not pick up the children, the parents can easily go to somebody else and you know what that means for my business. You just have to make the sacrifice because it is costing me twice but if I lay down, who is going to look after my family?" Of course that rhetorical question defied rebuttal.

Joyce, a domestic helper, also related her life experiences of which space only allows a brief summary which by no means tells



The strength of character and resilience that make this mother earn a living selling on the side walk and at the same time have the creativity to take care of her child is embodied in her features (inset) . At left she gives a customer her undivided attention..

"What is the best time of day for work" I asked him next. "Morning for sure," was his ready rejoinder. "People want to get to work then and you know what a problem the bus is. How I really get into it you know, is for seven years I worked two jobs, night and day and I saved everything from one. I just shut my eyes and decided that that is what I had to do. And at the same time I was doing my farming in the country in

My next encounter was with a man who picks up children in Spanish Town and takes them to school in Kingston and back. His bus had broken down just after he had bought a lot of expensive parts for it and in order to maintain his service, he had to hire a bus for cash [he gets paid at the end of the month] in order. In the meantime, he had to tow his bus into Kingston to be serviced.

even half of the story. "My mother died when I was three years old," she recalled "and my father didn't give us any support. I kind of understand that because he says that his father didn't mind him so him naw mind him pickney dem. If he was the caring type of father things woulda better cause all of us end up have to try and make it on dem own. have a sister who used

continued on page 10

SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

(continued from page 9)



Joyce: all of us end up have to try and make it on dem own. And she has succeeded.

to sell in Papine market and she have about six children and she have it really hard. She help the children them father to go to foreign to mek life much better and when him go ova deh, him nevah pay har any mind so she alone. She eventually have to pack up the market selling to go and live in Trelawny. She only come in on Friday now and go back on Saturday and she have to leave the children by themselves. She under real pressure because her first daughter got pregnant and she was trying to get an abortion but it never really did work out. Den she go back to the same guy who get her pregnant and she get another child. And the last girl is now pregnant and she not sixteen yet! My sister used to take them with her to the market to make them see how she haffi struggle but dem no tek it fi nutten. Her last son in Stony Hill approved school. I tell you, she miss it just so to get a nervous breakdown.

I decide that after I have my two I didn't want anymore so I take the tie off because my sister example was enough for me not to want any more. Especially too after my first baby father never want to own it neither. But I don't hide

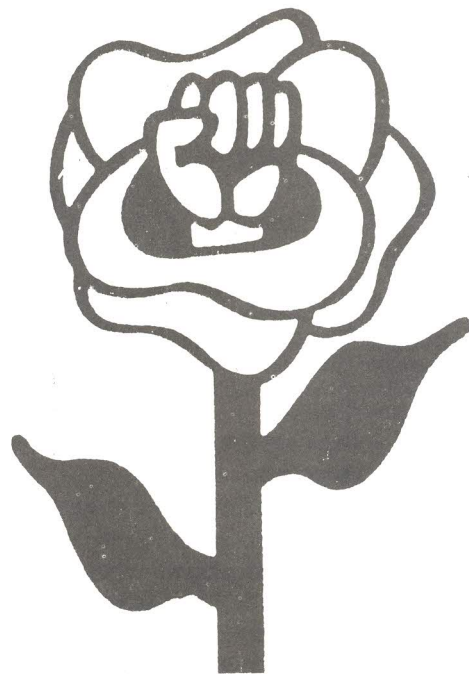
nothing from my children. I show them. And they are so understanding that if I come home and say that I don't have anything to make a big dinner, they will take crackers and a cup of tea and go to them bed."

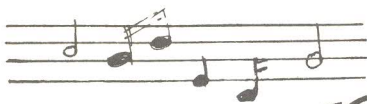
Like so many other women, Maria found that she had no support from the man who had impregnated her when she made a decision to carry the child; he wanted her to have an abortion. In spite of the emotional devastation, she maintained her equilibrium and a sunny disposition for the sake of her unborn offspring. She now finds it quite a challenge to cope with the economic responsibilities which mothering a child single-handedly entails but would not have reversed her decision for the world; she adores her precocious two-going-on-twenty year old. "He just doesn't know what he is missing," she said simply.

On the other hand, John, burst into tears as he recounted the tale of how he met and married Felicia. When they met she had three children whom he adopted and became a tremendous father to them. Now his wife migrated leaving the children with the Grandmother who now refuses to let him see them.

In spite of the grounds I had managed to cover in pursuit of this article, I concluded, I had merely brushed the tip of the multi-dimensional iceberg. However, it was sufficient for me to realise that there are many areas of distress that people are having to cope with daily without necessarily having the proper

support systems to lean on. There is much talk of the erosion of values and attitudes which once were the mainstays of the society in general and of our family systems in particular. It therefore begs the question that instead of treating these snippets of survival strategies as just another show of the creativity and resilience of our Jamaican people, there could be some mechanism by which the strengths could be harnessed towards ensuring that the next generation errs for example, on the side of the humility of Joyce's children rather than the recreation-of-the-wheel behaviours that typifies the responses of her more rebellious or perhaps, just plain naive, nieces and nephews.





WOMEN IN THE ARTS

MARJORIE WHYLIE

*The personal fulfillment
is immeasurable*

by Janice Scott-Walker

The legend began to take shape over 48 years ago. The story is told that one quiet evening, way past the bedtime of little girls, the strains of a piano being played were heard in an almost vacant house. There were only two of the occupants at home at the time, a ten year old boy and his 22 month old sister. On hearing the music the little boy quietly entered the room only to see his baby sister at the piano.

That was the first time that someone was amazed by Marjorie Whylie, but it certainly was not the last.

Today, Marjorie Whylie is an accomplished singer, drummer and pianist. Her name is synonymous with music, not just in Jamaica, but across the Caribbean and around the world.

The piano lessons began at the tender age of 6 1/2 and Marjorie confesses that although her love for the piano is immeasurable, she hated to practice. "I loved to play, but when it came to practicing I had to be reminded firmly.. Another thing I disliked was that I had to play whenever we had guests or if we visited someone who had a piano in their home."

Marjorie's first public performances included those at church, tea parties, concerts and later as a regular on "Lanaman's



Children's Hour", a weekly radio programme at RJR. While attending boarding school at St. Andrew High, she was the 'Saturday night after supper dance tune favorite', and later joined The Jazz Workshop where she studied with such greats as Sonny Bradshaw, Taddy Mowatt, and Carlos Malcolm.

Upon completing High School, she was awarded a Government Teacher's Scholarship to study Spanish. After graduating with an

honors degree in 1965, from the University of the West Indies, it was on to Kingston College (K.C.) where she taught spanish for nine years.

"Being at K.C. teaching Spanish was not an indication that I had turned my back on becoming a professional musician. I was still very much involved in music." After her years at K.C., she worked part-time with one of Jamaica's leading folklorist, Olive

continued on page 12

MARJORIE WHYLIE

(continued from page 11)



Marcia Griffiths (standing) and Marjorie Whyllie share a laugh.

Lewin whose Team performed at the Social Development Commission, Bellevue Hospital and in the prisons.

As a performer, Marjorie has set no boundaries. She has led the orchestra for several Little Theatre Movement pantomimes and musicals, she has performed with several studio bands in addition to performing in several local and international festivals "I'm involved in all kinds of music whether it be classical, jazz or reggae, gospel, traditional or contemporary. But unfortunately for my earning potential my name has become so linked with jazz that people have begun to think of me only as a jazz musician." Marjorie however will not be

limited. She is a very versatile person, having worked with the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC) at the annual festivals in the areas of Dance and Music in training and judicatio, the National Dance Theatre Company (NDTC) of which she has been Musical Director since 1968, the University Singers as accompanist, singer and composer and LTM as Musical Director and actress.

Looking at what Marjorie Whyllie has done over the years, it is safe to assume that if it involves music, she has tried it. Composing - done it. Performed - done it. Consultant - done it. Teaching - done it.

A graduate of the Jamaica School of Music, Marjorie has returned, but this time as a voice and piano tutor. That is just a fraction of the things this lady does on a weekly basis. In addition to the Jamaica School of Music there are voice classes at Tuff Gong, Classes on Caribbean Music at the University of the West Indies and private classes at home. Many of her past students are household names and include Pam Hall, Nadine Sutherland and Sophia George to name a few. Marjorie states that she derives a great deal of fulfillment from watching these performers mature professionally.

Looking at what Marjorie Whyllie has done over the years, it is safe to assume that if it involves music, she has tried it.

Composing - done it.

Performed - done it.

Consultant - done it.

Teaching - done it.

Marjorie Whyllie's unmatched dedication to music and folk culture have not gone un-noticed. Her awards include the UWI Guild of Graduates Pelican Award (1993), the Bronze Musgrave Medal (1973) the Institute of Jamaica Centenary medal, The Prime Minister's Medal of Appreciation (1983) and most recently the Order of Distinction (OD) this year.

Marjorie has accomplished a great deal. She has performed for thousands both here and

continued on page 16

BARREL CHILDREN...

need assistance



T rue to their tradition Jamaican and other Caribbean mothers have been supporting their families under increasing economic pressure. These hardships are brought on by the structural adjustment programmes and other conditions laid down by international donor agencies such as the IMF and the World Bank.

One strategy is the migration of parent(s) who send back money, food and clothes (remittances) to support their children. This continues until parent(s) can send for the children to join them in "foreign". Over the last 10 years this has become such an important part of children's lives that Jamaican social workers now describe them as "Barrel Children". During the separation these children are deprived of the love and care they would

normally have received from their parents.

Children left behind

Dr. Crawford-Brown and Melrose Rattery both of the Sociology and Social Work Department of the University of the West Indies have been studying what happens to these children who are left behind. They also examine the dynamics of the relations as they relate to the family, relative or friend with whom the children are left; and the special problems these children may have when they join their parents abroad, sometimes with new additions.

They note that usually when upper class families migrate the entire family goes and very little if any money or other supplies are

sent back to Jamaica. However, members of families from the lower socio-economic groups leave with the intention of returning. They leave behind family, relatives or friends to whom they regularly send food, clothing and money. Many of these individuals enter the United States, Canada and England illegally on temporary visas or by some other means. Their illegal status means that they cannot come and go as they please.

In the 50's and early 60's the Caribbean male migrated to Britain leaving behind mothers and children. He worked in the construction and heavy industry, transportation and agriculture. However in the 60's Britain closed off these employment opportunities while others opened in North America. The Americans needed female nurses and

continued on page 14

BARREL CHILDREN

(continued from page 13)

household domestic workers and so a new pattern developed where the woman migrated first and later sent for her husband and children. Mothers found it possible to migrate because relatives, friends or neighbours would assist the children. The process of filing for the family could take anywhere from two to 10 years. This long period of separation often meant that children arrived in North America at an age where they found it hard to adapt to the new society.

The children left behind sometimes spend their entire lives feeling rejected, abandoned and lost. They grieve for their parent, become very stressed and may suffer physiological and psychological reactions.

Four basic arrangements

Children may be left with extended family members such as grandparents, uncles and aunts; friends of parents or strangers. Most often they are left with someone in the same community. Rural children may be placed in boarding arrangements in the city where there are good schools for them to attend.

Sometimes there may be a breakdown in these living situations. The family, relatives and friends feel they can no longer cope with the child's

behaviour and they therefore institutionalize the child by boarding them in educational institutions or in underfunded government run child welfare institutions.

There are also instances in which the children are left with a spouse usually father or step-father. In some cases the children are left alone to care for each other, with the older child, usually a female adolescent in charge of her younger brothers and sisters. The "parentified child" is given the responsibility of rearing themselves as well as their entire household including father and siblings. Often overwhelmed their school work deteriorates, depression and a preoccupation with immoral activities e.g. promiscuity set in.

The fourth situation has occurred relatively recently; parents migrate (the mother in particular) for short periods, usually six months. She then sends money for school fees, mortgage payments, etc. Then she returns home for six months, usually at the beginning of the school year to send children off to school and to spend Christmas; then she returns abroad. The child left behind may be unprotected and unsupervised.

Whether deliberately or by the arrangements left for the care of the child breaking down, these children often become the victims of sexual abuse. In many cases they go unreported and untreated and the children carry these scars for life.

Feeling Rejected

The children left behind sometimes spend their entire lives feeling rejected, abandoned and lost. They grieve for their parent, become very stressed

and may suffer physiological and psychological reactions. The parents also feel a deep sense of guilt from having to leave their children behind. For the child left at an early age the memory of their parent fades; for the older child there is fear, anger, resentment and a feelings of rejection. In addition there is the absence of bonding between parent and child. The anxiety and loneliness experienced by the child may range from depression and withdrawal to anger and hostility. In these situations of separation it is important that contact be maintained between parent and child. Where this is done reunification is easier.

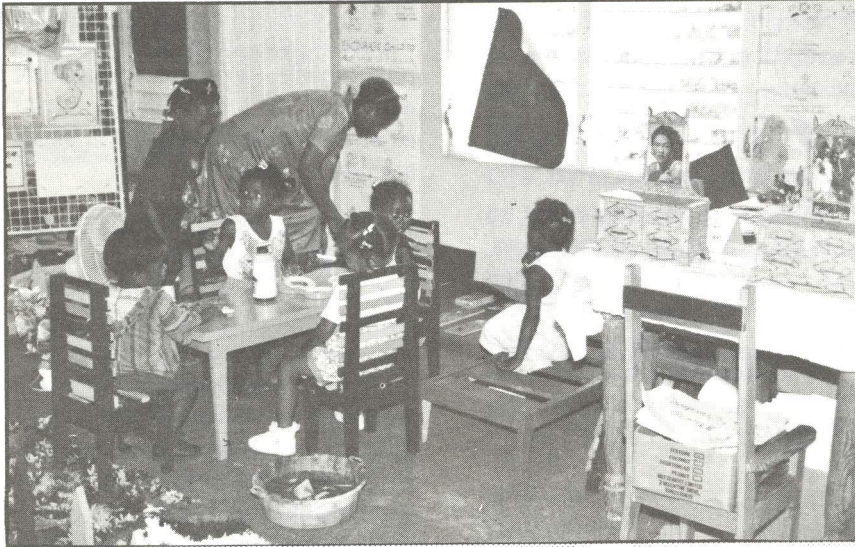
I left him when he was two years old. I bottled and brought the "navel string" (the umbilical cord) with me. Every time I feel lonely, discouraged or discriminated against, I take it out and cry over it, knowing that this is the only reason I am here, to give him a better opportunity.

One child had this to say: "the fact that my mother wrote directly to me, made all the difference in our relationship when we were united... the bond was maintained, because my grandmother used to sit down and force me to reply." [Jordon 1983]

A Jamaican mother describes how she coped with leaving her baby. "I left him when he was two years old. I bottled and

continued on page 17

St. Thomas leads the way (continued from page 7)



Above: "Teaching the children", this corner of the St. Thomas Family Expo focussed on teaching the children. Below : visitors to the Expo view exhibits on display

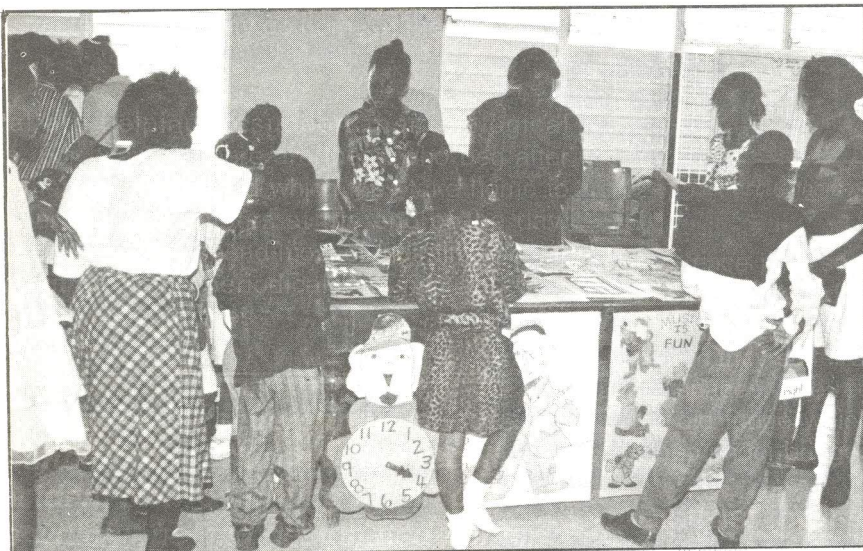
Ministries conducted the three-day training course; the response was tremendous. They will do an evaluation of the participants in January.

In the meantime they have targeted a hundred family counsellors for the parish by the end of '95. In their follow-up meetings they review some of the things they learnt during the course with the aim of strengthening one another. It's important to note that that initiative came from the group and not from the committee. It is truly a grassroots, community idea." The mediation training facilitated by Donna Parchment from Dispute Resolution Foundation, started on October 24; the second was held on October 31 with the final session scheduled for November 14. This group has twenty-six persons and includes a schoolteacher, youth club members, pastors, police, housewives, foster parents and so on.

A sustainable thrust

Claudette heartily objected to the notion of a mere "Year of the Family" focusing on matters concerning various family formations in Jamaica.

"I personally don't think the focus on the family should just be for one year," she asserted. "I really think that the family is the basic social unit and as such it should be highlighted continually. My fear is that when the year ends the impetus will fall off. I really want this to be a sustainable thrust. I am not from St. Thomas so I don't see myself forever there but along with other members of the committee, I



continued on page 16

MARJORIE WHYLIE

(continued from page 12)

abroad. Her talents have taken her to places such as the former Soviet Union, Mexico, Venezuela, France, Switzerland, Finland, Holland, France, Australia, Germany, Britain, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Panama, Canada and the United States. She has performed at Carnegie Hall and at the Caribbean Jazz Festival, the Commonwealth Festival, and the Montreaux Jazz Festival. With all this travelling has Marjorie ever gotten that feeling to make another country her home?

"Leave Jamaica? never!. Jamaica is such a part of me, I do not like to be away longer than two weeks. I thrive on the creativity of Jamaica and Jamaican people. I will be here to turn off the lights when everyone else is gone. No way am I leaving Jamaica."

The sky is the limit for this very talented and dedicated performer. Her advice to young and upcoming performers is "Music is not a soft option, it requires hard work and dedication, but the personal fulfillment is immeasurable."



St. Thomas ...

(Continued from page 15)

want to see development which is lasting.

"I see the Integrated Family Services as an opportunity to spread acceptance of families as families first so that they can come together and access the services that they need. They will know each other and be able to refer each other to the different areas so it will be a more personalised, needs based and user friendly kind of service. I am looking forward to widespread acceptance of people with disabilities while the Probation Office has already achieved the establishment of a Family Court."

The Parenting Education training is in the pipeline. The administrators at the Morant Bay All Age want to use their Parent Teachers Association meeting as a training ground to introduce parenting education to parents. They already have a parenting body in St. Thomas from which the committee is encouraging the identification of resource persons who will facilitate the training.

Claudette further revealed that the fledgling but determined group had the wholehearted support of the member of Parliament for the area. "In one of his face-to-face talks the M. P. Dr. Fenton Ferguson spoke of community based services. "Since we are not a political group, we really just wanted to have a look at what was happening. So we invited him to our meeting and he offered us \$55,000 for training. He said that he recognised that our group is made up of leaders who want to get things done for the benefit of the community and in the process, making everybody's work easier.

Flexible committee

"Ours is a very flexible committee; sometimes we have twenty persons attending but we really have a core of about fifteen. We meet and make sure information is passed to the others. As people see the need to invite someone from another organisation, they are invited to participate. We are still in the process of formulating our objectives which we have to insist, are needs based."

The Executive Committee of the Integrated Family Services group involves Claudette Wilmot, 3D project, Chairperson; Lt. Rueben Phillips of the Salvation Army, Secretary; Miss Marlene Wilson of the Poor Relief, Asst. Secretary; Sharon Kidd from 3D Project, Treasurer; Mrs. Joan Supria from the Ministry of Welfare, (Food Stamp Department), Public Relations Officer; Ms. Cynthia Thorn, Children's Officer for St. Thomas. We also have four co-opted members, Mrs. Millicent Williams, Senior Probation Officer for Jamaica's eastern region, Miss Kirlew from the Princess Margaret Hospital, Shirley Nelson from the Poor Relief Office and Mildred Wilson, Senior Probation Officer.



BARREL CHILDREN...

(continued from page 14)

brought the "navel string" (the umbilical cord) with me. Every time I feel lonely, discouraged or discriminated against, I take it out and cry over it, knowing that this is the only reason I am here, to give him a better opportunity."

Disoriented

The child who feels disoriented when their parent leaves feel powerless and unable to control what is happening to them. They may therefore have problems adjusting to the new household. The child may react by engaging in delinquent behaviour. A 1993 study by Crawford-Brown of delinquent male adolescents in Jamaica. She found that in 86% of the households mothers were absent while in 13% fathers were. She concluded that while more studies are needed there is some indication that there is a link between the development of delinquents and the absence of mothers from households due to migration. It is the mother who is critical to the children being disciplined and well behaved.

Delinquent behaviour may range from runaway, drug abuse, to generally aggressive behaviour. The degree to which these tendencies manifest themselves is often dependent on how well the children adapt to the family with which they are left.

Absence of the services

In most instances there are no services to which these children or parents can turn and a new wave of pain greets the child when they rejoin parents abroad. They suffer culture shock. The climate is strange and they have

to contend with the cold. They are accustomed to having close relations with people within their community; a spirit of caring and sharing and now they face situations in which people hardly take the time to say hello.

In most instances there are no services to which these children or parents can turn and a new wave of pain greets the child when they rejoin parents abroad.

Then there is the language barrier. They have difficulty understanding and being understood. Suddenly they become minorities; a different education system which is less "disciplined" and "requires you to interpret issues for yourself". They are disappointed when their false expectations of the system, encouraged by media and family, are not met.

In addition their family may have a new mother or father and new siblings who see them as an intruder. Conflicts may be generated and parents expecting the child to be eternally grateful is disappointed. This conflict may extend beyond the parent and child and can lead to separation of the child and parent or divorce of parents. The child may be blamed for these problems and takes to the streets to escape, the parent is disappointed and hurt. The old way of punishing the child, perhaps by beating, cannot work because of the laws protecting children's rights. The child may therefore be left to wander without direction.

Conflict may even arise because

the child is unclear what name to call the parent. The absence of bonding during the time of separation makes it difficult for the child to say Mom. She is not regarded as a source of authority. The child loses all sense of belonging as contact with those at home may be discouraged as those connections are seen as backward.

Conflict is particularly sharp with adolescents who don't share the parents expectations and the goals parents have designed for them.

What can be done to assist

One way of assisting these children is to have the social services division of government collaborate with embassies of receiving countries to ensure children are referred for mandatory counselling prior to migration.

Pre-migration counselling should include education on cultural differences between Jamaica and the host country.

West Indian organisations should be involved in the planning and implementation of orientation programmes as members will no doubt provide positive role models.

The Services division should also be informed of the location of children left behind so that they can be checked. Due to the limitation of resources they would have to be limited to children most at risk who should be singled out for special attention.

Government should also expand the existing parenting education services to sensitize the

continued on page 27

Stability of the family is threatened

Dr. Elsa Leo-Rhynie's lecture on the Jamaican Family presented as the 1993 Grace Kennedy Foundation Lecture sparked a significant amount of discussion in the society and once again highlighted the crises facing the nation. Below is a synopsis of the Lecture which remains very relevant.

The Jamaican family pattern can be divided into three categories: married, where men and women are legally united and share the same residence; common-law, men and women are not legally united, share a sexual union and a common residence; visiting, men and women share a sexual relationship, are not legally united nor share a common residence. This family pattern and structure has persisted despite economic, political and social change in the Caribbean.

The dominant family pattern remains matrifocal. Women are the primary care givers and disciplinarians, the presence of the father may be transient and financial support inconsistent; he is often excluded from intense participation in the lives of their children. The absent father often creates the absent mother who seeks employment to finance the family; in some cases she is unwilling or unable to be the primary care giver and the children may be abandoned or transferred from one home to another. It is difficult for these children to develop stable relationships.

Changing roles for women

At the same time there are



Dr. Elsa Leo-Rhynie

changing roles for women; she has taken advantage of education and training as a means of upward social mobility. She is increasingly involved in the workforce but is still concentrated in low pay, low status jobs. Those in professional and managerial categories are predominantly found in nursing, teaching and public sector management. There is also a reduction in fertility rates and a decline in family size making it possible for women to pursue options such as entrepreneurship, further education and training.

The stability of the family is threatened by various factors. Structural adjustment policies and the shift in government expenditure away from social services to debt servicing, the reduction in the quality and quantity of health and educational

services available and an increase in the cost; the policies which reduce women's access to income and services; increase demands on women's time who as heads of households must support their families are all threatening family stability.

(The absence of positive role models does not help and what is promoted in the media is the sub-culture of gun, drug and music dons who are engaged in activities considered socially unacceptable but are rewarded with media promotion.)

Reduced social services

Some of the areas which are most affected are shelter-inadequate housing leads to overcrowding, poor sanitation and the expansion of squatting; reduced access to health and education at a time when more education and counselling are needed to deal with health matters such as the transmission of HIV. At the same time many young people view education as

irrelevant as they see the deterioration of the physical conditions of schools; poor student achievement and lack of attractiveness of teaching as a career.

Other problem areas include many babies born to mothers 16 and under being abandoned at hospitals. In addition the job market cannot absorb graduates and parents have to support their children while they are adults. At the same time young people are frustrated at their inability to become independent while many young people have skills inappropriate to the job market.

The absence of positive role models does not help and what is promoted in the media is the sub-culture of gun, drug and music dons who are engaged in activities considered socially unacceptable but are rewarded with media promotion.

Loss of skills

Also where migration results from economic and other social factors there is a consequent loss of skills available to the country. Often times economic support is remitted to remaining family members here but this cannot compensate for the lack of supervision of children and the psychological and emotional deprivation which they suffer.

Rural-urban migration also robs rural areas of skills, leads to further overcrowding and the development of frustration. Criminal activity, drug use and trafficking and prostitution are the usual results of these developments.

These factors encourage an increase in domestic violence which has been noted since

1985. This is a result of traditional practices, economic pressures and increasing adverse living conditions.

The legal sanctions are ineffective and children are at risk and become victims of abuse, incest and involvement in child prostitution and pornography.

Marginalization of the elderly

Another undesirable factor is the increased marginalization of the elderly as increasing numbers of persons, particularly women lack services as they suffer a loss of financial independence, respect, love and social contact with others.

The other troubling situation is the incidence of street children, particularly boys, who are very vulnerable to accidents, violence, sexual and drug abuse.

Another undesirable factor is the increased marginalization of the elderly as increasing numbers of persons, particularly women lack services as they suffer a loss of financial independence, respect, love and social contact with others.

Coping strategies must address both the public and private spheres of life. There must be a public campaign to strengthen and rebuild the family base. The Family Life Education Curriculum

needs to be updated and made more relevant to the needs of students. The Change From Within project at schools should be expanded while Ministers of Religion should gear their services towards young people and assist in clarifying their values. The value of work must be taught in the homes and acceptable standards of behaviour communicated by words and deeds.

Compiled from synopses by Sandra Graham and notes provided by the IYF Committee.

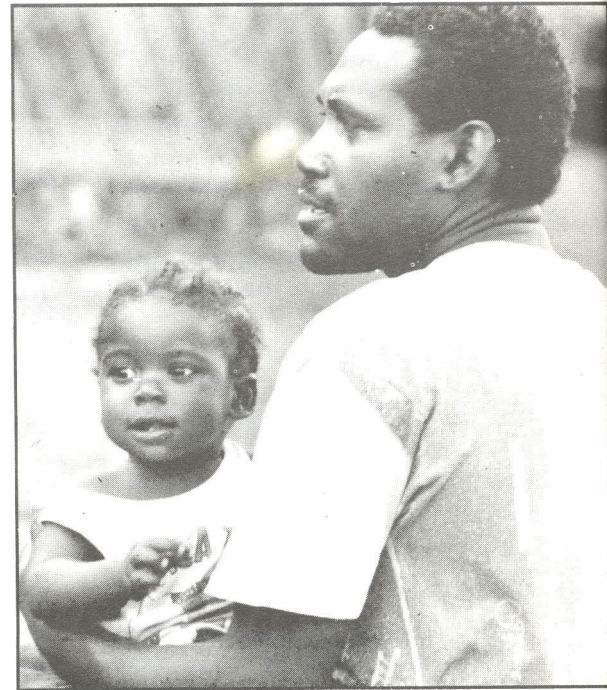


From I.W.T.C.

FAMILY :



The Chevannes family provides inspiration for many



Basking in her father's presence.

Many Forms



She feeds and grooms them daily...



Editor of Sistren magazine, Shirley Campbell sharing a quiet moment with daughter Anika.



Rastafari, Mr. Michael Lorne and his family represents a form which has many positive aspects especially as they relate to the father's role. A Rastafari father plays a dominant role in the household, particularly in relation to child rearing, the purchase and preparation of food, the education and discipline of the children. Perhaps we could learn from them.



HEALTH UPDATE

COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY TO PREVENTING AIDS

Increasingly abstinence, monogamy and consistent condom use are being promoted as the best means of preventing AIDS infection. These options are few and for many women the choices are even more limited.

Women's fidelity is no guarantee of safety. Preliminary studies from Africa suggest that more than 60 per cent of infected women have only one partner. While such studies have not yet been done in Jamaica indications are (from interviews) that some HIV positive women have had only one partner for a number of years.

While condoms may be the most practical method available, persuading men to wear them is not, for most women an easy task; particularly poor, uneducated women who rely on men for economic security.

These women are likely to be accused of infidelity if they try to convince their partners and may even risk physical abuse.

Risk factors

Refusing to have sex may have the same result as well as increase a woman's risk if her partner turns to other sexual partners and then insist on resuming sex with her.

With limited options for prevention as well as the biological and social risk factors which women face they are becoming infected in increasing numbers and are at greater risk of HIV infection than any other group.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that by the year 2000, 13 million women will be infected and 4 million will have died from the HIV virus. In Jamaica the dangerous belief that sex with a virgin will cure sexually transmitted diseases persists among some men and puts young girls at greater risk as they are likely to be targeted by men who have the disease. Also persons with STDs are more likely to have HIV because they are practicing unsafe sex and STDs which may cause irritations enable HIV to more easily enter the body.

In addition women are more prone to have an HIV infection because sexual transmission of the virus is more efficient from men to women than from women to men. In addition women are more likely to have untreated STDs that facilitates HIV transmission because women with STDs often have no symptoms.

Based on the limitations of the prevention options it has been

argued that targeting women will be ineffective without first improving women's economic and social status.

A lot can be done now

At the same time that the issue of development is being pursued however, there is a lot that can be done now. Women with one partner must realize that they are also at risk, men must realize that they can bring HIV home. Both partners must therefore seriously consider condom use.

In this process communication is key- between men and women and parents and children. It is the most important AIDS prevention measure. Wendy Roseberry, STD/HIV Strategy Coordinator for Africa and the World Bank had this to say, "We have to start talking about respect and love and equality, in addition to reproductive health, family planning and disease prevention,".

Communication between parents and children is difficult but necessary. Parents may often feel uncomfortable talking about sex with their children because they fear that they will be encouraged to become sexually active at an early age. But communication about sex can actually help delay sexual

Continued on page 24

HEALTH UPDATE

continued from page 22

initiation and improve young people's ability to protect themselves from HIV. Parents who discuss sex with their children can also become role models by encouraging more open communication between partners in the next generation.

Condensed from News Release
from Berl Francis & Co. Ltd.



Joan in retrospect... "I would never cry again."

by Verna Lee Davis-Daly

The downstairs clock chimed softly to the first stanza of "The Blue Danube", bong... bong... bong, three a.m. and Joan lay wide awake. The air-conditioner hummed softly and George breathed steadily and deeply beside her, his leg thrown carelessly across her.

"I don't know how I managed to stay alive this long, with this big six foot plus man throwing his massive, long legs over me every night for the past 15 years. Thank God! He does not snore. Strange how everything can be quiet at this time of morning. Sounds that you disregard in the daytime now become magnified, almost overwhelming. It is said that more babies are born at this time and more people die also.

The witching hour, yes, when your memories, real or imagined, come to the fore.

"I have noticed that for the past few months, I have been waking up at this hour despite the sleeping pills that I take before retiring at nights. Being awake is one thing, but those memories that keep coming at me, I just can't understand. Why now? I thought that I had forgotten those things, I had tucked them away nicely, in my mind, out of reach. So I thought.

"It was my fourteenth birthday, and of course Mummy had to have a party. All my friends from the neighbourhood were there, plus a few of my class mates, and family of course. But... there was this extremely handsome boy standing all by himself. He looked different, his clothes were not like

ours, they were very fashionable, his whole look was just different. He looked great..., but who was he?

"Your cousin, Joan", was the reply that I got from Daddy. He was the son of Daddy's oldest brother, the "black sheep" of the family. He went away to America for many years, never wrote anyone and never came home until now. He was sick, cancer, I think and he wanted to see Daddy and the others before he died.

He also wanted his son Robert, his only child, to know his relatives. So there he was, my American cousin, dashing and worldly looking. We were introduced, and he seemed to like me right off the bat, so we danced and had fun at the party, with Mummy and Daddy hovering in the corner of the room. He was fun to be with, and he could charm the scales of a cobra. A gentleman at the age of 16. So courteous, and considerate, my cousin. I was the envy of my girlfriends. Yes, he was all of those, loving and convincing.

continued on page 24

Joan in retrospect...

continued from page 23

Before the three weeks that he and his father were spending were up, my cousin and I became lovers in secret.

"It was not wrong", he convinced me. "We were cousins, it's O.K., no one will ever find out." I was so vulnerable and in love with my American cousin, my first love.

I can still see the look on Mummy's face when the doctor sat on the edge of my bed and told her that I was pregnant. That moment was void of sound, it was so still and heavy that it seemed you could reach out and touch it.

Time came for him to return to America and my heart was broken, but I could not let it show. He would come back for me when he was 18, had a job, and his own apartment. We would marry in America, no one would know that we were cousins, then we would run off to Paris and be lovers all our lives. Oh, boy! The folly of youth.

Six weeks after our little secret had started, it ended. I became very ill at breakfast one morning. Every ounce of it came right back up on my plate. I was a disgrace. I can still see the look on Mummy's face when the doctor sat on the edge of my bed and told her that I was pregnant. That moment was void of sound, it was so still and heavy that it seemed you could reach out and touch it. Mummy was too quiet, and

Daddy took it too well. Something was wrong, but they worked together and anything one said the other agreed with it. They had a plan for me, what it was, I did not know. I wrote to Robert, and my letter came back "Return to sender". I cried until my eyes were sore and red. Until then, I had not cried as I was convinced that Robert was sure to send for me sooner than we had planned, now that I was pregnant. No disgrace would come to the family. My bubble burst and I came to earth. One year away from G.C.E. and pregnant... for my cousin.

"I continued with my schooling under the watchful eyes of Miss Tingle our Head Mistress, Mummy's old school mate, and a friend of the family. I was sure that everyone knew that I was pregnant, so I became very withdrawn, and studied extra hard. Before you knew it I was six months pregnant, but it did not show as I was a plump girl and Mummy was ever present, every morning with her long line girdle. It was a bit uncomfortable but the loose tunic that I wore as uniform helped to conceal the "growing" condition. The physical education (p.e.) teacher was told that I hurt my back in a fall, so I was excused from p. e. classes. In short my life became a carefully weaved web of lies.

"At the end of the seventh month I stopped attending school, with the excuse that my back was getting worse and I needed bed rest. It was however a month from summer holidays, and I was allowed to do my G.C.E exams at home, under the piercing eyes of Miss Tingle.

Bong... bong... bong... bong... Oh boy, four o'clock and I am still awake. I am going to have to put

some cucumber slices on my eyes later this morning. All this lack of sleep is sure to tell on me. I have been sleeping for only three hours a night these past few weeks. I suppose that I am just going to have to allow these memories to run their course. But how will I know when that time has come?

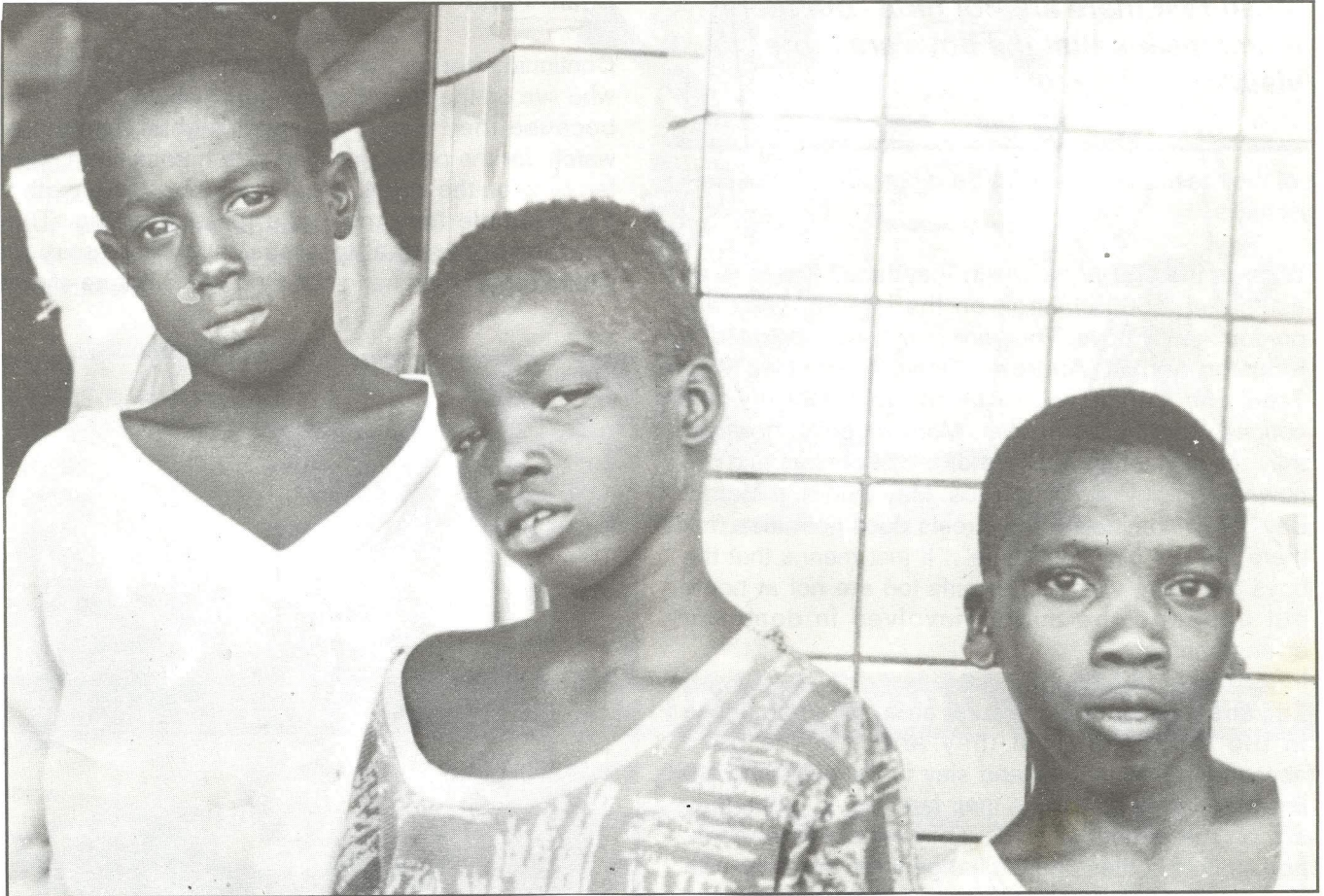
"The baby was born the second week in August. It was a cool evening as it had rained the night before and early in the morning. God must have been sorry for me in my pain and fear. I bore the pain well, not a cry of anguish, I had no right. I had sinned beyond comprehension, and so I must bear my punishment. The baby was born at 5:30 p.m. A faint cry was heard.

"It's a girl", said Dr. Jones. She was wrapped in my pink blanket (the one that I used as a baby) and taken away. All I saw were five tiny fingers grasping the air as she cried heartily, almost angrily. I heard voices in the passage. "She is so beautiful." "Thank you, Mrs. Bryce." A woman and a man, voices that were unfamiliar to me. My baby was given away like a puppy. There were no tears left to cry. The nine months of courteous existence, and silent anguish had sucked the very sinews from my bones, my soul was empty and parched.

Nothing in this world could make me cry again. I would never cry again. I must always be in charge of my life. I would never love again. I, and only I, must be in charge of my life and my emotions.

Verna lee Davis-Daly is the Founder/Director of F.O.R.T.Y a human relations Company for the maturing woman.

DROP-IN CENTRE COMING FOR STREET BOYS



Posing for the camera, 'these street boys' hang out in Half-Way-Tree

The question of how to help street children is being raised by several concerned individuals and organisations. "It is difficult to implement a programme because they are so transient, you see them this week and they disappear next week. You need to understand the culture of the street." This is the view of Ms. Dian McIntosh, Director of the Child Support Unit in the Ministry of Local Government, Youth and Sports as expressed in a recent interview with **Sistren**.

It is also the reason she is now working with six non-governmental organisations and members of the private sector to set up a Drop-in-Centre for street children. They call themselves an Ad-hoc Steering Committee which has representatives of the Ministry, the six organisations, UNICEF and is facilitated by lawyer and humanitarian Howard Hamilton.

The organisations are LEAP, YMCA (Kingston), Save the Children Fund, U.K. (St. Catherine and St. James), His Wings Mission, Helen Ann Brown (St. Ann), and New Beginning (Hanover) a church based group. They all work with street children now but do not have the contact for continuity as most programmes are residential - anathema to street children.

Weekend Retreat

They are also planning to revamp the YWCA Camp Hamilton in St. Catherine to be used as a retreat for week-end counselling and also to train a core of Street Educators.

At the moment the six organisations are networking to increase the efficiency and effectiveness

continued on page 26

STREET BOYS...

(continued from page 25)

Boys dominating the streets does not mean that there are not girls "out there". It just means that the boys are more visible.

of their resources as well as strengthen their specialist skills.

What is the challenge which they face? There is an estimated 2,500 children on the streets. They are predominantly boys. They are mainly concentrated in Kingston and St. Andrew - Down Town, Half Way Tree and Liguanea. In Montego Bay they are concentrated in the market. More recently, however they are appearing in all major urban centres and are now very visible in Ocho Rios, May Pen and Morant Bay. Boys dominating the streets does not mean that there are not girls "out there". It just means that the boys are more visible. The girls too are not at home but appear to be mainly involved in domestic arrangements.

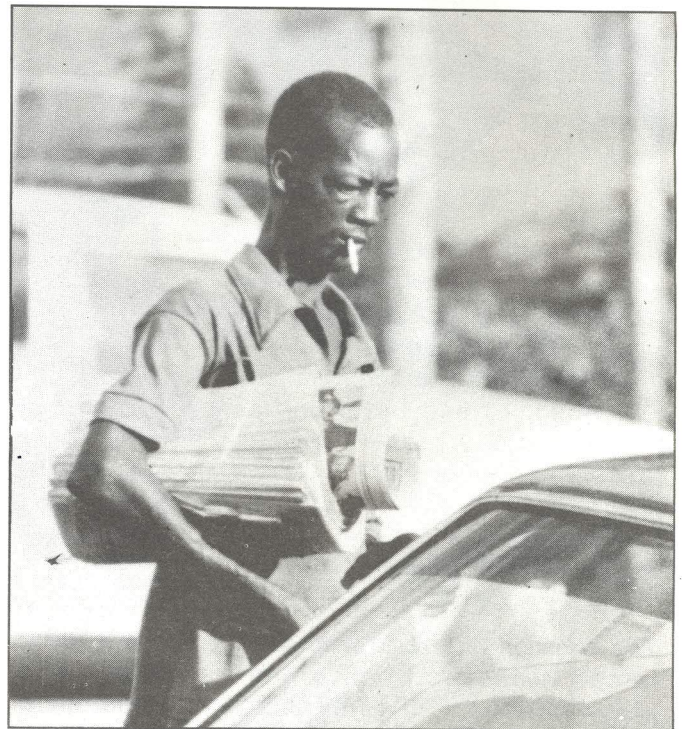
The street children in the rural area differ from those in the urban. In rural they are likely to have absconded from school and stay in the bush and are linked to farms as well as their families. In urban they are on the streets to work. They wipe windscreens, beg, collect bottles and exchange them and help with trading. Only about 20 percent of them actually live on the streets. The majority go home at the end of the day.

Several are helping to support their biological families. For example there are those who beg after school, then purchase food which they take home to feed other family members at the end of the day. There are others who spend most of their time on the streets but go home periodically to visit and give something to their grannies.

"Often they suffer severe trauma, cuts, stabs and fight for spaces. She recalls the incident of two fighting for an old fridge which one had designated home, they sleep under bridges.

In Spanish Town the street children mainly work and are connected with family members. Several of those who hang out in Coronation Market came in from rural on the market trucks and stay. They lift loads, push carts etc. until they migrate uptown.

Continuing her sad story Ms. McIntosh said, "Those who live on the streets come out at about 11-12 noon because they do not sleep at nights. They keep watch, for the police, for men who harass them. Their family is on the street, they take care of one another. For example they may take turns sleeping. They operate in designated areas, avoiding locations where bigger men hang out. Due to the nature of their



If we fail to rescue them now they will remain on the street and grow into young adults

existence they see a lot. They are exposed to drugs and underground criminal activity.

"Often they suffer severe trauma, cuts, stabs and fight for spaces. She recalls the incident of two fighting for an old fridge which one had designated home, they sleep under bridges.

Distrust for Institutions

"Their distrust for institutions is deep. Sometimes they are prepared to develop some continuity with

BARREL CHILDREN...

(continue from page 17)

population on the importance of continuous parenting.

Teaching the nation of the importance of the psychological development of the child and the implications of leaving children without parents for extended periods of time should be an essential component of parenting education.

RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR



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Respec due...

Once upon a time

by Janice Scott-Walker

Fe me father is a story teller, an when im belly full, get ready cause here cums a "When me was a bwoy story."

One story mi member most is how him an him lickle bredda a come from school and de district constable ole dawg start fe bark after dem. Mi father sey him just reach fi a stone and fling it lick the poor dawg. De dawg get mad an bark louda and louda and so him bark after dem, so dem bark afta im. De two a dem so busy a bark after de dawg dat dem neva se the owna fi de dog walk up backa dem.

Well to cut a long story short D.C. Wellington drop him baton and beat de two a dem with him bare han. If dat neva enough, him hold dem by dem colla and drag dem to dem yard. Him tell dem mother (mi granny), an mi (very embarassed) granny mek dem apologize. An as soon as de D.C. tun im back mi granny give dem one more licking.

Accordin to me father, de lick dem did hot, but de worse ting was dat dem embarass dem parents, an people might tink dem have no brought-upsy.

Now is 1994... an wha happen!

Any how yu talk too hard tc nobody pickney, much less try an put yu han pan dem de parents dem likely fe give you a good tongue lashing an tell dem pickney fi lick you back. If dat is all yu get thank God and walk fast, betta yet run. Who knows, dem migh even shoot you.

My granny tell me say, parents alone can't grow pickney, but now a days it seems as if pickney a grow parents.

Once upon a time if yu was a teacher, nurse or policeman everybady respec yu, pickney would stop doing wrong when dem see yu comin. Today dung to de teacher dema get flogging from parents. De nurse dem fraid fi wuk de night shif cause dem is as good a victim as anybody else, an as fi de police, we call dem Beast, Five - O, Babylon, Peter Red and Peter Blue, everything except police.

De days when yu call big people Massa or Missis, Uncle or Auntie gone, gone. A ting of de pass. Me believe sey de root of de problem is in de home. If pickney nah respec dem mother, how in heaven's name dem going to respect anybody else.

If dis a de way we a grow de pickney dem, only God one can help de nex generation.

Jus imagine how tings would a nice, nice if each family teach dem lickle pickney dat big people deserve respec. Just imagine if parents do more dan talk an actually show dem pickney how fi behave. Just imagine if everyone treat people de way dem deserve to be treated; Lawd have mercy! Jamaica would a nice yu see. One big happy family.



MARSON...

Her Isolation



by Honor Ford-Smith

It is precisely this isolation that undercuts her voice, makes her falter where she might be firm and clear, makes her lonely where she could be the visioned outsider. Again and again Marson's poetry expresses loneliness, loss and sadness, very different from the activism and fast paced dynamism she lives until 39.

"We have known the heights together.

I have known the depths alone
We have joined in merry laughter
But the tears have been my
own...

Ah to reason thus, how selfish
Hast thou not thy vale of tears
And they hidden depths of
anguish
Through the ever lengthening
years?

Yet we linger on the hill tops
And we part as we descend
Strengthened thus to seek the
valley
All alone without a friend.
Ah the heights grow still more

lofty
Since we too go hand in hand
But alone the depths grow deeper
Yet we seem to understand.

"There are words too sad for
sounding
There are thoughts too deep for
speech
But no heights too high for
climbing
And no depths too low to reach."
['Heights and depths':p.38,
Heights and Depths 1931]

"O heart what need is this that all
earth's balm

continued on page 30

MARSON . . .

(continued from page 29)

cannot assuage? What is this
mighty boon
That thou wouldst have to bring
thee perfect calm."

[*'Reasoning': p.84, Heights and
Depths, 1931*]

Where her work expresses
bottomless need, frustrated
desire, it is also suffused with
unexpressed anger "like a
smoldering fire". Yet each time
she is on the verge of expressing
anger she squelches it with
spiritual resignation of christian
charity.

"I am afraid of that which lies
within
My very soul and like a
smoldering fire
Seems on the verge of bursting
into flame
And so consume my very being's
might.
I try to fathom what the urge may
be,
and sometimes it reveals its
presence there
Like fluttering of the tiny wings
that grow
Upon the fledgling and with which
it soars
To heights in later years.

And can it be
That this vague consciousness
within my soul
Is but the fain forecast that
someday
This young and humble lover of
all things
May gladly give onto the world
she loves
In no uncertain or enfeebled
notes
Some little gift her heart doth long
to give

some gift in love that will not die
with her?"

[*'Perhaps': p90, Heights and
Depths, 1931*]

From Pain to Spiritual Gift Giving

It is this leap from pain to spiritual
gift-giving which leaves a void in
her work; that makes it feel
incomplete as if a resolution had
been artificially forced. It is also
these responses which lock her
into what Carolyn Heilbrun
describes as a tradition of female
autobiographic writing that finds
beauty in suffering and replaces
pain with spiritual transcendence
[Heilbrun, 1989]. Missing is the
expression of anger which would
allow her the self and social
insight to identify her needs, see
them as legitimate and work
toward creating safety for herself
by trying to unite them. Her work
is more successful where she
comes closer to the expression of
that anger as in **Kinky Haired
Blues**. It is in her suppressed
anger that we find the reason for
her inability to find the form
appropriate to the age. She is
thus forced to borrow from where
she should invent and to take
refuge in conventions which
undercut the mission she had
begun to destroy those
conventions. But even with the
limits of her strengths laid bare,
she nonetheless succeeds where
she might have failed, because
her failure itself draws attention to
what women writers most need
and what they must beware.

Pacomania, Marson's most
successful yet most problematic

work, is the best example of the
problem. The play, which is
autobiographical on one level,
can be interpreted as the struggle
of a Black middle class woman to
reclaim her African connections
and free herself from the
repressiveness of colonial
society.

Stella the daughter of a widowed
baptist deacon by the name of
Manners, as a child of eight
gathers the children together in
the moonlit bedroom to listen to
the pukumina drums. When she
starts to move to the rhythm she
passes out. Years later a grown-
up Stella, dissatisfied with the
tedious conventional existence of
the rural middle class, described
as "bored to tears", "fast" and
"strange", is drawn again to the
drums, much to the chargin of her
father and other church officials
who are trying to rid the area of
the supposed satanic influence of
the cult. Stella, who not only lost
her mother but also loses her
lover to pneumonia, seeks
healing in the pukumina ritual.
Sister Kate, the local leader of the
group, is in conflict with the
Baptist church officials who try to
expel her from the church.
Portrayed as a warm motherly
figure fund of Stella, Sister Kate
remains out of reach not only
because of the church but
because she does not approve of
middle-class people dabbling in
such matters. Stella continues
her attempt to join in the rite,
sneaking off to meetings. But
each time she attempts to move
to the rhythm of the drums, she
collapses. Soon Sister Kate dies
and the resolution of the conflict
is carried by Stella's new suitor, a
super hero by the name of David.
David understands her need for
"institutions which glorify the
ego", to rescue her from her
collapses. Through him Stella is
able to see that while the drums

may be potent, the behaviour of the lower classes involved is not romantic as she had once thought. While Sister Kate might have been warm and kind, the behaviour of others is often nothing more than drunk and disorderly.

The Contradiction facing Middle-class Black Jamaican Women

Through the play, Marson strikes at the heart of the contradiction facing middle-class Black Jamaican women of her time: the desire on the one hand to belong within African culture as it has been reconstructed in the colonized island, to express spontaneously pain and happiness and on the other hand the need to conform to the reality of middle-class social organization; the contradiction between the desire to "spress yuhself widdouten noting happen" and the need to be contained. It is in this sense that her narrative is especially important. It is a theme that Merle Hodge and Erna Brodber have picked up and treated in later work. Brodber resolves the fragmentation of the self by the colonizing experience by integrating the persona along a kind of continuum resonating with dual meanings and an ambiguity which allows for psychological maronage. Marson has no such option. Located within a colonial historical moment, her vision opposes feeling to intellect and spontaneity to manners. One side of the dichotomy has to win.

In the next Issue we explore which side wins.

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# **SOME LAWS WHICH BENEFIT THE FAMILY**

### **Maternity Leave Law**

A woman who has been employed in the same place for 52 weeks or more is entitled to a minimum of 3 months (12 weeks) maternity leave with 8 of these weeks paid. If necessary she is also entitled to an additional 14 weeks (usually on the advise of a doctor). She has the right to return to work and suffers no demotion, no cut in pension or superannuation. It is assumed that her employment is continuous. This is guaranteed for a maximum of three pregnancies. (1976)

### **The Status of Children Act**

Addresses the status of the child born out of wedlock. The Act abolishes bastardy. Prior to this if a father died and left a Will which refers only to children (or without a Will - Intestate) only his children born in marriage benefited. This Act allows children born out of wedlock to be given the same rights as children born in the marriage. (1976)

### **The Affiliation and Maintenance Acts**

Both Acts provide for the maintenance of children; for action to be taken to compel a man to take care of his children. The Affiliation Act addresses children born out of wedlock and the Maintenance Act, those born to married couples. However it should be noted that both Acts state that if men fail in their obligation then the woman is to maintain their children (and children's children if necessary), thus putting the burden for provision of child care on women.

### **Matrimonial Property**

Where property is registered in the name of the spouse who has not contributed towards the purchase price, the Court may assume that the property was a gift made to the spouse.

If there are problems identifying that the property is a gift, then the contributions made indirectly (e.g. housekeeping) or directly (e.g. time, labour and money) by the

continued on page 33

Nettleford and Mervyn Alleyne to students in secondary schools so that they can be more than a legend to them. In between being a language (Spanish and French) teacher at Immaculate High School and this job at the University, Jean has done many things; as writer, actress and director. During one of these stints she worked with Sistren when Honor Ford-Smith, then Artistic Director was on leave (1979-80). With her usual innovative self Jean brought Sistren to a new and exciting level. For six months she worked assiduously with the members to produce "Nana Ya" - (Heroine Nanny is still here). Back then Jean was very interested in exploring spaces in theatre and so they rehearsed at Devon House where a new theatre space was being developed. It was perfect. It was particularly suitable for the theme; the Great House in the background, the big tree which conveyed the mystique of the Cotton tree and the beautiful lawns. "It was Sistren's first historical piece.

All of their previous work was about themselves and their lives. And it was difficult because I was not getting the creativity I needed and so I had to compensate. It was a tremendous challenge. I had to be teacher as well as improvisatory. I taught about Africa, slavery, the different forms of resistance. I took them to the Institute of Jamaica. We read books, viewed films, studied the style and fashions of the period. I had to put myself on the stage, copy the players and their reaction. "I learnt a lot in the process; about theatre and working with people from the

grassroots. To work with people in a context where they need additional information. In plays such as DOWNPRESSION they had the information, they were excellent. "While I was at Sistren I was teaching at Immaculate and working at the School of Drama.

We started an education project at Immaculate with Sistren and it spread to Wolmers, St. Hughs, Portmore Secondary, Content Gap and Stony Hill. This project focussed on audience participation; after the performances we had discussions with the audiences with the objective of sensitizing them to the issues raised in the plays."

Commenting on Sistren's current position, Jean said, "I am somewhat disappointed. For me Sistren started out with a mission to sensitize women and people like themselves. To play an educational and socializing role. Instead they have performed mainly to uptown audiences. To me, they are speaking to the already converted. This was grassroots women on stage. This was not pure theatre but POLITICS. Performing where they did was, to me, not a political act.

"Sistren really represented 13 women who have grown, who sought to perfect their art but they also were exploited by educated white skinned women. It was an experiment which poured into their creative work. The process caused a change (I am not saying this is a bad thing). Sistren's members were sent to English, drama and dance classes; their earnings increased, they dressed

differently, moved out of their areas, some went international, they wanted their children to have better educations, money has become a central issue. At the same time some people's commitment also changed. Now several have disappeared into other jobs.

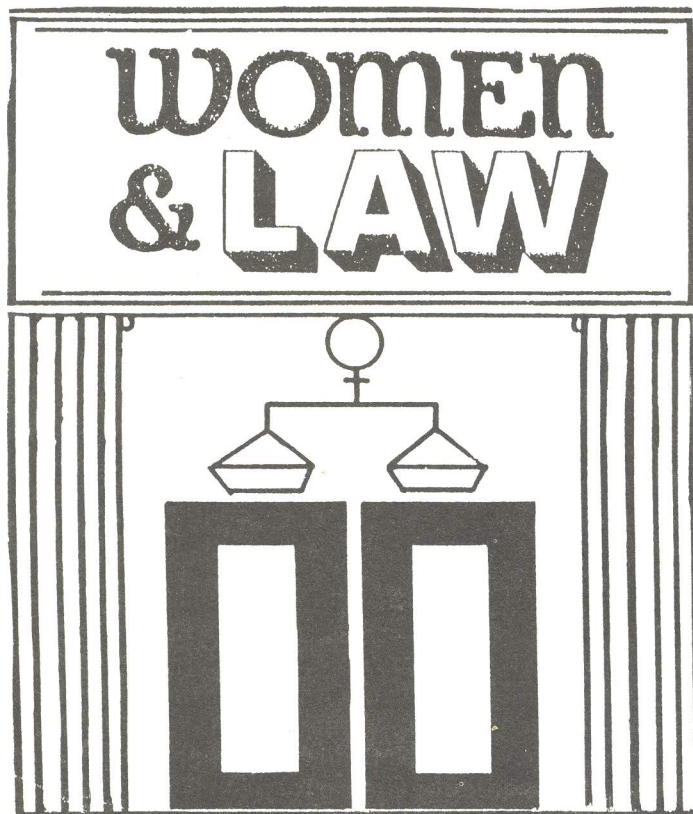
"The original mission seems not to be there anymore. The ladies who led in the early days did not leave Sistren's members with the organisational skills they need - so some problems remain and the early leaders are gone.

"There are some other concerns which I have. Most of Sistren's major productions have been directed by men - a negation about women speaking for themselves. It means therefore that those skills, for example, directing, have not been as developed as they could be.

Overall the quality of the product has also changed as Sistren moved more into the format of small workshops. Textile for example, needs to grow in design and style. There was a time when Sistren had a distinctive textile design style. The political/educational change needed to make the impact is not there. Sistren has recognized that in order to adequately discuss women's issues they need to involve men; to overcome certain limitations with working with all women. This new thrust is on the positive side and is reflected in members now wanting to have men in productions.

I am always happy to work with Sistren and my interaction with them is always enlightening and educational. One thing I think they need now is an Artistic Director who has commitment

*continued on page 34*



contributing spouse would mean she would acquire interest proportionate to the contributions she made.

Where it can be proven that the parties contributed equally then they would be given equal shares.

One may also claim an interest in the property where it can be proven that one spouse assumed other expenses in the household to enable the other to pay the mortgage.

Generally the Courts tend to allocate interest in matrimonial property based on percentage contribution as against a half share interest.

For the common law spouse, where the property is in the names of both parties the

assumption would be that it was intended as a gift to her otherwise she has to establish that she contributed time and effort to raising the children etc to her loss on the understanding that the matrimonial properties acquired whether jointly or severally would be for the equal benefit of both parties.

### **Citizenship:**

The Constitution provided for children to automatically assume the nationality of their fathers except where the couple is unmarried, then children are entitled to their mother's nationality. Also if children are born in Jamaica (except the child of a diplomat) such a child is automatically Jamaican... Now persons born outside of Jamaica with one parent being Jamaican - is automatically entitled to

Jamaican citizenship. Previously a child born abroad in wedlock to a Jamaican mother and a non-Jamaican father could not be declared a Jamaican citizen until that child returned to Jamaica and habitually resided here for 5 years prior to applying for citizenship under the Nationality Act. This provision was particularly trouble some because being non-Jamaican means you have to get a work permit to work here and non-Jamaicans, for example, do not qualify for student loans which might impact on your ability to get tertiary level education.

### **The Children (Custody and Guardianship) Act**

Each parent has equal authority over the child. Either parent can also appoint a guardian of the child by his or her Will.

The natural mother or father or a guardian may apply to the court for custody of the child, and the court in giving custody to one may give access to the other. Main consideration is what constitutes the best interest of the child. An application for custody can be made to the Family Court or to the Resident Magistrates Court.

The Court rarely denies the natural parents custody, but where they have been negligent the court may consider it. Based on experience mothers appear to be favoured over fathers for children under 10 years and for girls.

The Court will consider the behaviour of the parent and how it affects the welfare of the child and the Court seeks to avoid

continued on page 34

# SOME LAWS

(continued from page 33)

dramatic changes in the child's environment

The Court may rule on behalf of a parent or guardian or anyone responsible for maintaining the child, that the child be produced where a parent kidnaps, conceals or denies access to the other party.

Where the parent has abandoned or deserted the child or allowed the child to be brought up by another person and the Court is convinced that the parent was negligent they will not order the child to be delivered to the parent unless satisfied that the parent is a fit person to have custody.

The Court will also seek to ensure that the child is kept in a manner to which he or she is accustomed

## Custody orders

**Exclusive Order:** One parent is given complete custody with or without obligations of maintenance and access to the

other parent. The parties usually reach a mutual agreement.

**Joint Order:** Usually where there is a guardian. The surviving parent and the guardian are given joint custody with care and control to the parent and access to the guardian. When joint custody is given to parents the Court is usually convinced that they are capable of cooperating.

**Split or Divided order.** It may provide for exclusive custody or joint custody with care or control to be altered between the parties and the obligations of maintenance shared.

## Married Women Property Act

In relation to common-law marriages the Act provides that if you have lived continuously with someone for 5 years the court sees the children in the same light as someone legally married when it concerns the division of property.

## Family Court

Deals with family matters. Proceedings are not open to the public. It seeks to protect children mainly in cases of maintenance and custody. The Court was established in 1978.

## Domestic Violence

Protection is primarily provided by the Offences against the Person Act and the Matrimonial Causes Act. In a Resident Magistrates Court (one for each parish; deals with matters occurring in the parish or one mile outside the parish; cannot impose fines over a certain limit) sentence of two months or a fine of \$10 may be imposed. The High Courts deal with more serious cases of assault which may be tried upon indictment (written accusation - technical in form) in which case the maximum sentence would be one year for common assault, and three years for assault occasioning actual bodily harm.

Special Provision - Section 40 of the Offences against the Person Act. If the Court is convinced that the punishment of imprisonment for two months and a fine of J\$10 is not enough a sentence of imprisonment not exceeding 6 months with or without hard labour may be imposed. The offender must also be bound over (must do nothing to appear in court) for 6 months to keep the peace and be of good behaviour at the expiration of the sentence.

Laws concerning Sexual assault, See Sistren Vol #15 Nos. 1 & 2

*Compiled from articles and papers provided by Jennes Anderson Corporate lawyer for the Gleaner Co. of Jamaica Ltd.*

## Profile ... (continued from page 32)

and a sense of history.

Originally from Guyana, Jean is committed to exploring the folk form of the Caribbean; to devising an aesthetic for Caribbean theatre. As actress, Jean is perhaps best remembered for her role in **For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf** (1977) and more recently for her one woman performance **A Black Woman's Tale**. Sistren welcomes her support.

# INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY 1994



*Mrs. Pauline Knight, Chairperson of the National Coordinating Committee for the IYF addressing participants at the regional consultation to develop a National Family Policy, held recently in Port Antonio.*

In 1993 a National Coordinating Committee was set up by the Ministry of Local Government, Youth and Sports to coordinate activities aimed at improving family life. The International Year of the Family (IYF) Committee was therefore formed and chaired by Mrs. Pauline Knight of the Planning Institute of Jamaica. Other members comprised government staff working in policy making agencies and social services, representatives of non-governmental organisations and the private sector. The Committee was originally coordinated by the Rev. Marjorie Lewis-Cooper who was recently superseded by Imani Tafari-Ama. Patrons of the IYF are the Governor General Sir Howard Cooke and Lady Cooke.

## **Mandate**

The Committee has as its mandate the United Nations

General Assembly proclamation of 1994 concerning the Family. Nineteen Ninety Four was designated the IYF with the objective of stimulating local, national and international action with the long term goal of sustaining efforts to:-

- Increase awareness of family issues among governments as well as the private sector;
- Strengthen national institutions to formulate, implement and monitor policies in respect of families;
- Stimulate efforts to respond to problems affecting and affected by the situation of families;
- Enhance the effectiveness of local, national and regional efforts to carry out specific programmes concerning families;

- Improve the collaboration between national and international organisations in support of multi-sectoral activities;

- Build upon the results of international activities concerning women, children, youth, the aged and the disabled, as well as other major events of concern to the family or its individual members.

## **Sub-committees**

The IYF Committee has been undertaking several measures to achieve these objectives. Sub-Committees on Publicity and Public Relations, Research and Policy Formulation, Socio-economic Projects and Fund Raising have been set up. They have the mandate of focussing on and integrating their activities

*continued on page 36*

# INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY

(continued from page 35)

into those planned to mark the Year's.

Participatory activities such as summer camps, family fun days, seminars dealing with general discussion on family issues, training of family counsellors, mediation training to help reduce the pressure on the courts, and training in parenting are some of the ways in which the Committee has been fulfilling its mandate.

Discussions concerning the family are also being taken to rural and urban centres around the country: Consultations have been taking place in Montego Bay which involve people from Westmoreland, Hanover, St. James and Trelawny; in Mandeville; involving participants from St. Elizabeth, St. Catherine, Clarendon and Manchester; and

in Portland consultations will include participants from St. Thomas, Kingston and St. Andrew, St. Mary, St. Ann and Portland.

In these consultations there is an overview of IYF activities against its objectives; the family in Jamaica; functions of the Family; case studies from St. Thomas and St. Ann on the integration of services and the make up of model families. The main objective of these discussions is to formulate a national family policy using the UN framework on the functions of the family and the role of different sectors in fulfilling these functions.

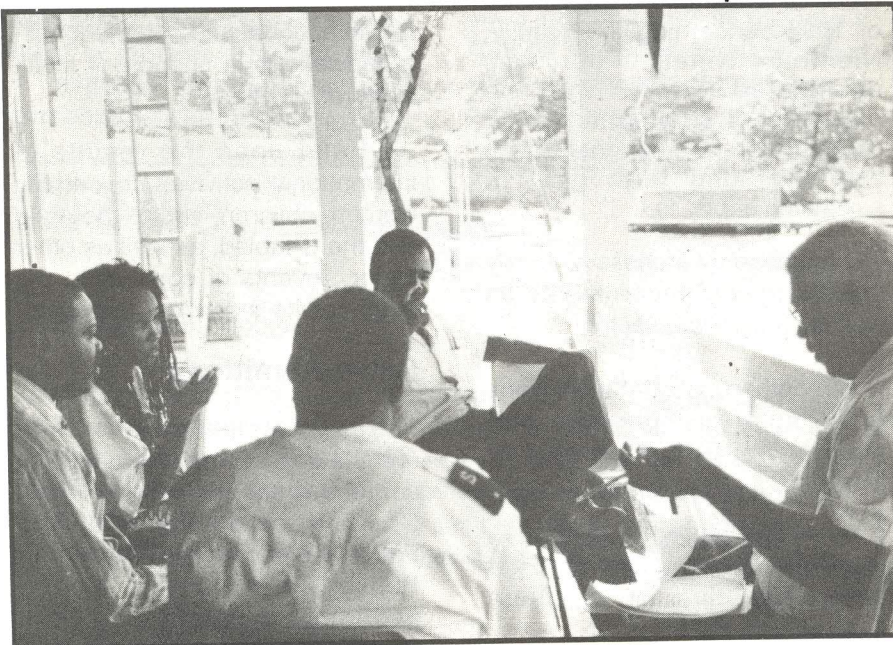
An evaluation and action plan concludes the consultation.

## Plans

The IYF works closely with a number of existing organisations to fulfill its mandate. There are plans for an Art and Literary competition with the Council for Voluntary Social Services (CVSS); collaboration with the National Values and Attitude Committee with a view to setting up sustainable projects promoting the family; fund raising "T" shirts projects with the Free Trade Zones; a Christmas dinner with model families hosted by IYF patrons and fund-raising efforts with UNICEF and the National Commercial Bank. The IYF Committee also works with the National Council on Drug Abuse and the mediation project for school children being sponsored by the Gleaner Company and other media houses.

They have also been responding to families in crisis by working with the Child Support Unit in the Ministry of Youth, the YMCA and the Ministry of Education's parenting programme among other groups. They are also considering joining the advocacy group which is seeking to have a Family Court established in every parish.

The electronic and print media have also been supportive of the Committee's efforts by broadcasting stringers on radio and facilitating radio and TV discussions. The Committee also plans to publish popular educational material on laws on the rights and responsibilities of marriage as well as divorce and to collaborate with the Institute of Social and Economic Research of the University of the West Indies for publication of an updated annotated bibliography on the Family in the Caribbean.



*Regional consultation: Participants from St. Ann, St. Mary, St. Thomas, Portland and Kingston and St. Andrew all participated in workshops.*

# FATHERS INC.

## promoting positive fatherhood

As a form of fundraising Fathers Inc. conduct workshops, and with Sistren Theatre Collective they have organised a number of workshops for Innerscity youths through the Kingston Restoration Centre (KRC).

In January 1991 the Caribbean Child Development Centre at the University of the West Indies sponsored a Conference on Parenting. There were several workshops one of which was called "Fathers Only". It was chaired by Dr. Barry Chevannes lecturer in the Department of Sociology. The discussion focused on the positive aspects of fathering and concluded that the situation with male parenting was more positive than the popular view in the society. Men were becoming more visible in their support for their families.

In an interview with **Sistren** Dr. Chevannes briefly outlined the activities and plans of Fathers Inc. The rapport and focusing which they achieved in the Workshop inspired these fathers to continue meeting. They met again in April of '91 under the same name, Fathers Only - at which time the name was changed to "Fathers Inc." as the name "Only" suggested some sort of exclusivity.

Their main objective was to promote a better image of fatherhood. Secondly they decided to undertake a project to promote the positive image of fathers. Since it was so close to Labour Day (May 23) they decided to visit the Glenhope Place of Safety where they became "FATHERS" for the day. On that day they introduced the sunshine into several little girls dark lives. The project has developed into each father adopting several of the girls. They visit them, remember their birthdays and when possible take them out on visits, Dr. Chevannes said.

Funding for the project was received from UNICEF in their first and second year. They are currently awaiting

funding to set up an office and employ an organiser. This is now considered

Some have also represented the organisation at conferences and work-



*Some members of Father Inc. proudly pose for the camera.*

an urgent task as the growth and development of the group is being held back for lack of a central place for operations.

Over 100 men have signed up for membership, but like most organisations in Jamaica only a small core remain active. It is the young men under 40 who are most active.

Through the use of animation techniques and training workshops the fathers are involved in motivating different communities into positive parenting. Members have been trained in issues such as sexuality, fatherhood and good economic management. The core of the programme has lost some members who, armed with their new skills, have relocated into rural communities where they have gained employment based mainly on their skills in animation.

shops overseas.

And don't think you cannot be a member, it is not confined to fathers. If you want to contact this organisation which is proving to be a part of the solution to family problems in Jamaica then please write to Dr. Barry Chevannes, Dept of Sociology, University of the West Indies, Mona Kingston 7 or Father's Inc., P.O. Box 589, Kingston 6.

Now you understand their desperate need for offices, to have a homebase from which they can reach out to all the fathers in Jamaica who are committed to projecting their real image as well as improving on their role where they are lacking.

*Compiled from an interview with Dr. Barry Chevannes of the Sociology Department of the University of the West Indies.*

# STREET BOYS

(continued from page26)

institutions/ individuals if they are allowed to come and go. If there is an open door policy then they might comply. This is a feature of the street personality. You cannot force them off the streets. They have to decide it is time to leave. Time to put some structure in their lives. This takes time and intense counselling because once they have enough for today the tendency is not to think about tomorrow.

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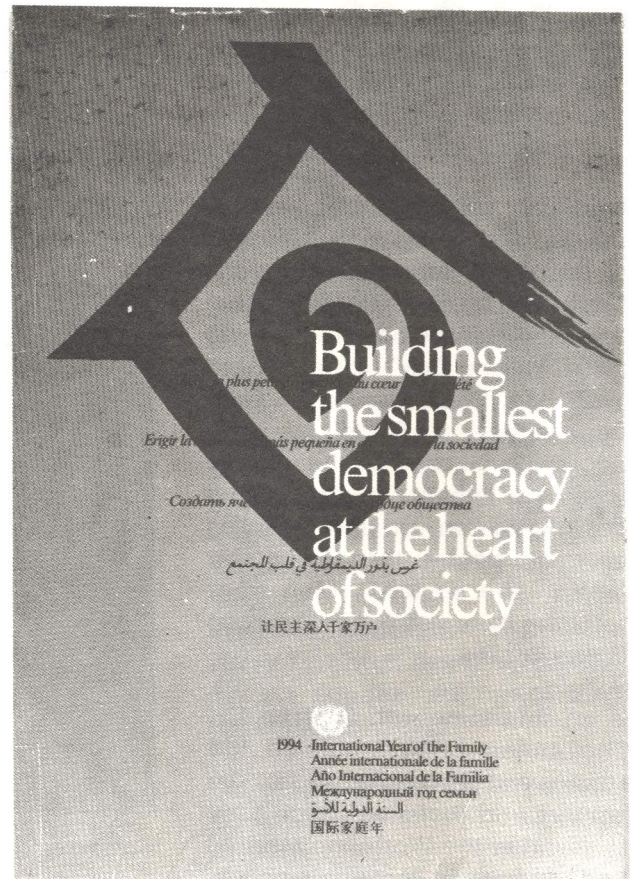
**They are also planning to revamp the YWCA Camp Hamilton in St. Catherine to be used as a retreat for week-end counselling and also to train a core of Street Educators.**

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“With counselling and the building of trust, they develop the ability to think about tomorrow - about where they are going. This is hard as they have a very limited attention span, perhaps 10 minutes. They operate intuitively. This skill is highly developed. Their relationships with people is based on this intuitive response. They must feel the “vibes” to deal with you. It is not surprising, as it is what keeps them alive on the streets.

Many want to be off the streets. To be back “home”; they want a place to eat and sleep (not necessarily home- a permanent residence). This is the reason for seeking to develop the Drop-in Centre; to introduce some stability and continuity in the lives of these children as a first step in developing more serious rehabilitation programmes.

Afterall, believe it or not the reasons most of them are on the street is not economic. It is the break down in family relationships; an inability to communicate with those in authority and sad to say the migration of mothers has added to.



*A heart sheltered by a roof, linked by another heart, to symbolize life and love in a home where one finds warmth, caring, security, togetherness, tolerance and acceptance -*

*that is the symbolism conveyed by the emblem on the International Year of The Family (IYF), 1994.*

*The open design is meant to indicate continuity with a hint of uncertainty. The brushstroke, with its open line roof, completes an abstract symbol representing the complexity of the family.*

# Trapped

by Takiema Bunche

I remember a time when I was 10 years old and I begged my mother for a perm. After six months of badgering, she finally gave in and I was elated. My first perming experience was with Gentle Treatment and I honestly couldn't tell you if the process was "Oh so gentle", but I can tell you that my excitement could not be suppressed. When she washed that perm out of my hair, it was as straight as it wanted to be. And below the shoulders at that ... I just knew I was the shit! My thoughts were confirmed the very next day when I walked into my fifth grade class and I gained friends in people who had never before given me the time of day.

And so began the cycle: every two months, straighten it (I know I'm cute); Uh oh, its starting to grow out (time to pull it back in one, or discover the joys of hats); Girl, you know just how nappy that kitchen back there can git!"; until once more. I. can. "manage". it. and. slick. it. back. and. look. more. "ACCEPTABLE".

Now I don't know if any sister can relate to my experience at all, but I'd be willing to bet that there's at least **one** who can. Since I've entered young adulthood, I've embarked on a journey to understand myself as a Black woman in a European-centered society. In doing this, I've tried to open my eyes and question my history, myself and those around me. When I look back on the girl I was at age 10, I see a young Black girl who ignored the post-perm burned scalp

she suffered from in order to conform to a standard of beauty which did not, and still does not include nappy, kinky, curly, regular Black folks hair.

Thinking that I was **all that** with a perm was the initial problem. Where it became magnified is the point at which at sixteen years old, I would not allow my head to be seen unless it was "together", meaning permed. I could not feel comfortable or attractive if my hair was not straight from roots to blow-curled ends. Now, I don't know about you, but, right now, the thought of depending on a jar of rotten-egg-smelling, burn-causing substance for me to feel beautiful about myself is a rather disconcerting idea.

The last time I permed my hair was September 22, 1991. After I did it, yes, I still felt cute, and people told me I looked good, especially a lot of white women. But after that, these annoying thoughts kept poppin into my head: "Why do you have these burns on your scalp? Why didn't they notice your beauty when your hair wasn't so straight? Why didn't **you** notice your beauty when your hair wasn't so straight?" ...and so forth and so on. Slowly but surely, I realized that I needed to come to terms with my nappy hair.

I have many a conversation with Sisters about hair. The general consensus seems to be "But, Takiema, you have GOOD HAIR. You can do anything you want with it..I can't put a comb through my natural hair!" (GOOD HAIR.. What?!!) And as you may already know, I've gone and done the unthinkable... I've locked my natural hair (otherwise know as dreadlocks. But note that a



*I'm so comfortable with myself says Takiema.*

"Dread" is a person who follows the religion of Rastafari and "locks" is their hair.) Now I've joined the ranks of sisters who can't put a comb through their natural hair, and can I tell you ... I have never felt better about myself (23 months, 11 days and counting, thank you!).

The point of this article is not to condemn or judge any Black woman's choice of how she wears her hair. Your hair is your own, and you can do with it what you will. I just want to share an inner reflection with you, my sisters, and to let you know where I am coming from and where I am. I've reached a level of peace and comfort with myself that I see many sisters around me struggling to find. I don't have the answer, and I doubt it lies within our hair. More empowering is the knowledge that we should be able to live with or without our locks, naturals, perms, weaves or crimps, and never be unsure of our beauty as Black women.

*The author of this piece is a student at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, USA. She resides in Brooklyn, New York. She spent four months studying women's issues and development theory here. She found that many of the same psychological chains of slavery which affect Black women in America also affect Jamaican women, such as the problem of hair.*

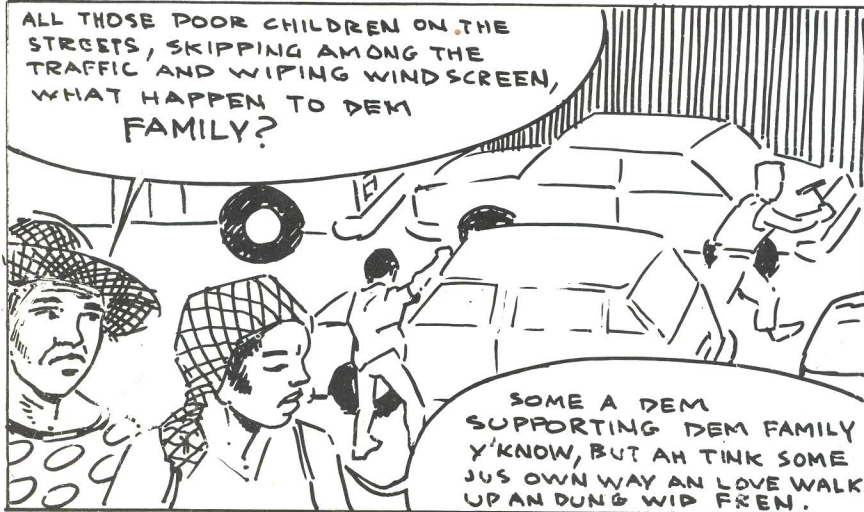


# SISTA ANSA AND GRANNY

# A CHAT BOUT... FAMILY



ALL THOSE POOR CHILDREN ON THE STREETS, SKIPPING AMONG THE TRAFFIC AND WIPING WINDSCREEN, WHAT HAPPEN TO DEM FAMILY?



SOME A DEM SUPPORTING DEM FAMILY Y'KNOW, BUT AH TINK SOME JUS OWN WAY AN LOVE WALK UP AN DUNG WID FREN.

I CAN REMEMBER HOW FAMILY USED TO LIVE...



...CHURCH SUNDAY MORNING, AN IN THE AFTERNOON DINNER AN TALK ANANCY AN DUPPY STORY.

BOY DEM DAYS DEH, AH WISH DEM COULD COME BACK!

GRANNY, TIMES GET HARDER. SOMETIMES NO MATTER HOW HARD YU WORK YU CAN'T BUY FOOD. TO KEEP UP, SOME LEAVE DI PICKNEY WID GRANNY WHO CAN HARDLY TEK CARE A DEM OWN SELF, AN GONE FOREIGN A CHASE U.S. DOLLAR.



WI MUS LOOK INTO OURSELVES TO SEE HOW WI CAN CHANGE THE SITUATION. FIRST WE MUST NOT HAVE CHILDREN UNLESS WE WANT THEM. NOW A DAYS EVEN BABY A HAVE BABY.

DEN AGAIN, A LOT A MAN JUS WANT A ONE NIGHT STAND; DEM NUH CARE BOUT FAMILY. AN A SO SOME A DI WOMAN DEM STAY TOO...



IS TRUE, AN IF TIME WASN'T SO HARD PARENTS WOULD A HAVE MORE TIME AND MONEY FI LOOK AFTER DEM PICKNEY...



DAT IS ALSO TRUE, BUT WE NEED MORE LOVE. WE NEED FI GO BACK TO DI OLE TIME DAYS WHEN THE BETTER OFF MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY USED TO HELP THOSE IN NEED. THE CITIZEN'S ASSOCIATION AND THE PTA HAVE TO PLAY A PART IN TEACHING PARENTING...



WE ALSO NEED PARENTS AND CHILDREN TO RESPECT ONE ANOTHER, AND WE NEED THE SOCIAL SERVICES TO GIVE FAMILY COUNSELLING SO YOUNG PEOPLE CAN LEARN TO COPE

