



# The CHACONIA

The TTAO Newsletter

June 2021

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## From the President's Pen

Adaptable, resilient, persistent and girded with fortitude are words best used to describe the members of the Executive, Education, Humanitarian and Social Committees of the Trinidad and Tobago Association of Ottawa (TTAO). They have all demonstrated that they are capable of responding to the rapidly changing environment that was and still is being created by the COVID-19 pandemic. In an earlier edition of this newsletter, I mentioned that the Executive and Committee meetings switched to the Zoom platform as early as April 2020, just a few weeks after we were no longer able to meet face-en-face.

The affairs of the TTAO continued to be conducted without a hiatus over the course of the pandemic. The Committees agreed that we could take the next step and fully embark on the new virtual world bandwagon. Planning went into high gear, and on Saturday, December 12, the TTAO welcomed guests to a Trini Christmas Evening, its first social event since the Republic Day Dinner Dance held in September 2019.

We were venturing into new territory. Even though we had been conducting our committee meetings via Zoom, hosting a virtual social evening was a totally different ball game. The planning committee soldiered on and two days before the event, we were blessed with technical support from Ms. Janet Stewart. As it turns out, the event was an overwhelming success. Details are provided later on in this newsletter in the activities report.

Buoyed by the success of the Christmas evening, the Special Events Committee embarked upon the production of another virtual event, which was held on March 27, 2021. The association hosted a "Virtual Winter Getaway Experience" and once again, a successful evening of fun and great entertainment was enjoyed by all who tuned in.

For the second year in a row, our TrinbaGo Day event will be cancelled. It will be replaced however by a virtual Republic Day Celebration on Saturday, September 18, 2021. Mark the date on your calendar as it promises to be an evening you will not want to miss. The TTAO Scholarship awards will also be presented at this event.

As is now our regular practice, we have continued to collaborate with other Caribbean and African associations. Once again, the TTAO was one of eleven participating member organisations of the "Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

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Committee”, which hosted a very successful virtual health seminar on Saturday April 24, 2021. The topics were “Laughter Yoga” presented by the Taibu’s Laughter Yoga Group from Toronto and “Wellness” with Coach Che Marville from Oakville.

The TTAO has also established contacts with two youth organisations. The Caribbean Student Association (CSA) of the University of Ottawa reached out to the TTAO, seeking support for its mentorship program. We are happy to report that two of our members have volunteered their services. Anyone who may have missed the email request circulated in February 2021 and is interested in being a part of this exciting project, you may contact the CSA by email at [caribbeansa.uottawa@gmail.com](mailto:caribbeansa.uottawa@gmail.com). Their Instagram handle is @CSA.AEC.

The other youth organisation with which we have formed a relationship is the West Indian Youth Association of Ottawa (WIAO). Two meetings have been held thus far between the TTAO and the WIAO. The main topics of interest raised by the youth body are the re-introduction of the celebration of Emancipation Day in Ottawa and the recognition of October as Caribbean Heritage Month. Articles on both these projects are featured later on in this newsletter. It should be noted that as the TTAO’s president in the late 1990s, I was the one who initiated the celebration of Emancipation Day in Ottawa.

At Christmas time, the Humanitarian Committee ensured that our seniors were not forgotten by the members of the TTAO. Poinsettia plants, synonymous with Christmas décor and festive cheer, were distributed to fourteen (14) seniors. Mention is made about this venture later on in this newsletter.

There are plans to engage our TTAO members and friends with the upcoming events indicated below. Flyers are attached at the end of the newsletter for the first and third events.

1. A virtual general meeting of the TTAO scheduled for Friday, June 18, 2021. The feature of the meeting will be the first in the TTAO’s Well-being series. “LOVE FROM THE INSIDE OUT: Spirit, Mind and Body in the Pandemic and Beyond” will be presented by fellow Trinbagonian Torna Anderson Morgan, Dietitian, Nutritionist and certified Personal Trainer, who resides in Maryland, U.S.A.;
2. In July, 2021 we are planning an evening of listening or dancing, your preference, to “Old Goldies”. Our resident DJ, David Supersound, will be spinning music from the glorious yesteryears of the 60s, 70s and 80s +++ and
3. The virtual celebration of the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Trinidad and Tobago as a republic will be held on Saturday, September 18, 2021. This evening promises to be one that you won’t want to miss. It will include a cocktail half hour,

superb cultural talent, presentation of the TTAO Scholarship awards, door prizes and a great after party.

We look forward to 2022 with optimism. The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago will celebrate 60 years of being an independent nation and there are plans to host celebrations in the city of Ottawa, which will include the return of TrinbaGo Day and Independence celebrations.

To you our members and friends, thank you for your support of our fundraising activities over the past several months. Your generous donations, which we applaud, enabled us to send \$500.00 to the Ottawa Food Bank in December, 2020 and we were able to raise \$2,200.00 for our scholarship fund at the March virtual event.

Once again on your behalf, I extend sincere thanks to the members of the Executive, Humanitarian and Social Committees, for keeping the TTAO vibrant and alive during the unprecedented circumstances of the last fifteen (15) months.

We wish you an enjoyable and safe summer. We also look forward to your participation at our upcoming events

Ingrid John-Baptiste  
President

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## TTAO activities report

### A Trini Christmas Evening



On Saturday, December 12, 2020, the TTAO held a successful Christmas event using the ZOOM platform. In excess of 200 patrons from Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton and extending to the USA and Trinidad and Tobago enjoyed an entertaining evening. The performance opened with local entertainers and TTAO members, mother-son combination Nira Dookeran and Roshan Chislett, followed by a parang interlude by La Petite Musical from Toronto. Threading the evening together was TTAO's very own Maurice Taitt, who performed the role of a comedic. At the end of the performance, our resident DJ, David Supersound, completed the evening with great dancing music so the "late nighters" were able to dance the rest of the evening away.

Several door prizes were donated and distributed to winners, whose names were

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pulled in a draw. \$400.00 was donated by members and friends of the TTAO in attendance at the event, which was topped up by other generous donors, thus allowing the TTAO to donate \$500.00 to the Ottawa Food Bank.

### Humanitarian Committee Christmas Project 2020

#### HUMANITARIAN

The purpose of this project was to reach out to seniors in our community, who are not very mobile, and maybe live alone or in a senior's home.

The Committee came up with eighteen (18) names, and after many suggestions were considered, it was decided to give a Poinsettia plant to each individual, in keeping with the Christmas spirit. Delivery was made by members of the Executive and Social Committees to fourteen (14) seniors, as there were concerns raised about some individuals interacting with persons outside of their bubble.

Expressions of thanks were received from those to whom deliveries were made.

### Virtual Winter Weekend Getaway Experience



On Saturday March 27, 2021, the TTAO hosted its second social event, billed as a "Virtual Winter Weekend Getaway". It was an evening of comedy, music, singing and dancing and was attended by many local supporters and patrons from various areas of Canada, USA and T&T.

Special guests, Comedians Jean Paul and Keesha Brownie from Toronto, kept the audience in stitches as they rolled out one joke after another. Calypsonian Love Man Kent from Montreal and his team filled the air with calypso and rhythmic music and dancing. Also featured were TTAO's local singing talent Roshan Chislett and pianist Eddie Alleyne.

Several gifts were donated by supporters and given to the lucky door prize winners. Over \$2,000.00 was donated towards the TTAO scholarship fund. In September, 2021 three scholarships will be awarded in the names of C.L.R. James, Nazru Deen and Friends of Serviam.

Once again, our local DJ, David Supersound, provided excellent dancing music for the many patrons who stayed on for the after party.

All reports indicate that everyone enjoyed the evening.

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## Scholarship Awards 2021

The Trinidad and Tobago Association of Ottawa (TTAO) is inviting interested candidates to apply for the TTAO Scholarship Awards 2021. The deadline for applications is midnight on Thursday, July 15, 2021.

For further details, please refer to the TTAO Scholarship Guidelines 2021 and the TTAO Scholarship Application Form, which are available at <https://ttaa.ca/scholarships-offered-under-ttaa-governance.html>.

Information can also be garnered by sending an email to [tandtassociation@gmail.com](mailto:tandtassociation@gmail.com) or by calling 613-834-1718.

Please feel free to circulate the scholarship awards information to engage a wider audience

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## Indian Arrival Day Message



Happy Indian Arrival Day 2021 to members of the Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora in Ottawa and the surrounding area.

In response to the continuing Coronavirus pandemic, its threat to members and friends gathering and our governments' anti-Coronavirus advice and regulations, the Caribbean Hummingbirds Cultural Association's "Indian Arrival Day/ African Emancipation Day 2021" was not held this year.

As you know, on May 30, 1845, some 213 Indian indentured workers landed in Trinidad, disembarking from the Fath Al Razak (Fatel Razack) after a 96-day voyage from Calcutta, around Africa's Cape of Good Hope and across the southern Atlantic. The celebration of Indian Arrival Day is an acknowledgement and appreciation of the

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contributions made by persons of Indian descent to the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

On May 30, 2021, we take this opportunity to remember the work of our ancestors and recognize and applaud the members of the Trinidad and Tobago Indian Diaspora for the contributions they have made to our organizations and to the wider Canadian community.

At this time, when our world has been turned topsy turvy and we are struggling to deal with what we consider to be normal, we have come to realize how much we depend on each other for our daily life. It brings to mind a quotation from the Psalms that was used by the Right Honourable Doctor Eric Williams, Father of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, "Behold how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in Unity".

Let us, therefore, ever strive to make this our "watchword", going forward.

Happy Indian Arrival Day 2021!

Sincerely,

Ingrid John-Baptiste  
President  
Trinidad and Tobago Association  
of Ottawa

Les Kumar-Misir  
President  
Caribbean Hummingbirds Cultural  
Association

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## On the Bookshelf

### Adults



**Tabitha by Pamela Antoine**

This inspiring story is about the power of perseverance and self-discovery. Tabitha is a nine-year old girl who stutters at school but not at home. At school she is mocked and bullied. She is disheartened. When a surprise burst of natural brilliance exposes her talent, she is emboldened with a new air of determination to help other children.

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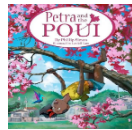
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### About the author

Pamela Antoine was born on the twin-island of Trinidad and Tobago in 1950. After she retired from her career as a health care professional, she embraced her passion for storytelling. Her first children's book, *Tabitha* is partly autobiographical. Pamela Antoine lives in Ottawa, Ontario and is currently working on a novel.

### Children



**Petra and the Poui by Phillip Simon**

Petra loves the poui trees in the park – until she stumbles upon a video on her mother's tablet that causes her to forget her pouis and makes her determined to see what's on the video for herself. Join Petra as she drags her parents on a journey halfway across the world where she discovers an important truth about herself.

### About the author

Phillip Simon is not your average sonographer walking the halls of Sangre Grande Hospital. *Petra and the Poui* is the first book of the healthcare professional, which combines the culture of Trinidad and Tobago with Japan.

What inspired him to write came from comic book legend Stan Lee. He loved how he made characters relatable. Simon's love affair with Japanese culture started at a young age, and it even prompted him to learn the language as he got older. While some in Trinidad and Tobago struggle just to learn Spanish as a second language, Simon did not even flinch when he decided to do one of the most difficult languages for a native English speaker to learn. While learning the kana, and how to pronounce the syllables is relatively easy, the grammar can be quite challenging, and learning the kanji, the logographic Chinese characters used in the Japanese writing system is very hard. His efforts in trying to master the language took him to the doors of the Center for Language and Learning at the University of the West Indies, St Augustine campus in 2012. He studied the language for three years at UWI, and shortly after that he became a part of the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme, which is aimed at promoting grassroots international exchange between Japan and other nations.

It was during his tenure as a JET participant that Simon's passion for Japanese culture found him in a Tokyo Comic Con event in 2017, where he and his wife, Brittney took a photo with Marvel icon Stan Lee holding Trinidad and Tobago's national flag.

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## In Memory of



Beulah Bland died on October 7, 2020. She left Trinidad for England, where she spent 5 years before migrating to Canada in 1965. She worked at Labour Canada, now Human Resources, from 1966 to her retirement in 1997. She was a lady of many talents, enjoying singing, writing poetry and making jewelry.

The Executive and members of the TTAO extend sincere condolences to her family and friends.

May her soul rest in peace.



Lynette Ng, (nee Blizzard) passed away on April 28, 2021. Born in Trinidad and Tobago, Lynette became an avid student earning degrees in numerous subjects. In 1999, she retired from her career as a Librarian of Health Science at the University of Ottawa. Lynette had a passion for family and friends and was known for her smile, her enduring kindness and generosity, and her infectious laugh. All of these attributes will be sorely missed.

The Executive and members of the TTAO extend heartfelt condolences to her family and friends.

May she rest peacefully.

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## Community Award



In November 2020, the TTAO's webmaster Rose LeBlanc, was awarded a Community Builder Award by United Way. Rose has given hours of her time to multiple community organizations. During her career in the public service, she was a dedicated United Way volunteer. She has also shared her time with organizations such as The Trinidad and Tobago Association of Ottawa and Friends of Serviam.

Rose uses her talent for crafting to create breathtaking quilts that she donates to silent auctions and other charity fundraisers. She is known throughout her community for these beautiful pieces of work.

During COVID-19, Rose took her love of crafting and dedication to community to the next level by hand sewing thousands of masks for front-line workers and coordinating groups of volunteers to sew masks as well. Rose has devoted her time and her supplies to helping people all across her community who need access to personal protective equipment during the pandemic. Thanks to her work, more front-line workers now have the equipment they need to take care of their neighbours.

Rose has been hand-crafting a stronger community for years, but she took her skills to the next level during a time of increased need. To quote her "I enjoy helping others. I saw a need and I filled it. It's my pleasure to give back to The Trinidad and Tobago Association of Ottawa and Friends of Serviam, helping make our communities a better place for all."

Congratulations to Rose on this well deserved recognition.

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## Tribute

The TTAO's president, Ingrid John-Baptiste, will be honoured for her community contributions by Flo's Seniors on August 28, 2021. Congrats to Ingrid on yet another accolade.

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Our association would also like to extend congratulations to Sandie Nault, Ingrid's fellow honouree, who is a TTAO friend and ally.

Flo's Seniors, a health and care programs network, was founded by Joan Robinson in honour of her parents Florence and Milton Robinson. The organization is dedicated to promoting the independence and well-being of older adults in the Ottawa region through the provision of information, as well as various programs and services.

Visit [www.floseniors.com](http://www.floseniors.com) or <https://www.facebook.com/Floseniors/> closer to the event for details on how you can view the proceedings.



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## Inspiration Corner

Credit: MENTions-Stories about us Facebook page



Today, Akinee Harry is a 25-year-old author and budding criminologist who has a passion for working with vulnerable young people and improving the lives of those that reside in at-risk communities. However, not too long ago, he was a teenager who committed a crime and was subsequently charged. After experiencing

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the realities of remand, he was released on bond with a renewed focus and drive. What caused the turn around? What motivates him now? How did he leave the system inspired and driven to be a better person? This is his story:

I was raised with my three siblings in a traditional nuclear home in Claxton Bay, a community that is no stranger to social issues. My parents tried their best to ensure that we were provided with the basic essentials for a healthy and productive life. As a result, there weren't many luxuries. Nevertheless, we were exposed to good parenting even with the many vices among us. I attended the San Fernando Seventh Day Adventist Primary School and then I moved on to Presentation College in San Fernando, after writing the SEA examination. I discovered my passion for sport at the primary school level and was actively involved in cricket, football and track and field. These extra-curricular activities contributed to my development and did not take away from my academic ability as I balanced the two quite well. In secondary school, I represented the school in both track and field and football between 2008 and 2013. My ambition was always to become a professional football player but God seemed to have had other plans.

### **"I often got in trouble for things such as stealing and fighting"**

While I did experience unpleasant social events in the community as a child, it was not until I started secondary school in 2008 that I was actively involved in delinquent activity. I often got in trouble for things such as stealing and fighting. During my time at the school, I became somewhat of a notorious figure among the school population. After a series of behavioural incidents at Presentation College, I decided to change my environment and start afresh. So, I enrolled at the Carapichaima East Secondary School to do Sixth Form. My behavioural problems ceased for a short while until 2014 when some friends and I stole money from a cinema in San Fernando. I was later arrested and charged. A series of events led to this bad decision that would change the course of my life.

### **"Many people turned their backs on me"**

Entering the criminal justice system was challenging as an 18-year-old schoolboy. I spent a very short time on remand and went to court back and forth: all while completing secondary school. Many people turned their backs on me and at one point, I was ready to quit school as a result of the stigmatisation and discrimination. But, my family and a few people, stood by my side. They believed in me and supported me until I found my feet again. This experience and the eyesore that is remand, were enough to convince me that I wanted better for myself.

### **"I saw it as a second chance at life"**

Eventually, I was granted leniency by the magistrate and was placed on a two-year bond to keep the peace. This is an opportunity that many young men do not get and I was really thankful for it. I saw it as a second chance at life because I could have faced a custodial sentence which may have put me at a serious disadvantage later in life. I later decided to move away from football and pursue tertiary education, hoping that one day I would make amends.

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### **“A phase of self-discovery”**

My decision to pursue Criminology and Criminal Justice at university was a direct result of my lived experience. Although I initially knew little about the field, my passion for it grew as time elapsed. It was something that was extremely fulfilling as the theoretical exposure helped me to better understand some of the reasons behind my actions. It was a phase of self-discovery. As I progressed in my programme, it became more evident to me how many young, at-risk men needed guidance and mentorship. Consequently, I decided to further my studies by enrolling in the Criminology and Criminal Justice programme at the master’s degree level at The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine.

### **“No one knew what I was going through”**

As I started this new journey, I did not initially have a mentor to help me through my first few years at university. I sat among peers and lecturers and no one knew what I was going through because I never spoke about it. However, the moral and financial support that I received from my family was enough to inspire me to keep going. While pursuing this post graduate degree, I have been fortunate enough to meet and learn directly from Dr. Wendell C. Wallace, who is now my mentor. He has been mentoring me for the past two years and I have learnt so much under his guidance. I firmly believe that there are insufficient role models and mentors for young men in Trinidad and Tobago. There is this notion that the young men today are unruly and have no desire for improvement. I refuse to believe this. In fact, what is evident to me is that there is a lack of guidance and mentorship, which encourages our young men to gravitate toward the negative influences around them. While there are some men that we can look up to, they do not often come forward or offer themselves to assist. I hope this changes.

### **“Re-directing fate”**

We need to be the change that we wish to see in the world and this is why I recently published my new book “Redirecting Fate- Rising Above My Troubled Past” to show young men that there is hope. To help inspire and guide them to fulfilling their innate potential. The book itself is a detailed account of my experiences as a young man. It shows how I got involved in crime but more importantly, it shows how I overcame. It underscores the message of hope and courage and provides counsel to young men in at-risk communities. It is a story I think all young men need to hear.

### **“Crime does not pay”**

My ultimate goal is to go after my Ph.D. when I am finished with this phase of my studies. It is something I am very passionate about because I have intentions of building a meaningful career in academia. What I would say to young men inclined to criminal or delinquent activity is to stay away from that life. Crime does not pay and it is in fact, very cool to stay in school. Not many people are as fortunate as me to get a second chance. Today, many young men are being shot and killed, or become lost

in the system, at best. There are numerous avenues to explore such as entrepreneurship, vocation skills training (trades), sport and even formal education. Make use of these opportunities.

"To all the "ghetto youths" out there, WE can achieve anything we want to. Do not limit your potential based on where you come from or the things you have done in the past. Use it to fuel your success. Find inspiration in my story so that you too can shatter the glass ceiling and exceed all expectations."

If you're interested in Akinee's book, you can contact him directly via his website <https://akineeharry.com/>, Facebook @akineeharryauthor or WhatsApp 868-750-6069. It is also available on Amazon and at the following retail outlets in Trinidad:

- Scribbles and Quills- Chaguanas
- Paper Based Bookshop- St Ann's
- The House of Creative People- Marabella
- I Believe in Success Foundation- Rio Claro

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## West Indian Youth Association of Ottawa

### West Indian Youth Association of Ottawa - Emancipation vision



The West Indian Youth Association of Ottawa is a non-profit organization geared towards the celebration of Caribbean culture among the youth in Ottawa. This year the association has taken on the planning of an Emancipation Day celebration, with the support of the Caribbean community in Ottawa.

Emancipation is a celebration for the gift of freedom, fought for by our ancestors and expressing these freedoms in today's world through the love of our heritage/culture in movement, music, food, art and folklore. Using our cultural freedoms as a platform to inspire, build, educate and celebrate who we are as a people, as a region and for generations to come.

### Declaration of October as Caribbean Heritage Month



Caribbean Women's Society (CWS) is a grassroots non-profit

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organization, based in Ontario, with the aim of improving the quality of life of Caribbean Canadians. In 2018, as part of its mission, CWS together with its subsidiary organizations, introduced the celebration of Caribbean Heritage Month in October.

Bill 134, Caribbean Heritage Month Act, 2019 is an act to proclaim October as Caribbean Heritage Month, as a means to have an official recognition of the contributions of persons of Caribbean Heritage to Canadian society. In addition, Caribbean Heritage month would be a time to celebrate and recognize the richness of Caribbean culture that contributes to the diverse and multicultural make up of Canada.

The West Indian Youth Association of Ottawa has proudly taken on the leadership role in planning together a calendar of activities in Ottawa to celebrate Caribbean Heritage Month in October 2021. We look forward to the support of our Caribbean community and well-wishers as we move towards having Bill 134 receive Royal Assent.

*Life is so  
much easier  
with a sense  
of humour*

Trini Humour



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## Explore Trinidad and Tobago



Ste. Madeleine is a village with an industry that was once the pride of the British Empire. Ste. Madeleine is actually named after the estate Usine Ste. Madeline, which was owned by Mary Madeleine in 1838.

Ste. Madeleine lays between San Fernando and Princes Town and its first introduction into recorded history was in 1838 during the post slavery period. The

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village was initially known for its impassable roads but also for the magnificent Ciperio River, which allowed for easy transportation of the sugarcane crop via sea.

<https://fb.watch/5L9JxZaPB4/>

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## New High Commissioner

Credit: [www.gg.ca](http://www.gg.ca)



A new High Commissioner for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to Canada has been appointed. His Excellency Dennis Daniel Moses presented his credentials to His Excellency the Right Honourable Richard Wagner, P.C., Administrator of the Government of Canada during a virtual ceremony on March 29, 2021.

Fun facts:

- A high commissioner is a representative of a Commonwealth country
- An ambassador is a representative of a country that is not part of the Commonwealth

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## Did you know?



Why the name "Carnegie Free Library?"

The Carnegie Library was founded in 1916 and named after a Scottish born American philanthropist Anthony Carnegie, who donated £2,500 to establish the library. E.R Gammon, of Public Works, was the architect for the library, similar in many respects to the Royal Victoria Institute in some of its neo-classical elements. The building was completed in 1919.

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The Carnegie Free Library is iconic for the role it played at its inception in 1919 in granting access to books and information to low-income sectors of the society, who prior to that were excluded from such resources.

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## How to catch a Soucouyant

Credit: Pointalive Facebook page



When I was a young boy, I heard many stories of Soucouyants. There was Miss Mary, the village Soucouyant, who lived on the same street as I did. One day, I threw salt on the road when I saw her approaching, just to see what would happen. After all, this was how to catch a Soucouyant. Well at least, this is what I heard the older folks saying.

When my initial plan failed and I reported to the elders what had happened, which was that Miss Mary walked through the salt, even stepping on it and nothing happened, I was told that the salt was to be used when she goes “flying”. If we can find where she left her “skin” whenever she turns into the ball of fire, we can place the salt on it (her skin) and she wouldn’t be able to return into her skin and that’s when she can be caught. Or, the easier thing to do was to place salt or rice and turn a broom upside down at your house door(s) to prevent her from entering your home, because she’d have to remain and count every grain of salt/rice before entering.

However, Miss Mary was a darn smartass Soucouyant because after placing the salt and the broom, people were still experiencing Soucouyant suck marks, which was a dark blue, blackish skin discoloration which appeared on various parts of the body, but mostly on the arms and legs. I overheard others in the neighborhood, including my own home, saying “she get bright, she using d windows to come in now.”

Therefore, Miss Mary remained the elusive village Soucouyant.

As a young boy, it was once my mission to catch this Soucouyant, who was constantly traumatizing my mom, leaving marks on her skin regularly. Though Miss Mary was identified as the main culprit, I still wasn’t sure, because my salt in the road test failed.

Years passed and I was never able to catch Miss Mary in the act. I never found where she left her skin, so I can place the salt or never even saw her ball of fire, which almost everyone else in the village claimed to have seen at some given time.

## Contact Us

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Reasonably, I gave up on my mission of finding the Soucouyant.

During my teenage years, I began noticing bluish, blackish marks on my skin, similar to the ones experienced by my mom and what others claimed to be Soucouyant bites. I became very curious and now wondered if Soucouyants were more interested in teenagers and adults because pre-teen, I could not remember personally having this experience.

At this period in my life, I was preoccupied with school, music, sports, social engagements etc. Things were too busy to even bother with the marks. My mom was still living a healthy life after years of Soucouyant bites, so for me, it was neither here nor there. I would live.

I continued experiencing the marks from time to time but as mentioned, it was no big deal, just a little fretting and some minor cussing, but life continued normal.

One day, now being an adult, I came home from work and was extremely tired and fell asleep without changing my clothes. The next morning when I woke, I noticed "soucouyant" marks on my skin, but this time, I fell asleep with the lights in my room on and from my understanding, Soucouyants don't like bright lights or they just don't operate in well lit areas.

I soon made a very crucial observation. My car key was in my pocket when I fell asleep and the area where the marks were observed, happened to be exactly where the key had been pressing against during sleep. I also remembered this being the preferred spot the Soucouyant loved to bite on as I turned adult. However, this was generally the area I always kept any key I had, my left front pocket. It was the body area beneath my pocket, which happened to be where I mostly saw the marks.

Immediately, I remembered my mom, being a strong catholic then, used to sleep with something called a "Chaplet", currently called a "Rosary".

I also remembered, during my teenage years, I slept with books on my bed. Then, I also observed, with the advent of laptops and cell phones, these items also became "bed partners". Nevertheless, though lifestyles became modern and the Soucouyant myth was fading, people were still complaining about Soucouyant bites.

I quickly came to reason, Soucouyant bites marks were as a result of improper blood circulation, caused by objects which apply pressure against a body part, constricting blood vessels. Sometimes, these objects are harmless as a folded blanket, a hand trapped between the body during sleep and remaining there for a significant period of time, thus restricting blood flow.

Normally, the victim is unaware of the object's placement during sleep and proceeded to blame the supernatural element for what they see.

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Having keys, phones or other objects in your pocket during an entire day, while walking around or working, may cause the constant friction. Though not immediately noticeable, this causes temporary skin discoloration and may not be observed until next morning, when it's time to take that daylight shower. BOOM! Soucouyant bites appear.

This observation was based on my personal experience and may not necessarily be the same for others. However, since I came to this reasoning, I stopped sleeping with any unnecessary objects, like phones, laptops etc, on my bed. I deliberately try not to place my hands tucked in any where between my body and the bed, my blanket is always spread out. Guess what? I have found the Soucouyant. Since I put into practice measures which I reasoned would stop the marks, it worked and is continuing to work, because since then, I haven't noticed any Soucouyant bites marks for over 20 years.

It's amazing how the things you were taught, because of tradition, can make you believe in falsehoods for almost your entire life or in some instances, an entire lifetime until death, going to the grave, holding on to beliefs which were just stories told but became believable folklore. To this day, the year 2020, there are people who still believe in Soucouyant stories and other folklore tales, some local and some from foreign lands, which today remains an integral part of many core beliefs or systems in which many still wholeheartedly believe or worship .

Nevertheless, Miss Mary escaped, but for me, I have found "my" Soucouyant.

## Member's Corner



To enhance what the TTAO can do for the community, we need your support, so why not become a member? New members are always welcome! Does an event or committee peak your interest? If you are 16 years of age or older looking to get involved, then consider becoming a member and joining a committee that interests you the most.



The annual membership for the association runs from **September 1st to August 31st**.

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TTAO membership form



You are encouraged to visit our [website](#) at [ttaa.ca](http://ttaa.ca) and our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Trinidad-and-Tobago-Association-of-Ottawa-TTAA/157550578878>.

Your feedback and comments are always appreciated

**Education:**

Andrew Williams      Ingrid John-Baptiste      Dianna Pierre

**Executive Committee:**

President: Ingrid John-Baptiste  
Vice President: Dianna Pierre  
Secretary: Sharon Pierre Louis  
Asst. Secretary: Judy Madhosingh  
Treasurer: Andrew Williams  
Floor Members: Anne-Marie Bostic      Nira Dookeran      Joycelyn George-Francois

**Humanitarian Committee:**

Lena Baptiste   Molly Taitt   Judy Madhosingh   Pamela Antoine

**Social Committee:**

Dianna & Tony Pierre   Sharon Pierre Louis   Judy Madhosingh   Andrew Williams  
Anne-Marie & David Bostic   Nira Dookeran   Joycelyn George- Francois  
Molly & Maurice Taitt   Lena Baptiste   Patricia Cholmondeley  
Rosanna & Trevor Lashley   Suzanne & Errol Whittier   Joe & Carmen Dyer  
Ingrid John-Baptiste



**Membership Committee:**

Molly Taitt    Ingrid John-Baptiste    Andrew Williams

**Public Relations & Communications Committee:**

Brenda Agard Alleyne    Carol Joseph    Rose Leblanc    Andrew Williams

We are always looking for participation on our committees, which will increase chances of success. You are more than welcome to volunteer and/or share your ideas so please [contact us](#) if any peaks your interest.

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**Feedback**

Interested in contributing to the next newsletter? Would you like to provide comments or suggestions to the TTAO? Send us an email, write us a letter or put a posting on our Facebook page and tell us what you think!



The Trinidad & Tobago  
Association of Ottawa

## General Meeting

Friday June 18, 2021

Virtual Meeting: 6:15 – 7:00 p.m.

Virtual Presentation 7:10 – 8:10 p.m.

## LOVE FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Spirit, Mind and Body in the Pandemic and Beyond

Presenter: Tonia Anderson Morgan

Dietitian, Nutritionist and certified Personal Trainer Maryland, USA

Please register by leaving a name and email address at

Telephone: 613-834-1718

Or

Email: [tandtassociation@gmail.com](mailto:tandtassociation@gmail.com)

# SAVE THE DATE

**Saturday, September 18, 2021**



**The Trinidad & Tobago  
Association Of Ottawa**

## **VIRTUAL**

**Celebration of the 45th anniversary of**

**Trinidad & Tobago**

**becoming a Republic**

*An evening you won't want to miss*

**Details to follow**