

# The BUXTON-FRIENDSHIP EXPRESS

AUGUST 2010

BFE 2010-7

## New York General Meeting for Buxtonians

To discuss new initiatives to help revitalize the Buxton-Friendship community

September 11, 2010  
from 4:00 p.m.

454 Vermont Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11207  
(between Blake & Sutter Avenues)

Phone: 718-342-0040

*Charting a New Development Path!*

## Inside this issue:

President Visits Buxton	2
Millions Pumped into Drainage, Irrigation & Agriculture	3
Buxton Celebrates 170th Anniversary of Purchase	4
Emancipation Youth Address	6
Dr. David Hinds on Government's Outreach to Buxton	8
Judge Decision by Outcome	11
Craft A Development Plan	12
A New Dawn for Buxton	13
Constructive Engagement	14
Annie Daniels' Awards	15

## Charting a New Development Path Government Supports Community Development Initiatives for Buxton

by Lorna Campbell

In honour of the 170th Anniversary of the Purchase of Buxton, the President of Guyana, His Excellency Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo, hosted a cocktail reception for villagers at his State House residence. He also entertained a delegation from the community, which presented several proposals for government assistance to help rehabilitate infrastructure, improve education, boost agricultural production and generate economic wealth for residents of the village and its expanded environs.

The President followed these up with a face-to-face meeting with hundreds of residents at the Buxton-Friendship Community High School, at which he listened to several concerns expressed by villagers and outlined some of the plans his government was prepared to set in motion to



*A section of the capacity crowd at Buxton-Friendship Community High School listening to Guyana's President Bharrat Jagdeo*

help return economic and social progress to our now depressed community. The list of initiatives include:

### Community Development

- Funding for the construction of a multi-purpose Tipperary centre in excess of **GY\$50,000,000 (US\$250,000)**. The new multi-storey facility is expected to house a community hall and a library. A stipulation that the

property comes under the joint ownership of the Tipperary Society and the Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC), which embodies the Buxton-Friendship district, will reportedly be part of the agreement. The current chairman of the NDC is Buxtonian Mr. Randolph Blair.

- Some **GY\$22,000,000 (US\$110,000)** to complete the Toucan II

*(Continued on page 2)*

## President Jagdeo Visits Buxton



*President Bharrat Jagdeo, flanked by Barbara Thomas-Holder (left) and Mboya Wood (right)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

Club building. This club promotes cultural and social activities for youths in the area

- Installation of electrical and water supplies, as well as other essential services, to render the Health Centre operational by September
- Provision of steel pans and training for interested youths by the Ministry of Culture

### **Education**

- Institution of a Literacy programme that will employ retired teachers from the community
- Establishment of Homework Centres in schools
- Twenty computers to aid Computer Literacy and boost technological skills

*Below: President Bharrat Jagdeo (right) being presented with a copy of the Buxton 170th Anniversary commemorative magazine by Nandi Kellman, member of the Buxton Response Committee*



- Guidance counselors for schoolchildren
- Hot meals programme for schoolchildren
- Increased grants for the schools
- Establishment of a Board of Directors, consisting mainly villagers, at the new Practical Instruction Centre (Trade School)
- Training of a PTA member as a Librarian for the schools
- Vaccination and screening for visual and hearing efficiency, for schoolchildren
- Assistance and access to job seekers from the community
- Improved quality of life services

### **Agriculture**

- Availability of a tractor to assist farmers in preparing their plots
- Availability of a dredge to dig trenches and improve drainage
- Training and assistance to farmers by the Ministry of Agriculture to help boost agricultural production

*See more in page 3 report on Drainage, Irrigation & Agriculture in Buxton*

### **Economic Stimulus**

- Technical advice and low-interest loans of up to GY\$250,000 (US\$1,250) to single mothers, under the Women of Worth (WOW) programme, to stimulate the creation of jobs and wealth
- Commercial breeding of pigs and goats

### **Miscellaneous**

Leading the discussions for the community were Mboya Wood of Buxton Anniversary Committee, Ingrid Ifill-King of CO-TAB and Barbara Thomas-Holder of the local Response Committee. They have been ably assisted by a strong support team, which includes “Rollo” Younge, Nandi Kellman, Hazel Carter-Murray, Merveline Moses, and others.

Vital to these accomplishments has been the involvement of son-of-the-soil Mr. Odinga Lumumba (also known by the nickname “Cheero”), Community Development Advisor to President Jagdeo.

These developments follow closely on the heels of a massive road improvement programme throughout the village and the construction of the new Practical Instruction Centre, both of which were initiated by Mr. Clyde Roopchand, another son of the soil and Chief Planning Officer attached to the Ministry of Finance. Mr. Roopchand also was instrumental in the reconstruction of the three-storey building which houses Friendship Primary School (formerly St. Anthony’s RC School).

AUGUST 2010

## Government Pumps Millions into Buxton for Drainage, Irrigation & Agriculture

20 August, 2010

*From the Government Information News Agency (GINA):*

MINISTER of Agriculture, Robert Persaud has delivered on his commitment to implement major drainage projects totalling in excess of \$115M following meetings with farmers in the Buxton/Friendship Community.

The National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA), has begun carrying out these and other projects in the area and has so far completed eight, according to the Government Information Agency.

At a previous meeting with the farmers, a commitment of \$47M was made by Minister Persaud to assist private sugarcane farmers and residents in the community.

Four projects are ongoing as a result of the promise

including the rehabilitation of major drainage and irrigation canals in Friendship/Buxton, construction of revetment within the Buxton pump basin and construction of a timber bridge at Buxton Company across the CNC canal.

The construction of the timber bridge was considered after a request by private sugarcane farmers for assistance in accessing farms and providing a route for transportation. The revetment within the pump basin has been completed and a clearing exercise is being undertaken at the Buxton West Sideline which will benefit more than 100 private sugarcane farmers from the Buxton area.

Just recently, the Buxton outfall was dredged and in addition, a yearly contract was awarded to ensure the payment of the mobile pump operators and watchmen of the Neighbourhood

Democratic Council (NDC).

These projects totalling in excess of \$52M are part of the NDIA's master plan to ensure communities and farmers are protected from the ills of climate change by strengthening the drainage infrastructure.

These works included the rehabilitation of the Buxton pump basin, construction of revetment along the Buxton Company canal, excavation works within Buxton and Friendship, mechanical cleaning of the Buxton Company canal from CNC to Pond Dam Bridge, provision of all tools, equipment and labour for the mechanical excavation of the Buxton and Friendship canals, rehabilitation of the 400 rods on Crown Dam between Strathspey and La Reconnaissance, rehabilitation of four intake structures and rehabilitation of Buxton sluice doors.

In the past, the Buxton/Friendship community has been severely affected during heavy rainfall prompting the Ministry's NDIA to make it a priority area with extensive emergency works being undertaken. The Agriculture Ministry says it will continue to work closely and provide necessary support to farmers and the Buxton/Friendship community. It is expected that with the improved drainage system in place, there will be increased acreages of fruits, vegetables, citrus and ground provisions. This initiative by the Ministry is part of its "Grow More" drive.

Farmers from the Buxton/Friendship area have commended the Ministry for its assistance in a massive clearing exercise which has encouraged them to go back to the land. The Ministry had also provided assistance with clearing, ploughing, seeds and fertilizer.

## Computers Donated to Buxton

Thanks to Dr. Richard Van West Charles and his foundation for the donation of six desk-top computers to the village. The former Guyana Health Minister made the announcement at the 170th Anniversary Symposium in Buxton.

Two of the machines have been given to the Toucan

II Club, a cultural and social organisation which caters to the youths in the village. The organisation also provides some after-school services and maintains a library for use by the community.

Another two were donated to St. Augustine's Anglican Church Youth Club, while

the remaining two went to the Practical Instruction Centre, which is slated to be opened next month.

This donation was facilitated by Buxtonian Rupert Sampson, to whom we also extend our deepest appreciation.

Thanks again, Dr. Richard Van West Charles.



*Dr. Richard Van West Charles  
Kaieteur News Photo*



## THE BUXTON-FRIENDSHIP EXPRESS

# Buxton Celebrates 170 Years Purchase & Pride

The national spotlight shone on Buxton as villagers and well-wishers, from all walks of life, came together for a grand celebration of the 170th Anniversary of the Purchase of the Village. The festivities which featured a variety of cultural, educational, entertainment, social and medical outreach programmes, as well as a socio-economic conference, began on Saturday, 24 July with a magnificent Opening Ceremony at the Friendship Primary (Roman) School to the great appreciation of a capacity audience.

The event was officially declared open by Kwame Apata, and prayers offered by Pastor Desmond Glasgow. Chairman of the Buxton-Foulis Neighbourhood Democratic Council, Randolph Blair, welcomed



*A section of the large audience at the Opening Ceremony, held at Friendship Primary (Roman) School.*

*"We are part of a ... multiracial society, but no other race will respect you if you do not respect yourself."*

*Dr. David Hinds*

returning villagers and guests, after which Fitzroy "Rollo" Younge presented a brief history of the village.

The programme also featured a host of performances by members of the Toucan II Club, the Guyana Police Force Steel Orchestra, Ras. Jerome Hope, ACDA's dance group and other artists.

Among those delivering special greetings were the president of the Canada-based Committee to Assist Buxton-Friendship (COTAB), Ingrid Ifill-King; ACDA's president, Eric Phillips; and community activist Mark Benschop.

Prominent Buxtonians and special invitees included Historian Tommy Payne; Clyde Roopchand, Chief Planning Officer attached

to the Ministry of Finance; Magda Pollard, former principal of Carnegie School of Home Economics and the first Women's Affairs Officer at the Caricom Secretariat; University lecturers Gordon Payne and Melvin Sankies; Orrin Gordon; Morris Wilson and Robert Corbin, Executive Member and leader of PNC/R, respectively; Malcolm Parris, former Minister of Education; Magistrate Hazel Octive-Hamilton; Justices Franklin Holder and James Bovell-Drakes; AFC Leader, Rafael Trotman; Ms. Sybil Patterson; Ms. Roxanne Meyers.

The highlight of the evening was the keynote address which was delivered by Dr. David Hinds, professor of Political Science

*(Continued on page 5)*



*Photos, courtesy of "Demerara Waves"*

# Reclaiming Dignity

*(Continued from page 4)*

at Arizona State University in the USA. He urged villagers to reclaim their dignity: “When our foreparents pooled their resources together and bought this village and other villages in Guyana they were striking the real blow for freedom because that was the highest form of self activity and self emancipation.” According to a 25 July report by Demerara Waves, he continued that their foreparents came out of slavery with dignity which was consolidated and saw the people through colonialism. But he added that there was a “sneaking suspicion that that dignity is under assault.”

Hinds urged the hundreds gathered at the school to use the next two weeks to address their dignity. “We are part of a ... multi-racial society, but no other race will respect you if you do not respect yourself,” he

declared to applause.

Hinds noted that the community had produced many persons of note including educators, national leaders and had led the country in other ways. He said it was a “burning shame” that Buxton has no secondary schools after having three when he was growing up. He added that education had always been the means to liberation and survival for Afro-Guyanese and if they lose that they lose themselves. Hinds urged the Buxtonians to use the next fortnight as a starting point to “agitate” for the return of a high school to the community and called on the powers that be to facilitate the process.

According to the political scientist, he was concerned that Buxton had seemingly become a beggar. “That’s not the Buxton I know. We demand things; and we demand not with arro-

gance, we demand with production.”

He called on teachers to donate time outside the schools to educate the community’s youth on self respect and dignity. Too many educators, he said had come out of the village, for them not to be able to give back.

Hinds noted that the community will be celebrating over the next two weeks but at the end of this they must start the serious work so that when they return next year they have something tangible to report on. Some of the other activities to mark the historic milestone were:

- ♣ Grand Variety Concert, which showcased a wealth of talent among the young ones in the village.
- ♣ Symposium under the theme: “Legacies of our Foreparents” which featured a stellar panel comprising historian



*Dr. David Hinds  
Professor of Political Science at  
Arizona State University, USA*



*Guyana Police Force Steel Orchestra at the Opening Ceremony*



*ACDA's Dance group*

*Thanks to “Demerara Waves”  
for the photos.*

- David Granger, Dr. David Hinds, Rollo Younge and young Tameka Boatswain.
- ♣ Socio-economic conference, from which focus groups on Education, Agricultural and Economic development were formed
- ♣ Medical Outreach Clinic over a two-day period
- ♣ Elderly Citizens’ Outreach
- ♣ Children’s Literary Camp
- ♣ Tour of the historic Fort Island and bustling Bartica en route to Baganara Island Resort, Essequibo
- ♣ Bus trip across the new Berbice River Bridge to Moleson Creek for a glimpse of neighbouring Suriname. The party was also treated to a brief tour of New Amsterdam and an unforgettable cultural performance by the villagers of Belladrum, WCB.

♣ Ball (Dinner-Dance)  
The Sports/Fun Day that was rained out, but will be held at a later date. Prizes for this event were donated by the Rotary Club of Guyana, in honour of its founder, the late Dr. Balbir Nehaul, the first Buxton Scholarship recipient.



## THE BUXTON-FRIENDSHIP EXPRESS

# Commit to Sustain The Life & Spirit of Buxton

2010 Emancipation Youth Address *by J. Ayana McCalman*



**J. Ayana McCalman**

*"In designing the future for Buxton we must therefore all guard against the influences that promote immorality or violence without regard to the self-destructive consequences. We must also avoid the current trends and philosophy that promote personal interests, self aggrandizement, personal rivalry and competitiveness as the keys to success. These were never values encouraged or embraced by the ancient wisdom of our foreparents or the ancestors of this village of Buxton."*

I am more than a little pleased to be involved in this Emancipation celebration of Buxton-Friendship and the celebration of 170 years of the Purchase of Buxton. I was born and raised in Buxton and I am privileged to be the beneficiary of an ancestral legacy that includes excellence and self-reliance. These virtues continue to shape me and mould me as a thinker, lawyer, entrepreneur and leader.

As I begin this address I take the opportunity to give due credit to the 141 men and women, now past, who purchased this village I call home. I also give credit to those living, including my mother, who continue to encourage and support my passion for the best life possible-and the many Buxtonians who continue to encourage me. I wish to acknowledge in particular the contribution of BESAC (Buxtonians for the Education and Social Advancement of the Community) group which supported my academic pursuits with a scholarship to study law at the University of Guyana. I appreciate all of you living and past.

The true value and meaning of history is made real when we adopt the posture

advocated by one writer: "To know the present we must look into the past and to know the future we must look into the past and the present". Tonight, my address contemplates the future of Buxton and I take this opportunity to add my observations of the past and present as a contribution to encourage Buxtonians at home and abroad to sustain the life and spirit of this community.

The past of Buxton, since the purchase of this village in 1840 to the present, includes many stories that encourage praise and others that are equally painful. I do not intend to recount the painful experiences of the past with vivid details inspiring anger at best in some or hatred at worst in others. Neither, am I choosing to ignore the past as some people intentionally or sub-consciously choose to do. Instead, I am inspired to acknowledge all these experiences of both praise and pain that encourage us to carry the best parts into the future.

The painful experience of the past of Buxton includes a people who have had to deal with the physical and psychological scars of slavery, including enslavement justified on the basis of

laws and customs that once regarded African people as property or livestock.

The present experience of Buxton has been one marred by recurring bouts of violence, poverty, prejudice and discrimination.

However, as we look deeper into the past and present of Buxton, we recognise that as Buxtonians we have individually and collectively often displayed the best of who we are. We only need to take a brief survey of the contributions of Buxtonians in the field of education, business, medicine, literature, culture, sports, public service and many other countless endeavours. Eusi Kwayana in the compilation of the book "Buxton-Friendship in Print and Memory" has an extensive treatise of the names and contributions of Buxtonians to the village, Guyana and further afield.

Moreover, we cannot overlook nor discount the feat of courage, perseverance and revolutionary spirit that spurred the first 141 Buxtonians to purchase this village in 1840

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Sustain the Life & Spirit of Buxton

(Continued from page 6)

(just two years after the abolition of slavery) and, as history notes, for being the first village to obtain the official title by Transport to the village. I believe that the first Transport is not merely a symbol of land ownership but a physical symbol of the belief in a better future far removed from the shackles of the indignity of slavery and servitude.

Thus, as we look to the future of Buxton it is best summed up in the lesson that we must daily move towards the future of Buxton with confidence and comfort carrying forward only what is the best of the past.

We must continue to dream and imagine together the future of Buxton and what it can be. This dream will not and cannot remain fantasy or waved away by skeptics or pessimists if it is grounded in the best of the life and spirit of this village. In particular, the collective action of Buxtonians at home and in the Diaspora as evidenced by the numerous community groups, who support various acts of generosity and charity including support for scholarships, healthcare and other contributions to the village, must be seen not as a weakness but as a positive strength and a commitment to Buxton. However, this dream must become provocative in the imagination to encourage and sustain effective collaboration between these various community groups. We must return to the ancient wisdom of the village—each contributing individual gifts or talents but always working together for the communal good of the village.

Moreover, as we move from dream to design we must create an architec-

ture that sustains the pillars of the Village movement which David Granger, in a recent symposium, describes as the home, church, school and farm. I believe that these pillars accurately represent the architecture of Buxton which was also an integral part of the village movement. These pillars I would add were sustained by the foundation of a community determined to sustain the values of cooperation, excellence in education and economic self-reliance. Thus, any future design of the community of Buxton must encourage individual and collective action to encourage collaboration between the home, church and school to promote education that is grounded in wisdom, devotion to God and the lived experience of the people in Buxton. It is the sort of education that encourages young women, young men, and adults to rely less on education as merely the consumption of information and more on education as the source of practical action. As Jamaican Reverend Burchell Taylor advocates, it is practical action that promotes:

- ♣ *Divine Wisdom in choosing the way of life regarding life's conduct, direction and goals*
- ♣ *Personal discipline and honesty*
- ♣ *Good neighbourly relations; and*
- ♣ *Responsible sex ethics and family life*

It is this sort of education that is rooted in these practical actions that will encourage industry whether in the farm or other economic activities that will sustain the best of Buxton

and guarantee a future for Buxton that retains the legacy of communal unity, excellence in education and economic self-reliance.

In designing the future for Buxton we must therefore all guard against the influences that promote immorality or violence without regard to the self-destructive consequences. We must also avoid the current trends and philosophy that promote personal interests, self aggrandizement, personal rivalry and competitiveness as the keys to success. These were never values encouraged or embraced by the ancient wisdom of our foreparents or the ancestors of this village of Buxton.

The future of Buxton is for all of us here now living and those to come to determine. We must each commit by our words and actions to sustain the life and spirit of Buxton. We must each take a positive oath not to sell or destroy our ancestral inheritance – neither freedom, nor the land of Buxton.

May the souls of our ancestors who won freedom in 1838 remain and rest in peace. Long live Buxton my own native land!

July 31, 2010



## David Hinds' Press Statement on President Jagdeo's Outreach to Buxton

August 20, 2010



Villager and executive member of the Working People's Alliance (WPA) Political Party, Dr. David Hinds (also known by the nickname "Twilly")

*"It is my view that over the last eighteen years African Guyanese have been systematically stripped of their dignity, both from without and within to the point where we are almost soul-less and powerless in Guyana. We have become mercenaries and beggars. We have all but surrendered our right to resist and claim our share of the national cake. If we do not stop this rot now, there will be no free tomorrow for our children. We have to have what David Granger calls a "second emancipation." And it has to start by regaining our pride and dignity..."*

It pains me to write this statement since it announces a parting of political company with persons whom I love and respect. But there is a time when principle and honor must take precedence. Buxton gave me my first breath and nurtured my sense of duty and pride. So I owe it the staunchest defense in the face of the recent political charade that is presented as "outreach," "healing," "change" and "reaching out." I do not control anybody in Buxton or claim leadership status, but given my history of activism in the village and nationally, some Buxtonians look to me for political example. Everyone has a right to choose their political friends and allies but to do so in the name of a community without its approval is an unforgivable act that deserves the strongest and widest condemnation.

Let me say from the outset I respect the right of the President of Guyana to invite any group of citizens to a reception in the name of the State and to visit any community. The President is constitutionally president of all of Guyana. If Guyana had a Government of National Unity that represents our common interests, I may even attend such func-

tions if invited. I also support the right of all citizens to share the national resources, including funds to aid development. Accessing government resources is a fundamental right and not a privilege. Hence the President and government should not behave as if they are doing citizens a favor when they commit these resources to the communities. And citizens and communities don't have to beg and curry-favor to get those resources. Finally I believe in healing and partnership as being vital to the wholeness of our multi ethnic nation.

It is my view that over the last eighteen years African Guyanese have been systematically stripped of their dignity, both from without and within to the point where we are almost soul-less and powerless in Guyana. We have become mercenaries and beggars. We have all but surrendered our right to resist and claim our share of the national cake. If we do not stop this rot now, there will be no free tomorrow for our children. We have to have what David Granger calls a "second emancipation." And it has to start by regaining our pride and dignity. It is with this in mind that I take a dim view of the growing accommodationist attitude being promoted by some African

Guyanese leaders and encouraged by the government and the ruling party. The latter senses our vulnerability and is intent on exploiting it. We are willingly presenting ourselves to be conquered in the name of cooperation. But there are fundamental differences between reaching out and groveling, between requesting what is yours and begging. Ultimately a people and its culture will survive and overcome by the quality of their dignity and by standing erect even in the face of perils. This is one of the truest tests of dignity. If you compromise your dignity you have little left of yourself to pass on to the next generation.

When I heard that some Buxtonians wanted to return to our village to celebrate the anniversary of Emancipation in 2010, I was excited. The idea was first mooted by Mr. Nigel Miller who resides in the USA. Although I was not a member of either of the two committees which spearheaded the activities in Buxton to mark the 170<sup>th</sup> and 172<sup>nd</sup> anniversaries of the purchases of that historic village and the formal end to slavery respectively, I offered my services to the groups. I supported the thrust of both groups even if I identified more with the one headed by Mr. Mboya

*(Continued on page 9)*



## David Hinds' Press Release

*(Continued from page 8)*

Wood, my longtime brother-comrade and friend, and Ms. Lorna Campbell in New York and Mrs. Barbara Thomas-Holder in Buxton. Mr. Wood and Ms. Campbell kept me abreast of the planning and sometimes sought my input. When my view was sought on the involvement of Mr. Odinga Lumumba in the activities, I said I had no objections—after all he is a Buxtonian. I was however wary of too much government involvement.

I was asked to give the keynote address at the opening ceremony on July 24 and to moderate a symposium a few days later. The Minister of Culture was slated to speak at the opening ceremony but he did not show up. There was heavy security at the event which suggested that the President or the Prime Minister, both of whom were invited, was expected. Neither of them showed up. The media, including the Chronicle, were there. A Chronicle reporter spoke to me and took my biographical information. While all the other media carried reports on the event, to date the Chronicle has carried not a single word. At the symposium I called on the organizers to turn down an invitation by the President to a reception at State House as I was certain that it was a politi-

cal trap. I felt and still feel that we should steer clear of partisan political involvement and should not offer comfort to any political side. For this I was roundly criticized by a leading member of the committee who viewed my call as unhelpful to the cause of development in Buxton and suggested that since I live overseas I did not have to face the realities of living with the present government. It was the first time I was ever told to my face that I had no business expressing a view about Buxton because I do not reside there. Needless to say I was amused as the member herself does not reside in the village. But it was the first sign that my presence was problematic for some of the organizers.—I was too political.

That same evening I reluctantly attended a “ball” at the Georgetown Club which was also attended by the Prime Minister and four Government Ministers. The only two speakers at the event were the Prime Minister and Mr. Odinga Lumumba. There were two things wrong with the event. First, why hold a Buxton Emancipation Ball at the Georgetown Club at a cost way out of reach of most Buxtonians. Second, why have a Buxton event where Government officials were the centre of attention? Suffice to say the event was at-

tended mostly by the overseas based Buxtonians. I sensed that something was going wrong but in the interest of harmony I held my peace.

My fears were confirmed when the time for an education forum on August 5<sup>th</sup> was hurriedly changed. I later learned that this was done to accommodate those who were going to the President’s reception. I was stunned by the report in the press the next day showing a happy bunch of Buxtonians at State House and quoting them as being “humbled” to be there. I was ashamed and enraged that my people could be so easily fooled and bought. It brought back images of the slaves dressing up and performing for the Massa — back then they were coerced; now they willingly present themselves. I thought of the slave traders delivering their own people into slavery. This is not the Buxton of the 1840 purchase of the “Promised Land,” of Nana Culley and Dan Cunchin, of Fredericks’ Buxton Scholarship, of the Buxtonians who stopped the train, of Eusi Kwayana, ASCRIA and the First of August Movement. I made some mild criticisms on a Groundings TV program but waited to hear from the organizers before expanding. When we met they were unapologetic. My explanations of the possi-

ble political ramifications were met with mild acknowledgements. However, I promised Sister Yvette Herod that in the interest of unity, I would tone down my criticisms. But I left the meeting with the feeling that something dramatic was being planned. Soon reports reached me that some members of the committee were describing themselves as “liaison” to the President and that they were planning to take the President to Buxton. They did not want to publicize it for fear that there would be protests.

The Education Forum referenced above heard gruesome tales of violence, hunger, poverty, illiteracy—the consequence of six years of the worst kind of terror. I was moved to point out that Buxton is in a post-war situation and that we should declare a state of emergency. Towards this end, the forum discussed plans to immediately tackle the violence in the schools, hunger and illiteracy. We also planned an outreach to parents. Similar forums were held with farmers and businesspeople. It was agreed that a meeting should be held with the wider community to report and get more input and that a press conference should be called to report to the nation. To date neither has been held. Instead the teachers were slated to have a meeting at State House

## David Hinds on President Jagdeo's Visit to Buxton

and President Jagdeo and other Government Ministers descended on the village on Wednesday. The Leaders of the Commemoration Committee were prominent. One of them called the President's visit a "historic moment." The President declared that government would fund the initiatives discussed at the education forum. None of these initiatives has been discussed with villagers as we agreed, but the President has pronounced on them as if they were government initiatives.

As stated above I am not opposed to villages accessing government funding. But we must not ignore the political context when we relate to the government. Despite the President's plea that he was not looking for votes, it is an open secret that the government is desperate to show it has the support of African Guyanese. It is one of the tactics to continue the resistance to share power with African Guyanese representatives. It is one of the tactics to secure a third term for President Jagdeo – he will argue he is the only PPP leader who can win African Guyanese votes.

I am opposed to the President going to communities bearing gifts and the communities gravelling at his feet. This to my mind is what has happened in Buxton. What started out as a noble effort to reclaim the dignity of Buxton has ended

up as an obscene political maneuver in which some leaders have mindlessly and perhaps innocently delivered the village to the political overlords. Perhaps Mrs. Thomas-Holder is right in describing the President's presence as historic – it is the first time that Buxton has been presented on a platter to be used as political props in a clear political game. That never happened under the PNC government to which Buxtonians had more ethno-political affinity. The sight of my colleagues grinning from ear to ear, of Buxton's children forming a guard of honor while the President strides confidently as if he owns Buxton is nauseating.

Although I fault the President for agreeing to this scheme—something that Mr. Burnham or Mr. Hoyte never did to Buxton-- it is the Buxtonians who used our commemoration as a platform to get in bed with the government that I am most disappointed at. My words must be harsh as the enormity of your transgression must be highlighted. It is an act of betrayal to surrender your people in an election year to the clutches of a party and government that have destroyed the democratic and multiracial hope of 1992 which your village was instrumental in bringing to fruition. You have betrayed African Guyanese for a few pieces of

dirty coins. You have become the model not of a new emancipation but of a new accommodationism. You are teaching Buxtonians and Africans to be mindless beggars and weaklings.

At a time when Indians, such as Freddy Kisooson, are in court for pointing out the racism against African Guyanese, for standing up for us, you are playing up to the accused. When Indians are saying how corrupt the government is you are welcoming it with African drums. When the international community is rebuking the government for its alleged role in the murder of young African men, you are dignifying it. When this government is accused of carrying blows to Indian dissenters you are taking your people into the unholy den. When African Guyanese are catching hell in Guyana, are being reduced to serfs, are being eye-passed you are strengthening one of the sources of their misery. You are dining and hosting a government that has refused to share power with your representatives. Mr. Jagdeo does not have to ask for votes, you are campaigning for him. You have lost your credibility and your way. You may get the millions promised but it will forever be stained with the blood of your betrayal. If you think a few million dollars will lift Buxton out of the depths, you are living

in a joker's world. Blood money does not facilitate lasting development and buy dignity. I spent my early youth actively opposing the deliverance Buxton to Congress Place—some of you were in the trenches with us. I spoke out against delivering our village to the gunmen of the recent past and now I oppose delivering it to Freedom House. Governments must govern fairly and communities must defend their right to self-determination. History will never be kind to those of you who slavishly delivered our ancestral house, however shaky it is, to be used as political prop.

We have not learned from our mistakes. When some Buxtonians welcomed the gunmen in 2002 they did not know they were opening the floodgates to mayhem in and from their village. Eight years later, the village is in tatters and the facilitators of the gunmen are nowhere to be seen. Now we are welcoming a new set of saviors. I predict the outcome will be of a different cloth but the same smell. Given the above I cannot continue my association with the group in Buxton. I cannot be party to their scheme. To them I say, as my colleague, Andaiye, famously said eight years ago—Not in my name. And I warn Buxtonians to stay away from this game, it is unhealthy. I can assure you that this is not my last word on this issue.

*David Hinds, PhD*

## Judge Decision by Outcome

After reading the articles by David Hinds, Eusi and Tacuma Ogunseye on the recently concluded 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, I felt I had to give my opinion for what its worth on this issue. While deliberating how to say what I wanted to say so as not to offend anyone or start a back and forth in the media between Buxtonians, I saw an article by Orrin Gordon. I am happy he weighed in because it is the kind of article I wanted to write and so spares me the headache. His, is the most sober voice to date that I have heard on this issue and I concur wholeheartedly with what he had to contribute. I understand the concerns of David, Eusi and Tacuma and I believe some of them at least are legitimate. I was a member of the overseas contingent of the commemoration committee, and while all that transpired in Guyana wasn't exactly as originally planned, I was happy with the overall result. I have scant interest in politics since in the limited experience in my lifetime I have

seen that it has not benefited people in general and Buxtonians in particular. Buxton has been asked time and time again over the years to resist, protest and stand up against all manner of ills in our society and governments. Buxton has always answered those calls. Buxton has always been seen as a standard bearer for black communities in Guyana. What bothers me is that Buxton has never benefited tangibly from any of this.

As far as I am aware nobody begged either for an audience with the president or aid from the government. If that is the perception, then that is the perception. That is all it is. An invitation was given to Buxtonians and those who wanted to go went. At the event concerns were raised by the people and solutions proposed by the government. It was as we say; "yah you, yah me"! As David noted, these were resources that Buxtonians were entitled to as taxpayers, and further, had been long overdue. I therefore do not see how you com-

promise your dignity or credibility by requesting what is owed to you; in fact, the opposite may be true. The follow up visit to the village, as evidenced by the turnout, suggests that rank and file Buxtonians wanted a forum to air their views and grouses. While we can debate the merits and demerits of how what was done was done, I think this should ultimately be judged by the eventual outcome of this experience.

In closing, I would like to say that the doomsday scenario predicted by David ignores our history as a people and as a village. It belittles our intelligence and trivializes our concerns. History is rife with examples of occurrences in which the predicted results of pundits were repudiated. There is, in fact, a possibility that this event, through the press and interest it has generated, may be an impetus to racial reconciliation in our country. And if that were to be the case, then that would be another first for Buxton.

**Owen Ifill, M.D.**

*Op Ed  
by  
Owen Ifill, M.D.*



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## Craft A Development Plan

by  
**Orrin Gordon**

*Dr. Owen Ifill made reference to this letter in his piece printed on the previous page. It was written by villager Orrin Gordon and published 24 August, 2010 in [Kaieteur News](#) under the heading: "Buxtonians should engage the President and his men to determine if they are genuine."*

I had joined the Buxton celebration discussion where I pointed to my preference for a collegial confab to talk and come up with concrete solutions and activities in a holistic manner to address the Buxton crisis. In that letter I spoke about my agreement with the notion of rights of the individual and that persons can engage and 'lime' with the President and his men, even though I took a position not to participate in the invite for reason known to me and my experience.

Dr. David Hinds' sharp press statement indicated that he was peeved by the President's visit with a rousing welcome and garlanding in tow.

Sharp words were uttered about the Buxton committee meeting where someone blotted his contribution to local politics by stating he was not around year round to deal with Jagdeo and company. Then his most striking position was that he was dissociating himself from the Buxton group. It was this latter statement which has assailed my consciousness and forced me to weigh in on the matter again. I will list my points for conciseness.

Professors David and Barbara should reconcile if there are differences in approach to the noble task of restoring Buxton to the days of yore. We all are

rooting for the accomplishing of this task and there are going to be approaches or strategies akin to one's training, experience and praxis. These must all be harnessed for the good of the community in a mature and sensible manner. There is no need for a public fight over the strategy as that is not a Buxton thing. David will know like all the others that we are known for the fiercest wars in the village but next minute we step out, the warring factions are fighting together. The truth is that we must trust each other's sincerity to the task and so the need not to look over one's shoulder – a negative and energy wasting activity is unneeded. Think about who wins when we have the public spat.

I took the time to call some persons and canvas their impressions of the visit. Maybe, I did not get a true representation but I got the feeling that in general, people were neither sold nor bought. Matter of fact the few persons who were shown by GINA/NCN commenting, were real and expressed candour.

In forging discussions on power sharing, consociationalism, inclusive governance, partnerships et al, one is compelled to speak with government and all others whether they were foes and adversaries in the past. As it stands now that these issues are still premature and may

be seen by some as still-born. We are therefore confined to the task of continuous engagements and avoid being seen as duplicitous – i.e. wanting to share political management space and still making territorial and clannish demands. A few decades in community activism and a few years in local government management have taught me many hard lessons. One of the tenets of a good community activist is the ability to let go of self and yield to the greater community good, sometimes even to your own let down.

The President's advisors must have told him and he acquiesced to the call to visit Buxton after the protest by the residents on the Thursday night, August 5, 2010. The residents made a powerful statement which reverberated poignantly in many circles across the world. This should therefore galvanise all Buxton parties to see and use the moment to press for just demands. It is therefore a question of strategizing and taking a militant stand for community development assistance. The intelligent minds of Buxton, well wishers and others must now craft a development plan for the community and engage the President and his men to determine if they are genuine. There were excuses made a few years ago and Mr. Hoyte's

*(Continued on page 14)*

# Dialogue with Government-Constructive

*Op Ed by  
C. Quintyn Bacchus, PhD*

My busy schedule did not permit my presence in Buxton for the 170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration, but I was there in spirit. As a member of the 170th Anniversary Committee that organized this event, my unyielding support continues. Many of the participants expressed that this event was ‘massive’ and it should be done on a yearly basis.

Over the weekend, dozens of concerned Buxtonians have e-mailed and called me to seek my opinion on the recent fiasco that transpired as a result of two opposing views on government’s outreach in Buxton. I quickly expressed to them that every Buxtonian has the right to vent his/her concerns about this issue since it could be a life-altering experience for some, if not all. I further stated to them that I fully support any effort that would liberate Buxtonians from high unemployment, poverty, illiteracy and a subculture of violence and lawlessness. After a thorough analysis of the two prevailing views that have left many Buxtonians bamboozled, I arrived at a conclusion of the manifestation these diabolically opposing options are likely to present. Broadly speaking, one choice is perpetual

poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and lawlessness; the other is, at least, a step towards alleviating those conditions which also threaten the very survival of our people. Thank God the sensible choice was made! If the Government is willing to financially support a slew of initiatives proposed by Buxtonians that would help us rebuild our infrastructure, stimulate economic and social progress, why would such a move be opposed? Is it not the development of Buxton that we have all strived to achieve for ‘donkey years’? I now hope the government delivers.

I wish to commend everyone who has taken steps to move Buxton in that forward direction. Moreover, I would like to echo Dr. Owen Ifill’s observation on the pivotal role Buxtonian women have played in the progressive movement of the village—starting with those women who stopped the train to those who have successfully managed their households with pittance. At this juncture, the same holds true as we witness a new movement led by two women, Lorna Campbell and Barbara Thomas-Holder, to restore pride and progress into our once leading village. They have championed the cause in initiating the return of sanity and dignity to our village. These two women are

the vanguards of the new revolution. Hats off to both of them!

Their accomplishments seem to be threatened, however, by politicking and personality clashes. These characteristics often develop into stressors that could surely destroy any movement. But there is hope if mature adults learn to get along, if just in the interest of Buxton.

This is indeed a serious time, and we must treat it as such. The decision by the Committee to open the door to dialogue with the government was a monumental paradigm shift. I refer to this kind of approach as a “common sense line of attack”. Buxtonians can now negotiate and agitate for change. Fussing and cussing from the outside is negative confrontation. Engaging and dialoging from the inside would more likely result in progressive changes. Meeting face-to-face with your “political adversary” is a sign of strength and not weakness, as might have been portrayed by some.

As a social worker, Barbara Thomas-Holder has come to understand the dilemma of the community and people she diligently serves. In my memory, this decision to entertain gestures by the government that would undoubtedly bring about enormous economic and social changes in Buxton is the most con-

structive political intervention by Buxtonians. Mrs. Thomas-Holder’s approach is the impetus behind what some are already calling the renaissance of Buxton-Friendship.

Before I close, I wish to share these few thoughts with Mrs. Thomas-Holder and her dynamic team:

Do not allow this recent ignominy to kill your spirits. There is a great deal of work ahead to be done. Distracters and obstructionists have a way of minimizing positive change with ghoulish remarks. They savor the division; they use it as a platform to prey on the misery of the same people they profess to represent. They would debase and dehumanize any one who tries to change the status quo. They are obsessed in maintaining their own status quo of being in control. Out of fear of inevitable change they lash out. That is the psychology behind the thinking of those always-want-to-be-in-control freaks. With time, these control freaks become sure that their theories about reality are right, and can build rational arguments and cherry pick data to buttress their beliefs. More importantly, do not lose sight of the goal—the liberation of Buxtonians from the plight of “marginalization”.

## A New Dawn for Buxton

*Op-Ed  
by  
John Newton*

Buxton has always been in the forefront of Guyana's struggles for change; in spite of all its sacrifices, the expected economic prosperity has not materialized in recent decades. History has now taught us, Buxtonians, that we should live our lives as patriotic citizens, not as political dissidents and pawns. Regardless of

which party is in power, the Government of Guyana is sworn to govern and provide for all citizens of this country; that includes Buxtonians.

At some point, good old common sense ought to prevail. If we choose to not discuss the problems that face our community with those who are in a position to effectively help us, we are likely to suffer to death. This has been the challenge Buxton has been grappling with for too long to the disadvantage of its residents.

An opportunity to engage the president and his cabinet in direct talks, to articulate the economic and social problems that

plague our community, and to seek assistance should always be greatly welcomed. I am happy that some broad-minded representatives seized such a moment and presented a convincing case for much-needed help from the State. Word is Buxton stands ready to receive hundreds of millions of dollars (GY\$) in aid for agricultural, educational, economic and community development. Kudos to the team of negotiators!

This should be seen as a new dawn for the community-Charting a new development path!



*John, Carol and Charis Newton enjoying a fabulous welcome from residents of Belladrum, WCB*

### THANKS!

*On behalf of Buxton's 170th Anniversary Committee, I wish to thank everyone who contributed to the success of the celebrations. Special thanks to the performers, panelists, clubs, organisations, villagers and friends for your enthusiastic support.*

*We also extend a warm note of appreciation to the Buxton Response Committee. Without you, this would not have been possible. Keep up the good work for Buxton-our own native land!*

*Lorna Campbell*

## Craft A Development Plan

*(Continued from page 12)*

plan was seen as holding the regime to ransom. Let us roll out an updated plan to see if there is genuineness. Crafting a plan must involve widespread consultations with villagers. If the President's visit predated the consultations, that should be no problem, we will still do our thing.

The President's perceived entreaty or politically expedient entry cannot and must not negate the work of the overseas and local committees. Let us find solutions to deal with our internal differences and continue to fight and work for the upliftment of the village.

In closing I have seen the

letters by Brothers David, Ogunse and Eusi in addition to statements from the PNCr and WPA, yet there is wisdom in finding ways to take all views and sentiments on board in crafting a plan for the village's resurgence. All are involved. All will make it happen.

*Orrin Gordon*



## Annie Daniels' Awards

A former Buxton resident who is now a Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago has maintained his promise to reward his fellow villagers for their outstanding achievements at the National Grade Six Assessment Examinations. For the past four years, Professor Kerwin Charles has donated US\$1000 each year to the village's most outstanding students to assist with the acquisition of text books for the commencement of their secondary school life.

The donation is made in honour of his grandmother, Annie Daniels, a lifelong resident of Buxton, whose feeling for young people was manifested not only in her profound love for her children and grandchildren but also in the caring concern for the many other young persons with whom

she came into contact. "This annual award which honours her legacy is made through her eldest grandson Professor Kerwin Charles, a Distinguished Professor at the University of Chicago," said Paulette Charles, the daughter of the late Annie Daniels and mother of Professor Charles.

In keeping with the professor's desires, this year the award was shared by nine students from the three Primary Schools in the Buxton/Friendship community. Topping the list is Candace Kirton of the Friendship Primary School who gained a place at the Bishops High School with a score of 529 marks. Nehemiah Thorne of Company Road Primary, whose mother was terminally ill throughout most of his school life and died just before he wrote the examinations, came in second with a score of 525 marks

which also earned him a place at Bishops'. The other recipients are Tamala Dover, Kassandra Campbell, Alicia Jordan, Tanisha Campbell, Gillian Sullivan, Tiffany Yaw and Mark Sam.

After presenting the awards, Mrs. Paulette Charles, a former head teacher in the community, encouraged the parents of the recipients to instill positive thoughts in them. The village of Buxton, though recently tarnished by negative activities, has produced some of Guyana's most outstanding academics.

### Kaieteur News

8 August, 2010

*In picture below, Mrs. Paulette Charles (second from the right) poses with the recipients of the Annie Daniels Award.*



## Note of Appreciation

We, the members of the Buxton Response Committee, extend our sincere appreciation and thanks to all our overseas based Buxtonians and Friends of Buxton who supported the activities of the 170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Purchase of Buxton. Your contributions and participation were a source of encouragement and inspi-

ration, and served to remind us that we are still "mattie Buxtonians" and that our ancestors' legacy of love and togetherness remain deeply rooted in us. You have, indeed, contributed immensely to the success of our activities, and hence the feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction that we all experienced.

We plan to continue func-

tioning as a group and forging ahead with the business of "Charting a New Development Path", irrespective of the challenges.

It will be remiss of us if we do not extend our heartfelt gratitude to the members of the 170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee for the initiative taken to plan such a historic event.

Once again, thank you all.

*Barbara Thomas-Holder  
Merceleine (Patsy) Moses  
Lester Andries  
Dr. Leslie Carter  
Hazel (Junie) Carter-Murray  
Andrew Castello  
Lyndon France  
Yvette Herod  
Ras. Jerome Hope  
Shurcine Hope-Hinds  
Mosa Telford  
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John Newton

**New York General Meeting  
for Buxtonians**

To discuss new initiatives to help  
revitalize the Buxton-Friendship com-  
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