



ISISA

Newsletter

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EDITORIAL

This is the first newsletter that I am editing for ISISA. The plan is to have two issues of the ISISA Newsletter annually (June and December). The main aim of this newsletter is to keep participants connected and 'in the loop' of what is going on, in between the ISISA biennial conferences. This newsletter is what you make it, so please keep the contributions coming. Photos, articles, forthcoming publications, upcoming conferences, and news on 'research in progress' are more than welcome.

Contributions for the December 2012 issue are to reach me at abaldacchino59@gmail.com by not later than NOVEMBER 15, 2012. Read and Enjoy. Suggestions for improvement are also appreciated.

I want to thank Denbeigh Armstrong, who as the ISISA editor before me, passed on information and handy tips on how to go about putting this newsletter together.

Anna Baldacchino
Newsletter Editor

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of their respective authors and are not necessarily endorsed by ISISA.

The "Islands of the World" XII Conference Evaluation Summary

Delegates of the 'Islands of the World XII' Conference, held at the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College (HLSCC), Paraquita Bay Campus, Tortola, British Virgin Islands, over May 29 – June 1, 2012, were given an opportunity on the final day of the conference to express their views about various aspects regarding the organization of this conference. This brief report provides a summary of the data obtained through the 50 completed evaluation forms that were returned to the organizers for analysis.

Responses to Evaluation Questions

Value of program segments – A large number of delegates commented that they found the keynote speakers' presentations to be both interesting and enjoyable. Most delegates also found the opportunities of networking, with well-known island scholars, and of recognizing and discussing similar challenges of islands, to be of significant value.

Delegates' comments to possible improvements – The delegates considered the conference to have many sessions of value, but attendance and participation was constrained as similar areas of interest were often scheduled in concurrent sessions. Suggestions were made for more attention to be given to parallel and less to plenary sessions. Suggestions were also made in support of a session chair protocol handout, and/or web-page

description defining the expectations and roles of chairs; such would alleviate or eliminate some timing issues within sessions.

Overall suggestions on improvements - This question received a large vote of support for the efforts made by Dana Lewis-Ambrose and her capable colleagues at HLSCC. The question also raised the issue that presenters could benefit from guidelines which would provide a deeper topic focus and improved presentation structure. A number of delegates expressed a wish for a conference attendee list including contact information (email addresses) to promote further networking opportunities.

Least valued program segments – The majority of the delegates responded to this question by stating that all sessions were felt to be of value. Delegates noted however that discussions on financial services and economic development segments lacked depth. This could be due to the complexity of the subject and time constraints

Rating different aspects of the conference - Delegates assigned top values (97%) to the helpfulness and friendliness of Student Ambassadors and the Organization Committee Members. Slightly lower yet similarly impressive values (91-96%) were given to the conference registration process, conference site facilities, conference tours and activities, bus services, and overall organization of the conference. Lower but still very high values (86%-90%) were given for the preparedness of presenters, conference topics and content of concurrent sessions. The lowest value aspects of the conference (85% and less) have been assigned to poster sessions and session timing issues.

The information provided through the rating of the conference aspects does not differentiate between program schedule issues and session start times associated with unexpected and unavoidable delays, as against those resulting from time management problems of session chairs and presenters.

Dana Lewis-Ambrose and her team deserve our warmest congratulations for an overwhelming successful conference. Her efforts, and those of all the members of her team throughout the conference, received repeated comments of appreciation in the evaluation exercise.

Cheryl Carmichael - Graduate Student, MA (Island Studies), University of Prince Edward Island, Canada Participant and Presenter



Delegates networking during lunch



H.Lavity Stouff Community College, BVI

Back on Tortola, we wandered through the Governor's heritage house to the beats of steel drums. A Cultural Showcase closed the conference, featuring local delicacies, dancers, and crafts. It sounds like paradise! It was often claimed to be. But no location can be perfect, not even in the Caribbean. BVI, and the other islands represented, share challenges with many Norwegian islands: poorer services, higher cost of living, marginalisation by mainlanders, and outmigration. To live on an island, you must accept the difficulties with all the advantages.

Dr. Ilan Kelman is a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for International Climate and Environmental Research - (CICERO) Oslo, Norway.



Beach near Bitter End, British Virgin Islands

Photo: Ilan Kelman



Island Studies Journal (ISSN: 1715-2593) was set up in 2006 as a freely downloadable, peer reviewed, scholarly and inter-disciplinary journal dedicated to the study of islands and island life.

ISJ is institutionally housed at the Institute of Island Studies, University of Prince Edward Island, Canada: www.islandstudies.com

ISJ is now the official journal of ISISA, initially for a trial period of 2 years.

Manuscripts to be considered for publication welcome at: isj@upei.ca

Website: www.islandstudies.ca/journal

“We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far.”

H.P. Lovecraft

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS BY ISISA MEMBERS

THE JUMBIES' PLAYING GROUND

Old World Influences on Afro-Creole Masquerades in the Eastern Caribbean

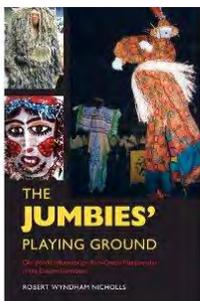
ROBERTWYNDHAM NICHOLLS
FOREWORD BY JOHN NUNLEY

During the masquerades common during carnival time, jumbies (ghosts or ancestral spirits) are set free to roam the streets of Caribbean nations, turning the world topsy-turvy. Modern carnivals, which evolved from earlier ritual celebrations featuring disguised performers, are important cultural and economic events throughout the Caribbean and are a direct link to a multilayered history.

This work explores the evolutionary connections in function, garb, and behaviour between Afro-Creole masquerades and precursors from West Africa, the British Isles, and Western Europe. Robert Wyndham Nicholls utilizes a concept of play derived from Africa to describe a range of lighthearted and ritualistic activities. Along with Old World seeds, he studies the evolution of Afro-Creole prototypes that emerged in the Eastern Caribbean—bush masquerades, stilt dancers, animal disguises, she-males, female masquerades, and carnival clowns.

Masquerades enact social, political, and spiritual roles within recurring festivals, initiations, wakes, skimmingtons, and weddings. The author explores performance in terms of abstraction in costume-disguise and the aesthetics of music, songs, drum rhythms, dance, and licentiousness. He reveals masquerades as transformative agent, ancestral endorser,

behaviour manager, informal educator, and luck conferrer.



Robert Wyndham Nicholls, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, is a professor in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences of the University of the Virgin Islands. He is the author of numerous articles in journals such as *African*

Arts, *the Black Perspective in Music, Dance, Folklore*, *Folklore Forum*, and *International Journal of African Dance*.

NOVEMBER, 304 pages (approx.), 6 x 9 inches, 30 b&w photographs (approx.), 65 color photographs (approx.), 3 maps, foreword, appendices, bibliography, index
Printed casebinding \$55.00 978-1-61703-611-8
Ebook \$55.00 978-1-61703-612-5
Folklore Studies in a Multicultural World

A TASTE OF ISLANDS

"This book is a journey to some of the world's many and diverse islands, captured in dishes, and between covers."

Grant McCall, President, International Small Islands Studies Association

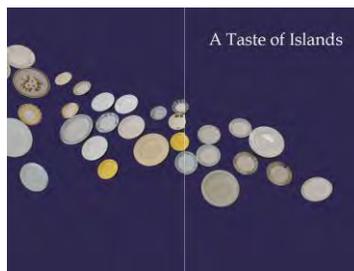
Anna and Godfrey Baldacchino are co-editing a publication titled, "*A Taste of Islands: 60 Recipes & Stories from our World of Islands*" This will be published late in 2012 by Island Studies Press, part of the Institute of Island Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island, Canada's smallest and only full island province.

The book is taking shape as a 260-page extravaganza of island dishes: the editors are collecting 60 "chapters" from all over the world, each showcasing a traditional, local island dish—with ingredients, recipe and method of preparation; followed by a short essay describing the dish's history, origins and transformations; and concluding with a list of further reading; just a succinct but captivating 2,000 words. Each article will be accompanied by one full-colour photo of the prepared dish. The editors invite readers to get a taste of each of the 60 islands in the book through their dishes.

The International Small Islands Studies Association, which held its 12th Biennial Conference from 29 May-1 June May, 2012 in the Virgin Islands, has endorsed this publication. It is a perfect fit as, just like the book, ISISA celebrates the diversity and resilience of island people and cultures throughout the world.

Pre-ordering a copy of the book and any enquires can be addressed to Anna Baldacchino: abaldacchino59@gmail.com.

Proposed artwork for book cover by Jean-Yves Vigneau



Mosquitoes and Lemurs: Branson’s Island Sustainability?

Ilan Kelman

Richard Branson owns a lot—including Mosquito Island within the British Virgin Islands, a U.K. Overseas Territory in the Caribbean. With his island, Branson is doing something different: he is building a luxury eco-tourism resort.

Extensive effort is aiming to make it environmentally friendly. Baseline studies established eco-zones and important species. Geological and forestry surveys are used to ensure that roads do not scar the landscape. Monitoring and data collection will continue after construction.

The buildings use passive cooling, natural ventilation, rainwater collection, energy reduction approaches, and a host of other sustainable architectural practices. All while incorporating hurricane resistance measures.



It is exciting to see sustainability principles being implemented in practice. The learning process is particularly important, in terms of gleaned feedback from the island and infrastructure while the resort functions.

More thoughtful and critiquing analysis would be helpful to ensure that we learn as much as feasible. For example, Branson wants to import lemurs, a mammal that has no connection at all with the island. He has already brought some animals to a nearby island.

Furthermore, consider the deeper sustainability questions which are rarely asked.

How does privatising an island contribute to the entire country and peoples of the British Virgin Islands? Are local, sustainable livelihoods generated by hideaways for the rich, irrespective of how environmentally friendly the resorts are? What ethics emerge through supporting small island countries with profits made from environmentally wasteful industries, such as aviation?

Despite the complexity of the answers (and the questions), Branson is charging ahead. That is not necessarily to be criticised. Nor should it be venerated.

Instead, we must learn what we can and always seek to do better. Sustainability is a never-ending process—especially of learning and teaching.

“An island to someone who has never left it is the world. An island to someone who has never seen it does not exist.”

Wayne Johnston