

## THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BAHAMIAN STUDIES

### Volume 16, 2010

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Welcome to the inaugural volume of the *International Journal of Bahamian Studies*. As announced in last year's editorial, after having analyzed the subject matter of all articles published in the volumes of both *College Forum* (1980-1999) and *The College of The Bahamas Research Journal* (2000-2009), we found that an overwhelming majority of articles had either addressed a Bahamian topic or an issue pertinent to The Bahamas. As a result, the Editorial Board agreed that the journal should focus on Bahamian studies and that The College of The Bahamas should be the home of such a journal. Therefore in this inaugural volume, we will continue the tradition of publishing in the multidisciplinary niche however all articles will now have a Bahamian focus or include content or topics of Bahamian interest.

The articles published in Volume 16 are drawn from variety of subject areas and disciplines: corporal and capital punishment and murder; Bahamian language, literature and music; animal welfare, the rights of children and climate change. All are on topics of intense public interest, some challenging, others, perplexing and yet others surprising in their conclusions. And, we are pleased to have had contributions from scholars located both in The Bahamas and abroad.

Children, animals and the environment are always vulnerable. Their rights are often overlooked or not considered in public policy discussions and debates. However their rights must not be taken for granted as they are subject to abuse and neglect and require state protection. The rights of children of non-citizen parents living in The Bahamas (particularly Haitian parents lacking residency status) was studied by Kristy Belton. She found that although The Bahamas is a signatory to many United Nations human rights treaties which guarantee protection of rights for stateless children, such as the right to health care, education, and freedom from discrimination, The Bahamas needs to go farther to meet the needs of these vulnerable children and protect them from abuse, victimization, and stigma. William Fielding studied the levels of care provided to various types and sizes of dogs in Bahamian households. He concluded that the largest sized dogs (whether pedigreed or not), potcakes and pitbulls received levels of care that borders on neglect and outright abandonment. The review of the issue of climate change in the Caribbean by Lisa Benjamin discusses how small increases in temperature and sea level can affect the economies of small island states, including The Bahamas.

The second trio of articles on corporal punishment/domestic violence, capital punishment, and the murder of Sir Harry Oakes also touch on sensitive issues of public policy. Shane Brennen and her team of researchers studied the levels of violence in Bahamian homes by focussing on the use of corporal punishment to discipline children and its links to sexual abuse, illegal drug use, animal abuse, and domestic violence. They determined that what is considered abuse in The Bahamas would be considered assault and battery in other jurisdictions. Capital punishment is still "on the books" in The Bahamas and is a topic of frequent public debate. The article by William Lofquist traces the use of capital punishment in The Bahamas from the first recorded execution in 1791 through to the most recent which took place in 2000. The use of the death penalty has changed through different historical periods and its use is a reflection of ever changing colonial and racial relations. The article includes a vignette of each execution. The unsolved murder of Sir Harry Oakes has been the subject of several speculative books, films and television documentaries. Cathleen LeGrand has critically reviewed six published accounts, providing a

highly readable interpretation of the facts, the characters involved, the circumstances and the mystique surrounding the murder. She may not have solved the murder for us but her critique of the theories of “who dun it” is well worth reading.

The volume includes three articles from the humanities disciplines of language, literature and music. Raymond Oenbring has contributed a landmark study of written Bahamian English: codifying usage, spelling and other aspects that identify the variety of English used in The Bahamas. Using computer software to analyze source texts—in this case, newspaper articles—his article opens up uncharted territory for research. The book and media review section concludes the volume. Marjorie Downie has contributed a review of School of English Studies professor Ivy Higgins’s new work of fiction, *To Market, To Market*. Paul Shaw has reviewed *Tchaka Mizik*, a music CD recorded by C-Force, a trio composed of College of The Bahamas Music Department professors: Christine Gangelhoff (flute), Christy Lee (keyboard), and Christian Justillian (euphonium and percussion).

As the research agenda of The College of The Bahamas drives the institution forward towards university status, we hope to publish more scholarly articles produced by our students, faculty and staff. Two articles in this year’s journal are the products of College of The Bahamas research grants – Raymond Oenbring’s study of written Bahamian English and the recording of the CD *Tchaka Mizik* by C-Force.

In the time since the journal has been published as an online open access journal and all the back volumes were digitized, we have been monitoring the usage statistics of the articles in the journal. Most of the articles have been viewed and or downloaded more than 500 times each and several have exceeded 1000 times. One article shows over 3,000 downloads. These statistics are evidence that the journal is indeed being used and that the articles are on topics of interest to researchers in The Bahamas and abroad. We hope to conduct a citation analysis in future to track the usage of articles.

Managing the production of a scholarly journal is not a solitary endeavour but is truly the result of the efforts of a number of committed people. First and foremost, thanks are due to the scholars who submitted their manuscripts to the journal and who patiently answered all the editorial queries. Equally, thanks must go to the many peer reviewers who selflessly gave of their time to read and critique the submissions. Without the peer reviewers—who remain nameless—this journal would not have quality papers to publish. Thanks to Valdez Russell, International Relations Liaison Officer and the staff of the Office of Research, Graduate Programmes, and International Relations, for their tireless support of the journal and its mission and to William Fielding, Chair of the Research Advisory Board for his encouragement. To Marjorie Downie, I am grateful for her supreme copyediting of all the manuscripts—and for her perennial support of the journal and interest in scholarship. To Cathleen LeGrand, many thanks for her fine proofreading. To all my all colleagues in the Libraries and Instructional Media Services department under the direction of Willamae Johnson, I am grateful for their support and assistance. And last but not least, thanks go to Italya Russell and the MIS team for maintaining the journal server.

Looking forward—we hope to publish one or two special volumes this year in addition to the annual volume of peer-reviewed research articles. Another goal for next year is to expand the book and media review section.

*Virginia Ballance*  
*Managing Editor*