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The Voice of the Taíno People®

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Illegal Adoption Exploits Caribs

DOMINICA, WEST INDIES - The poor situation of Dominica's indigenous Carib population is being exploited by foreigners, according to the Christian Children's Fund (CCF). The CCF exposed an illegal adoption and baby trafficking racket earlier this week.

It is now calling for action over its claims that families in Guadeloupe and Martinique have been illegally adopting children of Dominica's indigenous Carib people.

The group says there have been 30 such cases over the past 15 years.

Education needed

CCF Director, Francis Joseph, told BBC Caribbean Service that the group was trying to educate individuals about the implications of giving up their children for adoption.

"(Parents) need to know that it is irreversible and once they go through proceedings for legal adoption they are unlikely to see their child again," Mr Joseph said.

"What we are asking for under the circumstances and in the situation where mothers are now asking for their kids to be returned, is that in the initial stages that there should be counselling to ensure that in adoption proceedings, the protocol is followed in the best way possible," he said.

The CCF is also warning that problems are arising when adoptees are returning to Dominica in later life.

"We have had cases... people who have been taken away and are just returning to the Carib territory unceremoniously, unprepared, speaking French and now trying to fit into the education system but can't speak English," Mr Joseph said.

Ongoing situation

Earlier this week, the CCF director said that his organisation had been monitoring the situation for some time but recently there had been an increase in the level of trafficking.

The situation was confirmed by Carib chief Garnet Joseph, who said those involved in the racket took

advantage of the poor circumstances of the young Carib mothers and coerced them to give up their babies.



Carib Chief Garnet Joseph in Dominica.

Neither party has been able to confirm whether or how much money is being exchanged.

However, both the Carib chief and the CCF director have suggested that the deals have been facilitated by the involvement of local community leaders.

In response to the findings, the government has been urged to restructure the welfare services to closely monitor adoptions.

Police have also been asked to pay more attention to children leaving the island. •

UCTP Continues To Engage International System

WASHINGTON, DC – UCTP representatives, affiliates and other Caribbean Indigenous leaders gathered in Washington D.C. in April to participate in the meetings focusing on the **Organization of American States (OAS)** draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

This is an ongoing process and the participation of Caribbean community leadership via the Caribbean Indigenous Caucus led by **Dr. Albert DeTerville** has increased the visibility of Caribbean Indigenous Peoples with this international forum. Country representation within the caucus included St. Lucia, Puerto Rico, Barbados, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Diaspora.

Caribbean Indigenous community leaders representing the UCTP and its affiliates will also be participating within the **United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues** from May 10-21, 2004. UCTP representatives have actively participated at this Forum since its inception and this activity has led to increased visibility and awareness of Caribbean Indigenous Issues on an international level. •

Dominican, Haiti Floods Kill at Least 363

By *PETER PRENGAMAN*,
Associated Press Writer

JIMANI, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC - Sobbing villagers tore through heaps of mud with their bare hands Tuesday, searching for loved ones as the death toll from flooding in the Dominican Republic and Haiti

rose to at least 363. Trucks dumped scores of corpses into a mass grave.

An Associated Press reporter counted at least 180 bodies on the Dominican side of Hispaniola island by Tuesday afternoon. Another 100 or so had been dumped in the mass grave, according to Lt. Virgilio Mejia with the Dominican National Rescue Commission.

There were 83 confirmed deaths on the Haitian side, but the toll in both countries was steadily rising.

"I've looked at the bodies in the morgue and couldn't recognize any of them," said Jude Joseph, 30, who came to Jimani from Haiti's capital of Port-au-Prince to sell rice at a border market and visit family members in Bobmita, La Cuarenta and Barrio El Tanque, neighborhoods that were swept away in Monday's floods.

"I don't know what to do. I've been left with nothing," said Joseph, whose nine relatives were missing late Tuesday.

They were among the more than 250 unaccounted for in the Dominican Republic. In addition, 62 were missing in Haiti, mostly in the town of Fond Verrette.

U.S. Marines, who are leading a 3,600-member multinational task force sent to stabilize Haiti since the ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide on Feb. 29, headed to Fond Verrette help in the emergency.

Rain has pelted the region for weeks, but a weekend downpour caused the Solie River to burst its banks, sweeping away the three neighborhoods of wooden shacks built mostly by Haitian migrants working in this impoverished Dominican town. At least 50 of the dead on the Dominican side were Haitians.

"I found them this morning," said Shela Lena, 24, who lost her sister-in-law and 3-year-old nephew Tuesday. She came from Port-au-Prince to work as a maid.

About six miles outside of Jimani, emergency workers in surgical masks and white gloves watched as trucks dumped scores of corpses into a 15-foot ditch.

By late Tuesday, more than scores of bodies filled the grave. No relatives were present for the mass burial.

Some on the Dominican side were believed to be Haitian workers living there illegally and therefore afraid to claim the bodies of family members.

The Dominican government had issued an alert Sunday, warning people that rivers may swell with the rains. But Jimani — more than 100 miles west of the Dominican capital of Santo Domingo — has only limited access to radio broadcasts.

People whose houses still stood on Tuesday scooped water from their living rooms. Chairs and mattresses floated in deep pools of water as dark clouds threatened more rain. Hundreds of houses had been destroyed on both sides of the border.

As rescue workers and families pulled bodies from the mud, medical teams draped work areas with mosquito netting. The insects can carry parasites that cause malaria and dengue fever. Some people were also being given tetanus shots.

"We can't find her anywhere," cried Norma Cuevas, 32, as she desperately searched for her 63-year-old mother among dozens of other families reaching their hands through mud.

Many roads on both countries were still impassable.

Editor's Note: *Associated Press writers Amy Bracken and Jose P. Monegro contributed to this report.*

Story continues on page 3

Caribbean Killer Floods

(Cont. from pg.2)

Elena Diaz, 42, who lost her daughter in the floods, sobbed as she waited in a long line outside the morgue where she went to look for her son-in-law and three grandchildren.

"They found my daughter. Now I have to see if I have some family left," she said.

The raging water carried some victims away. Bodies were found as far away as six miles downstream, said Maximo Noves Espinal, an emergency official in Jimani.

Haitian officials were struggling to determine the full extent of the tragedy. Interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue was expected to visit the scene.

Since a three-week armed rebellion pushed Aristide from power, Haiti's interim leaders have struggled to provide basic services to its 8 million people. Left nearly bankrupt, the government has scant resources to deal with natural disasters.

The rains left at least three others dead in other parts of the Dominican Republic while one man was also killed in Puerto Rico. Another man was killed aboard a Guyanese-registered freighter that sank Monday in rough seas.

The floods were some of the deadliest in a decade.

In 1994, Tropical Storm Gordon caused mudslides that buried at least 829 Haitians. More recently, nearly 30 people died in September during floods caused by heavy rain in St. Marc, about 45 miles northwest of the capital, Port-au-Prince. •

LVTP Editor's Note: The "Dominican, Haiti Kill at Least 363" and several others published in this edition are reprinted under the **Fair Use Law: Doctrine of International Copyright Law.**

Vieques Conference

Outcomes

by Gina Rixturey Rosario

WASHINGTON, D.C. - A hundred activists gathered in Washington May 15-18 to discuss the future of the Vieques movement that succeeded in kicking the US Navy out of the Puerto Rican island, but still faces a crisis of health and environmental contamination produced by more than 60 years of naval bombing and maneuvers.

Vieques experiences high rates of cancer and other diseases, and while the Navy ceased bombing last year, most of the island's land is still controlled by the federal government and remains off-limits to *viequeses* themselves.

"Vieques: Transforming Dreams into Reality the Struggle Continues" was organized in Washington by a dozen organizations, convened by the Vieques Women's Alliance and Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, and coordinated by the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Nine Vieques activists, as well as representatives of more than 20 organizations and churches from Puerto Rico, New York, Washington, Hawai'i, Chicago, Massachusetts, California, Texas, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey re-committed to solidarity with Vieques.

Strategies developed during the conference focus on ensuring the United States cleans up the heavy metals, munitions, and other military toxics, obtaining treatment and compensation for Vieques residents who suffer from health problems caused by Navy actions, returning lands to Vieques after they are cleaned up, and creating means for sustainable development.

In the same spirit of the vibrant movement of Puerto Ricans and their allies that blossomed after Vieques civilian guard David Sanes was killed by an off-target bomb in April 1999, conference participants heard spoken word and song from younger and older activists, and participated actively across the lines of culture, ideology, age, religion, and geography.

Many participants stayed to lobby Congress and national organizations to support Superfund designation of Vieques and Culebra (also used as a bombing range) and to demand community participation in plans for how to use the lands still controlled by the Fish & Wildlife Service.

Two days after the conference, the movement again showed its resilience in a protest in front of the Puerto Rican legislature in San Juan demanding that the commonwealth's Health Department fulfill its promises for services, equipment, and testing children for the presence of heavy metals.

A coordinating group of Puerto Rican and U.S. organizations will continue the work charted during the conference. •

Editor's Note: UCTP Liaison Officer **Cyril Taylor**, a Carib Elder and member of Biaraku (a Taíno cultural organization), participated in the conference and presented Taíno history and perspective on Vieques.

Biaraku's coordinator, **Gina Rixturey Rosario**, designed the logo for the conference as well as developed a slide show presentation on the art of the struggle for Vieques. She also has donated one of her artworks towards the struggle. ♥

**New Finds Put Maya Culture
Back a Few Centuries**
By Thomas A. Maugh

Archeologists excavating a 2,500-year-old Maya city in Guatemala have unearthed buildings and massive carvings indicating the presence of a royal metropolis of more than 10,000 people at a time when, scientists had previously believed, the Maya were only simple farmers.

New studies at the Cival site in the Peten jungle have unearthed the oldest known carved portrait of a Maya king and two massive stone masks of the Maya maize deity, discoveries indicating that the Maya developed a complex and sophisticated civilization hundreds of years earlier than previously believed.

The city of towering pyramids and sweeping plazas is yielding other surprising artifacts, including jade and ceramic offerings to the gods that may mark the beginnings of the Maya dynasties, Vanderbilt University archeologist Francisco Estrada-Belli said Tuesday during a National Geographic (news - web sites) Society telephone news conference from Washington.

Estrada-Belli "is pushing back the time for the evidence of Maya state institutions by several centuries," said archeologist Elsa Redmond of the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

"We had hints of these kinds of buildings from El Mirador," another Maya city of the so-called Preclassic Period, which dates from roughly 2000 BC to AD 250, Redmond said.

The Maya civilization came into full bloom at cities such as Palenque in Mexico and Tikal in Guatemala during the Classic Period, beginning about AD 300. But other Preclassic sites have been

built over, often repeatedly, rendering interpretation of the findings problematic.

Cival, for reasons that are not clear, was abandoned about AD 100, "never to be occupied again," Estrada-Belli said, and has lain relatively untouched since. "It is very unusual to have a completely preserved Preclassic city that was not buried by subsequent building," he added.

It may have been a forgotten city, he said, or it may have been a sacred site whose memory was preserved and where building was forbidden.

And because it was preserved, it is now clear that "Preclassic" is a misnomer," he said. The new evidence shows that "Preclassic Maya societies already had many features that have been attributed to the Classic Period — kings, complex iconography, elaborate palaces and burials.... The origin of the Maya civilization has to be found in the first part of the Preclassic period, rather than the last part."

Cival, which is about 25 miles east of the much better known city of Tikal, was discovered in 1984 by Ian Graham of Harvard University. Most of the site was overgrown by jungle, however, and Graham's team thought it was a minor outpost.

Estrada-Belli has been studying the nearby Classic Period city of Holmul and was using satellite imaging and global positioning systems to explore the surrounding area when he rediscovered Cival four years ago. The new technology showed that its ceremonial center spanned half a mile, more than twice Graham's initial estimate.

Estrada-Belli and his colleagues have been digging there with support from the National Geographic Society.

Their findings and those of others studying the Preclassic

period are the subject of a National Geographic documentary, "Dawn of the Maya," which will air May 12 on PBS.

The most spectacular find at Cival occurred by accident. Estrada-Belli reached into a fissure in the wall while examining a dank looter's tunnel in the city's main pyramid and came into contact with a piece of carved stucco that felt like a snake or a mustache.



The enormous stucco face of a Mayan deity in Cival dwarfs archaeologist Francisco Estrada-Belli

Digging into the site from the other side of the pyramid, he discovered a 15-by-9-foot stucco mask. The one visible eye was L-shaped and the mouth was squared, with snake's fangs in its center.

"The mask's preservation is astounding," he said. "It's almost as if someone made this yesterday." The looters, he added, "just missed it."

More recently, the team discovered a second, apparently identical, mask on the other side of a set of stairs. The eyes appear to be adorned with corn husks, suggesting the Maya maize deity.

Story continues on page 5



New Maya Find

(Cont. from pg.4)

Estrada-Belli believes that the masks flanked a pyramid stairway that led to the temple room, providing a backdrop for elaborate rituals in which the king — viewed by people in the plaza — impersonated the gods of creation.

The team also found a stela, or carved stone pillar, dating to 300 BC, showing the accession of a king whose name has not yet been determined. Such stelae were quite common in Classic Period cities, but none this old have previously been found. "We didn't know there were kings then," Estrada-Belli said.

The large plaza in front of the pyramid was the scene of offerings to the Maya gods. In a recess in the plaza, the team found a red bowl, two spondylus shells, a jade tube and a hematite fragment.

Behind the recess was a cross-shaped depression containing five smashed jars, one on each arm of the cross and one in the center. The jars signify water and date to 500 BC, he said.

Under the center jar were 120 pieces of jade — an unusual concentration of wealth for the period — most of them round, polished pebbles. Nearby were five jade axes, placed with their blades pointing upward. The pebbles probably symbolize maize and the axes sprouting maize plants, Estrada-Belli said.

Kings in the Classic Period were thought to embody the maize god on Earth, and it seems that this tradition started much earlier than was originally thought, he said.

The team also found a major clue to what probably was the ultimate fate of Cival — a hurriedly constructed defensive wall built about AD 100.

The 6-foot-high wall "was a desperate attempt to close off the inner core of the site," he said. The find surprised him, he said, because "there was no previous evidence of warfare in the Preclassic Period."

Ultimately, he said, Cival "probably met the same end as many cities in the Classic Period": conquest by a more powerful neighbor. •

Arawak BBQ Sauce

submitted by "Caribbean Maiden"

This is a West Indian marinade used for generations. It's best suited for fish and game. I like it on chicken and pork. Allow meat to marinate for at least an hour before cooking. Make sure you adjust the amount of Chile peppers to your taste.

Also, I sometimes replace the orange juice with marmalade for a sweeter marinade. This recipe has been scaled to make two servings

Ingredients:

- 6 green onions, chopped
- 3 tablespoons minced shallots
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 tablespoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 scotch bonnet Chile peppers, chopped
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1/2 cup fresh orange juice
- 1/2 cup cider vinegar

1/4 cup red wine

1/4 cup soy sauce

1/4 cup vegetable oil

1 tablespoon molasses

Directions:

In a medium, nonporous bowl, combine the green onions, shallots, garlic, ginger, allspice, ground black pepper, chile peppers, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, brown sugar, orange juice, vinegar, wine, soy sauce, oil and molasses.

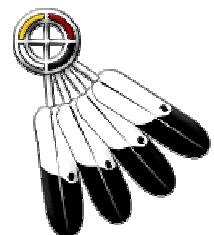
Mix well, cover and allow to sit for one hour. Mix well again before adding to fish or meat.

Discard any remaining sauce. •

UCTP Photo Gallery



UCTP Liaison Officers Joe Garcia (center left) of Washington and Claudia Foxtree (center right) of Massachusetts meet at local Native American Pow Wow in Massachusetts.



Our Universe: Historic Celestial Events - The First of Two Venus Transits

Our elders tell us that our ancestors observed the movements of the stars and planets and the information obtained during these observations were used to assist the daily life of the community.

Taíno community elders have also urged present generations to continue to honor this practice and therefore, the UCTP would like to inform all that the first of the two twin Venus Transits will take place on June 8 2004 being followed by another on June 6 2012.

Transits of Venus mark the passage of the planet Venus between our planet Earth and the Sun. A Venus Transit is among the rarest of planetary alignments with only six such events having occurred since the invention of the telescope (1631, 1639, 1761, 1769, 1874 and 1882).

The importance of this celestial event is noted by spiritual leaders around the world who relate that the two twin Venus transits represents a window of opportunity for humanity. This first one is being recognized by many as the beginning of a new era, a new age.

Several of these leaders are requesting that on June 8 2004, persons come together for 15 minutes to pray or meditate in their own ways for "peace, healing, beauty and global oneness" beginning at 10:00am GMT (New York time), 12:00 PM (Central European time).

The proposal is to continue to build momentum around this same day for the next eight years until June 6, 2012, the date of the second Venus transit.

As the ideals of peace and harmony are foundational principals of ancient Taíno

philosophy, the UCTP urges all Taíno, Arawak and Carib peoples to consider this request as it presents a unique opportunity to unite people around the world via an increase in spiritual awareness. •

Editor's Note: Last issue the "Our Universe" column reported on the West Indian Manatee. If you would like to get involved helping to protect Manatees, check out the website of the "Save the Manatee Club" <http://www.savethemanatee.org/default.html>

Community Bulletin Board

Editor's Note: The staff at 'La Voz' looks forward to hearing from all of you, and we thank you for your comments, suggestions, and inquires. To submit items to the Community Bulletin Board, please email your request to the Chief Editor at rjhnycnyc.rr.com

Announcements, Notices and Special Recognition...

As an extension of the LVTP news journal **La Voz del Pueblo Taíno**, the UCTP invites you, your family members and your friends to join our **online information** and resource list-server hosted at Yahoo.com. To **subscribe** to this **online news list**, send an email to:

Taino_News-subscribe@yahoo.com

Taíno Educational Video Programs are still available **free!** NYC's Manhattan Neighborhood Network continues to video stream the Taíno and Indigenous Cultures Educational Series produced by Roger Atihuibancex Hernandez, in collaboration with the UCTP.

The programming airs every **Monday night at 10:30pm (EST)** via the World Wide Web. Just tune into **Channel 34** at WWW.MNN.ORG website to download and view the weekly thirty-minute installments. If you cannot get the show online, **VCR, DVD or VCD** copies can be ordered (VCDs can be viewed

directly on your computer). For more information on the shows, please contact rjhnycnyc.rr.com

Keeping them in our Prayers...

On behalf of the UCTP we would like to our sincere condolences to all the families in **Haiti** and the **Dominican Republic** who have lost loved ones during the recent tragic flooding that has taken place.

Our condolences all go out to the families in **Borikén** (Puerto Rico) who have also experienced a similar tragedy as flooding on May 24 in killed at least four people on the island.

Searchers in the capital of San Juan found the body of a 24-year-old man who disappeared Sunday in a flooded lagoon, officials said.

Parts of the island got up to 8 inches of rain, according to the National Weather Service. More than 60 Puerto Ricans were in emergency shelters in schools...

Bieke Information...

To participate in the movement in **support** of the people and the island of **Bieke** (Vieques, PR), contact the **FOR Washington Office on Vieques** at 202-488-5613 or by email at sdueno@umc-gbcs.org

Happy Birthdays...

Our **April, May and June** birthday wishes go out to **Margarita Hollands, Jose Ramirez, Frank Borrero, Marina Molina-Diaz, Peter Salinas Jr., Liza Anani Gutierrez-Hertzman, Melanie Ann Johnson-Narvaez and Edward Lebron...**

Taíno Artist Recognition...

Congratulations to community member **John Ayes Brown** whose work was featured at the City of Casselberry 17th Public Art Series entitled "**Colores del Caribe**". The exhibition was displayed in Casselberry City Hall from February 7 – April 16th 2004...

The Voice of the People

Thank you for the interesting information... I did visit your site and signed your guest book. I take great interest in the Taíno people. I feel for my ancestors and agree with your petition, particularly the part of erecting statues of Spaniards that massacred and raped civil and unarmed people.

I take pride in my African and Taíno ancestors. Please continue your great work.

Deborah Renta

Have I ever told you how wonderful it is to receive this information about our people... All ancient history is fascinating to me - thanks.

**Sonja V.,
California**

Tauka: Thank you for the Taíno news and for this opportunity. I look forward for working with you in the future. Iuaonbo (white wolf) from Guamo Taíno Warriors Society.

**Carlos Rivera,
Bronx, NY**

[During the **summer solstice**] my prayers will be with all of you as on **June 21st** I will be in Montana Sun Dancing and fasting for the peoples of our nations and Turtle Island as well.... Thank you, bo'matum,

**Jaime Rosario,
British Columbia, Canada**

VIVA NACION TAINO! ARRIBA!
**Lilia Adecér Cajilog (Firefly),
Washington D.C.**

Finally got on to internet again and I love UCTP website.

**Marta Morales,
New York, NY**

Taino-ti, First of all I send Congratulations to the UCTP Staff

for all their wonderful and informative works. I am so very happy that there now is a place on the net for my family and I to get intelligent and legitimate information about Taíno.

I am a proud Taíno woman. I have always known about my ancestral history, yet I have found I really didn't do all my homework; you have. Your website has let me see that I am not alone. I am part of this history. Please keep up the great work. You have done something so marvelous for this generation, this world.

I also congratulate you on all the awards you have received; WELL DESERVED! Best of luck with all your endeavors. Don't let anything stop you now. Many blessings. And to all those that take pride in being Taíno, here we now have information, make use of it to make yourself stronger and more in tune with your ancestors. Teach others; pass it on!

Thanks from my heart and my family too.

**Sylvia Guarixcoa Santiago,
Coney Island, NY**

The UCTP website is great for answers about registration and history. Thank You!!

**Celina Gonzalez
Mashpee, Massachusetts**

I want to send a shout out to all our brothers and sisters around the globe, we need to unite.

**Santiago Cruz Rivera,
Milwaukee, U.S.A**



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*United Confederation of Taíno People, Inc.
Office of International Relations and
Regional Coordination*

PO Box 4515, Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

Email: la_voz_taino@yahoo.com

UCTP HOME PAGE:

<http://www.uctp.org/>

Chief Editor:

Roger Atibuibancex Hernandez

Email: rjhnyc@nyc.rr.com

Editor:

Sylvia Rosario

karayaturey@yahoo.com

Webmaster:

Glenn Welker

ghwelker@yahoo.com

Layout Design & Publisher:

Roberto Múcaro Borrero

Email: mayohuacan@yahoo.com

Contributors:

*R. Borrero ; Roger Hernandez ; Gina Rixturey
Rosario ; Thomas A. Maugh ; Meter Prengnamaen*

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If you are a Taíno, Carib or Arawak and would like information on the **UCTP Taíno Population Census and Inter-Tribal Registration Program** please visit our website or write to our U.S. postal address in New York.

CALENDER OF EVENTS

• **Third Session: United Nations
Permanent Forum on Indigenous
Issues**

Date: 10 – 21 May 2004 •

**Location: United Nations
Headquarters, NY**

Attendance to this session is by registration only. For information contact the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum at IndigenousPermanentForum@un.org

• **Historic Celestial Event: Venus
Transits**

**Dates: 8 June 2004 & 6 June
2012**

June 8 2004, persons come together for 15 minutes to pray or meditate in their own ways for "peace, healing, beauty and global oneness" beginning at 10:00am GMT (New

*York time), 12:00 PM (Central European time). The proposal is to continue to build momentum around this same day for the next eight years until **June 6, 2012**, the date of the second Venus transit. See page 6 of this issue for more information.*

• **Celebrate the Summer Solstice!**
Date: 21 June 2004

• **Taino Cultural Series in New York's
Boogie Down Bronx**
Location: Freedom Center, Bronx, NY

*Learn about the music, history and culture of the Taino People in this series, which is programmed in collaboration with the United Confederation of Taino People U.S. Regional Coordinating Office. The first program takes place on **Friday June 18th, 2004** at 7pm. Following programs continue on **July 30th (Friday, 7pm)**, **August 27th (Friday 3pm)** and **September 11th 2004** at the **Freedom Center Day Street Festival**. For directions and other information contact rjbnyc@nyc.rr.com*

• **Native Nations Procession**
Date: 21 September, 2004 •
Location: Washington, DC

The Native Nations Procession is a highly symbolic walk of indigenous cultural expression that will celebrate the grand opening of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. The Procession will formally kick-off the six-day festival on the National Mall in Washington D.C. For more information see the NMAI website:

<http://www.AmericanIndian.si.edu/subpage.cfm?subpage=dc&second=grand&third=procession>

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The Voice of the Taino People
c/o United Confederation of Taino People
UCTP Office of International Relations
PO Box 4515, New York, NY 10163