

Highlights

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The Voice of the Taíno People®

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Native Runners Continue on Sacred Journey



Two Peace and Dignity East Coast runners - Maximus Matos and Rafael Landron - joined by supporters Vanessa Inarunikia and Kuyayaku Pastrano displaying some of the sacred staffs that are being run in an incredible journey from New York to Panama.

UCTP Taíno News – Runners participating in the East Coast Tributary route of the **Peace and Dignity Journeys** have made their way from New York through New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland heading toward Virginia. With their final destination scheduled for Panama, the group of runners and supporters began their journey in New York City on June 13 with sacred staffs representing the prayers of various Indigenous Nations.

This year's East Coast route is a historic first for the Peace and Dignity Journeys inter-continental run, which

has taken place every four years since 1992.

At a ceremony for the East Coast runners held at Riverbank Park in Manhattan, approximately 75 representatives from many Indigenous nations gathered in one circle to welcome the sacred staffs the runners will carry throughout their journey. At the ceremony led by **Grupo Cetiliztli Nauhcampa Quetzalcoatl**, six representatives from East Coast Native Nations offered prayers. Messages of support were also received from **Tonya Frichner** (Onondaga) a UN representative, and **Chief Dwayne Perry** (Sachem Maqua/Chief Bear) of the *Ramapo Mountain Lenape Nation*.

The group of runners included **Elizabeth Rexford** (Inuit/Alaska), **Elvira Colorado** (Chichimec/Otomi), **Hortensia Colorado** (Chichimec/Otomi), Teyekahiyos “Dagots” Edwards (Onieda), **Jennie Luna** (Xicana/Caxcan/Mexica) as well as two Taíno community members **Maximus Matos** (Taíno) and **Rafael Landron** (Taíno). At sunrise on Saturday, morning June 14,

representatives of the **United Confederation of Taíno People** (UCTP) presented an additional unity staff to the group. The presentation was made by community leader **Roberto Mukaro Borrero** who explained that the Taíno staff was a symbol of unity between the Arawak, Carib, and Taíno Nations as well as a representation of the *Guaraguao* or Caribbean Red Tail Hawk within the Eagle and Condor prophecy.



Peace and Dignity Journey participants making their way across the George Washington Bridge from NY to New Jersey.

Following the sunrise departure ceremony the group crossed the George Washington Bridge into New Jersey and made their way to Pennsylvania where they connected to **Art Woolsey**, PA coordinator for the **Longest Walk II**.

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Peace and Dignity Run

(Continued from pg. 1)

Woolsey was instrumental in the logistical organizing for the runners through the state.

While in Pennsylvania the group visited the grounds of the *Carlisle Indian Industrial School* and offered prayers at the institution's cemetery. Over 100 indigenous children who were taken from their parents to attend the infamous boarding school died there and were interred on the grounds.

According to the East Coast Run coordinator **Jeannie Luna** the runners met up with the Longest Walk group in Greensburgh, PA. The two groups were able to share experiences and ceremony before the Peace and Dignity runners headed to Pittsburg where they were greeted by Taino community member **Miguel Sobaoko Koromo Sague**.



Runners meet Miguel Sague in Pennsylvania.

A member of **Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center** – the only Native Center in all of PA - Sague along with other PA Native community members contributed supplies and extended much appreciated hospitality to the group. Sague who is also the founder of the **Caney Spiritual Circle** offered an additional Taino staff to join the UCTP's prayer for Taino unity.

Following their visit to a local Pow

Wow in Farmington, PA that was held to honor the birth of a White Buffalo at a local zoo, the runners made their way to Friendsville, MD and Petersburg, West Virginia.

The runners will also visit Washington DC plan and while in the area they plan to link up with the Haudenosaunee **Spirit of the Youth Unity Run**. These two groups will continue running together until July 5th when they will unite with the Trail of Tears runners in Tahlequah, Oklahoma for the closing ceremonies of the East Coast portion the route. From Oklahoma the sacred staffs will be run to Taos, New Mexico where they will join the main group making their way south.

This southern route from New Mexico will unite all runners of the East Coast Tributary and other routes and connect them to the main route, carrying all the prayers, work and energy towards Panama. •

International Indian Treaty Council Issues Resolutions



UCTP representative Mildred Karaira Gandia meets with Maya Spiritual leaders in Guatemala.

UCTP Taino News - The **International Indian Treaty Council** held its 34th annual conference in Chimaltenago, Guatemala from June 19 – 22, 2008. The 275 registered delegates at this conference, representing Indigenous Peoples from North, Central, South

America, the Caribbean and the Pacific, adopted by consensus a series of resolutions to guide their work defending the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the local, national, and international levels.

Among those in attendance, representatives of the **United Confederation of Taino People (UCTP)** participated in the plenary sessions and working groups as well as during spiritual ceremonies led by the local Mayan traditional spiritual authorities. **Naniki Reyes Ocasio** of the *Caney Quinto Mundo*, UCTP Liaison **Mildred Karaira Gandia**, and youth representative **Justin Ziegelasch** contributed directly to the drafting of the final conference resolutions via specific working groups.

As a result of their participation the Taino People are specifically mentioned in the resolutions on “Land, Territories and Natural Resources, Treaties and the Implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” and the “Sacred Sites”.

The IITC reaffirmed for example the “land rights and self determination of Indigenous Peoples including the **Taino**, Cree, Dakota, Yaqui and Mayan peoples that are divided by colonial borders”.

The IITC also calls upon the “United States Government and the Island of **Boriken** (Puerto Rico) to recognize the Taino People of Boriken as the original inhabitants and Indigenous Peoples with full rights as recognized by the UN Declaration, including the right to self-determination.

Story continues on pg. 3



Treaty Council Meets in Guatemala (Continued from pg. 2)

"This much appreciated support from our indigenous sisters and brothers is extremely important for all our Taino People" stated Mildred Karaira Gandia. "It shows that the Taino are indeed part of the larger hemispheric movement defending the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." Karaira added "Making these connections today as our ancestors did long ago not only unifies us across borders but it strengthens us on a spiritual level."

Other resolutions adopted at the conference focused on the position of the CANZUS group and the UN Indigenous Rights Declaration, Lakota and Dakota Treaties, The Right to Food Sovereignty, The Rights of Women and Children, and Economic Justice and Migration.

The final resolutions will be posted at the websites of the International Indian Treaty Council and the United Confederation of Taino People in English and Spanish. ●

Puerto Rico archeological find mired in politics

SAN JUAN -- The lady carved on the ancient rock is squatting, with frog-like legs sticking out to each side. Her decapitated head is dangling to the right.

That's how she had been, perfectly preserved, for up to 800 years, until the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers came upon her last year while building a \$375 million dam to control flooding in southern Puerto Rico.

She was buried again last week with the hope that some day specialists will study her and Puerto Rican children will visit and learn about the lives of the Taino Indians who created her.

But archaeologists and government officials first had to settle a raging debate about who should have control over her and other artifacts sent to Georgia for analysis.

The ancient petroglyph of the woman was found on a five-acre site in Jácana, a spot along the Portugues River in the city of Ponce, on Puerto Rico's southern coast. Among the largest and most significant ever unearthed in the Caribbean, archaeologists said, the site includes plazas used for ceremony or sport, a burial ground, residences and a midden mound -- a pile of ritual trash.

Experts say the site -- parts of it unearthed from six feet of soil -- had been used at least twice, the first time by pre-Taino peoples as far back as 600 AD, then again by the Tainos sometime between 1200 and 1500 AD.

"It was thrilling, a once-in-a-lifetime thing," said David McCullough, an Army Corps archaeologist. "Just amazing."

But like all things on this politically charged island, the discovery got caught up in a sovereignty debate: If an archaeological site rich in historic and cultural value is discovered in a federal construction site in Puerto Rico, a commonwealth of the United States, who should be in charge of it?

After months of finger-pointing and accusations of officially sanctioned plundering, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers poured \$2 million into preserving the site. Plans to put a rock dump over it were changed, and the unearthed discovery was reburied with the aspiration that archaeologists will eventually return to dedicate the 10 or 20 years needed to thoroughly study the finding.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

promises the collection sent to Georgia will be returned to Puerto Rico. Some 75 boxes of skeletons, ceramics, small petroglyphs and rocks were sent via Federal Express in two double-boxed shipments for analysis.

"The site is a significant contribution to our understanding of what Indians were doing," McCullough said. "The thing that makes it unique is that the petroglyphs are so finely done. We originally were supposed to be there six weeks. It wound up taking four months."

McCullough said the corps had an inkling that the site was there since the mid 1980s but had never done much testing. They started digging in earnest last year while building a dam and lake to protect the region from floods, and realized the site had significant value.

The corps found a ball court with four walls lined by tall stones, where they believe the Tainos either danced or played games. Three were covered in petroglyphs, among the best experts had ever seen. Some of the figures were carved upside down, which none of the archaeologists had ever seen before. Discoveries included a jade-colored amulet and the remains of a guinea pig, likely the feast of a tribal chief.

"The size of the ball court is bigger than just about anything else in the Caribbean," McCullough said.

Archaeologists believe as many as 400 people are buried there.

But in its quest to build the dam and use the location as a dumping ground for rocks, critics say the corps quickly hired a private archaeological firm to mitigate -- a hurried process of saving what can be conserved so a project can go forward.

Story continues on pg. 4

**Puerto Rico archeological find
mired in politics**

The company sent 125 cubic feet of artifacts in two shipments to its facility in Georgia for analysis, a move allegedly made without consulting Puerto Rican authorities, which locals felt violated the law.

But the question became: Whose law applied? U.S. law says such artifacts found by the corps must be warehoused in a federally approved curating facility. No such place exists in Puerto Rico. And Puerto Rican law says historical artifacts belong to the people of Puerto Rico.

"In Puerto Rico, everything that has to do with our past is sentimental, and Puerto Ricans take it to heart," said Marisol Rodríguez, an archaeologist at the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture. "There's a feeling that you're taking something that's mine. It's about our national identity, regardless of the island's political status."

Rodríguez is pleased that the site has been preserved but acknowledges she was furious at how it was originally excavated with heavy machinery.

"I was so angry. I was indignant," she said. "I could not believe that a place of such importance was being treated with such disrespect."

New South Associates, the firm hired to do the digging, says it excavated about 5 percent of the site for study.

"It was in the newspaper that we raped and pillaged the site, because it all got caught up in local politics," said archaeologist Chris Espenshade, New South's lead investigator on the project. "We are required to take the artifacts to a federally approved curating facility. That played into the idea that we were stealing Puerto

Rican cultural patrimony away and never bringing it back. There's no question these things should be available for Puerto Rican scholars without them having to travel to go see it.

"It's a bad situation."

What's left of the site will remain beside a five-year dam construction project, which will continue as planned. It may be vulnerable to floods, archaeologists acknowledged, but they note that it lasted that way underground for hundreds of years.

"It's not the best way to preserve it, but it's better than the alternative: to destroy it," Espenshade said. "The Corps could have destroyed it, but they took the highly unusual step to preserve it."

Puerto Rican authorities say they are committed to opening a facility needed to properly store and exhibit the artifacts.

The Institute of Puerto Rican Culture is scouting locations and trying to secure the approximately \$570,000 a year needed to operate such a warehouse. Officials hope it will open as early as mid-2009, but some experts still worry.

"Nobody could believe that in the 21st century, a federal agency would hire a private agency to dig up a site and take things," said Miguel Rodríguez, an archaeologist who sat on Puerto Rico's government archaeological council for a total of eight years.

He quit in January following a heart attack, which he blamed on stress over the Jácana site.

"Those are the things that happened in the 18th and 19th century, not now," Rodríguez said. "Nobody dares go to Mexico, do an excavation and

just take the stuff. That's officially sanctioned looting."

While officials debate where they will find the funds for a museum, storage facility and lab, the Department of Natural Resources has hired 24-hour security to watch over the archaeological site, just to be sure no artifacts wind up for sale on the Internet.

"With the artifacts in Georgia," Department of Natural Resources Secretary Javier Vélez said, "at least they are not on eBay."

Source: Miami Herald

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Arawak Girl Wins Local Beauty Pageant



Guyana, South America (UCTP Taíno News) - A 16 year old member of the Eagle Clan Arawaks, **Christella Junior** won the 2008 Beauty Pageant in the 2,000 person *Pakuri Lokono-Arawak* community in Region #4 Guyana; South America.

Miss Junior was "excited and honored" to have won the pageant that took place May 25th 2008. Proud parents - Lolita and Raymond Junior - recalled that her Grandmother Etheldreda Simon remarked when Christella was born that she would be "Beauty Queen of Pakuri one day". The Junior's have 4 other children - Maradonna 21, Fidel 12, Cassandra 10 and Ray jr. 5.

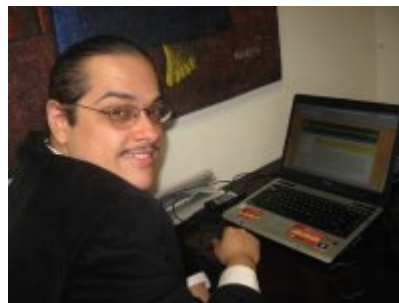
Christella Junior is a niece of Shirling Normellia Corrie (Simon) - wife of UCTP member and *Pantribal Confederacy of Indigenous Tribal Nations* founder/President Damon Gerard Corrie. •

Taíno Confederation Launches New Web Portal

UCTP Taíno News – The **United Confederation of Taíno People (UCTP)** has launched a new, interactive version of its award-

winning internet web portal at <http://www.uctp.org/>. The new portal features a web-based Community Forum where subscribers can post comments on issues, set up their own personal blogs and photo galleries as well as review up-to-date information on the work of the Confederation. The portal is also host to the premier Taíno news service "**The Voice of the Taíno People Online**" and an archive of the print version of the journal in pdf format.

"This is as an exciting new chapter in our focus on communications, education, and Nation building" stated **Roberto Borrero**, the President of the UCTP's Office of International Relations and Regional Coordination. The portal, launched as a part of the Confederation's 10 year anniversary initiatives, was designed by UCTP Director of Technology, **Eric Ausubonex Diaz**.



UCTP Technology Director Eric Ausubonex Diaz reviewing the new UCTP web portal.

"We are very grateful to Ausubonex for the incredible work he has put into the design of this web portal. It responds directly to years of community suggestions, requests, and comments" continued Borrero. "We had compiled quite a bit of information at our web site over the years and with this more-user friendly design we have increased the opportunities for community members to see and more importantly respond to the precedent-setting work that the Confederation has and

continues to do at the local, national, and international levels."

"The portal will assist us in knowing what our people are interested in as we will be able to see what stories, documents, and issues are getting visited most often" stated Diaz. "We consider the website an on-going work in progress but even at this stage there is really nothing like it available for our community on the internet that is fully owned and operated by Caribbean Indigenous Peoples".

The new version of UCTP portal will also provide a welcome resource for researchers and students who will not only be able to study documents from historical sources but they will be able to review contemporary Taíno history from over 10 years of collective activism in the international area. Presentations made at the United Nations as well as reports from archeologists and ethnologists will all be archived and available online as well as for download. Various photo galleries are now available or being developed for inclusion.

"The portal will also help us continue to strengthen our community and advocacy efforts as we have updated the documents related to the **UCTP's Taíno Population Census and Inter-Tribal Registration Project**" stated **Mildred Karaira Gandia**, the Director of the program. "Our enrollment documents can now be filled out online and printed out directly from the site."

The UCTP web portal received over 170,057 "hits" last month as it was "soft launched" in July so select users could test services and offer suggestions. The portal has recorded traffic from all over the world with persons from Puerto Rico among the top four country visitors to the site. •

After 10 years Columbus gets a new home in Borikén (Puerto Rico)



Borikén (UCTP Taino News) – Ten years ago the **United Confederation of Taíno People** and its member organizations in *Borikén (Puerto Rico)* – **Consejo General de Tainos Borincanos** and the **Caney Quinto Mundo** – launched a protest campaign against the Mayor of Cataño and his plan to erect a giant monument to Columbus in the town.

Defiant in the face of a barrage of letters and phone calls demanding an end to the project, the Mayor vowed to find to see the project to completion. The project failed after the town could not raise the funds to erect the statue. A decade later it seems the project may finally see completion and give the 310 ft. Columbus a new home on the island.

After years of sitting in pieces in a Cataño park the 2.4 million dollar statue is said to be moving to *Mayagüez* where it will be installed at a port run by management company, the Holland Group. According to the Mayor of Cataño, the company plans to install the bronze and steel statue in time for the city’s hosting of the Central American and Caribbean Games in July 2010.

Local Taíno community members were dismayed by the announcement.

Roger Guayakan Hernandez, a representative of the United Confederation of Taíno People (UCTP) in Borikén notes “this is just another example of the misinformation that continues to be

promoted concerning Columbus and his presence in the Caribbean. Columbus is no hero. This is an insult to indigenous peoples everywhere”. Hernandez reports that calls to the company to discuss local community objections to the proposal have not been returned. The UCTP plans to work with local groups and individuals in a follow-up to the 1998 campaign to call for an end to the project. •

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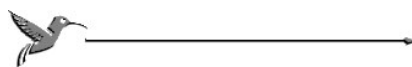
Taíno Dancers Commemorate International Day



New York, NY (UCTP Taino News) - Members of the **Cacibajagua Taíno Cultural Society** encourage audience participation during their successful presentation at the **American Museum of Natural History** on August 9th, 2008.

The program was co-sponsored by the **Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues** Secretariat, NGO Committee on the UN International Decade of the World’s Indigenous Peoples, the Tribal Link Foundation, and the **United Confederation of Taíno People** in commemoration of the United Nations **International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples.** •

(photo credit: John Knook)



Amerindian Heritage Day to be Celebrated in Trinidad

Trinidad and Tobago (UCTP Taino News) - Amerindian Heritage Day will be commemorated this year in Trinidad and Tobago with a week long commemoration from October 13-19, 2008.

Taking place in the town of Arima, the program will include ceremonies, lectures, and special cultural presentations hosted by the Santa Rosa Carib Community. Indigenous delegations from around the Caribbean region are set to attend the events, which will include a meeting of the Caribbean Organization of Indigenous Peoples (COIP).

“We are looking forward to attending this important regional meeting and continuing to work in solidarity with our relatives keeping our future generations in our hearts and minds” stated Roberto Borrero, a representative of the United Confederation of Taíno People.

Indigenous delegates from Guyana, Dominica, Suriname, Belize, Saint Vincent, Puerto Rico, and other countries are expected to attend.

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**Community Indigenous
Dominica gets CYPCC
Computers**



Photo: Members of the Young Achievers Group of Atkinson Community pose with their computers and accessories.

“The days when students used the library to do research and complete their assignments are virtually gone with the advent of the internet and other ICTs.”

DOMINICA - The Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre (CYPCC) and the Youth Department of the Government of Dominica have collaborated to present computers and other Information Communication Technology (ICT) to the Young Achievers Group of Atkinson Community.

At a presentation ceremony on June 28 at the Carib Territory, CYPCC Director Mr Charles challenged the Young Achievers to look towards the development of a Youth Information Centre that would help assist artists and other skilled young people to further develop their talent.

"Computers and ICT have become a very important aspect of the development of the community. There are communities among our Commonwealth countries where ICT has made a significant difference between people living in poverty and an improved standard of living." Mr. Charles said.

"This is the first phase; set up the computers and then you can get ready for the second phase but give us a development plan towards that quest and I can assure you that we will assist in making available additional ICT equipment to establish the Youth Information Centre," he urged.

Chief Youth Development Officer at the Division of Youth, Mr. Jules Pascal noted that the days when students used the library to do research and complete their assignments are virtually gone with the advent of the internet and other ICTs.

However, a proper computer facility was lacking in the **Carib Territory** and especially in Atkinson, he noted.

Pascal said the Youth Division will ensure that the computers are networked and assured that the Division will also service the equipment free of cost.

Chairman of the Atkinson Village Council, Mr Kitchener Laville said he was elated that the community's youth will finally have access to the internet which will ease the difficulties encountered doing school assignments.

Laville noted that the computers will be placed at the community centre and students should be able to begin using them shortly. ●

Source: Commonwealth Youth Programme

**Carifesta X symposium
highlights Amerindian artifacts**

GUYANA - A symposium on Indigenous Performance Traditions on Monday focused on the collection of Amerindian artifacts in the Austrian Museum of Ethnology which houses some 350 artifacts from Guyana.



Photo: The Indigenous Hammock weaving demonstrated at CARIFESTA X in Guyana

Most of these artifacts were collected from the Makushi and Wapishiana regions early in the 19th century by Austrian zoologist Johann Natterer. The symposium was held at the Guyana International Conference Centre, Liliendal as part of a symposia panel for Carifesta X, the Government Information Agency (GINA) reported.

Minister within the Ministry of Education Dr. Desrey Fox opened the session and panelists Claudia Augustat, Head of the South American Collection, Museum of Ethnology in Vienna, Austria and Henk Tjon, Theatre and Artistic Director with the Surinamese Delegation to Guyana made presentations.

According to GINA, Minister Fox stated that indigenous performance tradition is probably the most misunderstood since it is not what people are accustomed to as it focuses on birds and animals with specific characteristics which the Amerindians find impressive.

This, she said, impacts on the very lives of Amerindians and helps them to survive in very harsh environments.

Source: Stabroek News

Are you a registered and enrolled member of the Taino Tribal Nation? Get more information on the UCTP Taino Population Census and Inter-Tribal Registration Project at the UCTP Web Portal www.uctp.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CALENDER OF EVENTS

- **Amerindian Heritage Week**

Date: Sept. 2008 • Place: Guyana, South America

The Ministry of Amerindians Affairs in Guyana launches the annual celebrations of Amerindian Heritage Month throughout September. The theme of the observance is "Inspiring our nation to move forward in Unity".

- **Amerindian Heritage Week**

Date: October 13-19, 2008 • Place: Trinidad and Tobago

Amerindian Heritage Day will be commemorated this year in Trinidad and Tobago with a week long commemoration from October 13-19, 2008. Taking place in the town of Arima, the program will include ceremonies, lectures, and special cultural presentations hosted by the Santa Rosa Carib Community. Indigenous delegations from around the Caribbean region are set to attend the events, which will include a meeting of the Caribbean Organization of Indigenous Peoples (COIP). For info see: <http://www.coipsnews.blogspot.com>

- **Radio Program: Rethinking Columbus**

Date: October 13 2008 • Place: KBOO 90.7 FM in Portland, OR

The program will air: Monday October 13 at 10am - 12pm (PST), 1pm - 4pm (EST) on KBOO 90.7 FM in Portland, OR. You can stream in from your computer at www.kboo.fm. Featured Guest Interview: Roberto Mukaro Borrero, President and Chairman of the United Confederation of Taino People, Office of International Relations and Regional Coordination. Please note: On the West Coast, the show airs from 10am - 12pm (Pacific Standard Time) On the East Coast, the show airs from 1pm - 4pm (Eastern Standard Time)

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