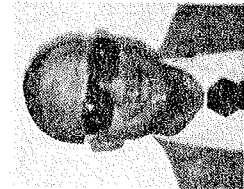


# The Way I See It The Fire of the Islands Arrives in Garner

By Timothy Truzy



Caribbean Islands play an essential role in American foreign policy and have drastically influenced culture in this country. With over 20 million people residing in the region, which is mainly where the Caribbean Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean, the U.S. has a large population of people from the islands because of their relative proximity to this country. Garner will have a chance to examine aspects of the Caribbean culture in the upcoming Island Fire Pageant to be held on May 24, at the Historic Auditorium on Main St., starting at 5 P.M.

"There was little going on here looking at the people of the islands, like in New York or Washington, D.C.," said Arvian Duval, the founder, director and sole sponsor of the Island Fire Pageant. "In 2001, I started using the historic auditorium, and I've held it there since then." Caribbean centered events are becoming more common place statewide. In July 2008, Charlotte, N.C. will host a festival focusing on the region, expecting 10,000 people to visit the

city. During cultural celebrations, the Durham School of Arts Steel Band often performs tunes from the islands to enthusiastic crowds in that urban center. Initially, though, the Caribbean Island Fire Pageant began in a house in 1998. "I sent out over 30 invitations that year to people from the Caribbean, asking them to meet at my home," explained Duval, "and 75 people showed up. My house was crowded. That told me there was a need for more activities with a Caribbean connection in the Triangle." To that extent, on the night of Friday May 23, at the Heather Hills Club House in town, a Formal Caribbean Swore, a dance, will happen at 7:00 P.M. in conjunction with the pageant taking place the next day. The countries of the Caribbean have historic relevance and present-day importance to Americans. Some of the islands and nations in the Caribbean include: Aruba, Barbuda, Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, Cuba, and Haiti. On December 2, 1823, to show support for the region, President James Monroe stated European powers should no longer establish settlements throughout the Americas, in particular, the Caribbean. Even then, the U.S. understood the importance of the islands in foreign policy. The purpose of the pageant to

occur in Garner is to renew exposure to the people and cultures of the Caribbean, while enhancing a friendly atmosphere. Some of the categories the contestants will compete in are: an introduction, casual and Caribbean wear, and an educational phase of the program, in which contestants will talk about the island they represent. The pageant is opened to men and women. Duval said most people who were born in the Caribbean, have relatives there, or have visited that area of the globe can apply, but those applications will be looked at individually. To learn more, visit: [geocities.com/islandsparkles2002/home](http://geocities.com/islandsparkles2002/home).

Because many people from the islands migrate to the U.S., familiarizing ourselves with the governments and people living there is essential. Generally, these people are hard working God lov-



ing folk, like citizens of Garner and the Cleveland Crossroads communities.

The best way to build an enduring relationship is to meet, greet, and speak with people from the islands, like Duval, who comes from the Virgin Islands. No place will make that more evident than we have kindred spirits with the citizens of the Caribbean than to enjoy the glory, blessings, and all around good feeling which will arise from going to the Island Fire Pageant. Meet you there. That's the way I see it.

## To Ponder

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.

- George Bernard Shaw

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