



YOUR VOICE

APRIL 2009

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLACK & MINORITY ETHNIC FORUM

NORTH SOMERSET

FORUM NEWS

There has been a lot happening since the last edition of YourVoice. At the end of November the Forum held its 2nd Anniversary Celebration and Annual General meeting, attended by over 150 people from 35 different nationalities. A delicious range of food was provided by Forum members and there was a variety of entertainment and activities.

Since the beginning of January the Forum has been running a weekly drop-in on a Tuesday at the Badger Centre with the aim of befriending and providing a signposting service for new arrivals to North Somerset, as well as making available a meeting place and other opportunities for more established BME residents. It has already proved useful in getting advice to people about self employment and a range of activities and advice sessions are planned. We are particularly looking for volunteers to help support the drop-in – if you are able to offer a few hours each week or each month please get in touch.

The Forum had a stall at the 'Your North Somerset' event run by the Council in the Winter Gardens on January 25th, which was attended by over 700 people. It was Chinese New Year's Eve heralding the Year of the Ox and there were Chinese Dragon dancers as well as entertainment from the Philippines, Cameroon and India.

If you would like to contribute to this newsletter or have any ideas for future editions please get in touch. We look forward to hearing from you



The environment is our shared heritage, and like all things precious we all have obligations to look after it. In that shared aspiration, we look forward to more engagement with all the communities of North Somerset in the coming year and beyond. **THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY**

BIENVENIDO WITAMY BEM-VINDO MALIGAYANG PAGBATI BIENVENU WILKOMMEN

WELCOME to the NEW North Somerset Black and Minority Ethnic Forum

Just arrived in North Somerset? Feeling Lonely? Need advice? Missing Home? Want to improve your English? Learning and volunteering opportunities? Help with your CV?

OPEN EVERY TUESDAY 9.30am – 4.30pm

BADGER CENTRE, 3-6 Wadham Street, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1JY Call 01934 414455 for details

9.30 - 11.30 Information and signposting coffee morning

12 - 2 BME group meeting – all welcome

2.30 - 4.30 Relax and meet families and friends

BIENVENIDO WITAMY BEM-VINDO MALIGAYANG PAGBATI BIENVENU WILKOMMEN

LINK

North Somerset Local Involvement Network (LINK) is a new way of involving the local community in shaping health and adult social care services. The aim is to strengthen the voice of local people and the LINK has legal powers to hold services to account.

Our Survey: We are soon to be carrying out a survey to inform us of your views, so we can identify priority local health and social care issues. It is important that as many people as possible get involved so that we are truly representing the people of North Somerset.

How you can get involved and for more information:

You can telephone us on 01934 876806, email us on contact@nsomersetlink.co.uk or visit our website www.nsomersetlink.co.uk. You can sign up to receive information and give your views from time to time, or you can become a full member and be more actively involved. There are even a few places remaining on the committee. If you belong to a group, we will happily visit your group to discuss the LINK & if you get in touch with us soon, you can take part in our survey which would be a great opportunity for you to influence which services we address first.



SIGHT PROBLEMS?

Sight problems can occur at any age, but are more likely to occur as people get older. Vision North Somerset is here to give help and support to anyone living in North Somerset who is experiencing difficulty with their sight. It is not necessary to be registered as blind or partially sighted to receive help from us.

Our Resource and Information Centre at 3 Neva Road in Weston, has a wide range of aids and equipment which can be of great help in keeping people independent. Items like large button telephones, talking clocks and watches, wrap around sun glasses for days when the light is just too bright and lots more.

Experienced staff are on hand to give advice and support on all aspects of sight loss. Although we can't help with anything medical, we can put you on the right road for getting the help you need.

If you would like some further information or advice please telephone Vision North Somerset on 01934 419393 10am – 1pm Monday to Friday and we can arrange for you to visit our Resource Centre. If it's difficult for you to visit us, we can arrange to visit you at home.



VAN TRAINING

Members of both the BME Forum and of the POPP Group have been enjoying training courtesy of the Voluntary Action North Somerset (VANS) In-Step programme.

This initiative, funded by Capacity Builders, seeks to increase the capacity of voluntary and community groups to deliver their services, promote their activities, and perform at a higher level.

In-Step Development Worker, Justin Parsons, explains: "We at VANS greatly respect the work of SREC, the BME Forum and the POPPs project, so when the opportunity emerged for us to work closer together, we were delighted.

The recent day's training in "Management Committee Skills" appeared well received by the group of delegates, all of whom worked remarkably hard to make the day a success. We have had requests to organise a similar day later in the year and will do our best to make it happen."

To find out more about Voluntary Action, the In-Step programme, please phone Justin Parsons on 01934 410192 or email justin.parsons@vansmail.org.uk.





LIBERIA

Sea Breeze Journal of Contemporary Liberian Writings is a peer-review electronic journal devoted to publishing art, creative non-fiction, short fiction narratives, cultural stories, poetry, interviews, book reviews, criticism, theory, and social and political commentary by Liberians arising out of Liberian life wherever we are. The journal was named to honor and remember the almost forgotten Sea Breeze Folk Songs of Liberia.

Sea Breeze Journal of Contemporary Liberian Writings was founded in 2004, published quarterly through 2006, and became a biannual publication in 2007.

The journal is published in May and November. We welcome submissions from guest writers and visual artists. For more information see <http://www.liberiaseabreeze.com/>

FACTS

- Full name: Republic of Liberia
- Population: 3.9 million (UN, 2008)
- Capital: Monrovia
- Area: 99,067 sq km (38,250 sq miles)
- Languages: English, 29 African languages belonging to the Mande, Kwa or Mel linguistic groups
- Major religions: Christianity, Islam, indigenous beliefs
- Life expectancy: 45 years (men), 47 years (women) (UN)
- Monetary unit: 1 Liberian dollar (L\$) = 100 cents
- Main exports: Diamonds, iron ore, rubber, timber, coffee, cocoa
- GNI per capita: US \$150 (World Bank, 2007)

THE SPIRIT OF INDIA COMES TO WESTON-SUPER-MARE

North Somerset residents have a chance to immerse themselves in the culture of the India this month, at an Indian evening to be held in Priory school. Activities will include Indian dancing lessons, henna painting, and for the children, block painting. Partygoers will be able to dance the evening away to the sounds of India, and of course they can look forward to tucking in to a wide variety of Indian cuisine, with recipes to suit all taste buds.

Premanjan Sen-Sharma, Chair of the local BME POPP project explains the reason behind the night: "Our group is keen for the people of the district to have the opportunity to share our culture, our food, dance and music. We have members from all over the world, and we are already planning other evenings such as a Caribbean night and a Latin American night. We hope as many people as possible can join us. All are welcome."

The event takes place on Saturday 25th April between 6pm and 9pm. Tickets are obtainable by contacting Somerset Racial Equality Council on 01934 414455 or email popp@srec.org.uk.

THE BEAUTY OF SUNRISE

The sun is huge and low early morning
 She sees the shaft of light through her window
 Her eyes were blurred
 The reflection brings many, many thoughts to mind
 Maybe it's a blessed day!
 It's time to rise up and claim it
 She senses it-yes!
 She hears the exquisite sounds of living creatures impressively.
 The window is open
 She sees the bees buzzing overhead
 She inhales the drifting flowers
 What a great feeling, Hmmmmmmm.....
 The goats won't stop romping!
 Can you glimpse what she sees?
 It's real! It's fantastic!
 It's really a new day!
 That's the splendor of sunrise.

Alexander Queh born in Juarzon, Sinoe County, Liberia. He resides in Delaware, USA.



POLICE INDEPENDENT ADVISORY GROUP

The police are keen to listen to the views of local communities about policing in North Somerset. The Independent Advisory Group (IAG) exists to provide an opportunity for policing issues to be discussed between the police and the local communities. It is a voluntary group which is supported by the police but led by people from the communities who want to have an influence over the way the police operate.

If you are interested in learning more about this group, please contact the Forum at the address overleaf and we will arrange a meeting with the police to explain more about the purpose of the group and how you can become involved.

SRILANKAN FISH CUTLETS - Serves 8 to 10 people

These are delicious as a snack with evening tea or as a side dish for lunch or dinner.

Ingredients

1 x 15 oz can of salmon or jack mackerel, 1 big onion finely chopped, 3 green chillies finely chopped, 1/2 lb potatoes, 1/2 bottle frying oil, 4-5 curry leaves, 1/2 lime, 1 egg, 1/4 lb bread crumbs, salt and pepper to taste

Boil, skin and mash the potatoes. Drain the water from the fish can. Break the fish into small pieces. Heat 2tbsp of oil in a pan over medium heat.

When hot add the onion, chillies and curry leaves, fry till the onions are golden brown. Add the fish and temper for 3-5 mins. Add the potatoes and season, mix well. Beat the egg in a bowl. Put the bread crumbs in a flat dish. Make small balls from the fish mixture (1 inch diameter). Soak the balls first in the egg and then coat with breadcrumbs. Heat the remaining oil in a frying pan and when hot add the coated fish balls and fry till golden brown. Makes 30-40 cutlets. Serve hot.

COMMUNITY LEARNING IN WESTON

By a local adult learner

Community learning courses are there to help people to learn a skill: updating their existing skills, a new skill or opening a path for further development and future initiatives.

All sorts of individuals attend these short courses and people come with a variety of individual needs or conditions in all ages. It could be long term unemployed, disability, may have lost their jobs due to ill health or even redundancy. It can be local or people from other countries wanting up to date information, to keep in touch with fast moving shopping, to enjoy writing letters stories even poems.

Ivi is a computer skills teacher. She is originally from Brazil. Over the past years, she has helped over 1000 people learning basic skills in computers in a friendly environment. She does make every person feel important. She treats every individual with respect and same time making the computers a friendly item with every user.

I am sure many other people must have experienced struggles in their school days or a college situation; get left behind feeling tutors are too busy with the students who make demands or already had basic skills. Most of the time minorities aren't seen or heard in a class for teacher's reasons.

From time to time I have tried IT basic skills courses. The more I know the more questions I have and when not reached my confidence plummets down to freezing level. This time I did not have to leave the class before finishing my course. I didn't feel stupid, it is a nice place to be and I have learnt so much and built my confidence. The classes are very interesting, enjoyable and fun.



Are you looking for a new challenge?

Recruiting now!

For more information on becoming a firefighter, please telephone 0117 926 2061 extension 249



PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

To contact us phone 01934 414455, email: bmeforum@srec.org.uk
or write to us at Badger Centre, 3-6 Wadham Street, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1JY
Designed and produced by Sarahjeffsdesign - contact 07859 07 06 08 sarahjeffsdesign@yahoo.co.uk

This publication is printed on 100% recycled paper

