

## SHANGWE NEWS ISSUE 12 – February 2009

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#### 1. Welcome & Happy New Year

Welcome to the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of *Shangwe News* – the quarterly on-line newsletter that aims to keep you informed of past events and gives you a preview of future topical events, along with the opportunity to network and/or contribute a poem or article. The purpose of *Shangwe News* is to promote new and diverse creative writing.

I know it's a bit late with the Happy New Year opening but this is the first issue for 2009. As we 'cope' with the recent snow attacks, I escape in my imagination to a far away warm environment where the language has no word for 'snow' – if only!

If you have any comments or information for the newsletter please email:  
[nicole@shangwe.com](mailto:nicole@shangwe.com)

#### 2. Hair Stories Blog - Update

On 13<sup>th</sup> December 2008, I contacted all 10 of the Hair Journal contributors to let them know my reflections and to find out their views on what they would like to see happen next and how this may take shape. For example, there is some potential for a Hair Story Collection being published in a book format. However, I would need many more stories for this to be an option.

I have received some inspiring feedback, e.g. Lavern Buchanan-Sy stated:

"The next stage could be getting the stories broken down into age categories as I think it will show that we go through different stages of acceptance, confidence about our hair according to our age. It might be good to get people to have written dialogues about their hair experiences, providing funny stories about hair disasters, unique hair styles that made them feel special, hair dos for special occasions, wrapping the hair, managing hair, losing hair etc.."

I have already raised the hair story idea with my local press (Enfield Gazette; Enfield Advertiser), who featured the Black History Month project, so anything is possible.

One thing's for sure, the Hair Blog is a great place to start and I look forward to the journey it may take. Most of the contributors were involved in the arts/media; writers/journalists. However, for Lavern Buchanan-Sy, writing her hair story was her first attempt at creative writing:

"This was my first creative piece and it was an extremely cathartic experience. I felt so at peace when I completed it. I wanted it to be poetic and yet provide a story about my life through the journey of my hair. This short piece prompted me to write a 4,000+ word short story on using the themes from the short creative piece. I was extremely encouraged by the Editor Nicole's comments and friends who read it particularly one friend who said he wanted to see more writing from me. It made me feel confident that I could write and I was safe in the knowledge that someone could edit some of the grammatical errors that sometimes enter the written piece. I now believe I can write and want to learn more about this artistic and creative craft that is so uplifting both to the reader and the writer." (Lavern Buchanan-Sy, 22/12/08)

To read Lavern's hair story, and other entries, please visit:

<http://hairjournal.blogspot.com>

If you have any ideas as to how this project may now take shape, please email me at: [nicole@shangwe.com](mailto:nicole@shangwe.com)

### **3. To Blog or not to Blog?**

I launched my blog in June 2008, and during that year posted 74 entries, on average one every 3-4 days. Before launching my blog, I did some research and found a few How to Blog sites were helpful although a lot of them focused on blogging for business and that's not a bad idea. However, my main aim was to share information, and post selected author's poems, book reviews and social/cultural commentary.

I have enjoyed the blogging experience and see it as an online creative journal. I particularly like uploading images to enhance the text and would recommend having a go at blogging as it's not that difficult to set one up. If you enjoy writing like I do, you will find it both a creative and therapeutic experience. It is also a great way to discipline yourself to keep on writing.

I will continue blogging and hope you will tune in from time to time and leave a comment or two! To visit:

<http://shawana-lulu.blogspot.com>

### **4. Poet's Corner – Sheree Mack**

Introducing: **Sheree Mack**, who is studying for a PhD in Creative Writing at Newcastle University, after having completed an MA in Creative Writing at Northumbria University in 2003. She is an active freelance writer within the UK. (You can read her hair story 'I've got good hair' at <http://hairjournal.blogspot.com> )

## **Dreadlocked**

Where ya come from?

Newcastle.  
No really ....  
Bradford?

Gonna get me hair locked,  
dreadlocked

London.  
Gonna get rooted, locked  
dreadlocked

Brixton market  
Saturday morning  
passing through,  
mustn't linger.

Huge purple stone  
wrapped in silver  
fit snug  
around my finger.

Reminded me of them  
poets with props  
words held my attention, locked  
dreadlocked.

The dreads were awesome  
but the Florida heat  
too long, too heavy  
cut, lick, slick, gone over night.

Nappy sore fingered hair left.  
I can see my neck  
I can see my face  
My smile, locked,  
dreadlocked.

## **5. Shangwe News – Next Edition**

*Shangwe News* is distributed to a target audience of black & mixed-race women of African & Caribbean descent in the UK and to other relevant and interested parties. If you would like to write an article of between 500 to 1000 words (max) or submit a poem (any theme) for the next issue of *Shangwe News*, the copy deadline date is: **20<sup>th</sup> April** for the May 2009 edition. Please email your submissions to: [nicole@shangwe.com](mailto:nicole@shangwe.com)

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