Definitions starting with F

Festivals

The Bahamian festival which outshines all others is JUNKANOO, a heady mixture of fantastic, colorful costumes and exuberant African rhythms which both starts the year in the early hours of New Year's morning and ends it up the day after Christmas. Preparations for JUNKANOO can take up much of the year in between. Neighbors, friends, co-workers or fellow students form JUNKANOO groups, which might meet in a SHACK or on a sports field in the dead of night to practice their own particular rhythms on home-made GOOMBAY or KEG DRUMS as well as cowbells, whistles, and SHAKERS. They choose a common theme for their group's FRINGE SUITS and FACES, and then begin the long and painstaking work needed to make them. They FRINGE crepe paper of various colors into SHINGLING or FRINGE, which is pasted or sewn in overlapping layers onto clothing. At 3 a.m, on the appointed night, Nassau is a massive traffic jam as groups meet to don their costumes and tune their drums with the heat of torches. As the groups begin to move in dance-like steps, the rhythm of their instruments becomes overpowering. Thus they RUSH along Nassau's Bay Street, some WALKING large float-like constructions of crepe paper on card-board symbolizing their group's theme, which are made to dance and move to their group's rhythm. Less formal SCRAP GANGS join the parade as throngs of o-lookers press to see which group will win the large cash prize awarded by a committee of dignitaries.

In the small settlements on other islands the celebration of JUNKANOO is less elaborate but just as enthusiastic. OLDER HEADS remember how individual JUNKANOOS would dress up in sponge-covered suits before Christmas to come around houses and frighten children. In some communities a RAKE-AND-SCRAPE BAND goes from house to house to SERENADE early Christmas morning. One of the masked players is dressed like a man and another like a woman; they cavort to the dance music until the band is given food or money by those they have serenaded. White Bahamians have a similar custom of MASQUERADING around Christmas, in which children wear MASQUERADE FACES to those homes of neighbors who must guess their identity and give them sweets. Easter Monday is traditionally the first day of the year for Bahamian families to go BEACHING. Discovery Day, celebrating Columbus's landing on San Salvador on October 12, 1492, is the tradional day for a regatta for local SLOOPS. AUGUST MONDAY, commemorating Emancipation, is celebrated in some communities with special church services followed by a great cook-out with dancing on the beach. Near Nassau, FOX HILL DAY is celebrated with a PLAIT POLE and traditional dancing to a RAKE-AND-SCRAPE BAND.

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