

Sweet TnT

MAGAZINE

Issue #10 June 2014

www.sweettntmagazine.com

Daddy's girl!

Graduation time
for students

Housewives - get a
manicure, work out,
colour your hair

Launch of
children's book
at NALIS

A taste of France
at new local restaurant

Chow Trini style

A look at
Princes Town and
Knolly's Tunnel



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Sweet TnT
MAGAZINE

Lifestyle
Creole Language
Food
Places

Trinidad and Tobago culture for so!

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RENDEZ-VOUS STAFF

Friendly staff members at RENDEZ-VOUS Restaurant and Wine Bar located at Fiesta Plaza, MovieTowne share smiles with *Sweet TnT Magazine* at the launch hosted by General Manager Craig Sells. See interview on page 16. Photo by Jevan Soyer

Editor's note

The June issue of *Sweet TnT Magazine* once again proves that there are a lot of positive happenings in Trinidad and Tobago despite the shocking rise of criminal activities in our faces every day. We thank our readers for the positive comments sent through the Contact Us section on our website at www.sweettntmagazine.com. Your feedback inspires us to continue bringing the good news of our country to you.

Our writers and interviewees have shown you many ways to help make T&T sweet again and we do hope that gradually people can do what it takes to make it happen. In the Lifestyle section we look at Father's Day, graduation time, a talented man working with leather, a young lady with a gift to bring out the best in people, and some fashion tips for housewives. Our Creole Corner section presents poetry, a humour piece on local culture, and an interview with a writer of children's books.

You will enjoy reading about sugar cane, roti, sweets, watermelon, and chow in the Food section. Also, we feature an interview with the general manager of a new restaurant that specialises in a fusion of local and French cuisines. In the Places section, we take you on a hike to Paria Waterfalls, and give you a tour of Knolly's Tunnel, Princes Town, and the Emperor Valley Zoo.

Congratulations to our talented writers, interviewees and advertisers who made the June issue possible.

Enjoy!

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Editor

Sweet TnT
MAGAZINE

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Sweet TnT
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Cover photo

A true father-daughter moment is captured as a cutie pie and her daddy wearing matching outfits happily pose for our camera in front of Chaud's Restaurant on Dundonald Street and Queen's Park West in Port of Spain. We share this winning photo with you as we celebrate Father's Day around the world on June 15. Also, their football uniforms seem just suitable as this month FIFA World Cup 2014 opens on June 12. Photo by Jevan Soyer

My first cinema date

Tribute to Dad on Father's Day

By Omilla Mungrroo

All I remembered was my mother making a big fuss over us getting dressed in new clothes, combing my long hair, and then the four of us walking from home through St Joseph with my dad. It was the first time he was taking us all out without any other relative, and without the car. I can't recall the entire trip, but the thing most memorable in my child's eye was the proud grin on my dad's face when he was greeted by one of his friends along the way.

The man had made some sort of grown-up comment to him and his eyebrows raised in pride as he smiled and whistled. I don't remember ever seeing my dad smile so brightly before. I heard the man say something like, "All four ah them one time?"

I didn't understand their small talk but I think I was the only one asking all the questions. "Where are we going? What are we going to see?" All he said was, "Herbie," and then he smiled and added, "The Love Bug, and we are going to the Planet Cinema."

We were walking from home, which was at the point where Maracas and St Joseph met, to the Planet Cinema on

Riverside Road, Curepe. The Planet Cinema in those days was one of two cinemas in Curepe. The other one being Crest Cinema, which stood near where the Sauce doubles vendors now occupy on the Southern Main Road, Curepe.

My dad was a cinema bug. He often went to Planet Cinema, perhaps because it was walking distance from his parents' home. That day he was walking us to his favourite place. I can't say whether my siblings were as excited as I was then. It seemed they were just waiting to get back home to play.

Today, despite all the ups and downs over the years, the hurts, the mistakes on both our parts, since that first visit to a cinema with my dad, the love between a father and eldest daughter never dies. It teaches lessons, if we are willing to learn.

He doesn't go to the cinema now. Both Crest and Planet cinemas are now defunct. Dad is now a TV bug.

I remember a song I heard when I grew up, The Living Years, by Mike and the Mechanics. So I am saying this now to my dad who is very much in his living years, "Happy Father's Day, Dad!"

And Happy Father's Day to all the dads in sweet T&T!





St Augustine Girls' High School annual graduation at the Anna Mahase Auditorium.

Photo by Nadia Ali

Graduation time!

By Nadia Ali

Many students are studying night and day for their final exams. The libraries across the nation have extended their opening hours. The countdown is definitely on for Standard Five students who are leaving primary schools and Form Five and Upper Six students leaving secondary schools throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

The dreaded exams take place from mid-April all the way through to mid-June. Then it's time to dress up and have one last blast with classmates before the official close of school for the July/August holidays.

It is graduation time and celebrations swing into high gear across the twin islands. It's a time that has hairdressers, clothing shops, seamstresses, car rentals and popular venues creating the ultimate graduation experience.

It is indeed an unforgettable time for graduates, one filled with much emotion and pride, felt by fellow students, teachers and parents alike.

For those graduating from secondary school, here's a checklist:

1. Remember whoever you go with to your graduation, it will be a big deal and maybe even the start of something big. If you intend to go alone don't worry, there are going to be fellow students who also go alone.

2. Dress to impress. Ladies, make sure to pick the right graduation dress, and guys achieve that distinguished look with your shirt, pants, jacket and tie.

3. Girls, make that appointment with the hairdresser to avoid disappointment. Don't take it for granted that your hairdresser will always fit you in no matter how busy. The same goes for any pedicures or manicures.

4. Girls, choose your heels and jewellery wisely. Don't wear the highest heels you can find and then you cannot dance in them. Taking off your shoes at the venue will dress down that one-of-a-kind dress that took you ages to find. As for jewellery, expensive, real jewellery is nice but expect to be jumping up to music at some point in the evening when you will need to secure your jewels.

5. Car rental: For that extra special touch have a fancy car drop you off at your venue. The trend is to hire a limousine for a group of friends and nothing says fun than sharing a limo together. You can also track down family members with outstanding cars and ask for a favour.

6. Keepsake: As this is the last time you will spend with all of your fellow students take an autograph book. This gives your friends a chance to write something about you that you can physically read years from now.

7. Charge it: Ensure your camera and phone and whatever other electronic device you are planning to take with you is fully charged for the evening.

8. Sleep: Now get a good night's sleep because the last thing you need is to be sleepy, grumpy and slumped down in a chair for your special graduation.

9. Do take photographs with your teachers and even the principal if you can. Group shots are ideal because you will get photos of everyone – not just your immediate friends.

So, go out there and have a spectacular graduation party!

“ You have brains in your head,
You have feet in your shoes,
You can steer yourself in
whatever direction you choose.”

– Dr Seuss



Dress to impress.



Take photos with your friends.



Make the appointment for your manicure early.



Don't wear shoes you have to take off when it's time to dance.

Photos courtesy Chantelle Wilson



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Wives and mothers... Work out, shop, dye your hair!

By Nerissa Hosein

So ladies, we sit and watch the soaps and the award shows and laugh at how housewives prance around on heels and fully made-up faces while making the five-star meal all while not chipping their perfect nails. Unrealistic but that's television for you!

But let me pose a question, why is it so many of us choose to let our appearance go simply because we become wives and mothers? Did we stop paying attention to things that was second nature to us when we were single? There must be a line between the fake TV personas and the reality we force ourselves into, right?

So here's a list of five must-haves that EVERY WOMAN, married, single, or with ten children should keep in check:

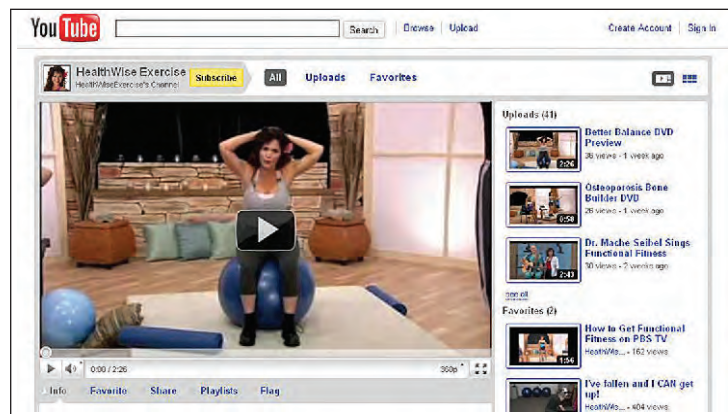
1. PEDI / MANI: At least once a week. Take a few minutes to do this. Now that doesn't mean to spend over \$500 a week on spa services. HELL NO! Go Pennywise. Buy some basic items (good



Nerissa goes red!

foot scrub, mani set, pedi file, nail polishes). If you can't afford a foot spa, a bucket with some warm water will do. Soak those hard working feet. Buying your own products also means you have supplies for at least 6-10 procedures). It's cost effective and keeps the hands and feet nice!

2. FACIAL: Again, no need to spend money at a spa if you don't have it. Just steam with some warm water, cleanse, tone and moisturise. Rub some cucumbers on the skin to restore a nice bal-



If you can't afford gym fees there's YouTube!

ance, put some under the eyes and you're good to go!

3. GYM (YOUTUBE STYLE): If you can't afford gym fees there's YouTube! Clear a little space, search any and every type of exercise on YouTube and you'll find some nice instructional videos to go along with. Whether it's zumba, yoga or kickboxing, YouTube has it all!

4. SHOP: We women have vices. We love our clothes, shoes and handbags, right? I love a good bargain. I shop online, and find lots of deals on eBay. If you don't shop online, no probs, go Tunapuna or Chaguanas on the Main Road, pay half the price you would pay in the mall. If that's not an option FACEBOOK SHOP! Tonnes of people are using Facebook to sell their items and I always find deals there. My motto is, "If there's a piece of clothes I need, there is an economic way to get it!"

5. GO RED: When you need a pick-me-up, change your appearance! Bored, tired and depressed? All you do all day is clean, cook, wash and then do it all over again? So, change it up a bit. Dye your

hair! Trust me, a little dye or highlights go a long way! It's amazing how a little hair colour can lift those dark circles away and brighten up the complexion!

As a Trinidadian woman I know sometimes we can feel burdened by the pressures of society to be a good mother and wife. We have little or no time for ourselves and even less money to really take care of our appearance. So we stop. But it's a proven fact if you don't like what stares you back in the mirror, you're going to be even more depressed. It's not the kids' or the hubby's fault. No one is responsible for your happiness and the way you feel about yourself.

Moms, ladies, come on! Trinidadian women are some of the most beautiful women out there. It's time to start appreciating our beauty and making a little space in our lives for us!



Sisters Janelle and Tanica Narine at Jazz Festival in Pigeon Point.

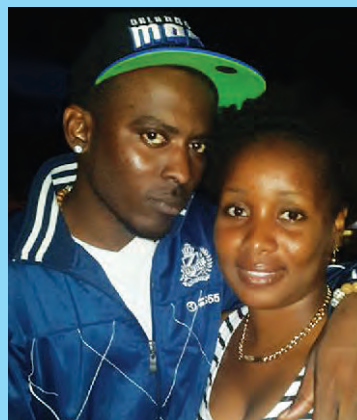
Tobago crew

Darryl "Sucrose" Corke shares with readers some photos he took with friends while liming in Tobago.

See more photos of Darryl and friends having fun in Issue #5 of Sweet TnT Magazine on <http://www.sweettntmagazine.com/>



Sucrose enjoys the music and a drink at Jazz Festival.



Sucrose and Janelle Narine at Jade Monkey Bar and Grill on Karaoke Wednesday night in Crowne Point.



Janelle strikes a pose at her table at Jade Monkey Bar and Grill.

Neil Audain
poses with
his leather
works at
his shop
in Arima.



Neil at his shop in Arima:

By Omilla Mungroo

I had not seen a “poya” case since my grandfather was alive! A “poya” case or cutlass case is used by people who hunt, plant crops or do some kind of farming for a living. So when I saw one hanging at the front of Neil’s shop I had to gasp and exclaim, “Aay, you know how long I ain’t seen one of these?” He smiled and replied, “Yeah, I make cutlass cases too.”

Every time I pass by Neil’s shop he would always wear a smile and have something cheerful to say. No matter how you felt, he’d make you smile or forget what you were unconsciously frowning about. Neil Audain is 35 years old and

I can make anything with leather!

started his own leather works shop two years ago where he makes and repairs sandals, slippers, handbags, hats, wallets, and accessories like belts, key chains, earrings, and yes, even cutlass cases. He states, “I can make anything with genuine leather.”

Neil said he always loved craft since school days. “My father was a

mechanic. And one day a man came to see him about his car, and noticed I liked craft, so he asked my father if I could work for him in his shop in San Juan.” Neil worked for 14 years doing the craft at the man’s shop. He said he started in September 1995 sewing shoes. He learnt to make the other stuff later on.

When I asked about the competition he faces around the town in Arima, he said his customers tell him there is none, and he smiled brightly. It seems it’s the least of his concerns because he takes great pride in his work, and says he does it just for the love of it.

I can attest to that because he had engraved my son’s name on a belt right after our conversation when I revisited him the same day. He beckoned me near the work station to see how it was done. I smiled and understood clearer what he meant by, “I do it for the joy and the expression on customer’s faces.” I thanked him for the belt and told him that if my grandfather was still alive I would have bought him one of those “poya” cases for Fathers’ Day and he would just love it.



Art in the Savannah

Stalls and tables at the Queen's Park Savannah, Port of Spain displaying paintings, jewellery, ornaments, bags and plaques made out of wood, calabash, beads, leather, and many other materials. Photos by Jevan Soyer



For the silent victims

By Marissa Armoogam-Ali

Victim - (1) a person harmed or killed as a result of a crime or accident, (2) a person who has been tricked: the victim of a Hoax. (Oxford English Dictionary)

We all as citizens of humanity may have experienced being a victim at some point in our lives and if you haven't, don't be too quick to celebrate for as the old saying goes, "What hasn't met you didn't pass you yet."

The unfortunate thing is that we take most things at face value around us but we look at the negative news plastered in the media and think that these unfortunate souls are the only victims in our society. There is no argument that their misfortune is real, but unfortunately our attention is drawn away from the silent victims, the ones whose stories go untold and scars of emotional abuse are unseen. To these victims, liberation from this life seems to be an unreachable dream.

I have witnessed the grievances of women of this beautiful twin isle, most of them we pass daily, a stranger on the street, a vendor, and the grumpy sales clerk, the list can go for miles. What we don't know is that behind the beautifully painted faces and crisp work suits hide women who are scared and feel very much alone in this

**Keeping
T&T sweet!**

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battle for survival of the mind. Emotional abuse and the damage it does to the human being is extremely dangerous simply because it is a wound not noticed and hence not treated. It usually becomes noticeable only when the damage is extreme.

A large majority of women are not aware that they are victims of this type of abuse since it usually is done to them by someone whom they love and trust, a sibling, a close friend, a husband or boyfriend even a co-worker. Emotional abuse attacks our minds. The hurtful words, unkindness, betrayal and uncaring behaviour toward us lead to disappointment, self-esteem issues, depression, hurt and in severe cases it can lead to suicide. When our minds are constantly bom-

barded with the negativity that is fed to us we begin to sink into a bottomless pit that can swallow us quicker than we can pull out ourselves.

I used the phrase "fed to us" because we choose to "eat it". No one can force us to enter that bottomless pit, it may seem as though we have no other choice but to be beaten down by the words and unloving actions, but we do! You don't have to wake up each morning wondering what disappointments I am going to face today. Yes the words do hurt, yes the actions may be disappointing, but we have to learn that this negativity does not define who we are and what are our purposes.

We were all given a unique combination of smarts, courage and beauty that set us apart from the rest of the world. It doesn't matter where we came from, who we are related to, or even what we did in our past, we are all able to roll up our sleeves and try to help find a solution. A person can only treat you the way you allow them to. This may not be easy and much easier said than done, but what other choice is there? Do we allow another human being, even if we love them, so much power that our lives are no longer ours?

Editor's note: Help stop abuse. Please contact your local hotline for help if you or someone you know is a silent victim.

“ I have witnessed the grievances of women... most of them we pass daily, a stranger on the street, a vendor, and the grumpy sales clerk ,,



Keeping T&T sweet!

By Kielon Hilaire

These days it often seems that everyone wants to change something – their hair, job, car, and even their overall identity. You see a world filled with people who could end up changing everything but the progression of the world itself. Here is a person who is capable of changing many things for better with simple actions.

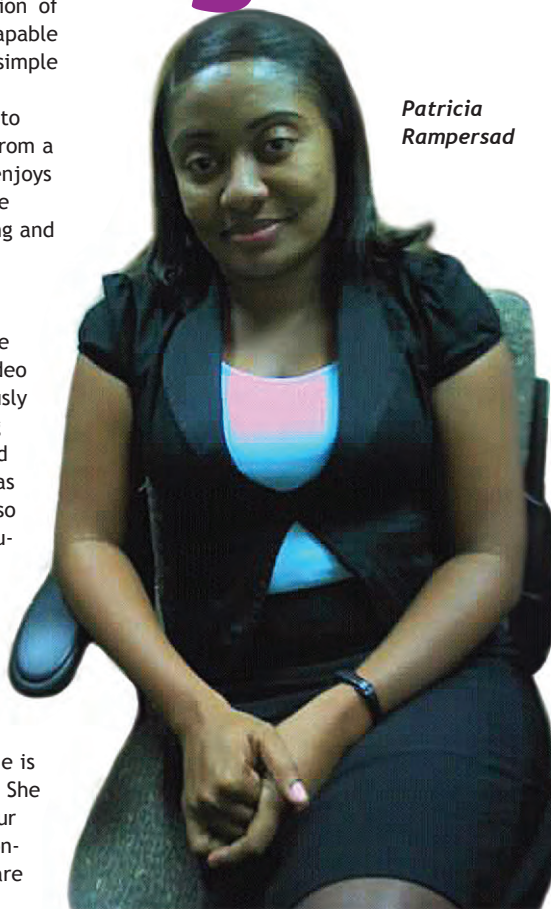
Patricia Rampersad will get someone to quit smoking, stop swearing and straying from a destructive life without doing much. She enjoys socialising, mentoring and transforming the minds of individuals, especially those young and still developing. People notice her gentle demeanour, non-judgemental attitude and what she stands for.

I once witnessed an incident when she was the assistant manager of a popular video game store and a well-dressed man anxiously got rid of his cigarette before approaching her at the counter. He told her that he had great respect for her. At the time there was “Jesus music” playing in the background, so some may think that her faith is what influences people to live better lives.

She has a loving husband, two beautiful girls and she is an aspiring librarian from the borough of Arima. She is pursuing her degree in Library and Information studies at the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT), where she is currently employed at the school’s library. She states, “Librarians are the custodians of our culture and are our future assets in the continuous educational system because they are challenged daily to find creative ways of

Patricia – an agent of change

Patricia Rampersad



retrieving different sets of information and using it to best satisfy the requests of endless professions.” Today, Patricia accepts that she can be a medium for change and likes being a beacon of light and hope to others.

She recalls her life growing up that may have contributed to her peaceful persona. As a child (one of six siblings) she used to visit the Cleaver Woods Recreational Park every Sunday to bathe and fill drinking water. Her July and August vacations were usually spent in Paria Bay enjoying the lovely view of springs, rivers, and eating great tasting mammy apples, padoos, cocoas, sugar apples and sapodillas.

She also remembers going to Gran Riviere later on in life and witnessing a leatherback turtle, in a trance-like state, laying eggs and carefully burying them in the sand, after which the turtle patted them neatly with her fin. These memories helped her appreciate nature and life, arguably the two most important things needed for consistently embracing positive change.

Patricia also has a vision for Trinidad and Tobago’s culture and it is to see more homes unite, more people have a greater love for God and mankind and she hopes to someday assist in establishing a community development programme in each area of the country so that everyone can help keep our beautiful T&T sweet.



Spreading joy with snakes

Two professional snake handlers at left allow passersby including children in Port of Spain to hold their snakes and to pose for photos to capture their brave encounters.

Photo by Jevan Soyler

Author Stacey Alfonso-Mills talks to Sweet TnT Magazine following the launch of her latest children's illustrated storybook titled "Manatee has a Question" on Wednesday April 16, 2014. The book launch was held in the children's library section at the National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS) on Abercromby Street, Port of Spain.

Launch of *Manatee has a Question* **Endangered animals help each other at Nariva Swamp**

I was born and raised in Trinidad but lived in the US for several years before returning home at the end of 1996. I am married to Julian Mills who is English and we are raising three sons Anthony, Mathew and Alexander.

I am the Managing Director of MAALAN Resources Limited, which is a project management company for the energy sector in T&T. However, my discipline is actually in the Public Relations and Media Relations fields.

I have a MA degree in Mass Communications from University of Leicester, England and offer Communication Consultancy services particularly in the areas of Business Communications, Media Relations, Customer Service and Personal Development. Somewhere in between, I write and self-publish children's books.

Apart from my collaboration with Bridge Foundation, I continue to attend schools for book readings. Earlier this year I read *Manatee Has a Question* for the



Stacey interacts with the children.

Grades 1, 2 and 3 at Maple Leaf International School.

On April, 2014 I visited Trimont College (a private primary and secondary school in Glencoe), to present a complimentary copy of

Manatee has a Question to the Principal Mr Herman Rodriguez and Librarian Mrs Diasie Sammy-Christopher. I also shared photo opportunities with the Primary 1 and Primary 4 students.

At the end of April, I was asked to judge the Junior and Senior story submissions for Children's Illustrated Storybook category for Maple Leaf International School's Writing



Book reading at Maple Leaf International School.



Visit with Primary 1 students at Trimont College.

Competition. I have always loved reading and writing. When I attended St Theresa's Girls' RC School, the primary school subjects encouraged and inspired early literacy in children. My favourite subjects were Poetry, Creative Writing, Vocabulary, Grammar, Spelling, and Art. These subjects also influenced Public Speaking (composing and reciting), which further develops presentation of speech and creative thinking.

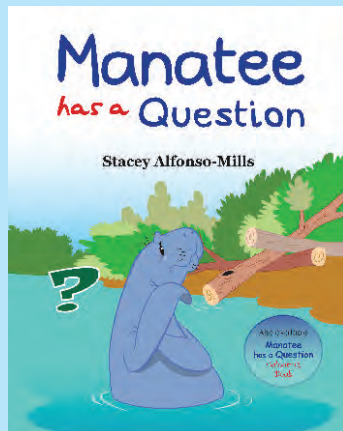
One of the best ways to educate ourselves and the rest of the world about T&T and at the same time preserve our culture and history is through books. This concern fuelled my goal to start writing for children about T&T. I consider this my tiny but honest contribution to the future development and enrichment of our nation.

My first book *The Boys of Sinclair Hill – Fun in the Backyard* was launched in 2009 and second *The Boys of Sinclair Hill – The Princess, The Treasure and The Blue Dragon* was launched in 2011. Kenneth Scott of Trinidad and Tobago illustrated both books.

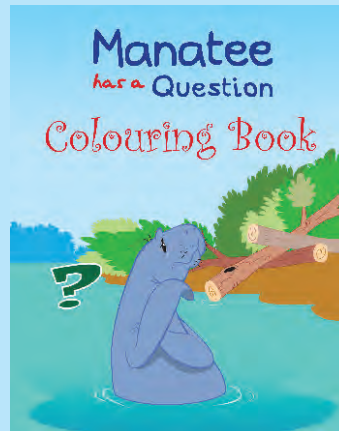
My third book *Manatee has a Question* features five endangered local wildlife animals from the Nariva Swamp – West Indian Manatee, Spectacled Caiman, Red Howler Monkey, Prehensile-tailed Porcupine and Blue and Gold Macaw.

The story encourages wildlife and environmental awareness as it highlights the natural habitat of these animals, the challenges they face and how they interconnect and depend on each other for their survival.

I researched heavily for this



Manatee has a Question storybook.



Manatee has a Question colouring book.



Stacey's first book *The Boys of Sinclair Hill – Fun in the Backyard*.

book and worked with the President of the Manatee Conservation Trust to ensure that my research was accurately written and illustrated. I also released a colouring book alongside the *Manatee has a Question* storybook. Christopher Riley also of Trinidad and Tobago illustrated *Manatee has a Question*.

The feedback from readers has been amazing. It truly is what keeps me going back to the story-board. Researching, writing and self-publishing a children's book is a very difficult and expensive ven-

ture. But each time I attend a school to conduct a book reading of one of my books the response from the children reminds me why this is all worth it.

Children are not only fascinated by books where they can relate to the story in some small way, but they are equally fascinated when the author of the book takes the time to sit and read with them. They ask questions, they contribute to the story, they appreciate the book, the author and the illustrator.

The best feedback I've gotten from the children is when they shout out in the class that they have my books at home and they read them all the time or that their parents read my books with them at night.

I received the best feedback from a teacher who told me that she uses all of my books with the students in her remedial reading classes.

I am a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and

Illustrators and Writer's Digest so I tap into any and all resources available from these groups to ensure that I am using the appropriate principles for writing a children's book. The information is endless, there is always something new to learn or incorporate in the next book, so I read a lot of material.

To ensure that the theme of my story and the storyline are going in the right direction, I also rely on my family for feedback. My husband Julian and older son Anthony are great at reviewing the overall presentation, but my younger sons Mathew and Alexander tell me whether it's a book they would read as a kid.

To me, writing is so therapeutic. Most people feel that writing is just for others to read. But writing is also a great way to express yourself – just for you. And this can be done by writing song lyrics, poetry, short stories, playwriting and of course journals.

I would advise anyone wanting to express themselves through writing to "just start" writing! If a person does not know what to write about, the best place to start is with yourself – your personal experiences, what's happening around you, your desires, goals or fears, even what you've learnt from other people's experiences. What's more is that social media is a hot bed of ideas for stories with many ideas on how to communicate them.

For more information you can email to staceyalfonso-millsbooks@gmail.com or visit <http://staceyalfonso-millsbooks.com/>



Presentation of *Manatee has a Question* to Principal Herman Rodriguez and Librarian Daise Sammy-Christopher.



Members of the author's family make up part of the audience.

Remembering the seasons

Vibrant yet painful but can't get enough

By Felesha Subadar

It is so beautiful but yet so difficult.

We tried to make up our minds but it was just too hard to decide.

Kalicharan Carnival was the band we chose to play with this year.

The colours of the costumes were amazing, making me speechless beyond words.

Red, green, brown, white, black, yellow.

Any colour that came to mind could be seen on any of the costumes.

We went to mas camp to pick out our costumes.

But an argument had to break out amongst us.

After a countless debate over which one to choose.

We finally decided on the best choice we could pick.

It was the red with silver accessories.

When the day came to pick up the costumes we

could not be happier with our decision.

It was magnificent.

We got our accessories to match and we patiently

waited for March 3rd and 4th to arrive.

As the morning arrived of Monday, March 3rd, we got ready.

Glitter everywhere.

Looking marvellous as ever.

We had to take out a few pictures to last us a lifetime.

But out on the road it was a different story.

Music blasting out from trucks passing by.

Everybody enjoying themselves and dancing to the music.

Moving their body to the rhythm of the beat.

Yet all of them following behind the music truck.

On Tuesday, March 4th, it was an indescribable experience.

It was completely amazing.

Everyone should experience playing in Carnival at least once in their lives.

But after it all, my feet were numb and felt like it was falling off but it was all worth it.

And once again Kalicharan Carnival won band of the year in south.



We chose the red costumes with silver accessories.

Our Little Easter Tradition

It began as a tradition in Jamaica.

But it turn out to be a tradition in Trinidad too.

Wanting to wake late to see the "magic" take place.

But the time was moving by to slow.

On Holy Thursday night.

We begged to do our Easter tradition.

We wanted to see if it would be the same thing every year.

After all it predicted our future according to the myth.

We grabbed a tall glass of water.

Filling it completely.

Then we put the egg into the water.

But the wait was going to be long.

After countless hours, Good Friday morning arrived.

We ran to the glass to see what happened.

Miraculously, it took the form of an object.

It was beautiful yet made everyone speechless.

It took the shape of a bride, or a bridge to me.

But it was utterly amazing.

Every year we promised to do our little tradition from then on out.

A Mother's Love

By Marc Algernon

We won't always see eye to eye but we should respect each other.

In the end I'm your son and you're my mother.

Please understand, I need to be my own man,

You can't always hold my hand. Request not demand.

When I'm stuck my defenses go up,

but my love for you will never stop.

Now I will tell you, like you told me

Love your family and live free,

Honesty, loyalty, fear for the Almighty.

Relax, you did a good job,

you're a great mom.

Release my hand and let me stand.

Let go of your son.

You're a Trinbagonian if you remember this

By Marissa Armoogam-Ali

As in all cultures there are certain activities, certain rights of passage that mould and form the heritage of that society. Recently I was simply reflecting on some of my fond childhood memories and some of the things my siblings and I enjoyed and hence the list that follows came to life.

I've decided to make this list into a fun little test for readers, simply to allow us all to look at the results and grasp just how much of our past we recall and just how much of a great memory it actually is for all of us... so as we begin... you know you're a Trinbagonian if you:

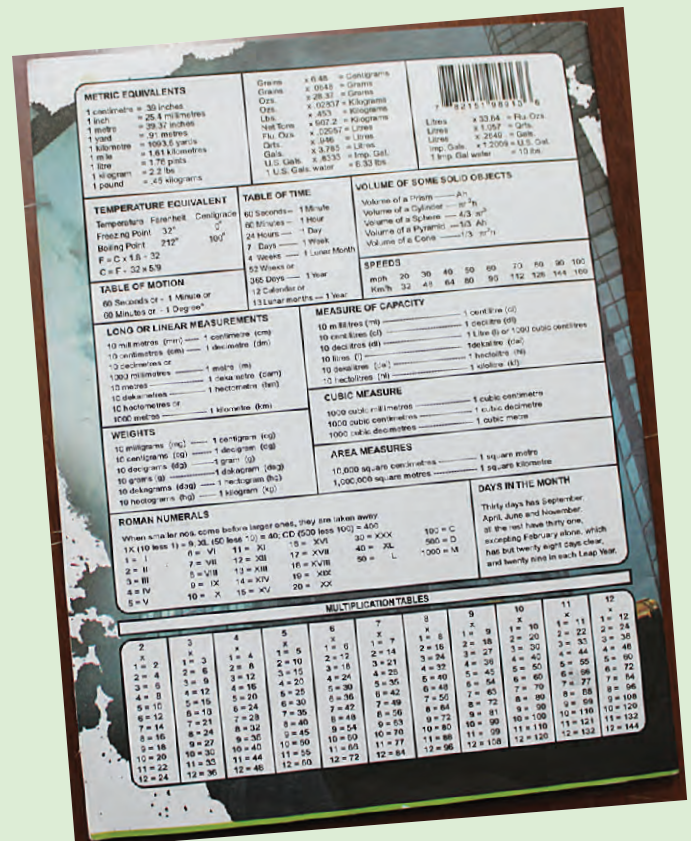
1. Learnt your timetables from behind a copybook
2. Bought red mango, amchar, pholourie in a piece of grease proof paper for 50 cents

3. Know what a "sucker bag" is
4. Look for "snatty nose" dongs after school
5. Ride or make a "box-cart"
6. Thief mango
7. Make chow with every kind of fruit in one bowl
8. Get "licks" in school
9. Get "licks" for the same thing when you reach home from school (lol)
10. Know what a bread van, fish van and gas truck is

Now this list may seem simple but it is a memory that most of our children will never have.

Now I find myself trying to come up with situations that I know will form fond memories for my children which does not involve any type of electronic devices or having to make a purchase, just good old down-home fun with family and friends.

So how much did you score???



Life in T&T

by A. James



When Sugar Cane Reigned

A heritage perhaps gone but far from forgotten
I seek out fading minds and arched backs of the heritage weavers
As they remind us sometimes with tales that if not told would take with it a heritage so bold

I lean in closer, his face lined with roads made by time
Squinted eyes and drawn lips, teeth stained with tobacco and a gleaming head where hair once lived
His tales regale of times when men, through fields burnt did toil, to cut and stack and carry away to sweeten and brighten our day

My memory jumps and yes it's true I remember this time his tales are true
I remember when they burnt the fields I'd run and play to catch the ash
I'd stop my play to watch the trailers loaded high with sugar cane
Once or twice a piece would fall, I'd eagerly run to claim my prize

With teeth and hands I'd peel the bark to find the heavenly nectar from within
Down my chin and down my arms would flow the juice I couldn't retain
And when the fields were cut and cleared I'd run and play in full delight

Then the rains would come and new sprouts pushed forth
So I'd wait once more for Crop to come

- Marissa Armoogam-Ali



French food with a Trinidadian flavour



A friendly
staff
member
serves with
a smile.

Craig Sells, general manager of Rendez-vous Restaurant and Wine Bar, shares his story with Sweet TnT Magazine at the opening located at MovieTowne on May 20, 2014.

I've been into hospitality management since 1999. I lived in Miami, Florida and worked in the East Coast of Florida for the last eight years, prior to that I was on the West Coast. I managed some of the most prestigious country clubs in the United States that are on the West Coast and Naples area and moved to Trinidad and Tobago a year ago.

I met Michael and Wendy Achim earlier in the year and they were in the process of opening this restaurant. When they realised that I have a background in fine dining, they asked me if I wanted to come on board and be the general manager of this restaurant which I was more than excited to be. I think that MovieTowne is a phenomenal location and I love Port of Spain.

I was really excited about this opportunity because I love Trinidad and Tobago, the culture, the food, the people, and they've done a phenomenal job of taking a French concept with the fusion of Trinidadian. So you will find that our executive chef will create a menu that you will see the French influence as well as the Trinidadian flair to it. He is from France and has been in Trinidad for the past seven years.

We consider this to be a nouveau French cafe with the fine dining. The interior designer



Craig Sells, left,
welcomes guests
at the entrance
of the restaurant.

recognised that being in MovieTowne on the ground level, the restaurant needed more of a cafe feel instead of the whole nine yards of the dark settings in the fine dining establishment.

Also, because of my formal training in this area I was given the opportunity to have an extensive wine knowledge. We want to come up with different suppliers in T&T and bring the wine to the forefront of this restaurant and highlight that as an aspect. We would be offering the

lunch and dinner service, and then wine tasting on Tuesday evenings. We invite everyone to come and enjoy this great experience.

Special thanks to Mr Sells and staff for courtesies extended to members of Sweet TnT Magazine. The food, wine and service offered at Rendez-vous Restaurant and Bar truly represent fine dining in a French-Trinidadian style.

Craig Sells interacts with patrons.
Photos by Jevan Soyer





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Pholourie, doubles, buss-up-shot in London

Trini roti shop making its mark

By Annisa Phillip

Roti Joupa is the Homes or Hoseins of London. Located in Clapham London, Roti Joupa caters to the Caribbean diaspora, serving West Indian dishes. That is what is advertised but, in reality it is Trinbagonian cuisine! The main dishes, sides and drinks? Basically Trinbagonian (minus some drink options). Dhauri and buss-up-shot can be made to order, eat two doubles with kuchela while you wait. Better yet, have a chicken roti and a red Solo. No joke, they also sell Solo.

This roti shop has made its mark in the London community, attracting both Caribbean nationals and British citizens alike. The prices are not what a Trinbagonian is used to paying (after converting) but considering that it's London, it is not so bad.

Dishes include stew chicken, curry

duck, curry goat, macaroni pie, aloo pie, doubles, pholourie, coconut bake, sweetbread, currents roll, kurma, fudge, anchar, tomato and baigan choka – that is only part of their menu.

I devoured the pholourie and doubles and must admit that they make tamarind sauce “that does real lash”. They did not fall short with the roti either, the buss-up-shot was exceptional, it was smooth, silky and felt right at home in my mouth. Eating from here felt like I was still in T&T.

The shop is owned and run by Trinidadians who are very friendly, warm and easy going. With soca music blaring on the radio, the food coupled with the welcoming atmosphere made me feel like once I stepped into their doors I was at home. Trinbagonians are everywhere and for Trini food made and served by Trinis, Roti Joupa is doing us proud.



Lenten meal

Felesha Subadar shares photos of the menu consumed during Lent. Her table spread displays (in photo at left) tomato choka, macaroni salad, fish pie, and fresh salad; and in photo above are fried fish and fried bake.

By Marissa Armoogam-Ali

Trinidad is renowned the world over for our many festivals, cultural activities, people and food, to name a few things. As we approach the middle of yet another year the festival and celebrations are in full swing as each month that goes by is met with preparations for any given celebration.

In this regard I jump right into the Islamic celebration of Eid-UL-Fitr which will be celebrated in the month of July this year; as such I have decided to share with you two recipes which are quite simple but elegantly delicious and delectable.

The sweets that make our celebrations



A decadent dessert of Sawine (Vermicelli), it can be enjoyed either hot or cold.

Sawine (Vermicelli)

Ingredients

- 1 pack of Vermicelli
- 1 pack of evaporated milk
- 1 tin of sweetened condensed milk
- 2 tsp powdered cinnamon or 1 stick of cinnamon
- 1 tsp powdered nutmeg
- 2 tsp vanilla essence
- 1-2 litres of boiling water
- 1 pack of sliced almonds
- 1lb of golden raisins (soaked in hot water to plump up)
- 1 jar of cherries (chopped)

Method

Heat a large cast iron pot, empty $\frac{3}{4}$ of the pack of vermicelli into the pot and stir intermittently until most of the vermicelli is browned. Lower the heat and add in the hot water and stir. Add in all the spices and the essence and raise the heat again.

Continue to boil for approximately 15 to 20 minutes or until the vermicelli is cooked. Lower the heat once again and add the condensed milk gradually tasting to your preference.

Turn off the heat, gradually add the evaporated milk stirring continuously. When serving add the cherries, almonds and raisins according to your taste. Enjoy!

Rasgulla

Ingredients

- 1 pack of powdered milk
- 1 cup of water

For the Syrup

- 2 cups of water
- 1 tsp of grated fresh ginger
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of sugar
- Oil for frying

Method

Using a sieve gently sift the powdered milk into a large mixing bowl, slowly add in about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water and mix quickly until a soft sticky dough is formed, using the palms of your hands gently roll small amounts of this mixture into small balls, be sure not to roll the mixture too tightly or else the inside will not be cooked. Once you have done this cover all the balls with a light cloth.

In a large frying pan pour in the oil until the pan is filled $\frac{1}{2}$ way and slowly heat. Once the oil is hot add in the balls probably five at a time and constantly stir them until they are a light golden brown. Remove from oil and drain. Continue until all the frying is complete.

To make the syrup add the water sugar and ginger in a saucepan and bring to a boil and then lower the heat until it reduces to simple syrup. Place the fried ball into a deep bowl and pour the syrup over the balls and let rest. Enjoy!



Rasgulla



Watermelon on sale in San Juan.
Photo by Jevan Soyer

By Nadia Ali

How often do you drive passed the watermelon sellers at the side of the road and glance across to see the price? I recently had visitors from abroad and whereas I just looked to see if the price was right, they saw great big juicy feasts!

"Look at the size of those watermelons!" one screamed in excitement, looking at the huge, oval-shaped melons, tightly packed on the back of the vendors pick-up truck.

"Look how red and juicy!" another announced drooling at the large, red wedges on show.

I have passed the same vendors a number of times and never really have been amazed by the size or look of the watermelons, so to see them in a whole different light was refreshing. I did not even notice that there are typically four types of melons on sale in Trinidad, namely the Mickeylee,

Watermelon

A great big juicy feast!

Paladin, Sentinel and a name I am familiar with but not as a watermelon...Top Gun!

The Paladin is deep red with black seeds. It is oblong in shape with dark green and light green stripes on the rind.

Sentinel watermelons are an all-sweet hybrid which is deep red, sweet and crisp. The rind is dark green and light green with thick block-like stripes.

The Mickey Lee is a seedless melon, red in colour, almost circu-

lar in shape like a ball and the rind is almost a solid light green colour

The Top Gun is a seedless melon, crimson in colour with a uniform semi-oval shape and the rind is dark in colour with wide uniformed lighter-green stripes.

All watermelons are part of the cucurbitaceous family which include the pumpkin, cucumber and squash. There are many varieties grown worldwide with China being the top producing country.

Trinidad and Tobago produced 378,000 tonnes of watermelons in 2012, according to statistics from <http://www.factfish.com/>. The fruit is grown in low lying areas in Plum Mitán which is located in the area of the Manzanilla Mayaro Road, Biche, Bush Bush in Mayaro, Sangre Grande, Penal, Aranguez and Caroni. These areas provide lagoon conditions for the vines to run, but recently some farmers have taken to the hillside because of continued flooding problems. Most farmers reap two crops per year which is visible to the public by the appearance of roadside sellers.

So, the next time you see the trucks of watermelons look at the different markings, colours and shapes. And, if you stop to buy one, ask what is the name of the particular watermelon that you are buying... then enjoy your great big juicy feast!



The Trinidad Theatre Workshop is a not for profit organization and has long been a flagship for theatre here in Trinidad and Tobago, and indeed for the Caribbean.

Trinidad Theatre Workshop has multiple facets. These are:

- Theatre in Education (T.I.E.)
- School for the Arts Workshops (Children Theatre Workshop, Teen Theatre Studio, New Actors Workshop)
- Productions

• Theatre in Education

Theatre in Education also known T.I.E. was started in 1991. The concept of theatre in education (T.I.E.) incorporates the elements of education, theatre, and drama.

The benefits to school children and young people, while interacting as members of the audience or as participants of a TTW T.I.E. Company Project, may be put into four basic components:

1. Social Interaction
2. Content
3. Forms of Expression
4. Use of the media – the language of drama

• School for the Arts

The school for the arts has three components which are Children Theatre Workshop, Teen Theatre Studio and New Actors' Workshop. These classes teach basic acting techniques, movement and allow students to engage in fully participatory sessions. The January Cycle has already started. The New Cycle begins in April and May.

New Actors' Workshop - Wednesdays 6 pm to 9 pm - Restarting April 30th - \$1600.00

Children Theatre Workshop - Saturdays 10 am - 1 pm - Restarting May 3rd - \$1200.00

Teen Theatre Studio - Saturday 1 pm - 4 pm - Restarting May 3rd - \$1400.00

Scholarships and deferred payment plans available



Trinidad *Theatre* Workshop

Founded 1959. Derek Walcott, Founder. Albert Laveau, Artistic & Managing Director



Chow mixed with pommecythere pineapple, pomerac, apples, shadon beni, and hot pepper.
Photo by Joanna Hayde

Chow time

By Marissa Armoogam-Ali

One thing that must be known the world over is the love a Trinbagonian has for his stomach. We love food. It's not so much a grab and eat situation, when we eat it is an experience each time, of course there are times when we have to eat and run, but on most occasions and in most families the meal is what makes the celebration whatever it may be.

When we cook we seldom follow a recipe, the meal is cooked with time acquired know-how, we taste as we go along and add a pinch here and dash there... you know we put lots of love into it and we imagine our loved ones enjoying it and that in itself propels us forward to want to make it even yummier.

Anyway this article is not about any

gourmet meals but a favourite of every Trinbagonian at least that I know. CHOW! Now chow can be described as anything that you can add some savoury seasonings and within minutes you have a mouth-watering snack that when eaten usually just opens up your appetite.

I consider myself a bit of a "Chow Connoisseur". I have made chow with almost every fruit you can think of, both local and foreign fruits. There are many different methods that Trinis use to make a good chow. I have tried most of these variations but I always gravitate back to my favourite recipe.

So now I share with you my time honoured and very delicious and simple method for making a Trini Chow. Now remember you can use any fruit of your choice from mangoes, plums, guavas, green paw-paw, cherries, etc... the list can go on for miles.

Ingredients

Fruit of your choice cut up into bite size pieces (I prefer them thinly sliced)
Bandhania (chadon beni), blended or finely chopped
Grated garlic
Hot pepper, cut up (you can use hot sauce too)
Black pepper
Salt

Method

Mix all the ingredients in with the cut up fruit and enjoy.

Some folks like to add some water to make a sauce for the fruit to soak in, others lay the chow out in the sun to make the pepper hotter, and some add curry powder for flavour.

So whatever your preference, it is an ideal and inexpensive snack that is healthy and fast.



Enjoying the destination after a strenuous hike.

Hike to Paria Waterfalls

Joanna Hayde shares with readers of Sweet TnT Magazine photos of her fun trip with her sister Jodie and a group of more than 200 hikers to Paria Waterfalls on March 23, 2014.

The leader of Island Hikers, Mario Russell, led the group for the three-hour hike which began at Spring Bridge, Blanchisseuse and

ended at Paria Waterfalls. Joanna says that this class five hike was very strenuous for some first-time hikers as they struggled to keep up with the group.

She states, "Most hikers usually engage in these activities to enjoy the beautiful scenery and for health purposes."



Sisters Jodie, left, and Joanna Hayde, right, enjoy a moment on the rocks on the way to Paria.



A fisherman shows off his catch.



Front and back views of hikers trekking down a hill through the bushes and on the road to Paria Waterfall.

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Rush hour

Places

People at City Gate zebra crossing in the afternoon where they enter and leave Port of Spain via maxi-taxis and buses that provide public transportation at this location. Photos by Jevan Soyer



Red band maxi-taxis that travel along the East-West Corridor enter and leave City Gate in Port of Spain. At far right are PTSC buses.



Serene Knolly's Tunnel

By Nadia Ali

Located in Tabaquite, Central Trinidad, amid serene surroundings is the longest train tunnel in the Caribbean known as "Knolly's Tunnel". Although no longer functioning for the flow of trains, it is open to foot and vehicular traffic.

The drive to the tunnel is mostly along the Tabaquite Main Road which meanders through lush woodland. The closer you get the prettier it gets. You can see the orange flowers of the Parakeet Heliconia that grows in the wild along the roadside. The shafts of sunlight beaming through the trees highlights the robust red cocoa beans hidden under the foliage of green leaves of sporadic cocoa trees. It brings to mind the image of yesteryears vast fields of cocoa trees in the peak of the cocoa industry.

Then, as we turned a corner in the road, there were the broken remains of an old cocoa drying house. It's a place where cocoa plantation workers would have manually heaped cocoa to different stations to facilitate the drying process. We slowed down just to get a couple of photos and then continued through the woodland.

Once on the long road approach to the tunnel, the surrounding area is well kept with occasional picnic tables to facilitate family gatherings. Then behold, there it is straight ahead. Unfortunately, there are no visitor's information panels to relate the story behind the construction of the tunnel or even a name plate identifying it.

I do however know that it was built over 100-years ago and is steeped in colonial history. It was



Knolly's Tunnel
Photos by Nadia Ali

used to facilitate the expansion of the railway to transport cocoa from Tabaquite to Port of Spain. It took a number of years to complete the 100-metre long tunnel which was named after Sir Clement C Knolly, the Acting Governor of Trinidad and Tobago.

In August 1898, it was officially opened amid much fanfare with invited dignitaries to commission the longest tunnel in the Caribbean. Visitors specially frequented the area to ride on the train through Knolly's Tunnel. But as the years progressed, the discovery of oil in the area led to the decline in cocoa production. Sadly, the need for the train system less-

ened and in August 1965 the last train rolled through Knolly's Tunnel.

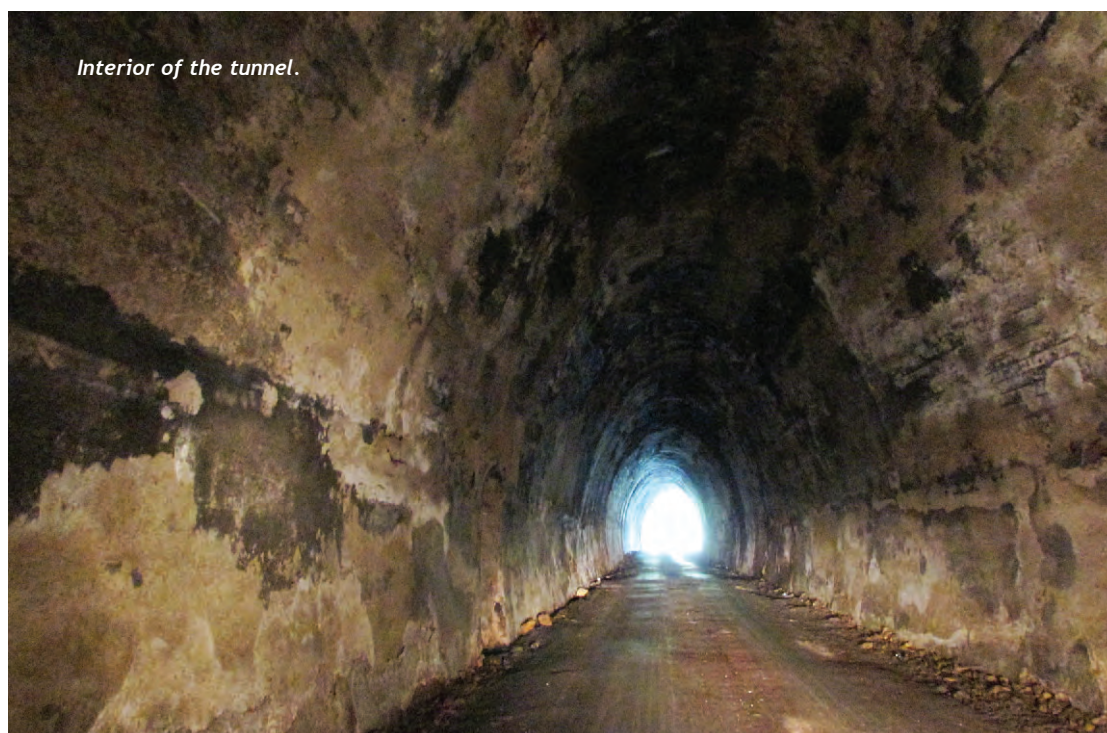
As we parked to the side of the road and walked to the entrance we got an idea of the enormity of it. Some say it is 600-feet in length, but I could not tell. Looking into the darkness, the sound of bats fluttering close to the ceiling can be seen against the bright light of the exit at the other end.

We then walked up the concrete steps aided by the hand railings at the side of the tunnel. This led up the green grass slopes to a visitor's picnic area on the hilltop above the tunnel. Having admired the view, fauna and foliage, we

headed back to the car to drive through the tunnel.

Once inside, it seems a lot longer. With the car's high-beam on it sent the resident bats above and in front of us into a flurry. The wing flapping could be heard as we bravely rolled down the windows to listen. Having reached the other end, we opted to turn around and go out the way we came in through the tunnel.

It is free to visit and there are a number of signs on the roadways indicating which direction to head. Knolly's Tunnel has also been added to many a tour operator's itinerary as part of the history of Trinidad's local cocoa industry.



Interior of the tunnel.



By Marika Mohammed

Many people don't know the existence of the little town called Princes Town.

The name is originally a result of Prince Albert and Prince George's visit to the area. They left behind a mark of planting two poui trees which are very much alive to this day.

When one thinks about Princes Town, one may imagine it may look

Strolling down Princes Town

rural and more or less full of bush. While it still has a lot of greenery, Princes Town has become a bustling shopping area. There are a variety of things to keep your eyes busy.

Even more so, there is an increase in the number of buildings, so who knows how it is going to be in the near future. There is easy access to transportation, variety of bou-

tiques, eating outlets and everything in between. You are able to find everything and anything in this one stop shop.

The best thing about Princes Town that I have found is that it is crazy cheap. For those who look for a good time but still want a bargain, Princes Town sells various things that are really easy on the wallet. Princes Town is definitely where one should take a stroll or a run for those last minute to-dos.

Photos by
Marika Mohammed





Lion enclosure.
Photos by Jevan Soyer

by Marissa Armoogam-Ali

I recently took my kids on a very nice family outing to the Emperor Valley Zoo. It had been a long time since my last visit and I decided that a visit to the zoo would be relaxing and entertaining.

I must say when you're a southerner and you enter Port of Spain sometimes you can feel as though you have entered another country, well, that's the way I feel! I just love driving around the Queen's Park Savannah and passing by the beautiful buildings and the Rock Garden. We finally arrived at the zoo and pulled into the car park, as we exited the car we were greeted by the sounds of the squawking Macaws.

I excitedly paid the entry fees and the children and I entered. It was fabulous! We made our way from each little critters' enclosure from one to the next and finally made our way around to the new giraffes and lionesses. They were a magnificent sight, I can tell you seeing them on the Discovery channel and up close and personal are two different ends on the pole.

That particular day all the animals were out in their full glory, usually the lions are very mundane or asleep, that day we arrived just in time when they were being fed and were able to witness them roaring loudly and fighting over the leg of a cow that had been fed to them.

Even the Caimans that usually hide amongst the bushes of their enclosures were out and about and entertaining the crowds, some of them were swimming while others were basking

A day at the zoo



Face to face

in the warm sunshine.

One of the highlights for me was the fairly new otter aquarium and enclosure; I loved the semi-underground tunnel, the experience of having the opportunity to see the otter swimming below the water level was amazing. As we walked through pathways covered with leafy vines there were ample seating areas under canopies and trees and beautifully manicured grounds to enjoy.

I was pleasantly surprised at a new experience which the zoo was offering to its patrons which was each day a zookeeper would have a

different animal that had been trained and was safe to handle, the zookeeper would have the animal in the open so that the visitors to the zoo would be able to touch and be up close with the animal. On the day we visited they had a parrot and were actually allowing visitors to take pictures with the animal.

The Emperor Valley Zoo has definitely stepped up its game and has become a very desirable destination for all of us. So the next time you don't know what to do and you feel like taking a prowl on the town consider our local zoo.



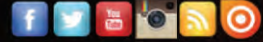
The otters playing in their new enclosure at the Emperor Valley Zoo. Photo by Marissa Armoogam-Ali



*Indoor viewing area of the otters' enclosure.
Photo by Jevan Soyer*

Sweet TnT

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