

Sweet TnT

MAGAZINE

Issue #17 August 2015

Loving Trinidad!

Winta Ghidei of Eritrea, a country in the Horn of Africa, enjoys herself at Maracas Beach during her visit to Trinidad for the July/August vacation period.

See more photos and Kieron Hilaire's story on pages 4, 5, 20 and 21.

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Electric Breakers dancing against crime
Caiman in the backyard
Story - Great Julie Mango Battle
Celebrations - Iftar, Emancipation, and Independence
Temple in the sea in Waterloo



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Sweet TnT
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Lifestyle
 Creole Language
 Food
 Places

Trinidad and Tobago culture for so!



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Statue in town

Statue of Christopher Columbus in Columbus Square, corner of Independence Square and Duncan Street, Port of Spain. See more statues in the Places section.

Editor's note

Crowded beaches, cinemas, clubs, malls, and book stores are seen all over Trinidad and Tobago during the July/August period despite crime and corruption bombarding the media on a daily basis.

The August issue of Sweet T&T Magazine faithfully brings to readers the positive and exciting happenings in this country since there are many people who really appreciate what T&T has to offer. The front cover shows a visitor to Trinidad who shares her story and photos inside this issue of herself enjoying Maracas Beach and several local cuisines.

Our *Keeping T&T Sweet* series continue with a visit to the zoo, a story on young men dancing against crime, a vacation at Granville Beach, and children having fun at a waterpark in Debe. Looking at pets once again, read about the caiman's visit to people's backyards in south Trinidad and caring for a neighbour's chickens.

The Local Writings section has an interesting commentary, interview with a journalist, and a humorous short story. In the Food section, there are images of delectable chows, fried chicken, and curried dishes. Again, we promote "Grow your own food" images to encourage readers to reduce their grocery bill. In the Places section, there are scenes in Tobago, Waterloo, Port of Spain and San Fernando, and a glorious piece on the Mount St Benedict lookout.

Congratulations to our team and contributors for making the August issue a success. Thanks to our readers, social media fans, advertisers, and all those who continue to motivate us to publish Sweet TnT Magazine.

Enjoy!

Joyanne James
Editor

Sweet TnT
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Winta in Trinidad

By Kielon Hilaire

Her name is Winta Ghidei and she was born and raised in the country of Eritrea, and if you are one of the few who know of Eritrea then it would be no secret that the country is located in the Horn of Africa. Winta grew up in the capital city of Asmara and can fluently speak Eritrea's native language, which is Tigrigna. If it's one thing some people might get from all of this is that someone might have an unusual fascination with words ending with "ah". As for me, it's just so much more fascinating to write about Winta. Why? Because Winta left Eritrea to come all the way to Trinidad, and boy did that visit turn out to be interesting.

Firstly, a little more about Winta and Eritrea. Much of what follows were Winta's thoughts prior to visiting Trinidad, "In Eritrea, the streets are clean, the buildings are historic and the culture of Asmara is memorable; social life is everything in the city and friendships are usually so deep that they essentially last forever. She also mentioned in Eritrea there is one culture she constantly craves for, which is referred to as "an evening stroll", that she could not seem to find anywhere else but on Harnet Street in Asmara. "Almost everyone goes out with

their friends or family to walk on the street and lime after work on evenings." Yes, she actually used the word "lime"! And some Trinidadians are probably considering how cool Winta might be at this point (no pun intended). Having interacted with many Trinidadians while doing her studies abroad, Winta became impressed by how proud Trinis are of their country; it made her curious. Winta decided she must visit Trinidad during her Summer vacation to see what the fuss was all about.

For three days Winta stayed in Trinidad with her good Trinidadian friend, Kershelle, who had seemingly planned an "around Trinidad in 30 hours" trip for Winta. After a few trips here and there Winta found herself exclaiming, "Omg, the food here is epic!" She even made a list of some of the different foods she tried and matched them with the places where they were eaten.

- Doubles from "Sauce"
 - Pholourie at the Queen's Park Savannah
 - "Sunday lunch" on the Boardwalk
 - Bake and shark at Maracas Bay
 - Roti from Patraj
 - Aloo pies, Saheena, and Kachourie at home for breakfast
- Yet, the variety of "epic foods" was



Winta Ghidei in her traditional wear.

arguably not the true epic moment; it was seeing Winta interact with Trinidadians and the environment so smoothly, as if she had grown up in Trinidad. Munching on doubles at the stand? Not a problem! Asking a stranger, "Waz the scene?" No big deal. But in her defence (and she easily recognises this) Winta does have a strong physical resemblance to the average Trini; if it was not for her unique Eritrean accent few people would

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guess that she was not a national of Trinidad. Makes you wonder if some of Winta's ancestors might have been Trini or if Trinis are unknowingly Eritreans. Hmmm. Winta then went on to share her experience zip-lining at Macqueripe in Chaguaramas, stating that it was a breathtaking moment to remember. Oh, and she did manage to come across several opportunities for "evening strolls" at different locations across the country.

Winta also observed how different dancing is in Trinidad in comparison to Eritrea. Winta said, "Eritrean dance (especially Tigigna, which is my ethnic group) is very conservative; a man and a woman, if they are dancing together, maintain a very wide distance between each other. No touching whatsoever. And you know how different that is from Caribbean dance. Also, when we dance the focus is in our shoulders; almost no movement of the hips." To all Caribbean fellas who might be reading this and like to dance, it might help if you were to stop thinking whatever you are presently thinking and try dancing with your shoulders for once!

Fun and games aside, Winta can also easily relate to the studious nature of Trinidadians. As the holder of a Bachelor's degree in Biochemistry, a Master's in Public and Epidemiology and eventual holder (God willing) of a PhD in Health Promotion and Socio-behav-

ioral Science, Winta, at just 27 years old, has already accomplished what lots of young people today dream of achieving. So this gal, like many Trinis, has certainly figured out how to balance life. "I add plenty laughing, watching TV and liming to the max," Winta said.

Unfortunately, Winta's visit to Trinidad was short-lived as she had to return home after the third day to take care of some Eritrean business. But she did confirm that she enjoyed her stay on the island and that she plans to be back as soon as possible to try two local dishes she was told she missed out on: Ox tail and the legendary pelau. When asked if she would take part in Trinidad's dancing (or wining) when she returns, she did smile and say, "I will have to talk with my shoulders first."

All in all it was a privilege to meet Winta and learn of her pleasant experiences in Trinidad. Before she left, for sharing her experiences I made sure to tell her, "Ye-ke-ni-ye-ley," which was the only word I knew in Tigigna that meant thank you (thanks to Google!). She then voiced a long string of Eritrean words with all sorts of hyphens included and all I could have said after that was, "Same to you, Winta. Same to you!" With any luck, Trinidad will see Winta again by next Summer.

See Pages 20 and 21





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My sister Katrina Khan and I (partly hidden) feed the giraffes Melman and Mandela while a zoo keeper at right looks on.



Visit to the zoo

By Candida Khan

It is crazy to admit, but I have not been to the zoo in 12 years. Since the additions of the tigers and giraffes, I was anxious for a visit. It was a very special surprise that I was taken to the Emperor Valley Zoo in Port of Spain for my birthday in June.

The first animal that we saw was the otter, drifting back and forth in the water. Sometimes he went under water and flipped over; swimming comically with his back paws only. Then we walked along to see the owl and toucan birds. The toucans were so stunning. Their plumage and beaks were uniquely coloured. Their tongues were thin and looked like sticks coming out from their beaks.

Walking along, we approached the tortoises and snakes. The tortoises were

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huge, slow and looked so old and wise. The snakes were curled up in their enclosed boxes.

By then it was snack time for the giraffes. We ran over to the area where they were kept. These two magnificent creatures stood by the gate. They were eating some special biscuits from one of the workers at the zoo.

My sister and I decided to

feed them. Their tongues outstretched and reached for the biscuits in our hands. The giraffe I fed had a hard tongue and some saliva on it. It was really a great experience to interact with the giraffes. I thought to myself that they were so tall, yet the worker said that they were only babies.

After the exciting encounter with the giraffes, we made our way to see the white tigers. The babies were with the mother and the father was kept separately. The white tigers were the other main attraction because they are endangered. They looked like big kitties; really cute and soft.

We then checked out the lions and other birds. I really enjoyed my zoo outing. I cannot wait to see what animals they would bring to the zoo next.

A huge tortoise



A curled up snake



Toucan birds



Electric Breakers from Carapichaima Dancing against crime

By Kerry Mc Donald

Specialist, Venom, Twister and Freeze. What do these names have in common? You may be wondering if it's the alternative names for the cast members of X-men or Avengers. Well, incorrect. Replace this thought with the drive to succeed and lively and creative dance moves, and you will get the energetic dance group – Electric Breakers. Because of the group's energy and daring stunts, Enrico Hyasent (Specialist), one of the groups's founding members decided that Electric Breakers will be a suitable name for the group.

Apart from Enrico who actually promotes the young men along with a couple of other persons, the group consists of three persons – Aaron Charles (Venom), Kotis Esdelle (Twister) and Kirt Esdelle (Freeze). The group which has been in existence since 2002 is from the quiet community of Orangefield Road, Carapichaima.

Initially, there were six members in the dance group, however, with change comes separation. Some of the members moved on to focus on other commitments.

All in their early 20s, the dynamic trio are also dance instructors at Electric Breakers Dance Against Crime Academy (EBDACA). The academy conducts dance classes at the Chaguanas indoor facility. Practice is done twice per week and once there is an event they would devote more time each week. When they have to participate in events, the students from EBDACA complement the dance group well as they are included with them.

Besides their hectic dance schedule, Aaron is a dance instructor at Eugene Joseph Dance Theatre, Kotis is employed at Raghunanan Group of Companies, and Kirt is pursuing his degree in Computing and Information Systems at School of Business and Computer Science (SBCS).

Regular dance practice has paid off as they are the winners of



Members of Electric Breakers Aaron 'Venom' Charles, Kotis 'Twister' Esdelle, and Kirt 'Freeze' Esdelle.

Below, members perform a stunt.

Photos courtesy Enrico 'Specialist' Hyasent

'Form a dance crew... it's a beautiful way to use your body, it keeps you away from idleness and it keeps you fit and healthy.'

the Trinidad and Tobago Hip-Hop Dance Championship and have held this title for five consecutive years.

The young men will be travelling to San Diego, California in August 2015 to take part in the World Hip-Hop Dance Championship where dance crews from various parts of the world will compete.

Kirt gives his views about this momentous event, "This trip is a big challenge for us. As dancers you always seek recognition. A title says all and competition on an international level is quite tough. Seeing and interacting with so many dancers on such a broad spectrum give you that joy and inspiration to push yourself beyond limits to reach the next level."

The guys look up to international dance groups Quest Crew from USA, Jingo from Korea, and Brotherhood from Canada. And local dance groups Unstoppable4ce

United and UBDC. They highly admire the crews for their extravagant routines and swag.

Adding to their lists of achievements the group were back-up dancers for Machel Montano for eight years and participated in local shows such as Boom Champions Soca School Tour, Scouting for Talent, and B-mobile Dance Off, just to name a few.

Kirt attributes some of their success to Heaven "Snakey" Charles who is brother and uncle to the members of Electric Breakers. Snakey is also in the entertainment arena and is known for his catchy and hypnotic 2014 release "The Dhoti Song" and in 2015 "Cyah Rhyme". Snakey's advice to them, "Give it your all, give it your best, never give up, make sure your supporters are pleased, and keep loving what you do because it's your God-given talent."

Noteworthy is the annual "Dance Against Crime" show held in December. The show has received tremendous response from persons within and beyond central Trinidad. The show envisioned by Enrico was an avenue for the guys to demonstrate their talent. Due to perseverance and persistence, the show has been around for ten years.

Reminiscing on the days of "Party Time" Kirt said, "This is the show everyone looked forward to for local talent."

When they were ready to participate, the show was replaced with "Party Flavor". They still got the golden opportunity to represent. They were no longer a secret as Trinidad and Tobago was now aware of Electric Breakers.

The team is independently funded and maintained. They are also sponsored by businesses and family members who are their biggest critics.

The group's future plans are to enhance and expand the dance academy throughout Trinidad and Tobago for the upliftment of youths and create the possibility for dancers to display their abilities.

Kirt's advice to persons with intentions of forming a dance crew, "Go right ahead, it's a beautiful way to use your body, it keeps you away from idleness and it keeps you fit and healthy. Despite the sleepless nights and injury attempting certain moves, with endurance it pays off."

Readers may visit the group's Facebook page - Electric Breakers, send them an email at electricbreakers@hotmail.com, or call 764-5031, 722-0364, or 781-5369.

Down memory lane to Granville Beach

By Felesha Parboo

As a child growing up, I always remembered going to Granville with my family.

My grandparents and most of my mom's family lived there, so it was basically moving from house to house until we reached the beach.

At my grandparents' home, there

were astonishing varieties of dogs, fruits and vegetables. My cousins, sisters and I would run into the bushes at the back of the house and try to locate any fruits we wanted.

See Page 19

In photo my niece and nephew play in the sand at Granville Beach.



Sierra and Cassey in matching swim suits, with Aadam, Elaina and Britney at Sunsplash in Debe.

Summer splashing

By Marissa Armoogam-Ali

Last year for the August vacation I was able to spend quite a lot of time with my two children Aadam and Elaina. There are many interesting places to visit in Trinidad and I made full use of the mostly sunny weather we had been experiencing.

My neighbour invited the children and I to join them in celebrating her daughter's birthday at the Fun Splash Water Park located along the Main Road in the southern district of Debe.

I jumped at the opportunity. With my family, any chance for nice clean fun and memorable family time is priceless.

We packed up the car early and made our way to the park, they opened at nine o'clock and we were probably the second group there.

The scenery at the park blew my mind. Everywhere I looked had spacious sheds with chairs and benches. There were several areas that sold different types of foods and another section had a restaurant and bar.

My attention was quickly drawn towards the three different pool areas; there were a sprawling kiddie's pool with 12 types of cartoon-character slides, a bigger 40-foot pool that had its deepest end at five feet, and then the mammoth water slides that frankly scared me. My son Aadam, however, ran fearlessly towards the slides and made his climb up the four flights of steps to get to the top.

He slid down through the winding turns and shot out the end like a cannon. As he emerged from the water he swam to the edge of the pool, climbed out, and ran back to the stairs for seconds.

As the day progressed, the crowd began to grow, but, it was not uncomfortably crowded, since, the grounds were so large and spacious there was enough room for everyone.



A caiman stationed itself behind our house for a full day and was gone the next morning. It came from a long river drain that joins the Caroni River.

Caiman in the backyard

By Nadia Ali

Living in the Caribbean you expect to see tropical birds and creepy insects that are larger than life in the garden. I often run outside when I hear the familiar squawk of wild parrots flying above, but when the bushes rustle on the border fence where has a long river drain that joins the Caroni River... I know to be cautious!

During my busy day, I noticed our cat sitting at the back of the garden staring down into the long river drain at the tall grass and bush. I ventured into the garden approaching quietly because I knew the cat was obviously looking at something.

I couldn't see anything. Staring harder trying to make sense of the colours, I saw the

During the rainy season caimans are seen at the side of the Sir Solomon Hochoy Highway

long grass moved. Oh my goodness, something really was there! I thought. I stood motionless staring down again. There it was long and dark...

"A CAIMAN!" I shouted and ran frantically back to the house to gather the rest of the family, not forgetting to grab my camera to capture the moment.

They came out, trying not to sound like a herd of elephants

running towards the caiman which was still there. It was amazing to see, close-up in the wild! I felt scared and excited at the same time.

Of course, it made us wonder if it was alone or if there were more.

The caiman made for some great photos and sparked new interest in finding out more about the species. Realising it wasn't going anywhere, we returned to the house and I to my laptop.

According to the online Encyclopaedia Britannica, the caiman or cayman refers to reptiles of Central and South American origin. They belong to the Alligatoridae family and live both in water and on land. The females lay hard-shelled eggs in nests which they guard. The caiman is considered shy unless antagonised.

During the rainy season in

Trinidad, it is not uncommon to view caimans at the side of the Sir Solomon Hochoy Highway, which is the major north-south highway. This is because the Caroni Swamp is located on the western coast and the excess water of heavy rain sees the caimans migrating to roadway drains and backyard ponds. In fact, according to local newspapers in 2014, a seven-foot caiman was discovered in a backyard in Gopaul Lands, San Fernando! Luckily, it was captured by game wardens and released unhurt back into the wild.

Fortunately, for us there is a fence between us and the Caroni River bound drain that lies behind our house. The caiman that had stationed itself behind our house stayed for a full day and was gone the next morning. It brought much excitement, great photos and a better understanding of the plight of caiman crocodilus.

Pet-sitting Mother Hen

By Nadia Ali

I have never looked after farm animals before. The closest animal I have looked after is a domesticated dog, a purr-fect cat and of course most people's first pet – a childhood goldfish. So when my neighbours went on holiday and left me in charge of a coup of six chickens, I figured how hard could it be to throw chicken feed over the fence?

One thing my neighbours forgot to tell me was that there was a mother hen officially known as a "Broody Hen" sitting on eggs (known as a clutch) in a half-barrel outside the kitchen window. The all black plump mother hen never moved from the eggs and I was told she wouldn't until they were hatched.

The other five chickens ran around to our side of the house whenever they heard our backdoor opened, assuming it was food time.

They clucked eagerly from across the fence. I would take a cup of chicken feed and throw it on the soakaway at the side of the next-door house and that was it until the evening feeding time.

However, as time went by, once my backdoor opened a stench from the chicken droppings would waft over. They never really came on our side of the house until now and were coming twice a day to eat. The once clean soakaway was now littered with chicken droppings. Suddenly, feeding the chickens gave way to a whole other chore. I now needed to wash down the side of the neighbour's house to avoid the smell.

As time progressed, one morning when I opened the backdoor, there was the sound of chirping chicks! I went over the fence to investigate – followed by the brood of chickens wondering where was their food.

There was Mother Hen and five chicks. She fluffed her feathers as if to attack and the chicks huddled underneath her body.



Many Trinbagonians have grown up chasing the odd yard fowl around and it is not uncommon to see chickens running around people's yards today.

They were not bright yellow ones like I had expected, but white and black ones – looking like baby penguins because of the distinct markings.

It was only then that I looked carefully at the chickens. They were all different breeds, and different colours. It sparked my interest. What breed were these

white and black penguin-looking chicks? According to Mr Google, they were Mottled Cochins Bantam chicks and Mother Hen was a Black Cochins, apparently known for her big fluff of feathers – at least I think so!

Mother Hen got used to me arriving twice a day to specially feed her and the penguins – oops,

I mean chicks! As cute as they were, I couldn't help but wonder why someone would opt to keep them? Well, environmentally, they are the greenest pets around by encouraging sustainable living maintaining a healthy lawn by eating bugs. They provide natural fertiliser and compost as chicken poo provides nitrogen and best of all they eat almost anything!

Here in sweet T&T, many Trinbagonians have grown up chasing the odd yard fowl around and it is not uncommon to see chickens running around people's yards today. In fact, interest in raising backyard chickens has spiked in recent years in the USA and UK where it's considered a trend! But, until my neighbours return, I am pet-sitting Mother Hen, her chicks and the rest of the brood. My cat Cici sits somewhat disgruntled on our side of the fence as I walk around with feed in hand saying, "Here chicky, chicky!"

AUGUST EVENTS



Emancipation Day

Emancipation Day is celebrated on August 1. It commemorates the freedom of African slaves in the Caribbean in 1838. The national holiday was declared in 1985. The event is usually marked with parades in Port of Spain, San Fernando, and Arima with many people of many races dressed in traditional African attire.



Great Race in Tobago

The annual Carib Beer Great Race is due to take place on August 22 from Pier 1, Chaguaramas to Store Bay, Tobago. Several events usually lead up to this race day including a parade and boat show, brunch and parties. During the Great Fete weekend, Tobago is lively with citizens and visitors flooding the beaches, hotels, and night clubs.



Independence Day

Independence Day is celebrated on August 31. Trinidad and Tobago gained its independence from Great Britain in 1962. The national holiday is marked with early morning military parades in Queen's Park Savannah, Port of Spain and Scarborough, Tobago. Many spectators line the streets to observe the parades and crowd the cities in the night time to see the great displays of fireworks.



At right, I stand with some women in my family celebrating Iftar at our home.

IFTAR

A Muslim gathering to break fast

By Nerissa Hosein

Ramadan is a special month for us in the Muslim community. It is the ninth month in the Muslim calendar. It is also the month of fasting for us where we can reflect and give thanks to Allah for our many blessings and mercy.

It is not an easy fast, especially for us in the Caribbean with the heat, but it is something we Muslims do gladly without second thought.

We start the fast at dawn and go straight through until sunset. We resist all foods and drinks. We also keep away from gossiping, back biting, bad language and any such thoughts that will corrupt our peace of mind.

At sunset most mosques

offer the traditional Iftar or breaking of the fast gathering where food is prepared and shared to all those who have observed the days fasted.

In many Muslim homes the Iftar is also offered as a way of us giving back to the community and our family members who have observed the fasting. We prepare many dishes and open up our home to those who can come and break the fast with us.

It is a special time. It is almost a practice for our biggest celebration of Eid for which we do all these customs and more.

A customary dish for breaking the fast is the dates. It is believed that the Prophet Muhammad broke his fast with three dates. Other little finger foods such as samosas, pies,

puffs and sandwiches are offered to break the fast. When this is done, the gathering moves to pray the Maghrib prayer.

After this is done, dinner is usually served followed by dessert.

It is believed in the Muslim religion that those who open up their homes for the Iftar will be blessed as it is seen as a form of charity.

Every year my family usually hosts at least one or two for our fasting relatives. We all gather together and it is a time filled with family, prayers and most of all peace. It makes the coming Eid even more anticipated. It is always a joyous occasion when family can eat and pray together along with the members of our community.

COMMENTARY

'If it was one time you were sure you were going to have to take a purge and drink senna was just before you went back to school during the July/August vacation.'



A look back

By Annisa Phillip

Times are changing, times are constantly changing, they say that the only constant in life is change, so you never really know what to expect.

While growing up there were certain things that were expected. For example it was expected in most families that Sunday lunch was a shared family meal, in many cases the only meal shared among family members. As we are on the topic of food, it was expected that the potato salad in your lunch would have beet root and boiled egg and the salad would contain watercress.

You were sure to get chicken or some kind of meat in the food on Sunday.

Sunday evening sweets like cake, sugar cake, fudge, cookies, and sweetbread were a must so as to have snacks for the week.

Soup was a guaranteed

meal on Saturdays and chicken foot soup was dedicated to the ailing child.

The two month hiatus that was the July/August vacation would find you visiting family members, playing with your cousins... first cousins, second cousins, some cousins who were not even blood relative but were cousins according to your parents.

Of course there were also the unpleasant moments. If it was one time you were sure you were going to have to take a purge and drink senna was just before you went back to school during the July/August vacation.

It didn't matter how much you detested the thing, how much you protested against it, one way or the other you were going to drink it, if you did not have it simply brewed in water you were going to have it in your tea.

Then, when you got back to school after vacation you were

always given an essay from your teacher to write, and the topic was always about what you did for vacation. I can't say that I miss having to do that. The vacation may have been fun but was it really necessary to tell the entire class about it? Some readers may have enjoyed doing that though.

Playing games involved physically interacting with your friends and family, using a ball, stone, rope and your body.

Unlike today where most games are played solo and are stationary.

Guess what folks, it's when you are all grown up that you realise that you value those little things, some of which you may have taken for granted as a child.

Life is about change but one thing I am sure we miss about childhood is not having bills to pay. Share the moments folks, share the fun, life is not going to stop changing.

'The July/
August
vacation
would find
you visiting
family
members,
playing
with your
cousins...
first cousins,
second
cousins,
some cousins
who were
not even
blood
relative but
were cousins
according to
your parents'

BOOK

By Simone Charles

Many persons know her perhaps by only reading about her featured in various local magazines over the years. Some may say, "Oh, she's the woman who married this famous guy." A selective senior few may say, "Hey! I know her reporting news on television." I had the great opportunity to speak with one of the most accomplished, yet exceedingly humble, Mrs Ann Marie Amante. This beautiful and dedicated Trinbagonian woman tells her story, one that will inspire many persons to appreciate the work she has been doing, especially those aspiring journalists.

Where did you grow up?

I was born in San Fernando, Trinidad and spent the first few years of my life in Princes Town. I later moved with my parents to East Trinidad (Arima) and then the central part of the country, Chaguanas. I believe that my childhood in Princes Town, a lot of which was spent with my grandparents, aunts and uncles (on my mother's side), laid the foundation for me. Two of the most important people in my life are my mother and father and it is to them I pay the greatest tribute. For as long as I can remember, they have been the driving force behind all that I do, encouraging me to go after my dreams and supporting me in my decisions. We didn't have much in terms of material things while I was growing up but I knew contentment because this is what I saw in my parents. My life today is very different to what it was when I was a child but it is filled with memories and life lessons.

Tell me a little about your personal life.

If someone were to tell me a year ago that this is where my life's journey would take me, I probably would not have believed him/her. I used to wish for my Prince Charming to come riding into my life on a white horse and finally, after many twists and turns my fairy tale happened. Today, I am married to a wonderful, kind and extremely talented man. My husband Michael Amante is a world-renowned Opera and Classical singer with many accomplishments under his belt. He was "the number one classical artiste of the year" in 2002 according to Billboard Magazine. He is an Emmy nominee and he has sung for numerous celebrities including US presidents, Pope John Paul II and Luciano Pavarotti. I tell everyone my husband has a heart of gold and I thank God for him every day.

Did you ever achieve your goals? If yes, how did that make you feel?

Every time I'm asked whether I achieved my goals, I smile because it's interesting how goals and objectives change as time goes by. For instance, at nine, I wanted to go to Disney World, at 11, I wanted to attend a "prestige" school, and at 14, I decided that I would be on

Journalist Ann Marie Amante: My goal is to help others achieve theirs

'Eighteen Lessons From Wayne' is a collection of my experiences and insights as it relates to the teachings and philosophies of world-renowned motivational speaker and author, Dr Wayne Dyer

television. I knew that I wanted to be a journalist even before I understood what that truly meant. I have anchored television newscasts, I was a reporter for many years, I was a communications specialist and consultant for the government and huge multi-national companies. As well, I have held very senior public relations and communications positions in the corporate world.

In addition, I have serviced clients throughout the Caribbean region and been involved in numerous charitable projects and organisations. I have also lectured in journalism and public relations and won awards for my contribution to media. I feel blessed indeed that I have been able to achieve this much professionally. My goals now are not so much about what I want but instead how can I help others achieve theirs. My passion and vision is now rooted in the concept of transformational living and helping others reach their full potential. I guess you can say this forms the basis of both my professional and personal goals.

I self-published my first inspirational book

in 2014 and I'm now fully committed to my new family and my parents. Most importantly, my number one goal is to reach the highest level of spirituality I possibly can while I am alive because I know it will pave the way for what lies on the other side.

How does all of this make me feel? Blessed... truly blessed and grateful for everything that I have experienced and everyone with whom I have crossed paths. I truly believe that whatever we want to achieve in life is possible, once we align that objective with God.

Tell me about your experience working in the media industry. What are some of the achievements you have acquired throughout the years?

I started in media in 1992 when I was 18 years old. I was writing copy for radio news and did the early morning shift on 106 FM which was part of CCN group. I later moved to television, CCN TV6, and began reporting for the evening news programme. From there I moved around quite a bit as many media people do and worked for both radio and television.

I am very fortunate to have worked with and been trained by some of the most respected media persons in Trinidad and Tobago. People like, Selma Ayee, Andy Johnson, Wesley Gibbings, Barbara Asoon, Jim Sutherland, Jai Parasram, Afzal Khan, Errol Pilgrim, Julian Rogers, Hansly Adjodha, Gideon Hanoomansingh and Dominic Kalipersad. I was a reporter for both radio and television as well as a news presenter. I also did some behind the scenes work as a news producer for radio and television.

I was part of numerous live broadcasts, many of which were either political or entertainment related. I have so many wonderful memories of the years I spent in media, one of them is definitely anchoring the Panorama newscast on what was at the time Trinidad and Tobago Television (TTT). What I remember most of all is how honoured I felt to have been given that opportunity. Panorama was a legacy and to those who believed in me, thank you!

My awards also stand out as a reminder of

BOOK

Journalist Anne Marie Amante: My goal is to help others achieve theirs

how very fulfilling media can be. They include the Caribbean Broadcasting Union Merit Award for “best newscast feature – radio”, the Media Association of Trinidad and Tobago (MATT) award for “best news story – TV” and the prestigious Luminary of Journalism award. I have interviewed and met celebrities, politicians, heads of state and business tycoons but my most memorable interview is definitely with former US President Bill Clinton. What I also remember is the thrill of “getting the scoop”, in other words a story that no one else was able to. There is a very competitive side of the industry and I was very much a part of it. Then there was the fun side of things, my entertainment reporter days of covering concerts and interviewing rock stars. There was another aspect though, the sense of being able to help someone tell his/her story. Even though I reported on the “hard news”, I thoroughly enjoyed the more human-interest side of things, the stories about the heroes among us, the cancer survivors, the men and women and children as well, who dedicated their lives to a bigger cause.”

What are some of the lessons you have learnt in that type of industry?

I have learnt many invaluable lessons over the years but perhaps the most important one for me coming out of my years in media has to be humility. A person can be at the top of his/her game one day and then in the blink of an eye this can change. The dynamic of media is very much like show business, up one day and down the next, it's a reality that helps to put things into perspective. I began to recognise my own mortality and not take anyone or anything for granted. You see, there are no guarantees in life, we just never know what tomorrow brings, we could be here one day and gone the next. At the end of the day when you take away the spotlight, the fame and the glamour, all that really matters is living a life of peace, good health, happiness and love.”

What are some other behind-the-scenes projects on which you have worked?

I have been doing volunteer work for most of my adult life. One of the organisations with which I was affiliated in the past was “Project EX-cel”. This was a programme which focussed on drug prevention activities geared towards young people.

Another was “Friends For Life” which promoted AIDS awareness in T&T. I was also a volunteer with the Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross, the Growing Leaders Foundation and the Calabash Consortium. As a communications specialist I was also heavily involved in community-based events and organisations. I also lectured in Public Relations and Broadcast Journalism for several years.

Tell me about your book. What is the name of the book? When was it released? What is it about?

The title of my book is *Eighteen Lessons From Wayne: Reflections on the teachings of Dr Wayne Dyer*. It is a collection of my experi-



Michael and Ann Marie Amante.

ences and insights as it relates to the teachings and philosophies of world-renowned motivational speaker and author, Dr Wayne Dyer. Dr Dyer who has been described as “the father of motivation” has written about 41 books, most of them best sellers and he has impacted my life greatly. *Eighteen Lessons* was released in February 2014 by Balboa Press which is the self-publishing division of Hay House. It was launched in Ft Lauderdale, Florida in May 2014 at a conference hosted by Hay House.

What inspired you to write about that particular subject?

I wanted to use my life's experiences to help persons in need of encouragement. It was my way of saying to others, “Keep holding on, don't you ever give up because life is too precious.” I was fortunate enough to have met Dr Dyer a few years ago and when I decided to write my book, it just seemed natural to make a connection between my personal journey and his teachings.

How do you think the book will benefit its readers?

I consider myself to be a student of self-reliance and transformational living. Both are concepts written and spoken about by Dr Dyer for decades. It teaches us that we are all connected to that universal power that makes all things possible, we don't need anyone or anything to make it through life except God. I am on a journey of self-realisation and *Eighteen Lessons* is written from the perspective of someone who is searching. I believe that it will resonate with persons who are on similar paths like myself.

Here is an excerpt: “I will look up at the sky, feel the grass under my feet, hear the birds sing, smell the roses and see unconditional love in a baby's eyes... all the while remembering there is a thread connecting me

and you with everything universal, a thread called God.”

Where can someone get a copy?

Eighteen Lessons From Wayne is sold internationally and is available online to persons in Trinidad and Tobago. There are countless sites offering it for sale including Amazon, Barnes and Noble and the Balboa Press website. It is in three formats – hardcover, softcover and an e-book.

Concluding, looking forward, how would you assess your ever-more maturing life's journey thus far?

I heard it said not so long ago that if it's one prayer you should say every morning, it is “thank you”. I feel very blessed and greet each day with anticipation and thanksgiving. Even those incidents in my past which I once considered to be bad, happened for a reason. Every experience and every person with whom I have ever crossed paths had a role to play. I remember this when challenges come my way, and they do still come! I think about what is written in the Bible, Ecclesiastes 3:1, “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.”

I have become excited about life, about what the future holds. You see, I truly believe, in fact I KNOW that we can achieve our hearts' desires. God did not put us on this earth to be mediocre, we all have the ability to shine, to be the best that we can be. We were born to be extraordinary and this is what I tell myself every day. My life has transformed in a fascinating way, and I am now on a path of self-discovery and enlightenment. We all have a calling and I believe mine is to inspire and encourage others, especially women.

SHORT STORY

The Great Julie Mango Battle

By Jamie Gangoo

It was early one Sunday morning when Joseph, scratching his back and yawning loudly, dragged his feet to the kitchen. He pulled back the curtain to the window overlooking the backyard and peered outside; his usual morning routine. The birds seemed extra cheery that morning as they chased one another and dived from tree to tree.

As Joseph enjoyed their ruckus, his eyes fell on the half-hidden grass below the Julie mango tree. The blood drained from his face. Ripe mangoes lay abandoned on the ground, their skin split from bird pecks and their vibrant orange entrails exposed. The worst, Joseph thought, was that the birds did not even care to eat the entire mangoes, but pecked each one here and there.

The injustice cut deep, deeper than the pecks on his mangoes. But the feeling of injustice turned quickly to guilt. He had become one of those heathens that left their mango trees to suffer the weight of ripe mangoes on their branches. That Sunday morning, however, Joseph was determined to redeem himself.

Armed with a market bag, he marched his way to the yard, grabbed a long rod and started collecting every single ripe mango he saw. He needed to do something about the birds this mango season. He was considering waking up his son, Kevin, to help him, but the boy will never be able to function





A flock of doves at Aranguez Savannah, San Juan.

this early on a Sunday morning.

As he glanced up, he saw a bird quietly perched on the orange tree. "None for allyuh!" He said, threateningly shaking his rod. The bird insolently tilted his head to the side.

The bird was Fleek, a Bananaquit who had seen the entire ordeal. Fleek always liked Joseph as the human had made a simple bird feeder in which he left seeds and fruits for the birds. Sometimes, Joseph also tried chirping to the birds, but sounded like a duck quarrelling which made the birds laugh at him fondly. However, despite Fleek's love for Joseph, he could not deny that an injustice was being served to his family and himself. Mango season was but once a year, after all.

His eyes followed Joseph's bag of mangoes to a short stool in the gallery, beside which lay Jabba the dog guarding. Jabba was lovable, but silly, and will easily leave his post to chase a drifting leaf.

Fleek devised a plan but needed the help of his family. Meanwhile, the other birds were flying wildly about and making unnecessary commotion in Fleek's head. Must be the sugar in the mango have them so unruly, mused Fleek. Maybe it was good that Joseph take all, he thought spitefully, until his yellow belly reminded him otherwise. "Gather around!" He cried. They had to act quickly.

While Buggy the Blackbird distracted Jabba, four of the others, Fleek included, pecked the bag to make a hole. Each bird worked until there was a hole big enough for

the mangoes to pass through. Together, they began nudging a mango with their beaks to make it roll out the bag and onto the floor. As they diligently continued their work, nudge by nudge, a huge explosion broke their concentration.

"AHHHHHCHOOOOO!"

It was Joseph's notorious sneeze. With that sneeze, there was no need for a look out. Fleek chuckled briefly, thinking about Joseph's expressions as he sneezed. But the sneezes were getting louder.

"Attack!" yelled Fleek. Flit, Kiwi and Jay flew straight into the house, wildly circling Joseph and tweeting loudly. They had no intention of pecking the culprit, but distracting him long enough so the others can complete their mission.

"Get! Get! Get out of meh house!" Joseph bawled, reaching blindly for the mosquito zapper and whacking the air. He knew the birds were out for revenge, but he was going to fight back with all he had. He flayed his arms wildly while pummeling to the gallery where his gems lay. And it was there he saw the birds rolling his sweet beloveds on the ground.

"No!" He shouted. He lunged towards them, but hit his knee against a chair that sent shock waves throughout his body.

"Dad! What happen?" Joseph turned around to see Kevin, armed with a cutlass and eyes surprisingly wide awake.

"De bird and them!"

"Eh?"

"DE BIRDS THIEFING MEH MANGOES!"

Kevin stood silently looking from his father to the birds around him. It then dawned on him that he had willfully gotten off his bed on a Sunday morning to intervene in this madness.

"I going back to sleep," he proclaimed, walking back in the house.

Anger and pain were seething in Joseph. He glared at the birds perched on the trees, the shed and the gallery wall. Fleek himself stared at Joseph, until their eyes locked.

It was then the pair came to the slow realisation that the mangoes had not only filled their bellies, but consumed their souls like a diabolical charm.

Joseph was first to break the spell. "Ah, alright!" He muttered gruffly. He took some of the mangoes from the bag and placed them in the bird feeder. The birds were at first skeptical and continued looking on quietly.

"Eat them! Is everyone own," Joseph professed. "Although I plant the tree," he added under his breath. He walked back in the house, defeated, and peeped at the birds through the kitchen window. One by one he saw them fly to the mangoes and begin feeding. He, himself, took a mango and after peeling off the skin with his teeth, bit into the sweet flesh until pale, yellow juice streamed down his arm.

Meanwhile, as Fleek swallowed bits of the juicy fruit, he vowed never to let mangoes come between his friends and him again. Well, unless his friends were being greedy, he rationalised.



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Mango and plum chow



Portugal, orange and cucumber chow

We got mango, plum, chenette, coconut, orange, portugal, and a lot more. Most of the time, while we were waiting to go on the beach we would make a chow with a lot of fruits that we found in the bushes. It was absolutely amazing.

Also my grandparents owned a parlour where they sold snacks, soft drinks and ice cream – my favourite. But unfortunately, we would have to pay for most of them. Haha. My grandparents were strict but they gave us a little slack once in a while.

When it was time to go on the beach, all my cousins, my sisters and I would put on our bathing clothes, jump into the back of a van and hold on for dear life. Going along the

road we would try to pick out what kind of birds we saw and looked at all the different kinds of trees and nests. The view was always astonishing.

At last, we would reach on the beach and it would feel like it was long overdue. We would run into the water and play with balls and floats for about three to four hours.

Dozens of families usually came out for fun and relaxation. I also noticed many of the sheds were equipped with an area for cooking for which many families opted, and the air would be filled with the delicious aromas of many dishes.

When we became tired we would come

out of the water and eat some food like fried rice, macaroni pie and fried chicken, which I would help my mom cook early in the morning before we came down to Granville. And when the food was digested we would make teams and play a game of football or cricket on the shore or parking lot.

It is a memory I will always have. We enjoyed every minute we could with our grandparents. When it was time to go we would stop and collect our fruits and vegetables, kiss Papa and Mama goodbye, and it was back home until another weekend or holiday when we could visit Granville again.

– Felesha Parboo

Fried chicken



Winta Ghidei
drinking from a
coconut on
her trip to
Maracas Beach.





Bake and shark



Delicious roti



Having pholourie



Yummy doubles

Melongene and celery plants are captured in Aranguéz, San Juan. *Sweet TnT Magazine* wishes to encourage you the reader to grow your own produce and reduce your grocery bill.

Grow your own food





One of the spectacular views from the look-out at Mount St Benedict.

The look-out at Mount St Benedict

By Omilla Mungroo

Like an eagle watching over its brood, with watchful eyes and nurturing silence, the Abbey at Mount St Benedict sits with its historical buildings surrounding it, as if beckoning to the people, "Come away and rest for a while."

Founded in 1912 by a group of monks from Brazil, this community quickly developed in five years to include a boarding school for boys, a rehabilitation centre, a seminary, The Retreat House, and the Pax Abbey Guest House with the Abbey at the

heart of it all. Today there is also the Pax Abbey Shop with a cafeteria section.

The bookshop itself is the only fully Catholic shop in the entire Tunapuna area too.

The look-out attracts many to its spectacular views. The beauty that surrounds the place is breathless! People of all religious backgrounds visit the mount; some for counselling, some for pleasure, or to appreciate its peaceful beauty.

However, when I arrive, I go specifically to the look-out. Each time its serenity overwhelms with an irresistible urge to praise The Most High God. How can one

take in all the majestic beauty around and not want to connect with its Creator?

It is also a perfect place for students who need absolute quiet for study, apart from the Tunapuna Public Library, that is.

The mount is also visited by tourists, who take with them an endless supply of pictures to share with friends and family when they get home.

For anyone with an eye for beauty, and a utopian heart, take a trip to the mount and see what miracle awaits you there.

"How can you say to my soul, flee as a bird to your mountain?" Psalm 11:1

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Scene in Tobago

Places

A fancy architectural
building stands firmly at
Fort King George in Tobago.
Photo: Chantelle Wilson



Temple in the sea in Waterloo

By Marika Mohammed

Every country in the world has its own wonder, for Trinidad, The Temple in the Sea in Waterloo is one of them. It is not only a place of prayer for people but a reminder that if you want something bad enough you'll find a way to get it. It is exactly what it is. A temple in the sea and a popular site for photographers, tourists and locals. It comes with an old story, not written but orally passed down by Trinians, of a man who built it to pray. The story itself is one of true faith and commitment.

It begins in the early days when the Indians arrived to Trinidad to work on the sugar plantation. One man devoted to his faith started his prayer routine. One day the plantation master saw what was going on and told him that his people were not allowed to practise their religion on his land. The man then took a rock, walked to the sea and threw the rock into it. He kept doing this until he got a little land to stand on. He continued to do this until he got a little path away enough from the shoreline. He continued to drop rocks in the sea, making a small island. Then he built a temple for both his people and him-

self to practice their religion. The plantation master couldn't do them anything.

It is not only a wonder filled with wisdom but it is absolutely beautiful. There are several benches and tables to enjoy a nice picnic and view the calm waters. It is so peaceful and quiet. There is even a statue of the man who built this incredible wonder. Everyone I met was warm, welcoming, and willing to give their opinion on the site or retell the story to someone who has never heard of it before. It is a must-see as it embodies such concrete values of hard work and determination.

'The Temple in the Sea is not only a wonder filled with wisdom but it is absolutely beautiful.'



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Honorary statues



A memorial statue to nationals who served in the two World Wars is situated at Memorial Park, upper Frederick Street, Port of Spain. Inset above is the inscription on the monument.



On the Brian Lara Promenade

A statue created in honour of cricket legend Brian Lara commemorates his record-breaking career.

The figurine is located on the Brian Lara Promenade near Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.

Tribute to Marcus Garvey

A statue dedicated to Marcus Garvey who visited Trinidad in 1937 is situated at Harris Promenade, San Fernando.



STATUE AND MONUMENT
COURTESY
ALFRED GRAHAM

MARCUS MOSIAH GARVEY

Born - IN ST. ANN BAY JAMAICA, August 17, 1887
Died - IN LONDON, June 10, 1940

PAN AFRIKAN NATIONALIST HERO
FOUNDER OF THE U.N.I.A & A.C.L.

*Visited TRINIDAD IN THE YEAR 1937 & SPOKE AT
The GAIETY CINEMA WHICH WAS LOCATED
ON Mucoropo St. San Fernando*

DEDICATED TO ALL AFRIKANS
BY THE AFRIKAN ADVANCEMENT ASSOCIATION A.A.A.

Gandhi in San Fernando

A statue of Mahatma Gandhi stands at Harris Promenade, San Fernando.



MAHATMA MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

BORN AT PORBANDAR INDIA. OCTOBER 2, 1869

DIED JANUARY 30, 1948.

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TO ESTABLISH SUPERIORITY
OF WHICH HE LABOURED HIS LIFE
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