

Sweet TnT

MAGAZINE

www.sweettntmagazine.com

Issue #19 December 2015

Lil Santa on the runway

Cute little Santa Claus models at Red Runway Kids fashion show at the Gold VIP Lounge, Hasely Crawford Stadium on November 21. See other models on pages 5, 6 and 7 inside magazine, and hundreds of photos in the album 'Red Runway' on www.sweettntmagazine.com

Parang in Lopinot and Chaguaramas
Vox pop: Have a Trini Christmas!
Thoughtful handmade gifts
Drive safely after Paranging
Making bread and fruit cake
Story: 'Angel Hair' on a Mango Branch
Books to look out for this Christmas
Salybia, Vessigny, and Parlatuvier beaches



A tent offering
"tasty pastelles".

Parang in the day...



Sweet Parang music is in the air as the Christmas season is in full swing. A Venezuelan group opens the festivities at La Fiesta de Lopinot held at the Recreational Grounds in Lopinot on Sunday, November 29. Patrons were treated to pastelle, pork, pan, and Parang. Also, tents displayed jewelry, toys, crafts and a variety of foods for sale.

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...and in the night



Members of San Jose Seranaders perform at Parang on the Boardwalk in Chaguaramas on Sunday, November 29. An angel graces the floors of the event with a dance performance as part of the children's showcase by Mystic Veil Dance Studio.

Editor's note

People are already soaking their fruits in Cherry Brandy for black cake and shopping for ham, sorrel, gifts, new curtains, decorations and paint to make their home a Trini Christmas one. The not so jolly people in the country would need some cheering up though. We all can contribute to making T&T sweet by donating to those in need. We can help a friend, family member, neighbour, or put a smile on the faces of children and elderly persons at homes with gifts of food, clothing, toys, and love.

This December 2015 issue features an overflow of positive people just loving what they do right here in Trinidad and Tobago. The evidence of happy parranderos and patrons in photos above is a taste of the vibrant atmosphere in T&T this season. In the Lifestyle section, readers are reminded to have a "to do" list for the Christmas; there is fashion galore at the Stadium; young entrepreneurs sharing stories about their love for doing makeup and jewelry; people on the street giving their Christmas thoughts; very important financial and driving advice; a school reunion feature; an amusing take on the best gifts for the youth today; and a piece on an uninvited backyard pet iguana.

The Food section opens with a sorrel plant at a residence in Aranguez as a reminder for you to grow your own food and make life easier; there is a mouthwatering display of tantalising Christmas foods from a cook whose secret ingredient is love; there are recipes for bread; a scrumptious fruit cake display; and the launch of a Nestle's product described as a little helper for cooking.

For those lovers of literature, the Local Writings section features an amusing short story on decorating a mango branch with "angel hair"; brief reviews on four local children's books; and a talent piece on a singer, song writer/poet.

Visit beautiful beaches in the Places section with your eyes and see Salybia and Vessigny in Trinidad and Parlatuvier in Tobago.

Congratulations to our team, and thanks to our readers, contributors, advertisers, and fans on social media for making the December issue a success.

Enjoy!

Joyanne James
Editor



Sweet TnT Magazine

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To do list for Christmas

Did you make your To Do list for Christmas as yet? Or is it something you still need To Do? December is here and Christmas is around the corner. We asked 50 people around Trinidad and Tobago for activities on their To Do Christmas list and these were the most popular responses:

- Make some extra money
- Move the dusty carpet in the living room to clean under it
- Take down those curtains that were up all year
- Get paint to brighten up the living room, my room, and the outside front of the house that people will see
- Ask the neighbours for plenty Gazette paper to spread on the ground for painting and cleaning windows
- Get my lazy family members to help me clean the house
- Throw away the loads of rubbish that have accumulated all year like those electronic items that do not work
- Organise somebody to cut the bush gone wild outside in the yard
- Clean the mossy drains around the house
- Buy new curtains, wares, sheets, pillows towels, mats, baskets, placemats, and Christmas decorations
- Shop for gifts and get the people in the store to wrap them at the same time
- Make a grocery list and buy them
- Prepare ham, turkey, macaroni pie, pastelles, pigeon peas, potato salad, sorrel, ginger beer, ponche a crème, bread, black cake, sponge cake, and sweet bread

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Glamour galore

at Red Runway fashion show, Hasely Crawford Stadium

Strutting their stuff are children and teens in the Red Runway Kids show and then the adult models displaying fashion artistically in the evening at the Red Runway 2015 fashion show at the Gold VIP Lounge, Hasely Crawford Stadium on November 21. The shows featured 16 local and four regional designers. The garments were displayed by 150 local models. Each fashion show hosted a cocktail hour prior to the event where guests took part in a variety of complimentary foods and drinks. See more supermodels on pages 6 and 7 and in the ALBUM "Red Runway" on www.sweetntmagazine.com.



Pretty smiles and sheer elegance.



Dressed to impress the ladies.



Doing her thing on the runway in African garments.



Striking a classy pose in Indian style.



Umbrella and fan Chinese style.



Modelling proudly in Chinese wear.



Posing in her Indian fashion.



An Indian dance pose to suit her outfit.



Little Ms Santa Claus (cover photo) with her gift bag and candy cane struts with confidence on the runway.



Empowering pose in his African attire.



Young madam in African wear.

FASHION

Glamour galore



"Fashion police" patrols.



Talented crowd pleaser.

Terrence La Caille, one of the designers, with a model wearing a 2016 Carnival costume at the Red Runway 2015 fashion show at the Gold VIP Lounge, Hasely Crawford Stadium on November 21.



Display of children's Carnival costumes for 2016.



Simple and classy.



Fashionable trio.



Elegant.



Chic.



Intriguing dress.



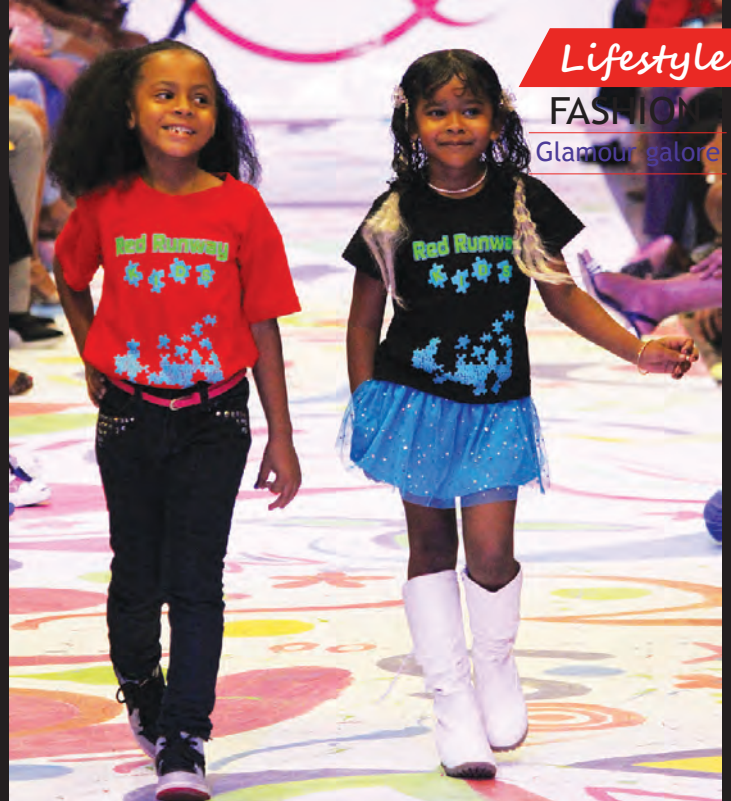
Models pose in stylish beach wear.



Sophisticated ladies in Muslim garments.



A royal display at the Red Runway 2015 fashion show at the Gold VIP Lounge, Hasely Crawford Stadium on November 21.



We know we look good!



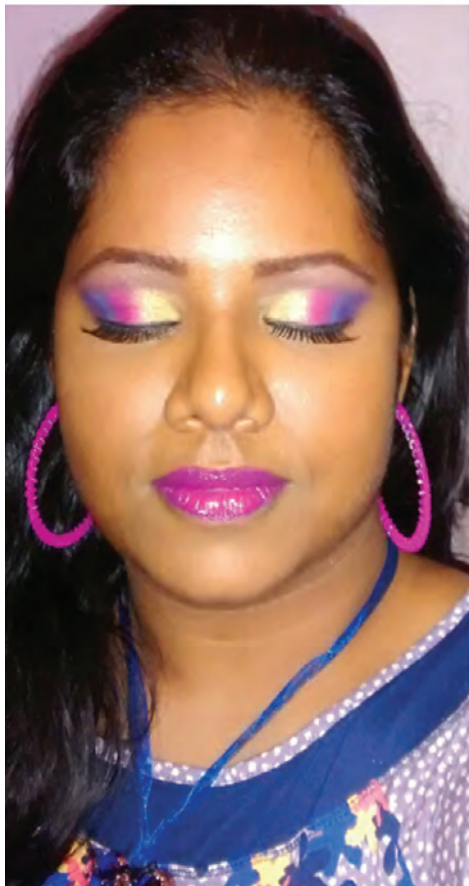
Look at us on the runway!



Amused members of the audience.



Adele Mohammed



Kavita Marajh



In love with doing Makeup

Courtesy Makeup By K

I'm Kavita Marajh, owner of Makeup By K. I am hardworking, adventurous, fun-loving and witty. I love to give my absolute best in everything I do, especially makeup artistry. My absolute favourite thing to do in Trinidad and especially in our sister isle is go to the beach; to me there's no better way to spend time relaxing. Other than that, I enjoy cooking, reading, listening to music of all different genres and liming with family and friends.

Makeup Artistry came about as a fun class to take with one of my good friends. I had no idea that I would fall in love with it as much as I did and I am still smitten. It started just over eight years ago and it blossomed into my business today.

Although it is part time, I really do hope for it to grow into a full time thing. I enjoy doing different types of looks for both men and women for a variety of events from graduations, weddings, parties, and photo shoots. I have received many different requests, done makeup for clients with varying tastes, many who were having their makeup done for the first time. Each experience is unique and I appreciate and learn from each one.

This Christmas season will be "real pace" for sure since many people would be attending functions, dinners, and staff parties. I usually get my fair share of bookings for makeovers. I also prepare pastelles for customers so with these two things and my full time job as an assistant manager in a retail outlet, my hands will surely be full, and I look forward to it very much!

- Kavita Marajh

<https://m.facebook.com/Make-up-by-K-180791961626/?ref=bookmarks>



Chandra Cindy Nanan-Ramgoolam

Accessories on sale at the Stadium

Vendors proudly display their hair accessories next to a table showcasing necklaces, earrings, and bracelets at Red Runway 2015 fashion show at the Gold VIP Lounge, Hasely Crawford Stadium, Port of Spain on November 21.

FASHION AND BEAUTY



Thoughtful handmade gifts

Courtesy Scottygirl Jewelry

Yesterday I was walking down Frederick Street where I saw a gentleman selling some artwork on the pavement. I stopped. Now that I make jewelry I have an appreciation for all handmade work. I am fascinated more than ever by the boundless creativity of the Trinagonian. So I paused to appreciate the pieces of work that was done. I was fascinated. I thought it would be very expensive but I asked him the price and he said, "\$45 but I will give you for \$40." So there I was trying to sound impressive and I suggested that he find out about the craft markets and sell his stuff. "You would make a killing," I said. He looked at me like I had three heads and said, "Miss Lady, what you asking me about craft market? Right now I don't even have current, I just trying to survive here."

I bought two of his pieces partly out of guilt and shame but mostly because I have never been so impressed with anyone's work before and because it was a great bargain. I gave one of the pieces to a friend who was visiting from the US and she cried when she opened it. She found that it was such a beautiful and thoughtful gift. She said, "I would never have gotten anything like this in a souvenir shop." It made me think of the handmade industry and it made me think of Christmas. Many have forgotten the true meaning of Christmas. Most people are caught up in the Christmas party, the pastelles, the ponche a crème, and the last minute Christmas shopping. Few sit to contemplate the best possible gifts that they can give to their loved ones. Many rush around to get the cheapest, or the quickest thing possible. So how do you convince people like that to settle down and get their loved ones and themselves handmade gifts?

When I receive a handmade gift, I think of it as something that was specially chosen for me, something that is unique and special. Before



becoming a jewelry designer, I used to be an avid jewelry shopper. I grew up in a time when handmade beaded afro-centric necklaces were the rage in Trinidad. Who remembers the dolphin necklace and the hand bands that were made from the telephone cable? (Now I know why I could never get a pay phone that worked). When I had my first job, every time I got paid, I would always buy a new piece. What I remember about that time is people would always compliment me on my exotic jewelry.

When I outgrew that stage and the fashion industry started to include a lot of cheap jewelry, I always wanted to look different. With the excep-

I grew up in a time when handmade beaded afro-centric necklaces were the rage in Trinidad. Who remembers the dolphin necklace and the hand bands that were made from the telephone cable?

tion of my signature hoops I always reached for something that was extremely eye catching and original. Now that I have transitioned from jewelry wearer to jewelry maker, my perspective is still the same. I still try to create eye-catching, one-of-a-kind pieces of jewelry.

I try to create and experience love for people. I can mass produce 100 little earrings in a day. I am not joking. I love making jewelry so much I can sit from sun up to sun down to make stuff. But would that make someone feel special or beautiful? Would that inspire you? Would you feel truly loved if you had a piece like everyone else?

I make jewelry that creates memories. At Scottygirl Jewelry I create pieces that when someone sees it they can't help but ask you, "Where did you get that?" And when you begin to answer, you are flooded with reasons to smile; you are forced to remember a good time, a better time. You are transported to a happy moment and a feeling of love.

That's the reason I create. And that is the reason why you should buy something that was made with thought and love. Something that was made to stand out, something that was made to carry memories. I hope this Christmas when you are getting gifts for your loved ones that you are moved to buy them something that every time they wear it or use it, they have a good memory of your love and that is a good reason to smile.

Merry Christmas, everyone!

- Denise Scott

<https://www.facebook.com/ScottygirlJewelry/?fref=ts>



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Have a Trini Christmas

Lifestyle

VOX POP

By Kielon Hilaire

Ask the average celebrator what is the meaning of Christmas and you may have a hard time getting an answer that is more expansive than, "It's the season for giving and sharing," or, "It's that time of year when people celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ." Children may indeed be the ones who enjoy Christmas more, especially since adults usually do most, if not all, of the cooking, cleaning, shopping, and working to ensure that gift-giving is of high quality. Even though the season has become very commercialised people in Trinidad know exactly what it means to have a Trini Christmas. I managed to ask a few people what makes their Christmas feel so special and the following responses were some of the most heartfelt:

From: Mahendra Buchoon

"To me Christmas is about family. Every year I look forward to spending this exciting, festive season with my family at home. On the night of Christmas Eve we stay awake most of the night, watching movies and listening to some traditional Christmas music, while a member of my family bakes scrumptious sponge cake, fruit cake, sweet bread - and of course, I must have that mouth-watering ham! Speaking about ham, it's tradition that we all sit at the dining table on Christmas morning to have ham and bread for breakfast, while we make jokes and have fun with each other. But overall, the scent of fresh paint, the sweet sounds of Parang music and Christmas carols truly make my Christmas."



From: Nikauleene Andrews

"For Christmas I enjoy the company of my family. We visit each other and our loved ones and recognise the birth of Christ and symbolic gift giving. What makes it most enjoyable is when we can all come together, eat, drink, have a good laugh and bond. Trini Christmas is really the best because aside from the family gatherings, the food is unique and delicious. Each year I look forward to black cake, the classic ponche-de-crème, ginger beer, pastelles, turkey, ham and my all time favourite - sorrel. Another thing that helps create that special atmosphere for me for Christmas is Parang music. It just makes everything come to life. I love my country even more for the way we celebrate this holiday."



From: Emmerson Superville

"Christmas in Trinidad is one of the greatest times of the year. Trinis really try their best to make others feel merry and it goes far beyond just receiving presents for me. I see Christmas time as a time for family and loved ones to come together and celebrate all the past achievements and great memories that were created during the year and what to look forward to as the new year approaches. I just love the spirit that the holiday brings and the food - my goodness - I will need a whole day just to talk about the pastelle, the ham, the homemade bread and all the other types of food to eat. Christmas makes me feel like a child again and I love that feeling every year. Parang! Parang!"



From: Crystal Phillip

"I believe that Christmas is about love, family, caring and tradition. These things just seem to make up the entire festivity of the season. Once I have those things I then look forward to all the good food. As a professional caterer, food is a big part of it for me because the possibilities for whipping up dishes at that time of year are endless. But once I can make my family and customers feel the Christmas Spirit then I'm always good and merry. A perfect Christmas for me would be one where I go to church then come home to spend time with my family while eating a good ham sandwich, then later on celebrate with Parang groups. Oh, and I must, must, must, light my highly decorated Christmas tree. My Christmas just doesn't feel the same without it."



“People in Trinidad seem to only need a few things to have a merry Christmas. They just need good food, good people and good music. What this translates to is that Trinis like to keep life festive and simple, never forgetting what's truly important.”



Crystal Phillip was so excited about Christmas that she just could not resist sharing a picture of her Christmas tree with everyone.

6 simple ways to maximise your Holiday Budget

By Nadia Ali

It's the holiday season and you know there will be extra family gatherings, extra food, gifts, decorations, cooking, outfits and running around. On local TV, there are already a slew of jingle bell bank loan adverts encouraging you to take out a loan to cover your holiday expenses. Before you consider that, here are a few simple tips to help maximise your holiday budget and give you more to smile about this season.

Plan ahead

The holiday season comes at same time every year, so that makes planning ahead a lot easier. You have the entire year to spread out your expenses especially when it comes to buying gifts. Take advantage of the warehouse sales, closing down sales, new store opening sales and even the Black Friday sales in November. Spreading out your expenses over the year prevents you from having to find a lump sum in December.

Make a gift list

Before you make your way to Westmall, Gulf City, Trincity, Long Circular, Mid Centre Mall or downtown

Port of Spain, make a gift list. A list on your phone is handy, so when you are out and you suddenly see something at the right price you can buy it. It will ensure you get what's on your list and stay within budget.

Divide your budget

Now that you have your list, divide your proposed budget. After all, you know that you want to spend more on your best friend than your tanty.

Give family gifts

Let's face it, who doesn't have a big family in sweet T&T? You know that when you all get together there are cousins by the dozens, and aunts and uncles by the score! Instead of buying individual presents which can be on the costly side - give a family gift. Try the toyshop for board and card games or even educational games for your younger cousins, gift cards for older cousins and lovely gift baskets for aunts and uncles.

Give creative gifts

No, I don't mean get your kite paper, glue and scissors. By creative, I mean gifts that cannot be wrapped. Is there a new baby in the family? You can offer the parents an evening of babysitting. Are you fortunate to still have your grandparents alive? Take them out for a meal or visit one of the many places to visit in this country. Get thinking and get creative.

Bake it

Who doesn't like baked goods? Baking something special and sweet as a gift is one that is always welcomed. Try home-baked goods such as black cake, breads, cakes, pies, cookies, and even festive coloured pawpaw candy! You can find decorative boxes and gift bags to add that special presentation.

Now that you have your list, ideas and budget for this year's holiday season, do plan ahead for 2016 keeping all of these points in mind.

Drive safely after Paranging

"Ah went Paranging by my neighbour... aye Ms Gloria!" says Scrunter in his famous Soca Parang tune. "We moving from house to house, Christmas time"... "Neighbour, neighbour, this year ah passing by everybody"... "Neighbour oh ya yo, bring out the ham"... and... "We Parang the wrong house" are other popular songs about Paranging for the Christmas season. The lyrics are usually requests for neighbours to provide ham, black cake, pastelle, and plenty alcohol for them when they visit. From Christmas Day right up to the New Year, families, friends, neighbours, and invited guests will be visiting each other's homes to eat and drink excessively, and be merry with liming, laughter, loud music, and singing while beating a bottle and spoon together. Unfortunately, there is a lot of drunk driving on the roads after this festive celebration causing accidents and fatalities. Here are some tips by Nadia Ali to keep you safe on the road after Paranging:

NEVER drink and drive: It's the law. You've heard the safety awareness campaign from Arrive Alive Trinidad and Tobago and you must know that as of January 2016 there are new increased fines for driving under the influence of alcohol. No excuses!

Seatbelts: Make sure everyone in the car buckles his or her seatbelt. Not only will it keep you safe, but it's also the law.

Secure children: The laws of Trinidad and Tobago make it mandatory for drivers to properly secure infants and children, once they are travelling in a motor vehicle. According to the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act, Chap 48:50, section 43 D (1) (b), a person failing to place a child who is five years and under in a child restraint or booster seat in the vehicle while driving the vehicle, can be faced with a fixed penalty. Why say all that? Because I still see children standing in cars or in the front seat.



Quick check: If your gas tank is almost empty - go and fill it up at your nearest gas station. How are the car's tyres? Ensure they are road worthy and fully inflated.

Don't speed: Driving fast increases the likelihood of your being in or causing an accident, not to mention being charged for speeding.

Don't follow closely: Keep a safe distance between your car and the car ahead - that goes for maxi taxis too!

Watch out for other drivers: You know the type of driver I mean, over taking on the shoulder, weaving in and out of traffic, be wary of other drivers.

Heavy rain: In T&T, the only bad weather we experience is exceptionally heavy rain. Stay in the middle lane as rain runs off to the sides of the road, keep a good distance between you and the car in front, and don't drive behind a truck, maxi taxi or bus.

Avoid distractions: Yes, your cell phone, changing the radio station or CD, watching DVDs on your dashboard screen and interacting with passengers can divert a driver's attention.

So, if you are driving on the Claude Noel Highway, Churchill-Roosevelt Highway, Uriah Butler Highway or the Solomon Hochoy Highway to visit the homes of friends and families, be safe and drive carefully. Above all, don't get angry on the roads of sweet T&T.

'Mrs Blizzard was well loved and respected among us. She gave the most homework of any teacher, but she was such a charismatic teacher'

'Ask anyone who went 'El Do Brown' as the school is called, and bet you, no one will utter a bad word about Mrs Rohelr.'

Nerissa Hosein poses with Mrs Blizzard, left, and Mrs Rohelr.

Selfie with my close friend Treneiceia Charles.

Reunited

Class of '97 Committee, El Dorado West Secondary School

By Nerissa Hosein

For some people high school is a place they want to forget, but for us, the students of El Dorado, it is simply some of the best days of our lives that we cherish and jump at the chance to relive and reminisce at any chance we get. The Class of '97 Committee, El Dorado West Secondary School held its 18-year reunion on the school grounds at Target Road, El Dorado on November 14.

The friendships we formed at El Dorado were ones that we still hold dear to and many of us from that period are still very close. I myself being part of the planning committee was very happy that we were able to pull off such an event, along with my close friends Treneiceia Charles, Tenille Trotman and Damien Charles. We four worked on the idea for months and were able to execute a simple, yet fun and effective reunion for our old classmates.

Thanks to the excellent planning done by Ms Charles we were able to surprise our guests with two members of our past faculty, one of which was our excellent and well loved principal Mrs

"The night went on and old friends hugged and danced and we all promised to do it soon again."

Rohelr. The other being our beloved History teacher Mrs Blizzard.

Lots of people talk about high school and glaze over certain memories. But ask anyone who went "El Do Brown" as the school is called, and bet you, no one will utter a bad word about Mrs Rohelr - the woman with the iron fist and golden heart. Mrs Rohelr was a strict principal but was fair to each and every one of us. It was a highlight to the reunion to have such a wonderful woman grace us once again with her presence. Mrs

Blizzard was also well loved and respected among us. She gave the most homework of any teacher, but she was such a charismatic teacher that we didn't even notice all the late nights and aching hands. We always aimed to please her.

The reunion was filled with old classmates who wanted nothing but to reminisce and have a good time. Damien Charles who is now the owner of Asia's Catering Services supplied us with a well stocked buffet and bar. His food was excellent and only left us wanting more.

After 18 years, the school has not changed much. It was such a good feeling to walk those halls again. I could still hear my El Dorado school song in my ears, pushing us and motivating us to succeed and above all, always remember "at El Dorado we are one".

It certainly was a trip down memory lane. The night went on and old friends hugged and danced and we all promised to do it soon again.

It was a great night at the El Dorado West Secondary School. It was a night to remember. My high school days will always be a part of me. As the song says, "At El Dorado we are ONE!"

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Phones and tablets under the tree

All I want for Christmas is a brand new phone and tablet! While spending time with family and friends, the youth of today are busy staring at their phones and tablets. They are watching, liking, sharing, uploading, and commenting on photos, videos, statuses, and listening to and downloading new songs.

What a joy it would be to look under the Christmas tree and unwrap gifts containing the latest phone and tablet that recently hit distribution stores in Trinidad and Tobago! Those lucky young people would be able to browse

the internet faster, store more data, see images and videos clearer, and most importantly of all, show off their latest devices to all their friends who are still rocking the old versions of these phones and tablets.

Who wants a new bike for Christmas? You can't ride and text at the same time. A Segway might be better, being a fancy self-balancing skateboard, but wait, that's about \$6,000 in T&T, so no way you can ask Mummy or Daddy for that. Same thing goes for a drone with a built-in camera, too expensive. How about a

new computer? A desktop is too obzocky and complicated with wires to move around and a laptop just cannot fit in the back pocket of a pair of skinny jeans.

Phones and tablets are in their faces, hands, pockets, by their ear, between their pants' waists and the females' bosoms and bra straps. What else to put under the tree? Maybe clothes, jewelry, books, and games might be a good idea, but it seems like the first choice for the youth are new phones and tablets.



Young fellas liming the modern way with their phones on Maitagual Road in San Juan. From left are Justin Pitman, Julianio Garcia, Kwesi Cunningham, Richard Goyrie, Chad Pitman, and Rhondel Gibson.



iguana

in my mango tree!

By Candida Khan

There is an empty lot behind our house that is abandoned in Felicity. The grass has grown tall and it has become a shelter for animals like the iguana. We saw two iguanas living there, and I would romantically think of them as probably being husband and wife. A fire started a few weeks ago and the animals that lived in that tall grass couldn't have survived, or so we thought.

I was sitting behind my computer, doing assignments for school when I heard the dogs barking at something. I quickly ran downstairs and heard some noises on the galvanised roof. Looking up at the nearby mango tree, a baby iguana appeared. It was such a happy sight! I

Nature is alive
and well, even in
the heart of a
bustling urban area

called my mum and excitedly pointed out the little green reptile to her. The two iguanas we saw probably had a family in the tall grass. One sur-

vived! It was gorgeous! There were multiple shades of green on it. It looked so pretty climbing the mango tree. Mum said that it looked skinny and was probably hungry.

I'm so glad that the iguana survived. According to sources, there has been a reduction in the iguana population locally as they are hunted and eaten in Trinidad and Tobago. The green iguana is a reptile that mostly eats plant material. They spend their days lying in the cool. They are great swimmers. These reptiles are always quiet, alert, hyper and aware of their surroundings. They usually sleep at night and are active during the day. How comforting to know that nature is alive and well, even in the heart of a bustling urban area.

Grow your own food

A sorrel plant flourishes at the side of the road outside a house with a gated garden of sorrel plants in Aranguez on Saturday, November 28. Citizens with this plant in their yards will be making the popular Christmas sorrel beverage very easily rather than paying a “pound and a crown” for it from retailers. When you grow your own food it is free from chemicals and you can use the extra cash to buy the things you cannot grow... like presents!

Food



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Mouth-watering Christmas dishes straight out of Wendy-ann Alexander's kitchen in San Juan. The plates include pastelle, macaroni pie, callaloo, pigeon peas, vegetable rice, stewed and baked chicken, plantain, potato salad, fresh salad, cole slaw, and on foil are delicious slices of sweetbread.



Wendy-ann's food for family and friends

Love

 is my secret ingredient

"I love Trinidad and I love cooking," says Wendy-ann Alexander, a member of the Church of the Anointed One at Old Road Junction, Saddle Road, San Juan. Wendy-ann cooks for members of her family, community, church, and anyone who asks her to make something for them. She says that they all say her food tastes really good, even her sister's coworkers at the Hyatt can't get enough of the dishes she prepares.

Leading up to Christmas Day, Wendy-ann is usually busy making chow chow for her family, friends, and neighbours. She says, "Everybody waits on it with their bottles and I give to whoever wants and whoever else I feel to give." Then, at her church she assists with organising the Christmas dinner along with Suzette Antoine, Grace Singh, and Marissa Samaroo. Also, she helps her sister Cheryl Brumant with an annual children's Christmas treat at La Canoe Road, Lower Santa Cruz.

On Christmas Day, Wendy-ann does not cook. She prepares her dishes on Boxing Day. This year she plans to make Shepherd's pie, macaroni pie, baked chicken, turkey, ham, pastelle, rice, callaloo, potato salad, and green salad.

When Wendy-ann shares her recipes with others, they tell her that the food just does not taste like hers. She states, "It is an art. You need to be loving the food to make it right. Love is my secret ingredient!"



Wendy-ann Alexander



Succulent ham already sliced and ready to devour prepared by Wendy-ann. At left is the ham bone that she used to make her ham-flavoured corn soup.



My first try at Hops bread

to serve with ham and pepper sauce or even baked chicken

By Felesha Parboo

The mouth-watering aroma of bread being baked in an oven can mesmerise anyone. Especially if it is being served with ham and pepper sauce or even baked chicken. I decided to make my own bread because lately, the baking company has raised the prices of bread. The white sliced bread is now \$12.75, while the whole wheat one is \$13.75 and a big butter bread is priced at \$7.00.

As a Trinidadian it is much simpler to go to the parlour close by and purchase a bread rather than kneading flour and baking that same kind of bread for a few hours before it is ready to eat. I had the time and ingredients needed to make a few plain hops bread and some with sesame seeds for my husband. I didn't want to spend so much money on such a little bit of bread by the shop.

I called my mother and she gave me the recipes she used to make her breads. Honestly, after trying to make it, I thought it would have been hard like a rock being my first try but surprisingly, it was perfect. It came out soft and fluffy like a marshmallow and my husband couldn't get enough. He ate one immediately as it came out of the oven with baked chicken. It was delicious.

My mom's all-time famous Hops bread recipe:

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups warm water
- 1 tablespoon active dry yeast
- 2 tablespoons white sugar
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 cups bread flour

Directions:

- In a large bowl, stir together warm water, yeast, and sugar. Let stand until creamy, about 10 minutes.
- To the yeast mixture, add the oil, salt, and 2 cups flour. Stir in the remaining flour, 1/2 cup at a time, until the dough has pulled away from the sides of the bowl. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface, and knead until smooth and elastic, about 8 minutes. Lightly oil a large bowl, place the dough in the bowl, and turn to coat. Cover with a damp cloth, and let rise in a warm place until doubled in volume, about 1 hour.
- Deflate the dough, and turn it out onto a lightly floured surface. Divide the dough into 16 equal pieces, and form into round balls. Place on lightly greased baking sheets at least 2 inches apart. Cover the rolls with a damp cloth, and let rise until doubled in volume, about 40 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 400 degrees F/ 200 degrees C.
- Bake for 18 to 20 minutes in the preheated oven, or until golden brown.

My mom's all-time famous Hops sesame seed bread recipe:

Ingredients:

- 8 cups of flour
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup powdered milk
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 3 eggs
- 1 packet instant yeast
- 2 1/2 cups warm water
- 8 tablespoons butter softened

Directions:

- Mix all dry ingredients, make a well in the middle and add egg and water. Knead for 15 minutes.
- Lightly oil a bowl and place dough in bowl. Cover with a damp cloth, and let rise in a warm place until doubled in volume, about 1 hour.
- Break off the size of dough you want and place on a baking sheet and allow to rise again.
- Brush with egg and sprinkle sesame seeds.
- Bake until golden brown about 30 mins at 180 C.
- It could be a little longer or shorter based on your oven, so bake until golden brown.

Then enjoy. Serve with ham and some tasty pepper sauce or anything you desire. You will never want to buy bread again.





Radha Ramoutar's delicious fruit cakes of different shapes and designs.



Scrumptious Fruit cakes for all my customers



Radha making her special Christmas fruit cake.

Courtesy Radha's Cake Designs

My name is Radha Ramoutar. I am humble, down to earth, fun-loving and compassionate. I have always had an interest in cake designing, event planning, and decorating. I enjoy going to Satsang, cinema, beach, staying at home, going out to breakfast and of course, the typical Trini limes with family and friends.

It started many years ago when I was around 19 years old, decorating for family and friends. After that, I also did decorations for bigger events such as weddings and it was at this point I started doing cakes. That was when I met my match because to this day my interest in it hasn't faded. I am even more taken by this art and I thoroughly enjoy the challenges my clients present me with. I wouldn't have it any other way. So far I haven't had any bad experiences with customers, though I've had some challenges along the way. I enjoy each new order and I often say, "There's nothing I can't do."

I create delicious cakes in flavours like lemon sponge, spiced sponge, double chocolate, carrot as well as cheesecakes and many more. I do fondant designs and that's how I am able to achieve different results that delight my customers every time. As fondant



A slice anyone?

can be molded in many ways, the possibilities are endless.

This Christmas season I will be doing fruit cakes and my usual range of cakes – scrumptious fruit cakes, and Christmas cupcakes all made to order! I only resumed business late last year, but it has been picking up as satisfied customers spread the word.

This December will be busy as usual and perhaps even more so because of increased orders which have already been coming in. I am excited to face this challenge as well.

Radha Ramoutar

<https://m.facebook.com/RCakeDesigns/?ref=bookmarks>



Lentil Cakes and Buffalo Cups

California Sushi, Thai Lettuce Wraps, Lentil Cakes, Orange Chilli Wings, Sticky Oriental Wings, Vanilla Punch de Crème, and Caribbean Fruit Sorbet were plated and served at the launch of Nestlé Food Solutions at the Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute (TTHTI) in Chaguaramas from 10 am to 6 pm on Monday November 16.

Food artisans, hoteliers, restaurateurs, caterers and bakers came out in their numbers to experience the event for their kitchen, first hand. Among the solutions – MAGGI, Carnation, Orchard, Nescafé, Nestlé Sweetened Condensed Milk, and the star of the show MINOR's Ready-To-Use Sauce. The sauce was launched at the Expo in three flavours – General TSO, Bourbon and Teriyaki. Consumer marketing manager of Nestlé Professional, himself a chef, Rian Dickson told members of the food fraternity present at the Expo and launch that MINOR's sauces “open your cuisine to a variety of flavours” and are not only ready-to-use sauce, but also “easy to use”.

Whether on the grill, on fish, ribs or even home-made burgers, MINOR's will deliver a “mouth-watering taste – created for chefs, by chefs”.

Host of the day's proceedings Joel Villafana introduced the foodies gathered to five Culinary Management students of TTHTI, part of Nestlé's Young Culinary Talent (YOCUTA) programme.

Nestlé Professional Solutions
helps you prepare these, and more

YOCUTA, an alliance formed with TTHTI as part of the Nestlé Needs YOUTH initiative launched earlier this year, aims to advance the talent of budding chefs and food connoisseurs, in line with the goal of the Nestlé Needs YOUTH initiative – to improve the employability of youth in T&T aged 16-30 between 2015 and 2017.

At the Expo, students Shantelle Pierre, Avionne Wilson, Karym Charles, Kyle Jemmoth, and Tevin Gonzales demonstrated their culinary prowess via live cooking demonstrations of dishes inspired by Nestlé products.

Shantelle, Tevin, Kyle, and Avionne prepared, on-the-spot, Roasted Coffee Chicken Tenders inspired by MAGGI Pepper and Chicken Seasoning; Bourbon Buffalo Cups, inspired by MINOR's Bourbon Sauce; Peanut Fettuccine Alfredo, inspired by Nestlé Peanut Punch and Nestlé Cream; Coconut Kale Pan Seared Shrimp, inspired by MAGGI Fish Seasoning and MAGGI

Coconut Milk; and Chicken Teriyaki Fried Noodles, inspired by MINOR's Teriyaki Sauce, to name a few. Avid onlookers and taste-testers were guided through the cooking process, with methods and ingredients used highlighted by the soon-to-be chefs, along the way.

ABOUT NESTLÉ PROFESSIONAL

Nestlé Professional (NP) is the food and beverage solutions service for Nestlé operating in the out-of-home market. NP's purpose is to create and provide the consumer with a complete solution to meet their food and beverage needs.

The company hosted its first Food and Beverage Exhibition in Trinidad and Tobago on Monday, November 16, 2015 to showcase its portfolio of large-scale food preparation solutions, that takes menus of chefs and food practitioners, to new heights.

ABOUT NESTLÉ

NESTLÉ is a leading nutrition, health and wellness company. Its mission is to provide consumers with the best tasting, most nutritious choices in a wide range of food and beverage categories and eating occasions, from morning to night.

- **Kim CS Kirton,**
Brand Communications Architect



‘Angel Hair’ on a Mango Branch

By Omilla Mungroo

Who say Trinis can’t have a White Christmas?

In the old, old days when sweet T&T was really sweet, we had a piece of “white Christmas” almost every year.

Aunty V would go to the back of my grandmother’s house where a huge doux doux mango tree spread out. It was not my favourite mango but every Christmas it provided us children with something to look forward to - a brand new tree!

Aunty V used to walk with cutlass in hand and chop a nice branch off the tree, clean out most of the leaves and get some white oil paint on it, except for on the few leaves. If nothing

else did, the smell of the paint, along with my late grandfather’s three new pigs which he bought to fatten for a kill about the week before December 25, always did. Aunty V’s tree was the highlight for us because we all got the chance to do something to help. For that short time we were never yelled at, pinched or scolded.

Aunty had the most exotic tree decorations - about a dozen small Santa Claus hanging from thread, small candy sticks, stars, bright coloured bulbs, red, green, silver, gold, blue, orange, and she made some decorations by covering match boxes with Christmas gift paper; these looked like miniature gifts hanging from the tree.

When she was finished hanging all the deco-

rations, which was after the paint had dried on the branch, of course, she would wrap a long string of blinking lights around it from the top to the bottom, then the last touch that she liked best - white “angel hair” she called it. “No tree should be without this!” She always smiled, as she covered the entire tree with it.

At nights when she plugged in the blinkers, we thought the tree looked so magical, it seemed we were somewhere in another place and time. It glowed with the blinkers and exuded a snowy look.

Time to pack the presents underneath it! We couldn’t wait!

Merry Christmas, everybody!



Books

to look out for this Christmas



By Marsha Gomes-Mckie
Founder, Caribbean Books Foundation

Caribbean Books Foundation is an international platform that connects the Caribbean Community and its Diaspora through its literature. We have a robust book review programme and have reviewed a number of books in 2015.

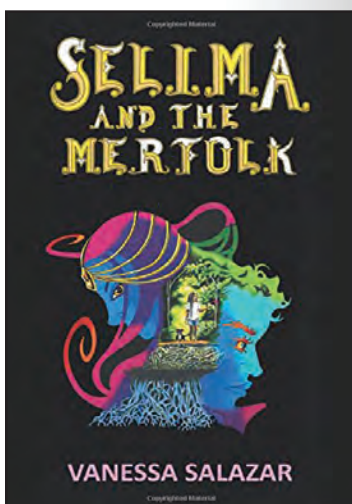
All reviews are posted online at www.caribbeanbooks.org and made available to the author to promote his or her work. If you have written a book and would like a free review please contact us at marsha@caribbeanbook.org with the heading "Book Review Request".

SELIMA AND THE MERFOLK

By Vanessa Salazar (Trinidad)
Genre: Young Adult

I am a sucker for happy ending so whenever I read a book, I secretly say to myself, please don't let this be an undercover tragedy. I get so caught up in a book I usually feel like throwing it if the ending is horrid. I am pleased to report that "Selima and the Merfolk" was enchanting. The book was full of beautiful descriptions and real emotions. It captured the local culture perfectly; anyone who has been to the beach

Vanessa Salazar writes about will search their memory to remember those rocks. Youngsters and adults will relate to it. In the end I felt a little worried about Dave's relationship but I look forward to enjoying more magic as the second book is published. I hope the manuscript is already in the works. Overall, "Selima and the Merfolk" was a refreshing read. I felt like driving up to Las Cuevas, as I am in Trinidad to see if I can cross the jagged rocks into the isolated beach and find the hidden pool. Maybe I will someday.



THE PROTECTORS' PLEDGE

By Danielle McClean (Trinidad)
Genre: Teen/Young Adult

JV our resident hero is a darling and he could be your little brother or your big brother - a cousin, nephew or uncle. He is very much a Caribbean youth. His adventure is the "bush" adventure we all dream of as a kid but our mothers, well my mother never let me near the forest. He has a peppery grandma and gets in trouble when he disobeys her. The village comes with a nosy neighbour, a market with tamarind balls, and someone named Mr Chin. The story is believable and it flows wonderfully. There are a few wonderful additions though, of the mythical folklore-ish kind. I love folklore and Danielle effortlessly weaves a web that entertains and teaches.

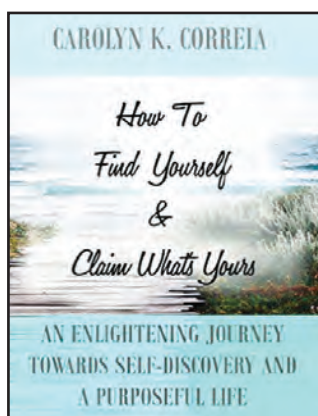


HOW TO FIND YOURSELF AND CLAIM WHAT'S YOURS

By Carolyn Correia (Trinidad)

Genre: Motivational

Carolyn's, "How To Find Yourself and Claim What's Yours" is a personal journey which is narrated by the author during her times of self-actualisation. Throughout the book Carolyn takes us back and then brings us to the present as she shares what worked for her and what can work for us. The book is as genuine as Carolyn in her desire to make a difference as she lays life's lessons at your feet.

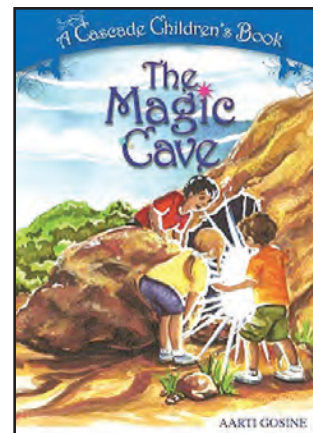
**THE MAGIC CAVE: BOOKS 1-3**

By Aarti Gosine (Trinidad)

A Cascade's Children's Book

Genre: Children/Teen

All three books took the children on a wonderful adventure in the secret Magic Cave. Each book held its own and each story was new and exciting to capture any child's imagination. So you could have read any one as a standalone and still be impressed. Samantha, Alan and Mark go on a magical and mythical adventure into new worlds and not only explore but unveil family secrets. Alan and Mark are strong characters while Book Three is definitely Samantha's awakening. The books are well paced for children. There is action and themes of friendship and respect. The children work with the adults and it is a great coming-of-age adventure. The best thing about this book is that their parents weren't dead and got involved in the end.



Singer, songwriter/ poet on a mission

My objective is to continue communicating with song and literature and to open my mind to brave boundaries

Tricia S David, 38, published her first book "Tuning with God" in January 2013. The book is a compilation of 50 poems and can be purchased online. She received a First Time Author award from the National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS) the same year.

On Amazon she states, "First I was interested in narrating the Gospel in fiction. Somehow the truth is tied to every word from God. So it came to the point of losing reasoning. Shakespeare was a poet, and so was Mozart. The craft is the author's tools. God allows him to inherit his fruits. Very often composure is gifted. Trees seldom grow twisted. Read with reasoning and don't forget understanding. The gift of love is eternal. Love is turned on and is exposed through



**First time author
award from NALIS.**

true light. My prayer is that those who explore these poems learn to dissolve all the compounds and surround them. The mystery of Jesus is grace. These are all found in this very human race."

**Tricia S
David**



Tricia wrote "When" a Trinidad Folk song at the end of 2013.

She became part of the Ministry of Arts and Multi-culturalism's Mentoring with the Masters programme entitled "Songwriting, Music composition and Arrange-ment," mentored by Winsford Devine.

She completed a course at Exit Marketing Studio called "Introduction to The Artiste Industry, 2015".

Her her songs written and sung fall under three genres:

- Trinidad Folk songs – "When" and "Like an Ant"
 - Inspirational Folk songs – "My Whole Heart", "Burden Off", "Growing with my God", "Jesus Song", "Eternal Love", "Evangelize", "Every Morning", "He Died for Me", "Holy Spirit Hold Me", "Holy Spirit Come", "I Have Found My Joy", and "Singing to Jesus"
 - Inspirational Folk/Rock song – "A Prayer"
- See her Facebook page for links to Youtube and Soundcloud.





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Parlatuvier

a must-stop place in Tobago

Photo courtesy: Khaydia Kahrin

Places



Khaydia Kahrin enjoys the breathtaking view as she relaxes on a bench near the roadside overlooking Parlatuvier Beach in Tobago.

December 2015

Sweet TnT 27
MAGAZINE

Picturesque Vessigny



A beautiful gazebo display at Vessigny Beach.



Green scenery welcomes visitors to the vendors area.

By Marika Mohammed

Not many have heard of or have been to Vessigny. Why? Because they're too busy going to Maracas Beach or Chaguaramas Bay. No one goes down south. That's where Vessigny is located. Yup, when you're going to the Pitch Lake take a pit stop to Vessigny. It is WOW! When I first saw it, I was like "This can't be a beach!" It was a picture garden with an ocean view. It was as though the Botanical Gardens and Chaguaramas merged into one. So pretty.

I was informed that Vessigny is not just a beach but a place of memories for many. It hosts weddings, christenings and a variety of functions and events. No wonder! It's such a beautiful site. It has everything for a dream wedding - gazebo, bridges and secure parking. In addition, it has top of the line facilities. I was jaw-dropped amazed.

The best thing is that since hardly anyone goes there, it is never crowded. The water is shallow, so it is safe and fun for the little ones and for those who want a good workout in swimming. One can also view the edges of Trinidad and the peaceful ocean views that surround Vessigny. Being there you feel as though you've been transported from Trinidad into a picture. It is definitely something worth going down south for.



Architectural walkway amidst the lovely green.



Fishing boats docked at the shore.



Bathers enjoy the waters.



Salybia Nature Resort and Spa.

Runaway to Salybia

By Nerissa Hosein

Every now and then life can get to you - the bills, the jobs, the traffic, the endless pressures of our modern day society - and if we don't take care of ourselves and allow ourselves to breathe, it can really be crippling. So for me and my family, when those times seem too much I like to whisk us away for a few days somewhere peaceful, simple and relaxing.

This year my husband and I chose a weekend with the kids at Salybia Nature Resort and Spa. Let me just say, we were not disappointed. This resort, nestled nicely in Salybia, Toco is one of the most peaceful and breath-taking resorts in Trinidad.

From the moment we arrived to the moment we left, we felt at ease. The staff was pleasant, the food tasty, and the rooms were simple yet

well-equipped for my family of four.

Our stay was a short one, but nevertheless we left making a mental note to come back soon. The views offered by Salybia is simply outstanding with full ocean scenery and sea breeze winds encircling the well-kept grounds. I think the biggest hit for us was the absolutely amazing pool.

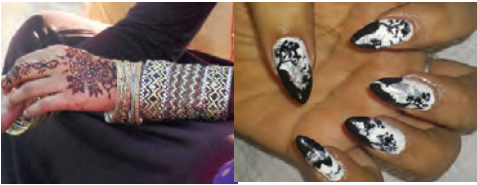
It was a big hit with the kids as it went all the way around, was not deep and even had a shallow walk-in for my smaller son to bathe comfortably without feeling threatened. It was nicely maintained with a nice quiet area for lounge chairs for those who wanted to relax out of the water.

After spending most of our days at the pool we would dine at the restaurant on the compound and the food was simply elegant. Breakfast was wonderful with dishes such as bake and salt-

fish and they also had the traditional eggs, toasts and a nice variety of fruits.

There were very accommodating packages for families which included meals so we were well taken care of. Salybia is located not too far from the Toco Light House so it was nice to take a drive on that side and show the kids some of our rich island monuments. The beaches nearby were also nice to take a dip.

Salybia is exactly what the doctor ordered for my family this year. My kids had the best time and were a bit sad when we had to leave. Honestly, so were my husband and I. But I surely will visit this resort soon again. It was such a welcoming change of pace from the regular bustling life that we all tend to want to run away from every now and then. So next time you need a little break give Salybia a call, you won't regret it at all!

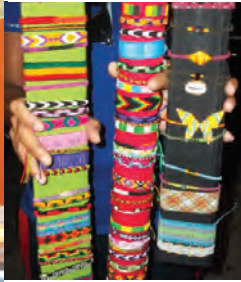


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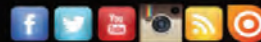
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