

Sweet TnT

MAGAZINE

Issue #8 February 2014

www.sweettntmagazine.com

Making mas

Tricia Blaise-Fergus, left, and Rehyan Dottin, right, apply the finishing touches to Yakira David-Murray's make up before she makes her way to the stage in costume by Zigwa. See story on Pages 4 and 5

Keeping T&T sweet:
Protecting the family

Tobago band Play presents
Jab Jab and Jab Molassie

Marriage proposal
at Pigeon Point Beach

Local poetry:
Calypso,
Valentine's Day,
Giraffe and Rats





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Sweet TnT
MAGAZINE

Lifestyle
Creole Language
Food
Places

Trinidad and Tobago culture for so!



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Editor's note

The year 2014 started off with a bang in Trinidad and Tobago, not just with fireworks but with the alarming news of daylight killings of young men, vehicular accidents, and the discovery of drugs in cans labelled with our beloved country's name. After hearing all of this it would seem as though Sweet TnT Magazine would be short of content to give frustrated readers some sort of hope to continue living in what they used to call paradise.

Fortunately, our February 2014 issue happens to be surprisingly jam-packed with positive stories written by proud citizens from all over Trinidad and Tobago. These upbeat people are thinking about J'ouvert, Carnival, Valentine's Day, and Jazz. They are constructive and creative with writing poetry, fiction, and human interest pieces. They share with readers their love for real Trini style foods and are having a ball in Toco and Tobago.

Also, Sweet TnT Magazine starts a new series called "Keeping T&T sweet" in which we address and offer suggestions to help curb the lawlessness in this country. We particularly encourage our readers to call their local hotlines and report instances of abuse and criminal activities in their communities. Since most problems stem from the home the topic in our February issue is "Protecting the family".

Congratulations and thanks to our team, writers, interviewees, and advertisers for making this issue a successful one. We thank all our supporters for clicking "like" and "follow" on our networking sites and we look forward to keep on entertaining you.

Enjoy.

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Editor

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Members of Zigwa show Sweet TnT Magazine readers how a small group of friends in T&T can work together on a big project that contributes to the range of beauty we see on Carnival Tuesday. They share photos of themselves working hard before their work of art hits the road.

Zigwa consists of five members – Kerhann Jones, Warren Le Platte, Kenwyn Murray, James Hackett and Michael Norgriff. Kerhann is a civil engineer having earned a degree in engineering from the University of the West Indies.

Both Warren and Kenwyn hold degrees in Carnival Studies also from UWI, Warren currently being a freelance graphic designer and part-time lecturer with the School of Business and Computer Science and Kenwyn, a fine artist as well as a lecturer at UWI in the Carnival Studies programme.

James earned his degree in Fashion from the University of Trinidad and Tobago and is currently a practicing fashion designer while teaching at the same fashion programme from which he previously

Making mas with Zigwa

Hard work and fun

Stage 1



The sketch

graduated. Michael holds a degree in Visual Arts from UWI and is an art teacher at La Romaine High School.

All of Zigwa's members studied art at Trinity College where they met and formed a bond over 15 years ago that remains as strong today. Zigwa was officially registered as a company in 2008, its origins date back to those days in the art room in Trinity. The roles of Zigwa's members rotate and adjust based on the job or situation at hand, it's very organic in that respect.

Also, they all have worked at the Callaloo Company helping produce Mas for Peter Minshall's Carnival Bands. They have also worked with the Trinity Carnival Foundation, a children's Carnival band where they helped to design and create costumes. Other bands they have done work for are 2 Peas and d Pod and Imagenation. Most recently they have

Stage 2



The underlying structure is observed by Michael Norgriff, left, James Hackett, Kenwyn Murray, and Kerhann Jones.

Kenwyn tests the movement of the instrument.



Stage 3



Yakira David-Murray adds fabric to the frame of the costume.

Stage 4



Final touches: Kerhann Jones, left, Warren Le Platte, Michael Norgriff and his wife Aina Jones-Norgriff assist James Hackett on the sewing machine (below).



designed and produced costumes for NCBA Individuals category in 2011 and 2012 where their costumes placed first and second respectively. They state that there isn't a best or worst design; there is only experimentation, design and enjoyment.

The initial stage is generating the ideas for the costume, usually one of the members would have an initial idea and bring this to the group where it is refined and sketches are done.

Stage 2: At this point the underlying structure is developed; having a civil engineer in the group becomes a positive. Calculations are done based on the proposed size of the costume as well as the measurements of the masquerader. Then fabrication begins.

Stage 3: Once the structure has been built, the costume evolves and materials are added to the frame: fabric, wire, mesh, etc.

Stage 4: The finishing of the costume is the last stage. Decorative elements such as braid, cord, glitter, paint, etc are applied to the costume. These elements are also added to the boots and bodysuit of the masquerader, after that the only thing left to do is...

"Play ah Mas!"



On the road: Yakira and her husband Kenwyn parading on Carnival Tuesday.



Yakira poses for spectators in Zigwa style.



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COSTAATT's 'devil' ready for Carnival 2014

By Kielon Hilaire

Venture into the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT) and several Information Technology students will tell you that Marva Wilson is the devil! Miss Wilson would start each new class pleasantly staring at her students before proudly stating, "Yes, you heard right. I am the devil. Any questions?"

Trained as an accountant and holds a degree in computer science Miss Wilson joined her good friend Miss Cathyan Townsend also an IT lecturer at COSTAATT a decade ago. Miss Wilson is extremely passionate about her work and believes that you should be too. She rebukes the words "I can't" and gets even more unsettled with "I won't".

She will seemingly give her students twice as much home work, assignments and exams than other lecturers and will probably not be able to sleep for days if a student's overall result for a course with a minimum pass mark of 70 ends up being 69.999, as this would mean that it would be up to her irrefutable discretion to pass the student. Not only this but she despises hearing students say that they got a grade A or B in a course where they felt they still did not grasp the course material. This means that YouTube videos and Wikipedia alone probably won't help students pass her courses. On top of all of this she marks her students very meticulously. In other words, if you try to copy and paste information or "fluff" your answers to her exam questions you will certainly receive a fluffy grade.

Miss Wilson claims that while some students may find her teaching strategy challenging her true objective has always been to get them to rise to an even bigger challenge, life! This is because while grades certainly do not make the person,

focus and consistency surely helps. However, she also claims that life would not be worth living if you do not work as hard as you play. For she has many interesting secrets and one of them is that even though she was born during the Christmas season on the 26th of December she sees herself more as a Carnival person. She is a "Trini to de bone" and with Carnival 2014 in the air she has already started chippin' from the confines of her bedroom singing, "She ready! She ready! Yeah she ready!" Kudos to Bunji Garlin winning Best International Performance at the 2013 Soul Train Awards, she said.

Each year she looks forward to a wide array of Carnival events including all-inclusive fetes, Soca Monarch, Calypso Monarch and of course Carnival Monday and Tuesday. Then again, perhaps it is not that surprising considering she was born into Carnival as her father and brother

were heavily involved in mas and there were a number of pan sides close to the St James area she grew up in, which all encouraged her mas playing. She even played mas with Irwin McMillan, Edmund Hart and admits that her most memorable Carnival experiences came from playing mas with the legendary Peter Minshall and liming by the side of the Roots Truck with David Rudder and Chris "Tambu" Herbert.

When asked what is the biggest difference she has noticed between Carnival in previous years and now, she said the price nowadays to partake in the season has caught her attention as she has spotted Carnival loans in the newspapers for as much as \$25,000. Just a couple decades ago you probably could have gotten a house with that. Still, despite the significant increase in cost she remains an avid supporter of the season and a huge fan of local artistes - David Rudder, Superblue, Bunji Garlin and Machel Montano.

Nevertheless, when it comes down to it, Marva Wilson's enjoyment of the

“ She tells her students, ‘Play as hard as you like for the season but just make sure and work just as hard on my Carnival assignments’ ”



Marva Wilson stands in the doorway of COSTAATT's faculty lounge.

Photography: Krystin James
Makeup: Renee Wilson-Philo

Carnival season probably would not have been as gratifying as it still is today had she not worked as hard as she did in her earlier years so she could now "free up" herself at a moment's notice. She even stated that in a country like Trinidad and Tobago where the Government presently covers 100 percent tuition fees for all of its citizens pursuing Bachelor's degrees on soil there is little reason for not giving everything you do your all. As she tells each of her students every year around Carnival time, "Play as hard as you like for the season but just make sure and work just as hard on my Carnival assignments. For you just never know, you could be the one to end up on 69.999 and I might just have to play de devil... jab jab!" Yet she always smiles and "ole talk" with her students, and could never wait long enough to attend their graduation ceremonies.

I can't vouch for others but anyone who creatively supports and encourages me to work harder and become a better person throughout life seems to be more of an angel to me than a devil.

Adventures in paradise

By Marissa Armoogam-Ali

I have lived in Trinidad my entire life, and when I go on road trips and family vacations in Trinidad I am always in awe of the abundance of the beauty of this island. A while back my family and I along with some extended family were invited to spend a weekend at the picturesque Toco Beach. Let me give you a tantalising taste of the wondrous journey that we embarked on from the southlands all the way across the country and up to the very tip of the island.

The journey usually takes about two and a half hours from San Fernando, but with the number of stops we made, it took about an hour longer, but it was worth it.

The drive was a breezy relaxing one and for me the hustle and bustle of city life that I am used to daily encouraged me to embrace the scenic drive... the abundance of greenery... flora and fauna were everywhere. The air itself as we drove through Matura and Salybia was so refreshingly clean and crisp.

Along the way we passed through many small villages, and they were villages in the true sense. Every home had a small shed to the front with some kind of local fruit or vegetable for sale, it was things they grew in their own yards. Children were playing along the road side, climbing trees and there were some of the



Cousins from left: Steffon Beharry, Elaina Ali, Satori Armoogam and Annalee Armoogam enjoying the natural beauty of Toco Beach.

older folks of the village sitting on the corners talking and just relaxing. It looked very enticing.

As we drove on, we stopped several times to "stretch our legs" and talk to one or two locals from the village. They seemed as amused by us as we were by their very inviting lifestyle. The children devoured the experience as if they were being introduced to a strange custom from another land. They clamoured about when we would get to the beach.

When we finally arrived at the beach house, we were not prepared for the beauty we were about to see. The house itself was very rustic and inviting, but the location of the house and the view was worth the hours of drive it took to get there. The house was nestled on a small hill with a large sloping yard filled with coconut trees leading to a secluded bay.

Next to the bay there was a tiny tributary that ran directly into the beach. It was breathtaking!

The house had several hammocks all around the veranda that seemed to hug your body when you lay in it. The children screamed with excitement as they ran unto the lawn as if they had been caged and was suddenly freed.

The yard had many other adventures for them, there were many trees to climb unto, to play under and just relax. There were areas of sand where they were freely allowed to play. For them this was a treat to be relished since they would usually get scolded for doing that at home.

The children truly enjoyed themselves that weekend and we look forward to the other adventures that this beautiful paradise island has to offer.

FAMILY VACATION IN TOBAGO

The Ali clan in a pool at Crown Point, Tobago. Aadam wearing snorkel gear, Khaleel in orange swim shorts, Elaina in blue life jacket and Sabeera in orange life jacket, all ready for an early morning swim. You can never catch them in the water without wearing their swimming gear! In the background the sailboats gently bobbing up and down on the morning swell. The perfect way to start the morning in beautiful Tobago.

Photos: Marissa Armoogam-Ali



Protecting the family

You want to reverse the madness that has taken over the news in Trinidad and Tobago but you do not want to get involved in other people's business because it may bring harm to you and your family.

You voice your opinion to others about the ridiculously high food prices, the wickedness of others to abuse children and spouses, and the problem of drugs, guns, gangs, kidnappings and murders.

You hope your opinion reaches the right people through word of mouth, yet the drama on the news worsens and you feel hopeless. Presently, you await

**Keeping
T&T sweet!**

A *Sweet TnT* series
MAGAZINE

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a miracle that will bring back T&T the way you want it to be.

The articles in this series address the issues that usually make your jaw

drop and offer suggestions that you can use to help curb society's problems.

The suggestions are not unique to you, they are messages posted in your face everywhere you turn to which you probably pay little mind.

You can respond to this feature on www.sweettntmagazine.com either publicly on the Magazine Comments forum or in a private message in the Contact Us section. Your suggestions are welcomed so that together we can make T&T sweet again.

In this February issue of *Sweet TnT Magazine* the topic is "Protecting the family"!

*Mama tell me since a baby
Doh pass people just so when you in Tobago
Doh play proudly, tell dem howdy
Ah say, "What's the reason Mammy?"
Is then she tell me
She say, "All ah we is one family, all ah we
is one family!"* – Lord Nelson

Family. You hear this word more often than ever throughout Trinidad and Tobago. It comes in many forms: "Neighbour, lend me some sugar nah, you know we is family," "Eh family, buy something from meh nah," and "Psst... family, you looking good today." You hear it and probably use it yourself, but do you think the word has lost its original meaning in recent times? Women and children raped and murdered almost every week in T&T! You talk to people on the street, read the newspaper, watch the television and listen to the radio, you hear, "That man sick, they should hang him," "That woman stay with that man because she like licks," and "The Government should ban drinking, is the alcohol make him do it."

Don't listen to them, do your part. Look at your mother, father, sister, brother, cousin, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, grandmother, grandfather, or in-law. Is there something wrong?

Take a look around your community and observe your friends, neighbours, shopkeepers, taxi drivers or persons living a few blocks away from you. Are you aware of abuse happening?

At school or the work place, look at your classmate, student, teacher, coworker, supervisor, manager, or cleaner, do you

suspect something is wrong at their homes just by interacting with them? Do you see obvious signs of abuse or hear them talk about persons at their homes with utter disgust? Are you aware that people in abusive situations usually feel alone?

Many abused children are afraid to tell someone because their abusers have threatened to hurt them so they scream for help in other ways. Do you not see the frustration painted on their faces or shown in their outrageous behaviour? Do you know that many abused women do not complain to others because the advice given to them is useless? Why tell a woman to leave her violent husband if you do not offer a secure place and sufficient funds to keep herself and her children safe? Have you really tried to make a difference in your home, community, school or workplace?

Domestic violence does not occur overnight. The signs are in your face long before it gets physical. It starts with the passing of hurtful words, sexual advances, the appearance of a selfish attitude and expression of controlling behaviour. Once this stage is not addressed, the abuser becomes more confident. Encourage children to talk about adults who make them uncomfortable. Adults, you are encouraged to get out of a relationship as early as possible when you detect mental instability in someone. Do not give these abusers power over you. They need to be loved just as much as you and should earn it, not demand it.

As for abusive relationships that have already gotten out of hand, report it! When you read the newspaper, watch the televi-

sion, listen to the radio and browse the internet, have you paid attention to the messages that beg you to confidentially report abuse to organisations that specialise in handling these matters?

These officials are ready to tackle the abusers with full force and put an end to the misery that they bring to our families, our children, our mothers, our fathers, our neighbours, our friends and our coworkers. Unfortunately, these officials are not psychics and cannot find the culprits without your help. When you do not report it the "hate disease" just festers, both in the abuser and the victim. This disease spreads rapidly and professes itself in the incidents you see in the news today. Many abusers were abused themselves so the cycle of violence continues.

Starting today, help put an end to the violence in homes and make a pact to protect the family. If you believe that a situation of abuse is beyond your control, call a hotline and report the case. The call is anonymous so that you can play a great part in your community without putting your life at risk. Avoid making a scene with the abuser or victim just before making the call to a hotline because it defeats the purpose of confidentiality.

Lord Nelson's mother advises him that when he passes people in Tobago, "*Doh play proudly, tell dem howdy*," very powerful words of advice to live in harmony with others, a good message for you to live by in your own community. Remember that *all ah we is one family!*



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

Trinidad Theatre Workshop has multiple facets. These are:

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

• Theatre in Education

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

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

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

• School for the Arts

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

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

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

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

Scholarships and deferred payment plans available

• Productions

1st & 2nd February, 2014 at 7pm - Manthology - Moriba Marcano
- Up Close & Personal - 'This is my story' - Tickets - \$150.00

Friday 21st, February 2014 - Dinner 7:45 pm, 9 pm Show,
Saturday 22nd, February 2014 - Dinner - 6:45 pm, 8 pm show
DINNER THEATRE: TWO CAN PLAY produced by Trinidad Theatre Workshop, hosted by The Normandie

The Normandie in collaboration with Trinidad Theatre Workshop (TTW) is hosting the Dinner Theatre Series in aid of the Youth Camp that will be conducted over the July/August vacation at TTW.

Reservations: Call 624-1181 ext 4010 or ext 3009/30053006.
Tickets: \$400.00

March 13th to 16th - Fourplay - New Year, New Directors, New Directors

The theatre space is also available for rental.

For more details - Call 624-8502, email: trinidadtheatre@gmail.com, like us on facebook: Trinidad Theatre Workshop and follow us on twitter @trinidadtheatre and join our mailing list - <http://eepurl.com/qK-2H>

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Play creates a new way to experience J'ouvert:

Jab Jab and Jab Molassie combined

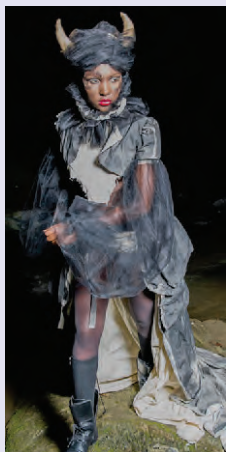
Tobago band Play tells Sweet TnT Magazine readers about their team and plans for Carnival 2014.

Play is the brain child of three high school friends. We all come from diverse backgrounds academically and socially, however, we share the same vision in relation to business and enterprise in Tobago and agree that the mas in Carnival is sorely lacking. As a result, we decided to assimilate the two.

Our managing director TR McWellington is an engineer by trade and study, our creative director TJ Phillips is a geographer, and our director of marketing TN Ramsey is a researcher and cultural studies advocate. It may seem out of left field the choice to partake in mas and costume design, however, when it is taken into consideration that Carnival is in the very blood and cultural traditions of Trinidad and Tobago, the very idea is not all that novel.

The managing director is in charge of finance and budget oversight, and task management which ensures that every deadline is set and met. The creative director is in charge of our vision, costume design and process/fabrication. The director of marketing is in charge of sponsorship, building the brand and promoting the image of the company along with the creative director.

Play has been in the works for about three years. The initial idea came about from watching our creative director doodle on any scrap of material she could get her hands on and constantly researching costume fabrication. She has often referred to Rosalind Gabriel and Brian Mac Farlane as her mentors. It progressed from there to



convincing her to take a costume fabrication course during her tenure at university (which to her disappointment yielded her lowest grade). Thankfully she was not discouraged. In fact this motivated her to help create Play.

Play was officially registered in 2013, with our freshman offering of Play A New Way "Jab Jab—Jab Molassie: A Queen's Court". Our creative director had/has a vision of utilising pre-existing materials which can be sourced locally and incorporating them into the J'ouvert which has come to be symbolised by t-shirt and shorts. Our vision at Play is to create a new way (no pun intended) to experience J'ouvert. We intend to keep our cultural characters at the fore, while re-imagining the materials, and elevating the experience of fore day morning or J'ouvert to that of Monday and Tuesday mas.

With our first offering "Jab Jab—Jab Molassie: A Queen's Court" we have combined the Jab Jab and Jab Molassie characters. Typically, the two mas characters are not incorporated into one as they have their own identities, along with expected pat-



terns of behaviour, costumes, courts, etc, however, in our vision, we have assimilated both. We have also re-imagined the materials used to create costumes, preferring to go with cloth and other materials which are indicative of the plantation and also those which can be sourced locally.

Play has envisioned the band as Spectacle and Supporter. The Spectacle are those who will be robed in costumes within the hierarchy of the Queen's Court; the Queen, Messenger and the Soldier, while the Supporter are those who will be in typical J'ouvert fashion of shorts and t-shirts.

J'ouvert is very much mud and oil territory. Play has re-imagined this idea as well, and aims to offer powder paint as an alternative. Phagwa is the festival that comes to mind when one envisions powder paint, Play has borrowed this concept and incorporated it into the J'ouvert experience. We have also upped the ante by offering all inclusive packages and group packages. Check out our website at www.playmasband.com, Facebook page at www.facebook.com/playjouvert, and Twitter at playahmas. Email us at playjouvert@gmail.com

Mark Waldropt proposes to
Therese Chung at Pigeon
Point Beach in Tobago.

The family witnesses the
proposal. From left,
Gabriella Cook, Isabella
Cook, Therese Chung,
Mark Waldropt, Colleen
Cook and Daniel Cook.



The proposal at Pigeon Point Beach

By Therese Chung

I would never forget the day, that special day at Pigeon Point Beach in Tobago. Pigeon Point is the most popular beach in Tobago with the magnificence of blue-green waters splashing upon its sands. The calamity allows you to simply bask in the waters and enjoy the admiration of the scenic sights of tall coconut trees standing at attention one behind the other in a marching band. It was only five minutes away from Bon Accord where I stayed for my Christmas vacation.

Upon entry to Pigeon Point Beach, we chose our seating area which were two white lounge chairs accompanied with a large umbrella which gave us shade if we needed. The beach was clean and safe, with life guards on duty patrolling the beach regularly. We ran into the waters and floated on my surf board.

My sister was visiting from the Minnesota State situated in the United

States of America. Her husband and two daughters joined her. They were ever so happy to leave the cold winter and partake in the sunny weather and warm waters in the Caribbean, preferably the islands of Trinidad and Tobago. Here we were all sunbathing, when my boyfriend looks at me and says, "It's time."

My brother-in-law glanced at me and in a matter of minutes we were walking on the jetty. I could feel the warmth under my feet as I walked on each wooden plank on the jetty. The carat shed was ahead with its cover blowing in the breeze which made an inviting sound. I felt as though I was in a movie upon the Perfect Island.

The sun came out and invited the cool breeze to accompany her that day. The aqua waters surrounded the jetty and as I looked around the picturesque surroundings, his eyes caught mine. The earth was at a pause as my boyfriend went down on one knee. He looked up at me and shared his feelings of love for me, a love he knew would last forever. I was

lost in his words but was carried to the next point of "THE RING". He put his hand in his right pocket and pulled out a glass box. The box was beautiful. I could not imagine what was in the box. He then opened the box with a gentle lift and there it was... the most exquisite diamond I have ever seen. It glittered in the sun and it was all mine. He asked me, "Will you marry me?"

"Yes!" I replied instantaneously and the rest is history.

We asked a spectator who was with her family from Sweden to take photos to captivate this day and so she did. Words of congratulations diffused in the air and life has not been the same since that Engagement Proposal in Pigeon Point.

So for all you men out there, bring your girlfriends to Pigeon Point in Tobago. Give her the proposal which will live in her memories forever.

Note: Sweet TnT Magazine congratulates feature writer Therese Chung and her fiancé Mark Waldropt on their engagement. Thank you for sharing this very exciting romantic moment with our readers.

See poem "Be My Valentine" on page 20

By Marissa Armoogam-Ali

As all the excitement of the different activities and seasons approaches, most Trinbagonians are in a full celebratory mode or at least that's what we are sometimes led to believe, I included.

A few weeks ago I was driving along Lady Hailes Avenue in south Trinidad, of course lost in my own thoughts about my own "world ending" issues when I noticed a woman standing under a bus shed as I made the turn to go into Gulf City Mall.

As if by some heavenly intervention (harps included) I was able to get my mind off my own problems long enough to notice the woman's face. She seemed so sad and burdened! Her face spoke of never-ending turmoil and grief, she looked lost and desperate for someone, anyone, to offer to save her from whatever it was that was hurting her. That's when I realised here I

The hand of hope

'We are citizens of humanity'

am driving... DRIVING! Not waiting under a bus shed in the rain perhaps on my way to shop and yet lost in what seemed to me to be a world of issues.

Which brings me to my point; we sometimes take for granted the many blessings we have that are bestowed upon us. Our health may not always be 100 per cent but we're not fighting against something that's threatening our very existence like others are, yet we gripe and complain of all that we may be going through. Sometimes we argue that our

spouses may not want to help us do the dishes so we punish them by not speaking to them for days on end, whilst somewhere a lonely widow or the hearts of a broken marriage are longing, hoping they could hear the voice of their loved one just once more.

We are not only citizens of Trinidad and Tobago but citizens of humanity and we must remember that our very nature must be to care and nurture each other. Sometimes a simple pat on the back, a smile or casual hello is all is needed to lift the spirits of another human being.

We do not have to be rich to bless richly, nor qualified to give good advice. So as we bask in the warmth of being part of a diverse culture and we swell our chests with pride of being a rainbow people let us also remember to reach out our hands and fill the needs of our brothers and sisters.

Fresh flowers for me

By Omilla Mungroo

The shabbily dressed, unshaven old man who delivered the flowers, looked at me as if I was from Mars! Of course they were for me, I thought, but who sent them? There were three red roses, two pink and one white rose, two white and two pink carnations, and two yellow water lilies, all carefully arranged amidst different shapes and sizes of green fern shooting out from the pretty bouquet! All these so neatly tied with a golden ribbon! How extravagant, I thought, pondering who would send me fresh-cut flowers, and on Valentine's Day.

Being a single mother, I was wary and skeptical about matters that may affect my heart, since I needed to think to stay level-headed. The woman at the desk, who called me to receive it, looked at me and smiled, as I tried to search through the flowers to see if there was some kind of note or something to suggest who the sender could possibly be. I didn't see it till I was back in the office where I worked. It was just so cool since it was the first time I got flowers, and I would definitely have to tell the guy thanks. It was a friendly gesture, and I hoped it was just that.



How many ladies in Trinidad and Tobago receive flowers on Valentine's Day, I wondered. Where did Valentine's Day come from anyway?

Well after doing a little research I found out that Valentine's Day dates all the way back to the fifth century when Pope Gelasius declared February 14 St Valentine's Day. However, it was earlier seen as a pagan celebration of Lupercalia, which was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture. It was also dedicated to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus.

The actual St Valentine's death though, was said to have occurred around AD 270. There were three stories of this Valentine guy – a patron saint, they say; each one with different angles to it. One was said to be martyred for the lover he couldn't have. Another story suggests he was a priest who defied the then Emperor of Rome, Emperor Claudius, who ruled out marriage for men who served in the military. Yet another was told of a Valentine who may have been killed for trying to help Christians escape from prisons in Rome where they were tortured.

It was later outlawed by Pope Gelasius, as un-Christian to celebrate his death. During the Middle Ages, in France and England, February 14 was believed to be the start of the birds' mating season, hence, the romantic significance to the date.

Today, Valentine's Day is celebrated around the world with much romantic appeal. No one really bats an eyelid to wonder how and when and why it all started. Trinbagonians are no exception. In Trinidad and Tobago, red is the colour everywhere on February 14. Candies, chocolates, stuffed teddies, flowers, even lingerie are the order of the day. Who really wants to know where it all started? Just bring the chocolates, the flowers and the gifts!

Happy Valentine's Day!



Jazz Artists on the Greens

Come for the lime
and discover the
music in St Joseph

By Members of Production One Ltd

Production One Ltd is an events-oriented company which was established in 2002 by a group of friends who came together to address a perceived decline in professionally produced live-music events; specifically jazz and Caribbean jazz-related events. Members of the group include brothers Anton and Rolf Doyle; Keith Niles; siblings Martin and Maria Wellington; and Nigel Campbell.

The group was also concerned about a lack of opportunities for jazz artists to perform locally. Determined to actively facilitate additional avenues for the re-growth of Caribbean jazz which has a rich, 50-year-plus history in Trinidad, the group committed itself to creating a company



that would deliver on its vision of professionally produced events that provide a delightful mix of contemporary Caribbean jazz entertainment and relaxation in an informal atmosphere.

By creating a corporate environment for their enterprise, the group's founders recognised the changing landscape for cultural activity and related sponsorship for the arts in the Caribbean. The company is committed to the top quality production of high-profile live-music concerts and generally to expanding the audience for live music genres in Trinidad and Tobago and

the wider Caribbean.

Jazz Artists on the Greens had its first edition in June 2003 and has grown from a small 200-guest soiree and is now a large festival-styled jazz picnic. The event is hosted two weekends before Easter each year. The open-air concert is fashioned to encourage patrons to "walk with their mats and festival chairs" and sit where they are most comfortable as they enjoy good company and great music on the bucolic greens at Farm Road, St Joseph.

The music featured at the event is always Caribbean in its rhythms and style;



“Our patrons say that Jazz Artists on the Greens is an excellent way to restart their social calendars in a relaxed, up-beat, no-pressure, picnic-styled atmosphere”



and is delivered by musicians who are always Caribbean-born or Caribbean-based. The goal of the event from inception has been to expose as many new patrons and young musicians as possible to jazz, in an informal setting that could help remove much of the mystique and inaccessibility that has always seemed to imbue the genre. Jazz is fun! And the people who love jazz know how to lime, and everyone who loves jazz limes at Jazz Artists on the Greens every year. This has inspired our motto – *Come for the Lime, Discover the Music!*

JAOTG is positioned during a period of traditionally low entertainment activity in the country (four weekends after Carnival and two weekends before Easter, annually). Our patrons are loyal and we get great feedback on the show to improve from year to year. Our patrons say that Jazz Artists on the Greens is an excellent way to restart their social calendars in a relaxed, up-beat, no-pressure, picnic-styled atmosphere. Of particular note is the comment from a reputable, independent Virgin Islands-based jazz aficionado/blogger, the Woodshed Entertainment Collective, who visited the event in 2012 and stated, “... the event ran like clockwork from start to finish. That was stage production at its finest... an experience never to be forgotten.”

From our perspective at Production One Limited, we recognise the changing landscape for cultural activity and related sponsorship funding for the arts in the Caribbean, and we have consistently pursued and maintained a corporate attitude and approach to our enterprise. Along the way, we have developed skills in all aspects of event management from pre-production planning through event setup, to break down and can boast of consistently producing top-quality open air concerts that start



on time, run smoothly and leave our patrons, concessionaires and sponsor/partners well satisfied.

We're always on the lookout for new, up-and-coming jazz talent throughout the Caribbean to perform at our concerts. For 2014 the company will present a dynamic five-act, five-hour presentation of show-stopping Caribbean jazz music with a dynamic cast of performers:

- Trinidad-based, male vocalist Nyol Manswell accompanied by a group headed by pianist Raf Robertson;

- Cuban Jazz Trio, Espiral, led by saxophonist/clarinetist, Emir Santa Cruz and featuring Odessa (Ukraine) Jazz Festival 2013 winning female Jazz drummer, Yissi Garcia and celebrated bassist Julio Cesar Gonzalez;

- Ken “Professor” Philmore, Steelpan virtuoso and his accompanying group;

- UK-based Caribbean Jazz guitarist, Cameron Pierre; and

Barbadian female vocalist, Marissa Lindsay.

You want to hear REAL jazz, you come to Jazz Artists on the Greens! Production One Ltd has been able to develop a success-

ful model which has grown organically while always remaining true to the jazz. We are confident in our role as revivers of the appreciation for jazz music in Trinidad and Tobago as well as diligent workers in awakening an interest in the genre among young musicians, new patrons and corporate sponsors alike.

Over the past years, jazz in Trinidad has undoubtedly experienced a resurgence led by our efforts as the longest running event host of jazz events, as evidenced by the popular hosting of several “Jazz” events (both major and minor) produced by many groups. During this resurgence the country saw the introduction of at least two local radio stations dedicated to the jazz genre. Unfortunately their corporate and operational models have not allowed for their commercial sustainability and they have now been subsumed by other genres.

Nonetheless, with Jazz Artists on the Greens, officially a premier annual event for jazz in Trinidad, we believe that this event contributes positively to a revival of jazz on the local scene and toward an appreciation of the genre by a new and expanding market. We achieve this success, not by compromising the music, but rather through a dynamic and highly visible marketing strategy and by developing the public's trust through a commitment to quality.

Over the past 12 years, the event has grown from strength to strength, ever widening its base of regional performers... and its audience, not only in Trinidad and Tobago, but throughout the region and indeed, throughout the world.

Visit Facebook page at:

www.facebook.com/JazzArtistsOnTheGreens



The world spins in Trinidad

By Therese Chung

What is spin? What is spin class? This is a form of exercise aiming at making cardio exercises fun and competitive. So spinning is a twist to good health and happiness. One day my sister woke me up and asked me to accompany her to a spin class. I asked her what I needed and I threw on my gym wear and sneakers and went with her to the gym.

The room was filled with stationary bikes. Yellow was a common colour. I guess it gave the colour of energy to such an intense routine. The instructor was at the front of the class and at the strike of the clock, everyone in the room started to peddle.

Each person had his or her own bike and followed the instructor's commands like when to slow down and when to increase speed, when to raise off the seat and when to return to the seat. There was a valve to increase speed to the right and slow down to the left. It was highly ener-

gised. I never perspired so much in my life but as I looked around, I observed everyone in the room releasing sighs as to a good yet challenging workout.

Spin has evolved in the world of exercise and is found throughout Trinidad in every gym to date. There are classes scheduled daily and usually last an hour per session. Trinidad is a modern island with contemporary fitness routines implemented in every health and fitness institution.

There are annual competitions held and each gym in the island is notified as to the location and prerequisites for registration. Usually each gym would send its top ten performers, even though all are invited to competitions in the island. One such competition was held and I was fortunate to witness, a vast and spacious room filled with bikes and men and women ready to GET IT ON. The energy was contagious. I felt as though I was spinning.

Come and spin at a gym near you. Let's get ready... ONE, TWO, THREE... PEDDLE



Masqueraders work out at the gym especially to look good for Carnival.

Have you ever been on a music truck?



Scorpion Sound Crew Mixer Narvin Armoogam, right, with his wife Lisa, son Nathan and mother Indra.

By Marissa Armoogam-Ali

So it's February and memories of Christmas have faded away since January as most Trinidadians have already taken down their Christmas decorations and lights. In most countries January begins the year as a slow-paced month, a month of reflection on the past year with most people planning how they can improve on the year gone by.

In Trinidad and Tobago however it's a much different story.

The majority of Trinbagonians are looking at "the next big thing" which in this case is CARNIVAL!!! Carnival for a majority of the country is anxiously looked forward to, it flows in the veins and perhaps it's the life in the Carnival that brings a heartbeat to most of them.

Many Carnival fetes have already taken place, and the newspapers beautifully display the fun that many partygoers have at each of these events. Now for those of you that have never experienced Trini Carnival or the intoxicating rhythm of the music of this world renowned celebration – it is as addictive as any drug, when the music plays you can do nothing but move to it.

One sight synonymous with Carnival are the large music trucks that are also colourfully decorated which accompany each band of Carnival revellers as they parade through the streets and communities of the country. I have had the fortunate experience of riding on a music truck for Carnival several times since my cousins are DJs and throughout the Carnival season they are well known for the quite large music truck they play music on.

About two years ago was the last time I was on the truck and I have to let you know it was an experience like no other. It was actually quite exhilarating and to be on the music truck is seen somewhat as a privilege that only a few chosen persons are allowed. "If you on a truck is either you



know somebody on the truck or you popular." I remember being up on the truck, holding on to a safety rail and looking down below and to the sides at the hundreds of revellers on the streets enjoying themselves. It's one experience to be on the street in the midst of all the action, but it's a totally different experience to be able to watch it all play out in front of you on your very own musical perch.

My cousins usually spend the weeks coming up to Carnival preparing their speaker boxes and the many metal stands and electrical parts that go hand in hand to make the two days of fun and revelry go off without a hitch, music wise at least... it would be a terrible thing if in the middle of a "sweet wine" the music stopped!

Since they live on my street I remember them working late into the nights sometimes the very early hours of the morning building new boxes or just fixing up the ones they have for the celebrations. And every now and then during the night in the dead silence, when everyone is asleep they decide to "try out" the box and

BOOM!!! They shake the entire neighbourhood with some hot soca... it was great, even though the older folks got very peeved.

Now by Carnival Sunday evening the truck is already packed with the boxes and all safety harnesses are in place, it's just the banner going up "DJ SCORPION SOUNDS"... and all the "fellas" who helped during the process are there some just liming, while another group "bubbling ah pot" all in preparation for later that night as they head out for J'ouvert and then straight into Monday mas on the streets back home for a shower if they're so lucky and back out for Monday night mas in Gasparillo and then straight to Tuesday mas until the early hours of Wednesday morning. All the while providing the masqueraders with wonderfully jubilant soca music.

So if the chance ever comes your way and you're offered a ride on a music truck... jump at the opportunity because it is quite an entertaining experience.

Maxi taxi etiquette and tips

Tamica K Porter shares her Facebook posts on maxi taxi etiquette and tips with Sweet TnT Magazine readers.

Male passengers, start taking your wallet out of your back pocket before you sit in the seat so that when you are ready to pay you wouldn't be stabbing me in my side or rubbing down my leg!

Driver, try spraying your maxi with insecticide the night before and open the windows early next morning to air out so that I wouldn't have to be waving at mosquitoes, please and thanks!

And, Driver, there is an accelerator for a reason!

Aye, I'm not saying to drive like if you are flying a plane... geez!

So, a passenger gives you money folded, you take 10 minutes to unfold and smooth it out before you give change, and you purposely crumple the change to give back... nah man!!!!

And, Driver, stop stopping for Casper!!! If somebody wants your maxi they will put out their hand!!!



Illustration by Andrina James

FICTION

Behind de mountain

(As told by Faadah)

In memory of my late grandfather

By Omilla Mungroo

De same day Faadah and Ma come back home from de garden, was de same day ol' man Kambo come back from de bush with one set ah gouti and lappe. He and Faadah was long time friends so de ol man bring some wild meat for him. Well they was downstairs conversing about dey old time hunting days, when all ah we sit dong on de ground, round de old hammock what patch up patch up, to listen to de yarns.

"It had ah time," Faadah say, "when

me and Boysie did get los' in de bush behind that mountain. Bwoy? Hai ya yai! Was snake, mapipire zanana, centipede long like my foot! Bwoy? It ent nice to get los' in dat forest behind dat mountain nuh. It have ting woss dan snake an centipede up dey oui.

"Boysie and me eh ketch ah gouti, not even ah manicou when night fall. Princess look like she pick up ah scent but not ah ting in sight. Dat night we find weself goin round in circles. I tell Boysie, 'yuh see dis ting, we better pray, because Ma Boysie an my lady eh go be pleased when we

come home with no wild meat'.

"Before I look sharp, he disappear. Princess start to wag she tail an was watchin behind my back. So I turn to see if was Boysie. Well bwoy? What I see look like ah man who get los' in de bush for days. De man hair like ah ol' throw away mat, an it long long long. But he smellin' like goat! An was not Boysie!

"Well de man watch me like if he ent really watchin me, and arksin me if I have ah cigarette. So I give him de las one I had. He arks for ah light an I light de cigarette for him, yes, because de man makin me feel real uncomfortable. Is when I hear de bush behind me make ah noise, I turn to see Boysie comin. By de time I go to tell Boysie look somebody go help we get outa here, de man disappear same way he come.

"Boysie want to know if I goin mad. He say, 'pardner take ah five.' It eh take a full minute we hear de dog an dem like they pen ah gouti. Dat day we ketch 'bout ten gouti, an we find de track out, an reach home quiet, quiet. We never tell ah soul wha happen in dat bush behind de mountain dem two days."

Ol' Man Kambo watch Faadah an say, "Ent you know was de Papa Bois you give de cigarette to?" Faadah shake he head an smile.

By de time story done my aunty callin me to go upstairs with she to watch de news, an was only 7 pm.

omillamungroo@yahoo.com

It inside you yuh know

By Marissa Armoogam-Ali

It inside you yuh know
I sure sure you does feel it sometimes!
You doh have to be out in de road or close to any action
Sometimes yuh in yuh own house minding yuh own business and yuh does feel it

I remember ah day I washing and ah pull on the clothes line
Man yuh should ah hear it; the clips shake on de line like a tambourine
I forget I was washing yuh know; I start to feel the rhythm,
Ah jingle and shake the wooden clips on the wire,
In my mind ah add in some beats and when ah ketch meh self
Ah was beating de wash tub like it was ah pan!

So when ah say it inside we, it inside we, all ah we
Once yuh born here, yuh didn't have to grow here... jus born here
It inside yuh, in yuh blood
Rhythm! Movement! Life!

Poetry by Therese Chung



Therese Chung and her fiancé Mark Waldropt pose with soca-parang king Scrunter

Be My Valentine

I think about this thing call love,
and what does it really involve,
is it as simple as an emotion you feel,
or is compatibility the real deal

I asked people if they saw love's face,
some said yes and that it is a grace,
they asked if I knew about the love of God,
I smiled and pondered and gave a gentle nod

I asked others about love and desire,
some claimed that love is all about the fire,
they say the chemistry between a man and woman,
is romantic and deserves a big celebration

Parents stopped me and gave their opinion,
that love is shared amongst their own children
the family unit gives strength and power
something to cherish, something to admire

So in Trinidad there are many types of love
love between a person and his Father above,
another between a man and a woman
in addition the love amongst the children

So on Valentine's Day in Trinidad and Tobago
Many people get dressed and choose different places to go
some go to church and even lend a hand
in the many Cathedrals in the land

Some go to lunch during the day
in restaurants along their way
others wine and dine in the finest hotels
toasting with champagne among red rose petals

Children play games at the Fun Station
the air is filled with celebration
come to Trinidad to wine and dine
maybe you could be my valentine

The Calypso

A long time ago there was a man,
who had an idea, he had a plan,
he wanted to share his thoughts to all,
but had not a phone to make a call

So he put his pen to some paper,
and wrote his thoughts an hour later,
he shared about his dreams one day,
to have a mansion built in May

He planned to work hard every day
and save every cent from his pay
he sang his dreams with a melody
and performed his thoughts for all to see

this is what calypso is all about
people sharing their dreams, without a doubt,
and entertaining all around
sharing with an inviting sound

Why Study in Trinidad

Trinidad is the island to see,
the land of fun, the land of beauty,
but there is much more for you and me,
to learn, gain knowledge and to study

I wanted to know what we had,
what really made this Trinidad,
so I asked a person on the street,
what makes your Trinidad oh so sweet

She said the people are really smart,
they go to school to get a start,
they put education as a priority,
and choose an institution to get their degree

There are many schools throughout this nation,
that offer a high level of education,
at the levels of primary, secondary and tertiary,
you will always find the intelligent Trini

I know a lady in her mid-forties,
wanting more business opportunities
She registered at Arthur Lokjak,
Obtained her degree and never looked back

You see a Trinidadian known as a Trini for short,
Is really a human resource cultural work of art,
he is the balanced human being,
who mastered the art of fine living

He knows in life to have real success,
you must study hard and pass the test,
then party til morning when the sun comes up,
from morning to night the fun will never stop

Poetry by Marc Algernon

RATS

I started thinking of something, rats are a lot like men,
and the games they play, are a lot similar then.
I had a sling shot, quite a work of art
and a healthy target, a house full of rats.
Sure there were toads and bats,
but toads eat flies, nothing good bout rats.

So I waged war, I pillaged the village,
1000 rats to me alone,
I kicked down doors, burnt down homes
I am Spartan wherein I roam.

I didn't care, I killed rat-man, rat-woman, rat-child...
but they kept coming, this made me smile.
I made rat poison bombs, I bought another sling shot
I killed and killed but the rats wouldn't stop

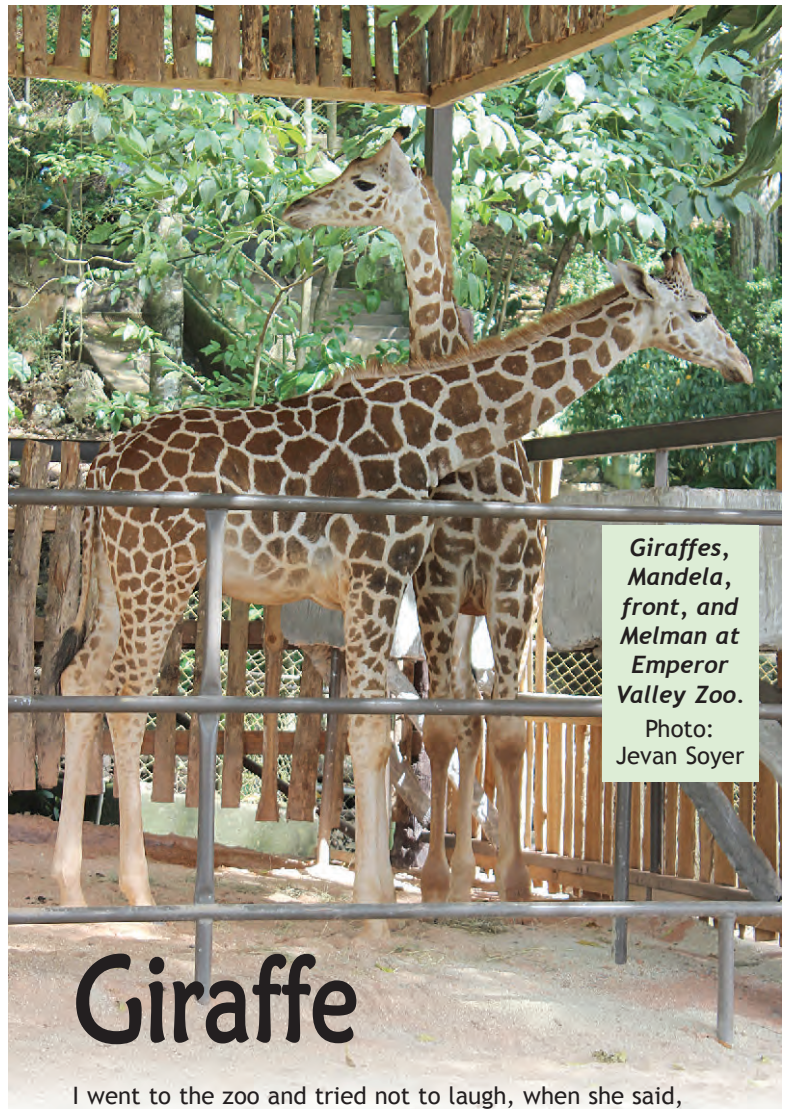
Soon I lost interest, rat hunting wasted time...
I put on crime watch, so I could watch crime,
Police killed and arrested, put your "inner-sense" away
and crime increased more every day.

It's hard to believe how much we are alike,
Rats snatch and steal and fight.

Yes! They even have fun,
They squeak and play and run.
They climb, they fall, they jump.
They get rat girlfriends and boy do they hump.

Rats also hump very similar to us,
Except they're rats, so they don't make a fuss
They hump on bags of rice, they hump on the floor
Day or night, it's all open door...

We can't fix crime, till we clean up our acts
Without honesty, loyalty, we are nothing but rats
They are just like us, to see this is plain
I think I'm gonna pillage the rat village again.



*Giraffes,
Mandela,
front, and
Melman at
Emperor
Valley Zoo.*

Photo:
Jevan Soyer

Giraffe

I went to the zoo and tried not to laugh, when she said,
"Daddy, I want a giraffe."

In her bright yellow boots and her hat and her scarf,
she begged, "Daddy, can I get a giraffe."

She skipped and she laughed, down the concrete path,
"Daddy, I want a giraffe."

"Darling I cannot afford, please do the math,
it's too expensive to buy a giraffe."

"He would need to be fed, and given a bath,
I would not know where to start, if we had a giraffe".

Her eyes went red, her lips curled with wrath,
she screamed, "DADDY, I WANT A GIRAFFE!"

As we opened our front door, she squealed with a laugh,
"Mommy look! Daddy bought a giraffe."

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Roucou

By Omilla Mungroo

Someone once told me a globally recognised fast food doesn't taste the same elsewhere as it does here in Trinidad and Tobago. It's most probably the herbs or seasonings grown here, she said. Others who have travelled to the US and other countries confirm what was said. Our unique blend of shadon beni, podina or fine thyme, and other seasonings, mint, etc, all create a most exotic blend that nowhere else in the whole world can boast of. One of our long time secret to a tasty and colourful meal is a liquid made from the roucou plant; or "ookoo" as the old people used to say.

"Ookoo" comes from the fruit of the Achiote tree. The fruit itself is a soft, prickly pod of seeds, which is packed with the red dye so subtly hidden inside them. Although it is used to add colour to our variety of local cuisine, it also served as body paint, used by the indigenous Caribs who lived here so long ago. It is said that roucou also has medicinal purposes. It is currently being researched to make snake anti-venom in other parts of the world. Of course foreign countries may have different uses for the plant, but its main use here in Trinidad and Tobago is for food. In some instances there is the powdered form of it, but we are more familiar with the liquid, "ookoo".



Dried roucou pods

Memories of my late grandmother, "Mama", cooking lentil peas and soups, often included orders or commands to "bring de ookoo for mih please". I didn't know where the unlabelled bottle came from until one day I saw bunches of the strange looking fruit on the kitchen count-

er. My aunt had answered my inquisitive mind that day, scolding me, "You leave that! That is ookoo for Ma to make!"

That evening, I watched as Mama carefully used a spoon to empty the seeds from the prickly pods into a bowl. Then she put warm water in it, and left it to soak overnight. The next day she strained the liquid into another bowl using a piece of clean cotton cloth, and added a little more water to the seeds, rubbed them and strained it, about three times, to get more of the red colour out. Then she strained them all again into a clean pot and put it to boil, adding a little salt to it. When it was done, she let it cool and filled the liquid into bottles, ready for use in the kitchen.

It was one of those bottles she called for that day when she was cooking the lentils. Roucou is used by many Trinis when making pelau, pastelle, callaloo, sancoche, oildown and even stew fish! I am sure some of you Trinis used some "ookoo" to make your pastelles last Christmas.

What's cooking this Carnival? "Bring de ookoo for mih nah!"



Roucou tree at Mucurapo Road, St James. Photos: Jevan Soyer



Nutrition secrets from Candida



Photos: Nadia Ali

By Nadia Ali

For all of those readers who are on Facebook you can identify with the plethora of pages which are linked to yours to beckon your attention or in my case a page referred to me by a friend. The page caught my attention as it was called “Nutrition Secrets” – just the thought of learning secrets about nutrition got me to click on the link.

The Facebook page had the tag line “Fitness! Health! Weight loss! Goodbye illness! Let’s do this!” showing a positivity that I liked. On reading, it was dedicated to making healthier lifestyle choices through nutrition and on looking at who owned the page it appealed even more because it was created by local budding dietitian – Candida Khan, a fourth year student at the University of the West Indies and in the final year of becoming a registered dietitian.

Her love for the subject led to the creation of “Nutrition Secrets” on Facebook to promote a healthier lifestyle. She said, “I always had a dream of helping others and in my final year of university life, I found an outlet by starting ‘Nutrition Secrets’. I was just bursting with information and wanted to find a way to reach out to people to help them become healthier individuals.” You need only to visit the page to see the encouraging messages which for example encourage readers to grab a fruit today with a link to why it is beneficial.

Candida initially tried approaching the local media by pitching the idea of a *Nutrition Secrets* column, but that was to no avail. Undeterred she says, “I decided to try the social media route, and with the help of my family, ‘Nutrition Secrets’ was born.”



Candida Khan

Her advice comes from her academic training of which she says she particularly enjoyed “Basic Human Anatomy and Physiology as well as Community Nutrition and Medical Nutrition Therapy”. These courses gave her a greater insight and understanding of how to achieve a healthier lifestyle, something which is needed by Trinidad.

In response to the recent obesity study in which Trinidad and Tobago ranked third prevalent country in the world, she says, “I think that we as a community do not see nutrition as essential in overcoming health-related diseases such as obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure.” She continues, “we need to start taking care of ourselves by thinking and living nutritiously.”

But given the increase in fast food chains and outlets not to mention doubles stands on the twin island, what is a good example of a healthy local dish? “A healthy Trinidadian dish is pelau which includes rice, a wide range of vegetables and meat. It gives a great range of the essential building blocks of a balanced diet.” So, everyone don’t skip out on that one-pot of nutritional goodness!

I thanked Candida for sharing a wealth of health tips for a better lifestyle and asked her to leave us with one of her nutrition secrets. She encourages readers to “eat a more colourful plate with fruits and vegetables. They help reduce the risk of problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer risk and Alzheimer’s disease. The brighter the colours of the fruits and vegetables, the more nutrients they possess”.

You can check out *Nutrition Secrets* on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/askthedietaian>

Trinidad woman: I take my speech and food wherever I go

By Annisa Phillip

“You can take the woman out Trinidad but you can’t take Trinidad out of the woman.”

This twist of an old cliché holds true for those who have our lovely isles dear to their hearts. Personally, leaving Trinidad and Tobago on holiday does not mean that I leave it behind. I take my culture with me. I do not automatically change my accent or speech because I am proud of where I’m from.

Even the food I take with me... well, even the food I cook. I can have a Trinidadian Christmas wherever I am in the world... provided I find all of the necessary ingredients. This is much to the delight of my family members

overseas. Pastelle is a must, black cake and Punch de Crème... you now talking my language!

Thanks to the internet, parang is ensured. When I can’t be home for the holidays I am sure to make do. Christmas morning is greeted with ham, chow chow, dinner rolls (in the absence of hops or homemade bread), pastelle and maybe a slice of the drunken fruit cake. I miss out on the sorrel but I guess you can’t always have everything you want.

Bearing in mind that Christmas is not actually about food, time spent with loved ones, being grateful and remembering the real reason we celebrate is essential. However, the food is a bonus. *Big grin*

Vendors who make us smile

You see a vendor selling cotton candy or sno-cone and you feel obligated to have one. These pretty-coloured treats can be seen all over the country where there are a lot of people having a good time. This Carnival season expect to see the cotton candy man and the sno-cone man everywhere. Photos are by Jevan Soyer taken outside the Emperor Valley Zoo by the Queen's Park Savannah.



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Photos:
Marika Mohammed



The mammy apple

By Marika Mohammed

I know it as “mammy apple”. This fruit creates a buzz when I give it to someone to eat. Many people may have heard of it but never seen or taste it while others may not even know of its existence.

It has a coarse, cantaloupe texture on the outside but it is sweet and soft on the inside. It varies in sizes and cannot be picked. This fruit requires patience since you have to wait for it to fall to decide if

it is ready to eat or not. It does not have a particular season like mango or pineapple so it's a plus to have a fruit that's year round.

The inside is orange and delicious. It looks somewhat like a big plum with a huge seed in the middle. It definitely doesn't look like a fruit since it looks dry but when you bite into it, the texture and flavour will absolutely leave you thinking, “This from Trinidad?” One thing for sure mammy apple beats an ordinary apple.



Go round the merry-go-round at MovieTowne

By Nadia Ali

Have you dreamed about riding horses, zebras or even an ostrich? Well now you can at the recently opened Carousel Park at MovieTowne, Invaders Bay. Located between the Marriott Port of Spain and MovieTowne there is a small park area of green grass and landscaped plants where the carousel is located for kids of all ages.

It is smaller in size than I first anticipated and when I visited on a Saturday evening the place was buzzing! Adults and kids crowded around the area, creating a barrier to viewing the carousel itself. Then breaking through, there it was in all its splendour, aglow with lights.

The faces of the children on the ride were filled with smiles and laughter as they held onto the brass poles that gently gave a galloping motion to the figurines. There are horses, zebras, ostriches and seahorses. There is even a seating chariot for about three children. Also, a round chair that holds the same amount that spins independently in circles. The animal rides are in rows of three with varying sizes. Some of the highly decorative figurines look upwards towards the stars while others seem to charge straight ahead as if concentrating.

The carousel dates back to medieval times in Europe. Knights would use a less sophisticated “carousel” as part of their lance thrusting training in preparation for a jousting match.

Earlier carousels did not feature the pole secured to a platform, instead the

animals were suspended by chains or a pole which would just spin outwards as the ride spun around like the chair plane ride seen around Trinidad and Tobago at school sports days. Also, long ago there were no motorised engines to power the carousel so horses or men would walk around and around to make the revolutions. It was only until 1861, a steam-powered carousel was created in England followed by the introduction of the electrical motor in 1951.

Here in Trinidad, Saturdays and Sundays prove to be a busy time at Carousel Park where children of all ages ride the figurines. They go around and around for about five minutes to band organ music. With the wind in their hair and smiles on their faces the iconic fair-ground ride from medieval times shares the love of the carousel with locals.

The Hosein family.

Relaxing vibe in Tobago

By Nerissa Hosein

I was stressed. Trinidad was getting to me, with the busy life, the hustling and bustling and the traffic everywhere. So I decided to run away with my family on Boxing Day to our little sister island of Tobago.

Tobago just has such a low key, relaxing vibe to it. It is like being in an alternate universe where time slows, people smile more and traffic is almost nonexistent. So as soon as I reached I felt like a new person.

I took a chance this year and instead of going to the bigger more expensive hotel I chose a quiet little guest house for which I had read great reviews. On arriving at Papa Joe's Place my family and I were immediately greeted by the very friendly staff. We were shown to our room and I must say I was so happy with my choice. They offered full amenities and the place was clean. For a mother of two young children who are always playing on the ground, cleanliness is truly next to godliness for me.

The few nights spent there were so peaceful. The ladies came and spoke to us every day, made friends with my kids, made sure we were well looked after and kept our room clean and tidy. Thanks to them, my family and I had a wonderful time in the beautiful island of Tobago.

Pool at Papa Joe's Place
in Tobago.

Cricket in the Savannah

Sunday cricket match at Queen's Park Savannah. In background is the International Waterfront Complex located at Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.
Photos: Jevan Soyer



Valentine's display on Abercromby Street



Showcase at Pals Caribbean Flower Shop on Abercromby Street, Port of Spain.



The crashing waves cover us with their energy.

By Therese Chung

I got a call one day from my dear friend, inviting me to Toco Beach in Trinidad. Of course as a Trinidadian who loves life, I accepted the invitation and started to prepare for my weekend excursion. Mellissa advised that we all had a road trip and should meet at her home. We got ten of us together in three vehicles and away we went, heading for a fun filled weekend in Toco Beach, which is located to the North Eastern Coast of Trinidad.

Upon arrival, we were welcomed with a scene from a fairy tale. The grasses were lush and green as the poster paintings sold in art stores. The plants and trees were all shades of yellows, greens and oranges. The Croton plants were everywhere, which added to the colourful painting. We were on a mountain, for as we approached the edge, we could see the sea below with the tan sands and white shells. The horizon was as clear as glass and I anticipated the sunset in its full view.

The thrill of Toco Beach

There were guest houses on the hills in Toco, offering bed and breakfast to guests. We booked the entire house for the weekend. In Toco, you could find just about any guesthouse to suit your needs from romantic self contained bedrooms to spacious house for groups of friends and large families.

We walked down the pathway which led to the beach. Untouched and natural, the rocks and caves were out of

this world. Colours of metallic silvers, greys and black came together to form the perfect rocks a beach could ever ask for. It was as though diamonds were everywhere upon the rocks along the beach. I ran in one of the caves, natural formations of rock with the sea and sun. Some of us ran up on the rocks and stood there waiting to see the reaction between the waters and the natural land formations. We could see the waters gently creeping toward us... Then all of a sudden, to our anticipation... SPLASH!!!!!!!!!!!!

The waters collided with the rocks and up in the air it went with a full force covering us with the thrills of the cool and refreshing Toco waters. We stood there for hours, just looking at the waters and awaiting them to cover us with their magnificent energy.

If you want a thrill, come to Toco Beach in Trinidad where it is just you and nature bathing you in its energy.



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