

FOCAL POINT

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Message from the Chief Establishment Officer

Publication of a newsletter is not without its problems. The Establishment Department, tucked away as it is at the bottom of the city of St. John's and very clearly mostly forgotten as a social entity within the family of Ministries and Departments of the Public Service of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, continues to live up to its responsibilities as the core of Civil Service personnel operations. There was therefore the need to project another face, other than that of the regulatory ogre, and this has prompted to a large extent the creation of the *Focal Point* newsletter through which vital information can be disseminated. Happily, we have survived our first year of publication and we are committed to staying focussed and to keeping our objective in full view.

Over the years, we have become acutely aware of the increasing shortcomings of Ministries and Departments as we received submissions and requests on behalf of officers, and we felt that a newsletter would enhance our capacity to share vital information with our colleagues across the Service. Hence our efforts to include in each publication sections of important regulations to speak to some issues, to document for our readers information and excerpts from the agreements arrived at with the five (5) Civil Service Unions which represent the cross section of Civil Servants. We would welcome greater participation from members of the Service through articles, comments or questions.

Over these last few months, as the economic situation for persons employed by Central Government has worsened there seems to be very blurred lines of recognition as to who is a Civil Servant, and the conduct of Civil Servants. Lest we forget, Civil Servants are employed by the Public Service Commission. Their terms of engagement are enshrined in the Civil Service Act and Regulations and endorsed by the definitions set out in the Constitution Order 1981 of Antigua and Barbuda. In this regard, it behoves Civil Servants to read carefully the Civil Service Act and Regulations and the Constitution of Antigua and Barbuda to be fully apprised of their rights and privileges and to see that these are properly defended.

The Establishment Department's vision is to build a courteous, efficient and accessible Public Service and our mission is to provide courteous, accurate and efficient processing of human resource services for the benefit of all Civil Servants. We believe that officers of the Civil Service must always keep in view, who they are and what is expected of them. As the core department responsible for the welfare of Civil Servants we have a responsibility to emphasize and re-emphasize the importance of efficiency, courtesy and reliability.

This newsletter will continue to encourage Civil Servants to strive for the highest ideals of service. We will continue to point out benefits that can redound to each officer but we will not be reluctant to highlight weaknesses which, through this medium, can be acknowledged and corrected.

As the festive season rolls around, many of us will be faced with great hardships and unaccustomed deprivation yet it is appropriate that the joy of Christmas, the love of family and friends be celebrated. Do accept our best wishes for the season and for 2004.



**Merry Christmas
to one and all.**

Establishment Birthdays

Our final Birthday celebrants for the year 2003 come in for double celebrations since they fall in the zone of the end of year festivities of our country's Independence celebrations as well as the Christmas/New Year's celebrations. Greetings for a Happy Birthday to you from all your co-workers at the Establishment Department. You are:

Dwight Pereira	Fiona Lewis
Irma James	Jessel Edwards
Cyd-Charisse Elabanjo	Avonelle Roberts
Paula Smith	Ernetta Lewis
Barbara Benjamin	J.M. Eusalyn Lewis

Did you know??

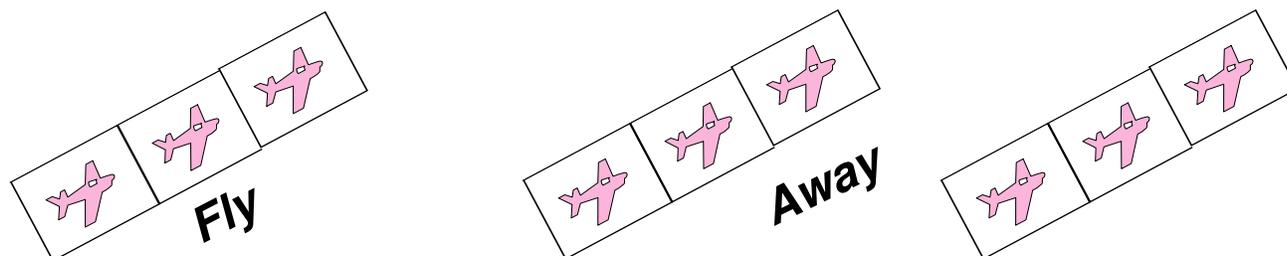
The Establishment Department is the Civil Service Affairs Division of the Ministry and is mandated to play its part in fine-tuning our Civil Service Operation. As part of this process, it is incumbent on us to see to it that an attendance register is maintained in each Ministry/Department/Division in order to track attendance and punctuality of officers. We have discovered pockets of resistance to this practice and find it worthwhile to point out to you here, that the Civil Service Regulations speak directly to this issue.

40. (1) Every officer shall ensure that he is regular and punctual in his attendance to duty.
- (2) Every Government Office shall keep an attendance register.
- (3) Except an officer exempted by the Permanent Secretary, every officer shall sign the register kept under paragraph (2) on arrival and departure from the office.
- (4) Disciplinary action may be taken against an officer who does not attend his work regularly and who is often not punctual.

Whenever leaving Antigua/Barbuda be it for a weekend, during your leave time or otherwise, permission must be sought and granted. Many in the Service were not aware of this regulation, so now you know!!

41. (1) Before leaving Antigua and Barbuda an officer not referred to in paragraph (2) and (3) shall obtain the approval of the Permanent Secretary/Head of Department or Division.
- (2) Before leaving Antigua and Barbuda, a Head of Department or Division shall obtain the approval of the Permanent Secretary.

- (3) Before leaving Antigua and Barbuda a Permanent Secretary shall obtain the consent of his respective Minister and the approval of the Chief Establishment Officer.
 - (4) An Officer who is absent from Antigua and Barbuda without approval in terms of this regulation may be summarily dismissed.
84. (1) Any absence of an officer from duty for a full working day or more shall be recorded in the Ministry or Department where the officer works and the records of such absences of all officers in the Ministry or Department taken in one month shall be submitted in a summarised form to the Establishment Department.



In this, the final quarter of the year 2003, the Civil Service can count among its numbers, a group of truly intrepid tourists. This truth is borne out by the decision they've made to use their leave passage grant to travel North into the temperate zone at this time of year. We all know that in nature, birds fly South to escape the ravages of winter but our tourists are about to brave the winter weather. Bundle up folks!! These records show that a great many of you are now retirees. Congratulations! Come back refreshed and ready to embark on a great new journey. To Winston Henry, our lone Serving Officer on the list, we look forward to your continued active contributions to The Service.

Winston Nathaniel	Deputy Comm. of Police	Min. of Labour, Co-operatives and Public Safety	Retiree, 41 years
Coralita Shadrach	Specialist Supervisor	Min. of Education, Culture & Tech.	Retiree, 40 years
Glendora John	Postal Officer	Min. of Finance, Public Utilities, Housing and Aviation	Retiree, 27 years
Nova Langlais	Assistant Teacher	Min. of Education, Culture & Tech	Retiree, 28 years
Hazelyn Francis	Education Officer	Min. of Education, Culture & Tech.	Retiree, 35 years
Winston Henry	Principal I	Min. of Education, Culture & Tech.	Serving, 35 years
Jean Knight	Public Health Nurse	Min. of Health and Social Impment.	Retiree, 33 years
Charles Meade	Chief Air Traffic Control Officer	Min. of Finance, Public Utilities, Housing and Aviation	Retiree, 31 years
Ethlyn Michael	Staff Nurse	Min. of Health and Social Impment.	Retiree, 25 years
Maude Theodore	Specialist Supervisor, Art	Min. of Education, Culture & Tech.	Retiree, 37 years
Dickson Prince	Public Health Inspector	Min. of Health and Social Impment.	Retiree, 26 years
Lura Jarvis	Domestic Aide	Min. of Health and Social Impment	Retiree, 19 years
Sonia O'Marde	Department Sister	Min. of Health and Social Impment.	Retiree, 39 years
Walter Charles	Inspector of Police	Min. of Labour, Co-operatives and Public Safety	Retiree, 40 years

Records Management

The Antigua and Barbuda National Archives has come up with a Disaster Plan for Records Management during the Hurricane Season and has published it in booklet form. In perusing the document, we realized that so many of the ideas and suggestions have broad-based applicability that we felt it imperative to bring bits of it to 'John Public'. Dr. Blair and your staff at the Archives, we thank you for such an important and timely publication which can be of assistance to everyone.

The document lists the key components of the plan, namely Objectives, Administration, Prevention, Preparedness, Risk Management, Records Management and Recovery. There are bulleted activities falling under each of the key components of the plan and here, we shall mention a number of those we view as having wide appeal:

- * List emergency equipment and supplies noting location
- * Know where main electrical disconnection switch and main water disconnection valve are located.
- * Inspect building, assessing its vulnerability to flooding.
- * Inspect trees over hanging building.
- * Inspect area for loose objects which may become flying projectiles.
- * Ensure shutters are securely hinged.
- * Trim trees.
- * Ensure doors and windows are water-tight.
- * Remove all records from the floor and provide adequate protection.
- * Unplug computers and store either in plastic bags, under plastic sheeting or in a strong room.
- * Books should be removed from shelves and stored in a safe environment.
- * Assess the degree of damage to building and alert appropriate emergency services.
- * Alert Insurance Agency and photograph the damage.

In addition, the plan includes tips on how to handle wet documents as well as an important Recovery checklist of equipment and supplies. We encourage you to visit the National Archives and obtain a complete copy of the document for your information.

GONE TOO SOON



During recent months, the Civil Service lost two of its valuable members to the call of the Great Beyond. They were both in the prime of their productive lives and we are the worse off for the loss of these colleagues.

One of these persons was Mrs. Rosalind Nathan-Browne, Assistant Teacher, at the Bendals Primary School where she will be sorely missed. She passed away on 8th June, 2003 after a period of illness.

The other person was No. 36 Corporal Malcolm Leroy Jackson, a policeman who died on 25th July, 2003. The Police Force, always in need of a few good men, will miss this officer. He was the husband of another of our Civil Service colleagues, Mrs. Cassandra Jackson, at the Ministry of Agriculture, Headquarters.

The Establishment Department joins to pray and to wish our fallen colleagues Godspeed on their flight home. Best wishes also to the loved ones they left behind.

Editor's Note:

Unbelievable!! Can you believe that a year has come and gone, in what can only be described as a blur? How time flies. This is the fourth (4th) issue of 'Focal Point' and completes our first (1st) year of publication. Hooray!! Thanks to all our contributors who helped to make this possible. Thanks also to our readers out there who came along for the ride and made it an interesting one.

Stay with us because next year's issues promise to be even more interesting, exciting and insightful. Be sure to pick up your copy early each quarter. If it does not find its way to you, call on us at the Establishment Department. Remember to pay close attention to our Civil Service Regulations Spots, for only in becoming familiar with these, will you become an educated, well-rounded and aware Civil Servant.

Antigua and Barbuda Trade Union Congress

As was promised in our previous issue of Focal Point, here we will focus on the Launching Ceremony held on 19th June, 2003 at the Royal Antiguan Resort.

The ceremony opened with the singing of the National Anthem which was followed by a prayer led by Rev. Cortroy Jarvis. Welcome remarks were made by Sir George Walter and Mr. Robin Bascus. Next at the podium was Maurice Christian, the Co-ordinating Chairman, who welcomed all attendees and introduced the Steering Committee. A very insightful feature address was delivered by Mr. Robert Morris of the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados. He outlined some of the pitfalls and problems the colleagues in Barbados had to overcome and how, by using best practices as guidelines, the Antigua Trade Union Congress can avoid these. He spoke at length about the role of the Congress in society and even touched upon the Trade union's objective in the New World Order, which is to champion customer service and productivity along with the private sector. In this respect, government workers need to deliver the same high level of customer service and productivity as private sector workers. In conclusion, he stated that Trade union solidarity's main aim is to bring those at the periphery, to the centre of human existence while taking strong stands against poverty and any type of economic or social exclusion. There were also remarks by the Minister of Labour, the Labour Commissioner and others.

We at the Establishment Department congratulate the Antigua and Barbuda Trade Union Congress on its long awaited launch and look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with this new organization. At present, the Antigua and Barbuda Trade Union Congress is made up of seven (7) affiliated unions. They are:

- ❖ ***Antigua and Barbuda Workers Union***
- ❖ ***Antigua Trades and Labour Union***
- ❖ ***Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers***
- ❖ ***Antigua Hotel Management Association***
- ❖ ***Antigua and Barbuda Public Service Association***
- ❖ ***Leeward Islands Aeronautics Engineers Association***
- ❖ ***Guild of Antigua and Barbuda Air Traffic Controllers***

Women's Forum 33rd Annual Conference of CPSA

Eighty-one women attended this forum, the theme of which was "Winning Women Workers' Rights: Gender Equality and Equity". The Forum targeted women trade unionists from Caribbean Public Services Association (CPSA) 's affiliates providing them with the space to discuss their concerns, develop their skills, knowledge and attitudes and map their strategy for the next year.

The two main focus points of the forum were:

- * **Gender Mainstreaming; and**
- * **Pay Equity**

Main points from opening ceremony:

Mrs. Patricia Bird, Commissioner of Social Improvement, spoke passionately about:

- * The violation of Human Rights relating to fair and equal remuneration and discrimination.
- * The absolute lack of respect for and against women and young girls.
- * The institutionalized inequalities are real impediments to social participation and fragmentation of family life.
- * The disproportionate representation of women in certain sectors, particularly in the informal and non-tradable goods and service sectors.
- * The increased employment of women but this is not matched by the better working conditions commensurate with the needs of women.

The feature address was delivered by Mrs. Eusalyn Lewis, Chief Establishment Officer. She focused mainly on the Public Sector using the Antigua Public Service model:

- * She spoke on the structure of the Service in relation to Established and Non-Established positions and the inequalities in the pay structure of the parallel services.
- * The composition Civil Service which comprises of approximately 60% women. The distribution of female workers indicates that the majority are in the lower income brackets.
- * The importance of Education and Training for upward mobility and effective service delivery.
- * The current crisis of late payment of salaries in Antigua Barbuda and its effects particularly on female employees.
- * The negative image that is placed on Public Sector workers.

The terms Gender Mainstreaming and Pay Equity which are new and/or unfamiliar to many were defined and explained. Also laid out were requirements to make these terms a reality. Participants agreed on a clearly defined structure for the CPSA Women's Committee. They must now define the committee's Terms of Reference in preparation for elections at the next CPSA Conference.

The Antigua and Barbuda Bureau of Standards

The Bureau of Standards is a **Statutory Body** established under the Standards Act (Cap 411) to promote and encourage the maintenance of mandatory and voluntary standards in relation to goods, processes and practices. It has responsibility for monitoring the manufacture of goods and the production of services to both local and international standards.

The Bureau is currently preparing standards that are relevant to the economy of Antigua and Barbuda e.g. Labelling of goods: General Principles, Labelling of Pesticides, Labelling of Beer, Specification for Prepackaged Ice, Specification for Pneumatic Passenger Car Tyres etc. In so doing, the Bureau will provide a broad base of technical, advisory and monitoring services for producers and manufacturers. This will in turn benefit the consumer.

Standards are detailed descriptions of what is expected from manufacturers and service providers. These take the form of technical specifications or codes of practice for the goods and services produced. All quality expectations will be consistently met by developing standards for products and services, and by implementing Quality Control Programmes as an integral part of any manufacturing process or service delivery.

Technical committees comprising technical specialists from industry, representatives of government and consumer organizations, and others with an interest in the product write the standards.

These committees have access to Regional (Caricom) and International standards and testing facilities.

Standards form the basis of trade. When a product is made to a particular standard, the purchaser can be sure of the quality of the product and the manufacturer can also be sure of providing consistent and reliable quality. Therefore standards enhance and encourage trade. Producing to the required standards avoids wastage of materials and other resources that result from poor quality and rejected products. Standards offer an opportunity for developing countries to compete on the world trade stage by removing technical barriers to trade. The vote of international standards as the technical foundation for the global market is explicitly recognized in the World Trade Organization's (WTO) agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), which urges governments to make the utmost use of international standards in order to prevent unnecessary obstacles to the free flow of goods.

Everyone benefits from standardization. Manufacturers and service providers benefit from the Bureau's technical assistance, international links and certification programme. Consumers receive improved products and Antigua and Barbuda in turn experiences increased trade, resulting from improved product quality.

Submitted by: The Antigua and Barbuda Bureau of Standards

HEALTH WATCH

Be aware and beware, folks. There is a wave Conjunctivitis sweeping the land. Also known as 'Redeye' or 'Pinkeye', this is a very uncomfortable condition at best and at worst it can blind you! Be sure to heed the warnings and advice of our health officials and practice good hygiene in an effort to halt the spread of this disease. Also teach the children to practice these good hygiene habits as they are very vulnerable.

Patriot's Corner

Our 22nd anniversary of Independence is coming up on 1st November, 2003. To this end, Focal Point has conducted an informal survey and seen a need for a refresher on things patriotic so here goes:

Our Flag

designed by Reginald Samuel



The large 'V' signifies our Victory over adversity.
The red signifies the blood shed by our forefathers.
The white signifies our white sand beaches.
The blue signifies our beautiful blue seas.
The yellow is our bright sunshine.
The black signifies the African heritage of our ancestors.

Our Motto

"Each Endeavouring All Achieving"
Penned by James Carrott



Our Coat of Arms

Designed by Gordon Christopher

Our National Dish

"Pepperpot and Fungi"

Our National Anthem 'Fair Antigua and Barbuda'

Words by Novelle Richards

Music by Walter Chambers

Fair Antigua and Barbuda
We thy sons and daughters stand
Strong and firm in peace or danger
To safeguard our native land
We commit ourselves to building
A true nation brave and free
Ever striving ever seeking
Dwell in love and unity.

Raise the standard, raise it boldly
Answer now to duty's call
To the service of thy country
Fearing nothing giving all
Gird your loins and join the battle
'Gainst fear, hate and poverty
Each endeavouring, all achieving
Live in peace where man is free.

God of nations let thy blessings
Fall upon this land of ours
Rain and sunshine ever sending
Fill her fields with crops and flowers
We her children do implore thee
Give us strength, faith loyalty
Never failing all enduring
To defend her liberty.

N.B. Please stand at attention and in reverence whenever this Anthem is played or sung.

In 1967, after many years of Colonial Rule by the British, Antigua/Barbuda gained a measure of responsibility for itself through an arrangement of "Statehood in association with Britain". At that time, we developed our National Anthem, 'Fair Antigua'. For our attainment of full Independence in 1981, we made some changes to the lyrics of the Anthem. Below, see the lyrics to the first verse of the original version.

Fair Antigua we salute thee
Proudly we this Anthem raise
To thy Glory and thy beauty
Joyfully we sing the praise
Of thy virtues all bestowed
On thy sons and daughters free
Ever striving, ever seeking
Dwell in love and unity.

Finding the Free Balance

The Government has embarked on a new accounting system. It is designed to make accounting and auditing activities throughout the Government Service more streamlined, parallel and efficient.

Overall, the Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) Project will introduce new policies, procedures and supporting systems to all Ministries within the Government of Antigua (GOA). Within this phase of the Project, the objectives are to enable identical Accounting Procedures to be integrated for all Pilot representatives, with stand alone Balance Sheet and Income & Expenditure statements for each organizational unit. The IFMS components will feature for all Ministries and significant Departments:

- * Common Chart of Accounts
- * Common Business Policies & Processes
- * Common Accounting Procedures that meet internationally accepted standards
- * Real-time monitoring by each of the Ministries and by the Ministry of Finance on behalf of the GOA
- * Trained individuals to assist in sustaining capacity within the GOA
- * FreeBalance (implemented as the supporting system) and also internationally accepted.

The initial IFMS phase consists of: -5 Pilot sites which will implement Business Policies and Accounting Procedures including FreeBalance Foundations for: Budgeting, Commitment, Expenditure (including cash sales), General Ledger, and standard Reporting/Enquiry functionality. This implementation will include a Pilot trial (over a 20 day period) in which a variety and volume of transactions will be inputted to the IFMS. The IFMS Project - this Pilot phase is intended to conclude in February 2004, or sooner.

The IFMS Project Team consists of:

- * 2 persons from the Ministry of Education
- * 2 persons from the Ministry of Public Works
- * 2 persons from the Treasury Department
- * 3 persons from the Budget Department
- * 2 persons from the Audit Department
- * 1 person from the NCC - Department
- * 1 person from the ITC - Department

* 2 persons from FreeBalance Inc.** of Ottawa, Canada

* Senior Managers representing each of the Ministries and Departments above.

** FreeBalance is a Canadian-owned software company dedicated to the design, development and delivery of financial and administrative software products that help streamline government management. The Company has been successful in delivering an integrated family of products under the name FreeBalance eFinancials throughout North America and internationally. To date, over 100 government organizations have successfully implemented the FreeBalance eFinancials client/server suite of applications. FreeBalance supports its line of government financial modules with expert implementations and relevant training. Post-implementation, FreeBalance supports its customers by providing unlimited hot-line support and regular software upgrades as part of our comprehensive FreeBalance Support Services.

(Submitted by the Budget Office)

WHEW!!!

Just taking a minute to catch my breath and tell the readers that the past few weeks have been hectic and that the Establishment Department has been burning the midnight oil. Our nurses have demanded that new appointment forms be issued without delay to reflect the negotiated conditions of work, so our diligent staff have been working late to ensure that the new forms are made up and dispatched to the relevant parties in the shortest possible time. This is in accordance with the most recent collective agreement between the Government of Antigua/Barbuda and the Antigua/Barbuda Nurses Association.

We extend thanks to the nurses for their patience through delays and assure them that they will have these forms in short order. Thanks also to our entire staff, all of whom in some way aided in this process. Now back to work. We must finish this!

Who are we??

Who is a Civil Servant?

The Civil Service Act 1984. No. 24 of 1984, declares the definition of a Civil Servant.

3. (1) The several public offices in the public service from time to time set out in the First Schedule are deemed to constitute the Civil Service of Antigua and Barbuda which is hereby established for the purposes of this Act.

(2) A public officer who holds a public office in the public service that by subsection (1) is deemed to be an office in the Civil Service shall be referred to as a Civil Servant.

Employment - Who employs Civil Servants?

This is also determined by our Constitution Order 1981. (**Cap. 23**)

100. (1) Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the power to appoint persons to hold or act in offices in the public service (including the power to make appointments on promotion and transfer and to confirm appointments), the power to exercise disciplinary control over persons holding or acting in such offices and the power to remove such persons from office shall vest in the Public Service Commission.

How to apply for Civil Service employment.

This process is outlined in great detail in the ***Civil Service Regulations***. It says:

7 (1) An application for employment in the Civil Service shall be in writing in Form P/1 and be addressed to the Chief Establishment Officer containing a true statement of the applicant's qualifications.

(2) The Chief Establishment Officer shall forward to the Commission any application received in terms of paragraph (1) which satisfies the requirements of recruitment.

(3) Upon the appointment of an applicant to an office in the civil service, the Commission shall inform the Chief Establishment Officer who shall issue an appointment letter in the Forms P/3 and P/8 to the Permanent Secretary.

(4) Copies of an appointment letter issued in terms of paragraph (3) shall be given by the Chief Establishment Officer to the Accountant General and the Director of the Audit Department.

(5) The Permanent Secretary shall, upon receipt of any information addressed to him by the Chief Establishment Officer in terms of this regulation inform the person who is appointed or rejected for a post in the Civil Service.

On becoming a Civil Servant

Very often school leavers and other job seekers confirm that they know very little about the Civil Service or how to gain access thereto. The information set out hereunder is a guide and should assist anyone who is desirous of entering the Civil Service.

Requirements:

The General Service requires applicants to provide as follows:

Clerical Assistant	- 2 O'level subjects CXC/GCE
Junior Clerk	- 3 O'level subjects including Math or English
Nurses	- 5 O'level subjects CXC/GCE plus 1 science subject
Teachers	- 4 O'level subjects CXC/GCE including English and Science

What to do:

Come and visit us at the Establishment Department on Friendly Alley to pick up your application forms and to ask any pertinent questions. Our staff will be glad to be of assistance. Take your application forms home and complete them, attaching all relevant certificates and other documents. Once complete, deliver application and documents to the office of the Public Service Commission upstairs the 'Paris Shoes' shoe store on Nevis Street. You will be contacted in due course. (While at the Establishment Department, be sure to fill out our customer service questionnaire at the reception area!)

P.S. Look for other requirements in future issues of 'Focal Point'.

Topical Items

Dress Code

There have been long-held standards of appropriate dress for the professional and corporate environments. The government maintains partial dress code in the Civil Service through the use of uniforms for specified officers in specific disciplines, the cost of which is borne by government. Where the provision is not made, officers in various departments have organized their own uniforms at the staff's expense.

Much can be said in favour of as well as against uniforms:

Pros

- easier on laundry
- if designed properly, it can keep a minimal level of professionalism
- helps to maintain team-spiritedness
- economic savings on bulk buying
- easily identifiable

Cons

- can look regimental
- blunts individuality
- interchangeability is minimized.

The recent furore concerning dress standards within the Civil Service has sparked a national debate on the subject. This debate is a good thing as it exposes us all to the inner workings of what to many, seems to be a secret society. This sort of debate gives us all pause to reflect and even to rethink our own positions. What has come clearly to the fore through this furore is that there is always more than one way to approach a situation and get the desired result. The Marketing and Management students among us will remember Mr. Mazlow's carrot and stick approach to management, where the carrot is used to lure staff to perform as expected and the stick is used to whip them into submission when they step out of line (of course, not literal). After the Industrial Revolution, the Scientific Methodology (Empirical Approach) to management was employed as the way to go. These days, there is a place for either approach or a blend of both that can work. As managers, we must seek out the best approach for the situation in which we find ourselves.

The Effects of Late Payment

"We no longer have a payday". (Petty Officer)

The statement above, made by a Petty Officer, forces one to look clinically at the existing economic situation as it affects Civil Servants.

For the better part of a year the long-suffering Civil Servants have endured the embarrassment and dishonour associated with late payment of salaries. After such a prolonged period in the wilderness of salary insecurity, our savings, self respect and, above all, our patience have been stretched to the limit. Our plight has become the nation's plight since our lack of spending power has a major negative impact on the country's economy.

We Civil Servants have been beset with problems including but not limited to, an inability to provide even the basics of food, clothing and shelter for our families, facing disconnection of our utilities due to non payment and an inability to service our loan agreements with banks and other lending institutions. For us, Mazlow's hierarchy of needs has been turned on its head and we all know that this is a recipe for disaster. Do you realize that we no longer have a payday?!? Which reputable organization wants to do business with persons who **have no payday?**

Monthends come and go accompanied by a deafening silence as to why we have not been paid yet. This has caused various groups of Civil Servants to cry out publicly and threaten industrial action should their needs not be met. Is work action the answer? One would hope that this is not the case. It is time for all stakeholders to come together and speak to the 'powers' in an effort to put an end to this untenable situation.

WORLD FOOD DAY ACTIVITIES

16th October 2003, is World Food Day. The theme for this year is "Hunger can be stopped: Grow your own". Commemorative events for this year's celebration include:

Thurs. 9th October	Talking Agriculture on World Food Day
Mon. 13th October	Minister's Speech
Wed. 15th October	Backyard Gardens Field Tour, starting by bus from the Agricultural Extension Department.
Thurs. 16th October	World Food Day Open Day, Ministry of Agriculture
Sat. 18th October	Fishing Field Tour, starting by bus from the St. John's Fisheries Wharf
Tues. 21st October	Livestock Field Tour, starting by bus from Ministry of Agriculture, Headquarters on Queen Elizabeth Highway.

The focus this year is on backyard gardens and small scale production. The Ministry is organizing field adventures for the public. Space is available on a first come first served basis. So hurry to register before all spaces are gone.

By the way, we had a Special Visit

On Monday 8th September 2003, the Establishment Department was graced with the presence of one **Ms. Neried Walker** of the Inland Revenue Department. She toured our entire facility and was able to interact with staff members. We trust that your visit was a fruitful one and that all issues were resolved. This is what we are here for so don't be a stranger!!

INDEPENDENCE

Programme of Activities 2003

Official functions begin with A National Service of Thanksgiving to be held at the St. John's Wesleyan Holiness Church, Bishopgate Street on Sunday 26th October, 2003 at 4:00 p.m.

Continuing on Tuesday 28th October, 2003 the National Youth Rally will be held at the Antigua Recreation Grounds at 8:00 a.m.

'Instruments and Voices in Concert' will be held at the Multipurpose Centre, Perry Bay on Wednesday 29th October, 2003 at 8:00 p.m.

'A Cultural Dimension' is to be held also at the Multipurpose Centre, Perry Bay on Thursday 30th October, 2003 at 8:20 p.m.

On Sunday 2nd November 2003, the Golden Memories concert will be staged at the St. George's Anglican Church, Fitches Creek at 3:00 p.m.

These official functions will close off with A Ceremonial Parade at the Antigua Recreation Grounds on Monday 3rd November, 2003 at 8:00 a.m.

Please take part in the festivities. It's our thing!!

So much to do

Independence - wear national dress, attend functions, teach your family its meaning.

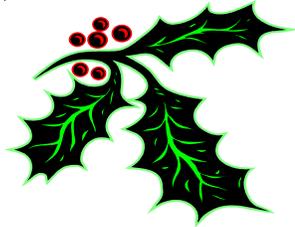
Moods of Pan Festival - attend the concerts.

Christmas (Kwanzaa) - get in the spirit.

New Year - time for reflection on the past and planning and anticipation of the future. ENJOY!

T'IS THE SEASON

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our contributors and readers. We look forward to continuing to bring you Civil Service news in the New Year and beyond.



SAFETY FIRST

Please be careful with your Christmas candles and lights. **DO NOT** leave them unattended and alight whether day or night. Be observant and aware of your surroundings. Suspicious looking persons may well have a malicious agenda. No need to be paranoid, but be aware. Secure your homes, vehicles and other personal property at all times. Given the state of our economy, you can always assume that there are others out there, worse off and more desperate than ourselves and on the hunt for what does not belong to them. Be careful and have a blessed holiday season.



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Should you have articles, ideas, comments or other correspondence to share with us, please send them to Focal Point c/o Establishment Department at the address, email or fax facilities listed above.

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