

FOCAL POINT

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Quote

“Freedom is never granted, it is won.”

“Justice is never given, it is exacted.”

Philip Randolph



OUR INDEPENDENCE

This our 24th year of independence is one with a difference. It is our independence homecoming which will be met with many activities taking place in Antigua from 21st October to 01st November, 2005.

This year’s theme is: **“One Family Working Together to Achieve Excellence.”** The activities will commence on Friday 21st October, 2005 with a Pre-Independence Theatrical Performance and concludes on 01st November with the Ceremonial parade at 8:00 a.m; Food Fair/Panache at 12:00 noon and the Independence Homecoming Banquet at 7:30 p.m.

This will be our 2nd Homecoming Independence which is anticipated to be the biggest and the best yet, consisting of a week of celebration, competitions, Parades, Expose’ and Food fairs. These activities cater for all Antiguan living at home and abroad, as well as visitors.

Leading up to Antigua and Barbuda’s Independence, competition titles up for grabs are the Independence Homecoming Queen Show and the Classical Pan Competition.

It is expected that this year’s Independence Celebrations will benefit the economy tremendously. It is expected that there will be many Antiguan returning home plus visitors to our shores.

You can’t afford to miss out on this momentous occasion. This is the time where political differences are put aside and everyone joins as one in celebration of our heritage.

Go to the back to see the Independence Program Line up



Birthday Celebrations

Each year, most of us look forward to celebrating our birthdays. It's a time where we can celebrate with our families and or friends in gratitude of reaching a milestone. Focal Point wishes everyone that celebrate their birthday this quarter, a happy and fulfilled birthday.

These are the birthday celebrants for Establishment Department this quarter:

Barbara Benjamin
 Ernetta (Clyna) Lewis
 Shamora Farell
 Gwendolyn Joseph
 Fiona Lewis
 Jessel Edwards

Paula Smith
 Jean-Marie Brown
 Jarrett Knight
 Damali James
 Irma James
 Cyd-Charise Elabanjo

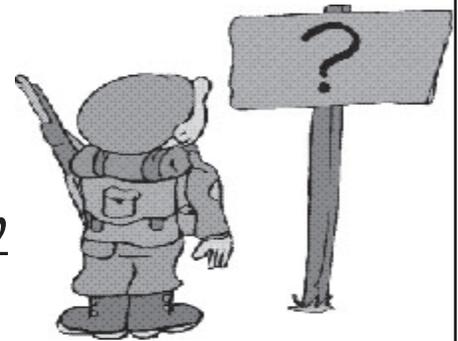


RETIREES



Focal point is happy to congratulate a number of our Civil Servants for their dedication to the Civil Service and upon reaching their retirement. You have accomplished a milestone, but remember don't count this as the end of your journey but the beginning of many more things to come.

Rexford Simon	Lecturer, Antigua State College	40 Years
Cuthbert Hector	Postal Officer, Post Office	31 Years
Sylvia McCoy	Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Health	40 Years
Winston McIntosh	Graduate 1, Ministry of Education	15 Years
Hollis Francis	Education Officer, Ministry of Education	38 Years
Jeanette Joseph	Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Trade	38 Years
Avonelle Roberts	Principal Assistant Secretary, Establishment	40 Years
Gretlyn Tittle	Community Psychiatric Nurse	36 Years
Bernadette Joseph	Executive Officer, Ministry of Public Works	33 Years
Alice Knight	Assistant Teacher 2, Ministry of Education	34 Years



Things to Know

Payment of Salary:

61. An officer may arrange to have his salary paid into a bank in Antigua and Barbuda on notification to the Treasury on Form P/13.

Salary of Officer Proceeding on Leave:

62. An Officer who is proceeding on leave outside Antigua and Barbuda, may receive his salary in advance for the month in which he proceeds on leave provided that the period of leave extends beyond the end of the particular month for which payment is made.

Allowance on Acting Appointment:

63. (1) An officer appointed to act under regulation 26, in a post with a salary scale which is higher than that of his substantive post shall be paid an acting allowance on the following basis:-

(a) where he is not required to discharge the duties of his substantive post while acting in the higher appointment, for the period of his acting appointment;

(i) if the actual salary he is drawing in his substantive post is less than the minimum salary of the office in which he is appointed to act, he shall receive an acting allowance equal to the difference be-

tween his actual salary and the minimum salary of the highest post;

(ii) if the actual salary he is drawing in his substantive office is equal to the minimum salary of the office in which he is appointed to act, he shall receive an acting allowance equal to the difference between his actual salary and the salary equal to one increment above the minimum salary of the higher post;

(iii) if the actual salary he is drawing in his substantive office is greater than the minimum salary of the higher office, he shall receive an acting allowance equal to the difference between his actual salary and the salary equal to one increment above his actual salary in the higher office;

(b) where he discharges the duties of another office, in addition to his own-

(i) where his office and the office in which he acts are distinct and separate offices in different departments, the officer

(Taken from the 'Antigua and Barbuda Civil Service Regulations 1993, No. 1)

(Taken from the 'Antigua and Barbuda Civil Service Regulations 1993, No. 1)

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE CSME?

A Single Market is vitally important to all producers and manufacturers in CARICOM countries. It will create a market that is much larger than the national markets in which businesses now operate.

Firms will also be able to lower their costs and increase productivity through economies of scale. Business will have more opportunities for investment.

Efficient companies will create more employment and bring greater wealth to their national economies. Competition between companies within the region which will have the right to operate and sell in every CARICOM country. This will bring down prices of many goods and services and promote cross-border investment.

The people of the region as a whole should benefit enormously from the increased and more efficient economic activity that will result. There will be creation of greater opportunity for travel; Creation of more opportunities for nationals to study and work in CARICOM countries of their choice; Creation of increased employment opportunities and improved standards of living.

The Single Market will also strengthen the interest of each country in the other's economic health. This should make for better and more cohesive bargaining in the international community. It will make the international community take CARICOM more seriously, and therefore, more willing both to help and to listen to their arguments.

Continued from page 3

shall be paid half the initial emoluments of the office in which he is acting and the whole of the emoluments of his substantive office;

(ii) in any other case, the officer shall be paid an acting allowance in accordance with paragraph (a).

(2) An acting allowance shall not be paid to an officer in

respect of any period during which the officer who holds an acting appointment is on leave.

(3) Upon reverting to his substantive post after the termination of his acting appointment, the officer shall be paid the salary in his substantive office which he would have received had he not been given an acting appointment in a higher post.

ETHICS IN THE WORK PLACE

Having ethics in the work place speaks to several things that characterize a job. This is evident through the quality of work being produced and the ability to meet deadlines. There are several work traits employers consider important. Below are ten work traits that inform and illustrate the connection between an individual's work ethics and their effects on a business.

- Attendance:** Arrives on time and gives advance notice of absence.
- Character:** Displays loyalty, honesty, trustworthiness, dependability, reliability, initiative, self-discipline and self-responsibility.
- Teamwork:** Respects the rights of others; is a team worker and is cooperative.
- Appearance:** Displays appropriate dress, grooming, hygiene and etiquette.
- Attitude:** Demonstrates a positive attitude.
- Productivity:** Good work habits result in a good work product.
- Organizational Skills:** Manifests skill in personal management, time management, prioritizing, flexibility, stress management and the ability to deal with change.
- Communication:** Displays appropriate verbal and non-verbal skills.
- Cooperation:** Displays leadership skills; maintains appropriate relationships with supervisors and peers.

A thought



Take a Proactive Approach to Your Attitude Today

As you can see, attitude isn't simply about how you feel. It also encompasses the things you do that show your feelings and beliefs to the world. When you're not afraid to embark on new endeavors, when you can learn from your mistakes, and when you're confident enough to promote yourself, you exemplify the attitude that fosters success.

Every day, every moment you decide how you want to feel, think and act. This is your own personal choice, not anyone else's. This is the one thing you have total control over in your life. It's the only thing! What decisions and choices will you make from this moment forward? Will you choose to love life, grow and prosper, feel terrific about who you are and what you are capable of? The freedom to choose is yours. Choose to maintain the attitude that attracts success.

Health Watch

Importance of Healthy Living

Getting well and staying well involves more than just treating your illness. Good health also means caring for your whole self. The basics for good physical health are regular exercise, a nutritious diet and getting enough sleep.



Keep active

Exercise is an effective way to fight depression. A simple way to get started is going for a 20 minute walk. Exercise also has many other perks:

It improves your cardiovascular health, reducing your risk of heart disease. This is important because studies suggest depressed people might have a bigger risk of heart disease.

Exercise gives you added energy and improve sleep and appetite.

It can help you stay at a healthy weight.

Exercise reduces irritability and anger.



Eat well

A healthy diet can improve the way you feel on many levels. Eating more vegetables is the best way to increase nutrients and limit fat and calories. Vegetables are also full of beneficial vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Try limiting the amount of caffeine and sugar you have each day. Some people who suffers from depression, would feel better if they cut out or limit caffeine and sugar in their diet. Sometimes people eat to block out negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety or loneliness. When you have a craving for sweets or want a snack to unwind from a stressful day, try taking a walk, calling a friend, or treating yourself to a movie instead.



Get enough sleep

Sleep refreshes you. It improves your attitude and gives you energy for being physically active and coping with stress. It also boosts your immune system, reducing your risk of illness. Try going to bed at the same time every night and relaxing before you go to sleep. This creates a routine that could help you fall asleep faster and easier. Try not to sleep too much. Too much sleep can actually give you shallow, unrestful sleep. Aim for eight hours of sleep a night, although some people need less and others need more.

FLY AWAY



In this the fourth and final quarter of the year 2005 quite a few of our eligible Civil Service workers will be taking their leave passage to many parts of the world. Focal Point wishes everyone a safe journey and that you will come back refreshed and ready to take on new endeavors.

Casroy Charles	Postal Sorter	General Post Office
Hazle-May Anthony	Registrar	Antigua State College
Velma Archibald	Senior executive Officer	Ministry of Works
Torene Anthony	Domestic Aide	Holberton Hospital
Millicent David	Principal I	Ministry of Education
Verlyn Miller	Assistant Teacher I	Ministry of Education
Sharon Chiddick	Senior Executive Officer	V.C. Bird International Airport
David Browne	Senior Executive Officer	Holberton Hospital
Hazlemay Rawlins	Senior Executive Officer	Statistics Division
Keturah Francis	Assistant Secretary	Planning
Emily Hector	Assistant Teacher	Ministry of Education
Valerie Barnes	Assistant Secretary	Registrar Division
Joycelyn Richards	Nursing Aide	Fiennes Institute
Sylvia McCoy	Assistant Secretary	Ministry of Health
Jean Marie Grant	Executive Officer	Office of Governor General
Delva Charles	District Nurse Midwife I	Medical Division
Hollis Francis	Education Officer	Ministry of Education
Gloria Farrell	Senior Executive Officer	Agriculture Division
Hyacinth Gage	Nursing Assistant	Mental Hospital
Nathalie James	Senior Assistant Secretary	Legal Affairs
Malcolm Beazer	Superintendent of Works	Public Works
Heather Antonio	District Nurse/Midwife	Medical Division
James Spencer	Agricultural Assistant II	Agricultural Extension
Bernadette Joseph	Executive Officer	Ministry of Works
Erma Christopher	Customs Guard	Customs Division



ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007



World Cup Preparations way ahead

Assurances have been given that the region remains well advanced in terms of its preparation to host matches in the 2007 Cricket World Cup.

This has come from the man in charge of overseeing the physical construction of the stadiums across the region, Donald Lockerbie. Mr. Lockerbie indicated that the region remained ahead of where South Africa was at the same time for the 2003 Cricket World Cup.

Lockerbie also stressed that the International Cricket Council (ICC), who are the owners of the event, had given World Cup planners the assurance that the work which has been done and continues to progress across the region meets the strict ICC standards. "One of the main reasons this is so is because the ICC have been part of our planning from the beginning and we have formed a great partnership with them," he stated.

Event director, Nigel Rushman, indicated that he, too, was pleased with the pace of work going on at the various venues. "This is my third Cricket World Cup and we are more advanced in planning than either of the previous two in which I was involved at the same stage. This is far more complicated because we are operating across nine countries, but nonetheless the progress which stakeholders have made is well advanced in comparison. Enthusiasm is building and the pace of work is accelerating and it's great to be working with a motivated team of professionals and Caribbean nationals," he said.

It was also revealed that the event management department was close to a phase of implementation, after months of planning and preparation. Rushman indicated that the department was approaching the end of (its) planning and assessment and moving into an operational mode, looking at specific Match Day plans, he added.

In giving an assessment of the work which was done at the recent venue summit, Lockerbie stated that teamwork was crucial to the success of the event. Venue Summit VI was a pivotal week for the integration of various departments. From all reports, it would have to be the most successful week of meetings to date. All nine LOCs came prepared for a week of intense and grueling meetings. The medical directorate, the security directorate, the venue development department and event management all met with each other for the first time to integrate plans and strategies, thereby ensuring that no aspect of Cricket World Cup development would be taking place in a vacuum without regard to related areas. We left with a better understanding of where we are, what we have to do and the timetable in which we have to do it.

Lockerbie said that the Caribbean will be pulling out all of the stops for the upcoming 2006 Digicel home series to test the state of readiness of the region for events in 2007. India and Zimbabwe will tour the West Indies next year and several trial events for the Cricket World Cup will take place during the home series to test the level of collective preparedness.

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All stadiums will not be completed at that time, but we will have to show our flexibility of putting on the tour without the benefits of all our new stadiums. Testing is a standard operating procedure for world games. It gives new venues, with no previous experience, an opportunity to gather insight into how they should operate, he stated.

Former chairman of ICC CWC WI 2007 praised the Local Organising Committees for the work which they had done for the event thus far. I am confident that the LOCs, who are exceptional teams of brilliance, have used the last two years to very minutely plan the World Cup. I am sure they will carefully implement those plans which will make the entire Caribbean extremely proud for a long time, he remarked. It was also suggested that Caribbean nationals had expressed a serious interest in participating in the CWC Licensing and Merchandising Programme. We are looking forward to signing the first of a multitude of waves of licensees for the programme from as early as October this year, across a variety of categories. In addition, we are particularly proud of this programme as it fully commits itself to one of the major objectives of the Caribbean Economic Enterprise Initiative, which is to provide Caribbean companies and nationals with the opportunity to benefit economically from the staging of the CWC in the West Indies. We are confident that the successful Caribbean licensees will reap rewards, Stephen Price of the ICC CWC WI 2007 Inc, commercial department stated.

Work is also expected to increase in intensity as the event itself approaches. Lockerbie indicated earlier this year that the ICC was also interested in the improvement of the pitches and fields across the region. He stated that each venue was obligated to ensuring that not just the stadium was in order, but the most important facilities where the players would be asked to perform. Each country is contractually obligated to have Mr. Atkinson and the ICC to approve our pitches and our fields, no later than July 2006. That process is already ongoing. He has been visiting all of the grounds and he has been meeting all of the countries who are building new grounds. The ICC has a standard and we have to meet it, and if we don't then we have to continue working until we do, he added.

Following is the itinerary for Digicel 2006 Home Series: Zimbabwe to the West Indies April 12 to May 15, 2006 and India to the West Indies May 15 to July 4th, 2006.

India to the West Indies

May 15 in Jamaica One day practice game
1st One Day International May 18 in Jamaica
2nd One Day International May 20 in Jamaica
3rd One Day International May 21 in Jamaica
4th One Day International May 24 in St. Kitts
5th One Day International May 27 in Trinidad
6th One Day International May 28 in Trinidad
1st Test June 1 to 5 in Antigua
2nd Test June 9 to 13 in St. Lucia
3 day tour match June 16 to 18 in Nevis
(WICB Board XI) 3rd Test June 22 to 26 in St. Kitts
4th Test June 30 to July 4th in Jamaica
July 5th India Departs

Zimbabwe to the West Indies

April 12 in Barbados three day tour Match
April 15-17, at (UWI), Barbados,
(V. Chancellors XI) 1st Test April 20 to 24 Guyana
2nd Test April 28 to May 2nd Trinidad
One day Practice Game May 4 in Trinidad
1st One day International May 6 in Trinidad
2nd One Day International May 7 in Trinidad
3rd One Day International May 10 in St. Lucia
4th One Day International May 13 in Antigua
5th One Day International May 14 in Antigua
May 15 Zimbabwe departs

By Dorian Bryan

Small Business in Antigua and Barbuda and the CARICOM Single Market

In the past, economic improvement in the developing world was considered possible only through industrialization. Many of the world's International development and financial institutions stressed the importance of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and liberalization of the economy as the main ways to foster sustained economic growth. Many policies were designed and implemented to encourage investment from foreign firms, but one very important sector of the economies was overlooked. While the larger local business and foreign investors were given red-carpet treatment, the small business sector may have been virtually ignored.

In recent times, there has been shift in this outlook as many governments around the world have been implementing policies that will uplift small and medium enterprises (also called SME). They have realized that although FDI creates new jobs and opportunities, many more jobs are created by small businesses. Small and medium enterprises account for approximately 60% of employment in the European Union, 53% for Barbados, and while no empirical evidence is available for Antigua and Barbuda, it can be assumed that small businesses also play a vital role for employment in the private sector. The small business sector has power in numbers, so that even though each may only employ a few people, the fact that there are so many of them gives the sector a great deal of power in the economy. These businesses are rather dynamic, and maybe because of their small size, they can adapt to changes quite quickly to changes. They foster keen competition and are better able to capitalize on product differentiation and niche markets for their goods and services.

The Caribbean Community recognized the importance of SME development in industrial policy of the region before re-writing the Treaty in 2001. In the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, Article 53 addresses Micro and Small Economic Enterprise Development. The Article calls for policy measures to encourage the development of competitive micro and small economic enterprise and the establishment of effective programmes to foster a facilitative legal, economic and administrative framework in Member states to enhance micro and small economic enterprise development.

One of the difficulties faced when setting policies for small and medium enterprises is defining what businesses can be categorised as being large or being an SME. It is difficult to give a standard definition for an SME throughout the region because of the differences in the sizes of our nations, populations and economies. What may be considered as a large business in Antigua and Barbuda may be considered as a small business in Jamaica. It may be best that each country set the criteria for itself. There are several parameters that can be used to designate the size of an enterprise, and these include the number of its employees, the amount of asset it owns, quantity of annual sales. A formal definition is important so that specific policies can be formulated to promote development of these enterprises that are separate from those used to develop large and/or industrial enterprises.

There are several challenges that small businesses face in Antigua and Barbuda, and these may include access to capital, limited development goals, poor/lack of record keeping, poor management structure, cash flow constraints and possibly the lack of an entrepreneurial culture. A small business policy can help remedy a few of these problems by implementing measures such as the establishment of a small business development agency (or a

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similar unit in a Ministry), develop/improve micro-finance institute for small enterprise, and promotion of enterprise in the education system.

Establishment of a Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency (SMEDA) will help by providing assistance and guidance for small businesses throughout our nation. The Agency should be able to provide businesses development services that include assistance in setting up and registration of a new business, development of a business plan, assist in identifying options for financing, training (in records keeping and accounting, management practices, production line techniques and customer service), marketing assistance and other business development services.

A micro-finance institution dedicated to providing loans for small businesses will assist in allowing for new ideas that lack the initial start-up capital or existing business that want to expand the opportunity to 'take-off.' The Policy should not be limited to this institution, but also seek to encourage commercial financiers to recognize that the small business sector is a viable investment route.

Our culture does not openly embrace the entrepreneurial spirit. This can be easily seen in our education system, which seems to promote students getting qualified so that they can secure a good means of employment but seldom encourages them to establish businesses of their own. Interestingly, many persons also do not consider some trades and professions as small businesses. It should be recognized that most of our farmers are entrepreneurs. A small private laboratory or pharmacy that is owned by lab technicians and pharmacists should also be considered as an enterprise rather than just a profession. The same can be said of computer technicians, architects, plumbers, chefs and craftsmen who work for themselves. Many of these are experts in their own fields, but they may not see themselves as businesspersons. They need to view themselves as businesses, because they can face similar problems to their operations that a supermarket or a clothing store would sometimes encounter.

It should also be recognized that many of the larger local businesses started out as a small enterprise. They were able to adapt to the business environment and expand as time progressed. The dawn of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) will herald a change in the business environment in our country. One aspect of the CSME is the Right of Establishment. Under Chapter Three of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, provisions are made for the free movement of businesses throughout the region. It allows for regional enterprises to set up business in any other Member State and be given national treatment. Here in Antigua and Barbuda, there is the fear that this will bring increased competition, and it certainly will. But there is a misconception that competition is something to be concerned about. Competition will benefit the country through a wider variety of choice and lower prices.

Consequently, the door swing both ways. Not only will Regional businesses be able to establish themselves here, but Antiguan and Barbudan enterprises will also have the right to set up elsewhere in the Region. One of the major constraints of our local enterprises has been the size of our market. They may have been unwilling to expand or increase production because our population may have been too small for the expansion to be profitable. With the CSME, our businesses can move from a limited market of 75,000 to over six million people. There will be room for growth of their business in this enlarged economic space that would not have been available to them without the CSME. This will provide our small businesses

Submitted by: Dia Christian

The CSME and External Trade Arrangements

It is increasingly being recognized that an established and functioning integration system is an important asset in contemporary trade arrangements. It is in this context that the CSME must be seen as an important platform for the region's trade and economic linkages with the rest of the world

Individually, CARICOM member states represent an insignificant share of global trade. Our markets are small and sometimes fragmented; we are susceptible to a range of natural disasters; we have relatively limited access to economically viable land; small populations which limit the scope for human resource development; and have highly open economies often heavily reliant on imports. The CSME helps us to overcome some of these challenges.

It is clearly based on Article 80 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas which provides that "Member States shall coordinate their trade policies with third states or groups of third states and calls on the community to "pursue the negotiation of external trade and economic agreements on a joint basis."

The establishment of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) will enable CARICOM countries to adjust to more liberal international trade and investment arrangements by first operating in an integrated market with countries with which it shares geographical proximity and deep cultural and historical linkages.

The CSME gives this region of small states the benefit of greater critical mass, pooled resources, improved ability to recruit skilled workers, source inputs from resource rich locations and achieve greater economies of scale for enhanced external competitiveness.

In the establishment of harmonised rules and the creation of regional mechanisms, the CSME enables the region to simplify its approach to negotiation of relevant issues with the rest of the world.

The region has used and will increasingly be able to rely on common rules and institutions as bases for its negotiating approaches. It has relied for example, on regional rules of origin in shaping positions in external negotiations and will be able to use rules being developed and implemented in, inter alia, trade in services, competition policy, intellectual property rights, trade remedies (anti dumping and subsidies) as benchmarks for negotiations in the FTAA and other trade arrangements.

In addition to these benefits, the establishment of common, trade-related institutions and the harmonization of laws and practices have improved the readiness of member countries for participation in emerging trade arrangements including the FTAA and the ACP/EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations in particular.

The CSME serves as a basis for a stronger and more effective negotiating and lobbying force than individual territories acting on their own. This has helped the region to win recognition of important principles such as the need for special attention to the situation of smaller economies.

Brain Teazer

Fill in the answers to the clues by selecting the correct syllables from the list below. Each syllable can only be used once and the number of syllables to be used is shown in brackets. When the correct words are filled in, the first and last letters reading down will reveal a proverb.



BRA, BU, CO, COUN, DO, EN, EN, FOR, IN, NA, NAL, NATE, NOC, PLUS, REAU, SAGE, SCOPE, STE, STEP, SUL, SUR, TA, TER, THO, TU, TUR, UN, VA, VER, VI.

1. Bluster _____ (3)
2. Make visible _____ (3)
3. Medical instrument _____ (3)
4. Part of the foot _____ (2)
5. Relating to the night _____ (3)
6. Imagine _____ (3)
7. Dried grape _____ (3)
8. Excess _____ (2)
9. Chest of drawers _____ (2)
10. Meeting _____ (3)
11. Lucky _____ (3)

*Do You
Think you
Know the Answers?*

Answers to 'Fun Page' Puzzles from the previous issue.

Eight O'clock	Plot Lock
Beetroot	Day 1 16 Beds
Building	Day 2 28 Beds
Dominoes	Day 3 40 Beds
Frontier	Day 4 52 Beds
Flamingo	Day 5 64 Beds
Stubborn	
Ambitious	
Audience	

Quote

*"Iron rusts from disuse; water loses its purity from stagnation ...
even so does inaction sap the vigor of the mind."*

(Leonardo da Vinci)



A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!



What is a Year without Christmas, a time when families and loved ones gather to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ and celebrate one of the happiest times of the year with exchange of gifts and lots of hugs. Can you just imagine the smiles that you are going to see this Christmas on peoples faces. Some of us will be seeing our loved ones for the first, in a long time. Is that not wonderful news?

Establishment Department wishes the entire Civil Service Season's Greetings and a Happy New Year. The love we feel at Christmas just keeps increasing as we share it! Holidays should be a time of sharing. So spread a little love around this Christmas. There may be someone that needs to know you care. May health and good fortune follow you throughout the coming year. May you find the answers to your questions, wisdom in your decisions and solutions for all obstacles.



Christmas Recipes

BLACK CAKE RECIPE

Ingredients:

1lb / 2 cups currants
 1lb / 3 cups raisins
 8oz / 1 cup prunes
 2/3 cup mixed peel
 14 oz / 2 ¼ cups dark soft brown sugar
 5ml / 1tsp mixed spice
 ½ pint / 1 ¼ cups sherry
 90ml / 6tbsp rum, plus more if needed
 2 cups softened butter
 10 eggs beaten
 1 lb / 4 cups self-raising flour
 5 ml / 1 tsp vanilla essence



1. Wash the currants, raisins, prunes and mixed peel, then pat dry. Place in a food processor and process until finely chopped. Transfer to a large, clean jar or bowl, add 115g/4 oz of the sugar, the mixed spice, rum and sherry. Mix very well and then cover with a lid and set aside for anything from 2 weeks to 3 months. The longer it is left, the better the flavor will be.
2. Stir the fruit mixture occasionally and keep covered, adding more alcohol if you like.
3. Preheat the oven to 160°C/325°F Gas mark, Grease and line a 25cm/10 in round cake tin with a double layer of greaseproof paper.
4. Sift the flour, set aside. Cream together the butter and remaining sugar and beat in the eggs until the mixture is smooth and creamy.
5. Add the fruit mixture, then gradually stir in the flour and vanilla essence. Mix well, adding 15-30ml/1-2 tbsp sherry if the mixture is too stiff; it should just fall off the back of the spoon, but should not be too runny.
6. Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin, cover loosely with foil and bake for about 2½ hours until the cake is firm and springy. Leave to cool in the tin overnight, then sprinkle with more rum if the cake is not to be used immediately. Wrap the cake in foil to keep it moist.

For a Drink: SORREL

3 cups sorrel (red, with seeds removed)
 1 part boiling water
 2 cups sugar



Add sorrel to the rapidly boiling water. Bring to boil and simmer for 3 to 5 minutes or until the water is a nice dark red colour. Strain. Add sugar and stir until it is dissolved. Use this as a base or mixer with other drinks, or may be used alone. If a more spicy flavour is desired, add ginger and 3 or 4 cloves. Since sorrel is in the markets around Christmas time, this makes a very nice drink for Christmas.



Establishment Department

**Friendly Alley
St. John's
Antigua W.I.**

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Email:
estabdep@antigua.gov.ag**

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.

Independence Program Line Up

October 21-22 8:00 p.m	<i>Pre-Independence Theatrical Performance</i>
October 23 4:00 p.m	<i>Thanks Giving Service ARG</i>
October 24 7:30 p.m	<i>Literary Arts Competition</i>
October 25 8:00 a.m	<i>Youth Rally</i>
October 25 5:30 p.m	<i>Pre-Jubilation Presentation</i>
October 26 9:00-3:00 p.m	<i>Elderly Program</i>
October 26 7:30 p.m	<i>Steel Pan Competition</i>
October 27 7:30 p.m	<i>Cultural Presentation</i>
October 28 8:00 p.m	<i>Folk Song Festival</i>
October 29 10:00 a.m	<i>Excursion</i>
October 29 8:00 p.m	<i>Queen Pageant</i>
October 29-30	<i>Antigua and Barbuda International Cricket Fest</i>
October 30 6:00 a.m	<i>Antigua and Barbuda ½ Marathon</i>
October 30 4:00 p.m	<i>Jubilation Gospel Festival</i>
October 31	<i>National Dress Day</i>
November 1	<i>Independence Day - Public Holiday</i>
November 1 8:00 a.m	<i>Ceremonial Parade</i>
November 1 12:00 noon	<i>Food Fair/Panache</i>
November 1 7:30 p.m	<i>Independence Homecoming Banquet</i>