UWI
ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

www.sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/

UWI TODAY

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES • ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

SUNDAY 5 AUGUST, 2018

Let the Weeds Grow

UWI researchers have got mind-blowing results from tests using seaweed as bio stimulants. A gold mine for agriculture might be floating up on our shores. **See Page 8**

UWI
ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

#BeUWI

Find out more at
www.sta.uwi.edu/admissions

1 regional university | 4 campuses | 7 Faculties
100s of accredited and internationally recognized programmes
Study Abroad and Exchange programmes | Entry with SAT's, IB and other qualifications
modern teaching facilities | a Caribbean university with global reach | a great West Indian tradition

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

The Best Time to Plant a Tree

The term 'Urban Greening' embraces activities such as public landscaping and the creation of urban forestry that seek to 'green' and soften the urban landscape and make it, as they say, more 'people friendly'. These greening initiatives include planting road verges and islands with indigenous vegetation, removal of alien species, upgrading of parks and gardens in inner city areas, development of urban trails passing through green areas, and getting landscape architects to design or redesign inner city areas to reflect a more natural and green surrounding.

Urban greening provides one other, perhaps more important benefit than just 'softening' the urban character of our surroundings. Its ecological impact offsets the deleterious effect of urbanisation and industrialisation on the environment and on human health. I have often made the point that every building that is erected potentially increases the level of flooding in lower areas, unless adequate provision is made to handle water runoff.

The more our country turns into a concrete jungle, the worse it becomes. In contrast, trees extract water from the ground and help control water saturation and flooding. Greening is considered as one approach to mitigate the human health consequences of increased temperatures that result from climate change.

And that's not all. Researchers at Columbia University have found a high correlation between the increase in tree population in urban neighbourhoods and a lower incidence of asthma. Just consider how miserable life recently has been for many of us due to the Saharan dust. Trees capture airborne particles such as dirt, dust and soot. As students of biology would know, they clean the air by absorbing greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming, storing carbon dioxide, the primary greenhouse gas, in their stems and leaves. Indeed, I am told that two medium-sized, healthy trees

Hillview College's Principal, Leslie Mahase is the anchor man while Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley did the spadework as they planted a Chaconia under the watch of the MP for Tunapuna, Esmond Forde, at the launch of the reforestation project which was part of the National Herbarium's celebration of its 200th anniversary.

can supply the oxygen required for a single person for a year.

In May 2017, Trinidad and Tobago registered its first "green" building when a flagship commercial development was opened in Port of Spain. The building, Savannah East, was designed and built in an environmentally responsible manner and promotes recycling, encourages sustainable energy through the use of rainwater to flush fixtures, condensate water from the air-conditioning system to irrigate the green spaces in the building, insulated windows and roofing to reduce heat transfer, and the creation of energy every time the elevator is used. Our architects, contractors, and planning officials should encourage this approach!

Research has also uncovered some unexpected benefits of urban greening. Three scientists in the US: Jody Rosenblatt Naderi, Byoung-Suk Kweon and Praveen Maghelal, presented empirical findings from a pilot study on street trees and their effect on driving behaviour, safety perception and speed in urban or suburban areas. They surmised that tree-lined streets are safer in both urban and suburban areas. In addition, individual driving speeds were significantly lower in the suburban settings with trees. In other words, trees calm traffic and reduce the frequency and severity of crashes. This research suggests that, quite apart from the aesthetic appeal, there is validity – from a safety perspective – in having trees on our streets and highways. You may recall there was a bit of an outcry when the trees lining the median of the highway between Curepe and Valsayn, were removed. I am therefore pleased to note that Works and Transport Minister, Rohan Sinanan, has promised that trees will be replanted once the new interchange is completed.

At The UWI, we do recognize the fact that in all possible future scenarios, including even any description of a worst-case scenario, we have to take care of the environment in which we live.

This is the gist of what I said at the launch of a reforestation project, where we joined with Hillview College, the Forestry Division, and the UWI Biological Society as the National Herbarium marked its 200th anniversary by planting 200 trees on the denuded hillside to the north of the College.

It was a small start to building that sustainably developed future but it was a start, nonetheless and an example that I hope other schools across Trinidad and Tobago will follow. We were delighted to have Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley join us, as he has also encouraged the planting of our national flower, the Double Chaconia, in schools nationwide.

Bringing an appreciation of greenery in our urban landscapes is one way we can secure a sustainable ecological future. We all have to act, to do something one way or the other, to ensure that this future will exist. There is no better time to plant that tree than now.

Brian Copeland

PROFESSOR BRIAN COPELAND
Campus Principal

THE BULLDOZERS OF HISTORY

It is hard to imagine that this bucolic scene was actually what the Churchill Roosevelt Highway once was maybe half a century ago. This image is from a postcard bearing a 15-cent stamp that featured both the Trinidad and Tobago Coat of Arms and an image of the Queen of England – suggesting a post-Independence and pre-Republican period. The postcard comes from the Michael Goldberg Collection, one of several held and now digitized at the Alma Jordan Library. This was the first digitized collection to be placed in The UWI Institutional Repository. We found it so beautiful it was featured on the cover of our April 2016 issue.

There is nothing on the card indicating the geographical location of this stretch of the Highway, but it is most likely between the Curepe traffic lights and those at Valsayn. Unfortunately, the magnificent pouis that have been on this site have been completely erased from the landscape they adorned for more than 50 years.

PHOTO: COURTESY THE WEST INDIANA SECTION OF THE ALMA JORDAN LIBRARY, UWI ST. AUGUSTINE.

EDITORIAL TEAM

CAMPUS PRINCIPAL
Professor Brian Copeland

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS
Dr Dawn-Marie De Four-Gill

EDITOR
Vaneisa Baksh
email: vaneisa.baksh@sta.uwi.edu

CONTACT US
The UWI Marketing and Communications Office
Tel: (868) 662-2002, exts. 82013 / 83997
or email: uwitoday@sta.uwi.edu

CAMPUS NEWS

Measuring and Managing Risk Pays Off

Sarika does an actuarial first

BY SHEREEN ANN ALI

If you never thought you'd need much maths smarts in your future, you were clearly not considering the very analytical (and profitable) career of actuary. One recent graduate of the BSc Actuarial Science programme at UWI, St Augustine, Sarika Chin Fong, has become its first graduate to achieve the Associate of the Society of Actuaries (ASA) professional designation, earning the respect and pride of UWI's Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

"Becoming a Fellow of the Society of Actuaries is one of the most difficult professional designations to obtain. Currently there are less than 20 nationals who are fellows," came a missive from them.

For Sarika, achieving the ASA is cause for both celebration and relief. "I was in shock at first. Now I'm very proud and relieved that I managed to get this far. I am still far from the light at the end of my tunnel. I still have to get my FSA designation. But I feel like I can sit back and smell the roses a bit before I throw myself back in."

The ASA designation is awarded after a rigorous series of exams and case studies. Says the UWI Department of Mathematics and Statistics: "The Associateship is the junior designation that one must obtain before becoming a Fellow of the Society of Actuaries. It is very unusual and quite significant an accomplishment for a university programme of less than ten years to have any of its graduates achieve an Associate designation so soon after completing their BSc in Actuarial Science. This is quite the academic milestone for this relatively young programme and for UWI."

UWI's BSc in Actuarial Science programme began in 2011. Sarika Chin Fong graduated from it in 2014 with First Class Honours, and after completing her professional examinations, she received the Associate of the Society of Actuaries (ASA) designation on April 6, 2018. It's a fitting career for a person who as a child, says she loved maths "all day, every day."

So what, exactly, is it that actuaries do?

Actuaries are financial experts who measure and manage risk to develop solutions for complex financial issues. To do this, actuaries must have a deep understanding of mathematics, statistics and business management. The programme at UWI includes courses in probability theory, economics, financial accounting, computer programming, linear algebra, analytical geometry, statistics, and asset & liability management.

Actuaries can work for many different kinds of businesses including insurance, banking, government, energy, marketing, predictive analytics and more. In the Caribbean, the two main areas of actuarial work are life insurance and pensions, according to the Caribbean Actuarial Association.

Last month the UWI Department of Mathematics and Statistics of the Faculty of Science and Technology, held a special event to recognise Sarika's ASA status. The July 3 event featured video messages of congratulations from the President of the Society of Actuaries and the President of the Caribbean Actuarial Association. Other speakers included Dr Judith Gobin, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology; former TT Attorney General Anthony Smart, Chairman of First Citizens; and Kyle Rudden, who is Consulting Actuary & Managing Director of KR Services Ltd, the firm where Sarika now works.

From left: Stokeley Smart, Senior Lecturer in Actuarial Science, The UWI; Winston Dookeran, former Governor of the Central Bank and Minister of Finance; Sarika Chin Fong, Associate of the Society of Actuaries and Anthony Smart, former Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago and Chairman of First Citizens at an appreciation evening on July 3.

For Sarika, the event was unexpected, but she took it in stride, telling he audience her story.

"In 2011, I applied to do the Electrical and Computer Engineering degree. The week before the semester started, the last week in August, I somehow set my sights on the new Actuarial Science degree. My parents' determination to see the dean or any other person that could help was the real reason I ended up in the programme… They told me: 'You like Maths, go do actuarial science, you'll like that too and it'll make money.' So there I was, first day of UWI, not a clue of where to go. Eventually I figured out the 'where to go' part." She added:

"The UWI programme was a mix of math, computer science and finance courses. I may have wanted to pull my hair out over the more financially-based courses. I had a math and science background, you see. The actuarial science courses were another story. Totally unfamiliar territory. But we came, we saw, we conquered. Our egos took some hits but we were better students for it."

She says: "The professional exams were done on your own time, at your own pace. It was especially hard for me to find a rhythm between working, studying and living. Finding that balance was very satisfying for me. I liked that I was able to have some sort of social life outside these exams and work."

She says dealing with some failure was all part of the learning experience of becoming an actuary:

"I failed my first exam ever in 2016. Ever. First fail in my life. Models of Life Contingencies. My friends told me 'Welcome to the club! Let's go drink.' There are many profound quotes on failure. My advice to all of you about failing – it's an experience and just like all experiences, you learn from it and move on. Take some time off from studying. Have fun, party hard (or sleep hard). And then, sign up for the next sitting. Just keep going. Self-motivation is very important."

Honorary Degrees 2018

At the annual business meeting of the University Council, which was held on April 27, 2018, it was agreed that honorary degrees will be conferred on the following four persons.

LLD: Mrs. Paula Lucie-Smith
teacher/advocate/pioneer, Trinidad and Tobago

LLD: The Rt. Hon. Hubert Ingraham
politician, The Bahamas

LLD: Mr. Shivnarine Chanderpaul
sportman/cricketer, Guyana

DLitt: Mr. Winston Bailey (Shadow) *musical composer, Trinidad and Tobago.*

The honorary degrees will be conferred at the St. Augustine campus graduation ceremonies scheduled for **October 25-27, 2018.**

More in our next issue.

CAMPUS NEWS

Tropical Agriculture still has the edge at 94

A limequat! I didn't know what a limequat was, never heard the name and though I instinctively broke it down into something related to limes and kumquats, I didn't know how it should be pronounced. Thanks to Google, I was able to find out that it is in fact a hybrid between a kumquat and a key lime, and it does look like a lime.

So why was I trying to figure out what a limequat is? Well, it wasn't for a recipe, It was because I was just looking through the journal, "Tropical Agriculture," which had something of a relaunch on July 23.

It was actually founded in 1924, three years after the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture was formed, and it has kept going through all the transitions that have led to the adulthood of The UWI as an institution.

This is Volume 95 Special Issue 1, the first online edition and it is a collection of the papers on the research findings from the project, Enhanced Preservation of Fruits Using Nanotechnology. This project was funded by the Canadian International Food Security Research Fund and included researchers from the University of Guelph, Canada (leader); Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, India; Industrial Technology Institute, Sri Lanka; University of Nairobi, Kenya; Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania; and The UWI.

So the abstracts are practically segmented by fruit variety as they look at different ways to extend shelf-life and what are the factors affecting them. There were studies using a veritable fruit salad as subjects – bananas, papayas, oranges, limequats, mangoes – looking at specifics like "the effects of pre-harvest application of hexanal formulations on time to ripening."

I had to look up hexanal, which is used in the flavor industry to produce fruity flavours, and it smells like freshly cut grass. According to Wikipedia, it is potentially useful as a natural extract that prevents fruit spoilage. And I guess that's what the researchers were exploring.

They also spoke about Senescence, which I looked up as well. When I found the meaning I shook my head in sad recognition: it is the condition or process of deterioration with age. (Maybe researchers will find something to slow that down in humans too.)

Dean of the Faculty of Food and Agriculture, Dr. Wayne Ganpat tells guests about the vision for food security at the launch of the special online issue of the journal, "Tropical Agriculture." At the head table from left are Dr. Lynda Wickham, Principal Investigator and Editor in Chief of the Journal; Professor Emeritus Julian Duncan, Editor in Chief, Tropical Agriculture Special Issue; Professor Jayasankar Subramanian, leader of the project, Enhanced Preservation of Fruits Using Nanotechnology; and Carla Hogan Rufelds, the Canadian High Commissioner to Trinidad and Tobago. **PHOTO: ANEEL KARIM**

A limequat: a hybrid between a key lime and a kumquat.

But even if you are not an academic, or not an agriculturist, and just someone interested in regional development or learning something new, the journal is worth scanning.

On the Tropical Agriculture website, it declares that it was established to publish the results of original research on aspects of agriculture that would lead to greater productivity and sustainability in tropical regions.

Has it kept to that objective?

Click here and find out!
https://journals.sta.uwi.edu/ta/index.asp?action=viewIssue&issueId=730

(Vaneisa Baksh)

UWI
ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

First Year Experience is a year long programme consisting of a series of orientation activities aimed at helping students transition to UWI Life. The UWI Life events kick off the orientation programme.

FYE
First Year Experience
2018-2019

UWI Life Student

Wednesday 29 August, 2018
9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
UWI Sport & Physical Education Centre
St. Augustine Circular Road

ONLY New Undergraduate & Postgraduate Students

UWI Life Support

Wednesday 29 August, 2018
6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
UWI Sport & Physical Education Centre
St. Augustine Circular Road

Parents, Guardian, Spouses ONLY

If you have been accepted to begin a programme and have not received your invitation via mail please let us know by emailing **marketing.communications@sta.uwi.edu**

For more information on **FYE** and **UWI Life** visit **www.sta.uwi.edu/fye**

CAMPUS NEWS

Mapping the Campus Inside Out

BY JOEL HENRY

"More than 80% of the decisions we make involves location. Can we answer questions about our campus facilities without having to go and look? Wouldn't it be more efficient if this information can be provided on an ICT platform that is easily accessible by university decision makers?"

–Dr. Earl Edwards

In 1960, St. Augustine became the Trinidad campus of The UWI. And in the 58 years that followed, UWI St. Augustine's growth has been phenomenal – thousands of students, myriad programmes of study, groundbreaking research, and of course, buildings. Like a small society, the campus has grown, and one of the most dramatic signs of its growth is its structures and the assets within them.

UWI St. Augustine is made up of offices, lecture rooms, laboratories, commercial spaces, and many other facilities housed in more than a hundred buildings. And for the people responsible for managing and maintaining the campus, access to reliable information on these facilities is critical for informed decision-making. This information, if used strategically, can save the University great amounts of time and money. But first, it must be stored in a structured database that can be easily accessed by decision makers.

Enter the Geospatial Information Research and Innovation (GIRI) Group from the Department of Geomatics Engineering and Land Management (GELM), of the Faculty of Engineering.

"Our campus is a very complex place to manage and good data is crucial to make it work," says Adam Thomas, a graduate student who is a member of the GIRI Group.

Since 2014, Adam and other members of the GIRI Group have been using a combination of geomatics (traditionally referred to as land surveying), drones, digital cartography and information and communications technology (ICT) to collect and manage data about the campus. This led to the creation of the Interactive Campus Map that is available both on the UWI website (http://sta.uwi.edu/campus-map) and mobile app. The map gives a layout of the campus buildings, other structures, green spaces and even trees.

In 2017, the group embarked on an even more ambitious project.

"The map is a frame of the buildings, a topographic map. Now we are going inside the buildings," says Anushka Ramnath, an undergraduate geomatics student.

Over the 2017 and current vacation periods, Anushka and a small team of student interns have been going to buildings throughout the campus, measuring rooms and other hard spaces such as permanent cubicles, and drawing building plans that will eventually become part of a Campus Enterprise GIS. This Campus Building Measurement Survey (CBMS) Project, is a partnership between the Office of the Campus Registrar and the GELM Department.

"For a long time we have been doing this kind of work for clients outside of the University, and internally we don't have the very systems that we have been implementing in other organisations," says Dr. Earl Edwards, Lecturer in Geoinformatics at GELM.

Dr. Edwards, the mind behind the UWI St. Augustine's Campus Enterprise GIS project, says: "We have the resources in terms of software and expertise. We have young minds eager to learn. So it's a win-win situation. The University gets an Enterprise GIS system which can be used for managing its facilities and assets. And the students will be able to play a role where they can work, first-hand, from step one to the final stage of building an Enterprise GIS."

One of the most exciting aspects of the project is how pivotal the students have been. Adam and his fellow supervisor, Arrio Lokai, are very much in leadership positions and they are both in their twenties. Most of the fieldwork is carried out by undergraduate students.

"Many times we will go to a building and they will say, 'oh students! Is this an academic project?'" says Adam, smiling. "I tell them no, we are working."

At 23, he is obviously a very driven young man with clear ideas about the role of GIS in both education and society. "I am going to get into education for sure," he says. "I love to teach. I also want to be involved with GIS on a national level for decision-making."

Anushka, 23, from Chaguanas, also enjoys geomatics, particularly the fieldwork, and would like to pursue it further. "Last year (the initial round of building measurements) was my first time working professionally," she says, highlighting what a valuable experience the internship has been.

Apart from this, there is the benefit of a campus Enterprise GIS. The administration at UWI St. Augustine is aware of the benefits of GIS and is working with GELM through the Office of the Campus Registrar. In fact, Dr. Edwards was initially approached by Asset Manager Keith Chin Pang to collaborate on building on the trove of data collected through the interactive map project.

"More than 80% of the decisions we make involves location," says Dr. Edwards. "Can we answer questions about our campus facilities without having to go and look? Wouldn't it be more efficient if this information can be provided on an ICT platform that is easily accessible by university decision makers?"

The CBMS project has made good progress but still has some way to go. Interns have collected data and drawn plans for several buildings, including the Faculty of Humanities and Education building and the Alma Jordan Library (which was particularly challenging because of its incremental construction). Campus Administration has given the team a list of priority buildings for measurement and data collection.

The challenge is limited resources, particularly the need for dedicated workers. Currently they only carry out field work during the vacation period. However, they are doing great work and they are confident the results will be just as outstanding.

"I have seen many of these data sets from all over," says Adam, "and I believe ours will be one of the best ever developed."

Adam Thomas of the GIRI Group and student intern Camay Cuffie continue their measurements at the Marketing and Communications Office. **PHOTO: ATIBA CUDJOE**

GIS defined

The St. Augustine Campus.

Geospatial Information System (GIS) – integration of information and communication technologies for gathering, managing, analyzing, visualizing and sharing data about our world.

Geomatics Engineering – Traditionally referred to as surveying. Involves the measurement and analysis of data on or near the earth's surface using tools and techniques such as: drones, GPS, remote sensing, photogrammetry, hydrography, cartography and GIS.

Geoinformatics – the art, science and technology involved with the acquisition, storage, processing production, analysis, presentation and dissemination of GIS data.

UWI St. Augustine's Department of Geomatics Engineering and Land Management in the Faculty of Engineering, offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Geomatics; Master of Science degree in Geoinformatics and MPhil/PhD degree in Geoinformatics.

CAMPUS NEWS

When t
FEEDS TH

Seaweed products boost plan

BY JOEL

"It increased the yield and proc
It also **reduced disease levels sign**
By this way we can **cut down chem**
– Om

EIGHTY-SEVEN BILLION US DOLLARS – that's how much market research firm, Global Market Insights, says the global commercial seaweed industry will be worth by 2024. Seaweed as food, as biofuel, in agriculture, textile manufacturing, pharmaceutical production, and even cosmetics, it has many profitable uses. China, Indonesia, South Korea and Japan dominate the industry, which produces over six million tonnes of seaweed per year. But it's not enough to meet world demand. In this market, Indonesia has been increasing its seaweed production by 30 percent per year.

Seaweed is an asset. For years it's been invading the coasts of the Caribbean, piling up on beaches, patiently waiting for those with the capacity to recognise it for what it is – opportunity.

"It is a gift," says Professor Jayaraj Jayaraman, Professor of Biotechnology and Plant Microbiology at the Department of Life Sciences at St. Augustine's Faculty of Science and Technology.

The Professor is one of the driving forces behind a tight team of researchers, among them Omar Ali, a graduate student focused on tropical seaweeds. Omar, whose work was first highlighted in UWI Today in 2017 (https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/archive/june_2017/article19.asp), has achieved outstanding results using seaweed as a biostimulant for agricultural crops. When applied to tomato and sweet pepper plants, extracts from three local seaweeds produced incredible growth and disease resistance, far better results than that of commercially available biostimulant products.

"It increased the yield and product quality very significantly," says Omar, speaking of the extract's effects. "It also reduced disease levels significantly compared to the controls. By this way we can cut down chemical use to one third or even more."

The three seaweed types (one red, one brown and one green) were used as the basis for products that increased plant size by up to 60 percent, improved yield up to 60 percent and suppressed disease by up to 70 percent compared to the locally available commercial biostimulants. "Our current focus is only on those abundant ones; but there are few more rare seaweed species which we have discovered are better than the best reported anywhere in the world. But I'm careful not to tell you about those now," laughs Prof. Jayaraman.

"I was skeptical at first about the idea of using seaweed as a biostimulant," says Dr. Adesh Ramsubhag, Head of the Department of Life Sciences, but when they showed me these results, I felt this is the best way to go. We vowed to thoroughly study the mechanisms and roll out a product for crop use."

The research team is justifiably excited. They have created products with a level of performance that surpasses what the imported alternatives offer. And they say it will cost much less.

"About 40 to 50 percent less, and that is a conservative estimate," says Professor Jayaraman. "The main raw material is free. It is waiting there on the shore."

At their lab in the Natural Sciences building, Omar and Professor Jayaraman show samples of the commercially available biostimulants on the local market. One is made up almost completely of chemicals. The other two are branded as seaweed stimulants. The first lists seaweed as a 10 percent proportion of its ingredients; the second, five percent. The other ingredients include humic acid, nitrogen phosphate, zinc, chemicals and more chemicals.

"It's like an energy drink. It will give a short-term boost," Jayaraman says. "What we are offering is like a nutritious meal. It has a long-term stabilizing effect."

The team's seaweed products contain at least 50 percent seaweed-based ingredients.

"It's natural and organic," Omar says.

The idea of using seaweed as a biostimulant is not new. In North America, Ascophyllum, a brown seaweed native to temperate climates, has been used for some time for crop growth and health. In fact, Professor Jayaraman has worked with an Ascophyllum-based biostimulant manufacturers in Canada for more than 10 years. It was based on this experience that he recognised the potential for tropical seaweeds. The UWI team's research is not reinventing the wheel. It is making the wheel with local materials. "Local seaweeds are a bit tougher species though, but we found better ways to derive a premium product which is as good or even better than what you see imported from the Americas and Europe".

Fruit cluster comparison

When Omar Ali did his seminar presentation, he explained that the new products significantly improved plant biomass yield (up to 60%), they improved produce yield (up to 50%) and enhanced the quality of the produce. They also significantly suppressed disease incidence (fungal, bacterial, viral diseases and deficiency disorders) by up to 70%. The bigger cluster of tomatoes shown here is the one treated with the seaweed product.

SEAWEED TEAM: Professor Jayaraj Jayaraman, postgraduate student Antonio
The other member is Omar Ali (in photo above).

the Sea
HE LAND

nt growth and reduce disease

H E N R Y

duct quality **very significantly**.
ificantly compared to the controls.
ical use to one third or even more."
ar Ali

Ramkissoon, Dr. Adesh Ramsubhag.

"He knew the potential of those temperate types but no one had done a lot of hard scientific work on the tropical species," Dr. Ramsubhag says.

The initial research was carried out by graduate student Antonio Ramkissoon, who is also doing landmark work on microbial-based products with high potential for pharmaceutical use (see https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/archive/april_2018/article11.asp). When they saw the results, it was decided they needed a researcher dedicated to seaweed. It was a role Omar accepted.

"It is impactful research," says the 24-year-old from Indian Walk in Moruga. "We are working to get a premium product out of it, not just writing papers, graduating and leaving."

Omar says he wants to both see the creation of a new company manufacturing their seaweed products and encourage organic farming practices. "Some parts of the work are of intellectual property value, and my mentors are already working on it," he says.

A big part of their research includes field trials with local farmers, and they have been happy with both the products' organic nature and the bigger and better yields they produce.

But much more needs to be done – more field trials and more data collection, specifically more detailed basic studies, including genomic and transcriptomic sequencing to determine what processes are taking place and what genes are being affected when the seaweed extracts interact with the plants. Also the environmental effects of these extracts need to be studied.

"We have to use the science to drive the product development process, "says Dr. Ramsubhag. "We can't just collect seaweed, make a little concoction, that might sometimes work and most times not."

And research, particularly the sequencing, is very expensive. The research team has done outstanding work funded by earlier (now discontinued) external grants, private sources and even directly out of the pockets of Ramsubhag and Jayaraman. The Life Sciences students have also shown great commitment to the work, volunteering their time and effort for little to no recompense. Moving forward, with these strong results, they are hoping for more support.

"We don't need millions of dollars. We can start small," says Professor Jayaraman. "But we must not wait too long. We cannot wait for things to happen. We have to make them happen." "Extracts are only a part of the story. There are many exciting molecules which are of high commercial value. We are also working on those with the help of our colleague, Dr. Nigel Jalsa from the Chemistry Department," says Professor Jayaraman.

Dr. Ramsubhag agrees. "In the business world, time is of the essence." But he remains optimistic that they can find support for their work. "The end we have in sight is the creation of a UWI spin-off company. But there are several models we can look at. We can even licence the product and work with the private sector."

"Adesh is more of an optimist than me. He is a mahatma," says Jayaraman, smiling. Having a long career as a researcher in both India and North America, he has the firsthand knowledge of how aggressively societies invest and pursue high potential research.

"I am more cautiously optimistic," he says.

Meanwhile the seaweed piles up, mountains of it, on the Caribbean coasts.

Seaweed

A thousand products, A hundred markets

How big is seaweed? It's big enough for a segment on "60 Minutes", the renowned US news programme. "A promising source of food, jobs and help cleaning ocean waters," is how journalist Lesley Stahl describes it in the July 15 news segment.

The growing demand for seaweed is easy to understand. It's a natural product in the age of increased health consciousness and environmental sustainability. And it has many, many uses. Seaweed has traditionally been a source of food as well as a food additive and that still remains its primary use, with an estimated 80 percent targeted towards food consumption in 2015. Seaweed is categorised by colour: red, green and brown.

Asia is both the main producer and market for seaweed food products. China and Indonesia are the major producers. Japan, South Korea and China are the major consumers. Europe has been steadily increasing its seaweed consumption, with the UK as the top market. But seaweed is enjoyed around the world as an ingredient in food items as varied as Welch bread to Caribbean punch.

Beyond food, seaweed has myriad uses, and even more are being investigated. Seaweed is a source of hydrocolloids, gelatinous substances that are very useful for a variety of purposes. The hydrocolloids are alginate, agar and carrageenan. They are used as natural food additives and preservatives, in natural medicine and science, filtration (of unwanted nutrients in water such as ammonia), crop biostimulants, ingredients in paint, toothpaste, cosmetics, and feed for livestock and fish.

Conservative estimates put the current value of the industry at between US$10 billion and US$16 billion. With such a variety of uses and growing demand it is easy to see why.

CAMPUS NEWS

ON THE BACKS OF THE TURTLES

The village that the leatherbacks built

BY JUNIOR DARSAN, CHRISTOPHER ALEXIS AND SAYYIDA ALI

Nestled between the main ridge of the Northern Range and the North Coast of Trinidad lies the charming and isolated coastal community of Grande Rivière. Despite continuous population decline since the 1930s, every year from March to August, the village is a hive of activity, welcoming visitors averaging more than the actual resident population.

They come to see one of the most enduring and remarkable creatures of the oceans, the giant leatherback turtle *(Dermochelys coriacea)* (Figure 1). These turtles cross oceans to return to the place of their birth to spawn new generations.

From the anticipation at night as the large leatherbacks slowly emerge from the rumbling coastal shores, to the fresh local food, fish and therapeutic nature walks, Grande Rivière is a captivating and peaceful getaway.

Despite its recognition as a unique site of ecotourism, its existence continues to be precarious given its vulnerability to the impacts of natural and anthropogenic forces. The beach where the turtles nest is constantly subjected to cyclic high-energy wave and river channelling events, causing erosion and loss of or damage to turtle eggs or hatchlings.

Episodic extreme flooding of the Grande Rivière River has led to the shifting of the river mouth and resulted in backshore beach erosion, with the most recent recorded event in 2012. It is anticipated that the magnitude and frequency of extreme events may increase. Furthermore, sea-level rise on the north coast of 1.3mm per year (EMA, 2007) has implications for beach erosion and nesting success.

Grande Rivière offers us a "living laboratory" to measure and study topics such as the cost of inaction, the benefits of timely interventions, the impacts on people and planet and the challenges to and opportunities for good sustainable management and effective governance. Studying this area can promote better decision-making in similar areas globally.

Against this backdrop, our team at The UWI's Department of Geography is working on a research project at Grande Rivière, which we call "Society, turtles and environmental change in Grande Rivière – towards sustainable management of a vulnerable community."

One objective is to understand the dynamic nature of the beach habitat. The project evaluated beach impacts and recovery in response to river discharge and the hydrodynamic conditions of the bay under extreme and episodic tides and storm events.

We also collected data on turtle nesting and analysed it against the changing beach morphology. Turtle nests were GPS-located and then mapped and analysed using GIS software. Historical turtle nesting data was used to analyse nesting trends and assist in the discussion of the eco-tourism potential and its sustainability. The ecosystem services provided by Grande Rivière were investigated alongside a baseline community-based assessment to determine perceptions on the future of development in Grande Rivière.

Environmental Challenges

The Grande Rivière beach is subject to a high wave energy environment year-round with the highest waves occurring between November and April. This wave energy results in a highly dynamic beach with frequent changes on the beach such as the presence of a berm, scarp or even the river charting a new channel (Figure 2). The beach sediment reflects these changes in the sorting of the sediment.

Turtle nesting is concentrated at the eastern end of the beach during the early nesting period (Figure 3) but expands westward as the season progresses. Nesting is concentrated adjacent to the river mouth, however, loss of these nests occurs during high river discharge in the rainy season as the river widens and sometimes shifts the position of its mouth (Figure 4). The research has yet to fully analyze the relationship, if any, between turtle nesting, beach morphology and sediment characteristics on the beach.

Social Challenges

Research indicates that the population in Grande Rivière is currently decreasing. While this suggests a positive ecological future on account of a reduced human influence, it leaves less human resources for community development. However, the fact that young women became caregivers for the elderly, while young males emigrated for employment but send remittances back home to support families, shows a psycho-social commitment to the community as a home. Having to leave to provide a better economic future, or having to stay to take care of those who were once the caregivers themselves, suggest a stake in Grande Rivière.

Community mapping revealed a total of 165 buildings in the community, 26 of which were commercial enterprises and 139 were residential. Of the residential buildings, 23% were abandoned houses scattered around the village. Despite the high numbers of tourists (approximately 10,000 visitors according to the Forestry Division in 2016), and the employment of additional employees by establishments to cater for their needs, several respondents agreed that employment opportunities from the eco-tourism sector are still lacking.

Survey data collected on sources of income for Grande Rivière community dwellers revealed that 12.6% of respondents were involved in tourism-related activities, 43.4% were employed in non-tourism-related activities and 44% of respondents were unemployed.

The Turtle Village Trust (TVT) and the Grande Rivière Nature Tour Guide Association are the main entities which organise activities such as tour guiding, beach patrolling, turtle data collection and conservation initiatives in Grande Rivière.

As a result, only few jobs are available and the short-term, seasonal nature is unattractive for those who are able to seek higher-paying, permanent jobs elsewhere. It was also found that 16% of surveyed households are highly dependent on governmental pension as the main source of financial support for the family unit.

Nesting turtles on the beach at Grande Rivière have become a typical aspect of life in the community. There are many residents who feel particularly connected to nature and their God by the presence of these marine turtles, while there are those who, during the nesting season, remain completely disconnected from the beach, disgruntled by tourist behaviours.

An overarching understanding exists of the instrumental value of nesting turtles to the community despite personal interests, a point which may hold the key to the development of Grande Rivière.

For more information
junior.darsan@sta.uwi.edu or visit:
http://sta.uwi.edu/ffa/geography/society-turtles-and-environmental-change-grande-Rivière-bay-towards-sustainable-management

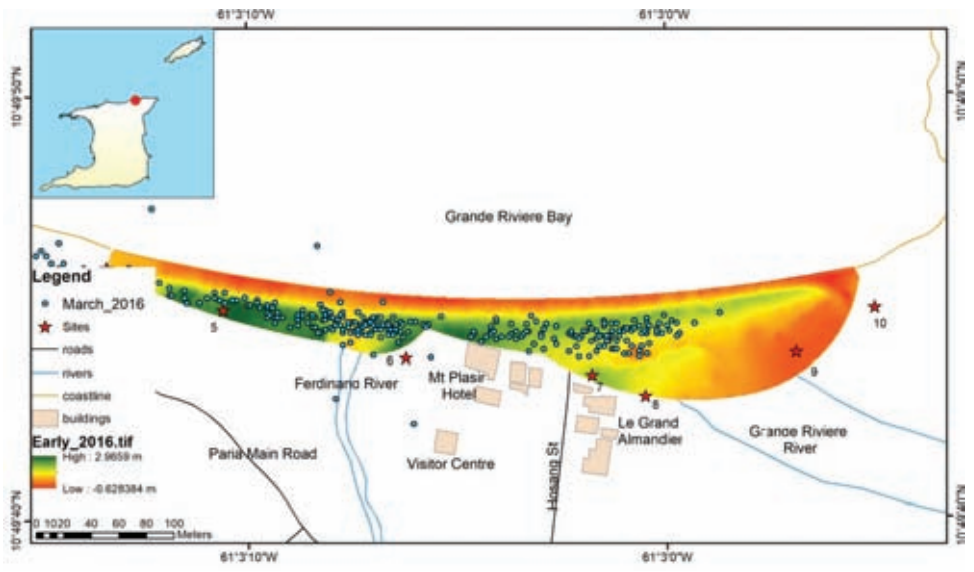


Figure 3: Early nesting season and beach topography.

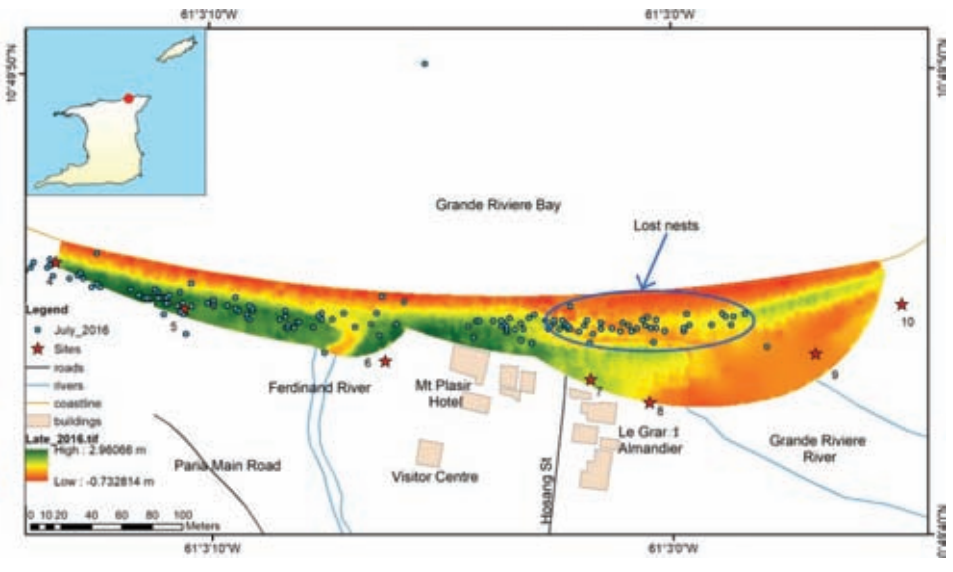


Figure 4: Late nesting season and beach topography.

"Society, turtles and environmental change in Grande Rivière – towards sustainable management of a vulnerable community."
This project from The UWI's Department of Geography is being led by Dr Junior Darsan (Coastal Geomorphologist) and postgraduate students Christopher Alexis and Sayyida Ali.

CAMPUS NEWS

Islands need to protect marine biodiversity as well as their onshore natural environments. So believes **Dr Howard Nelson** one of the three plenary speakers at the inaugural **Latin America and Caribbean Congress for Conservation Biology (LACCCB 2018)** that was held in Trinidad and Tobago from July 25-27. The discussions around the conference theme *"Rainforest to Reef"* allowed participants to explore conservation needs and practices in Caribbean, island and marine ecosystems. In this Q&A with **Pat Ganase**, Dr. Nelson considers some of the challenges in Trinidad and Tobago.

ON LAND AND AT SEA

Rainforest to reef conference explored the challenges and needs

Dr. Howard Nelson is a senior lecturer in the Department of Biological Sciences, University of Chester in the UK. He acquired the BSc Zoology and Chemistry; and MPhil Zoology at The UWI St Augustine; and the PhD Wildlife Ecology and Forestry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA. The focus of his current programme and consultancies is biological conservation and sustainability.

What marine areas are protected? Which should be?

Currently only Buccoo Reef is protected under the Marine Preservation and Enhancement Act. There are many areas that need protection around the country. Deciding which ones get protection is a complicated issue as you not only need to look at protecting unique areas, but places that are important for traditional uses, as well as for important ecosystem processes such as migration, etc. The FAO and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago have been preparing a new national parks plan for the country. I helped develop the draft which was completed a month or so ago. This plan proposes new areas for protection, including deep sea areas, a large coastal and marine area around north-east Tobago, several islands, and coastal areas around Trinidad (such as the reefs at Salybia Bay in Toco). If approved, these will altogether cover about 21% of our Exclusive Economic Zone.

What are good examples (from other countries/ islands) that we should look at?

Across the Caribbean, there are several efforts to increase the size of terrestrial and marine areas under formal protection. The countries in the region are signatories to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), an international treaty that protects biodiversity globally. All member countries have committed to protect, at a minimum 17% of their terrestrial and 10% of their marine areas by 2020.

Good examples across the Caribbean abound. Look at the Codrington Marine Reserve in Antigua and Barbuda. Dominica has set national targets that exceed the CBD 2020 targets: they are aiming at 20% of terrestrial and 15% of coastal and marine areas. Several countries in the region (Bahamas, Grenada, St Kitts/Nevis, and the Dominican Republic, etc.) have also signed up to the Caribbean Challenge Initiative (CCI) that seeks to protect 20% of terrestrial and near shore marine and coastal resources by 2020, exceeding the CBD targets. The Belizeans have also been doing amazing work with protected areas of their barrier reefs.

Are there good examples in T&T that should be looked at? Where are they and why have they remained protected?

In T&T we've been slow in developing formally protected areas, as we have relied on the Forest act, Conservation of Wildlife Act and Marine Preservation and Enhancement Act primarily, to designate protected areas. These laws were never designed to accomplish the kind of protected areas management we need in the 21st century. We do have some protected areas that are still in good shape: Trinity Hills Wildlife Sanctuary, Little Tobago Island, Main Ridge Forest Reserve, St David's Forest Reserve, Paria and Blanchisseuse Forest Reserves. Many of these areas have stayed in good shape either because they are relatively inaccessible, or in the case of the Tobago areas, are valued for their contributions to local livelihoods. There are areas where local community efforts have led to tremendous conservation success, such as at the coastal beaches in the north-east of Trinidad, and the work of Nature Seekers at Matura.

How would you try to influence people in T&T? Policy makers?

Trinidad and Tobago is a very special place for conservation in the Caribbean. We have the most diverse terrestrial ecosystems; the first forest reserve in the Western Hemisphere; our islands sit on a part of the South American continental shelf that is really interesting from a marine standpoint; and our people have provided some of the best examples of NGO-based conservation action. In spite of this, we appear to lag behind many of our Caribbean neighbors in terms of protected areas management.

Raising our game will require more public and political buy-in. The way to increase this buy-in is to improve the link between people's daily lives and the biodiversity in protected areas. Today, climate change is the biggest threat to biodiversity. It also presents some of the greatest national development challenges in terms of increased infectious disease risk, drought, loss of agricultural productivity and increased risk from storms and forest fires. All these risks can be accentuated or reduced through management of protected areas and biodiversity. Better management of these areas means more livelihood opportunities (jobs); and investments in reduction of the risks of flooding, drought and forest fires. These are not merely "nice to have" but "must have" as we develop our country.

You spent five years at the Asa Wright Nature Centre (AWNC), what do you think a place/ institution such as Asa Wright should be doing to be a model protected natural area and to conserve biodiversity?

Places like the Asa Wright Nature Centre offer some of the best national/regional models of how local ideas about conservation can make a lasting and substantial impact on biodiversity conservation. The longevity of the AWNC and its work on multiple different fronts makes it a tremendous model. To ramp this up, the AWNC could promote the lessons it has learned in the past 50 years, to other national and regional NGO/CBO and national governments looking to replicate its success.

CAMPUS NEWS

Mandela Days

BY JEANETTE G. AWAI

If I asked you to motivate people to become more like Nelson Mandela, how would you do it? The Norman Girvan Library (NGL) of the Institute of International Relations (IIR) figured out just that with their Dollar a Day Donation Drive – an appeal to UWI staff to donate 100 dollars in 100 days (from April 9 to July 18) in honour of Nelson Mandela's centenary birthday and Nelson Mandela Day. The Nelson Mandela Foundation celebrates Nelson Mandela Day under the theme, ***Take Action. Inspire Change. Make Every Day a Mandela Day.***

Being change agents is nothing new to the NGL staff. They answered the call to 'Take Action' before in 2013 and 2017 by hosting campus-wide Book Drives with Project for Educational Excellence (PEDEX) – a foundation which assists in equipping primary schools and its pupils with school supplies. Together, they hosted book donation drive; the proceeds of which were donated to primary school students and libraries respectively.

This year's initiative, according to Library Assistant, Carrill Melville, came about by coincidence. After seeing internal promotions for the Division of Student Services and Development's (DSSD) Adopt-a-Student Fund (a fund where staff give monthly donations to students in need of financial assistance through salary deductions), Carrill reached out to Chandar Supersad, Manager at Financial Advisory Services to see if people could make one-time donations instead of monthly, thus the $100 in 100 days drive was born. A proposal was presented to and approved by the NGL Librarian (Mrs. Cherill Farrell), the IIR Director (Prof. Jessica Byron), and the Campus Registrar (Mr. Richard Saunders). NGL staff members, Malika Charles, Carrill Melville, Premma Ramsawak, and Gina Ravello then went full steam ahead with the coordination process.

For the next 100 days, 41 departments participated in the drive including my Marketing and Communications Office, who were the drive's highest donors raising approximately $2,111.11. Overall, $8,161.95 was raised during the drive and on July 18, the Norman Girvan Library hosted a Dollar Plus Sale with local goodies for purchase as well as games, movies as well as a reading of "Long Walk to Freedom: Children's Edition".

Children were invited from around the community as part of educational outreach including 111 campers from various camps including from The UWI After-School Care (14), Curepe Anglican (47), Jump Start Child Care Services Camp (27), and Art- in-Action Camp (23); and a total of 18 counsellors.

The sale generated $1,213 in additional funds, and with a final donation of a thousand dollars, the total was $10,374.95. As chief fundraiser of the highest contributing department, I think my coworker, Publications Manager Nicole Huggins-Boucaud expressed it best: "Thanks Jeanette for the weeks of pestering, cajoling, badgering, and mild shaming – just what is sometimes needed to get stuff DONE!" Indeed, we must do whatever it takes to make every day a Mandela day!

Jeanette G. Awai is a freelance writer, part-time idealist and full-time Marketing and Communications Assistant at the UWI Marketing and Communications Office

Age and Balance

The "Connecting the Dots: Work Life Balance Ageing" conference was hosted by the Institute of Gender and Development Studies and the Social Work Unit in April.

The conference was energized by the recently concluded three-year research project "Work/Life Balance: Its Impact on the Productivity of Working Men and Women and on the Wellbeing of Ageing Populations" which was funded by The UWI Research and Development Impact Fund, and brought together stakeholders, including the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), International Labour Organization, Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean (ILO/DWT), Women Working for Social Progress (Working Women), policy makers, public sector official, corporate sector representatives, caregivers, civil society, regional and international scholars in the field of ageing, and members of the public.

Lead Investigator, Professor Patricia Mohammed established the need for the research and the conference from the onset, by highlighting the demographic shifts towards an ageing population in the Caribbean and the imperatives for society to plan forward to address the emerging changes.

The conference began with a difference, moving away from traditional conferences which establish social problems from the onset. Rather, the introduction of an animation piece specially commissioned by First Citizen's Bank, allowed young people to produce a public think-piece which guided the participants through re-imagining life in a society which supports our ageing population.

Professor Denise Eldemire Shearer, Director of the Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre set the tone for the conference with her presentation entitled: "Ageing and the Art of Living: A Doctor's Prescription"

The Work Life Balance & Ageing Research team shared the findings of the project and invited participants to dialogue during an Open Mike session on the topic: Finding Our Equilibrium- Full of Ups and Down". Other panels highlighted issues of care work and ageing with speakers Cynthia Carrington Murray of J&C Adult Daycare and Re-Creation Centre, Emmanuel Joseph from Martinique and Ariel Pino, representing the ILO. The day ended with a panel discussion on Duties of Care with Dr Neleen Baboolal, Dr Simone Mc Fee and Satye Seemungal framing the discussion around dignity in care and preserving the quality of life of persons for as long as possible.

The second day's keynote speaker, Mrs. Niala Persad-Poliah, Executive Director of the National Insurance Board of Trinidad and Tobago, stimulated the audience's thinking around "planning for a longer working life." Her presentation around the realities of increasing life expectancy, the doubling of the over 60 sector of the population and a contraction in the workforce aged 15-60, invited conversations around whether older people should have the right to continue working beyond the current compulsory retirement age.

Other panel discussions followed on Work, Ageing and Society with Ms Diane Hector, Dr Letnie Rock, Ms Douladel Willie and Mr Feyaad Khan,. The final panel, Implications of Work and Work/Life Balance and Ageing Issues capped the discussions for the day. Presenters at this panel included Mr. Nirad Tiwarie, Mr. Francis Jones and Mrs. Christine Sahadeo.

Celebrating Students Past and Present

"Our graduates are our most important asset. We are delighted to recognise them at this moment of the University's history." Chancellor Robert Bermudez was speaking to guests during his opening remarks at The UWI 70th Anniversary Pelican Awards ceremony on July 25. It was part of the University's Chancellor's Week celebrations, which also honoured seven distinguished alumni.

In response, President of The UWI Alumni Association (UWIAA) Jamaica Chapter, Mrs. Jacqueline Sharp, who delivered greetings at the event, stated, "We have The UWI to thank for giving us the solid foundation from which we've launched our careers, for giving us the values that have shaped our character and prepared us for leadership, and for giving us long-enduring friendships and a valuable network which we can lean on for support."

Dr Lloyd Stanford, retired senior public servant of the Province of Ontario, Canada, and president of Le Groupe Stanford Inc; Dr Karl Massiah, Orthopaedic Surgeon, Founder and Head of Orthopaedics at Etobioke Hospital in Canada; Professor Merle Collins, internationally acclaimed poet, oral archivist, documentary film maker and educator;

Chancellor Robert Bermudez with members of the Jamaica Chapter of the International Women's Forum (left) and with members of the Guild of Students from the four campuses. **PHOTOS: DENNIS GORDON**

Dr Andre Irvine, a distinguished jurist on the Superior Court of Justice of Ontario; Dr June Soomer, Secretary-General of the Association of Caribbean States and Chair of The UWI Open Campus Council; Dr Andre Haughton, Lecturer in the Department of Economics at The UWI Mona and Dr Nicole Nation, a specialist in autism and disabilities, received awards. They were nominated by their peers in Chapters of The UWI Alumni Association globally.

CAMPUS NEWS

Regional Tobacco Tax Harmonization

A High-Level Knowledge Exchange Conference on Regional Tobacco Tax Harmonization in the Caribbean was organized by the World Bank Group's Tobacco Control Program, under the leadership of Patricio Marquez and The UWI, HEU, Centre for Health Economics, under the leadership of Prof Karl Theodore.

The purpose of the Conference was to discuss the way forward for tobacco tax harmonization across the OECS region, based on the experiences and lessons learned from other customs unions across the world. The Conference was envisaged to be the starting point of tobacco tax harmonization discussion in the region and was born out of a recently drafted report on the state of excise taxes in the OECS region. The Report was drafted by the HEU-UWI, in collaboration with the World Bank Tobacco Team, and with data generated by the Statistical offices and Customs and Excise Divisions of participating OECS member countries. Included in the report were simulations on harmonization scenarios for 2019 to 2021.

The Conference was attended by representatives from;

- World Bank Group's Tobacco Control Program;
- The UWI, St. Augustine Campus;
- Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Secretariat;
- Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance officials from the OECS and Trinidad and Tobago;
- CARICOM (Caribbean Community);
- Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization;
- European Union (EU);
- West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU); and
- The Economics of Tobacco Control Project team, Cape Town University, South Africa.

Among the subjects discussed:

Draft report on, Advancing Action on the Implementation of Tobacco tax Harmonization in the OECS.

- Each country was invited to give their thoughts on the report, the applicability of the findings in their respective contexts, and potential commitments to harmonizing tobacco excise taxes.
- There was a general consensus that the harmonized rate should be set as a minimum (price floor) where individual countries could exercise freedom in setting a higher excise tax level based on country's agenda.
- Participating countries indicated that there was strong political will for strengthening tobacco taxation and an effort to harmonize tobacco taxation would be timely, given that tobacco tax reform discussions have been on-going in many countries.
- To achieve the health status goals, it was identified that the increase in taxation translates into retail price increase i.e. cigarettes should become less affordable over time to deter initiation and encourage cessation.
- It was also suggested that excise tax increases be publicized so that the public could pre-emptively change its smoking behaviour.

Applicability and effect of the tax harmonization at the OECS regional level

- Currently tobacco control policies are determined at the national level with different tax structures, levels of taxation, and processes for tax collection. While there are currently five different types of taxes are applied on tobacco products across the region, the proposal is to rationalise to three types of taxes: Customs (CET), VAT and excise tax.
- The exact taxation rate that will fit all of the countries in the region will need to be assessed.
- It was widely believed that simpler tax systems are better than more complex taxes. A uniform specific tax that is adjusted regularly for inflation and income growth is regarded as best practice.

Illicit tobacco trade in the Caribbean region

- While concerns were raised about the illicit trade in the region and the impact on tax revenues, stronger port controls and legislation were identified as measures to minimize such trade.

Availability of data and data monitoring in the region

- A lack of data hinders tobacco control policy and monitoring. It was suggested that a data repository for the region be created.

Earmarking excise tax revenues; tobacco tax revenues

- Some countries favoured earmarking revenues specifically for healthcare as well as smoking cessation programmes.

The Conference was held on June 21and 22 at the HEU, Centre for Health Economics, Sir George Alleyne Building, 25A Warner Street, St. Augustine.

UWI Scholarship 5K RUN

The UWI Scholarship 5K Fun Run took place on Sunday June 24, from the UWI Sport and Physical Education Center (SPEC) and it was well attended by staff, students, alumni, and other friends of The UWI. This inaugural 5K was held to raise funds for scholarships for student athletes.

Runners take off at the SPEC starting point.

Ms. Grace Jackson, Director, UWI SPEC, with Mr. Connell Lord, Administrative Assistant (Accounts), Sports Fitness and Athletic Development and Cantius Thomas, prize-winner.

BOOKS

IMMORTALISING KITCH

BY JARREL DE MATAS

Under a barely-lit night sky, a star was born on stage, while a calypsonian's legacy was re-ignited. Trinidadian-born, UK-based writer Anthony Joseph delivered a stellar performance as part of the book launch of his novel *Kitch* on April 27. The Big Black Box was the venue for a roster of imminent and emergent writers. But it was Anthony Joseph who stole the show.

Endorsed by the NGC Bocas Lit Fest, Joseph's novel did more than focus the spotlight on his artistic voice, it also redirected attention to the larger-than-life figure who embodied the lived experience of a generation, and whose personality invigorated a nation.

I'm referring to the late Grandmaster, the calypsonian known as Lord Kitchener, Aldwyn Roberts. Joseph's text is a masterclass. I do not think a Trinidadian novel has ever made a single artist the sole focus of its literary illustration. It is appropriate that Lord Kitchener is the first.

Born in 1922, Kitchener's musical consciousness had been unavoidably informed by the colonial experience. He lived through colonialism, post-colonialism, post-war independence, and was on the cusp of early Trinidadian modernism. Kitchener personified the rise and development of the Trinidad and Tobago nation-state. Arima, Belmont, Port of Spain and Diego Martin are a few of the places captured in the novel that, together with uniquely Trinidadian expressions such as "it have a zwill in the madbull tail," "jagabat," and "vaps," reinforce the voice and setting that *Kitch* portrays.

This artist, who defined a generation with his musical magnificence, was given fresh life on a night that celebrated music as much as the written word. *Kitch* was a fitting headliner that did not disappoint. And given the recent controversial statements made about the Windrush generation, it was timely.

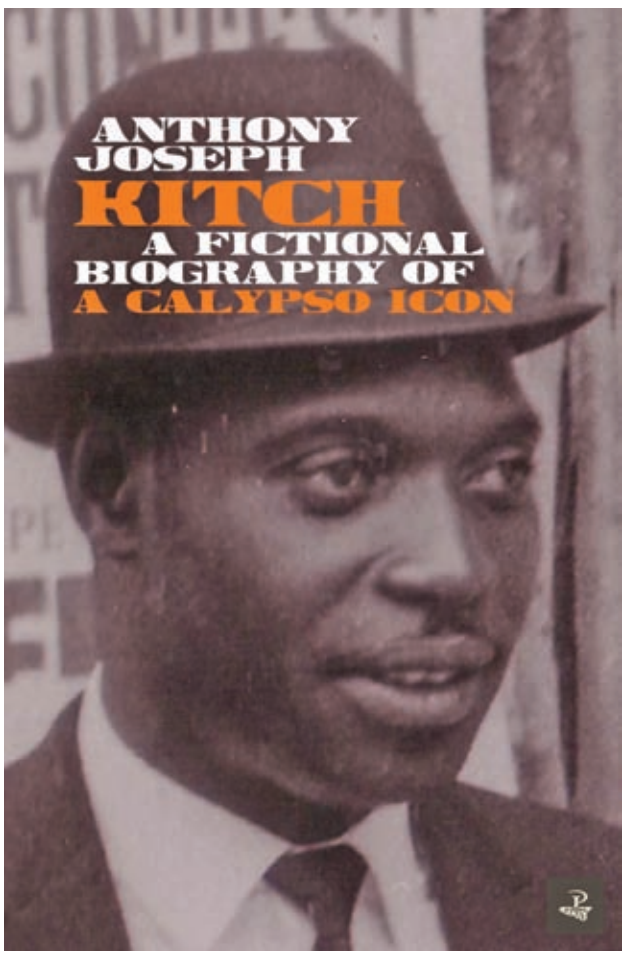
Joseph was prophetic in describing the uncertainties and insecurities faced by the Windrush batch of migrants: "And when you land in the mother country, who you is to the English? You don't know if you coming or going, you papers say England but you born in Trinidad, and you not of the place you reaching yet – and when you reach you is a immigrant."

Lord Kitchener left Trinidad in 1948 aboard the *MV Empire Windrush* to go to the UK. Joseph paid special tribute to Kitchener's role as part of that generation. Describing the moment the ship docks in England, an extract reads: "But he stands here now, on the wooden jetty, upright in England, the land he had imagined for so long."

A few lines later, *'Kitch'* delivers one of his most famous pieces, upon request by the reporter, which Joseph captures down to even the calypsonian's mannerisms:

"Now, may I ask you your name?"
"Lord Kitchener."
"Lord Kitchener. Now I'm told that you are really the king of calypso singers, is that right?"
"Yes, that's true."
"Well, now can you sing for us?"
"Yes."

Anthony Joseph



"London is the place for me"
(mimics the upright, wood bass)
"London, this lovely city"
(the right shoulder rises, the beat turns down)
"You can go to France or America
India, Asia or Australia
But you must come back to London city."

Accompanied by live music and vocals of Kitchener's classic, "London is the place for me," Joseph was met with thunderous applause.

The author's extensive craft as a poet brings a unique rhythm and style that makes the reverence of Lord Kitchener's characterisation in the novel leap off the page. This is not your typical work of fiction, or biography. In fact, the subtitle of the novel – a fictional biography – sets readers up for a promising journey into the life of Lord Kitchener that is enhanced with Joseph's poetic prose. Interwoven in the text are lyrical interludes which evoke the nostalgia and musical genius associated with the almost mythological persona of Kitchener.

Part of Joseph's creative brilliance is that most of what readers learn of *Kitch* is filtered from the community of people around him. In this way the myth-making of *Kitch* is sustained. In fact, the calypsonian does very little speaking in the novel, which paradoxically increases his presence and impact further because different people all have their say on what *Kitch* meant to them..

The novel's chapters are divided into three broad sections that trace the development of the legendary calypsonian: "Bean," "Lord Kitchener" and "The Grandmaster." Each sub chapter is a personal account of the impact Kitch has had on the people describing him. The calypsonian's influence through music is summed up in the section titled "Centipede, June 1948:" "Fellas does feel sweet when Kitchener open he throat to sing. Long as he singing, we feel safe; we eh go dead."

"The Road" describes him further: "But *Kitch*, like he put something else in that song. What it is? I don't know much about Africa, but if you listen you could hear like people beating big African drum with bone in there."

As a child of the nineties I did not understand how significant the life and career of Lord Kitchener was to Trinidad in particular, and the Caribbean in general, but Anthony Joseph's performance that night was something special. The entire audience, young and old, was captivated by the gravity of Joseph's literary project. I myself was so overwhelmed with pore-raising, lump-in-throat, emotions following the performance that I was compelled to give Joseph a standing ovation (as did other members of the audience). For a brief moment, Lord Kitchener was reincarnated on stage and I was able to share in the legendary individual who will forever be immortalised by *Kitch*.

Anthony Joseph has hit a gold mine as it concerns in-depth biographical explorations of Caribbean icons through fiction. It is my hope that similar writings will be undertaken to shine light on other artists who shared the generation with our very own *Kitch*.

Jarrel De Matas is a postgraduate student, M.A. Literatures in English, at The UWI St. Augustine campus.

LITERATURE AND POLITICS

Elvira, you is a Bitch

BY KENNETH RAMCHAND

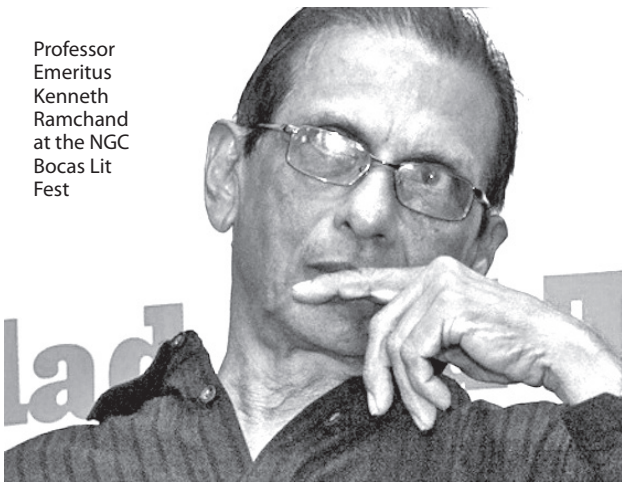
The Suffrage of Elvira is comically alive and politically relevant at the age of 60. The novel was published in April 1958, two years after VS Naipaul's first return visit to Trinidad in 1956. His uncle Simboonath Capildeo was a candidate for the "Indian" party (the PDP), and during his visit, Naipaul experienced the campaigning for the election that was to initiate 30 unbroken years of control by one political party (the PNM). The good things that happened during this period have been recognised, but the malformations that set in have not been corrected and may never be able to be corrected.

The racial tensions Naipaul saw in 1956. His fears for the fate of the Indian population and his sense of the communal terrors Independence might bring enter The Mimic Men (1967) and Guerrillas (1975), books written after some time had passed and after further grounding visits to the island had been made.

The mind has its own ways of working. It came to Naipaul during those disturbing weeks that he should write a novel about a rural election. He chose to build the story around the 1950 general elections. He invented a fictional constituency called Elvira in the remote County of Naparoni, and he provided a voters list. Elvira has 8,000 registered voters: 4,000 Hindus; 1,000 Muslims; 2,000 Africans; and 1,000 Spanish cocoa-panyols. The new voters have no idea what the vote means or what to do with it except to sell it to the highest bidder or surrender it to a broker.

The invented constituency used to be a grand cocoa estate, and is named after the plantation owner's wife Elvira, who had had a baby by an African worker and buried it in the foundation at the time the cocoa house was being built. All Elvirans are afraid to encounter the baby ghost of the cocoa house when darkness falls. (But not, of course, as much as they fear the obeah dog that crawls down the high street like a gunslinger at high noon.)

Naipaul gave to Elvira a geographical setting that is recognisably in Caroni, around Couva, Gran Couva and Tortuga. It is an "innocent" landscape already being exploited for lumber and quarrying. One of the finest views of Trinidad is seen (and can still be seen from Tortuga) from the top of Elvira Hill: "Below, the jungly hills and valleys of the Central Range. Beyond, to the South, the sugarcane fields, the silver tanks of the oil refinery at Pointe-a-Pierre, and the pink and white houses of San Fernando; to the west, the shining rice fields and swamps of Caroni, and the Gulf of Paria; the Caroni Savannah to the north, and the settlements at the foot of the Northern Range." To Candidate Harbans and the large-scale operators whose lethal coming Naipaul's novel anticipates, it is "a lot of bush" for lumber; and plenty rock and dirt for quarrying.

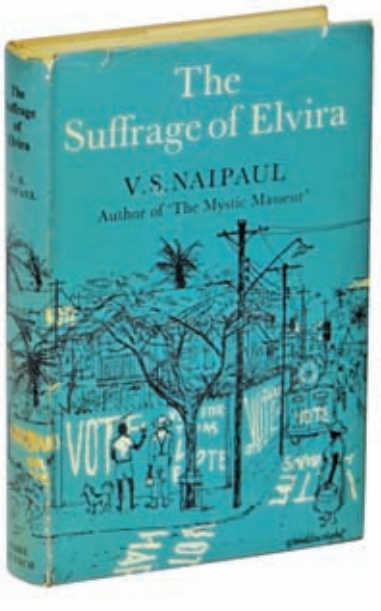


Professor Emeritus Kenneth Ramchand at the NGC Bocas Lit Fest

The 1950 Elections

In the 1950 elections, the general area in which Elvira is located was divided into Caroni North (won by Mitra Sinanan) and Caroni South (won by Ranjit Kumar). All the island's constituencies had been adjusted to make sure that each of them would have around 12,000 voters. There were 18 elected seats for which 141 business-minded candidates offered themselves. Of the 90 Independents, six were returned; of those with nominal party affiliations, 12 won places. The Butler party (which always aimed to unite African and Indians) won six, the Trinidad Labour Party (TLP) won two, and the Caribbean Socialist Party (CSP) won two. The moderate Political Progress Group (PPG) also won two seats. It is worth noting that after the election, two winners (Bhadase Sagan Maraj and Tobago's APT James) pledged support for Butler in the 18-member Legislative Council. But the Legislative Council did not choose Butler or any of the other seven "Butler" members to serve on the Executive Council. With supreme self-contempt, they chose Albert Gomes who wielded great power as Chief Minister, and three Independents (Norman Tang, Roy Joseph and Ajodhasingh), who also became 'Ministers'. Butler claimed quite justifiably that he had been cheated, and everybody knew why.

Before and after the election there was talk about an alliance of the radical groups, but all the party candidates were individualists to whom the so-called party affiliations were relationships of convenience, with people shifting around to suit their personal interests. The Elections and Boundaries Commission did not bother to list any of the candidates as belonging to a political party. Some of the campaigners complained that the only sure thing you could count on to influence voters was personal influence and bribes.



For the full review, please visit our website at **https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/archive.asp**

CAMPUS MUSEUM CASES EXHIBIT

As The UWI celebrates its 70th anniversary, the Campus Museum Committee seeks to highlight the importance of the University to regional development, research, innovation and tertiary level education.

The St. Augustine Campus for example is the site of the National Herbarium of Trinidad and Tobago, a national asset that contains the second largest single collection of specimens in the Anglophone Caribbean. The Herbarium marks its 200th anniversary this year.

The display curated by Dr. Allison Ramsay, lecturer in the Department of History, was mounted in May 2018. It features documents representing Mona, Cave Hill and St. Augustine; items from the St. Augustine Campus and the National Herbarium of Trinidad and Tobago. Documents and artefacts on display are part of the Museum's collections, the West Indiana Division and Special Collections and the National Herbarium. Previous displays mounted by the Campus Museum Committee were "Evolving to the UWI" and "Representations of the UWI."

The Campus Museum Cases are located in the Alma Jordan Library, the Administration Building and the Teaching and Learning Complex.

UWI **Calendar of Events**
AUGUST – NOVEMBER 2018

Microsoft Office Skills
August 18 to November 3
FSS Computer Laboratory

The Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) Computer Laboratory invites you to register for its upcoming Microsoft Office Intermediate 2016 course which costs $3,000.

For more information on the course, please email fss-comp.lab@sta.uwi.edu or call 645-7856, 662-2002 ext.83559

UWI LIFE 2018
Orientation Programmes
August 29
The UWI SPEC

The UWI St. Augustine invites incoming students and their supporters to their official first welcome The UWI family. This is part of the First Year Experience (FYE) year-long programme consisting of a series of orientation activities aimed at helping students transition to UWI Life. The theme for this year's FYE is Direct Your Story. UWI Life is by invitation only. Times are as follows:

- **UWI Life Student | 9am to noon**
- **UWI Life Support | 6 to 8pm**

Invites are sent via email and via a personal letter to invitees mailing address.

EU-CARICOM Law Conference
September 26 to 27
University Inn and Conference Centre
St. Augustine

The UWI St. Augustine's Faculty of Law, Brunswick European Law School of Ostfalia University and Coventry Law School presents the EU-CARICOM Law Conference: Present and Future Challenges.

The conference will feature topics on International Economic Law, UN Agenda 2030, EU and CARICOM issues of developing and how to foster trade relations in times of evolutionary development of regional cooperation and their related aspects to other communities.

For more information, visit the Campus Events Calendar at www.sta.uwi.edu/news/ecalendar.

Caribbean Energy Policy, Societies and Law Conference
8.30am to 4.30pm
October 4
University Inn and Conference Centre
St. Augustine

This multidisciplinary conference brings participants from diverse academic and practitioner backgrounds for discussions on: Laws and Policies for Sustainable Oil and Gas Development in the 21st Century; Gender, Energy and local Content/ Workforce Issues; Environmental Law and Ethics, and more.

For more information, visit the Campus Events Calendar at www.sta.uwi.edu/news/ecalendar.

COTE 2018
October 10 to 11
Learning Resource Centre (LRC)
St. Augustine Campus

The UWI St. Augustine's Department of Economics hosts their annual Conference on the Economy (COTE 2018) under the theme, Economic Development challenges: Looking Towards 2030. This year's conference honours Professor Emeritus Patrick Watson.

For more information, visit the Campus Events Calendar at www.sta.uwi.edu/news/ecalendar.

Call for Papers
Third Regional Mixed Methods Research Conference
Deadline: October 31, 2018
The UWI, St Augustine Campus

The Mixed Methods International Research Association-Caribbean Chapter (MMIRA-CC) together with the Schools of Education (Cave Hill, Mona and St. Augustine), Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES), Schools of Nursing (Mona and St. Augustine), Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business, Centre for Language Learning, Faculty of Medical Sciences (St. Augustine) and the Department of Government (Mona) present the 2019 Mixed Methods Conference in Trinidad and Tobago. They have issued a Call for Papers with the deadline of October 31, 2018. Registration for the conference opens August 15, 2018 and the conference takes place on March 26 to 28, 2019.

For more information, please visit http://conferences.sta.uwi.edu/mmiracc/.

Climate Change Impacts on Food and Nutrition Security Conference
November 12 to 16
Radisson Hotel
Port of Spain

The Faculty of Food and Agriculture (FFA) hosts the Climate Change Impacts on Food and Nutrition Security Conference which aims to collate and share new research experience and findings in sustainable agriculture and climate change through interactions and publications.

For more information, visit the Conference's website: www.foodsecurity2018.com.

13th Annual Caribbean Child Research Conference
November 15 to 16
St. Augustine Campus

The Caribbean Child Research Conference is an annual regional conference which shares research on children and examines the status of children and child rights in the Caribbean. This year's theme is, Leaving No Child Behind: The 2030 Agenda. Children can attend and make presentations. It is a partnership of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES), the Institute of International Relations (IIR) and the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS).

For more information, please visit http://www.uwi.edu/salises/ccrc2018.php

UWI TODAY WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU

UWI TODAY welcomes submissions by staff and students for publication in the paper. Please send your suggestions, comments, or articles for consideration to **uwitoday@sta.uwi.edu**

UWI TODAY is printed and distributed for The University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus, through the kind support of Guardian Media Ltd, 22-24 St Vincent Street, Port of Spain, Trinidad, West Indies.