

THE COMMISSION NEWSLETTER

Conserve nature, preserve life



TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH

NORTHERN LIGHTS SHINE BRIGHTLY AT FARLEY HILL

A DAZZLING DISPLAY of multi-coloured lights illuminated Farley Hill Park as the National Conservation Commission (NCC) launched the inaugural Northern Lights Festival on Sunday, December 22nd, 2024.

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OVER 50 CHRISTMAS trees sparkled under the stars in Queen's Park this yuletide season as part of the Royal Commonwealth Society's 'Christmas in the Square' project.

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CHRISTMAS TREES AGLOW IN QUEEN'S PARK

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GM'S MESSAGE

CHRISTMAS AT THE Commission is a wonderful time of the year!

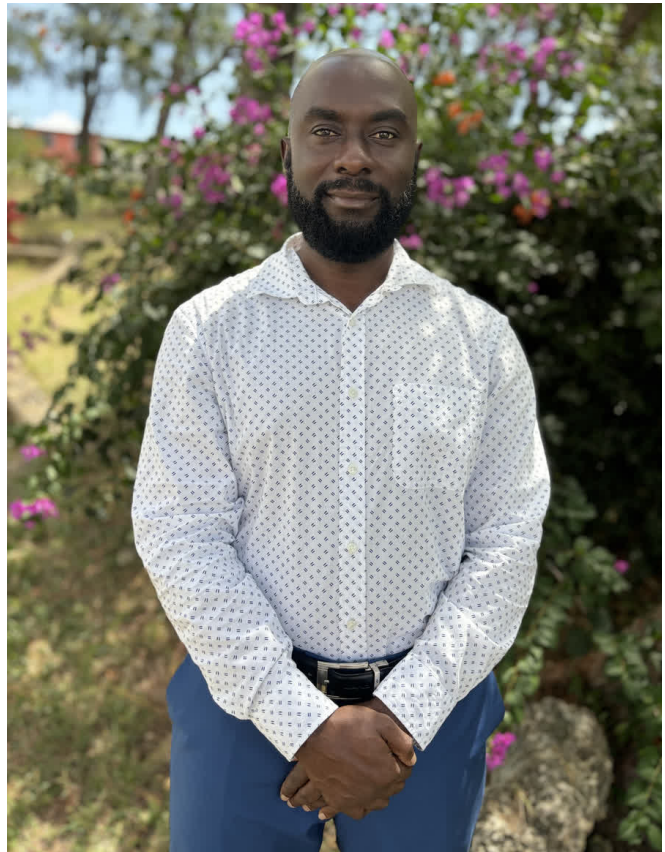
During this month, we celebrated the 70th Anniversary of the Bellairs Research Institute.

Three hundred young science students from five schools were welcomed by Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training (METVT), the Hon. Sandra Husbands, Directors of McGill's Redpath Museum, Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy, McGill President Deep Saini and R. Bruce Lennox, Dean of Science, to the Folkestone Marine Park to learn more about science - it was fascinating.

The Royal Commonwealth Society's 'Christmas in the Square' project is an awesome addition to scenic Bridgetown - the most beautiful city in the world! That's my humble opinion.

Each year, a bit more is added and the children have a wonderful time decorating the trees in their own expressive style.

The Royal Commonwealth Society, Barbados Defence Force, National Conservation Commission, various schools and youth groups come together in true Bajan fashion to ensure that the yuletide displays are captivating. Our Environment Champion, Maria Marshall, with representatives from UNICEF, the Canadian High Commission and students from Graydon Sealy Secondary School inspire us to do more. Their festive tree's decorations, made from recycled materials, reminded me of the times we made toys from old containers. The Trident Fountain in Queen's Park



Mr. Ryan Als

Acting General Manager

National Conservation Commission

with the Christmas trees was my favourite. We also ventured to the north to beautify the picturesque Farley Hill Park.

Our Superintendents and the Electrical and Plumbing section led the charge.

The hard work of the NCC family brought to Barbadians, Northern Lights - a gift to the people of the north.

During this season of love and togetherness, it was a joy to see so many Barbadians families come together in harmony.

As I sat in Farley Hill Park under the Northern Lights, I could not remember at anytime before seeing so many smiling faces.

It felt like we worked non-stop from October to make everything right, then the joy came as we flick the switch and said: "Let there be light!"

Northern Lights shine brightly at Farley Hill



The Farley Hill Ruins were illuminated with Christmas lights this season.

A DAZZLING DISPLAY of multi-coloured lights illuminated Farley Hill Park as the National Conservation Commission (NCC) launched the inaugural Northern Lights Festival on Sunday, December 22nd, 2024.

Thousands of Barbadians and visitors were mesmerised by the assortment of lights that stunningly glowed from end to end.

With over 500,000 lights throughout the venue, they quickly secured vantage points and whipped out their smart devices to capture innumerable magical moments.

The breathtaking display, which is the brainchild of the NCC's Acting General Manager, Ryan Als, was brought to fruition by staff of the Building and Works Department as well as the Field Services Operations Department.

The Departments worked in tandem to ensure that the venue was aesthetically-pleasing prior to its enhancement with

the installation of the lights by the staff of the Electrical and Plumbing Division - a section of the Building and Works Department.

Under the astute leadership of William Husbands, Acting Superintendent of Building and Works, this team worked assiduously to install the dazzling lights. Husbands noted that it was a balancing act for the team as they simultaneously provided critical support to the Royal Commonwealth Society's Christmas in the Square Project.

This annual celebration entails the placement of Christmas trees at select locations in the City of Bridgetown - Heroes Square, Independence Square and Queen's Park.

The Electrical and Plumbing Division's staff members ensure that the trees' lights are safely supplied with power each year. The dedicated team was lauded by Husbands, who noted that they went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that timelines were met and the work was

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‘Overwhelming’ response to dazzling display

completed satisfactorily.

Als echoed Husbands’ sentiments as he heaped praise on both departments for the support they lent ahead of the festival’s launch.

He added that their dedication and hard work is testament to their commitment to the Commission and ensuring their names are written on the organization’s history pages.

Als was equally heartened by the response from Barbadians and visitors, which he described as ‘overwhelming’. While he hinted at the festival being a staple on the calendar, Als opined that the northern parishes of the island were ‘highly deserving of this Christmas gift from the NCC’.

“We are pleased to show our appreciation to Barbadians and visitors alike with this northern yuletide festival. Christmas is that special time of the year when

families and friends come together to celebrate the true meaning of the season and what better way to facilitate that than to create the perfect setting for persons to bask in this beautiful display and even capture these wonderful moments,” he asserted.

The expansion of the yuletide festival to other sections of the island is also under consideration, as Als acknowledged the high level of interest among members of the public.

He believes that there is untapped potential for entrepreneurs and small business owners to offer their goods and services at the event.

Als extended a heartfelt thank you to the sponsors for their invaluable support during the 16-day event.

They included the Barbados Tourism Investment and Marketing Inc. (BTMI), Forde’s Freighting and Gerald B Sounds.



The multi-coloured display of lights in the Ruins were a favourite among many.

NORTHERN LIGHTS HIGHLIGHTS

The dazzling display at Farley Hill Park



Streams of lights were wrapped around the trees at the Park's entrance.



The lights brought a magical element to the Park's main pathway.

NORTHERN LIGHTS HIGHLIGHTS

The dazzling display at Farley Hill Park



The breathtaking display of lights in the gardens were admirable.



The pathway leading to the Farley Hill Ruins also shined brightly.

NORTHERN LIGHTS HIGHLIGHTS

The dazzling display at Farley Hill Park



There was no shortage of lights displays to captivate the Park's visitors.



No building was too big or small for the placement of Northern Lights.

NORTHERN LIGHTS HIGHLIGHTS

The dazzling display at Farley Hill Park



One of the more stunning displays was the lights at this tree's base.



The gazebo's radiant blue colour was accentuated by these white lights.

Christmas trees aglow in Queen's Park



The Trident Fountain in Queen's Park was adorned with the Christmas trees.

OVER 50 CHRISTMAS trees sparkled under the stars in Queen's Park this yuletide season as part of the Royal Commonwealth Society's 'Christmas in the Square' project.

Acting General Manager of the National Conservation Commission (NCC), Ryan Als, welcomed the Park's inclusion in the Project's 11th Anniversary celebrations. The Trident Fountain, Bandstand and the Park's trellis were among the areas that were adorned with the captivating Christmas trees.

Als noted that the enhancement of the historic site's ambience brought an aesthetically-pleasing component to the venue during the festive season.

Meanwhile, NCC's Senior Electrician, William Husbands, said that the Plumbing and Electrical Division was pleased to provide the requisite assistance to support the project.

The Division, which has oversight for the management and maintenance of

the electrical infrastructure at the facilities and open spaces managed by the NCC, ensured that all of the trees' lights were safely connected.

Christmas in the Square is an annual celebration that entails the placement of Christmas trees in Independence Square and Heroes Square.

The project gives students of the primary and secondary schools as well as Barbadian youth groups an opportunity to display their creativity through their decorations for the Christmas trees.

The project's participants primarily create these decorations from recycled materials and draw on inspiration from the pictures and emblems of countries, which are incorporated into their respective themes. As part of the project's 10th Anniversary last year, the Royal Commonwealth Society arranged the placement of 56 trees at vantage points in Queen's Park, which was executed by members of the Barbados Defence Force.

QUEEN'S PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Christmas trees sparkled under the stars



The Bandstand's pathway was accentuated by the Christmas trees.



The Christmas trees surrounding the Trident Fountain were breathtaking.

QUEEN'S PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Christmas trees sparkled under the stars



The Park's garden trellis had a magical wonderland appearance.



The Blue, Green, and Everything In Between Christmas tree.

QUEEN'S PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Christmas trees sparkled under the stars



The Christmas trees evoked nostalgia as they glowed at the historic site.



The spirit of the holiday was enriched by the beautiful Christmas trees.

ENVIRONMENT CHAMPION

UNICEF Youth Advocate Maria Marshall



UNICEF Youth Advocate, Maria Marshall, in front of the festive tree that promotes recycling and inspires creative solutions to environmental challenges. (Feature and pictures by UNICEF Eastern Caribbean)

AMONG THE STUNNING array of Christmas trees in Queen's Park was one with a powerful message about the importance of protecting the environment.

Created by 15-year-old UNICEF Youth Advocate for the Environment, Maria Marshall, this unique tree is a product of her "Inspired by Trash to Create" initiative.

The project, which partners Harrison College—where Maria is a student—and Graydon Sealy Secondary School, is part of her broader environmental movement, "Blue, Green and Everything in Between."

The tree is a striking example of up-cycled art, with decorations made entirely from items most people would

consider waste.

Egg cartons, toilet paper rolls, plastic spoons, Pringle cans, and countless plastic bottles, commonly referred to as 'PET' bottles, were repurposed to spread holiday cheer and promote an urgent environmental message.

"We used a lot of garbage that we naturally generated to create this tree," Maria explained.

"It's kind of like an advocacy, artwork kind of thing where we are inspiring young people to be creative. It also showed them how much garbage we generate and gives them a couple of ideas to raise awareness." The idea for the project came to Maria while working on a Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) Visual Arts assessment. Even during the festive season—a time

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ENVIRONMENT CHAMPION

Recycled materials used to make decorations

traditionally associated with winding down— Maria was determined to find ways to make a lasting impact on her community and the environment.

Representatives from UNICEF, the Canadian High Commission for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, as well as local officials, were on hand to support the initiative.

Together, they celebrated not only the creative use of recycled materials but also the message behind it: the importance of reducing waste and protecting the environment.

As Maria highlighted, the project is also about challenging negative perceptions

of youth.

"Youth usually get a bad rap these days because all we're seeing is a lot of bad stuff out there on the internet. So I think if we put out some good examples, it would inspire people to do more positive things for the environment."

Her tree is more than just a holiday decoration —it's a call to action for young people to think creatively and take responsibility for the world around them. By reimagining waste, Maria is showing that even the smallest actions can contribute to a larger environmental movement, one that celebrates both the holiday season and the planet we all share.



Representatives from UNICEF, the Canadian High Commission for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean showed their support for the initiative as Maria Marshall was joined by students from the Graydon Sealy Secondary School.

QUEEN'S PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Christmas tree decorations promote recycling



Blue, Green and Everything In Between Christmas Tree in Queen's Park.



Graydon Sealy Secondary School students made some of the decorations.

QUEEN'S PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Christmas tree decorations promote recycling



This decoration was a beautiful piece to represent the blue economy.



The use of paints as part of the up-cycling process is highly commendable.

QUEEN'S PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Christmas tree decorations promote recycling



The Sustainable Development Goals bus amplified the tree's message.



An artistic depiction of a sea turtle was also spotted on the Festive Tree.

QUEEN'S PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Christmas tree decorations promote recycling



Plastic spoons and a bottle cap were utilized to create this decoration.



A pet bottle and paints were the materials of choice for this decorative piece.

Students explore science beyond classrooms



Students participate in an experiment simulating a rocket launch during a day of science activities organized to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Bellairs Research Institute. (Feature and pictures by McGill Faculty of Science)

HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS recently saw science come to life in a whole new way.

As part of the celebrations marking its 70th Anniversary, McGill's Bellairs Research Institute opened its doors to the community on Thursday, December 5th, 2024.

Three hundred students from five local schools were treated to free science kits, lunch and a day of hands-on activities.

The event, which was held at the Folkestone Marine Reserve, was a collaboration between McGill, the Ohio-based Centre of Science and Industry (COSI), and its partner, the U.S. Embassy in Bridgetown.

It was presented by Frederic Bertley, BSc'94, PhD'00, the President and CEO of COSI and a member of the Board of

Directors of McGill's Redpath Museum.

Gathered under a large tent, the students, ranging in age from nine to 13, buzzed with excitement.

The event opened with speeches from distinguished guests and university representatives, including Sandra Husbands, Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training (METVT); Donald Maynard, Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy Bridgetown, McGill President Deep Saini and R. Bruce Lennox, Dean of Science.

The students listened as Saini spoke about his experiences as a young student in India and encouraged them to "prepare yourselves to lead this world."

"I know that I am looking out at many future leaders," he told the students.

"Get engaged, particularly with science, but

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Minister Husbands embraces partnership



Left to right: Fiona Hinds, President, Bellairs Board of Directors; Deep Saini, President of McGill University; Donald Maynard, Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy; Frederic Bertley, President and CEO of the Center of Science and Industry; the Hon. Sandra Husbands, Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training; and R. Bruce Lennox, Dean of McGill's Faculty of Science.

also think about how science relates to social science and humanities, because the complex problems that the world faces will be solved by the confluence of many different approaches. Together, we can tackle the challenges that lie ahead and make a positive impact that will endure for generations to come,” Saini added.

To kick off the science activities, Bertley invited several of the representatives to join him as volunteers in a live science experiment.

The students streamed from their seats to stand in front of the stage, where Saini, Lennox, McGill's Vice-President (Global Engagement) Anja Geitmann and Fiona Hinds, President of the Bellairs Board of Directors, poured water onto dry ice, causing it to turn from a solid to a gas.

As the volunteers emptied their water bottles, a thick cloud of fog billowed

into the crowd to the audible delight of the students.

Highlighting how many countries and institutions came together to make the event possible, Bertley encouraged the students to embrace collaboration as a way of life.

“As you think about your future and think about what you want to do, you can and should work really hard,” he said. “But always make sure to partner with people, whether it's your friend, your classmate, people in your school or people in your neighbourhood, because there is strength in partnership.”

Assigning the students to breakout groups, COSI staff guided them through two interactive science experiments at picnic tables shaded by tall trees. Students left Bellairs with science kits donated by COSI and the U.S. State Department, along with valuable hands-on experience.

NCC's Garden Centre Staff Selection

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