

INTERFACE

The Ministry of Transport and Works' Newsletter



MTW GETS READY FOR EPMAS

The Employee Performance Management and Appraisal System (EPMAS) has reached the implementation stage in the Ministry of Transport and Works.

In support of the implementation process, a number of initiatives have taken place so far while others are scheduled to come on stream. The following have since occurred:

- Training Sessions in the art of writing Unit and Individual Work plans
- Attendance of Senior Officers at Work/Unit Plan workshops at the Management Institute of National Development (MIND)
- The EPMAS Committee within the Ministry has been meeting on a weekly basis with a view to finetuning strategies for implementation
- Discussion on and completion of all Unit/Work plans between some Supervisors and direct reports.
- The signing off on work plans between the Permanent Secretary and Direct Reports
- Workshops with resource persons from Price Waterhouse Coopers



The Snr. Director of Policy, Planning & Evaluation signs her work plan with the Permanent Secretary

As the process is an ongoing one, there are aspects of the programme which will be implemented on other dates. As of July 1, 2004 all Pilot Ministries including this one, will fully embrace EPMAS. As a result, the automatic payment of increments to public officers will cease. This will be in keeping with current Staff Orders where an increment will only be paid to an officer whose performance and conduct are reported to be satisfactory.

Other features of the system will be as follows:

- An increment will be paid if the minimum threshold of 75% of targets agreed is achieved at the time the employee's appraisal is being done.
- The employee's formal performance evaluation/appraisal will be done at the end of the financial year but the increment paid on the appointment anniversary date after the financial year.
- If more than 75% of agreed targets are met, non-financial rewards may also be considered in keeping with a programme which is being worked on.
- Monetary rewards may be considered

if 100% of targets agreed are met in keeping with a programme being worked on.

- The 3 year waiting period to qualify for seniority allowance will be reduced to one year for employees who are at the maximum of salary scale. If in the waiting period an employee's performance merits a reward, a one-off payment equivalent to an increment to the employee will be recommended.

- The current compensation system is being recommended for revamping over the next two years with a view to re-enforcing the principles of the new performance culture.

Pilot entities which will implement EPMAS are the Office of the Prime Minister, Office of the Cabinet, Office of the Services Commission, Ministry of Finance and Planning and of course, the Ministry of Transport and Works.

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GUESS WHO?



Can you hazard a guess as to the identity of the person in the above picture?

If you can, please send your answers to the Public Relations Unit by July 30, 2004 and you could be the winner of a pleasant surprise. The winner will be selected from a raffle type draw.

The identity of last Issue's personality is Ceceilia Wilson, Secretary in the PS' Unit. No one was able to correctly guess the answer.

CFI AND JICA IN SEARCH OF THE DIAMONDBACK SQUID

The Caribbean Maritime Institute (CFI) continues its move to foster and strengthen its corporate alliances. The latest of these is a collaboration with the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) with whom CFI has joined forces to conduct a fishing survey on the Diamond Back Squid and Demersal Species in Jamaican deep waters.

Demersal fish such as snappers and groupers live close to the seabed and are among the fish targeted in the survey. Such a programme deepens the ongoing professional relationship between the CFI and JICA with the exploratory work running from April 2004 to May, 2005. The CFI is the main executing Agency and originator of the survey and is the principal contact for the study.

Other organisations involved in the project include the Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, the University of the West Indies, Mona, the Montego Bay Marine Park and the Caribbean Fisheries Training and Development Institute. The UWI, Mona which will give scientific advice and supervision of the activity also has responsibility for the overall research. The Ministry of Agriculture's Fisheries Division is involved in the selection of JICA trained fishers and provision of fishing gear (provided by JICA), bait, a captain, engineer and one staff participant. The JICA Jamaica Office has supplied a fishery expert and will report on the project while also providing support cost of the boat, gears and survey staff.

For its part, the Caribbean Maritime Institute will supply a vessel with fish finder capable of going to depths of 1000m as well as global positioning system (GPS). The Institute is also responsible for providing a boat

captain and engineer, in addition to supplying the fisheries staff participants with fuel, food and drink.

Over the years, fishing activities carried out in the region of the coral shelf of Jamaica have resulted in over exploitation of the stocks and as a result, decreases have been observed. By using new methods introduced by JICA experts a new fishing ground survey is proposed in order to increase catch amounts in the near future. If successful, this study will explore the air-freighting of this valuable deep-water cephalopod from Jamaica to the USA, EU, Japan and will form the basis of a small fishery using new techniques. If the quantities located and landed are large, then the possibility of setting up a freezing plant will be looked into as that will then become necessary.

The JICA members based at CFI are Messrs. Takahiko Yasuda – Group Coordinator, Dr. Toshio Uede, Mr. Toshikazu Iwami and Mr. Shigemitsu Takasugi – Fisheries & Technology Specialist.

Your Health



Your Most Valuable Possession

THE 'JUICE' ON FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Just what is all the hype surrounding fruits and vegetables? Are they as good as nutritionists and other health professionals are making them out to be?

Evidence abounds to confirm that this is in fact so. Fruits and vegetables are excellent sources of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, fibre and special plant ingredients called phytonutrients. These are special chemicals found only in plants. They provide benefits above and beyond those of the vitamins and minerals alone and protect against a variety of diseases such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, blindness, high blood pressure and circulatory problems, just to name a few.

The vitamins found in many vegetables and fruit act as antioxidants. Vitamins C, E, beta-carotene (which changes to Vitamin A in the body) and silencium are all antioxidants and it is advisable to choose foods high in these particular vitamins.

WHICH FRUIT, WHICH VEGETABLES ARE BEST?

The rule of thumb in deciding which of either is best has to do with the colour. The more colourful the fruit or vegetable, the greater the benefit to one's health as different coloured fruits and vegetables provide different nutrients. According to Dr. David Heber, author of the book, "What Colour Is Your Food", there are actually seven different categories of fruit and vegetables that comprise seven key colours. One's daily servings of fruits and vegetables should ideally include these seven groups. Examples of such would be:

- (1) Fruit and vegetable colour: Orange to yellow
Fruit Concerned: Oranges, Tangerines, Papaya
Health Benefit: Phytonutrient
- (2) Fruit and Vegetable Colour: Red to Purple
Fruits Concerned: Red Grapes, Plums, Cranberries, Strawberries, Blueberries, Tomatoes, Pink Grapefruit, Watermelon

Health Benefit: Lycopene – good for healthy heart and prostate

The latest recommendations from the National Cancer Institute in the USA are that men should eat nine servings, women and teenagers should eat seven servings and children – five servings daily to enjoy an optimal healthy diet.

SIZE OF SERVINGS

A medium-sized piece of vegetable or fruit is about as big as a tennis ball

- 1/2 cup (125ml) of chopped or cooked vegetables or fruits is about the size of a computer mouse.
- 1 cup (250ml) of salad greens – the size of a fist
- 1/4 cup (60ml) dried fruit – size of a golf ball
- 1/2 cup (125ml) of fruit or vegetable juice - a small juice glass or three shot glasses

It is to be noted that fruit drinks, cocktails or punches do not count as real fruit juice because they contain only a small amount of real fruit or vegetable juice along with other liquids. Such a label should be checked for 100% juice.

Re-printed from an article in the Daily Gleaner dated April 29, 2004



Elsa-May Binns

MTW's VERY OWN HUMAN ENCYCLOPAEDIA

When you are in her presence, you can't help but feel awed by her vast storehouse of knowledge. From the gentleman's game of cricket, to matters of the heart, to matters of the spirit – the holy spirit that is, she will engage your mind without so much as missing a beat!

Elsa-May Elizabeth Binns represents a breed of Civil Servants who is very fastidious about preserving what the civil service is all about – service to the public while observing all the rules and regulations governing same. In very upbeat tones, she declares, "On the 18th November, it will be 36 years since I have been in the service – my pension is already worked out!"

Of her stint in the service, Mrs. Binns had this to say, "My years in the Civil Service have been very good, I have been on several training courses, received numerous scholarships, fellowships – I owe a lot to the Civil Service," she asserts. Continuing, she says, "Significant progress has been made in many areas of the Civil Service; take for instance buildings housing Government entities, there was a time when these were always dilapidated structures – that has changed. I remember when the Ministry of Education building was constructed, it was THE BIG ATTRACTION at Heroes Circle; people would pay special visits just to view the building!"

She points also to the times when the service was seen as a career which carried a lot of status with it and laments the fact that some of that prestige now seems to be lost. Her negative feelings concerning that, are however tempered by the fact that quite a lot of training is now taking place within the service, an initiative which she feels can only redound to the benefit of persons within the service and ultimately, the country.

But enough about the 'professional'

Mrs. Binns, let us now meet Elsa-May, the one from St. Mary and who always has a story to tell. You will always hear her talk glowingly of St. Ann but she was actually 'born pon mi granmadda bed' in St. Mary even though her parents were living in Kingston at the time. At age two, the family moved to the 'original' Eltham in St. Ann where she attended primary school followed by Westwood High School for Girls where she was a boarder. Coming from a family of five children, and countless other foster ones, (she says there was hardly ever a time when fewer than ten children were domiciled at her house), Elsa-May did not have a problem fitting in with her new environment at Westwood.

Of her growing up years with her close-knit family, Elsa-May has nothing but positive memories. One cannot miss the gleam in her eye when she speaks of her grandfather – 'he was a true colonial gentleman', she says matter-of-factly. She recalls how Busha Wilmot (her grandfather) was the one who got her interested in cricket. 'Back in those days, he had a Telefunken Radio and we listened cricket commentary at various hours of the day and night from places such as England, India and Australia. In fact, family, attracts a rather high premium in Elsa-May's scheme of things. She sang the praises of both parents who she described as 'very gentle, yet firm religious souls'. In terms of her own family, there are five children, two of whom are hers biologically while the other three have been adopted. Being a country girl, it was somewhat of a culture shock when she travelled from St. Ann and 'country collided with town'. According to her, moving to Kingston required big adjustments but then shortly after her arrival in Kingston, BAPS! ... she met Mr. Binns and within twelve months, they were married, she relates with a girlish grin.

So what does this 'Five foot, eleven incher without shoes' lady do when she is not involved in any of the challenging tasks she performs? Cricket (what else?), of course tops the list, watching the game that is, reading, watching television and cooking (she makes a 'wickid' mannish water. Not far behind are her chop suey, rice pudding and cheese cake. A trip to the White River in her favourite parish where she spends time hanging out completes that picture.

Cont'd on page 4)

TRANSITIONS

Welcome Aboard

Paula Brown—Research Officer
Shernette Sampson—GIS Analyst
Devon Sterling—Dir, Inf. Mngt



Enjoy Your Leave

Delroy Palmer
Valorie Peart
Pauline Nelson
Lois McCausland
Trudy-Ann Bucknor



Welcome Back

Sonia Fennel
Sonia Thompson
Genevieve Mykoo
Kadian Small
Joan Tucker
Andrea Belnavis



Farewell & Best of Luck

Richard Nembhard—assgnd. to
Min. of Local Govt.
Christopher Walker—resigned
Vaughn Rose—resigned
Janett Peters—transferred to RSU
Natalee Fuller— " " "



Appointments

Andrea Belnavis—appointed.
Nadine Mitchell— "
Michael McFarlane— "
Audrey Gentles— "
Jennifer Campbell— "



Academic Achievements

Natalee Fuller—Diploma In
Business Administration



World Health Day Celebrations—A Success

In recognition of the serious, global problem of preventable mortality due to traffic accidents, the World Health Organisation (WHO) decided to observe World Health Day 2004 under the theme “Road Safety is No Accident.”

World Health Day was celebrated on April 7, and in Jamaica, a number of activities were held to emphasize the importance of road safety.

With staggering figures of 354 accidents in 2003, which resulted in 391 deaths, 1,450 people suffering serious injuries and 2,591 experiencing minor injuries, the methods used to observe World Health Day in Jamaica reflected an innovative approach.

In collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and 3M Interamerica Incorporated, Driver Feedback Signs were erected at Mountain View Avenue in Kingston and in Montego Bay in St. James.

The Driver Feedback Signs are interactive devices that give drivers feedback about the speed at which they are travelling.



HM Pickersgill turns on Driver Feedback Sign

The signs provide motorists with an immediate display reading about their actual speed. This is made possible through the use of a Light Emitting Device, that

shows the driving speed, and alerts the drivers to reduce their speed if they are exceeding the speed limit.

Impact studies have shown that while the Driver Feedback Signs are not law enforcement tools, they do help to reduce accidents by letting drivers know about their exact speed.

The main activity to mark World Health Day took place at the Excelsior High School on Mountain View Avenue. The collaborative effort to stage the event involved the Ministries of Education, Health and Transport and Works. Portfolio Minister Robert Pickersgill, Education Minister Maxine Henry-Wilson and Health Minister John Junor addressed the audience.

The activities of April 7 were also linked to Labour Day 2004, when, in keeping with the theme of road safety, pedestrian crossings were painted or refurbished in parish capitals islandwide.

EDITORIAL



Dynamism is a feature of life. So is adaptation...to the extent that very few things in one's existence is guaranteed, unexpected happenings are bound to occur. And this is where the two qualities meet – if survival is to continue, adaptation to suit the dynamic nature of life has to take place.

Let us take a look at some of the recent events which will impact our lives one way or the other. Take for example, the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the public sector and the various trade unions. In essence, this will mean no wage increase for this segment of workers for the next two years. Then there is the rise in oil prices and the attendant effect this will have on cost of living.

Now both occurrences are changes over which very few if any 'regular Joe' has much control. So what is the answer to these challenges? ADAPT with a view to addressing these changes.

In response to these events, an individual will have to find innovative ways to adapt. So, the consumer with a static income may find that she will have to abandon visiting the supermarket on a weekly basis and to instead start patronising a wholesale establishment on a monthly basis. It may mean purchasing a less prestigious motorcar which fulfils utilitarian considerations as opposed to 'showing off' with the latest in 'designer wheels'. Within walking distance may have to take on more attractive tones as persons may have to opt to walk to nearby areas rather than drive, thereby cutting down on expenses. And persons who enjoy their regular mani/pedi/facial regimen for instance may find wisdom in learning to do these activities themselves; again reducing the amount being expended on such services.

The truth is that we will all have to re-structure our lifestyles to suit the prevailing environment – simply put, we may have to adopt Hobson's Choice in this regard!

Thought

Cherish your health:

If it is good, preserve it

If it is unstable, improve it

If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take

But, by the moments that take our breaths away.

(...continued from page3)

In terms of satisfying her gastronomic taste-buds, a totally Jamaican fare of Roasted Breadfruit, Yellow Yam and codfish will do the trick every time even though she admits to liking Indian cuisine as well – the only problem here is that 'genuine Indian food is hard to come by', she says.

Anyone who may have heard this senior civil servant speak at the 'Easter Reflections'

programme earlier this year would have sworn she had swapped her nicely tailored pants suit for a surplice and a collar. The fact is that this multi-talented lady is well grounded in her Christianity and is a member of the St. Matthews Anglican Church in Allman Town. She is quick to point out though, that she is equally at home in any other denomination or religion.

A love of plants and animals (she has a particular fixation for the elephant and was 'over the moon' when she got close to one when she visited South Africa) is but another part of her eclectic interest base.

And her philosophy on life? A quote from Proverbs sums it up, "My son, hear the instructions of thy father and forsake not the laws of thy mother ...!"

Selah!

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