

# TEENTIMES

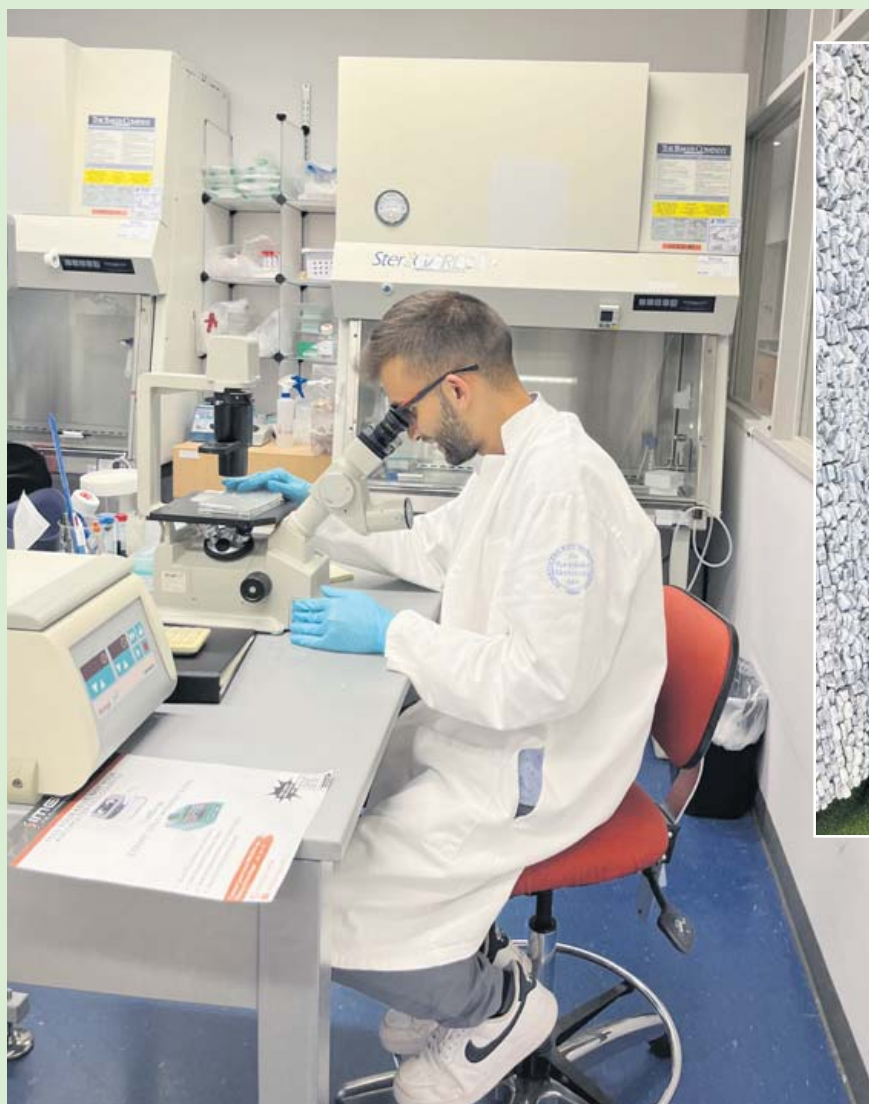
FOR THE YOUTH, BY THE YOUTH!

JUNE 2024

*Ready, Set...*

*Prom*





## ST. MAARTENER VIREN BAHARANI LEADING COVID-19 RESEARCH

**St. Maartener Viren Baharani is a PhD candidate at The Rockefeller University in New York, USA, where he leads several research projects related to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes the COVID-19 disease.**

In 2017, Baharani graduated from Learning Unlimited Preparatory High School as valedictorian. While on the island, he was actively involved in the local community; amongst other involvements, he served as President of the St. Maarten Alpha Leo Club and Vice-President of the Learning Unlim-

ited Interact Club. Baharani also displayed great promise as an academic scholar. Based on his excellence in the sciences, he was awarded a full-ride scholarship to further his studies in biology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA.

Baharani is now pursuing his PhD in biosciences at The Rockefeller University, where he researches the immune response to the SARS-CoV-2 virus. He has been leading efforts to predict how the SARS-CoV-2 virus will mutate in the future. Using techniques in the lab, Baharani can anticipate

the specific mutations that will arise in future SARS-CoV-2 variants.

He explained that this approach allows us to prepare for these variants even before they emerge in nature. He has found that compared to the original virus, the more recent strains of SARS-CoV-2 are more easily able to avoid the antibody response due to the presence of these mutations. These findings are reported in the scientific journal *Nature Communications*.

Looking ahead, Baharani said he will continue researching the SARS-CoV-2 virus during his PhD to guide future coronavirus vaccine designs.

**Baharani's career advice to the St. Maarten youth:**

"There is a whole world out there with opportunities. Pursue your career interests and make the most of every opportunity along the way. I had never imagined that I, a local St. Maartener, would be leading COVID-19 research efforts in the United States. Definitely dream big."

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Suhani Nathuma

**Graphic Designer**

Pip van Gelder

**Contact**

teentimesxm@gmail.com

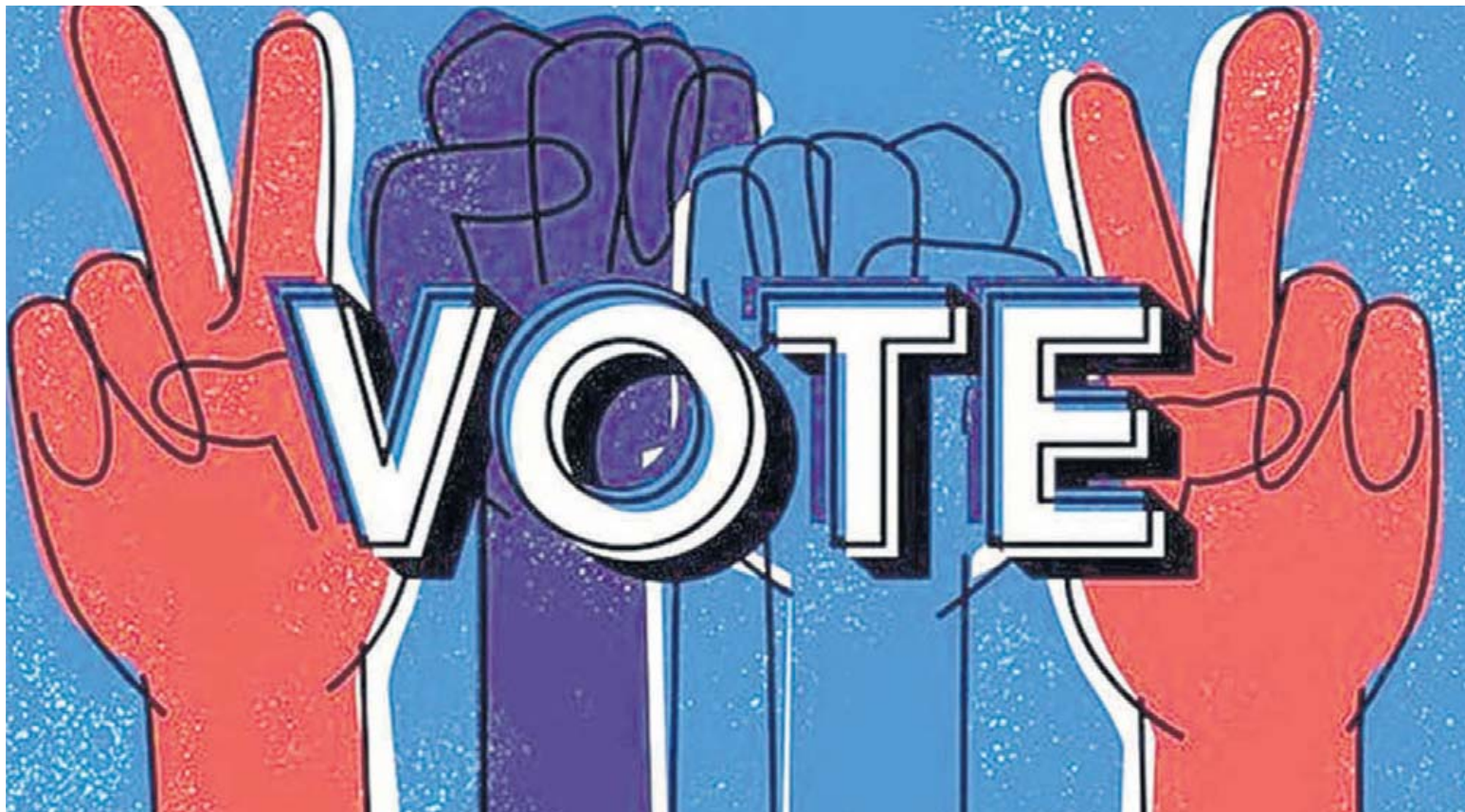
## The Coding Corner Did You Know?

**CHIRAG RAMCHANDANI**

The source code for the Microsoft Windows operating system might be the longest ever written. It was reported that Windows XP had more than 45 million lines of code when it was released in 2001. A sizeable codebase was needed to support the wide range of features and functionalities which made Windows XP one of the most popular operating systems at the time. The codebase has now grown even more as a result of updates like Windows 10 and Windows 11. Windows 11 has incorporated many innovations, including enhanced security features, support for various hardware setups, and broad app compatibility. As a result, we can say that the size of the codebase alone acts as a reminder of the complexity and scale of modern software development, which involves thousands of developers and intensive planning, testing, and collaboration.







# WHY YOUR VOTE MATTERS

## THE DANGERS OF YOUTH APATHY IN ELECTIONS

*It's time to talk about something super important – voting. You might think: "What does my one vote matter?" or "Politics is boring." But here's the truth; not voting is a serious danger to our community, and it can have some pretty scary consequences.*

### **The power of your vote**

When you don't vote, you're giving up your voice in the decisions that affect your life. Imagine your favourite band coming to town and you don't vote on which songs they should play. How would you feel if they only played songs you didn't like? Now, think about this on a bigger scale. Elections determine who runs our countries, what laws get passed, and how money is spent. If you don't vote, you let others decide for you, and those decisions might not be in your best interest.

### **The rise of fringe candidates**

One of the biggest dangers of not voting is the rise of fringe candi-

dates. These are people with extreme views who often don't represent the majority of us. When young people don't vote, the smaller, more extreme groups can take control because their supporters are more motivated to vote. This means that a candidate who doesn't have the best interests of young people or our community at heart can end up in power. Imagine rules being made that don't make sense or even harm us because the people in charge don't understand or care about our needs.

### **Remember the struggle**

In the Caribbean, many people fought and even died for the right to vote. Our ancestors faced incredible hardships, from colonialism to racial discrimination, just to have a say in how they were governed. This struggle wasn't just about voting; it was about having a voice, gaining respect, and ensuring fairness. By not voting, we disrespect their sacrifices and let their efforts go to waste.

### **If you don't vote, you can't complain**

One of the best reasons to vote is this: If you don't vote, you have no right to complain. Every time you get frustrated with the government or think that things should be different, remember that your vote is your voice. Voting is your chance to influence change and make sure that your concerns are heard. Without it, you're leaving all the decisions to others.

### **Voting is easy and important**

Voting is not as hard or as boring as you might think. Most countries make it pretty easy to register and vote, especially for young people. There are also tons of resources to help you understand the candidates and the issues at stake. Plus, voting can be a fun and empowering experience – knowing that you've taken part in shaping the future of your community and your country.

### **HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO**

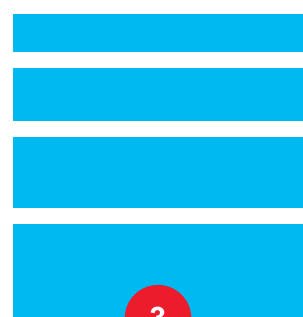
**Vote:** Make sure you're registered and know where your polling place is.

**Educate yourself:** Learn about the candidates and the issues. There are plenty of resources online, at your local library, and even on social media.

**Encourage your friends:** Talk to your friends about voting. Sometimes all it takes is one person to inspire others to get involved.

**Vote:** On Election Day, make sure you go out and vote! ON AUGUST 19, 2024, VOTE!!!

*Your vote is powerful. It's a way to honour those who fought for our rights and to ensure that we have a say in our future. Don't let apathy or indifference allow fringe candidates to take control. Stand up, be heard, and make a difference. After all, our future is in our hands. Let's make it a bright one by voting.*





# THE UNCOMFORTABLE CONVERSATION BEHIND SOCIAL MEDIA CONSUMPTION

## THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CREATING A CULTURE OF CONFORMITY, COMPLACENCY, AND COMFORTABILITY



*In the era of instant gratification that we live in today, it has become impossible to imagine our lives without social media. Although we may not realize it, the way we consume media plays a significant role in shaping not only our opinions, but also our identity. At the end of the day, we are all social beings who simply want to be understood and accepted by those around us. Therefore, in order for us to feel as though we belong, we change our behaviour to fit in with the social norms, creating a culture of conformity.*

It can be argued that social media not only influences conformity, but also promotes it, especially with platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, where we are governed by an algorithm created specifically to keep us scrolling. While conformity can be positive, as it allows us to feel connected, it can also be harmful as it can result in the loss of our individual identity and ability to form our own independent opinions.

Social media is truly both a blessing and curse, as it is the reason we have made so much progress, but also so much regression in our humanity. Furthermore, with the phenomenon of cancel culture that allows people to hold those who have power or influence accountable and to publicly remove them from their pedestal, everything has become polarizing, causing a divisive culture between what is “morally” acceptable and what is “socially” acceptable. That is a battle that all social media users have to face every single day, as there is always an opportunity to forsake authenticity in the name of fame and commercialism, further contributing to a culture of conformity and complacency.

The continuity of society and its associated social norms relies on conformity. Social media platforms capitalize on this by using social psychology to cater specifically to everyone’s existing beliefs, values, and opinions, perpetuating the concept of confirmation bias, which can also result in people becoming close-minded to other diverse perspectives. For example, when you have an opinion or belief regarding a political or social issue, you are more likely to see content that is curated to your beliefs from other like-minded individuals or groups. Although this can be empowering and provide a sense of community, especially for those voices that have been marginalized, it can also create a culture that is competitive, divisive, and set with unrealistic expectations of a singular belief system where everyone agrees with each other.

After asking some young people how they believe social media has

impacted their ability to form their individual opinions and shape their identity, it can be determined that social media often categorizes everything into black and white, leaving no room for nuance and the opportunity to be educated and grow. One person said: “What I’ve noticed is that many people just repost whatever is the most popular and socially acceptable ‘opinion’ to show that they are educated on a topic when, in reality, all they know is that most people are rooting for something.” Another person mentioned: “Social media has made me more aware of world issues that are going on, as I normally would not get the chance to educate myself on these issues.” Therefore, through these responses, it can be seen that both the positive and negative outcomes of social media consumption can coexist. Nevertheless, it is important to realize that we are slowly growing into a world where protecting “unethical” social norms is becoming more important than standing up for what is right, as we are constantly looking for content to feed the desire to fit in.

Furthermore, during a conversation with a peer regarding social media’s effect on the formation of our opinions as users, she provided her insight in a powerful statement, “I think that social media affects users’ opinions if they are the type to follow the trend and not do the extra research. They fall victim to misinformation and really just do not want to look like a bad person. Social media makes everything look like it’s black or it’s white. You’re either right wing or left wing. You’re either all for abortion in all cases, or you’re all for forcing an unprepared female to do something she may not be able to do. You’re against war if you post about it, or your silence means that you’re supporting murderers. The list goes on.”

This leaves no room for any meaningful conversations to allow for education and growth. It can almost feel as though everyone is playing a game where getting more likes and followers automatically gets you to the top of the social chain.

The world right now is going through an insurmountable amount of pain and suffering, with the genocide occurring in Gaza, war between Ukraine and Russia, humanitarian crises in Congo and Sudan, as well as the ongoing climate crisis. Unfortunately, even though social media plays a crucial role in empowering oppressed communities and highlighting these social, political, and environmental issues, there are many people who are merely showing support through reposting and sharing because it is trendy or will give them more likes

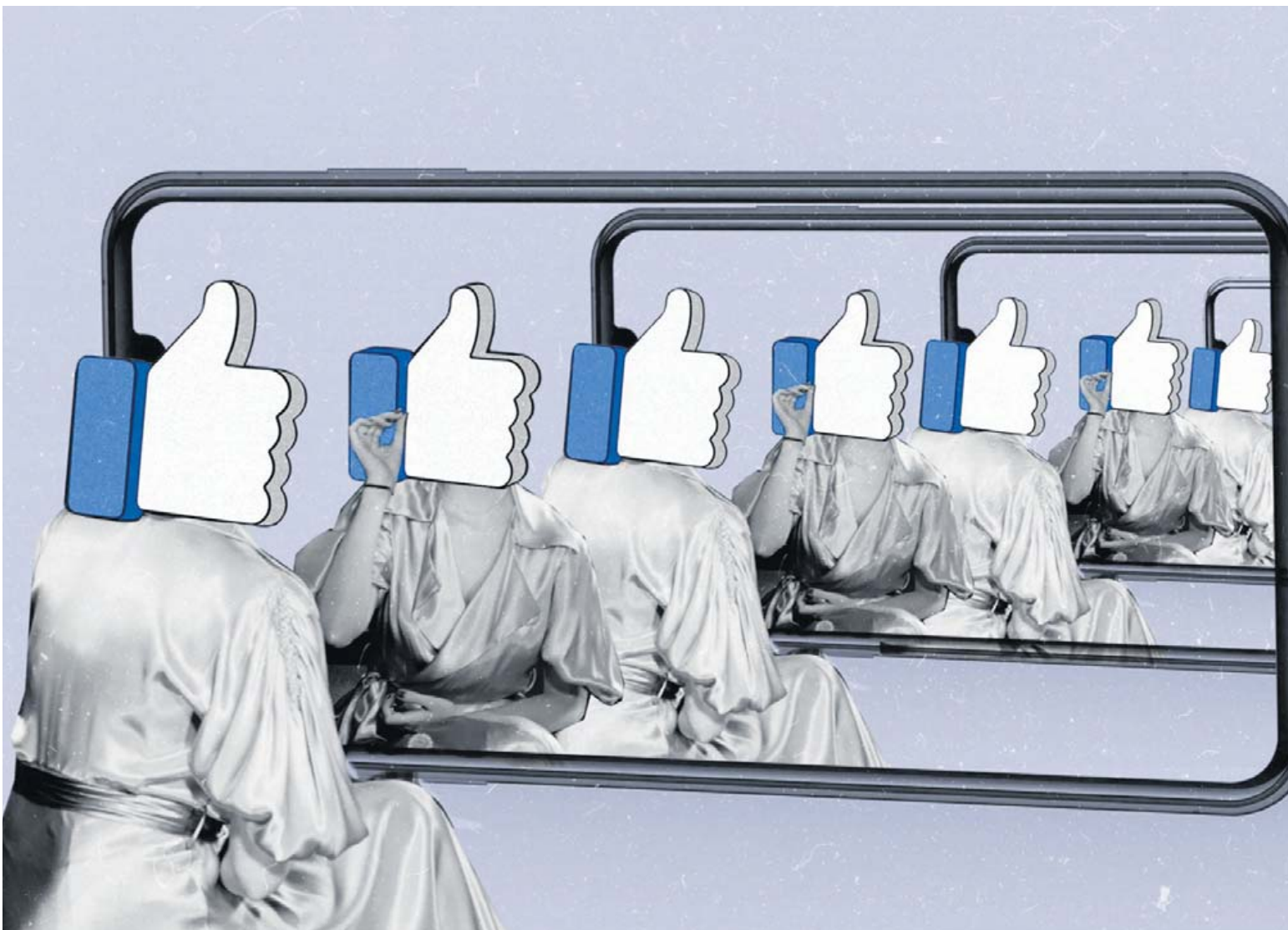


**BY SAHELI KIRPALANI**

or followers – which is known as performative activism. This creates a culture that is not only performative in nature, but also one that is inauthentic, unrealistic, and individualist as everyone is pretending to care for own personal benefit.

In the end, social media will always be a part of our lives; however, it is important for each and every one of us to reflect on the role it has played in shaping our individual identity, opinions, as well as our belief system. During our conversations with friends, whether it is about art, music, movies, or world issues, we need to take a moment to realize that each person's opinion should be respected and valued, creating space for a meaningful conversation where growth, education, and true human connection can take place. The world that social media has created can often make us feel alone, desperate to be liked, understood, and respected, leaving us no option but to resort to conformity in order to survive, but it is in these moments where we are presented with an opportunity to choose authenticity.

Oftentimes, being comfortable with what we believe and where we are in our lives may lead to complacency, but I would like to challenge all of us as a community, to resist the culture of conformity and actively choose to engage in media content that aligns with what we truly value.







# SNAP, SHARE, SHINE

## THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON PROM

BY CHIRAG RAMCHANDANI

*A typical lounge becomes a stunning exhibition of marvel, style, and creativity as the sun sets and dusk descends. Teens step out of limousines and vintage cars, their outfits glittering in the twilight as flashing cameras record every moment of this unique Prom Night experience. In the era of social media, these photos become carefully chosen memories shared with the world, rather than just being sentimental souvenirs. Undoubtedly, social media apps like Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest have had a big impact on today's youth and, in turn, on the expectations, styles, and fashion of prom. As a result, the role of social media in changing prom culture has definitely captured the essence of prom in a fascinating manner; however, it can be multifaceted.*

The main question that arises is this: To what extent is the essence of prom affected? And if so, which prom-related aspects are most affected by this? The world is now a global village because of social media platforms where trends spread like wildfire. Prom dresses are also not an exception to this phenomenon. Prom attire used to be typically selected based on suggestions from friends and nearby boutiques. The influence of Instagram influencers and TikTok creators on these trends has changed prom creativity into something else entirely. We must also take into account the DIY prom culture, which has become increasingly popular as a result of the digitization of our world. Stu-

dent designs of prom dresses and outfits have been sparked by the DIY trend popularized by apps like Pinterest and TikTok. Creative and personalized projects are encouraged by easily available guides for sewing, beading, and even upcycling old dresses. Fashion is becoming more accessible, and this change makes it possible for individualistic, distinctive expressions to stand out in the sea of store-bought dresses and suits.

Along with "prom fits", the main aspect of prom influenced by social media is the idea of "promposals", which are special ways of asking someone to prom. A once very straightforward question has now evolved into a creative event that frequently calls for planning, preparation and execution. Teens today go to tremendous lengths to put on extravagant prom proposals, aware that thousands of viewers online may judge them, in addition to their peers. Attributed with this creativity may come other benefits, where students who create compelling prom proposals and go viral can become instant celebrities. This trend is being driven by the desire to stand out and the pressure to match or even surpass the amazing actions that users are seeing on platforms like YouTube and TikTok. As alluring as this may sound, a knife is always sharp.

Promposals (also known as proposals) might be memorable and entertaining, but they also come with some degree of pressure.

Feeling like you have to make something unique and captivating for Instagram can be intimidating. This phenomenon highlights the necessity and significance of finding a balance between capturing moments and living in the present, while also taking social media's impact on prom into account. Not to mention, prom is often portrayed in a preached light on social media, which raises expectations for the event. The concept of an "ideal" prom can be changed by the extravagant pictures, impeccable attire, and lavish promposals glamorized on media. Hence, there can be a lot of pressure to recreate the ideal prom night that you've seen online. This means that in an effort to match what they see on social media, students could feel under pressure to spend extravagant amounts of money to splurge on after-parties, limos, dresses, and suits. This could lead to stress and financial difficulties, which would take away from the celebration's joy.

On the other hand, social media emphasizes prom's significance as a special milestone even in spite of the pressure. Students can feel more a part of a larger tradition by sharing their prom experiences online, which heightens the significance of the prom event. Prom culture is definitely influenced by social media, which can be one that brings a lot of stress and pressure, but also one that can be a motivator and quite rewarding. Proms are special occasions that encourage individuality and democratize fashion, but they can also result in anxiety and inflated expectations. Preserving composure in this setting is essential to ensure that prom's celebratory essence is not lost in the haste to attain social media perfection. In the end, prom has become a more diverse, artistic, and visually spectacular event thanks to social media. Students must embrace prom's positive aspects, while easing its pressures by recognizing and controlling its influence, preserving prom as a beloved high school tradition.







BY IVAN WU

# Can't dance? Feel the Groove at Prom

**Every year on the island of St. Maarten, a highly anticipated event, known as Prom, is organized for the youth by Teen Times. It is a night filled with fancy dresses, dances and most importantly unforgettable memories, labelled by Teen Times as "One Night: A Lifetime of Memories".**

The history of prom can be traced way back to the late 1800s and early 1900s in North-eastern colleges and universities in the United States. Prom is a shortened version of the word "Promenade", which means a formal and organized march. Initially, it was a way to teach manners and etiquette to the college senior students leaving their alma mater. As mentioned earlier, prom means a formal march, which can also be called a formal dance. While many students are able to feel the groove of the music and move along with it, some students are stuck and unable to move at all. Here are some few tips and tricks to get you grooving!

Below are the steps to groove to any song. However, you should adjust your speed to the song, because there are fast and slow songs.

1: Feel the beat and move along with your head: Whether you are standing with a group of friends or

your date, you can feel a little nervous when you first go onto the dance floor. As soon as you go onto the dance floor, you should try to gain a feel for the beat. When you finally grasp it, move your head in time with the music and begin to slightly raise and lower your body to truly feel the beat. Do not move your head only in one direction like up and down, try to move it left and right also. Once you get the concept, you can start to incorporate shoulder and body movements.

2: Incorporating your feet: Once you get the feel of the upper body, you can start working with your feet. If you are a complete beginner, you can just bend your knees up and down with the beat. The most important thing is to understand that you are not a professional and simply going with your own style will make you unique. Then, you can perform the "two step" once you are comfortable with simply shifting your feet. To execute this dance step, simply step your right foot approximately one foot to the right, shift your left foot to the right, and lightly tap the floor. After that, repeat the motion, this time bringing your left foot to the left.

3: Incorporating your arms: You can now start moving your arms as well because your head, shoulders, and feet should all be grooving. Keep in mind that you should ideally begin

moving every portion of your body at once. You will sense the rhythm more readily if you start with your head and feet, but do not stand with your arms by your sides, like a dead fish. You can dance like you are washing windows by putting your arms up and down by your sides, down by your knees, or even high in the air to the beat of the music.

4: Incorporating your hips: You should not disregard your hips because this body part is important to make it seem like you are not stiff. Move them to the left and then the right, so your hips correspond with your foot movements, or move them round and round to the music.

5: Scan the crowd and see what everyone is doing: You should always see what dance movements the people around you are doing so that you can fully understand the vibe of the song. When you have fully understood, you can always dance along with everyone else and make great memories!

6: If you know the song, you should always sing or lip sync a few lyrics: When you have completed all of the above steps, you should always sing a few lyrics to allow yourself to completely enjoy and be present in the moment. This should also give you a confidence boost and make your movements more natural.

7: Move around: Do not simply dance or stay still in the same spot. Make your way around by following the above steps. Make it engaging and, if you can manage it without having to yell over the music too much, start up a little conversation with your friends.

Follow the above steps and you should find yourself bopping to the song seamlessly. Of course, you should practice a few before prom to get the feel of it and make sure to try it with a wide range of songs. Remember that you should always put yourself first and disregard what everyone might think of you. At the end of the day, everyone is there to enjoy the night and have a good time!

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# PROM MAKE-UP TIPS WITH CHANDNI: PROFESSIONAL MAKEUP ARTIST

BY LEHAR MARATA

**As the date for prom draws closer, we tend to hear everyone around us talking about hair, makeup, nails, dresses, shoes and so much more to prepare for the big night. These conversations and questions can sometimes become overwhelming, especially if you have procrastinated with your prom planning. However, to help fix this problem, we have interviewed Chandni, an expert in hair and makeup, to give us insights and tips about prom make-up.**

**1: Can you please introduce yourself and tell us a bit about your background and interests?**

My name is Chandni Hingorani. I am a hair and makeup artist raised on St. Maarten. I graduated from St. Dominic High School here and went on to complete my A-levels at the British Yeoward International School in Tenerife.

I mostly do freelance work, occasionally at The Five Salon. My core specialty is weddings and bridal services, but I also cater events like Carnival, SXM Festival, as well as photo and video shoots. I recently worked on a marketing project for Vie L'Ven and backstage as a Maybelline Partner for St. Maarten's Carnival Caribbean Queen Pageant. I love all things artistic and colourful. I am also really passion-

ate about nail art. Besides that, I love social media content creation, reading books, and I really love my dogs.

**2: What was your journey to pursuing a career in the hair and makeup field?**

It all first started when I spent a year in India to get a Post Graduate Diploma in Cosmetology from the VLCC institute. Being from St. Maarten, I originally went there to get in touch with my roots and explore my culture. I have always loved playing around with makeup and nail art, but taking the course inspired me to feel passionate about all things beauty. I did theory and practical assessments on Hair, Skin, Spa and Makeup and found so many paths one could take in the beauty industry. After that, it was just to discover what I liked most by trying out everything. I found that my favourite thing was to make someone feel comfortable and beautiful for their big day.

**3: With prom season upon us, what makeup trends are popular for prom this year?**

There are so many makeup trends right now. Some of the most popular are glowy/glass skin, bold blush, glossy lips, and feather brows. As always, choose the trends that you feel beautiful in, not necessarily what is popular.

**4: What are some important steps to prepping your skin for prom makeup?**

My favourite prep for makeup is a good skincare routine. Always start with a clean face! Then use a serum specific to your skin type along with a moisturizer to keep your skin hydrated. Finally, I use a primer to smooth the skin and create the perfect base for flawless makeup.

**5: What are some tips to make your prom makeup last the entire night?**

I would suggest using a primer after skin prep to give the

makeup something to hold on to. After applying makeup, use a good setting spray to lock everything in place. For eyeliners and mascara, use a waterproof formula.

**6: What are some products teens must have in their basic prom makeup kit?**

A basic makeup kit should have the following items:

- A good skincare routine
- Foundation to even out skin tone (can be light or heavy depending on preference)
- Concealer to help cover any imperfections
- Pressed or loose powder to lock the foundation and concealer in place
- Blush
- Contour or bronzer
- Highlighter
- An eyeshadow palette (you can go as neutral or as creative as you want)
- Eyeliner
- Mascara
- Lipstick or lip gloss
- Setting spray

**7: What are some common mistakes to avoid when doing prom makeup?**

One of the most common mistakes is skipping a good skin prep. If the skin is not clean or moisturized, it shows through the makeup. Another is using a shade of foundation that is too light, too dark, too warm, or too cool for your face. Getting a right match to your skin tone is very important.

**8: How can teens go for the full glam look without overdoing it?**

With makeup, less is more. Start with a thin layer of foundation and only add more where needed. Using a strip lash adds glam without much effort. Practice your makeup look once or twice before Prom Night; this will help you discover what works for you and what doesn't. Practice makes perfect.

**9: What advice do you have for those with sensitive skin?**

I would advise to use skincare specifically for sensitive skin. Using a fragrance-free formula can be helpful in not irritating the skin. Always use clean makeup brushes and tools. And don't share your makeup, since that allows bacteria to grow. Also, be sure not to use expired makeup.

**10: What do you think makes the difference between a regular dinner makeup look versus a prom makeup look?**

I believe the power of makeup lies in how you carry it. A regular dinner makeup look or a daytime look will work just as well for a prom makeup look when all the elements of the dress and accessories come together. There is no right or wrong way, you could go as light or as heavy as you'd like.

**11: What are some budget friendly makeup brands that you would recommend?**

I had the pleasure of attending AMG's Beauty Seminar highlighting their products and I got to see the brands and formulations up close. I may be the tiniest bit biased, but I genuinely believe that Maybelline, L'Oréal, and NYX makeup products are some of the best and most affordable options out there with enough variety for every skin tone!

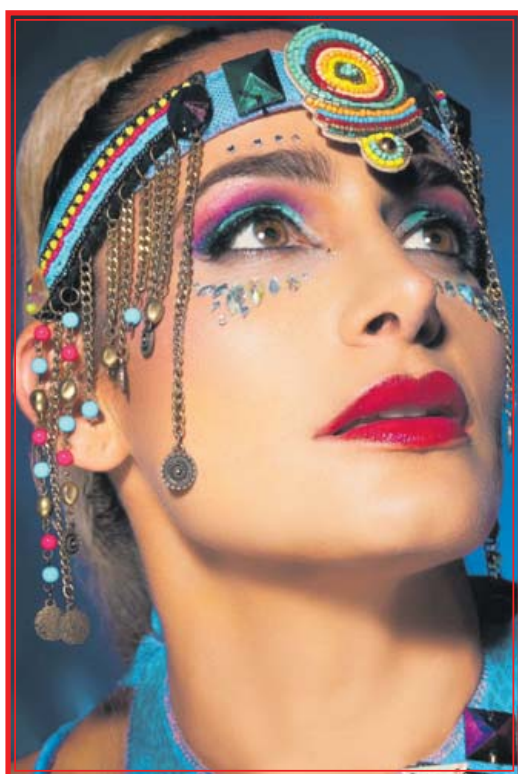
**12: What should someone do if they have a makeup emergency or if they smudge their makeup during prom?**

A good idea would be to walk with some essentials to touch up your makeup as needed. My favourite things to carry in my purse are pressed powder, eyeliner and lipstick. They can wipe the smudged makeup with a napkin or makeup wipe and touch up where needed.

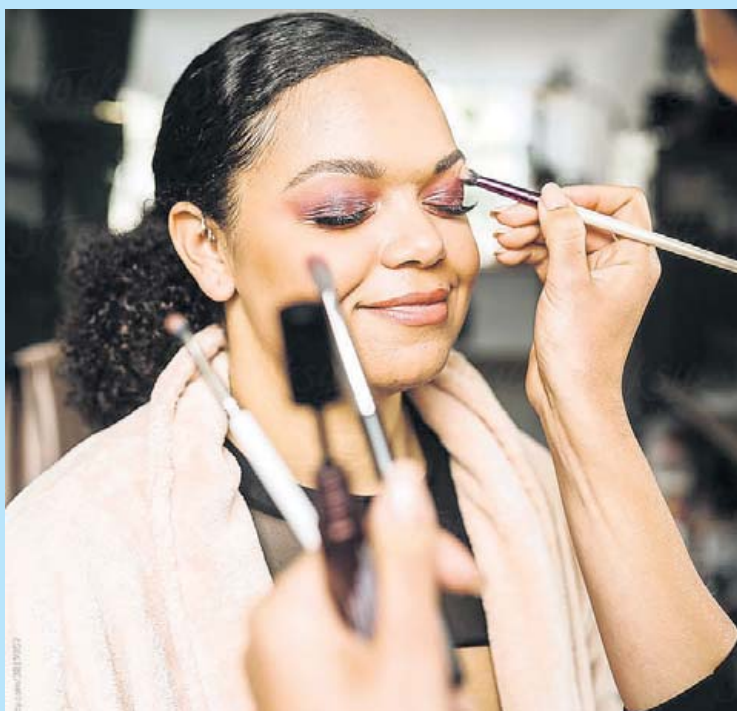
**13: Can you share any other tips regarding prom makeup?**

I would suggest personalizing your look according to what you like the most. Try on the makeup look, hairstyle and dress together before prom; and my biggest tip for prom is to be comfortable and confident in however you decide to do your makeup – whether you get it done professionally or go the DIY route. Prom is a well-deserved party for all the hard work you've put in, focusing not on perfection, but on enjoying the night completely and making memories that will last forever!

*If you'd like to book an appointment with Chandni for your big night, you can contact her on Instagram (@stylesbychandni), phone: +1 (721) 522-0957, Facebook: Styles By Chandni. You won't regret it!*







# GUIDE TO PREPARING FOR PROM AND GRADUATION

BY MAKAYLA COOKS

*After having gone through four to six years of high school, you may find yourself at the end of your course, which means it is finally time for you to graduate. In honor of this long awaited event, prom was created to celebrate your hard work. And how must one prepare for such events like graduation and prom, you may ask? Fear not.*

Here are some tips to help you prepare and even make you stand out above the rest.

Graduation is a ceremony in which you and other graduates receive your diploma. You are given a cap and gown to wear at the ceremony, but these can still be styled and detailed to your liking.

### Pre-graduation photoshoot

For one, a pre-graduation photoshoot can capture you in your full attire (or only selected items) for memories and better quality pictures.

### Cap decorating

Another way to personalize and spice up your look is by decorating your cap. You can style it by adding personalized items, graduation quotes, sparkles and more, to make it your own. Not only can this be achieved as a DIY, but businesses also offer these services.

### Footwear

Don't forget to purchase your dress or dress-shirt and dress-shoes. A simple yet elegant dress or dress-shirt underneath your gown would add a beautiful touch to your appearance, and choosing appropriate dress-shoes, such as heels, flats or loafers, can be an amazing addition.

### Appointments

Besides the outfit, there is your hair and makeup to take care of. Be sure to book your appointments and choose a style as early as possible, as everyone else will want to do the same. Furthermore, as

the time creeps closer there may be no appointments left. It would be advised to wear a hat-friendly style, but as it is your graduation, feel free to go nuts!

*Prom is a formal dance/party that is held at the end of every school year for all students in their final year. Most students usually go all out for themselves to win certain prizes, but how can you achieve that?*

### Planning and saving beforehand

First, it is highly recommended to begin planning and saving ahead of time, as prom is an event that requires detailing, scheduling, and loads of money – so be sure to begin months prior!

### Appointments

Second, as stated before, book your appointments on time! Hair, makeup, haircut/line up, lashes, nails, and grooming take time and money – and space becomes limited very quickly.

### Solo or prom date

Would you like go to prom with someone? Then a proposal is in order! Deciding whether or not you are going to prom with someone will help planning from beforehand.

### Transportation

With prom, you have unlimited ways to be creative, e.g., your transport. Depending on the theme for your prom night, you can alter your vehicle to the theme or rent a fancier automobile for a classier transport.

### Entrance and prizes

You can also be creative with your entrance. In order to have a jaw dropping entrance, you must be very creative and on theme, and the use of trailer trucks, red carpets, spray paint, and balloons can be altered to the theme, playing an important part in your entrance. With these tips, you will also be well on your way to winning prizes such as Best Dressed, Prom-King or –Queen and Best Entrance!

### Your dress or suit

Your dress or suit is the key factor of the night, as it is the first thing everyone will notice and the biggest factor in your planning. Be sure to take measurements of parts of your body, such as the neck, shoulders, bust, and waist, for precise fittings and/or comfortable fit. By staying on theme and adding unique details to your attire, such as glitter, fabrics or uncommon items, your appearance can be elevated to the max! Not only will you look and feel magical, but you also have a chance in winning your prom's various prizes.

### After-prom plans

As much as prom is a celebration for you and your classmates, some may want to celebrate on their own or

with their close ones. In order to achieve this, you can reserve a table for dinner, host a party, or even have a small kick-back gathering at your house. After all, you earned the opportunity to be celebrated the way you would like to be.

*As much as planning for these events may become a bit challenging, the main prize to win and ideas to achieve on these nights are your happiness and contentment. Hard work always pays off, and we as Teen Times believe that you should be rewarded and celebrated fully. Therefore, we want to say big congratulations to all 2024 graduates! We wish you much success with all your planning and upcoming future.*

THE GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO

**SHOES**

		
DERBY	LOAFER	OXFORD
		
CHELSEA	WING TIP	MONK STRAP
		
BROGUE	DESERT	BOAT





# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

BY SHILOH WILLIAMS

*Transitioning into young adulthood after high school can have you feeling as though you are entering a whole new world. The journey can be filled with excitement, nervousness and new opportunities. Furthermore, exploring different paths, whether that means going to college, becoming an entrepreneur or working, can be extremely overwhelming, especially at a young age when you are just trying to navigate through life. It can be hard to find the balance between work and still having an eventful social life as a young adult. However, this balance is essential for maintaining a healthy lifestyle at such an age.*

When you reach this point in your life when you are ready to make this scary transition, you may experience a great deal of pressure

externally from friends and family offering you various options. This can cause a lot of mental health issues, such as anxiety and panic, which may force you into a corner and make you feel as if you are not able to vocalize your ambitions or passions and choose the best path to follow that is authentic to who you are. Taking this next milestone step in life can be intimidating, and although using someone else's life journey may set a good example and be very helpful, it is important to remember to never lose sight of your passions and dreams.

Your future path can include anything from continuing your education in university or college to starting work to gain experience and build a résumé. For some young people, college and university is a path they want to follow. Nevertheless, it is okay that your

path is not the same as everyone else's. Going to college has granted numerous students with successful careers. However, over the course of time, it has been proven that college does not fit into everyone's lifestyle, and yet many have still turned out to live a very successful life. The college route can be overwhelming and draining at times, especially when paired with the pressure from family and friends, but it is at those times that you just have to stand up for yourself, believe in what you are passionate about, and pursue it.

Taking a gap year is also a possible opportunity for many young people after finishing their hectic final year of high school; hence the reason it is sometimes necessary to take a break. There are definitely new responsibilities and rules that you have to adapt to when step-

ping into the world of young adulthood, such as being financially responsible and stable. This journey is crucial for a young person as you are finding your way through life. It is important to use your money wisely, invest it well, and devote it to things you know will result in a good pay off in the end.

Since this will be such an important time of your life, mistakes are bound to happen. That is how you learn, and it provides the opportunity for growth. With experience and time, you can successfully transition from being a high-schooler to a young adult. Remember to have an open mind, take on new challenges, look at the world in a different perspective, and navigate your way to achieving your dreams!







# Summer Then vs. Summer Now

BY JAHZARA PAYNE

**At last, we have finally entered the season that is popularly known as summer, and everyone (including parents) is getting ready to kick back and relax after a year of school. Not only is summer the hottest season of the year, but it is also the season with the longest break. During these holidays, families usually make plans to go on a vacation to the USA, Europe, Asia or a Caribbean island to enjoy themselves and/or visit their relatives. Moreover, teenagers usually plan to spend their summer break with their friends to embrace the amazing beaches and fun activities that this island has to offer.**

Now, let's be honest, summer is not what it used to be. Some would argue that the "best season of the year" has gotten much better and more enjoyable, while some may argue the opposite.

Back then, summer used to be more fun as everyone had the chance to visit the beaches or pools, find fun activities to do during the break, or even just hop on a flight to another country with parents. Although it is still possible to engage in these fun experiences, it feels differ-

ent due to the rising cost of these activities and some worldwide restrictions that have remained in place following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nowadays, the majority of young people mostly lie in their beds scrolling through TikTok and Instagram trying to figure out where they can go for the summer break with their friends and family, keeping the rising costs and inflation in the back of their mind. In the past, even if you did not necessarily have much to spend for a perfect or ideal summer vacation, there were other more affordable options available. For instance, you could go to the basketball court to play with friends, or even go to the boardwalk and just have fun riding your scooter or getting ice cream.

Even though planning activities like this is still possible, the idea

of fitting into the "ideal" version of summer is shifting through the lens of social media and comparison culture. Furthermore, besides going to the beach, there are not that many places on the island that allow young people to meet and have fun without the pressure of being mindful of costs.

Most teenagers want to go above and beyond for their summer break, such as going jet skiing, zip-lining or partying, visiting fancy restaurants, or even traveling to places like Miami or New York. Others would rather go to the beach or the movies. The phrase for the summer is "being outside" as we would say; so when people ask how your summer was, the reply would be, "I was outside for the summer."

However, this summer, most teenagers are looking for a job, and

half are doing it for experience, while the others are doing it for money. This could possibly halt their plans for the summer, causing them to re-evaluate how they would like to spend their summer vacation. At the end of the day, the extent to which you enjoy your summer really depends on what you make of it. You can either make it better than last year or just continue to lie in your bed looking at your friends having the best summer of their lives.

*Since this will be the last Teen Times publication before the summer break, all of the members from Teen Times wish you all a fantastic summer break and we encourage everyone to make the most of every moment this summer, creating memories that will last a lifetime!*





# NOT TRAVELLING THIS SUMMER? BE A TOURIST ON SXM!



BY ADITI RAJPAL AND ADITI RAMCHANDANI

*Have you ever wondered what you could possibly do on the island to enjoy your summer? You know, to be like a tourist on your own island?*

**Here are five activities that St. Maarten has to offer:**

1: St. Maarten has some of the most stunning beaches in the Caribbean, which are perfect for swimming, sunbathing and snorkeling – some of the most popular being Maho Beach, known for the insanely close landings by the planes, as well as Mullet Bay for various water sports.

2: The island is small enough to explore in a day by car or ATV. You may take a drive to the top of Pic Paradis for amazing views, or visit Loterie Farm to experience ziplining and hiking trails.

3: St. Maarten has lots of marine life, making it an amazing place to snorkel or go diving. Popular spots include Mancenillier Bay, Creole Rock, and Long Beach.

4: You can even spend the day in another island in the Caribbean! You can take a ferry from St. Maarten to the neighboring island of Anguilla for a day!

5: Another really cool thing that St. Maarten has to offer is zipline

through the rainforest at Rainforest Adventures. Take a jet ski tour around the island and explore caves on beaches!

*St. Maarten has various amazing activities; however, the Caribbean is known for the blazing hot sun and St. Maarten gets really hot during the summer, which can lead to something called sun poisoning.*

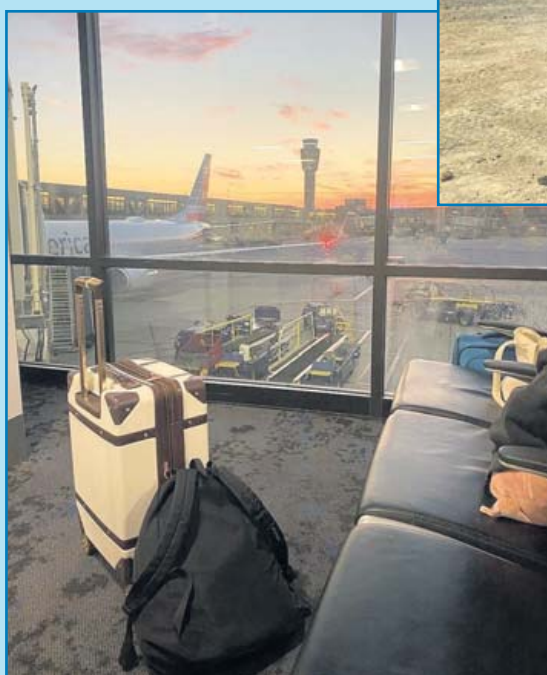
**Tips to prevent sun poisoning:**

1: Limit your sun exposure, avoid spending too much time in the sun, peak hours are 10:00am to 4:00pm.

2: Use sunscreen, apply sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher, and reapply it every two hours. You may need to apply more often if you are swimming or sweating.

3: Stay hydrated and drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated, especially when outdoors.

4: Beware of insects and take breaks in the shade through the day, especially if you start to feel overheated.





# GUIDE TO SELECTING THE RIGHT CAREER FOR YOUR FUTURE

BY ARTI BULLAND



**Choosing a career is a really important decision to make in one's life. It involves a lot of intensive research, as well as self-discovery, to find out your true passion that you can pursue as your career in the future. Sometimes, it takes a while and a few trials and errors until you know that the one you have chosen is the best one for you.**

Choosing a career can be very overwhelming for many, as there are so many available options to choose from. By considering various factors, you can select the one that fits your passion and skillset the best. You should choose a career that not only suits you, but also one that brings you happiness, fulfilment and success in life.

The first main step is to understand yourself – get to know yourself, your passion, your interests, skills, strengths, personality, and find out what you really like. This process may be difficult for some, while very simple for others, as it all really depends on how well you know yourself. If you are doubting and second-guessing yourself, then it may seem difficult to navigate the first step in this journey. Understanding yourself is very important, and no one can assist you in this process as you're the only one who knows your true,

authentic self. However, there are tools, such as personality tests and strength finders, which can provide insight into careers, enabling you to match your preferences.

Your true passion and interests are really important factors in determining your future. It is also essential to understand that choosing a career option just for its opportunities and benefits is not the right thing to do. Even though you may be reaping the benefits, what matters most is to be happy with what you do, and you should love what you do and not just do it for the sake of doing it. Hence, the reason why the first step in the process of choosing your career is the most important step.

Once you have a clearer understanding of yourself, the next step is to do intensive research on potential careers you are interested in. This can include gathering information about various fields, jobs, and industries which have matched your interests and skills. You can use resources, such as the internet, which has so many websites that will guide you and assist you to explore various careers. This would also inform you of the job descriptions, required qualifications for that particular position, as well as how the work environment will be.

To get more specific details, you may also speak to professionals or people you know within fields that you are interested in. These sources are very helpful and informative as people can be open and willing to discuss more about the challenges, rewards, and what a day in the life of a particular job looks like. You can also gain practical experience through internships. These opportunities allow you to observe professionals in their work environment and gain more knowledge and experience within that field.

After researching, you should have a list of some of the potential careers you may want to pursue further in life. Now, this next step may be a little challenging as you may have to debate to narrow down your choices to the option that suits you better. This can be done in various ways, such as listing the pros and cons of each option, as well as you may consider which has a higher demand, or which one you would like to see yourself doing more. Seeking advice will also help to narrow down your options. Consulting with counsellors, teachers, family members, and trusted individuals who can provide guidance and support may be extremely beneficial. They can offer different perspectives and point of views, which may help you

make better and more informed decisions.

Once you have made a decision, it is time to then take action! This includes obtaining the necessary education for your chosen career; hence, this step involves getting a degree, certifications, as well as attending seminars for training. It is also important to build a professional network. Networking can open doors to job opportunities and career advancements. When you have obtained all the necessary requirements, you should start searching for a job. However, it is important to first create a strong resume and CV, as well as be prepared for interviews. Look out for advertisements for job vacancies in the newspaper, online, or on company websites.

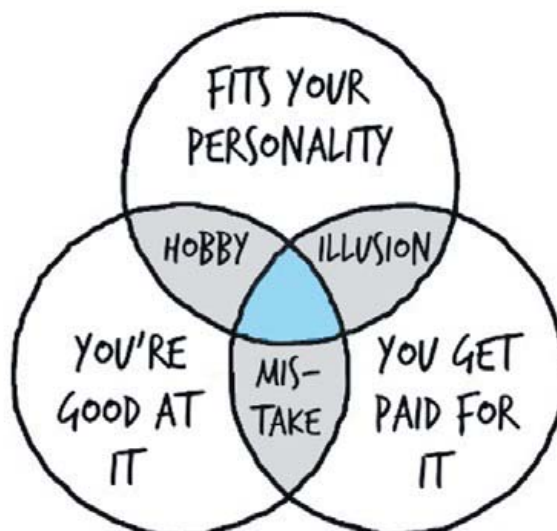
Furthermore, remember that choosing a career is not a one-time decision. You should always be open to evaluating your career path as you evolve, because your interests and goals may change over time. You should always remember to stay flexible and be willing to adapt to new opportunities. By following these steps, you can find a career that not only suits you, but also brings you fulfilment, satisfaction, and much success in life.

## Which career suits me?



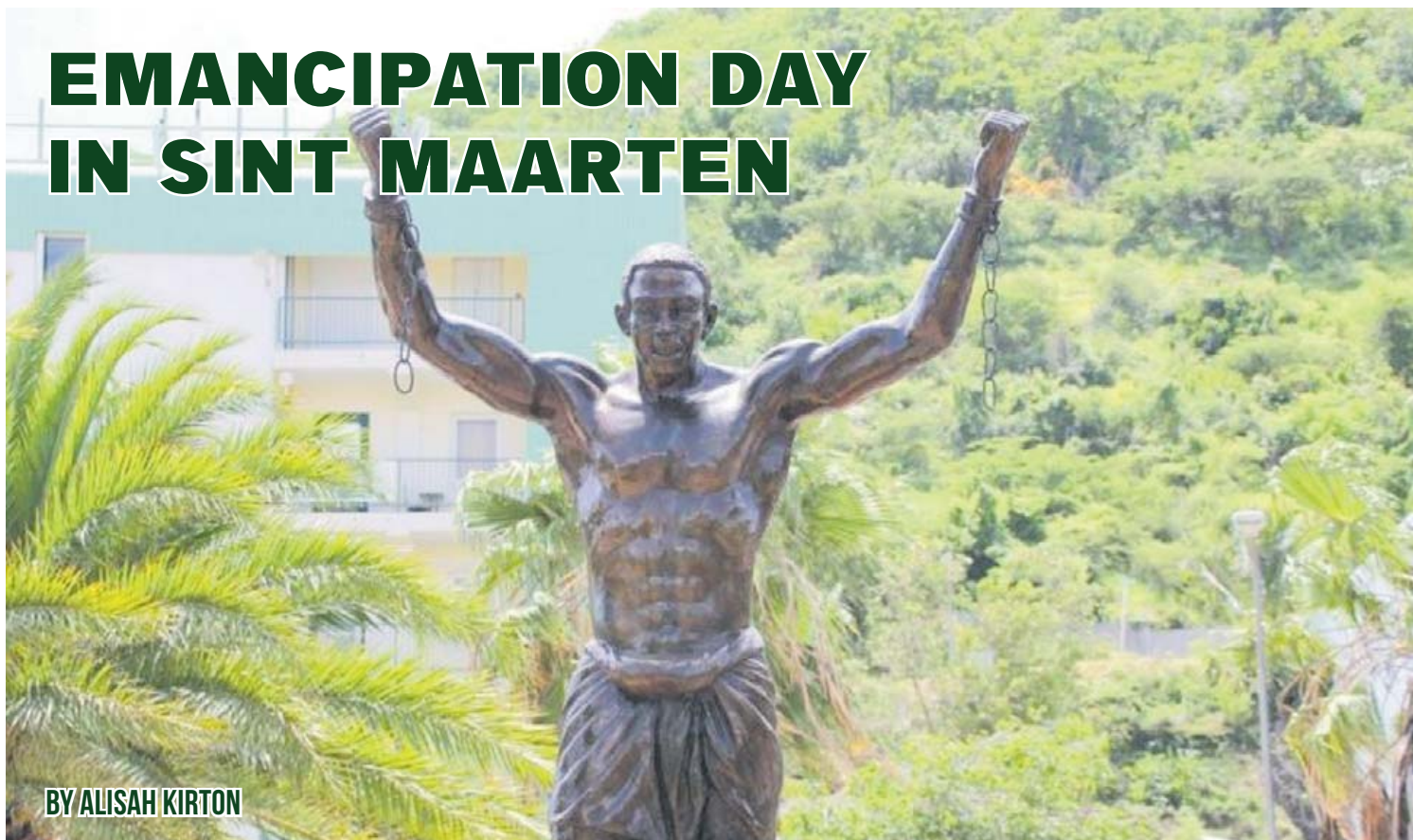
### WHICH JOB SUITS ME?

PERFECT JOB  MISMATCH





# EMANCIPATION DAY IN SINT MAARTEN



BY ALISAH KIRTON

**Emancipation Day in St. Maarten is a commemoration of the abolition of slavery on July 1, 1863, which represents a pivotal point in the island's historical narrative. The day commemorates the formal emancipation of enslaved African individuals from the harsh circumstances imposed by Dutch colonial domination. This event is of great historical and cultural importance to the people of St. Maarten, representing a crucial period in their shared history.**

### History

Emancipation Day celebrates the momentous event in 1863 when slavery was officially abolished in Dutch possessions, including St. Maarten. This marked a crucial achievement in the ongoing human rights and equality struggle. The transatlantic slave trade involved enslaved Africans and their descendants for a long time, and the abolition was the result of that struggle. St. Maarten was a constituent of the Dutch Empire's broader initiative, encompassing the Emancipation Act, which was a piece of legislation that not only officially abolished slavery in its colonies, including the Caribbean territory, but also marked a significant shift in the power dynamics of the time.

### Why is this day important?

Emancipation Day is observed as a means of paying tribute to for-bearers, safeguarding historical records, strengthening the cultural distinctiveness of St. Maarten, and commemorating the state of liberty. This initiative aims to acknowledge and celebrate the strength and hardships endured by enslaved Africans. Its primary goals are safeguarding the island's historical significance and encouraging educational opportunities. The day also commemorates the island's distinctive heritage and many influences, strengthening its cultural identity. Furthermore, it symbolizes the victory of fairness over tyranny and the continuous celebration that embraces diversity.

### Why is it celebrated?

Emancipation Day is an officially recognized public holiday in St. Maarten, established by the government with the purpose of fostering unity and healing among the population. This platform serves as an educational tool to provide knowledge about the historical context of slavery and its profound influence on the cultural fabric of the nation. The day also promotes civic participation and

facilitates discussions on contemporary social matters, such as racial equity and social justice. The symbol represents the collective sense of patriotism and cultural belonging, bringing together individuals in commemoration of a significant event in their past. Emancipation Day, in its role of fostering unity and healing, promotes introspection and conciliation, pushing individuals and communities to acknowledge the enduring consequences of slavery and strive for a fairer society.

### People that should be commemorated on Emancipation Day

Emancipation Day in St. Maarten commemorates the courageous efforts of freedom fighters, who fought for the abolition of slavery and the advancement of justice and equality. Prominent individuals include Claudius Pilgrim, Richardson, the enslaved populace of St. Maarten, community leaders and elders, educators and historians, artists, and cultural activists, and global influences, such as Toussaint Louverture.

Pilgrim championed the cause of labour rights and the enhancement of working conditions, while Richardson spearheaded the es-

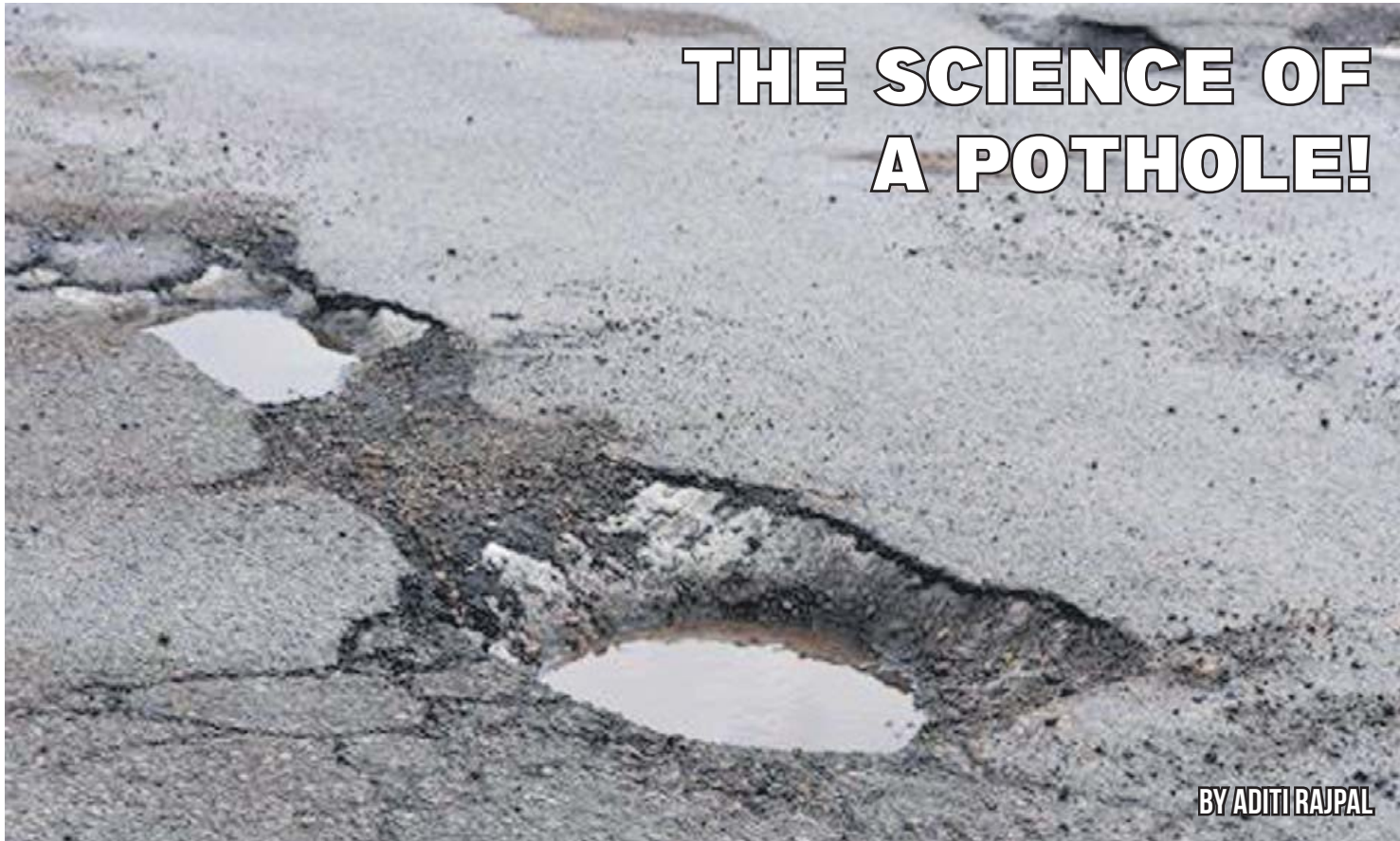
tablishment of labour unions and pushed for workers' rights. The commendable bravery and unwavering determination demonstrated by the enslaved Africans in St. Maarten deserve recognition. The preservation of the island's history and culture heavily relies on the involvement of local community leaders and elders. At the same time, educators and historians conduct research and education on slavery and emancipation in St. Maarten. By acknowledging the contributions of local heroes and broader Caribbean influences, we emphasize the interdependence of the struggle for freedom and the significance of unity in conquering oppression.

Emancipation Day in St. Maarten signifies the liberation from slavery and honours the island's cultural legacy. Today is dedicated to remembering, educating, and fostering a sense of community, emphasizing the significance of liberty and fairness. It promotes a more profound comprehension of history and emphasizes the importance of resilience, unity and cultural pride among individuals.





# THE SCIENCE OF A POTHOLE!



BY ADITI RAJPAL

**Don't let your next road trip turn into a car breakdown or a flat tire situation. Unfortunately, there are quite a few potholes in St. Maarten. Have you ever wondered what they are, where they come from, or if they could be damaging your car's wheels? Potholes are holes that develop in road surfaces, typically seen on asphalt roads, and they can also vary in size and shape.**

Potholes are dangerous because they can damage your car – hitting a pothole when driving can bend car rims or damage your tires. In some cases, you might lose control; for example, if you hit a big pothole unexpectedly, it can jolt your car, making it harder to steer. Moreover, they may also cause accidents as drivers might swerve to avoid potholes, which could lead

to accidents with other cars.

### **How to safely avoid potholes?**

1: Be vigilant and watch the road ahead. Pay attention to the road and scan for any dips or uneven patches on the road.  
2: Slow down in poor road conditions, and drive slower on roads that are known for having potholes or cracks.

3: Practice caution at night as it may be harder to see potholes in the dark, so be extra careful and reduce your speed.

4: Maintenance is important, so make sure your tires are properly inflated and that your suspension is in good condition. This will help minimize damage if you do come across a pothole and hit one.

**Potholes are formed in many ways but here are two factors:**

1: Just like anywhere else, heavy traffic puts stress on the roads, and rainwater finds its way into the cracks.

2: Erosion: The combination of heavy rainfall and the hot sun can speed up the process of the breakdown on materials, such as asphalt, leading to faster pothole formation.





# 5TH WORLD CULTURAL HERITAGE YOUTH SYMPOSIUM 2024

BY ASANTÉ PHILIPPS

*The Sint Maarten delegation of the 5th World Cultural Heritage Youth Symposium held in Ancient Olympia, Greece, is a testament to the unforgettable experience had by the six students representing the island. Asanté Philipps (Milton Peters College), Gabriel Brooks (University of St. Martin), Enrique Sullivan, Shaejuan Williams (MAC High), Dañ'le Brooks Ellis (MAC High), and Adio Williams (St. Dominic High School), under the auspices of Ms. Connie Francis Gumbs (Director of St. Maarten Youth Council) and Ms. Marcellia Henry (Secretary General of UNESCO Commission of St. Maarten), had the opportunity of a lifetime to participate in this prestigious event.*

The 5th World Cultural Heritage Youth Symposium 2023 was held on April 17-20, 2023, in Ancient Olympia, Greece, with the theme "This is our living heritage". The symposium was attended by delegations comprising students from different parts of the world, such as the USA, The Netherlands, France, Croatia, Turkey, China, Sri Lanka, India, Hellas Greece, and Slavonia.

During the symposium, students and teachers were able to learn about and connect with a variety of different cultures. They got the opportunity to learn about their peers, and got the chance to learn about one another. The symposium showcased a lot of different talents and brought awareness to the differences amongst us as human beings. The symposium also allowed for participants to experience the

vast ancient history of Olympia, especially how the Ancient Greeks contributed to the modern world.

Throughout the event, the St. Maarten delegation engaged in multi-cultural discussions, workshops, and activities that allowed them to gain a deeper understanding of the rich history and traditions that make up the cultural identities of other countries. Through these interactions, the delegations from different countries were able to not only learn from one another, but also make lasting connections and friendships.

Interacting with youths from various countries provided a unique platform for cultural exchange and meaningful discussions. The delegates were able to showcase the beauty and significance of their island, St. Maarten, to an international audience. It was a rewarding experience to be able to leave a lasting impression on the people of Greece and other nations in attendance.

After the symposium concluded, the delegates had the chance to further explore the wonders of Greece. From enjoying shopping excursions to indulging in local cuisine, the St. Maarten delegation enjoyed the opportunity to witness the rich culture of Greece. This was truly an unforgettable experience.

