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New Student

Special Edition

The Physical Examiner

Life in Dominica, A 4th Semester's Reflection

Guidelines:

1. Learn
2. Experience
3. Balance
4. Travel
5. Enjoy

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Inside this issue:

Nature Island, Holidays	2
A Note from Security	3
Island Fare	4
Island Fare, Local Markets	5
Dive Dominica	6
Electricity, Water	7
Announcements	8

“...this is the captain speaking, there will be a slight delay in landing today as there is a dog loose on the runway.”

Just stepping off the plane in Dominica for the first time was a unique experience. Looking around at the airport I could hardly believe that I would be calling this place home for the next 16 months. This was definitely an adventure in the making, at least that’s what everyone had been telling me before I left from back in the states. It just didn’t hit me until I actually made it here. Now I get the joy of seeing this on the faces of each new class.

Getting started here in Dominica requires a lot of dedication. The acclamation process depends entirely on attitude. Everything takes longer and nothing is ever done your way. (I’m actually surprised when restaurants have what’s on the menu.)

In first semester, its important to get a good start so that second semester isn’t so stressful as it can be for many students. Everyone has a hard subject or semester so don’t let this get you down. Keep the goal of

graduating in mind above all else. Every step in the process of med school depends mainly on the last thing you did. Your clinical selection will depend first on your USMLE Step One scores followed by class ranking. Class ranking is based on top third, middle third and lower third. Grade point average is used as tertiary measurement of success. Ross has a very good reputation in the US, many teaching hospitals and physicians alike have worked with Ross students and are impressed with the education provided here.

Living in the Caribbean can be a huge advantage for educational purposes. Outside of the realms of distractions from home can provide a very healthy environment for study. Dominica provides little of these for the adamant pupil. When the urge emerges however, many wonders of nature are literally at your backdoor. The “Nature Island of the Caribbean” has a so much to offer. With a little open-mindedness, a quick trip could bring out the outdoorsman in all of us. From pristine, untouched beaches to magnificent waterfalls, the island is a great place to start an education in

medicine. For the active participant, there are places to surf, climb, or dive. For those who are less than outdoor enthusiasts, I recommend stepping onto a cruise down at PBH.

While you are here on the island, remember that inter-island travel is very cheap. There is no other time when you can fly to any island in the Caribbean for under \$200. Use this opportunity.

Most importantly, question everything that you know, or don’t know. These things can tend to snowball later in your education. This applies to both advise from guest opinion columnists as well as peers and professors alike. Knowing something and thinking you know something can make critical differences in scores on tests and clinical situations later. I pity those who came to med school wanting to become a mediocre doctor. Make the most of your time. Study, have fun, experience what they cannot in the States, and leave feeling that you are full. Things don’t get easier, we are glorified undergrads until we are finished and responsibility will be our ultimate punishment. -Chris Clark

Important Phone Numbers At Ross

University

- Main Phone: (767) 255-6500
- Reception: x 6221
- Security: x 6247
(Guard Booth x 6257)
(Guard Office x 6234)
- Health Clinic: x 6302
- Counseling: x 6237
- Computer Help Desk: x 6321



The Nature Island

Like many islands around the world, Dominica is home to a unique and isolated fauna and flora. Over 170 species of birds have been recorded here; of these two are endemic species in that they are found only on Dominica. They are the Imperial Amazon Parrot, locally known as the Sisserou, and the Red-necked Parrot, known locally as the Jaco. One of the hummingbirds, the exquisite Blue-headed Hummingbird, is only found here and on Martinique.

Among the island’s reptiles and amphibians are a unique subspecies of boa constrictor known as the clouded boa, three other snake species (none are venomous), the second largest frog in the world known locally as the mountain chicken, and a unique member of the iguana family called the Lesser Antillean Iguana. There are very few land mammals here, but of note are the agouti, several species of bats, and wild boar.

In the ocean, over twenty species of whale and dolphin have been spotted, making Dominica one of the best places in the world for whale watching. Year round you can see sperm whales, pilot whales, false killer whales, killer whales, pan-tropical spotted dolphins, Fraser’s pink-bellied dolphins, Atlantic spinner dolphins, and more!

Enjoy all that Dominica has to offer, the sights, the sounds, and the smells. This may be your only opportunity to really experience island living!

Holidays in Dominica

Here is Dominica you will find yourself on vacation for holidays you have never heard of and attending class on Thanksgiving! Here is a general list so you can mark your new holidays on the calendar! Each holiday listed below is a national holiday and/or religious holiday. Most businesses are closed on each of these days unless otherwise noted. Closed businesses include: banks, grocery stores, etc. Always check if a business is open on a holiday, if you’re unsure and make sure to check if you will need to attend class!

- January 1st New Year’s Day
- January 2nd Merchant’s Day
Utilities, banks and hotels are generally open.
- February 7th Mas Domnik
Opens Carnival holiday – includes: parade, carnival queen pageants, calypso tents, dances, band splash, parade of costumes, and more.
- February 23rd – 24th Carnival Celebrations
A yearly celebration with street parades, colorful costumes, and Calypso King competition
- April 8th Good Friday
- April 10th – 11th Easter Sunday (*Celebrated Sunday, holiday taken on Monday*)
- May 3rd Labor Day or May Day
- May 31st Fete Isidore & White Monday
Local feast held in Grand Bay Village
- June 29th Feast of St. Peter
Regular hours for all businesses
- August 2nd August Monday
- Oct. 24th – Nov. 30th Creole Week
- October 29 Creole Day
Dominicans have numerous celebrations & wear traditional clothes
- Oct. 29th – Nov. 31st World Creole Music Festival
Festival with performers from Africa, Haiti and more
- November 3rd – 4th National Day (Independence Day)
- December 25th Christmas Day
- December 26th Boxing Day

A Note From Security

Ross University Department of Safety and Security is concerned about a recent trend in criminal activity. Given the current atmosphere, community members should remain alert and mindful of their surroundings, especially when traveling home late in the evening.

Historically, criminal activity on Dominica has been limited to residential break-ins and other non-violent crimes against property. Unfortunately, the Department of Safety and Security has noticed an upswing in a type of criminal activity that has the potential to become violent. During the last four months, a number of criminal events involving the use of a firearm have occurred within the Glanvilla/Portsmouth area. While only one of these events targeted members of the Ross University community, all have occurred within close proximity to campus and merit our attention.

Specifically, the community should be aware of four incidents where a firearm was recently used:

1. On February 14, Brother's Chinese Restaurant was robbed at 12:50 AM when the owner was leaving the restaurant with the evening's receipts.
2. On May 14, two Ross University students were accosted and robbed on the main road at 2:00 AM.
3. On June 3, Tina's grocery store in Glanvilla was robbed shortly before 11:00 pm.
4. On June 6, a Lizard Trail security guard approached three individuals who were 'loitering in the area. When confronted, one of the individuals pulled a firearm and threatened the guard prior to fleeing the area.

In response to these events, the local police have introduced uniformed and plain-clothes patrols in the community surrounding campus, especially along the Lizard Trail. Campus security has also increased foot and mobile patrols in student and faculty residential areas.

Firearms have rarely been used to commit crimes on the island; however, all of the above incidents involved a weapon, and all occurred late in the evening. As such, we request that members of the Ross University community exercise caution when walking at night. To further promote your safety, we ask that you observe basic crime prevention practices.

- Please remember to keep your apartment locked at all times.
- Do not open your door to strangers.
- Keep small valuables out of easy reach from windows.
- Refrain from wearing headphones when walking home or when running at night, as this limits your ability to hear what is going on. Wearing your headphones also alerts would-be assailants that you may not be paying close attention to your surroundings.
- Remember, if you see something that makes you uneasy, use your judgment and, if possible, avoid the area.
- Utilize University provide transportation services or commercial taxis whenever possible

As many of you already know, Ross recently purchased a new security vehicle as part of its effort to increase the overall level of security in the local community. This vehicle was specifically pur-



New Ross University Security vehicle

chased by the University to provide members of the Ross University community with a dedicated security vehicle capable of responding to security incidents in the area. If you see something or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Safety & Security Department at Ext. 6247 or 235-5387 and request assistance.

Ross University School of Medicine

Movie Schedule

May – August 2006

All movies will be shown in Classroom 6 at 7:00pm. The cost is \$5EC per person.

July 7	Eight Below
July 10	Inside Man
July 14	American Dreamz
July 21	The Pink Panther
July 28	Benchwarmers
August 4	Scary Movie IV
August 11	Mission Impossible III
August 18	RV

Make sure you vote for upcoming movies for next semester!!!

Island



One of the many changes one experiences when moving to Dominica is a change in what to eat. Here in Dominica there is a limited availability of the foods that many students are used to eating back home. Foods come and go on the island and something you see on the grocery shelves one week may not return until the beginning of the next semester. Whether you are a member of a family or you just want to eat in for a meal, cooking takes on a whole new art. As a spouse here on the island I have a lot more free time than I am used to back in the States. When I first came to the island I was excited to have more time to spend cooking and trying new recipes, since this is one of the things I enjoy to do. Since my arrival, I have had to create new recipes of my own using available ingredients found on the island and learn the art of substitution in various recipes. Despite these hurdles cooking on the island can be extremely fun and rewarding and often an enjoyable study break. Some of the tips I have learned during my stay on the island in regards to cooking include:

- **When you see something on the shelves that you enjoy, STOCK UP!** You never know how long it may be until you see this item again and if it makes you happy, then it is worth it!
- **Fruits, fruits, and more fruits!** There is no excuse for not getting your share of fruits here on the island. Experiment using fruits in different ways. Try topping you boring, “chicken again” with a fruit compote or relish. Now that pineapples are coming back in season try baking chicken with pineapple and brown sugar.
- **Know the seasons of the different produce on the island.** The ladies at the shacks will always let you know which fruits and vegetables are in season. Cook with what is in season to get the best flavors and that way you will make sure you don’t miss out on any of the wonderful tastes of Dominica during your stay on the island.
- **Learn from the locals!** Whether it be at the shacks or the Portsmouth market on Tuesday or Saturday mornings, the locals love to share their experiences in cooking with the local fare. When purchasing something new don’t be afraid to ask for some hints on how to prepare the item. Trust me you will get numerous suggestions for wonderful dishes!
- **Watch your Carbohydrates!** Here on the island it is easy to over do it on your carbohydrate intake and forget about the other important food groups! You will need extra energy on days you spend hiking or out in the sun, but make sure you follow the guidelines of the food pyramid and are getting adequate intake of fruits and vegetables.
- **Milk will freeze!** For those of you that enjoy real milk, watch Tina’s for when she gets in a new supply. This fresh milk will freeze just fine in your freezer for you to enjoy long after Tina’s supply runs out!
- **Wash your produce!** Here in Dominica there are certain bacteria or parasites that our stomachs will not handle well. As most of the produce you buy here is 100% organic, make sure to wash your produce efficiently before enjoying. Bull’s Eye Pharmacy, across from Ross front gates, also offers a deworming pill for very inexpensive that you can take once at the beginning of each semester.
- **Listen for the sound of the conk shell!** The local fisherman use the sound of the conk shell to alert people that they have fish to sell. When you hear this sound by the shacks, fisherman will be selling fresh fish usually out of the back of their pick-up trucks. The fish is very reasonable in price and very tasty. Try to get the fish straight home to the refrigerator, and it helps to have your own plastic bag to carry the fish home in.
- **Use the School’s Free Transport!** The school offers a free transport to carry students down to Roseau every Saturday morning. This transport picks students up in front of the library at 8a.m. and students return to the library around 1p.m.. In Roseau there are two large grocery stores, Astaphan’s and IGA, that carry a larger variety of ingredients than here in Picard. Astaphan’s also carries many home furnishings and kitchen supplies to make your apartment more like home.

Island Fare (cont from pg 4)

- **Try new recipes!** With internet capabilities, you can access thousands of recipes online. Many of the sites available work through typing in a chosen ingredient and then numerous recipes including this ingredient pop up. Also, Ross Spouses' Organization sells a cookbook compiled of recipes that many of the spouses use to cook here on the island. This cookbook only includes recipes that the ingredients can be found on the island. They sell these cookbooks for very inexpensive and can be purchased through any of the Spouses' Club members.
- **Don't be Afraid to Ask Around!** Many of those of us that enjoy cooking have found ingenious ways of substitution or learned how to "make your own" for many key ingredients. Don't hesitate to ask others for suggestions or ideas on how to make a recipe work or where to find the ingredients!
- **If All Else Fails Try a New Restaurant!** The shacks offer wonderful fare to keep the students fed, but there are also many other restaurant options to try around the island. Besides the more well-known restaurants try: Purple Turtle, 445-5296, CoCoRico's in Roseau 449-8686, La Robe Creole in Roseau 448-2896, Sunset Bay, 446-6522, Blue Bay, down by Big Papa's, or Iguana Café, a small restaurant on the waterfront on the way to Portsmouth from campus.

Whether you decide to try your hand at a new recipe or enjoy a restaurant don't miss out on the wonderful flavors the island has to offer! One of my island recipes to share:

Tuxedo Chicken Chili

In large pot add all of the below ingredients and bring to a rolling boil:

- 2 cans Great Northern White Beans
- 1 can Black Beans Drained

1/2 lb shredded chicken (I just buy chicken wings or drumsticks and bake them wrapped in foil until done and then shred into small pieces, reserve cooking liquid)

1 Green Pepper Diced

1 Onion Diced

2 T Hot Sauce (adjust to your tastes, the gentleman at the end shack makes a wonderful hot salsa that works great!)

1 T Sugar

2 t Salt

2 1/2 T minced garlic

Reserve cooking liquid from chicken strain and add. Stir well and allow to boil for 15 minutes. Cover and let simmer for 30 minutes. Remove from heat and add 3 T butter and cream into soup. Serve warm.

Dr Lambert is a certified dietician here on Ross University campus and can offer great advice and recipes for healthy cooking. Her office is located across from the gym.

Local Markets

The best place and time to get fresh produce and fish is the market. There are two main markets: Portsmouth and Roseau. The Portsmouth market is open on Tuesday and Saturday, Saturday being the bigger one. It is located at the edge of Portsmouth near the church, but on the waterfront... follow the crowds! It begins at 5:30am and goes to 1pm. The earlier you arrive, the more options you have. Listen for the conch shell, sounds like a horn, to announce the availability of fish and lobster.

For the Roseau market, you can catch a school-scheduled transport that will leave the library by 8:30am and leaves the market by

12pm, or you can hire your own transport (see transportation section). The market in Roseau is obviously bigger, but by the time you get there at 9:30 your selection is limited and you have to get all your food home!



It is a good idea to wash all produce bought at the market. Especially wash leafy produce very well. Everything is safe to eat; be experimental! The locals love to tell you about the produce: what it's like, when it's ready, how to prepare it, etc. Just ask!

Try some of the following: dasheen, green bananas, or plantains instead of potatoes; fruits like papaya, mango, guava, sour sop, apricots, passion fruit, tamarinds, many types of oranges, and sugar cane. Try and go to the market as often as possible for the best, fresh produce, meats, and fish. Bring small change and a bag for your purchases.

Dive Dominica

By: Lisa Hoyme

Most people do not consider Dominica when making travel plans, but within the scuba diving community, Dominica is at the top of the list. With its pristine coral reefs and crystal blue waters teeming with life, Dominica is consistently ranked as one of the top five dive destinations in the world. Just feet below the surface, divers enter a wonderland of vertical walls, volcanic sea vents, swim-thrus, arches, canyons and caves. Biodiversity is the key word when describing Dominica's seascape, with gardens of multi-colored coral, sponges and anemones, countless species of fish, eels, rays, turtles, and many rare sea creatures including batfish, flying gurnards and the ever-elusive sea horse.

Having grown up in Minnesota, I had never considered the possibility of becoming a scuba diver. But that all changed the day I took my first scuba lesson. Vacuum-packed into my wetsuit with a 40 lb tank strapped to my BCD jacket, I precariously made my way into the surf. The awkwardness of the equipment was instantly relieved once I was knee-deep in the water, but a new struggle arose: breathing through the regulator. After the first lungful of seawater, I started to get the hang of it, and completed the set of skills required for the first dive.

As we started our swim around the reef near Coconuts, the unbeatable sensation of weightlessness took over, and I forgot I wasn't meant to breathe underwater. A new world had opened up before me, beckoning me to explore. It was like every picture I had ever seen on the Discovery Channel – the colors so vibrant and the aquatic life incredibly diverse. I was hooked. And I soon learned that I wasn't the only one.

Scuba diving has become a favorite pastime of Ross students. Out of every class, there have been dozens of students who have gotten their open water certification, and even a few who have gone on to become dive masters. When do they find the time? When asked, fifth semester student Constantine Bulaitan said "being a medical student, there isn't much time for anything. Therefore I make the time by managing my plate as best I can. We're heading into a realm where staying sane will become increasingly difficult. In order to be an effective doctor it is important to have some sort of balance outside of medicine. For me diving is my way of reminding myself that I too am a part of the world outside my textbooks. If I can 'get wet' once a month I'm happy. To put yourself in an environment and be totally free from the constraints of

everyday life is true freedom. Diving offers that bit of freedom for me."

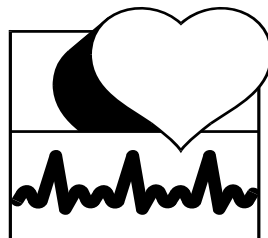


If you are interested in taking the plunge, you might want to check out Cabrits Dive Centre, located near campus just off of Lizard Trail. The only five star PADI shop on Dominica, Cabrits offers a wide selection of dive sites around the island. New owners Peter and Helen and their friendly staff welcome all Ross University medical students to dive with them and enjoy an experience that will last a lifetime. Cabrits Dive Centre offers students not only discounted certification and dive rates, but also flexible course scheduling. In conjunction with Ross Scuba Club, they also offer exclusive day trips, monthly specialty workshops, reef clean-ups, and post exam decompression dives and grill-outs. For more information, visit www.cabritsdive.com or simply stop by to begin your underwater adventures! See you under the sea!

The Health Clinic

The Health Clinic is open Monday through Friday 7am-5pm. A counselor is available Monday mornings from 9-12 and Wednesday through Friday mornings from 9-12. A receptionist is on duty for appointment setting daily from 8-4pm. Specific hours are as follows:

<u>Dr.'s Hours:</u>	<u>Nurse's Hours</u>
Monday: 7-1	7-6 daily
Tuesday: 8-1	
Wed-Fri: 12-6	



220v vs 110v

Dominica uses 220 volts while the U.S. uses 110 volts. Some apartments here are equipped with both, but most have only 220v. Ask your landlord about what type of voltage your apartment has. If you have a lot of appliances from the States, you may want to rent an apartment that has both 220v and 110v or find one with transformers already in the apartment.

All appliances from the U.S. will need a transformer or converter, except for a few things built for travel, such as a laptop, electric razor, etc. ALWAYS check what voltage an appliance uses before you plug them in because you can “blow” an appliance if you plug it into the wrong outlet. If something starts to spark, unplug it right away, and it may not be ruined.

If your apartment does not have transformers, they can be purchased at Astaphans in Roseau, Best Buy, Grand Bazaar or Courts in Portsmouth, and James Store hardware across from Perky's Pizza in Picard. Transformers come in many different watts, so

add up what you need by checking the back of each 110v appliance to see how much wattage it uses. Make sure the amount of wattage being used from the transformer does not exceed how much it can produce; otherwise you will blow out your transformer.

Some people get one transformer with a lot of wattage for their entire apartment and others get a few smaller ones for different areas of their apartment. If you choose to get one large transformer, plug your transformer into the wall and then plug a surge protector power strip into the other end of the transformer (make sure the power strip is 110v also.) Then plug your appliances into the power strip. Be careful and don't overload with many big things at once. If you are plugging in something like a hair dryer or iron, unplug everything else and just plug straight into the transformer without any power strip or extension cord

Almost all appliances you buy here will be 220v and can be plugged right into the wall. If your

appliance is 220v but has the 110v plug, you can buy an adapter at a hardware store, such as James Store.

Your electricity will already be set up in your apartment by your landlord. It will be either a pre-paid meter or monthly billing. If your apartment has a pre-paid electricity unit, you may purchase kilowatts of electricity with cash at the RUH office, the bank, the Domlec office, Tina's, or by phone with your credit card. Keep in mind these places are all closed on Sunday's and holidays so plan early and watch the meter. Your landlord should supply you with further information for purchasing pre-paid electricity.

Monthly electric bills will come from your landlord or your electric company. You will pay your landlord or at the bank or Domlec office, depending on your landlord's setup. Always check your bill carefully and your meter (if possible). **Always keep your receipts!!** Also, use fans instead of the air conditioning to keep your bill down.

How About the Water?

Despite what you may have heard, drinking water from your faucet is safe! We recommend using a Brita-type filter, but even if you do not have one, the tap water is okay. If you are still uncomfortable with this, there is ample bottled water available at the Shacks and grocery stores. Many prefer to buy large jugs of water and refill the bottles with campus drinking fountains or faucets.

Dominica is a 'developing' country, and as such you receive your drinking, shower, and flushing water from the nearest river. As it is also a tropical country, where it rains quite frequently, the rain causes run-off



from the mountains, and sediments fill the rivers. Therefore, when it rains for a good amount of time, the rivers, and therefore your faucet/

shower water, get “dirty.” It usually clears up within a day or two, but because of this it is wise to keep many bottles of water on-hand for drinking and cooking.

And if this weren't enough, the water also occasionally gets shut off. Because of this, we recommend that you keep several of the larger bottles on hand to fill toilets for flushing. The water usually comes back on in a couple days. Always inform your landlord of such problems, as they may not be aware of the problem and can sometimes fix it when notified.

