



The Montegonian

5 Things Montego Bay Needs

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“Instead of giving a politician the keys to the city, it might be better to change the locks.”

By *Doug Larson*

Montego Bay is a unique place in many a way. It is an inimitable blend of rural and urban life. However, it is sad and hard to admit that it is not perfect. As a city our friendly city is sometimes lacking. I do believe that everyone has found some shortcoming of the city at some point or the other. So I have compiled this list of the ten things I believe Montego Bay needs.

1. Tertiary Institutions

In this day and age where education, information and knowledge is a valuable and in demand commodity our city and those in charge of it, have done little to provide a variety of and popular tertiary institutions that can provide solid and marketable skills to Montegonians and it's neighbouring environs. Providing tertiary education in Montego Bay will undoubtedly stem the brain drain that Montego Bay experiences every year when many of its younger citizens usually 17 and above make the 4 hour journey to Kingston, some never to return as residents. This will also spur innovation and creativity for the city and lend itself to all kinds of new initiatives. Finally this will also attract brains from outside the city to come and make all kinds of contribution.

2. Museum

As a city with a very long history, one that extends to the 1500's, it seems baffling that Montego Bay has no official museum. One dedicated to the range of topics that can and could be covered pertaining to Montego Bay alone, not to mention the wider surroundings of St. James and the county of Cornwall. Photo essays of old Montego Bay, old maps, pictures of old building, heritage sites, Tainoes and Arawaks, the history of schools like Barracks road and Corinaldi, the Dome, The Western Mirror and it's predecessor the Beacon. St. James has much to offer, things such as artefacts, old sculptures, Maroon legacy etc. Montego Bay needs a place where its history can be collected and collectively viewed, as well as reviewed. As the saying goes "you don't know where you're going, until you know where you're coming from."

3. Literary Culture

As we fly head first into the information age, the city and citizens of the city need to foster a culture of readers, which ought to undoubtedly spawn a culture of thinkers. Montego Bay is without doubt a bit short on literary clubs, societies, poetry groups, meeting, writer's seminars, etc. It is about time Montego Bay had a Calabash of its own. We have produced so many writers here and yet still have so little that helps to promote and boost our literary minds. Our fair city has produced the likes of Colin Channer and featured Observer poet Safiyah Sinclair. A school of arts and a new and grand theatre would not be bad ideas either.

4. Entrepreneurial Programmes

In order to facilitate the economic growth of the city, the relevant agencies need to establish avenues that not just lend money to people but show them how to use it. Montego Bay could benefit from a small business development office. The city's entrepreneurs could benefit from learning marketing techniques, sales tips etc. The parish council would do well to set up seminars at the very least, that offer the necessary training at reasonable prices.

5. Technological Culture

With the advent of C.I.T. and the off-shore tech centres at Freeport, Montego Bay has made leaps and bounds in the technological arena. But so much more can be done to harness this. Montego Bay would do well with an all-rounded information technology centre. A place where all of the fair city's students can access the net do their necessary research, people can get phone cards of all sorts, make online overseas calls, use the various instant messaging services, online banking, e-mail and the necessary online business transactions, online purchases, get tutorials etc. Montego Bay could easily be the technological hub of the island.

These are however, just a few ideas on the thing Montego Bay needs. I am sure there are quite a few others, but I guess those will be for some other time.