



CURRENTS

The Newsletter of The Bahamas National Trust

BNT SPEARHEADS ECOTOURISM TALKS

Ecotourism: How Far Can We Go? was the subject of the Trust's last Public Meeting and round table discussions at the Ministry of Tourism and the College of The Bahamas in February. Making the presentations was World Wildlife Fund's Ecotourism Officer Elizabeth Boo.

Ms. Boo gave examples of potential gains and pitfalls in this "new" tourism concept. Her examples were taken from successful and failed ecotourism destinations around the world.

Unbeknownst to the audience Tourism Minister Brent Symonette quietly watched the Trust's evening presentation from the back of the room. On introduction he was greeted by an enthusiastic round of applause and spoke briefly on the challenges and benefits of ecotourism in The Bahamas.

Ms. Boo's round table discussions with senior staff members of the Ministry of Tourism proved to be most valuable. Lively discussion sprung up on the issue of what should and should not be encouraged in The Bahamas. MOT staff members also were "amazed" to learn about the depth and scope of the work of The Bahamas National Trust.

A whirlwind tour of New Providence, courtesy of the Trust's indefatigable President Pericles Maillis, topped off Ms. Boo's first visit to The Bahamas. Ms. Boo saw "great potential for add-on ecotourism". She observed that The Bahamas was already a popular destination with a strong tourism infrastructure. She added that the potential for having visitors stay for 2-3 more days to visit parks, etc. was an attractive possibility.

The Trust and its Public Education Committee is grateful to the Ministry of Tourism and Resorts International for making Ms. Boo's visit possible.

NATIONAL ECOTOURISM STRATEGY IN THE MAKING ?

The BNT has proposed a joint venture with the Ministry of Tourism in developing a National Ecotourism Strategy for The Bahamas. Such a Strategy would encompass among other things policies towards the environment in general and ecosystems, endangered species and natural resources in particular and would become the guiding document for all ecotourism development decisions.

BNT POSITION ON LONGLINE FISHING

It has been the position of The Bahamas National Trust for many years that it unequivocally opposes the use of longlines and other destructive techniques like trawling, and drift net fishing. In the past month the Trust has intensively researched the issue. Numerous international reports, totalling

/continued on page 2...

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY, APRIL 29TH

The Annual General Meeting of The Bahamas National Trust will be held at 6 pm on Thursday, 29th April at "The Retreat" on Village Road, Nassau. All Trust members and the general public are invited to attend. More details on time and speaker will be forthcoming. Mark your calendar now and plan to be there!

hundreds of pages, and the personal input of the Trust's scientific advisors has convinced us to remain unequivocally opposed to longline fishing.

There is no question as to the efficiency and destructive tendency of longlining. The decline of many of the world's great fisheries attest to this.

Surface or drift longlines will not only catch swordfish but also tuna, wahoo, sailfish, marlin, shark, etc. The gamefish tourist industry so essential to the economies and ways of life of many Family Island communities will be severely impacted by the bycatch consequence of longline fishing. Additionally, blue fin and yellow fin tuna, a favorite sport fishing target in The Bahamas, will be directly impacted by this technique.

The bottom longline technique targeted for snappers and groupers will

also catch sharks and because of the technique's non-selective nature, non-target species as well as under-sized target species.

With the development of the spear fishing industry, most of the Bahamas grouper stocks in the intermediate zone between coastal nurseries and deep water are under extreme pressure. Hitherto high breeding stocks were assured by the grouper population in the zones too deep for spear fishing and only partially at risk by fishpots or handline fishing. To now allow a new and deadly harvest method and open for mass harvest the only serious sustaining range of our grouper fishery will, in our opinion, prove highly detrimental to the resource.

Other concerns include habitat damage, equipment loss and "ghost fishing", whereby fish hooked on lost

gear become bait for larger predators, which are themselves caught on the lost gear, and so on. Fish hooked on lost gear are completely wasted as none are ever retrieved.

Many smaller Commonwealth Countries alone are rescinding and expelling foreign fishing concessionaires (Japanese and Taiwanese especially) who had previously procured fishing bases in their countries. We understand that Mauritius and Antigua have done so - and are now seeking to redevelop sports fishing.

The Trust recognizes the importance of developing our fisheries to their fullest potential. There are other alternatives to maximizing the sustainable yield of our marine resources without compromising the resources themselves and the Trust has urged Government to further explore these alternatives.

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our immediate Past President, Lynn Holowesko, and I represented the Bahamas National Trust at the IV World Congress on Parks and Protected Areas in Caracas, Venezuela during February 1992. The World Parks Congress is organized once every ten years by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), recently renamed The World Conservation Union.

IUCN/The World Conservation Union is the largest and perhaps most influential conservation body in the world. The Bahamas National Trust has been a member of IUCN since 1967. Mrs. Holowesko is a member of IUCN's Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas. (I am a member of the Species Survival Commission and our Director of Education, Susan Larson, is a member of the Commission on Education and Communication).

It was very important for the Trust to participate in the 1992 World Parks Congress. Most, if not all, of the major players in the conservation/protected areas field were there. The Trust has benefitted greatly from the personal contacts developed with many of these key people over the years.

The single most significant product of the 1992 World Parks Congress was "The Caracas Declaration" which was presented to Dr. Maurice Strong, Director General of the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, popularly known as the Earth Summit.

In this way, the World Parks Congress and The Bahamas National Trust had direct and official input in the Earth Summit which was held four months later in Rio de Janeiro.

While at the World Parks Congress the unique status of The Bahamas

National Trust was singled out. The Bahamas is the only place in the world where an organization like The Bahamas National Trust, which is independent of Government and self-funded, has the responsibilities for not only building but administering and managing the National Park System of the country. There is much international interest in our status as alternatives are being sought over government run national parks by conservation organizations the world over. Mrs. Holowesko presented a paper on this subject at the World Parks Congress.

Another relatively "new" idea in the conservation field is the creation of Conservation Trust Funds to support protected areas. In the Congress session dealing with this subject the model example used and explained in detail was The Bahamas National Trust's Heritage Fund. The Trust's Heritage Fund Prospectus and the advice

from ourselves in this regard have directly benefitted other National Trusts around the world, even as far away as Fiji.

In October of last year the Trust's Director of Education, Susan Larson, attended the World Congress for Education & Communication on Environment & Development held in Toronto. Joining some one thousand delegates from around the world Susan participated in a great variety of lectures and roundtable discussions. Of particular concern to the Trust's wide-ranging work were sessions on the implementation of "Agenda 21", the guiding document for sustainable development which came out of the Earth Summit, the role of NGO's in this process, and the development of environmental educational strategies and curricula for sustainable development. Susan returned with over fifty pounds of documents that have been assimilated and are being applied to the Trust's work, including Canada's "Green Plan", touted by IUCN and the United Nations as an ideal model for

other countries seeking to define and implement sustainable development strategies.

Shortly before the year's end the Trust was also represented at the International Conference of National Trusts, held every three years, this time in New Zealand. This Conference brought together leaders of 30 National Trusts from around the world. It is amazing how the various National Trusts are at the same time similar in some aspects yet very dissimilar in others. Such diversity tends to provide a great deal of strength for the National Trust movement as a whole.

It is important to maintain our association with the other National Trusts to continue a very beneficial interchange of ideas, methods and information. The Bahamas National Trust certainly benefits from this exchange but it also contributes.

In New Zealand our environmental education programs were cited as

outstanding examples and many National Trusts, including the Grandfather of them all - The National Trust of Great Britain - sought out details on many of our recent activities. In a truly poignant moment the Executive Director of the Fiji National Trust commended and thanked The Bahamas National Trust for helping to rejuvenate the spirit of that organization from despair and the brink of disbandment. The Fiji National Trust is now strong and healthy and presently implementing a Heritage Fund Campaign modeled after our own.

The Bahamas National Trust has achieved many, many successes. Our accomplishments and the paths we have taken in developing our organization are admired by conservationists around the world. This is a source of great pride for those of us who are close to the day to day workings of the Trust. I hope the more you learn of the actual work of The Bahamas National Trust, the more you as members will be proud of the organization you support.

Gary Larson

BNT RESTORES BATTERY

In November of 1990 the Trust's Historic Preservation Committee identified Potter's Cay Battery as an historic site in critical need of attention. A joint project was initiated with the Department of Archives, and the Ministries of Tourism and Works.

Initially hampered by lack of funds from November of 1990 until October 1992 the committee was only able to organize several Saturday morning clean-ups, which involved clearing bush and man-made debris from the site. In 1991 the committee received plans of the Battery from the Fort Charlotte MSS Collection of 1819 and 1859 and was granted formal permission to restore the Battery.

This historic 18th century artillery emplacement is situated near the eastern end of Potter's Cay in the Harbour



Photo courtesy of The Tribune

of Nassau. It was erected "to prevent the enemy from landing in that part of the harbour as well as to defend the entrance to the eastward by Hanover Sound". The actual date of construc-

tion is not known, but in 1794, the then Governor, Lord Dunmore, advised the Secretary of State in England that artillery had been mounted there. As it is not shown on any map prior to that

date, circa 1794 should be accepted as its approximate date of construction. The Battery was planned to house four twenty-four pounders. It fell into disuse and disrepair in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Under the direction of Mr. Tony Aarons, Archeologist/Anthropologist, Department of Archives, the Trust's restoration project continues. The Ministry of Tourism has lent a cement mixer and a stone-cutting chain saw; sand has been donated by the Port Authority (transported free by Mr. Sonny Waugh). A bobcat tractor, courtesy of Mr. Godfrey Lightbourn and Cavalier

Construction Company, recently arrived on site and "does the work of a hundred volunteers!" says BNT President Pericles Maillis. Lunch for the weekend workdays has been donated by Grand Central Take Away, with McDonalds Restaurants providing 10-gallon thermoses of juice each day.

Members of the Trust's Historic Preservation Committee and volunteers from the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Program, C.C. Sweeting High School, Government High School, and members of The Bahamas Historical Society have helped clear the fort of weeds,

excavated the interior and rebuilt the damaged areas of the fort walls.

The committee has been working from day to day with small donations from anonymous donors. Recently a donation of \$2,500 from the Nassau/Paradise Island Promotion Board has given them great encouragement. Attention will now focus on reconstructing the missing blockhouse and fencing in the fort for protection. The committee invites everyone to visit the Fort and see the progress which has been made. Volunteers to help with the ongoing work are always needed too!

STATUS OF BAHAMA PARROT

The Bahama Parrot Conservation/education Program formally came to a close on December 31, 1992. The 18-month undertaking was a cooperative effort between The Bahamas National Trust, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Lands & Surveys, Abaco's Friends of the Environment, Friends of the Bahama Parrot and RARE Center for Tropical Conservation. It aimed at heightening public awareness of the Bahama Parrot, its endangered status and need for protection. The program was a resounding success in virtually every regard and set unprecedented levels of achievement by which similar conservation programs will be measured for years to come. Have a look...



- ☛ 27,750 schoolchildren visited
- ☛ 26,500 bumper stickers released
- ☛ 6,000 participants in t-shirt day
- ☛ 2,000 legislation books released

- ☛ 10,000 posters distributed
- ☛ 5,000,000 letters stamped "Save Our Parrot"

- ☛ 2,500,000 grocery bags printed to advertise parrot's plight
- ☛ 14,000 newspaper supplements produced

The most important unfinished business is the creation of a national park in Abaco. It was with a great deal of disappointment and frustration that the committee saw the program formally end without having secured the Abaco National Park. In October the Cabinet agreed in principle to the creation of this park contingent on the formalization of the exact boundaries. We are presently having difficulty with the Ministry of Agriculture in establishing these boundaries.

The Bahama Parrot Conservation Committee extends its heartfelt thanks and most sincere appreciation to the individuals and businesses that rallied behind this program and made it such a success.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION VIDEO PREMIERES

The Bahamas National Trust in conjunction with Commonwealth Bank is producing a series of videos highlighting historic buildings and sites in The Bahamas. The first of the series, "Nassau's Historic Mile" premiered on February 24th at the LeMeridien Royal Bahamian. Under the patronage of our Prime Minister, Hubert A. Ingraham and Mrs. Ingraham, over 300 people viewed this impressive documentary. The Trust was further honored to have the Minister of Education and the Minister of Tourism attend the premiere and say a few words at the end of the presentation. BNT President Pericles Maillis presented Mr. Smith, Mr. Symonette and Dr. Gail Saunders with copies of the video.

"Nassau's Historic Mile" celebrates the contributions made to our Capital's architecture from the early 18th century to the mid-20th century. This BNT Historic Preservation Committee project, made possible by a generous grant from Commonwealth Bank, was produced by The Counsellors Ltd.

The video series aims to create an awareness of Bahamian architecture and history and prevent further loss of this important aspect of our culture through education. Future productions will feature other historic sites on New Providence and our Family Islands. The series will be the first complete collection of Bahamian historical heritage. The committee plans to place the video in every Bahamian school.

SECOND ANNUAL WINE & ART FESTIVAL

The second annual Art & Wine Festival was held last November at "The Retreat", Village Road. With "Wines from Around the World" as the theme Wholesale Wines & Spirits featured

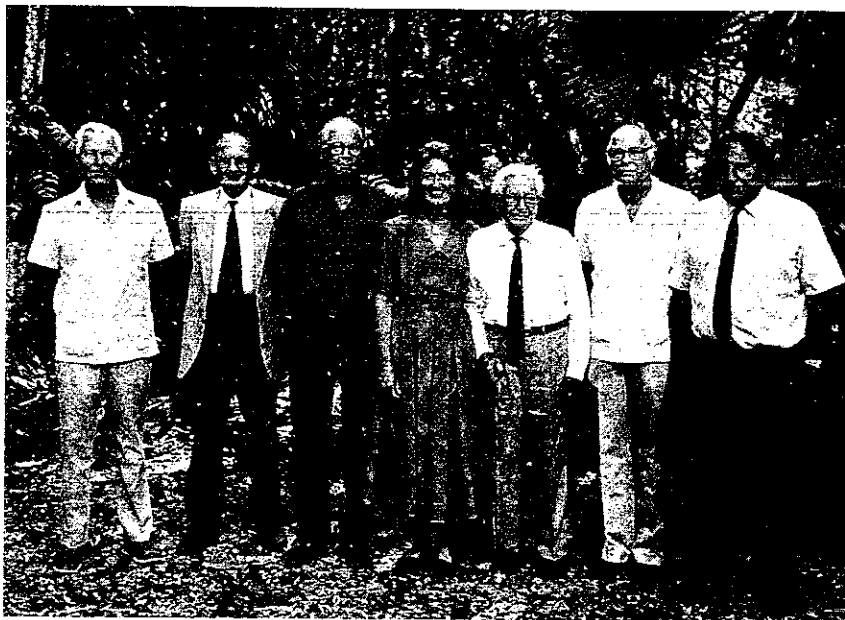
58 wines from 19 different countries. While tasting wine guests were treated to an exceptional collection of artwork by more than twenty Bahamian artists.

The popularity of the event was evident as almost 1,000 people attended, braving sporadic rainfall and heavy overcast skies.

The Trust is indebted to Diane Holowesko, who spent many months planning this special event. The Trust is also grateful to George Kelly and Wholesale Wines & Spirits for their generosity; all proceeds from the event were donated to The National Trust!

Many other people - the artists and BNT volunteers, as well as several generous corporate citizens contributed to the success of the day and our sincere thanks go to each of them... Chan Pratt, Melissa Maura, Rolfe Harris, Jennifer Phillips, David White, Barbara Pyfrom, Jackson Burnside, Stanley Burnside, Ricardo Knowles, Brent Malone, Tony McKay, Theiry Lamarre, Buster Hall, Nassau Glass, Lyford Cay Club, Resorts International, Sandra Wells, Donna Knowles, Beth Bethell, Blanche Morley, Alexandra Maillis, Penny Pyfrom, Johnny Bethell, Ernie Grinrod, MacGregor Robertson, Keva Hanna Lawrence, and Linda Thompson.

GATHERING OF BNT PRESIDENTS



The Bahamas National Trust was honored to have six of its Past Presidents gather at "The Retreat" with our current President Pericles Maillis for a Christmas Luncheon. This special group represents a total of 23 years leadership of The National Trust, going as far back as 1964. Pictured from left to right are: Basil Kelly, President 1982-1984; Michael Lightbourn, President 1974-1975; Andrew McKinney, President 1964; Lynn Holowesko, President 1976-1982 and 1984-1991; Robert Blum, President 1965; Oris Russell, President 1966 and 1972-1973; Pericles Maillis, current President.

**BNT IN GRAND BAHAMA
HUMMING!**

An enthusiastic team of Trust members have fueled up the GB Trust machine - officially known as the Bahamas National Trust Grand Bahama Regional Committee - and things are really beginning to hum! Under the inspired chairmanship of Dennis Knowles and the Trust's first-ever paid administrative employee on Grand Bahama, Dawn Hutton, Trust activities on all fronts have been launched.

The Rand Nature Center, acquired by The National Trust in 1992, is moving closer to an anticipated April opening. Guided tours of this 100-acre gem are offered every Thursday at 10 am. Mr. Knowles and Mrs. Hutton have developed an exciting marketing plan for the Center and the potential the Center has had since its inception seems closer than ever at being realized. Lucayan National Park is benefitting from renewed enthusiasm. Clean-up and maintenance projects are regular events and in spite of the challenges facing the Committee with this park everyone is optimistic about an exciting future.

BNT President, Pericles Maillis, recently led a team of experienced "Canaye" builders to Grand Bahama to begin the construction of a replica Lucayan village at the BNT Rand Nature Center.

Lynn Gape, the Trust's Public Relations and Assistant Education Officer, travelled to Grand Bahama in early April to meet with Primary and Secondary school teachers to discuss ways in which the Trust's environmental educational strengths can be better utilized there.

Public Education Meetings have been reintroduced. Michael Weilbacher performed "Oceans in Motion" to a full house in Freeport after his Nassau Open House success. Alexander "Sandy" Sprunt IV, of the National

Audubon Society and a member of the Trust's Council for over 30 years, was the guest of honor at the March meeting and gave a stunning slide presentation on the flamingos of Inagua.

There is much to be done in Grand Bahama and BNT members are encouraged to get involved! Please call Dennis Knowles or Dawn Hutton for more details!

**EXUMA ENTHUSIASM
GROWS!**

All is well in the Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park!

On February 1 of this year our new warden, Ray Darville, assumed his post at the Park's Waderick Wells Headquarters.

"He looks like he'd be comfortable in a cowboy hat with a silver star pinned to his shirt," writes the Exuma Park Newsletter editor. Poachers beware!! Ray, a native Bahamian, born in Long Island, has taken up the responsibility of Park Warden with enthusiasm and a sure sense of dedication. He has also enjoyed learning about the other challenges of the Park and a warden's life and is determined to tackle and master them all.

And he has lots of help. Volunteer activity in the Exuma Park continues to grow. From clearing trails and making interpretive signs, from installing solar panels and weather screens, from transporting supplies and new mooring systems...the list goes on and on. The Exuma Park is what it is today because of the extraordinary support and active involvement of volunteers. Our heartfelt thanks to everybody who pitches in to help... The Bahamas National Trust is indebted to each of you!

New moorings throughout the Park was the ambitious project for Spring.

In a contractual arrangement with John Halas, considered to be the world's foremost authority on environmentally friendly mooring systems, 35 moorings were installed to minimize damage from random anchoring in the Park's most popular spots. The decision to adopt moorings and limit anchoring was made reluctantly and was considered the only answer to protecting the resources from increased cruising and daily anchor damage.

If you are interested in learning more about what is going on in Exuma or in getting involved in one of the many Park projects please write Ray Darville or Peggy Hall at PO Box N4105, Nassau, Bahamas.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Our Inagua National Park Senior Warden, James Nixon, celebrated his 78th birthday on the 24th of March earlier this year. "Jimmy", once the best flamingo hunter in the country, has been protecting our National Bird, the West Indian flamingo, for over 40 years. His hunting prowess was discovered by Robert Porter Allen, then Director of Research of the National Audubon Society. Mr. Allen inspired James and his brother Samuel, also an avid hunter, to become conservationists instead. In the early years the salaries of the Nixon brothers were paid by Audubon. In 1959, when the Bahamas National Trust was created, the Nixons became the first employees of The National Trust. Jimmy has spent his life protecting the natural heritage of our country. Trust members and all Bahamians owe him a great debt of gratitude for such exemplary dedication.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JIMMY!

CORPORATE CITIZENS SHOW UNPRECEDENTED SUPPORT FOR BNT

1992 was a remarkable year in many ways. Especially noteworthy for The Bahamas National Trust was the level at which corporate citizens rallied behind The Bahamas National Trust, supporting an unprecedented number of programs.

Commonwealth Bank has underwritten the production of an historic heritage video series, the first installment of which, "Nassau's Historic Mile", premiered last month. The Bank also sponsored a Bahama Parrot Billboard and contributed generously to the production of the Bahama Parrot music video (to be released next month).

Barclays Bank, one of the Trust's most faithful supporters, was the sole sponsor of 26,500 Bahama Parrot bumper stickers which were distributed nationally to rally support for this endangered species.

Nassau/Paradise Island Promotion Board contributed generously to the Potter's Cay Battery Project, an on-going restoration effort spearheaded by BNT President, Pericles Maillis, the Trust's Historic Preservation Committee and the Department of Archives.

City Markets Limited printed 2,500,000 grocery bags with the message "Help Save Our Parrot". Smaller donations are also made throughout the year, the most recent being supplies for children's crafts at our 1993 Open House.

Coutts & Co. and Lloyds Bank Bahamas Ltd. contributed so generously to the Bahama Parrot music video they have been recognized as its official sponsors.

ESSO focused on the island's persistent litter problem and produced 5,000 vehicle litter bags. The bags are available at ESSO stations the

Trust's headquarters, Village Road, Nassau and The Rand Nature Center, Freeport.

Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce sponsored the Bahama Parrot national art competition, one of the Parrot Billboards, and have most recently become the sole sponsor of the Trust's Green Pledge Program which was launched last year to coincide with the Earth Summit.

Rotary Club of East Nassau, another enthusiastic Trust supporter, most recently donated a 27-inch color television, VCR player and 35mm slide projector to the Trust's Education Department. Their level of involvement has been so consistently high the Club was named the Trust's 1992 Volunteer of the Year.

Resorts International consistently supports our programs, provid-

ing accommodations for out of town guests, Conference rooms for Public Meetings, etc.

A total of sixteen Bahama Parrot Billboards were created and distributed in New Providence, Grand Bahama, Abaco and Inagua. They were sponsored individually by:

Alexiou & Associates

The Body Shop

John S. George Ltd.

Ardastra Gardens & Zoo

Bank of Nova Scotia

Nassau Glass

Commonwealth Brewery

Caribbean Management

The value of these contributions far exceeds their monetary worth. It is this type of support that elevates the Trust's effectiveness, increases its visibility in the community, and enables it to carry out its mandated responsibilities at a consistently high level.

NEW CURATOR FOR RETREAT

The gardens of "The Retreat" have received extra special attention lately, thanks to the watchful eye and talented hand of our new garden Curator, Barbara Pyfrom.

Bobby brings with her a wealth of experience and a lifetime of interest in and dedication to the flora of The Bahamas. In recent years she honed her skills at landscaping under some of the world's most respected design and landscape masters.

After successfully completing a series of courses in Palm Beach, Florida she was awarded membership in the Landscape Critics Council. She



continued her studies in Landscape Design at La Napoule, France as a student of James Van Sweden, a noted American Landscape Architect, and John Brookes, an acclaimed English Garden Designer and author of many books on Garden Design.

Bobby is enthusiastic about the challenges presented to her at "The Retreat". Some specific goals include repairs and further enhancement of Green Hell, the addition of more rare palms and increasing the garden's capability for the production of seedlings and cuttings, and the addition of an herb garden in the Pergola.

**HOLD ON TO
THAT BNT
MEMBERSHIP
CARD!**



THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST

PATRON: His Royal Highness, The Duke of Edinburgh

MEMBER _____

MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES _____

SIGNED _____

TEL: (809) 393-1317 • P.O. BOX N-4105, NASSAU, BAHAMAS

Helping The Bahamas National Trust conserve and protect the environment and natural resources of The Bahamas is the most important and obvious meaning behind our membership program. But Bahamas National Trust membership has personal advantages too! Take a look...

- * 1/2 price admission to Coral World
- * 1/2 price admission to Ardastra Gardens & Zoo
- * 15% discount at all (Bahamas) Body Shops
- * 10% discount at Modernistic Gardens & Pet Supplies
- * 10% discount at all Mr. Photos
- * 10% discount at Fox Hill Nursery
- * 10% discount at G.R. Sweetings
- * 10% discount at Cotton Ginny
- * 10% discount on encyclopedias through Bahamas Research Book Club

**MEMBERSHIP DOES HAVE ITS ADVANTAGES... AND THE LIST
KEEPS GROWING!**

**The Bahamas National Trust
P.O. Box N 4105,
Nassau, Bahamas**

You may have noticed something different about this newsletter. If you have renewed your membership for 1993 you might have noticed something different about our membership cards, too!

In an effort to develop a uniform look for The Bahamas National Trust we have introduced a vertical color bar, highlighting our distinctive crest and depicting images of our wide-ranging work.

**THE NATIONAL TRUST
GETS A "NEW" LOOK!**

The Administrative Branch of the National Trust will use a variety of colors in the vertical bar. However, each National Park and/or Regional Committee will use a single color in all of its material in an effort to develop an automatic association with that Park and/or Region. We hope you like what you see!