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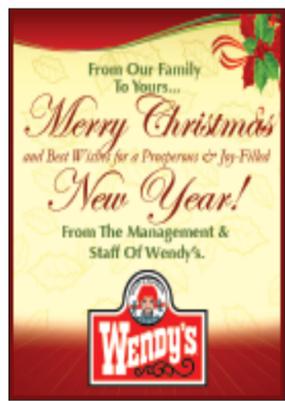
The Tribune

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USA TODAY

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Seeing the light
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INSIDE

CARS FOR SALE, HELP WANTED AND REAL ESTATE
BAHAMAS BIGGEST

SPORTS

Maynard committed to new role
SEE PAGE TWELVE

Business chiefs in handgun plea

Bosses want access to weapons amid spate of armed robberies

By NOELLE NICOLLS
Tribune Staff Reporter
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BUSINESS owners are calling for greater access to handgun licenses to protect themselves against armed robbers. Under current laws, shotguns and rifles are issued by the firearms licensing department of the Royal Bahamas Police Force for hunting. The conditions of the permit suggest these weapons are to be used for shooting birds and similar sporting activities, not personal armament. The handgun, however, is considered to be the weapon

of choice for personal protection. But the process for obtaining this weapon is more rigorous and political, making it almost impossible. "The Government's current policy is not to provide private licenses for handguns and that has not changed. In fact, for anyone other than a police officer to be issued a handgun requires approval by the Prime Minister. This procedure has been in place for many administrations," said Minister of National Security Tommy Turnquest. Wesley Willie, owner and

SEE page 10

Senior immigration officer voices fears after news of salaries cut

By ALISON LOWE
Tribune Staff Reporter
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A SENIOR immigration officer has raised fears of customs and immigration officers being left in default of their financial obligations and more prone to corruption in the wake of news that their salaries are to take a hit of tens of thousands of dollars in the new year. His comments come after Bahamas Public Service Union President John Pinder said the majority of officers had accepted the government's proposal to increase their base salaries by between \$4,000 - \$8,000

SEE page 11

ACTING COMMISSIONER GOES ON WALKABOUT



ACTING COMMISSIONER of Police Elliston Greenslade encourages a young traffic officer on Bay Street yesterday. Mr Greenslade conducted his first walkabout of the downtown area yesterday.

• SEE PAGE FIVE

Contract is signed for new Straw Market construction

By AVA TURNQUEST

STRAW MARKET vendors are one step closer to a permanent new home after Minister of Public Works and Transport Neko Grant signed the contract for the construction of the new Bay Street building yesterday. Cavalier Construction Company won the contract at a base amount of \$11.3 million after the work was tendered to four firms last month and bids were evaluated by Ministry of Work's tech-

SEE page 15

Ruling could see govt land returned to former owners

By MEGAN REYNOLDS
Tribune Staff Reporter
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LAND acquired by the government for construction of a road around the Albany development could be returned to former landowners following a Supreme Court ruling in their favour. Justice Cheryl Albury found the government unlawfully acquired land from six property own-

SEE page 11

Sir Jack Hayward signs agreement to sell GBPA stake

By NEIL HARTNELL
Tribune Business Editor

SIR JACK HAYWARD has signed an agreement to sell his stake in the Grand Bahama Port Authority (GBPA) and its Port Group Ltd affiliate, he has told the Prime Minister, describing the deal as being "as significant and prosperous" as the Hawksbill Creek Agreement's signing in 1955. In a December 14, 2009, letter to Mr Ingraham, Sir Jack said he had signed an agreement last Friday to sell his GBPA shares, although the identity of the purchaser(s) was blacked out on the documents seen by The Tribune.

SEE page 15

Deputy PM responds to Fred Smith's allegations over lawsuit

RESPONDING to allegations made in an affidavit by prominent attorney Fred Smith that FNM officials told him to drop a controversial lawsuit or lose his political dreams, Deputy Prime Minister Brent Symonette said he does not recall Mr Smith's version of the events.

As reported by The Tribune earlier this week, Mr Smith, QC, a senior partner with Callender's and Co in Grand Bahama filed an affidavit on

SEE page 11

Laing uncertain whether Bahamas will meet 'grey list' removal deadline

By ALISON LOWE
Tribune Staff Reporter
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STATE Minister for Finance Zhivargo Laing is uncertain whether The Bahamas will meet the end of year deadline it set for itself to be removed from the OECD/G20 "grey list".

He said that while The Bahamas has done all it needs to do to be in a position to sign the last two Tax Information Exchange Agreements that will bring it to the minimum demanded 12 TIEAs necessary to be deemed fully compliant with newly-evolved tax transparency and information

SEE page 10

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LOCAL NEWS

Sandals Foundation brings Christmas cheer to Bahamas' children

Despite the obvious absence of snow and reindeers, there was still an abundance of festivity in the air as the Sandals Foundation paid a visit to some of the nation's children bearing gifts and leaving smiles.

The foundation's Christmas Crew, including Santa Claus himself, called in at the Bilney Lane Children's Home, Princess Margaret Hospital and the All Saints Camp armed with hundreds of presents to leave the young patients, students and residents beaming.

Following a plea from Sandals CEO Adam Stewart, hundreds of toys were donated to the foundation, the philanthropic arm of Sandals Resorts International, by the resorts' management teams and travel agents from the United States, United Kingdom

and Canada during the recent MEGAfam trips held at Sandals Royal Bahamian.

Heidi Clarke, senior coordinator at the Sandals Foundation said: "There's no doubt, it has been an extremely challenging time for many communities right across the Caribbean and, for many, a year to forget.

Spirit

"However, we are pleased to say that there is certainly no shortage in festive spirit and we were delighted to be able to bring smiles to the faces of so many children this Christmas."

"It's times like these when organisations such as the Sandals Foundation really come into their own. The thought of any child

spending Christmas without a toy to open is awful but thanks to our team members, guests and travel partners, we are able to help."

Since its inception earlier this year, the Sandals Foundation has gone from strength to strength and has been responsible for a wide range of community, educational and environmental initiatives, including the creation of marine sanctuaries in Jamaica, the rebuilding of schools and farms in the Turks and Caicos and highly acclaimed literacy programmes in St Lucia.

The Sandals Foundation Christmas Crew also visited the Exuma Foundation and the Department of Social Services in George Town, Great Exuma and has plans for trips to Gambier Primary School and the Salvation Army in the pipeline.



SANDALS FOUNDATION team member gives a present to a resident of Bilney Lane Children's Home.

ST NICHOLAS IN THE GARDEN OF THE GROVES



SANTA arriving in his 'Sleigh' at the Garden of the Groves - guided safely down to earth by Michelle Hanson.

FREEPORT - The Garden of the Groves came alive with the spirit of Christmas this past weekend as more than 30 local arts and crafts vendors showcased their products, enticing the public to get a head-start on Christmas shopping.

On display were items of jewellery, cakes, cookies, fine chocolates, soaps and lotions, paintings, metal sculptures and much more.

The Garden's own New England style shopping complex also displayed the finest in straw and wood crafts, fragrances, books, candles, coconut jewellery and high quality logo-wear.

It was an especially festive occasion for the children, who even sat still for Tiffany Den-

nison's ever so popular face-painting. The little ones could hardly wait to see Santa Claus pull up in his electrically powered "sleigh".

Santa then sat in his elaborate peacock chair to receive the children and listen to their wishes for Christmas which also included a couple of complaints about gifts they had received last year!

All proceeds of pictures taken with Santa benefited the Grand Bahama Humane Society.

Another highlight of the day was a special performance by the Grand Bahama Battalion of the Boys and Girls Brigade under Captains Joseph Robinson and Martin Munroe. Onlookers were thrilled with the music, songs and marching.

Captain Robinson conducted the countdown to the lighting of the Christmas tree in the centre of the Labyrinth which ended a wonderful day for the whole family in the Garden of the Groves.



TWO OF THE more than 40 children who wanted to share their Christmas wishes with Santa.

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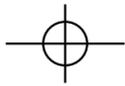
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LOCAL NEWS

Minister: customer satisfaction with the public service is up

By ALISON LOWE
Tribune Staff Reporter
alowe@tribunemedia.net



ZHIVARGO LAING

THE government's pilot public service improvement projects have gone "extremely well" with customer satisfaction up – in some cases by as much as 89 per cent – in the six key agencies involved, according to a top official.

Zhivargo Laing, minister with responsibility for the public service, suggested yesterday that short term programmes implemented as part of the government's long-term goal of reforming the public service into a more efficient, customer-friendly and accountable entity, have been successful and can now inform similar efforts throughout the public service.

"We had a scientific benchmark of where the six pilot agencies were in terms of how the public viewed their service and how the employees viewed their service through surveys that were conducted by the College of the Bahamas.

"A year later we had the College of the Bahamas do a follow-up survey programme following a number of things that had been done in those agencies to help correct some of the problems that had been identified – the focus of the agency, their responsiveness to the public, their presentation generally as people enter, et cetera.

"The results we got from the follow-up agencies (showed that) all of them made improvements, and some made remarkable improvements," said Mr Laing.

The prime minister announced in May 2008 that the government was launching pilot public service improvement programmes in six agencies – the Department of Public Service, the Registrar General's office, the Building Control Division, the Road Traffic Department, the Department of Physical Planning and the Passport Office – "to correct deficiencies in urgent need of action."

Mr Laing said yesterday that the Department of Physical Planning made the most drastic improvement in its service levels, with surveys revealing that there was an 89 per cent improvement in how the department was rated in this regard by those accessing its services.

This allowed it to win a competition associated with the service improvement programme which provided financial incentives for better service.

The Department of Public Service was rated by mem-

bers of the public as having improved the least in the levels of service it offered, although its ratings also went up by just over 20 per cent.

"We had installed comment boxes in these agencies and just reading the comments (showed that) those reflected what we'd seen in the survey, so from that point of view we're very satisfied that we had some lessons learnt that can be broadly extended across the service," said Mr Laing.

He described the public service improvement programmes as one branch of the government's ongoing campaign to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of the public service.

Another component involves changes to the legal framework that governs the service.

Mr Laing said that feedback to a draft public service Bill circulated internally within the service has now been received. It is "possible" the legislation itself could come before parliament next year, although this is not certain.

"The Act itself has not been updated for quite some time. The world has changed. We know some best practices exist in public service operations in the region and outside and there are some lessons that can be adopted and embraced, essentially to make the service more accountable, more transparent, to be more reflective of the kind of incentives that you want in place for people to work efficiently and effectively."

"Early next year we're going to have another round of discussions on that then we expect to be able to move forward with some broader

public consultations on the issue before moving forward hopefully with some legislative changes," said the minister.

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Man facing murder charge to undergo second mental evaluation

A 25-YEAR-OLD man facing a murder charge has been ordered to undergo a second mental evaluation.

Kevin Dawkins is accused of the November 24 murder of 39-year-old Fitzroy McDonald, who police believe was killed in an argument with another man in Gregory Town, Eleuthera.

Dawkins is also facing charges of burglary and causing damage.

During his initial appearance before Magistrate Carolita Bethel two weeks ago, Dawkins appeared confused and unresponsive.

Magistrate Bethel ordered that he undergo a mental evaluation.

Dawkins, who appeared before Magistrate Derrence Rolle in Court 5, Bank Lane on Monday, was ordered to undergo a further evaluation.

He is expected back in court on January 11, 2010.

Tickets for junkanoo go on sale

JUNKANOO tickets went on sale yesterday and Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture Charles Maynard said the parades will run more smoothly this year than ever before.

There will be shorter gaps between groups which will be spaced only one block apart, rather than the four block gaps that left spectators waiting for up to 45 minutes between groups last year.

Mr Maynard said it also will be easier for spectators to manoeuvre in and out of their seats on the bleachers in Bay Street and Shirley Street and there will be more seating in Rawson Square than ever before.

The better organised Boxing Day parade should allow Bay Street businesses to open downtown on the Saturday morning after Christmas, Mr Maynard said.

He added: "We want to improve the whole experience for those who come to spectate, from buying your ticket to getting to your seat and leaving your seat, we want to make it as easy as possible."

"This year should be the smoothest we have ever seen."

Junkanoo tickets range from \$5 for standing areas to \$45 for seats in Rawson Square.

Tickets go on sale on Wednesday and can be purchased from the Kendal Isaacs Gym in Yellow Elder Gardens or online at www.caribtickets.com.

Bahamian film that opened festival to show tonight

BAHAMIAN filmmaker Kareem Mortimer's first feature film premiered at the opening of the Bahamas International Film Festival on Friday and will play again tonight at Galleria Cinemas.

Children of God, a story exploring the struggle to live freely in a homophobic society, is told through rich cinematography portraying the dramatic landscape of Eleuthera, with the harmonious accompaniment of Bahamian music.

The film will be shown at 10pm at Galleria Cinemas on JFK Drive, and again at the same theatre tomorrow at 3pm.

Anger over decision not to hang Jewish decorations on Bay Street

By TANEKA THOMPSON
Tribune Staff Reporter
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THE government's decision not to hang Jewish decorations on Bay Street along with traditional Christmas ornaments this holiday season has angered one local entrepreneur.

Last December, decorations featuring the nine-pronged menorah – a symbol of the Jewish Hanukkah celebration – were hung in Rawson Square.

Opposition to these images due to their "unchristian" nature emerged shortly after and they were quickly removed by the Bahamas Electricity Corporation (BEC), which is responsible for downtown Christmas decorations.

It appears that the ornaments will not be hung this year, to the chagrin of 55-year-old Christian realtor Joshua Haeward.

"I felt really sad about the absence of the Jewish menorah from downtown. We have a very rich Jewish history in the Bahamas," he said. "The Jews are fully integrated into Bahamian society – financially, spiritually, politically and in every other which way."

Mr Haeward noted that Christianity and Judaism are deeply connected and said he was offended by the backlash that emerged last year over the decorations.

"Without the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – the Jews – this Bahamas would be of little worth. We must remember through Abraham, God blessed the whole world," he said.

BEC chairman Frederick Gottlieb told *The Tribune* yesterday he has no problem with the menorah as a religious sym-

bol but said the decision not to display it on Bay Street was in the hands of government.

"As I've said before, I believe this is a time for goodwill not just between individuals, but religions. I am not opposed to the menorah being put up but that's not my decision," he said.

Last year, Environment Minister Earl Deveaux said the decorations were removed as an act of regulation. He added that it was not an act of anti-Semitism, or a case of government buckling under public pressure.

He said that a specific directive had been given to BEC to replace some of the existing stock of Christmas decorations which displayed the word "Xmas", with new decorations featuring the word "Christmas."

However, a junior officer at BEC unknowingly selected the nine-candle candelabra known as the menorah for its aesthetic qualities – without recognising its connection to the Jewish festival of Hanukkah.

Mr Deveaux said he asked for these decorations to be taken down as they did not fit with the directive from the government.

As *The Tribune* pointed out at the time of the dispute, the menorah is as much a Christian symbol as it is Jewish. The first five books of the Christian's Old Testament – or the Pentateuch – are the holiest books of the Jewish Torah in



ENVIRONMENT Minister Earl Deveaux said last year the decorations were removed as an act of regulation.

which is found the description of the menorah, or the golden candlestick. The golden candlestick is mentioned in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers – texts included in both the Jewish Torah and the Christian Bible. In Exodus 25:31 the Lord instructed Moses how he wanted the candlestick of pure gold to be made. The *Tribune* argued that the golden candlestick – the menorah to the Jews – had as much right on Bay Street as a Christian symbol, whether it be called a candlestick or a menorah.

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EDITORIAL/LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Let's get serious about education

TWO thirds of Tribune readers voting on the newspaper's online poll believe that the resignation of College of the Bahamas president Janyne Hodder will hurt the college's transformation into a college.

However, among those voting that Mrs Hodder's return to her native Canada would not damage the College's future, one felt that from the beginning her appointment as president was a slap in the face "to the many well qualified Bahamians who are well suited for the task at hand."

Even Mrs Hodder when asked if she saw anyone presently at the College who could fill her shoes, replied: "Dozens ... we have a fabulous team here."

This might be so — we certainly hope that it is so — however, where were they when nominations were invited at the time of Mrs Hodder's appointment?

If they in fact applied and were stepped over in favour of Mrs Hodder might that suggest that the selection committee believed that Mrs Hodder had certain attributes that better suited her to turn COB into a university?

Commenting on a recent article by Pastor Myles Munroe in which he said "there is a lack of good leadership capabilities among our people," a writer observed that "just because you are qualified does not make you a good leader."

Over the years we have had to deal with many cases in which people have felt they were better qualified for positions that other persons were holding. "After all I am a Bahamian, and they are not," has been the bitter complaint.

However, on closer examination we have often discovered that although the complainant looked good on paper — with all the academic degrees in place — there were other aspects about him or her that made the person holding the job a better choice. This could be because of their attitude, physical appearance, lack of personality, lack of experience despite the degrees, indifferent work ethic. In other words employers are looking for more than degrees.

We have had applicants with degrees in communication who did not even know how to write a lead paragraph. Yet they expected to be employed and paid a higher salary than reporters, without degrees, who we had trained ourselves and who were far better qualified than they.

Mrs Hodder, who started her career in the Bahamas as a primary school teacher at Queen's College (1971-'73), moving to the Bahamas Teachers' College, then the College of the Bahamas, before returning to Canada in 1979 and joining the faculty of education at McGill University in Montreal,

was a vice principal at McGill University when she was invited to return to the Bahamas to head COB. She had an outstanding educational background, obviously with extensive administrative and leadership experience. She had her Bachelor of Arts and Masters degrees from McGill and had completed coursework towards her Ph.D.

On being nomination for the post of COB president the question arose among certain faculty members as to whether she in fact had her Ph.D. It was claimed that there were others who were better qualified because they had their doctorate. We never knew who these persons were, but did they have her outstanding experience both in her professional activities and the various positions that she held at the university? Did they have her work ethic? Did they have her vision, planning expertise, strength of character and a personality that would inspire others to financially support the College in its struggle to become a university? Did they have her international contacts that would be particularly essential to get to university level?

Jayne Hodder's experience would be hard to match. It was little wonder then that the Council chose her — especially with her early Bahamian background — to head the College.

There are those who want a Bahamian head regardless — no foreigner for them.

Prime Minister Ingraham answered this question when faced with a similar question on the appointment of foreign judges and prosecutors. Said Mr Ingraham: "I will use the best talents available to me, I will not concern myself with whether it is a Bahamian or Trinidadian or Jamaican — I will not box myself into that nonsense. I will do the best I can for the Bahamas."

Mr Baswell Donaldson, current president of the COB Council, said very much the same thing when asked about Mrs Hodder's replacement. He too will get the best for the College — regardless of nationality.

It is claimed that a COB staff member commented that they did not want a second McGill University in the Bahamas. They wanted a Bahamian university with a Bahamian flavour. Pray tell what flavour is that — Junkanoo? It is time that Bahamians got serious about education in this country and aspired to the highest standards — yes, even McGill. There might be many oldsters who want to remain in time's backwaters, but today young Bahamians should be reaching for the stars. Encourage them to aim high. Although they might not make the stars, with effort they could hit the tree tops. That certainly will take them farther in life than the ker-lick of a cow bell.

The Minister of National Security is living in the Land of Oz!

EDITOR, The Tribune.

Just hold Dorothy's hand and skip along the Yellow Brick Road to the Land of Oz, the Fairy Country, there you will find our Minister of National Security.

On Tuesday, December 8th, you reported on an exclusive interview with the Minister of National Security: "Turnquest says number too high, but killings not necessarily random." So if I am understanding the Minister, then all I have to do is:

1) Make sure I do not have an argument with anybody, as I may be like one of the 28 that have been murdered as a result of arguments.

2) Don't argue with my wife she may kill me and I may be like one of the nine murdered in domestic violence.

3) Don't accidentally stumble on a drug deal, as I may be like one of 14 killed in a drug related murder.

Wow, I am sure this exclusive interview made the family of the Burger King Manager feel better, I am sure it brought closure to the family of Wendy Bullard shot in a robbery, or peace of mind to the family of Mrs Cates who was brutally murdered in Eleuthera. What explanation does the Minister have for these crimes. And how will the Minister explain the explosive rate of armed robberies. We even had a Supreme Court Judge held at gun point. I guess it is the fault of the hard working businessperson why they have a

LETTERS

letters@tribunemedia.net

gun held to their head, while their material possessions are taken and their lives threatened.

Again Minister, we do not expect you to be in everybody's bedroom or prevent every drug deal, but we do expect you and your Government to move forward with legislation to get these thugs off the streets and carry out capital punishment. Do we have to say it in Spanish to get the People's voice across.

I was going to leave the December 8th, report alone, but then I read The Tribune on December 9th. There on page five: "Turnquest: Tribune headlines focusing too much on crime." This made me realise what I had been missing all along, I live in the Bahamas and the Minister lives in the Land of Oz. So let's skip down the yellow brick road and stop reporting the crime, then maybe it will go away. Is the Minister serious? As a matter of fact, I have people tell me about crimes all the time that don't make The Tribune. What would the Minister think if The Tribune got the opportunity to report all the crimes? I suppose us innocent people would not leave our homes, if this were the case. Trust me minister, some crimes are being suppressed because they are not reaching the media.

Well I ask the minister, what about word of mouth, what about e-mail, what about text messages, what about blogs, etc, etc, etc. I often hear about crimes by word of mouth the same day they are committed, hours before they are reported in The Tribune. I don't need The Tribune to put the fear of God in me. It's happening by just talking to people and living in this country.

Why didn't the minister use the exclusive interview to report to us what the government is doing to amend the Bail Act?

What are they doing to expand the capacity of the courts?

What are they doing with signing death warrants? When will the Committee on the Prerogative of Mercy hold their next meeting? I guess he does not have an update. I should not be surprised, since I am advised that the Commissioner of Police meets with the PM on a weekly basis, not the Minister of National Security. So will the PM please answer these questions.

The minister should stop worrying about the headlines and start worrying about his government punishing the criminals and keeping the thugs off the streets. Listen at the people man!

If we could only all hold hands and skip off to the Land of Oz, maybe there would be no murders.

JEROME R PINDER
Nassau,
December 9, 2009.

Trust-park merger idea should be put to sleep

EDITOR, The Tribune.

A recent letter in one of the dailies over the name of Richard Coulson suggested that the Clifton Heritage National Park be merged with and managed by the Bahamas National Trust.

Our suggestion to Mr. Coulson and others in this same frame of mind is to not even start down that road. Were it left to the Bahamas National Trust, the Clifton site would now be a private gated housing development for wealthy foreigners, off limits to the Bahamian masses. This baby should be put to sleep and never awakened.

REV. C. B. MOSS
Chairman,
Coalition to Save Clifton,
December 8, 2009.

A question about the wasteful costs of repatriating illegal Haitian immigrants

EDITOR, The Tribune.

Re: Melangé (sic) — A weekly look at Haitian Issues.

The Tribune,
November 21, 2009

In the above-captioned article, the writer poses over 50 questions for the Minister of State for Immigration, and suggests that approximately \$6.4 million was spent on repatriation of 44,614 illegal Haitian immigrants between 2000 and

2008. Incredibly, the writer manages to avoid the use of the words "illegal" or "unlawful" in this full page article!

However, I too have a question: How much money is the Haitian illegal immigrant community willing to contribute, in order to help Bahamian citizens with the burdensome and wasteful costs of repatriation?

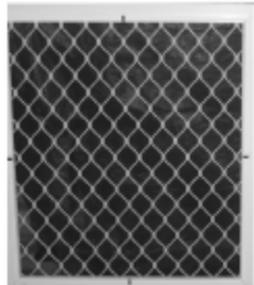
BTW, shouldn't there be an acute accent over the *first* 'e' in the title word melangé?

KEN W
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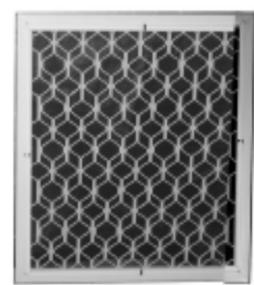
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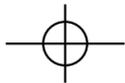
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LOCAL NEWS

Police report two stabbings, one during armed robbery

POLICE reported that around 11am yesterday, a 33-year-old man was stabbed in the back during an armed robbery in the Podoleo Street area.

According to police press liaison officer Chrislyn Skippings, the man was walking when he was approached by a man who stabbed him in the upper back and robbed him of his jewellery.

The suspect reportedly fled on foot heading north and the victim was taken to hospital.

Police also reported that around two hours earlier, they received word of a stabbing on Fleming Street.

"Police responded and the information received is that a 31-year-old male while walking through Fleming Street got into an altercation with another male that resulted in him being stabbed to the chest area," Ms Skippings said.

The victim was taken to hospital where he is listed in stable condition.

Both matters are being investigated by police.

Acting Commissioner on walkabout, promises greater police presence

By PAUL G TURNQUEST
Tribune Staff Reporter
pturnquest@tribunemedia.net

PROMISING a greater police presence not only on Bay Street but throughout the country, the new Acting Commissioner of Police Elliston Greenslade conducted his first walkabout of the downtown area yesterday.

Escorted by a host of senior officers, Mr Greenslade paused to speak with business owners, security guards, police officers, regular Bahamians and tourists as he made his way from East Street down to the straw market and back.

Noting that he has made a vow not to engage in "armchair policing", Mr Greenslade said yesterday's tour was intended to demonstrate to his officers that the leadership of the force will be at the front lines in the fight against crime.

"So this is simply a fulfillment of that commitment, to have a look to see how things are progressing on our main streets and certainly to assure the young officers that they have our full support."

Mr Greenslade added that he was extremely pleased to see so many officers not only going about their duty, but doing so in a professional and friendly manner.

"They are doing it with smiles on their faces, and that speaks volumes."

"And so it is a pleasure for me to stop and to shake hands with a young officer and to say how much I appreciate the work that is being done; to affirm that they are very special people, that they have always been special people, and that we are going to continue to get good things from them and will deliver good results as a result of that."

The acting commissioner said the police have already increased their presence on Bay Street in response to the increase in armed robberies of

tourists in the capital.

"Tourism is our life-blood. This is not an industry that we can trifle with. So no sooner have we experienced what is referred to as a pinch point, and we knew that there were some challenges, we moved resolutely to increase numbers."

"And so we went from 48 officers assigned to a Tourism Policing Unit to in excess of 100. That is a fact. We went from four bicycles to 10, and you can see them active and about. Our traffic response has been improved."

"We have detectives and

people who are paying attention to drug interdiction efforts in the mix. Those people we will just speak in general terms about but I want to assure you that they are here, they are active and I am very satisfied along with the executive team that very good work is being

done," he said.

The Acting Commissioner added that the Bahamas remains a very safe country to visit and police officers will continue "on a daily basis" to ensure that this country remains a safe place for both tourists and Bahamians.

Police Force performance is defended

By PAUL G TURNQUEST
Tribune Staff Reporter
pturnquest@tribunemedia.net

ACTING Commissioner of Police Elliston Greenslade defended the performance of the police force in the face of mounting levels of violent crime, stating that the force has historically been "very effective."

"Our results are astonishing, given the resources that we have to compare to many other jurisdictions the world over."

"People that have far more technological reach than we do today are not getting or seeing the kind of results that we see."

"Let me also tell you that we are required to do everything. We do everything here in the Bahamas. We do not screen out crimes - we are not offering any disrespect to anyone - but I speak from an expert position. We take every single report."

"And you know Bahamians are a people who wish to see service. And so when they ring you to say my vehicle has been stolen, the car is no longer where it was parked, but they would wish you to come and see the spot. Do you see?"

"But you can't say to the average Bahamian, 'I am sorry why don't you just come into the station and tell me about it, the car is not there, there is no purpose in coming'. So we are required to respond. We do our share and we do more," he said.

Mr Greenslade reiterated that the police force has over the years done an "excellent job" and while the force has some challenges, they will meet these head on.

"Yes we have some challenges. We are not perfect. There will be, in any organisation, challenges and you will have some people who will disappoint you. But I will tell you very proudly that where we have found it in the Royal Bahamas Police Force, we have dealt effectively with it."

"And I say that from a position of strength. We have done it firmly, resolutely, but we have done it fairly. And you will see that happening again. If someone were to breach the laws of this country, we'll move to deal with that," he said.



ACTING COMMISSIONER Greenslade talks to a Bahamian vendor during his tour of the Downtown area.



ACTING COMMISSIONER Elliston Greenslade speaks with a security guard during his tour of Bay Street.

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Land development issues on Grand Bahama

STANDING on the shore at the eastern tip of Grand Bahama you can gaze across the bight at the super-exclusive cottages of Deepwater Cay, an iconic fishing lodge

created in the 1950s by Gil Drake and A J McClean — the two Americans who first popularised the sport of bonefishing. Just beyond is Sweeting's Cay, Grand Bahama's easternmost settlement. This whole area is a patchwork of mangroves,

sandflats, creeks, and lagoons. It is not the most attractive part of the Bahamas, but I guess fly fishermen are more concerned with what they hunt for what they call the "grey ghost" than they are with picturesque seascapes.

In fact, nearby McClean's Town (which was laid out in 1835 for freed slaves by an official named Donald McClean) owes its existence to this complicated marine environment. Before the construction of Freeport, this area had the only sheltered harbour on Grand Bahama. And today, this is where the ferries are based that make the 45-minute trip to Crown Haven on Abaco.

Travelling west along the highway towards Freeport, I met 70-year-old Bishop Roberts in the sprawling settlement of High Rock. He was disappointed that business at his slightly more downmarket bonefish lodge is slow these days. And he remains bitter about the lack of trade he and others got from one of the biggest things to ever hit the island — the filming of Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

"You know, Johnny Depp and his boys would sometimes come by for drinks, but the producers wouldn't give us a thing — it was all handled at the political level."

A short drive from Bishop's beachfront motel brought me to the now deserted Gold Rock studio where the second and third versions of *Pirates* were filmed in 2005. The studio took over the derelict facilities of the US Air Force base that had tracked Cape Canaveral rocket launches from 1954 to 1987. The new leaseholders (a Canadian company) dredged and bulkheaded a huge open-water filming enclosure next to the base's old docking facility for the Disney project.

At the time, then prime minister Perry Christie called this "the most exciting endeavour on Bahamian soil," and predicted the birth of a new industry in glowing terms. But today, all that remains of this vision are the rusting hulks of half-submerged barges and other miscellaneous junk, along with a bitter aftertaste in the mouths of nearby second homers who say the dredging — which cut



through the shoreline — damaged the spectacular beach that runs for miles along this part of Grand Bahama's southern coast.

Arguably, the most lasting benefit from this ill-fated venture (which collapsed after the death of the principal investor) was the dredge spoil. Much of it was used for the foundations of the huge new College of the Bahamas campus that is nearing completion a bit further up the highway towards Freeport. And there is an even more interesting link between the tracking station and the college.

In Freeport I ran into Roger Brown, who was the COB's registrar for many years. He recalled that, in the expectation it would become the northern campus, he and college president Keva Bethel toured the base just after the US handed it back 22 years ago.

"Everything was left in place — even the sheets on the beds," he told me. "We could have just walked in and started up almost immediately, but the government never gave the go-ahead. Soon after our visit the entire base was stripped of everything that could be moved and the facility was just left to rot."

I can confirm from my visit this past weekend that the former tracking station, erstwhile college campus, and one-time film studio is as deserted and derelict today as it has been for most of the past 30 years. And once again, the place has been stripped — right down to the windows on the otherwise pristine guard house.

The film studio took its name from a tidal creek that meanders along the coast through the Lucayan National Park in the direction of Freeport, some 22 miles away. The 40-acre park was leased to the Bahamas National Trust by the Grand Bahama Development Company. It is bisected by the highway, but contains most of the island's ecosystem zones in a relatively compact and accessible area. And archaeologists have determined that the Gold Rock creek system and its associated caverns was a major settlement area for the original Lucayan inhabitants of the Bahamas.

According to Prescott Gay, the young BNT warden who escorted me around, the park receives a few hundred paying visitors a week, as well as local school groups. The chief attractions are the caves up in the pineland, which connect to miles of underwater tunnels; the copice and mangroves of the coastal creek; and the spectacular beach. As you can imagine, the cave system is a favourite haunt of divers and scientists. In addition to being a Lucayan cemetery, more than one new marine species has been discovered here over the years.

Peter Barratt, the retired architect who was Freeport's original town planner, was the

guiding force behind the creation of the park years ago. He designed all the pathways, boardwalks and signage, and identified the location of the bridge over Gold Rock Creek (which was recently replaced by a new structure). The creek itself is used for kayaking trips and eco-tours.

"I have been trying for years to get Devco to declare the whole creek delta a conservation area," Barratt told me. "It is an important wetland area that simply must be in the public domain."

The BNT also wants to expand the park, but land has been a sensitive issue here ever since the Grand Bahama Port Authority was formed in 1955 and acquired 80 square miles for next to nothing. The GBPA developed a deepwater harbour at Hawksbill Creek and carved Freeport out of the pine barren. And as the city expanded, beachfront property naturally became much more valuable than it had hitherto been.

An area of settlement along the broad sandy beach between Gold Rock Creek and Peterson Cay is perhaps the best example of the controversy over historical land rights. This area is now known as Old Freetown and is distinguished today only by the remnants of rock walls and a few scattered house foundations just off an old footpath behind the dunes that some have dubbed the heritage trail.

Freetown was one of a number of black subsistence settlements that sprang up along Grand Bahama's southern coastline after emancipation. The island was virtually uninhabited until well after the loyalist influx of the late 18th century, with the earliest recorded land grant dated to 1806 at West End. By the mid-1800s there were still only a few hundred people on the island, most of whom were ex-slaves and liberated Africans.

Many bought plots of land along the shore carved out of their former owner's estates. But despite short bursts of economic activity during the American Civil War, the Prohibition years and the 1940s when the island's pine forests were logged, most people on Grand Bahama remained poor and poorly educated. By 1962, the area known as Freetown had dwindled to a 20-acre tract that had been granted to one Jacob Nesbitt in 1857.

According to local history buff Darius Williams, this beachfront property was eventually acquired by Freeport founder Wallace Groves and the inhabitants were forced to move to another location, more inland, that became New Freetown.

An engineer by trade, Williams has lived on Grand Bahama for some 30 years, but his wife (Joyanne) descends from the original settlers of Holmes Rock, just west of

Freeport. The current inhabitants all derive from 20 slaves who were transported from Exuma to Grand Bahama in 1829 by Lord John Rolle, around the time of the Pompey rebellion. Among this group was a slave named Ambrose Rolle, whose grandson, Hector, was Joyanne's grandfather.

Williams Town is a similar emancipated slave village, just outside of Freeport. Some five years ago this small coastal settlement was chosen as the site for a new \$20 million cruise port that was supposed to have been built as a joint venture between the government and Carnival Cruise Lines. The goal was to separate the tourism and industrial functions of the port, which are currently intermingled in Freeport harbour, and spur new commercial development.

The basic plan was to build a finger pier extending into the ocean, connected to a shore facility. In September, Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham said the government was acquiring 55 acres of land at Williams Town for the onshore facilities. Acknowledging the sensitivity of land acquisition in Freeport, he promised that owners would get a fair price for their property and could contest the valuation in court if they chose.

"We will abide by whatever decisions are made in such a process. In the meantime, we propose to conclude an acquisition and cause a cruise port at Williams Town that will have significant economic benefits for Grand Bahama," he said.

Part of the problem with land development around Freeport is the unreliability or lack of historical records. The other problem is the continued vitriolic infighting among the GBPA's owners — Sir Jack Hayward and the heirs of his former partner, Edward St George, who died in 2004. Their holdings are distributed in a clutch of offshore companies, which are subject to no public oversight. They derive a significant income from land sales, license fees and service charges, and they are reportedly opposed to any attempt by the government or other parties to build a new cruise port.

Meanwhile, the Chinese conglomerate Hutchison Whampoa acquired some of the GBPA's assets a decade ago for \$80 million and now operates a major container hub at Freeport as well as the Our Lucaya resort complex. And in fact, Hutchison remains a potential buyer of the Port Authority and its remaining assets.

Insiders say all this creates a huge dilemma for the government, which does not want to be seen as intervening heavily in private enterprise, abrogating the Hawksbill Creek Agreement or pre-empting the courts. Yet Freeport's franchise is so important to the welfare of Grand Bahama and the country as a whole that it is difficult to take a completely dispassionate approach.

What do you think? Send comments to larry@tribunemedia.net Or visit www.bahamapundit.com

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LOCAL NEWS



Noelle Nicolls

HASH HOUSE HARRIERS representatives present a cash donation to Hands for Hunger executives. Pictured left to right: H4H Driver, Francis Burrows; H4H Executive Director, Ashley Lepine; Hash Master David Wilkins; Haser House Harrier Representative; H4H Founder, Alanna Rodgers.

Hands for Hunger eases the burden on govt social services

By NOELLE NICOLLS
Tribune Staff Reporter
nicolls@tribunemedia.net

LOCAL food rescue organisation Hands for Hunger is easing the burden on the government coffers by assisting feeding centres and food banks across the island.

Hands for Hunger currently services 14 food distribution agencies, and is gearing up to expand its operations to 24 by mid 2010.

This will represent the largest expansion since the organisation was founded by a group of university students in the summer of 2008.

"Hands for Hunger has allowed organisations who rely on subsidies from the government, to be able to use their resources in other productive ways, not having to invest as much on purchasing and preparing food, especially perishable food items. That has really been an asset to those organisations that feed and house people, and generally help those in need. Indirectly that is a great help to the government," said Loretta Butler-Turner, Minister of State for Social Development.

"These are very difficult times and we're seeing more people relying on the safety net programmes that the government offers. Hands for Hunger has certainly been able to expand the capacity of food kitchens so they can provide more food to people visiting on any given day. The demand on the government could have been greater without their assistance," she said.

Hands for Hunger collects unused food from 30 donor agencies in New Providence, including Starbucks, Sandals Resort, Lucayan Tropical Produce, and Robin Hood Enterprises Ltd. Cooked food, such as rice, vegetables, bread and meat, represents about 85 per cent of the food collected. The other food is primarily fresh produce and dairy products. The organisation's relationships are strongest with local resorts, who contributed significantly to the 150,000 pounds of food rescued since March 2009.

Rescued food is transported to feeding centres across the island, including: the Salvation Army Drop-in Meal Programme, the Food Bank and Women's Shelter, the All Saints Aids Camp Shelter, the Red Cross Meals on Wheels Outreach Programme, and the Kid-

sUp Summer Camp and After School Programme.

There is currently a waiting list of more than 40 agencies seeking the services of Hands for Hunger.

Working on the basis of one pound equalling a meal for one person, Hands for Hunger estimates they cater to 600 to 1,000 people daily through the work of their distribution centres.

"The basic premise of food rescue is that there is enough food for people not to have to go hungry, but there is an inequitable and inefficient distribution of food. The market does not compensate for the lack of access people have to those who have an over-supply of food. Hands for Hunger is a bridge organisation to collect the surplus and redistribute it to those who have the need," said Alanna Rodgers, founder and programme co-ordinator.

Hands for Hunger was on the receiving end of some Christmas cheer yesterday, with a donation of \$500 from the Sands Bahamian Brewery-sponsored running group, Nassau Hash House Harriers.

The running group collected donations at their annual Christmas party to support the charity. This is the most recent in a series of donations and partnerships that have helped the organisation to achieve financial stability.

"Hands for Hunger is a very worthwhile charity. We are confident the majority of the funds donated will go directly to those in need rather than to cover administration expenses," said David Wilkins, Hash Master. This is the second contribution made by the running group to Hands for Hunger.

In February, donations from Sanpin Motors, the Bahamas Motor Vehicle Association, Summit Insurance, and Insurance Management allowed Hands for Hunger to acquire two refrigerated trucks to facilitate their food collection.

For the past year, Hand for Hunger has rotated their two trucks on one distribution route, headed by full-time driver, Francis Burrows. As a part of their expansion the organisation is actively searching for a new full-time driver to add an additional route.

"We have had a few interviews and screenings, but found no candidates yet. Our truck driver is not just a driver, he is an ambassador for the organisation, a customer service representative, and he is involved

in decision making. We have an online database and record keeping process that requires the driver to do data entry and calculations. The process of finding someone to fit that role has been more arduous than expected," said Ms Rodgers.

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THREE FILMMAKERS WIN \$10,000 FROM FESTIVAL FILMMAKER RESIDENCY PROGRAMME

WINNERS of the Bahamas International Film Festival's Filmmaker Residency Programme were announced at the Balmoral Club over the weekend following the festival's tribute to Johnny Depp and the BIFF film awards presentation.

The announcements were made by festival founder and executive director Leslie Vanderpool and filmmaker residency advisors Kelly Moore, Steven Beer, Nathaniel Kohn, George Heller and Marisa Polvino.

BIFF's Filmmaker Residency Programme will award a total of \$10,000 to local Bahamian filmmakers Vashti Anderson, Miguel Drayton and Ithalia Johnson.

Vashti Anderson's screenplay and film project is titled 'Cold Calypso' and she will receive \$5,000 for its development and production. Michael Drayton will receive \$3,000 for his film 'Granny Vs The Undead', while Ithalia Johnson was awarded \$2,000 for her screenplay 'Play Me a Life.'

BIFF's Filmmaker Residency Programme was established to award a significant cash prize to a deserving independent Bahamian and Caribbean filmmaker vying for funding on his or her project. The prize money will go directly towards the development and production of their films.



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LOCAL NEWS

Dominicans demand government solve plane mystery

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico

RELATIVES of 11 migrant workers who boarded a small plane that vanished over the Atlantic Ocean a year ago are demanding that the Dominican government investigate what happened, according to Associated Press.

"We've had 365 days of pain, despair and helplessness. No one can express the feeling, because you can't measure pain," Angela Amparo, the mother of one of those aboard the chartered plane, said Tuesday at a news conference in Santo Domingo.

Marina Herrera, whose brother is among those missing, said the twin-engine Britten Norman left Santiago on the afternoon of Dec. 15, 2008, heading northwest toward the Bahamas to later depart for the U.S.

About 35 minutes after takeoff, pilot Adriano Jimenez sent an emergency signal to Providenciales International Airport in the Turks and Caicos Islands, according to a report from the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board.

The plane then disappeared from radar.

U.S. federal officials believe it plunged into the ocean about 12 nautical miles south of West Caicos island, but no debris or bodies were ever found.

In a telephone interview, Herrera said the families need answers from the Dominican government.

"We have knocked on different doors and have obtained no answer, no clue," she said. "We are devastated."

Governor General praises the dedication of Sandilands staff

By **GENA GIBBS**

GOVERNOR General Arthur Hanna recognised the dedication of Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre employees, who he said have given hope and help to those who have been forgotten and are in despair.

"Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre is seeking to give comfort to those who are very much in need of comfort," the governor general said during a visit to the facility last week. "It is not only a hospital but it is a home and a safe haven for many of the less fortunate and challenged among us."

"For many of them the centre is the beating Christmas heart of the Bahamas, and it is here they are provided for and shown love and indeed we have to congratulate those who work here."

He explained that when he was a minister, there were many Bahamians who wanted their parents committed to the Sandilands geriatric ward.

"There was such a pressure on Sandilands and they were lining up as to who should bring their parents here," he said.

"It was quite a disgrace because some of these sons and daughters were healthy enough to care for their parents."

"That is why Sandilands is so important in our country," he said.

"They are making sure to give the care and love that the patients didn't get at home."



GOVERNOR GENERAL Arthur Hanna greets Minister of Health Dr Hubert Minnis with a Christmas handshake at Sandilands Rehabilitative Centre in Fox Hill.

The governor general also acknowledged the contributions of the Ministry of Health, which is now led by Minister Dr Hubert Minnis.

"The growth of the Ministry of

Health, the special attention that has been given to it, and the training of the nurses, doctors and the medical facilities has been ingrained in our hearts already over the last few years," he said.

"There has been a tremendous trial in the development of health-care in our country, and those of us who take interest in our country will note the trials that have been made to benefit so many people."

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ARGOSA CORP. INC.
(Liquidator)

Legal Notice

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WINTERLANDSCHAFT INC.

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Legal Notice

NOTICE

ALIOSKA OCEAN INC.

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SALAMANDA FALLS INC.

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LOCAL NEWS

FROM page one

Business chiefs in handgun plea

these facts, he said there is no favouritism in the process. Atwell Ferguson, manager and part owner of Fergie's Meat Mart, located in South Beach, said: "Business people with a clean record, a good relationship with the police and a level head should be able to have a concealed weapon, even if they have to go through special training. Times have changed. One time ago police never used to be armed. Criminals have no respect for law and order; now they are shooting police, robbing judges and tourists. Times have changed drastically." Fergie's was the scene of an attempted armed robbery several years ago. A licensed shotgun was used in the incident to abort the robbery. The

assailant was apprehended, tried and convicted. Since then Ferguson said there was another incident, where he was not as lucky. When the suspect entered the store, Mr Ferguson was not in the location where his shotgun was stored, which made him unable to respond. Another vulnerable time for business owners, according to Mr Ferguson, is when they conduct cash drop-offs. "Business people who have money are always a target. I have to leave my shotgun in the car when I am making a deposit. The criminals know this, so they know when to wait and when to jump you. They have an edge over you because they know this. The business person is always in

the position of being surprised," he said. Assistant Commissioner of Police Hulan Hanna is advising individuals handling large quantities of money to take care when transporting and securing money. He said business owners should speak to the divisional police command in their area to seek any help the police are able to provide within the confines of the law. He says businesses should also engage the services of armored vehicles. As far as handguns are concerned, he said: "The police have nothing to do with licensing handguns. The person needs to speak to the government for handguns. The police issues shotguns and rifles." Licensed firearm owners came under scrutiny this week after the fatal shooting of an

armed robber by an East Street South proprietor, who used his shotgun. Police are investigating the shooting in which one of the two armed robbers died on the scene at Island Wide Produce and Meat Mart. Police have yet to classify the shooting, although they suspect it was lawful. Atwell is the brother of Preston Ferguson, who owns Island Wide Produce and Meat Mart. Mr Willie, formerly a police officer of ten years, said he is disappointed lawmakers have not engaged the business community more to develop laws to give honest citizens the upper hand against criminals. Making handguns more accessible is just one of many laws, politicians could consider. He recalled there being discussion about a law that would apply to an automatic four-

year sentence for anyone caught with an illegal handgun, and another sentence if caught with illegal ammunition. "Whatever happened to that legislation? I thought that was what the politicians were there for," he said. He suggested lawmakers could also work on a form of blacklist, so business owners could access records of misconduct when vetting employees. "If I had a staff member who was a cashier and I fired that person for stealing and reported it to the Central Detective Unit, and then drove down the road and saw that former employee was a cashier in another store: Shouldn't there be a law, even a labour law, to prevent that person from being employed in that position?" he asked.

FROM page one

exchange standards, its fate is now in the hands of the countries with which it hopes to sign on the dotted line. Asked on Tuesday about the status of The Bahamas' efforts to get off the international watch list of offshore "tax havens", Mr Laing said: "If you treat March as a deadline, we believe we will certainly have the (TIEA) numbers for March. It really doesn't matter if you have two more than you thought you would have but you have to have 12 to get off the list, and we think we're on track to do that." He said the government "had hoped to have the 12 signed by the end of this year." "That was what we were aiming for. We certainly have negotiated and initialled with sufficient countries to do so but we have to wait for them to do what they have to do to be in a position to sign and that's what we're waiting on," said Mr Laing. The Government has on numerous occasions expressed its commitment to signing 12 TIEAs by the end of this year, moving away from its unfavourable "grey list" status that has been blamed for the pull out of French bank BNP Paribas. Yesterday, the Bahamas Financial Services Board issued a press release on the

'Grey list'

status of efforts to meet G20/OECD tax transparency and information exchange standards in which it said that with ten agreements signed and "another two of the already initialed agreements scheduled to be signed in the coming weeks, The Bahamas aims to meet the OECD Standard well in advance of the G20 deadline of March 2010." "The BFSB believes the decision to endorse the OECD Standard reinforces The Bahamas' unwavering commitment to be a trusted jurisdiction for clients and to be a responsible member of the international community," added the statement. Ryan Pinder, an international tax attorney, told The Tribune yesterday that while it is three months ahead of the official deadline set by the OECD to avoid further sanctions, meeting the end of year deadline The Bahamas set for itself to get on the "white list" may still be critical to protecting the country's reputation as a preferred financial services centre. "The perception is that when The Bahamas promises 12 TIEAs by year end and is only able to deliver 10 that they again have not lived up to promises. That's the risk we face. We don't necessarily face

the OECD coming down on us, but the risk is our perception in the market place. We have already seen BNP Paribas pull out because we didn't act fast enough." "It's easy enough to move capital around and our financial services competitors in the region — The British Virgin Islands, Bermuda, Cayman, Barbados all seem to be able to be well ahead of curve even entering into numerous TIEAs surpassing 12 months and months ago." The Bahamas has so far signed TIEAs with the UK, US, San Marino, Monaco, Netherlands, Argentina, China, New Zealand, Belgium and France. Of these, San Marino, Monaco, Argentina and China are non-OECD member states. Mr Laing said The Bahamas has chosen to sign TIEAs with "countries who represent strategic trade partners, countries with whom we share diplomatic ties and with countries that matter in the world and will matter in the future." He added that while the OECD requires that the 12 TIEAs are with OECD countries, the G20 only requires that countries sign 12 agreements, and since the list is a "joint" one, the signings achieved by The Bahamas will suffice despite not all being with OECD member countries.

• SEE PAGE THREE

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BRILAND VILLAS LTD. (In Voluntary Liquidation)

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LINDWALL VENTURES INC. (In Voluntary Liquidation)

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SEINFELD CORP. (In Voluntary Liquidation)

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LAKE AUSNTRALIA INC. (In Voluntary Liquidation)

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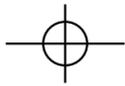
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LOCAL NEWS

Deputy PM

FROM page one



BRENT SYMONETTE

December, 7 which alleges that the FNM's Candidates Committee told him he would not receive their endorsement for the Pine Ridge constituency in the 2007 general election — unless he dropped lawsuit against a foreign developer.

At the time, Mr Smith represented the litigants against the Baker's Bay resort development in Guana Cay, Abaco.

Said Mr Symonette when contacted by The Tribune for a reaction to the allegations: "If Mr Smith has made those allegations in an affidavit form — I don't think the party, the FNM party, is a member of the action in court and so we don't have a forum to deal with it. And if that's what he wishes to put in his affidavit — (it's) a democratic country he can put it there."

"It's not my recollection of what happened but that's obviously his recollection."

Mr Smith represented the Save Guana Cay Reef Association in a four-year-long legal battle against the \$500 million Baker's Bay development. The case was recently rejected by the Privy Council.

The lawyer alleges that money outweighed democracy in the selection of the FNM candidate for the Pine Ridge seat in 2007 — claiming that the committee was worried that his part in the Guana Cay case would offend the FNM's "powerful financial backers."

Ultimately, another Grand Bahama attorney — Kwasi Thompson — was officially nominated for the constituency and was elected as MP for the area.

The affidavit was filed in connection with the argument over who should pay the legal costs in the unsuccessful appeal to the Privy Council launched by Mr Smith on behalf of the SGCRA seeking to have the initial ruling that gave the development the go-ahead in the face of the SGCRA's concerns overturned.

In the affidavit, Mr Smith stated: "My political aspirations and the wishes of the voters in the Pine Ridge Constituency Association were dashed as a result of this case."

"I was elected by the members of the (Pine Ridge Constituency) Association, prior to the last general election in 2007, to be the FNM candidate for the Pine Ridge Constituency. The next stage was for the FNM party candidates' committee to nominate me as the FNM party candidate for the election."

"Despite overwhelming local support I was told at one of the meetings with the committee members that unless I dropped the Guana Cay case, or unless I persuaded my clients to drop the case, I would not be chosen by the committee as the candidate for the next general election."

FROM page one

ahead of the implementation of a shift system on January 1, 2010 that will see them lose lucrative overtime opportunities worth in some cases up to around \$40,000 a year.

Talk of introducing such a system — which will substantially reduced the government's costs as well as those paid by airlines and others using this country's ports — first formed part of discussions between the government and the BPSU in 2006, but was never implemented.

Nonetheless, President of the Bahamas Public Service Union and the former minister of public service, Fred Mitchell, yesterday suggested that officers have had a long time to prepare for the day that they would be placed onto a shift system rather than the current system.

"It's going to mean a significant drop in income, and it's going to be difficult to adjust," said Mr Mitchell, "but it's been coming for a long time."

BPSU President John Pinder described the potentially huge monetary benefits that officers have been able to get from working overtime

FROM page one

ers when it took possession of their properties to reconstruct the South Ocean Road around the new Albany development in March 2007.

In an exclusive interview with *The Tribune* attorneys for the plaintiffs Cedric and Kahlil Parker, of Cedric L Parker and Co, said they argued that government had disregarded the Constitution when it failed to provide prompt and adequate compensation to landowners.

They further submitted that government went outside its powers under the Acquisition of Land Act when it agreed Albany's developers Park Ridge Securities Corporation would cover the cost of the land acquisition in their Heads of Agreement signed in November 2006.

Justice Albury found the arrangement between government and Park Ridge Development was contrary to Section 6 (1) of the Act, which allows acquisition of land for a public purpose providing payment is made from public revenue or a statutory corporation.

She also found the government's actions went against Article 27 of the Constitution protect-

Immigration officer

for many years as "a privilege" and charged that in the current economic circumstances the average "six to seven hundred dollar a month" that most officers will see their base pay increased by should be considered a fair deal. The union chief added that officers will now have more free time "to spend with their families or studying" and can expect to see the salary question re-addressed next year.

On Sunday night, only three customs officers showed up for work while on Monday a "skeleton crew" of around 40 per cent of normal staff levels were at work as customs and immigration officers protested an allegedly unsatisfactory salary offer made by the Government in Saturday ahead of plans to scrap the overtime system. It is understood that the offer may have proposed adding around \$3,000 a year to the base salaries of officers.

They went back to work on Monday afternoon after Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham and Minister of State for the public service, Zhivar-go Laing, agreed in a meeting with

Mr Pinder that morning to increase base salaries for officers by between \$4,000 and \$9,000 a year.

Junior officers will see their salaries increased from \$14,000 a year to \$18,000 while a grade four officer will go from \$19,000 to \$28,000 a year, said Mr Pinder.

However, the senior immigration officer, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the move will leave most officers "hurting" in a hard economy. He noted that last year he made around \$30,000 in overtime.

"It's in poor taste when the economy is in such a bad state to even consider entering into these that will leave people hurting. They should abandon this until the economy gets better."

The officer noted that officers are given a letter when they are contracted by the government saying that they can reasonably expect to make at least \$16,000 per year in overtime — letters which they then use to get credit and other financial responsibilities.

"To suggest they can get less when people have already gone and got loans on those letters is a crazy thing

to do. If you take that away and give them less how will they maintain their houses, how will they keep their kids in school?"

"To allow us to get at least the minimum that we were previously promised in overtime would not be doing us a favour, but would simply be doing what is reasonable."

"You can't begin to say what taking that away will mean in terms of people doing what they have to do to survive. I don't think the government wants to encourage that and I don't think the union wants to encourage that," said the officer, hinting at a possible increase in corruption among officers as a consequence of the change.

In response to suggestions that corruption may result from the drop in income, Mr Pinder said: "If they want to go and be corrupt they will be dismissed if they're caught. They will be dismissed and then they will have no job at all."

He also denied suggestions that Immigration officers, who make up a smaller proportion of all officers in the customs and immigration departments, were not adequately consulted on the proposals.

Ruling on land

ing citizens from deprivation of property, Justice Albury said.

The judge therefore declared the acquisition of land notice null and void and without legal effect.

Kahlil Parker said the ruling marks a victory for landowners who lost their properties nearly two years ago and have yet to be compensated.

He added: "There is a pernicious fear of taking the government to task for its blatant disregard of the Constitutional rights of Bahamians."

"While some would have you believe 'you can't fight the government', it has again been shown that you can fight the government, and more importantly you can win."

Landowners and plaintiffs Patricia Bethel, Kenderlyn and Omar Theophilus, Levaughn Copper, Maxwell Wells, Ava Munnings and Wendell Munnings will now await an assessment of the value of their land by order of the court.

Senior partner Cedric Parker said: "It is important to the growth and health of our democracy for the people to be aware of their right to redress against autocratic and abusive use of power by

successive governments.

"Our system cannot work towards the general welfare of the people, when successive governments appear firstly, not to understand the law with the administration of which they are charged, and secondly, when they appear to be overly willing to employ their misunderstanding of the law to the detriment of the citizen."

Realignment of the road was agreed prior to construction of the \$1.4 billion luxury development of private homes, a marina, golf course and hotel on 565 acres of land as the new development would obstruct the existing road.

And although the agreements were made and land acquired under Perry Christie's PLP administration, Justice Albury found the current FNM government failed to reconcile discrepancies upon coming to power in May 2007.

A formal written judgment is expected to be issued this week and government will have six weeks to appeal the ruling.

Acting Prime Minister Brent Symonette said Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham will decide what action to take upon his return from the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen on Tuesday.

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AQUA BROOKS LTD.

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BIANCA VALLEY INC.

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GREENFIELDS VILLA LTD.

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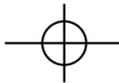
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SPORTSNOTES

GOLF NAUTILUS SPONSORS ROLLE TOURNEY

• Nautilus Water is one of the major sponsors for the 2009 Georgette Rolle Junior Golf Camp that will take place from today through Friday at the Bahamas Golf Federation's Training Facilities at the Baillou Hills Sporting Complex. During a press release on Tuesday in reference to the camp, Nautilus's name was not included in the list of sponsors. Nautilus, however, was inadvertently omitted from the list.

GOLF GOLDEN CUP CHALLENGE

• The Bahamas Golf Federation will close out the year with the hosting of the Golden Cup Challenge on Saturday at the Training Facilities at the Baillou Hills Sporting Complex.

The tournament, sponsored by Johnny Walker, will feature five club teams, inclusive of the Pistol Leros out of Lyford Cay, the Poop Deck Eagles, the Hertz Strikers, the Synturions and Palmdale.

Each team will comprise of 16 players, but only the scores of 12 players will count.

As this is the last tournament for the year, it will also bring the presidency of Glenn Archer to an end. James Gomez, the president elect, will officially take over on January 1.

TRACK MEMORIAL/FUNERAL SERVICE FOR BETHEL

• THE Bahamas Association of Athletic Associations is advising all athletes, coaches and officials that the funeral service for the late Chris 'Nipples' Bethel will be held on Saturday December 19th 2009 at 1 p.m. at the Holy Cross Anglican Church Soldier Road.

All those persons attending the service are requested to wear their club uniform top and a dark coloured bottom. All senior athletes are asked to be fully regaled in the Bahamas national team uniform in respect of Bethel, who has represented the Bahamas on numerous national teams.

The BAAA further advised all concerned that a memorial service will be held on Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Holy Cross Anglican Church.

Maynard 'committed' to new role as Sports Minister

By BRENT STUBBS
Senior Sports Reporter
bstubbs@tribunemedia.net

ALTHOUGH he's not like his predecessors, Charles Maynard said he's confident that his management skills will overshadow his lack of athletic background that he brings to the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture.

In an interview with The Tribune on Monday after he was ascended from the position of Minister of State for Culture to Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture, Maynard said he's committed to making an impartial contribution to the new portfolio.

Since taking over from Desmond Bannister, who has moved on to replace Carl Bethel as Minister of Education, Maynard said he's been busy speaking with his personnel to ascertain exactly where they are in reference to all aspects of sports.

"The master plan for the Queen Elizabeth Sports Center is a priority and so we were able to allow the Chinese people to make a presentation to cabinet and so we're moving full speed ahead with the target date for us to complete the new Thomas A. Robinson Track and Field Stadium, the first phrase of the project, by next

year," Maynard said.

"That has huge implications and the time line has been set, so that is taking up a lot of time because we want to make sure that it's done in a timely fashion."

Also early next year, Maynard said he intend to have a meeting with all of the local federations and associations so as to get their input on the new policy that will take effect.

"We will be discussing how athletes are dealt with and how federations and associations will be dealt with," he said. "Because of all of the implications, we expect to modernise the relationship between the ministry, the federations/associations and the sporting body in general."

As a fully fledged minister, Maynard said he's very humble that Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham saw fit to appoint him, considering the fact that he's the youngest member of cabinet at age 39.

"For the last two and a half years as the Minister of State for Culture, I've been fully involved in all of the senior managers of the ministry, so that part of the transition was rather easy," he stressed.

"I think we have developed a very good relationship so we can only build

on that as we move forward. So I'm very pleased with the move from culture directly to youth, sports and culture."

In moving ahead, Maynard said once he met with the movers and shakers of the sporting community, then he will try to bring an amicable agreement to ensure that the best is provided for the

"Right out of the gate, there was the impression that the ministers of sports pay too much attention to track and field and not enough to the other disciplines," Maynard said. "But with not having a track and field background, I don't have a favourite."

"All of the sporting disciplines, I could treat the same way. Now I know we have had much success in track and field and I want to do my best to keep it going. But I also know that we have a lot of world class athletes in just about every sport and I want to make sure that everybody is given equal opportunity to succeed."

While the completion of the new stadium is the number one priority for his ministry, Maynard said there's also been considerable discussion on the return of the Bahamas Games.

"I believe that many of the islands have been crying out for the return of



Charles Maynard

the Bahamas Games and we're looking at the possibility of bringing that back," he said.

SEE page 14



COMMODORE Gerard Moxey presents Michael Bethel of the Cancer Society with a cheque. At right are treasurer Lorrie Lightfoot and vice commodore Craig Miller.

Commonwealth Sailing Association aids local charities

By BRENT STUBBS
Senior Sports Reporter
bstubbs@tribunemedia.net

THE Commonwealth Sailing Association took an unusual step and provided some cheer to at least three local charities for the Yuletide season.

Treasurer Lorrie Lightfoot said while the association doesn't have an abundance of funding, they just simply wanted to make Christmas a little more cheerful to those in need.

Commodore Gerard Moxey said their plan was to make the contribution to ease the burden of the charities as they head into the festive season.

While cheques were presented to the Cancer Society of the Bahamas and Unity House, the Bilney Lane for Children were presented with a stove.

As he made the presentation to Janet Brown, the administrator of Bilney Lane for Children, Moxey said hopefully "this will go a long way in helping you guys continue doing what you are doing for the less fortunate children at the home."

Brown, in accepting the donation, said words can't express her gratitude on behalf of all of the staff and residents of the home for the gift.

"Just the other day, our stove went bad and when Mrs Lightfoot called and asked if

there was anything that we needed, I told her about the stove," Brown said.

"And lo and behold here it is. So there are no words to tell you how much we appreciate this. Thank you very, very much."

In making the presentation to Earl Bethel, president of the Cancer Society of the Bahamas, Moxey said it was their intention to "make it an easy time for the association as they continue to make their contribution to such a worthy organization in our country."

Bethel said the society is greatly appreciative of the gesture by the association and they hope that this will be the start of a long working relationship between the two entities.

"Sailing is very big in our islands and to note that you have selected us as a benefactor, we really appreciate it," Bethel said. "We know that you are in all of the islands and so we hope to get into all of the islands as well."

Bethel said the society needed to have their presence felt on the islands as they spread the word about the work they are doing with the prevention and care of cancer patients.

And he noted that there's no better way than to tag along with sailing.

Joining Moxey and Lightfoot at the presentations was vice commodore Craig Miller.



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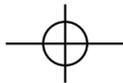
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ADULT white belts taking test.



Orange Belts Kumite

JKA Bahamas, formerly Shotokan Karate Bahamas, held its first grading on Monday, November 23, 2009, at the Dojo, located West Bay Street in Nassau.

The grading was conducted by Sensei Mikami, 8-Dan, and Chief Instructor of the Japan Karate Association/American Federation (JKA/AF) which is affiliated with the Japan Karate Association (JKA) with its headquarters in Tokyo, Japan, arguably the largest and most prestigious Karate organisation in the world.

Sensei Mikami was the first graduate of the famed JKA Instructors Training Course and also currently serves as

a Senior Technical Advisor to the JKA.

The successful students, 18 of whom were graded for Kyu Ranks (Color Belts) and 2 graded for Dan Ranks (Black belts) displayed an impressive performance to which Sensei Mikami was very pleased; one exceptional student skipped two ranks taking him from white belt to green belt. Sensei Mikami also conducted two clinics mainly focused on developing basic techniques which is the foundation and key point of emphasis for JKA Karate.

Founder of Shotokan Karate and first Chief Instructor of the JKA, Sensei Funakoshi, once said:

“The ultimate aim of the art of Karate lies not in victory or defeat but in the perfection of the character of its participants.”

“We at JKA Bahamas are following in this tradition. Our students are taught that Karate should only be used as a last resort and for self-defense purposes.”

The other benefits of Karate training such as healthy exercise, discipline, awareness and self-control are emphasised. Each class ends with the students reciting the Dojo Kun which stresses the importance of character, sincerity, effort, etiquette and self-control.

Karate is an excellent activity for the young and the old.

We at JKA Bahamas would like to extend an invitation to the public inviting you to become a part of our organisation that is guaranteed to make a difference in your life both mentally and physically.

For more information please visit our website at www.bahamaskarate.com or call Chief Instructor Brian Stapleton at telephone 424-0413.

The JKA Bahamas wish to thank some of its members and their parents whose generosity ensured that the entire grading exercise was a success and that Sensei Mikami had an enjoyable stay in the Bahamas – Derick Gilbert, Jamie Johnston and Ghandi Kane.

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Nassau 'Nastics hosts free classes for young boys

NASSAU 'Nastics, the oldest gymnastics club in The Bahamas, proved its commitment to community last week by hosting several young boys from the Nazareth Centre to free gymnastics classes.

The boys, whose ages ranged from 10 to 13 got to show off their flips, learn athletic tricks and get away from the family situations that some of them were in the midst of.

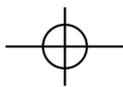
“Many people have a misconception of these children and think they are troubled,” said Head Coach Trevor Ramsey who gave the boys a pep talk to boost their confidence. “They are actually very mannerly, articulate and average.”

“The only difference is they live in a group home instead of with what society deems as a normal family. We at Nassau 'Nastics were delighted to have them join us for the class and hope that we get to see them soon because some of them have raw talent and could go a very long way.”

According to Lavatte Saunders, the social worker who made the event possible in part to her role as a competitive coach at the gym's Oakes Field location, some of the boys don't have parents and are less likely to be adopted since most prospective parents prefer babies or toddlers. The remainder who do have parents are waiting for their family structures to fall in place so that they can return home.

“We always try to provide children who come through social services with a chance to live as normal as possible despite the problems they left behind,” said Saunders.

“It's working in part because so many persons have opened their hearts to assist in some way especially during the holidays. From what I've seen here, the boys truly enjoyed themselves and they are looking forward to their next Nassau 'Nastics adventure.”



SPORTS

First Caribbean Law Enforcement Basketball Tournament set for February

Maynard 'committed' to new role as Sports Minister

FROM page 12

"So what better way to christen the new stadium than to have the official opening ceremonies for the Bahamas Games in 2011."

One of the other issues that Maynard said his ministry will be having a lot of discussion with the sports leaders is the Government subvention to the elite and collegiate athletes.

"That is something that we are trying to finalise so it will take away that grey area that exist today," Maynard said. "But my understanding as far as track and field is concerned is the former interim BAAA executives took some interest in the way the moneys were dispersed."

"Now the new administration have some different views, so what will prevail we hope, will be in the best interest of all of the athletes concerned."

Maynard said the ministry will be losing its Director, Martin Lundy, and assistant director, Frank 'Pancho' Rahming, both of whom have reached the retirement age.

As a result, Maynard said they are looking at having their replacements selected in short order because "we don't have a shortage of Bahamians who can fill their positions."

"They may not be living in the Bahamas, but they exist. We know that for a fact. They are out there. So we are excited about who will apply and who we will eventually get to replace those who are retiring."

To those who have doubts about whether or not he's the right man for the job as the new minister, Maynard stated: "I've heard the rumbling around by some who feel that I don't have a sports background."

"But I believe that my people's skills will carry me through. I believe that I have an ability to listen and so I assure them that my management background will more than make up for what I lack in a sporting background."



Dahalia Smith/Photo

FROM LEFT (back row): BBF Public Relations-Sean Bastian; Electro Telecom CEO – Paul Smith; RBDF Sr. Lieutenant - Sonia Miller, RBDF Lieutenant – Judy McDonald; Tourney Organizing Committee member – Wayne Watson, Tourney Organizing Committee member –Mario Bowleg; front row: Royal Bahamas Community Affairs Officer - Anthony "Cops" Rolle, National Security Minister Tommy Turnquest ;BBF President – Lawrence Hepburn; Jamaican Honorary Consul Patrick Hanlan and RBDF Acting Commander – Clyde Sawyer.

By DAHALIA SMITH

ALL in benefit of underprivileged school children, Bahamian and Jamaican squads will clash in the 1st Caribbean Law Enforcement Basketball Tournament set for February 1-7 at the Sir Kendal Isaacs Gymnasium.

A week of activities is planned during the week of the Tourney. Youth and local police and defense force bands are expected to perform at the games set for Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday nights of that week.

Also the Jamaican force will be going into several schools to explain how adversely influential some rap, reggae and dance music can be. Pledging full support towards this end at the press conference was National Security Minister, Tommy Turnquest.

"When Paul Smith approached me about this tournament I thought it was a great idea. It is about bringing law enforcement together in a spirit of fun and competition."

Smith is a community minded person and I commend him for that.

"It is difficult to say who I want to win this tournament. It has been a wonderful rivalry between the police and defense forces. I am going to try and convince the prison to also get involved. I also want to assist in getting the bands out to perform. We look forward to an exciting tournament," said Turnquest.

Having Turnquest's full support meant volumes to Smith.

"I appreciate you Minister (Tommy Turnquest) for taking an opportunity to pledge your support. Nei-

ther will I or Electro Telecom benefit from this tourney," he said.

"This tournament will be used to assist the underprivileged children or children who are on welfare in the junior schools. In this light, I ask the general public to support this event."

Jamaican Honorary Consul Patrick Hanlan will do his part.

"Over the years The Bahamas and Jamaica has had great rivalry when it comes to sports," he pointed out.

"As a representative of Jamaica I will do my best to get the Jamaican community in The Bahamas involved. At this point I know who I would like to see win but because of the type of event and how it brings people together,

there won't be any losers."

Speaking on behalf of the Royal Bahamas Police Force team Officer in charge of Community Affairs Anthony "Cops" Rolle noted: "We are so accustomed to winning against the Defense Force Team; this Tournament gives us a chance to defeat some other squad and make this event a success."

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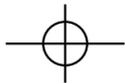
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LOCAL NEWS

Straw Market

FROM page one

nical officers, Patrick Rahming and Associates' Quantity Surveyors and Construction Cost Engineering (Bahamas).

Although the Government originally allocated \$10 million towards the project, Mr Grant explained that surveyor's analysis proved subsequent increases in material, mechanical and electrical costs.

The new market will encompass approximately 34,000 square feet at ground floor level and includes a 4,500 square feet mezzanine level. The ground floor will be open and the upper level closed to include air-condition, elevator service and space for after-school children's activities. The building will also boast solar panels that will sustain the building's daytime electrical needs and retractable hurricane shutters.

Mr Grant said: "The Bay Street Straw Market has for many years offered tourists a unique experience with a vivid display of Bahamian straw and wood craft in the downtown area. We feel that this world renowned tourist attraction should remain as a major feature of Bay Street."

More than 120 straw vendors attended the ceremony, many of whom expressed their excitement and confidence with Government's plan, especially its 78-week construction timeline.

The ceremony also included remarks from Minister of Tourism and Aviation Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace, the site's



Tim Clarke/Tribune staff

MINISTER of National Security Tommy Turnquest looks on as Minister of Public Works and Transport Neko Grant unveils a model of the new Straw Market.

consulting architect, construction developer and musical selections from the Royal Bahamas Defence Force Pop Band.

Minister of National Security Tommy Turnquest was also present. He told vendors that he felt personally attached to the project that began under his tenure as Minister of Tourism and confirmed to those present the Government's move to settle outstanding claims with the site's previous contractor, project architect and professional consultants.

The former government had originally awarded a contract with Woseley Development Company to build a \$24 million straw market.

"We hope that the satisfactory resolution of these claims will remove any controversy from this project, which is so

critical to our vendors and our country," said Mr Turnquest.

He said that tourism is of critical importance to the national economy and outlined several initiatives taken by the police force such as close circuit television monitoring and increased presence of both uniformed and plain clothed officers.

However, the new market is not without some controversy, Ministry of Works' First assistant secretary William Munnings pointed out that the building will only be able to house around 450 vendors, a notable contrast from the 604 registered vendors.

Another challenge, Mr Munnings said the ministry is likely to face will be booth allocation as a decision has not yet been made as to what methods will be used to organize vendors.

Sir Jack Hayward signs agreement to sell GBPA stake

FROM page one

"I hope that you will agree with me, and many others, that this could be to the Bahamas as significant and prosperous a happening as that in 1955, when the Hawksbill Creek Agreement was enacted," Sir Jack wrote.

He described Edison Key, the South Abaco MP and Bahamas and Agricultural and Industrial Corporation's (BAIC) chairman, as "instrumental" in attracting the buyer to Freeport, with GBPA chair Hannes Babak and attorney Andre Feldman then responsible for "bringing the parties together and negotiating an agreement extremely satisfactory to everyone involved."

Sir Jack suggested that Mr Key receive a knighthood for his efforts, and that Mr Babak at least obtain permanent residency, as he had

"more than fulfilled the mandate you gave him to resolve the Freeport situation before Christmas."

In a clear reference to Fred Smith, the attorney for the late Edward St George's estate, which has been engaged in a three-year legal battle with Sir Jack over his claim to own 75 per cent of the GBPA, the seemingly outgoing GBPA co-owner said Mr Babak was doing "tremendous work... despite destructive demons in the shape of a local lawyer."

Sir Jack added that the purchasers did not want to alter the existing GBPA management team, adding that they were "particularly impressed" with Mr Babak, president Ian Rolle, and vice-president Ginger Moxey.

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BRITISH AMERICAN SAYS

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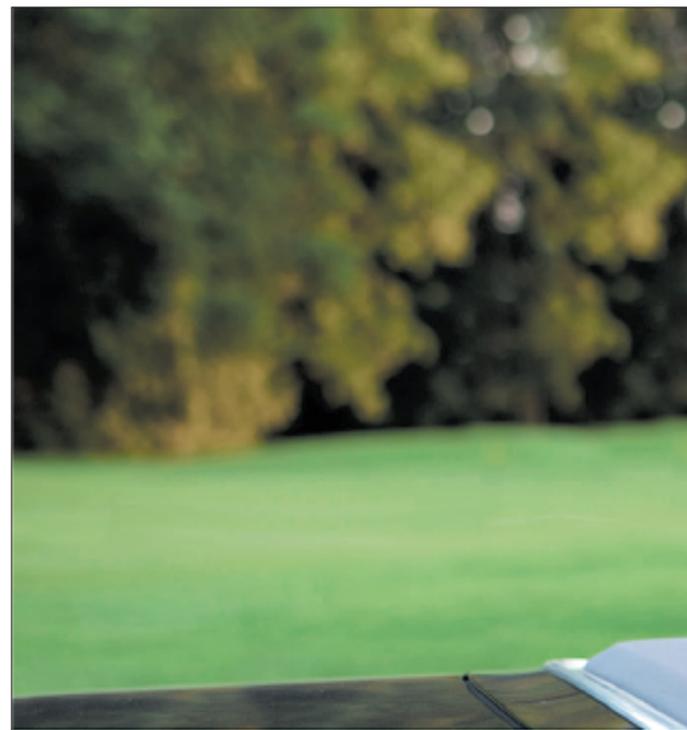


Pictured above is British American President & CEO, I Chester Cooper with Zarina Fitzgerald who was the volunteer spokesperson for cancer awareness month.

In support of the Cancer Society and the Sister Sister Support Group's effort to raise funds and promote awareness of the disease, British American held its annual "Lee National Denim Day" during Breast Cancer Awareness Month this past October. The international event is staged every year on the first Friday in the month of October, participating companies and schools wore their favorite jeans with pink shirts in solidarity with cancer survivors. British American has lead this initiative for the past 12 years.

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LOCAL NEWS

A holiday story of two ducks and a bittern

Article and photographs
By LIONEL LEVINE

I want to write about three birds that have featured in this holiday period. Two are ducks – the American Wigeon (*Anas americana*) and the Ring-necked Duck (*Aythya collaris*) – and the third is a wader, the American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*). All are winter migrants from North America.

I had not thought about it before but there are some late migrants that seem to time their arrival by mid-December with the holiday season in mind. Ducks seem to feature in these later arrivals.

The previous Saturday Paul Dean, Lee Hanna and I went out and it seemed there was little of interest to be seen. The day was also a disaster for me as a photographer. It was overcast with low light and although certain remedial steps can be taken, ultimately that meant slow shutter speeds, slow focusing and blurred bird images.

The only bird of interest seen was an American Bittern. I had only seen one before, six years ago. It is a relatively large bird for a wader and its interest is its stance with long outstretched neck outlined by a black line carrying long thick black stripes on a lighter feathering from its neck to its underside. It also has large brown wings with black tips.

The books say it is an uncommon bird in the Bahamas and most frequently seen when unexpectedly flushed when you stumble across it hiding in undergrowth in a swampy area.

That is precisely what happened last week. In our desperation over the absence of birds, Paul took us to a remote spot in the back of beyond between Carmichael Road and the south shore that only he knew about or could find. The area was not only remote but so rocky with occasional swampy patches that not even squatters seemed to have a possible use for the land.

Just as we concluded that despite its remoteness from



human disturbance the area was devoid of bird life, out flew an American Bittern from behind a low bush marking the edge of a marshy area. The bird only revealed itself because we were almost stepping on it. It rose up and flew away from us with slow measured beats of its long wings. It was flying low and flying faster than I assumed and the bird was quickly lost to sight.

In the time available to me I was able to release the camera shutter twice without properly refocusing. I knew that both images of the receding flapping wings were so rushed they were out of focus and fit for the deletion button on the computer. It put me in a bad mood. In New Providence the American Bittern is more than uncommon. It is a rare sighting and I had fluffed it. Irrespective of the circumstances I blamed myself for not reacting faster and I was going to have to wait another six years for another chance.

In the intervening week the holiday partying had begun and when Steve Hoffer left a party on Friday night for an early start in a Wahoo Fishing tournament the next morning, he warned me that the forecast called for strong winds out of the north east. I did not know that fish cared about strong winds but birds certainly do. In fact they disappear off the face of the earth and no one knows where they go.



When we met the next morning the winds were blowing and I was expecting another disappointing day. Paul can find a spot to avoid the worst of the wind and avoid the rain for that matter. He decided it was a day for ducks. I knew he had a plan.

We started at Wilson's Pond in the National Park and from the start our luck was in. It seemed that additional Blue-winged Teal had joined those previously there but definite new arrivals for the Holidays were a male American Wigeon and a male Ring-necked Duck. Almost certainly their arrival can be connected to the recent storms on the eastern United States coast. Their arrival seemed timed for the holidays.

THE AMERICAN WIGEON

This duck has declined in numbers over the years. Johnnie Bethel tells me that when he was young the duck was common in Andros and they used to shoot it, but now it is uncommon there. In New Providence regrettably, it seems to be rare and I have only see it once before.

This was a male still almost in breeding plumage displaying all the appropriate distinguishing features bar one. The bird has a whitish buff head which is somewhat round shaped, with a broad dark band starting in front of the eye and sweeping over the eye to the back of the head. The bill has a blue tinge to it. The bird has a distinguishing black pointed tail. In front of the tail there is a white band and a sliver of white along the folded wing. In flight the bird displays much

more white which is under the body and in the wings

As seen the bird lacked only the dark green around the eyes usual for a male still in breeding plumage but it might have been the effect of light and distance that made the green merge into the dark background. The bird is quite distinctive. For most of the time we watched the bird it was moving back and forward feeding on the surface.

THE RING-NECKED DUCK

The other new arrival is a male Ring-necked Duck. This is not an uncommon bird here in the winter but it is very rare to have it put in an appearance at Wilson Pond.

The bird is somewhat smaller than the Wigeon and has a dark distinctive pointed head and a dark back. The bird gives the appearance of having small beady red eyes. It has buff sides ending with a white spur at the neck.

Confusingly, a distinctive feature of the bird is the white ring, not on the neck, but near the tip of the bill and the white outline also where the bill joins the bird's face.

The neck ring referred to in the name of the duck can only be seen when the bird has its neck extended in flight. This duck dives when feeding.

THE AMERICAN BITTERN

Last Saturday morning held other surprises. We were standing on the boardwalk near the platform when Paul said: "There is something moving in that bush". I glanced to see



where he was looking and scanned the bush he referred to using the long lens on my camera as a telescope. I saw a small heron-like bird presumably standing on a branch because only its body and its extended neck were visible. Instinctively, I took a couple of shots of the bird but it became apparent this was not the bird Paul was referring to. "Yes" he said, "It is a Sora coming into view at the water's edge."

I lowered the eyepiece of the camera to the waterline and coming into view was one of the most secretive birds in the wader group. It was one of the Soras we often hear at a distance at Wilson's Pond but never see, coming into full view quite unaware that from across the pond he was being observed.

After getting wonderful views and photos of the Sora, my mind went back to the heron-like bird that I had photographed shortly before. It was gone but I was excited. The only heron it might have been was the prevalent Tricoloured Heron (*Egretta tricolor*) but this bird had been smaller and the neck – was it not striped over a pear shaped body?

Now one of the faults of my otherwise excellent Canon Camera is that the LED Monitor on which you can review the images taken is not up to the standards otherwise of the camera. Accordingly I did not chance "calling" the bird that I had seen fleetingly in the eyepiece of the camera on my way to finding the Sora.

However back home when I transferred my images for the day on to my computer with its 17-inch screen, I knew the bird was indeed an American Bittern, every bit as secretive as

the Sora, which had stuck its head out of the bush, believing, like the Sora, it was unobserved. On second thoughts, was it only a Tricoloured Heron?

That makes it my third Holiday bird. The possibility that it was a Bittern came as a gift to put me into the Holiday spirit. I only had to wait a week to see my third American Bittern, not six years. However the nagging doubts remain . . .

If you get up early and feel like a walk you could go to Wilson Pond in the National Park to see the Ducks I write about. The gates off Fire Trail Road are always open.

There are no hides so the birds, particularly the duck, see you coming and stay at a distance from the boardwalk so take a pair of binoculars.

You should still see the rarer ducks I have written about as well as the other species in the wader.

Don't be too hopeful about seeing the Sora or the Bittern but you should see the Tricoloured Heron and will understand my agony.

The commonest species, all black with a white forehead, swimming closest to the boardwalk, is not strictly a duck at all. It is a Coot and it is not the Caribbean Coot which the Park includes in its bird identification display.

All the Coot you see are American Coot (*Fulica americana*).

If you doubt my word and are determined to stay in the Park until you identify at least one of the Coot as being of the Caribbean species then you will miss the joyous Christmas I wish you, and miss many Christmases to come. The Caribbean Coot stays in the Caribbean and does not come to the Bahamas.



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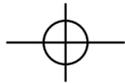
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Pizza chain unveils New Year expansion

* Marco's owners eye return on investment in two years, and aiming to open second location at Village Road Shopping Centre in New Year
* Caribbean expansion via franchisees also targeted

By CHESTER ROBARDS
Business Reporter
crobards@tribunemedia.net

MARCO'S Pizza will expand to its second New Providence location with the first two months of the New Year, its owner told *Tribune Business* yesterday, while a move into the Caribbean also on the drawing board.

Terry Tsavoussis, who owns the franchise along with brother Chris Tsavoussis, said the restaurant's first location on Prince Charles has done so well, a new location is now needed to relieve the foot traffic.

According to Mr Tsavoussis, the lease for their second Marco's location has not yet been signed, but will likely be in the Village Road Shopping Plaza, which once housed Papa Johns.

"We've been very busy," he said. "I do worry about service times and we will have another location sooner than later."

Mr Tsavoussis added that the customer response to the newest pizza chain in the Bahamas had exceeded his expectations.

The brothers have shown themselves to be moguls in the quick serve restaurant (QSR) business in the Bahamas and, after owning and running the Domino's Pizza franchise in the Bahamas for several years before selling it to AML Foods, they decided to get back into the business of pizza.

Mr Tsavoussis said his discovery of the Marco's brand was by chance. However, when he finally visited the restaurant in Tampa, Florida, he knew it would be a good fit in the Bahamas.

"They are very different," he said. "They make their dough fresh every day, and their sauce is a secret recipe of the founding fathers all the way from Italy."

Mr Tsavoussis said fresh cheese and other ingredients also sets Marco's apart from the competition. He said the brothers' other QSR franchise in Nassau, Wendy's, also boasts fresher ingredients than any competitor.

Marco's, which is headquartered in Toledo, Ohio, operates more than 190 stores in 17 states and the Bahamas.

The Tsavoussis brother intend to expand the franchise into the Caribbean via Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, two markets which they scouted and found to be suitable breakout locations. It touts itself as the fastest-growing pizza chain in the US.

Though the brothers have not set a date for the Caribbean expansion, they

SEE page 4B

Sir Jack: Deal is 'as big as Sol Kerzner's'

By NEIL HARTNELL
Tribune Business Editor

Sir Jack Hayward last night described the investors who he has agreed to sell his Grand Bahama Port Authority (GBPA)/Port Group Ltd stake to as having "a real zeal for investment and bringing loads of money into Freeport", branding the deal "as important as Sol Kerzner's" for the Bahamas.

Although declining to name the investors he had sold his 50 per cent GBPA/Port Group Ltd stake to, citing confidentiality reasons, Sir Jack described the purchasers as "terrific for the Bahamas, and I could not have better people to take up my shares. I hope the Government will accept it".

Sir Jack, who has been locked in a long-running three-year legal battle with the estate of his late business partner, Edward St George, over claims that he owned 75 per cent of the GBPA/Port Group Ltd, said he had signed the sales agreement and initialled all the pages on Friday.

He told *Tribune Business* that Edison Key, the South Abaco MP and chairman of the

Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Corporation (BAIC), had informed the Prime Minister during last weekend's tour of BEC's Wilson City power plant of the transaction. He was uncertain, though, whether a December 14, 2009, letter sent to Mr Ingraham informing him of the transaction personally had been delivered prior to his departure for the United Nations Climate Summit in Copenhagen.

"It is the best thing to have happened," Sir Jack told *Tribune Business*. "It is not the highest price. I was not asking the highest price, as I was keen on getting the right successor, and not the right people for Freeport and Grand Bahama."

He added that the purchasers were the right investors "to carry on what I've done for 60 years", and said he had received approaches from other parties, who were "not acceptable", to acquire his GBPA stake.

Asked whether the Prime Minister and the Government were likely to approve the purchase, Sir Jack said Mr Ingraham had "made a very prophetic statement" - which he had recorded - after Ian Fair, the

former Bahamas Financial Services Board (BFSB) chairman and a trustee of the Hayward family trust, had approached him over Lord Ashcroft of Belize potentially acquiring Sir Jack's stake.

Sir Jack told *Tribune Business* that Lord Ashcroft ultimately withdrew his interest after receiving bad publicity in relation to his Belizean interests, but alleged that the Prime Minister had said at the time: "I will not stand in the way of any purchaser."

"The Prime Minister has been pressing everyone, including Hannes Babak, to resolve the Freeport situation and gave him the mandate to do that. He pressed the St Georges and myself to resolve the dispute, and I have done. I have sold out," Sir Jack said.

"These people should be very acceptable to the Prime Minister. It's probably one of the most exciting investments in the Bahamas' history, as exciting as Wallace Groves, Sir Charles Hayward and the Hawksbill Creek Agreement. It's as important as Sol Kerzner. I feel we've handed over to

SEE page 3B

25% dividend tax on banks demanded

By NEIL HARTNELL
Tribune Business Editor

The Government was yesterday urged to impose a 25 per cent tax on the profits Bahamian commercial banks repatriated to their Caribbean parents, a former Chamber of Commerce president arguing that they should also be required to divest a portion of their shares to Bahamian investors.

Dionisio D'Aguiar, a long-standing critic of what he yesterday described as the "severe under-taxation" of the Bahamian banking industry, the country's most profitable economic sector even during a recession, argued that the licence fees banks currently paid were relatively minuscule, as a percentage of net income, when compared to the likes of supermarket chains.

However, Paul McWeeney, Bank of the Bahamas International's managing director, urged the Government to take a "holistic and multi-faceted" approach to increasing bank taxation, calling for it to work with the industry on developing a business model that worked for both sides.

Telling *Tribune Business* that the Prime Minister's Monday comments, indicating the Government was considering further tax increases on the banking sector, came as no surprise, Mr McWeeney said: "My views still hold firm in that we clearly under-

SEE page 4B

Unemployment benefit is effectively exhausted

\$20.185 million claimed from \$20m fund, but \$500,000 in funds not collected keeping it going

By CHESTER ROBARDS
Business Reporter
crobards@tribunemedia.net

The NATIONAL Insurance Board's (NIB) unemployment benefit fund is effectively exhausted, with \$20.185 of the \$20 million already allocated, although almost \$500,000 worth of payments have not been collected.

Algernon Cargill, NIB's director, said the unacquired unemployment cheques are proof that the jobless numbers may be falling, which will bring relief to National Insurance's cash outflows in 2010.

Mr Cargill said NIB has enough assets, around \$1.6 billion, to sustain all its obligations. The initial funds for the unemployment benefit were taken from NIB's medical fund.

Because the addition to NIB's portfolio was expected to put a strain on its coffers, a 1 per cent increase in contributions was mandated by government. Minister of Labour, Dion Foulkes, said yesterday he had not been apprised by Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham of when the increase would occur, but suggested some time in the New Year. Mr Cargill said, though, that NIB will continue

SEE page 3B

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VAUGHN ROBERTS

'Anxious' for Downtown legislation in 2010 first half

By NEIL HARTNELL
Tribune Business Editor

The Downtown Nassau Partnership (DNP) is "anxious" to finalise legislation that would empower/create an authority to run the city of Nassau, and establish a Business Improvement District (BID), during the 2010 first half, its manager saying yesterday that the first revitalisation phase would cost "tens of millions of dollars".

Vaughn Roberts said the situation "definitely has the potential for some serious progress in the New Year", with discussions between the public and private sector representatives on the DNP, plus

- * First phase revitalisation of Nassau city's core to cost 'tens of millions of dollars'
- * Downtown Nassau Partnership head says situation 'definitely has potential for serious progress in New Year'
- * Potential revenue sources from parking management, sidewalk use and special events

the Government, "ongoing around the scope of services [an authority will offer] and the revenues to be paid.

"The discussions are ongoing, and we're progressing them. It's not at the point

where we've got any finalisation of thinking between the private sector and the public

SEE page 5B

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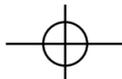
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Bahamas First Holdings Limited hereby notifies all its shareholders that the Board of Directors has declared an interim dividend of five cents (5¢) per ordinary share to be paid 15th December 2009, to all shareholders of record as of 7th December 2009.

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Tel: 242-362-4400/4025
Fax: 242-362-4493



BUSINESS

Bay Street mixed on Oasis effect

By **CHESTER ROBARDS**
Business Reporter
crobards@tribunemedia.net

DOWNTOWN vendors yesterday said they have already experienced some economic advantages from the arrival of the world's largest cruise ship, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines' *Oasis of the Seas*.

Some vendors told Tribune Business that they had high hopes for the massive vessel, which can sail with almost 6,000 passengers.

Supervisor of Delucci Jewelry store, Kevin Rathmani, said they saw a sales increase with the arrival of the ship last Friday. He said he was optimistic about the arrival of the ship and was not disappointed by the sales.

Owner of The Perfume Shop, Tim Lightbourne, said his expectations for increased sales were not overly optimistic. So, when sales were relatively good, he was pleasantly surprised.

The store tracked the foot traffic through its doors and made note of the *Oasis of the Seas* passengers who caused a sale. "I never expected much business from her, and considering the torrential rainfall we did better than expected," he said.

Mr Lightbourne said, however, that last Friday's inaugural voyage to Nassau was not the true test of the ship's ability to bring in high revenue to the city. He said a ship's first voy-



FLOATING GIANT: The *Oasis of the Seas*. The vessel is 1,187 feet long and 213 feet high.

age is typically chock-full of journalists and media people, who traditionally do not spend much time or money at ports of call.

His long-time concern has been the presence of on-board shopping options, which he lamented has dug into the pocket of Bay Street merchants for years. Though cruise lines and the Government have argued that the shops are mandated to be closed during the vessel's time in port, Mr Lightbourne sees that deal as an empty gesture, as the shops are open when guests are back on board and on the open ocean.

"These are floating hotels, casino and floating entertainment," he said. "Until the Caribbean works together and bans shops onboard boats, there will be a limited amount

(of revenue for onshore stores) coming out of boats."

Government has taken steps to attract spending for crew as well, offering them special offers at select stores in downtown Nassau.

Mr Lightbourne said he will wait until the *Oasis*' next visit to Nassau to gauge its economic impact. "The maiden voyage is never one to go by," he said.

Some stores said they saw no immediate benefits from the ship's visit.

Supervisor of La Casita, Anquanette McKenzie, said she expected to see lots of business. However, only two or three guests from the *Oasis* came through the store, but none purchased any items.

"We did expect to see lots of business," said Ms McKenzie. "We didn't see much."

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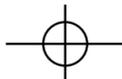
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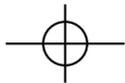
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BUSINESS

FROM page 1B

Sir Jack

Adding that Hannes Babak, the GBPA chairman, could run the companies from the Cayman Islands if the Government refused to renew his work permit, Sir Jack again praised him as "incredible".

He added that the purchaser was not a group connected to Ben Bell, who had been involved in "a previous" bidder. Meanwhile, Tribune Business had been told Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham may take "unilateral" action in the New Year to end the Grand Bahama Port Authority (GBPA) ownership dispute once and for all, with Hutchison Whampoa having produced a "blueprint" for how Freeport's future could evolve.

And the Prime Minister's assertion that both Sir Jack Hayward, whose family trust is one of the GBPA/Port Group Ltd co-owners, and chairman Hannes Babak had "been aware for months" that the lat-

ter's work permit would not be renewed come year-end was also backed by this newspaper's contacts, who disputed the Austrian's version that the renewal hinged on him fulfilling a series of conditions.

Tribune Business was told that when Mr Babak met the Prime Minister, a meeting at which Sir Albert Miller was also said to be present, Mr Ingraham told him bluntly that he did not consider him the "right person" to chair the GBPA/Port Group Ltd.

While the Prime Minister was said to have told Mr Babak that he was free to run his own business interests, which include BIX-listed Freeport Concrete, the firm he chairs and has a 43 per cent stake in, Mr Ingraham was adamant that he could not stay in his position at the GBPA past year-end. "He was not given a list of conditions to fulfill, and had no reason to hope," one source said of the meeting's outcome as far as Mr Babak was concerned.

Mr Ingraham's frustration at the inability of the Hayward

and St George families to resolve their ownership dispute seemed to be evident in the nature of his replies to questions on the GBPA situation, which were posed to him at his press conference prior to his departure for the United Nations (UN) summit on climate change in Copenhagen.

When asked whether the GBPA ownership was happy about the non-renewal of Mr Babak's work permit, Mr Ingraham replied: "Their happiness has nothing to do with the Government's decision. They are aware of the Government's decision and have been aware for months now. Mr Babak personally is aware and so are the owners of the Port."

Tribune Business had previously reported that the Prime Minister had wanted the GBPA ownership dispute to be resolved by year-end, viewing it as the major obstacle to his plans to revive Grand Bahama and its economy. The Government is already moving on a new cruise port for the island at Williams Town, with Mr Ingraham now wanting to turn his

full attention to Grand Bahama - believing he has set in train all he can for New Providence in the circumstances.

The Prime Minister's preferred solution, as previously

detailed by this newspaper, was for both sides to settle their dispute and then sell to Hutchison Whampoa. It will be interesting to see what he does now.

FROM page 1B

Unemployment benefit

nesses to court for non-payment. Several heads of well-known companies throughout the Bahamas have been summoned to court to appear before a judge due to delin-

quent benefit payments, including Wendall Jones of Jones Communications, Jackson Ritchie of Global United, Mark Finlayson of Solomon's Mines and Galen and Henry Saunders of More 94 FM and Spirit (92.5 FM).

to use the \$500,000 in undistributed cheques to pay unemployment benefits. According to him, the money is injected back into the fund after the claimant has not collected it within one month. "What we've seen is a decreasing number of unemployment claims," he said. "We see positive trends for employment, and there won't be a significant increase in the New Year for the unemployment budget."

Despite the unemployment benefit being almost exhausted, and the Government unsure of when the increase will come into effect, Mr Cargill said every unemployment benefit claim will continue to be processed and paid.

However, he pled for individuals who may have found jobs before their benefit payments expire to inform NIB, so that those funds can be cancelled and reinstated into the fund. NIB has been processing and prosecuting individuals who have made false unemployment claims, and have several matters before the courts regarding the same.

The Department has also been busy recouping general benefit payments, by taking busi-

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BUSINESS

25% dividend tax on banks demanded

FROM page 1B

stand where he's coming from, and there needs to be a meeting of the minds between the Clearing Banks Association and the Government. "My view would be to take a proactive approach, and design a fee and tax structure acceptable to both sides. Make it holistic, and don't just do it for the sake of increasing taxes on Bahamian banks because there are making a profit. It must be an initiative in the best interests of the country for the long-term."

Mr McWeeney said that unlike banks in other countries which, in the case of the UK, were being hit with taxes on banker bonuses worth more than £25,000 amid government and public outcry over the excesses that led to the financial crisis, Bahamian banks were both well-run and well-regulated. Urging the Government to take a "multi-faceted approach", Mr McWeeney said any move to increase taxes and fees imposed on the banking sector had to ensure this country still "attracts and sustains financial institutions".

"We need to take the bull by the horns and develop a comprehensive, long-term solution to this," Mr McWeeney said. "What is the Government trying to achieve at the end of the day? It must be more than taxation. There must be a broader national goal."

Responding to questions about whether the Government was likely to

increase banking sector taxation, Mr Ingraham said: "Possibly. The banking sector in the Bahamas is under-taxed, we have made that point before. We began last year in increasing the licensing fees for banks in the Bahamas. That is inadequate. The banking sector should pay more. In due course they will be required to pay more."

Mr D'Aguilar said the Government could "easily" extract another \$10-\$15 million in taxes and licence fees from the Bahamian commercial banking sector, adding: "It's no secret that the banking industry is severely under-taxed, and that the bank licence fees they pay are a minimal part of their profits. "When we compare the amount of tax they pay - and don't include Stamp Tax, because they pass that on to the consumer for 100 per cent recovery - as a percentage of net income, to a food store that has sales of \$100 million, profits of \$5 million and pays a business licence fee of \$1 million, that entity is paying 20 per cent of their net income in tax."

"The banks' licence fees, under no circumstances, presently exceed \$2 million, and even in this depressed economy they are making \$60-\$70 million in profits. They are really getting away with paying nothing."

Mr D'Aguilar said that "what many people find offensive" is that the Canadian-owned banks, chiefly Scotiabank, Royal Bank of Canada and First-Caribbean International Bank (Bahamas), all repatriated their Bahamian profits to their regional

headquarters in Barbados or Trinidad.

The regional parent thus paid taxes on Bahamian profits in Barbados or Trinidad, before repatriating them to Canada, something the former Chamber president described as "unconscionable" because "the Government is doing itself out of tax revenues."

Mr D'Aguilar argued that none of the commercial banks was likely to leave the Bahamas if the Government increased their taxation, as this jurisdiction was their most profitable in the Caribbean. He urged the Government to impose a 25 per cent tax on the profits/dividends Bahamian banks repatriated to their regional parent, arguing that compared to Bahamian-owned firms, the amount of taxes and fees paid was "unfairly low".

"The three Canadian banks probably made between them, in the good old days of 2007, probably \$360 million in profits," Mr D'Aguilar said. "Now, they may be down by \$100 million, but they're still paying an usually low percentage of their net income in taxation."

The banking industry, he added, was the largest industry in the Bahamas "by leaps and bounds". He added: "There isn't even a sector remotely close to them."

Mr D'Aguilar also called for the Canadian-owned banks to be required to divest shares, or more of their shares, to the Bahamian public. He told Tribune Business a banker contact of his had told him that the banks had never been pressured by the Government to do this.

Pizza chain unveils New Year expansion

FROM page 1B

have been sourcing fellow franchisees who may be interested in taking on the pizza chain in their country.

With the success of their first location, Mr Tsavoussis said they could see a return on the investment within two years.

According to him, because the restaurant is only weeks old, processes and staff training are still being fine-tuned. He said they have made customer service a priority, and with this first restaurant often packed with patrons, are doing their best to roll out their product.

"We're having our challenges, but we will correct them with the expansion of more stores," said Mr Tsavoussis.

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 137 (4) of The International Business Companies Act, 2000, Notice is hereby given that :-

- (a) PIMPERNEL INVESTMENTS LIMITED is in dissolution;
- (b) the date of commencement of the dissolution is 4th December, 2009
- (c) the name of the Liquidator is Donald W. Tomlinson of Oak Hill Road, Nassau, Bahamas

FURTHER NOTICE is hereby given that the Creditors of the above-named Company are required, on or before the 3rd day of January, 2010 to send their names and addresses, with particulars of their debts or claims, and the names and addresses of their Attorneys (if any), to the Liquidator, Donald W. Tomlinson, c/o FT Consultants Ltd., P.O. Box N-3932, Nassau, Bahamas.

Dated this 11th day of December, A. D. 2009

Donald W. Tomlinson
Liquidator

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE

LA VIEILLE POULE LIMITED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN as follows:

- (a) LA VIEILLE POULE LIMITED is in voluntary dissolution under the provisions of Section 137 (4) of the International Business Companies Act 2000.
- (b) The dissolution of the said company commenced on the 14th December, 2009 when the Articles of Dissolution were submitted to and registered by the Registrar General.
- (c) The Liquidator of the said company is CST Administration (Bahamas) Limited, The Bahamas Financial Centre, Shirley & Charlotte Streets, Nassau, Bahamas

Dated this 16th day of December, A. D. 2009

CST Administration (Bahamas) Limited
Liquidator

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE

FEBO LIMITED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN as follows:

- (a) FEBO LIMITED is in voluntary dissolution under the provisions of Section 137 (4) of the International Business Companies Act 2000.
- (b) The dissolution of the said company commenced on the 14th December, 2009 when the Articles of Dissolution were submitted to and registered by the Registrar General.
- (c) The Liquidator of the said company is CST Administration (Bahamas) Limited, The Bahamas Financial Centre, Shirley & Charlotte Streets, Nassau, Bahamas

Dated this 16th day of December, A. D. 2009.

CST Administration (Bahamas) Limited
Liquidator

Legal Notice

NOTICE

**DARROW INVESTMENTS LTD.
(In Voluntary Liquidation)**

Pursuant to Section 137(4) of the International Business Companies Act, 2000, notice is hereby given that the above named Company is in dissolution, which commenced on the 2nd day of December, 2009. The Liquidator is BdS Corporate Services Limited, George House, George Street, P.O.Box N-8159, Nassau, Bahamas

BdS Corporate Services Ltd.
(Liquidator)

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE

VILLA HELGA LIMITED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN as follows:

- (a) VILLA HELGA LIMITED is in voluntary dissolution under the provisions of Section 137 (4) of the International Business Companies Act 2000.
- (b) The dissolution of the said company commenced on the 14th December, 2009 when the Articles of Dissolution were submitted to and registered by the Registrar General.
- (c) The Liquidator of the said company is CST Administration (Bahamas) Limited, The Bahamas Financial Centre, Shirley & Charlotte Streets, Nassau, Bahamas

Dated this 16th day of December, A. D. 2009

CST Administration (Bahamas) Limited
Liquidator

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE

BARLEY ASSETS LIMITED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN as follows:

- (a) BARLEY ASSETS LIMITED is in voluntary dissolution under the provisions of Section 137 (4) of the International Business Companies Act 2000.
- (b) The dissolution of the said company commenced on the 14th December, 2009 when the Articles of Dissolution were submitted to and registered by the Registrar General.
- (c) The Liquidator of the said company is CST Administration (Bahamas) Limited, The Bahamas Financial Centre, Shirley & Charlotte Streets, Nassau, Bahamas

Dated this 16th day of December, A. D. 2009

CST Administration (Bahamas) Limited
Liquidator

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE

CYTRA LIMITED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN as follows:

- (a) CYTRA LIMITED is in voluntary dissolution under the provisions of Section 137 (4) of the International Business Companies Act 2000.
- (b) The dissolution of the said company commenced on the 14th December, 2009 when the Articles of Dissolution were submitted to and registered by the Registrar General.
- (c) The Liquidators of the said company are Manex Limited and Blue Seas Administration Ltd, The Bahamas Financial Centre, Shirley & Charlotte Streets, Nassau, Bahamas

Dated this 16th day of December, A. D. 2009

Manex Limited and Blue Seas Administration Ltd.
Liquidators

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE

CYTRA LIMITED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN as follows:

- (a) CYTRA LIMITED is in voluntary dissolution under the provisions of Section 137 (4) of the International Business Companies Act 2000.
- (b) The dissolution of the said company commenced on the 14th December, 2009 when the Articles of Dissolution were submitted to and registered by the Registrar General.
- (c) The Liquidators of the said company are Manex Limited and Blue Seas Administration Ltd, The Bahamas Financial Centre, Shirley & Charlotte Streets, Nassau, Bahamas

Dated this 16th day of December, A. D. 2009

Manex Limited and Blue Seas Administration Ltd.
Liquidators

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE

WIONA LIMITED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN as follows:

- (a) WIONA LIMITED is in voluntary dissolution under the provisions of Section 137 (4) of the International Business Companies Act 2000.
- (b) The dissolution of the said company commenced on the 14th December, 2009 when the Articles of Dissolution were submitted to and registered by the Registrar General.
- (c) The Liquidator of the said company is Verduro Associated Ltd., Pasea Estate, Road Town, Tortola, BVI

Dated this 16th day of December, A. D. 2009

Verduro Associated Ltd.
Liquidator

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE

CUTTER LIMITED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN as follows:

- (a) CUTTER LIMITED is in voluntary dissolution under the provisions of Section 137 (4) of the International Business Companies Act 2000.
- (b) The dissolution of the said company commenced on the 14th December, 2009 when the Articles of Dissolution were submitted to and registered by the Registrar General.
- (c) The Liquidator of the said company is CST Administration (Bahamas) Limited, The Bahamas Financial Centre, Shirley & Charlotte Streets, Nassau, Bahamas

Dated this 16th day of December, A. D. 2009

CST Administration (Bahamas) Limited
Liquidator

BUSINESS

'Anxious' for Downtown legislation in 2010 first half

FROM page 1B

sector representatives on the revenue side," Mr Roberts told Tribune Business.

Once there was "a meeting of the minds" between the DNP and the Government, and there was support from the public sector and legislative process, Mr Roberts told Tribune Business that the revitalisation could move rapidly.

"We're anxious to get this finalised in the first half of 2010," he added of the authority/BID legislation, "and the Government is minded to move the revitalisation forward in an aggressive way."

Mr Roberts pointed out that

efforts to revitalise Bay Street and downtown Nassau were proceeding despite the ongoing DNP/government discussions about the legal framework required for an authority to manage the city of Nassau, plus the BID.

The Government, Mr Roberts said, had already completed the \$44 million Nassau harbour dredge, awarded the \$11.295 million contract for the Straw Market reconstruction to Cavalier Construction, and was looking to initiate further enhancements through the road improvement programme and efforts to reclaim the waterfront via a boardwalk between Woodes Rogers Wharf and East Street.

The DNP and the Government are spending much time and effort on getting the BID and Downtown authority legislation, and the funding for these bodies, right first time, recognising that these are the essential building blocks for the rebirth of Nassau's city centre.

"It's not as easy as it looks from the outside," Mr Roberts told Tribune Business. As well as establishing both entities, they each needed funding and "recurrent revenue sources."

Consensus

"There's some consensus as to where the monies should come from. The idea of equity participation from private and public sources is overarching as well," he told Tribune Business.

Apart from levying the traditional real property taxes and business licence fees on real estate owners and businesses, respectively, in downtown Nassau, Mr Roberts suggested that

raising for green spaces, public spaces in the city. We're also looking at other development opportunities."

Opportunity

One such opportunity could come from a development company or other entity owned by the Downtown authority acquiring or leasing real estate from other parties, developing it and then leasing/selling space itself.

"The idea is that all stakeholders in downtown should contribute to the progress and maintenance of the city," Mr Roberts said. "The mindset is that every stakeholder should pay for improvements, and ongoing maintenance will come from taxes and special assessments. I think the Government

is looking for us to come up with our own programme for running the area."

Aside from the talks on legislation and revenue sources, Mr Roberts said the DNP was "getting some good progress on the details of the master planning and what is needed for the core of the city for phase one".

He added that the initial improvements being considered would cost "tens of millions of dollars", and suggested that the DNP needed "to show physical improvements to drive the revitalisation".

Mr Roberts suggested that the DNP may focus on getting "one or two streets" to the level it wanted, as a way to encourage property owners, businesses and other stakeholders that revitalisation was more than a 'pipe dream'.

NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that RICHIE ELYSEE of BLUE HILL ROAD, P.O. BOX GT-2557, NASSAU, BAHAMAS, is applying to the Minister responsible for Nationality and Citizenship, for registration/naturalization as a citizen of The Bahamas, and that any person who knows any reason why registration/naturalization should not be granted, should send a written and signed statement of the facts within twenty-eight days from the 9th day of December, 2009 to the Minister responsible for nationality and Citizenship, P.O. Box N-7147, Nassau, Bahamas.

NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that MARC ARTHUR PIERRE of P.O. BOX GT-2627, NASSAU, BAHAMAS, is applying to the Minister responsible for Nationality and Citizenship, for registration/naturalization as a citizen of The Bahamas, and that any person who knows any reason why registration/naturalization should not be granted, should send a written and signed statement of the facts within twenty-eight days from the 9th day of December, 2009 to the Minister responsible for nationality and Citizenship, P.O. Box N-7147, Nassau, Bahamas.

PUBLIC NOTICE INTENT TO CHANGE NAME BY DEED POLL

The Public is hereby advised that I, JOCELYN DECIUS of the Western District of the Island of New Providence one of the Islands of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas intend to change my name to JUSTICE BOB DECIUS. If there are any objections to this change of name by Deed Poll, you may write such objections to the Chief Passport Officer, P.O. Box N-742, Nassau Bahamas no later than thirty (30) days after the date of publication of this notice.

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OFFICE CLOSURES FOR



Thursday, December 17th, at 12:00 noon, RE-OPENING on Friday, December 18th, 9:00a.m.

Thursday, December 24th, at 1:00p.m., RE-OPENING on Tuesday, December 29th, at 9:00a.m.

Thursday, December 31st, at 1:00p.m., RE-OPENING on Monday, January 4th, 2010, at 9:00a.m.

Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year!

Techician WANTED

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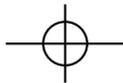
Apply in writing to P.O. Box N-1818

Include resume and educational qualifications

Advertisement for Bahamas Business Solutions Ltd. featuring TechWise and BB SL logos, contact information for Nassau and Grand Bahama, and website URL.

Advertisement for electronics and computer equipment, listing various products like LCD TVs, keyboards, and printers, with a 'NOW OPEN SATURDAYS until 2:00 pm!' banner.

Financial market data table including BIXS LISTED & TRADED SECURITIES AS OF TUESDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2009, and BIXS LISTED DEBT SECURITIES. Includes columns for security names, prices, and yields.



TASTE

The Tribune **Taste**

'YULE LOG'

makes its debut at the Patisserie Tea Room



HISTORY OF THE 'YULE LOG'

A YULE LOG traditionally is a large wooden log which is burned as part of the Christmas celebrations in several European cultures.

Historians believe the burning of the log to have its roots in Germanic paganism.

It is also known as the 'Yule Clog' or 'Yule Block' in some parts of England.

However, in the culinary world, the term also refers to the log-shaped Christmas cake, also known by its French name, 'Bûche de Noël'.

According to the culinary research site foodtimeline.org, the ingredients suggest the cake is most likely a 19th century creation.

"That's when thinly rolled sponge cakes filled with jam or cream and covered with butter cream icing began to show up in European cook books. Marzipan and meringue, typically employed for decorative purposes, date to the Medieval Ages and the 17th century respectively."

By JEFFARAH GIBSON

'Bûche de Noël' or 'Yule log', the traditional European Christmas dessert made with sponge cake and chocolate butter cream has made its way to the Bahamas, and will be the highlight among the pastries served at the Patisserie Tea Room on Charlotte Street this season.

This delicacy is usually served during the Christmas holidays in countries such as France, Belgium, French Canada and Lebanon, just to name a few.

And now, thanks to the Patisserie Tea Room, the chocolate frosted log will officially be introduced to Bahamians for the first time.

As the name indicates, the cake is prepared and garnished to look like a wooden log.

Ronnie Deryckere of Belgium, Chief Chef at the Patisserie, spoke with *Tribune Taste* and explained the process of how the cake is made and molded into a log.

"The Christmas log is made with sponge cake, frosted and filled with chocolate butter cream. The cake is then formed into a log. But to get that shape the cake is constantly rolled so that it is shaped like a cylinder," he said.

The cake takes approximately three and a half hours to complete, and when it's done it can be decorated for the season.

Besides vanilla, the cake can be made in chocolate, coffee, or strawberry flavours.

And what sets this French Christmas staple apart from other pastries is its unique taste.

"The cake can be made in just about any flavour and it is delicious. It doesn't taste like other cakes because it has its own original flavour," Mr Deryckere said.

To make it look like a real wooden log, the cake is served with one end cut off, that end is then placed on top of the log. This gives the illusion that the top portion is actually protruding out of the cake like a chopped off tree branch.

In addition to the extraordinary log cake, the Patisserie will be making Christmas bread for the holiday season as well.

"The bread can be made any time of the year. You don't have to wait

until Christmas. But it is at this time we chose to add a little something extra to the ingredients. So instead of making the regular bread, we add things like mixed fruit, raisins, orange peel, and pearl sugar. This is tasty and it is something new to give a try," he said.

Also among the delicious treats now baking in the oven at the Patisserie are of course cookies, Christmas must-haves that most people never tire of eating.

The Patisserie's cookies will be decorated to suit the season, and will taste like no other, said Mr Deryckere.

Ever since the Patisserie's opening six months ago, they have made it their ultimate goal to offer a delicious culinary experience.

As you step inside the doors of the bakery you are greeted by a cozy, dining area, a pantry of pastries, and the aroma of freshly baked croissants and other goodies.

"We don't only serve pastries, but we serve breakfast and lunch," Mr Deryckere said.

And the Patisserie's menu is ever-changing.

"Each day we serve something different because we want to give our customers variety," he said.

Some mornings patrons can help themselves to sausage, bacon, and cheese croissants or omelettes. If they prefer something a little lighter then the better choice would be a Danish side with an espresso, cappuccino or coffee.

"We have three different breakfast croissants, they are chicken oriental, turkey or broccoli and cheese. Other sandwiches include bagels and French toast. We also serve an assortment of Danishes," Mr Deryckere said.

"On the lunch menu we serve a variety of quiches and club sandwiches. And for the Italian food lovers we also serve pizza."

The great thing about the Patisserie is that you can actually see your food being made.

"We designed the restaurant in this way so our patrons don't have to worry about what is being done. They can see for themselves how everything is made, and by doing this we ensure them that our food is always made fresh," Mr Deryckere said.

Everything at the Patisserie is made fresh. The pastries are all made from scratch, and all of the dishes and sauces are made at the bakery.

The Patisserie also specialises in catering for meeting and events.



CLASSIC YULE LOG RECIPE

(www.free-easy-recipes.org.uk)

Preparation time: 30 minutes
Serves: 8

INGREDIENTS:

- Cake
- 2 Eggs
- 3oz of sugar
- 3oz of Flour or self-raising filling
- warmed jam

Icing

- 8oz of chestnuts - peeled
- 3oz of sugar
- 4 tablespoons of water
- 1 tablespoon of unsweetened cocoa powder.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Grease a 12" by 8" baking tray and then line with baking parchment. Pre-heat the oven to 400F or 200C. Mix eggs and sugar with an electric mixer until white, stiff and foamy. Stir in sifted flour and combine thoroughly.

Pour batter on to baking tray and bake for 7-10 minutes.

Turn out straight away on to a piece of grease-proof paper, spread with warmed jam, and roll up firmly.

Tidy up the ends by cutting a small piece of each end. For the icing, place the chestnuts in a saucepan and boil until soft, about 7-10 minutes.

Boil the sugar and water together until a drop sets instantly in cold water.¶

Puree the chestnuts and the syrup together, and add the cocoa powder.

Tip mixture over the cake and rough up the back with a fork this will create the bark look. Sprinkle with icing sugar to look like Snow. Add holly if needed.

COOKING TIME:

- In oven - 10 min.
- On hob - 10 min.
- Preparation time - 10 min.

SERVING INSTRUCTIONS:

Serve with double cream or custard.

TASTE

The Tribune

entertainment

things
2DO

• Bahamas Dance Theatre presents 'Shake 2' - The next generation

The musical production by Leroy "Tinkle" Hanna, revised by Michelle Hudson, will be shown three times - tomorrow, Friday and Saturday night at the College of the Bahamas Performing Arts Centre on Poinciana Drive and Thompson Boulevard.

The show kicks off at 8pm each night. There is also a special Sunday matinee performance at 4pm.

Tickets for Thursday and Sunday are \$15; general admission on Friday and Saturday is \$20, and tickets for the dress circle seats (ear-marked for the Cultural Exchange Programme) are \$30.

For ticket information contact 361-4462, 10am to 3pm on Monday, Wednesday or Friday; or 356-5547.

The show is staged and directed by Michelle Hudson and Gillian Springer.

• 'Christmas Magic' presented by Dance Bahamas School

The official school of the National Dance Company of the Bahamas presents 'Christmas Magic' - an evening with students of Dance Bahamas School tomorrow and on Friday.

The event takes place at the National Centre for the Performing Arts at 7pm on both nights.

Tickets for adults are \$15, children under the age of 12 pay \$10.

Contact 328-7588 for more information.

• Blackout 5 - Christmas Party

KO Productions presents the ultimate party of the holiday season, Black Out 5, held under the theme, "Once Upon A Dark Night".

The event takes place at Fort Charlotte this Friday starting at 9pm. Then comes "The Dawn", the official after-party for Black Out 5 on Saturday, admission is free with a Black Out band.

Call 225-4314 or e-mail star@thenewbreed.tv for tickets and information.

• 'It Could Happen To You' Book Signing

Singer and songwriter Paulette Stubbs will be signing copies of her book 'It Could Happen To You'.

In the book she explores her experiences with abuse and domestic violence, and how God and her faith ultimately helped her through it.

The book signing takes place this Saturday at Nassau Stationers in Palmdale.



Share your news

The Tribune wants to hear from people who are making news in their neighbourhoods. Perhaps you are raising funds for a good cause, campaigning for improvements in the area or have won an award. If so, call us on 322-1986 and share your story.

GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATED 'PRECIOUS' CLOSES BAHAMAS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

'PRECIOUS', the critically acclaimed and controversial Harlem drama which just picked up three Golden Globe nods will be debuting in the Bahamas tomorrow night as the closing night film of the Bahamas International Film Festival (BIFF).

Starring newcomer Gabourey "Gabby" Sidibe alongside entertainment veterans such as Mo'Nique, Mariah Carey and Lenny Kravitz, 'Precious' has also been named the best picture of 2009 by the African-American Film Critics Association.

Lee Daniels' movie is based on the novel 'Push' by Sapphire and is an honest and raw look at the struggles of a 16-year-old African-American girl born into a life no one would want in 1987's Harlem.

She's pregnant for the second time by her absent father. At home, she is forced to wait hand and foot on her abusive mother (Mo'Nique). School is a place of chaos, and Precious has reached the ninth grade with good marks and an awful secret - she can neither read nor write. But while Precious may sometimes be down, she is never out.

Ever since it premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in January, 'Precious' has



IN THIS film publicity image released by Lionsgate films, Gabourey Sidibe is shown in a scene from "Precious." The film was nominated for a Golden Globe award for best motion picture drama, Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2009. The Golden Globe awards will be held Jan. 17 in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Anne Marie Fox/AP Photo

stirred up controversy.

Armond White of the NY Press made this now famous statement about 'Precious':

"Not since 'The Birth of a Nation' has a mainstream movie demeaned the idea of black American life as much as 'Precious'. Full of brazenly racist clichés (Precious steals and eats an entire bucket of fried chicken), it is a

sociological horror show."

However, for many the film is not a demeaning one, but rather one that paints a true picture of what life is like for disadvantaged young persons growing up modern America.

And the Hollywood Foreign Press Association certainly seems to agree with those heaping praise on this

movie, nominating 'Precious' in three categories for the 67th annual Golden Globes.

'Precious' is nominated in the best drama category, and Gabourey Sidibe and Mo'Nique are among the best actress and best supporting actress in a drama nominees, respectively.

'Precious' is showing tomorrow night at the Galle-

ria Cinemas on John F Kennedy Drive at 7.30pm.

Tickets are \$50 and can be purchased from the BIFF Box Office on 4th Terrace East and Collins Avenue, Building #10, 2nd Floor, or at Galleria Cinemas JFK, RND Plaza.

Call 356-5939 for more information or visit www.bintfilmfest.com.

Bahamas International Film Festival names 2009 award winners

'La Soga', 'Morenita', 'Traces of the Trade' and 'Gaining Ground' take home top prizes

COMPETITION winners for the 6th Bahamas International Film Festival (BIFF) were announced on Sunday night at the Balmoral Club following the special career achievement event honouring Johnny Depp.

The festival showcased 86 films from 26 different countries, including 38 features, of which several were world or international premieres and nearly all Bahamian premieres. The four competition categories at BIFF are Spirit of Freedom: Narrative; Spirit of Freedom: Documentary;

New Vision; and Short Film.

Below are the official competition winners at this year's festival:

New Vision

The New Vision Award was awarded to "Morenita", written and directed by Alan Jonsson Gavica.

In this Mexican drama, Mateo Cruz, desperate to save his family from death threats by a notorious drug dealer, steals the venerated image of the Virgin of Guadalupe causing pandemonium throughout the country.

Spirit of Freedom: Narrative

The Spirit of Freedom: Narrative Award was pre-

sented to "La Soga", a Dominican Republic film from Director Josh Crook.

In his first solo directorial effort, Josh Crook has worked cheek-by-jowl with writer-actor-producer Manny Perez to create a work of such poetic ferocity that much of its imagery will be stamped on the viewer forever.

The film starts in a poor neighbourhood in Santiago, Dominican Republic, where the streets are run by "boomerang" drug dealers and a modest butcher struggles to raise his ten-year-old boy. After witnessing the murder of his father by a vicious New York criminal named Rafa, Luisito meets General Colon, head of the

Dominican secret police. Colon preys on the boy's desire for revenge, transforming him into a heartless killer. Twenty years later, Luisito has risen to become Colon's top assassin, kept in control by the general's promise to deliver his father's killer.

Spirit of Freedom: Documentary

The Spirit of Freedom: Documentary Award was awarded to Katrina Browne's "Traces of the Trade: A Story From the Deep North".

In this American documentary, filmmaker Katrina Browne discovers her New England ancestors were the largest slave traders in US his-

tory. 'Traces of the Trade' follows Browne and nine fellow DeWolf descendants as they travel from Rhode Island, to Ghana and Cuba on a trip that brings them face-to-face with the history and legacy of New England's hidden enterprise.

Short Film

The award for Best Short Film went to the German film "Gaining Ground", directed by Marc Brummund.

The short film tells the story of a young illegal immigrant couple who spend their time furtively avoiding the German authorities, until the well-being of their young son dictates that they resolve their untenable situation.

Rhythm of the Drums

By REUBEN SHEARER
Tribune Features Reporter
rshearer@tribunemedia.net

That's only a small spectacle of the production.

"It's a real burden when you do all of this on your own," said Mitzie, who is noted for her riveting fire-dancing and junkanoo skills.

Mitzie and her family have come a long way in this industry and have often faced criticism. She said she was called "unladylike" because of her dancing when she was younger.

"We were never on drugs, we're not alcoholics, we're Christians, but we dance. David danced his clothes off for the Lord, but when we danced it was wrong," she recalled.

Mitzie said it has been a continuous fight for her family to establish themselves as entertainers in the Bahamas.

She remembers producers often considering her for a performance but when an international artist was brought in they were chosen over her; "they're seen as the best in the world," she said.

Mitzie said in her view the local entertainment scene is the least supported sector by government.

In the 1990s, Bahamian entertainment was said to have died.

"It was not respected by the people, the government, so it had to die," she said.

"I want to bring it to another level where people see that they shouldn't forget these people (Bahamian performers of the past)."

It was because struggles like these that Mitzie was pushed hard to create a "world-class" show.

Now, all her hard work seems to be paying off, and she is currently negotiating with cruise lines to have 'Rhythms of Drums' performed on their ships, particularly on the world's largest cruise ship, the Oasis of the Seas, which docked in Nassau last week.

'Rhythms of the Drums' has been done twice before, but the show didn't garner the amount of support the family were hoping for.

"Getting funding right now is really impossible from a sponsor's point of view," Mitzie said.

And when it comes to criticism, she said Bahamians are some of the harshest critics out there.

"If you can perform for the Bahamian people, you can perform anywhere in the world," she said.

The show starts with Eloise Louis, a great Bahamian singer who will be dancing to her music in the opening act.

This is followed by a Goombay-style segment with breath-taking costumes.

"The Goombay scene depicts where we came up with the fire, dance, limbo. The African scene is layered with a Tony McKay and George Symonette song that is really on a fast level. The junkanoo scene is the finale, where Veronica Bishop, Tony Seymour, and Ronnie Butler will perform," Mitzie said.

"When (the performers) come out, it's not a moment that you sit down for five minutes until the other scene comes on," she said.

"We do not waste a second. Every second something is being done, for an hour and a half straight through."

The show is something Mitzie has been working on for 15 years now, and



BAHAMIAN dancers transform into Las Vegas showgirls in a cabaret performance.

she's been sewing the costumes herself for the past five.

Every bead that you see on the costumes was sewed on by hand.

People who have already seen the show said it was a uniquely Bahamian experience.

"I have not seen a show like that, like a native review, since the Cat and Fiddle days at my father's club," said former senator Cyprianna McWeeny.

Her father, Freddie Munnings Sr, was the owner of Cat and Fiddle, and a leading figure in the Bahamas music and entertainment industry.

'Rhythms of Drums' will be shown twice at the Rainforest Theatre at the Wyndham Nassau Resort this weekend.

Tickets are \$25 for children, \$50 for adults and are available at the door.

For further information call 393 4069 or 544-6991.

ARTS

It's all natural

Photographer Richard Hokemeir uses natural paper to print custom colour photos

By REUBEN SHEARER
Tribune Features Reporter
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'GREEN' is the theme of a unique method a famed photographer in the Bahamas is using to produce his art.

Working with natural papers to print custom colour photos affords photographers the convenience of no longer needing a frame with a glass to showcase their work, Richard Hokemeir, owner of Your Photographer Ltd, told *Tribune Art*.

In keeping with the 'green' theme, Mr Hokemeir prints all of his scenic photos on museum etching, torchon, bamboo and sugar cane paper. And crumpling and folding will not harm the pictures on these natural photo papers, he said.

The question on most people's minds who saw his latest exhibition was whether the pieces in the collection were photos or paintings. The papers' luminescent qualities made it hard to tell.

A resident of the Bahamas for the past 40 years, Mr Hokemeir is a photographer with an eye for shooting "the little things."

Last month, he held his seventh exhibition for the year in a private room at the Poop Deck Restaurant West.

Mr Hokemeir and his wife Odette scout out different areas of New Providence, travelling from the eastern end of the island to the west to capture unique scenes.

Each of his photos are printed on exotic papers made from natural resources which give the pieces a glossy finish.

One of Mr Hokemeir's most esteemed photographs is of a royal staff member at Buckingham Palace.

Brigadier John Smedley, private secretary to the Earl and Countess of Wessex, asked Mr Hokemeir to take a picture of him many years ago while he was in Nassau on assignment.

The photo now hangs in Buckingham Palace in Brigadier Smedley's office. Graycliff and Humidor Restaurants also have copies of the photo.

Extensive research goes into importing the special exotic papers Mr Hokemeir uses.

The photographer and his wife order the special papers from countries around the world, and especially from Asia.

In the near future, they hope to start printing on rice paper, made in



Richard Hokemeir photography/Photos

Xuancheng, China. Rice paper is said to be rot-proof and moth-proof; and is the reason why art pieces painted on this paper centuries ago still look almost new.

Each type of paper, be it rice, bamboo or sugar cane paper, absorbs colour differently.

Noticeably, the sugar cane paper makes certain colours in a piece really 'pop'.

Odyssey Airlines is a big client of Hokemeir products. And if you frequent the VIP room downstairs at the Lynden Pindling Airport, you will see his photography hanging on the wall.

"It took me about five months of shooting to capture the flamingos at the side of the pool looking at their reflection," he said about the piece on display at the airport.

"Some figures take years, going to the same spot just to get the right



shot," Mr Hokemeir said. "Some things can't come, so I'm up early in the morning at five to get the right spots and I look for something spectacular."

He highly recommends a photo he took of graceful flamingos getting their feet wet in a pool in water. "It looks like ladies in a ballet," he said.

"I get so much more leeway to express creativity. Everything has to have a reason. I just don't want to take pictures," he said. "I like taking it up a little."

All of Mr Hokemeir's photos were shot in Nassau. And his photos of Haitian dinghies and boats in the harbour are the most popular.

A good number of the shots feature sights uncommon to the Bahamas.

For example, Mr Hokemeir was able to capture a pelican which was way off its course as it made a stop at a local beach.

He has also taken photos of Sean Connelly's 'Out of Bounds' boat.

Mr Hokemeir has taken photos of major court cases, like the John Travolta trial, and has done some work for the Bahamas Handbook.

There are some photographers that have a passion for where they live, want to capture the essence of it, and they want to share it with everybody. Richard Hokemeir says he is that photographer.

THE WEATHER REPORT

INSURANCE MANAGEMENT (BAHAMAS) LIMITED
INSURANCE BROKERS & AGENTS

5-DAY FORECAST

TODAY	TONIGHT	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly sunny High: 83° Low: 72°	Partly cloudy with a shower High: 81° Low: 70°	Clouds and a couple of showers High: 81° Low: 70°	Cloudy, a 1-storm possible; windy High: 81° Low: 68°	Times of clouds and sun High: 82° Low: 63°	Mainly cloudy and windy High: 76° Low: 58°

ALMANAC
Statistics are for Nassau through 1 p.m. yesterday

Temperature	86° F/30° C
High	72° F/22° C
Low	72° F/22° C
Normal high	79° F/26° C
Normal low	67° F/19° C
Last year's high	62° F/18° C
Last year's low	70° F/21° C

AccuWeather.com
Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2009

INSURANCE MANAGEMENT TRACKING MAP

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

MARINE FORECAST

LOCATION	WINDS	WAVES	VISIBILITY	WATER TEMPS.
ABACO	Today: NE at 7-14 Knots	3-6 Feet	10 Miles	77° F
ANDROS	Today: NE at 7-14 Knots	1-3 Feet	10 Miles	80° F
CAT ISLAND	Today: ENE at 12-25 Knots	2-4 Feet	10 Miles	80° F
CROOKED ISLAND	Today: E at 8-16 Knots	3-5 Feet	10 Miles	81° F
ELEUTHERA	Today: E at 9-16 Knots	2-4 Feet	10 Miles	80° F
FREEPORT	Today: NE at 7-14 Knots	1-3 Feet	10 Miles	79° F
GREAT EXUMA	Today: ENE at 12-25 Knots	4-6 Feet	8 Miles	79° F
GREAT INAGUA	Today: NE at 12-25 Knots	1-2 Feet	7 Miles	80° F
LONG ISLAND	Today: NE at 10-20 Knots	2-4 Feet	10 Miles	82° F
MAYAGUANA	Today: E at 7-14 Knots	3-5 Feet	10 Miles	81° F
NASSAU	Today: NE at 6-12 Knots	1-2 Feet	10 Miles	79° F
SAN SALVADOR	Today: E at 8-16 Knots	2-4 Feet	10 Miles	81° F
RAGGED ISLAND	Today: E at 15-25 Knots	2-4 Feet	10 Miles	81° F

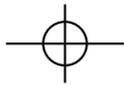
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'Yule Log' makes its debut at Patisserie Tea Room

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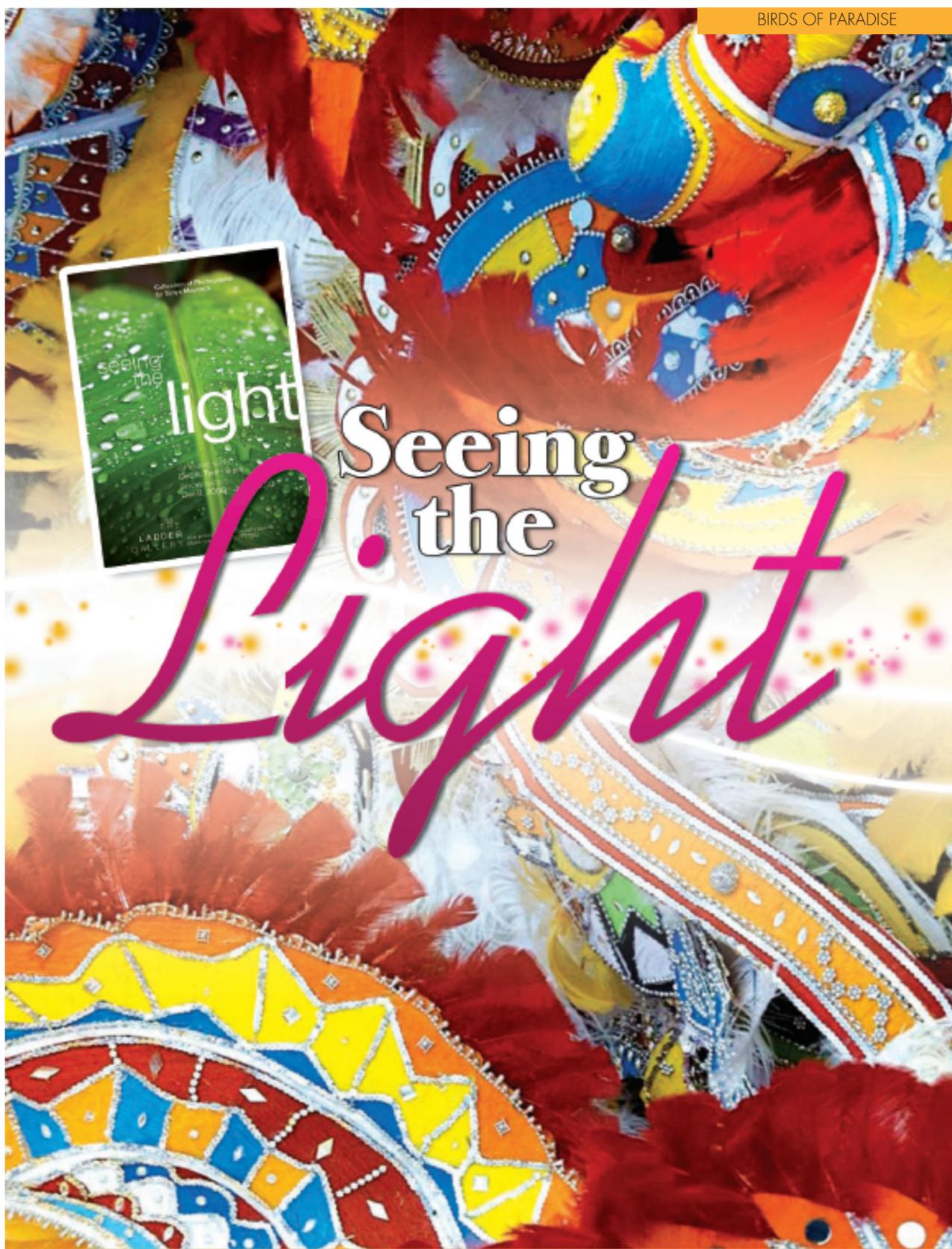
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The Arts

The Tribune SECTION B •

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2009



BIRDS OF PARADISE

By JEFFARAH GIBSON

THE field of photography has significantly changed over the past few years.

With digital cameras and photo editing software being widely available these days, almost everyone who picks up a point-and-shoot fancys themselves a bit of a photographer.

And this trend has become so widespread among the general public that many forget that photography can also be a very demanding art form, requiring study and talent.

But photographer Tanya Maycock wants to change all this. With her first photo exhibition, 'Seeing the Light', she aims to capture the "uncommon of the common" by illustrating the finer aspects of art photography.

The exhibition opened last week with a total of 23 photographs on display at the Ladder Gallery in the New Providence Community Centre.

So far, seven of the photographs have been sold since the official opening.

Ms Maycock's pictures entitled 'The Gathering Storm' and 'The Cure' have garnered the most attention.

Speaking with *Tribune Art*, the photographer spoke about the overall purpose and her hopes for the exhibition. "There a lot of images which are part of the exhibition that capture nature, but the photographs are not stereotypical images that are always seen. I try to capture the uncommon of the common," Ms Maycock said.

Her main goal is make Bahamians more aware of their surroundings.

"We take these things for granted because we are so used to seeing them everyday, and there are people who travel from all around the world who come to our islands and appreciate what we have," she said.

And just as the environment is often taken for granted, so is photography as an art form.

Ms Maycock said that more often than not credit goes to the camera that was used and not the person behind it. Anyone can take a picture, but not everyone can be a photographer, she said.

"It's a cultural thing where we as a people love to take photos. This is a good thing, but people have been under the impression that once you have a good camera you can take a great photo. This is not true, because I have taken very bad pictures with a great camera," she said.

When it comes to great photos, light is to a photographer what paint is to an artist, it is the medium that separates a bad photo from a good photo, and a good photo from a great photo.

"In photography light is the important element. It is not about the equipment or the subject matter, it's about the light. And this light is what draws attention to the subject matter within the picture," she said.

While commercial photography can be a lucrative field, Ms Maycock said she hopes to change the perception that photography is only limited to selling a product.

"Fine art photography is more than selling a product and it speaks to you on a number of levels, and you get to fulfill a creative vision rather than just simply take a picture with no meaningful purpose," she said.

Ms Maycock has been a photographer for 25 years, but she has never had any formal training.

Everything she knows about photography she learned from experience and her photography teachers at Queens College.

Ms Maycock said she wants to inspire young persons to try their hand at photography, whether commercially or artistically.

For persons interested in her work, Ms Maycock's exhibition at the Ladder Gallery runs until January 5.

THE GATHERING STORM

THE CURE

MY HAT

