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INSIGHT

HIV, AIDS AND THE BISHOP

SEE INSIGHT ON PAGE 12B



NFL ACTION: WEEK 13

DOLPHINS DESTROY RAIDERS

SEE SPORTS SECTION E



Mystery over Bay St blaze

Police seeking person spotted near fire site

By AVA TURNQUEST
Tribune Staff Reporters
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INVESTIGATORS have few leads to assist them in their probe of yet another tragic and devastating downtown fire.

Police Commissioner Ellison Greenslade said officers were following a "basic" lead that there may have been someone spotted at the scene during the early morning hours prior to the blaze. However, police are without an identity for the individual, he said.

"Once the alarm was sounded, police officers immediately responded to the scene," Mr Greenslade said.

"In speaking to members of the public they received information which has caused us to look a bit closer to how that fire may have been started."

Three Bay Street structures were gutted by Friday's blaze, which is believed to have got

underway sometime around 2am. Among the razed buildings was the Vendue House, home to the historical Pompey Museum of Slavery and Emancipation, in which priceless books and artifacts were destroyed. The building was considered one of the most historic buildings in New Providence as it dated back to 1769, when it functioned as a slave and goods trading centre.

The tragic loss of vital history was expressed by historians and curators, who said the building served as a critical part of Bahamian identity, heritage and culture.

According to fire services, the fire started at the straw market and then - as a result of the high winds - spread quickly to the surrounding buildings, which housed the museum, SunTime Shop and Da Balcony Night Club.

Last week's fire was said to have affected more than 40

See page 13



FIREFIGHTERS survey the devastation left in the wake of the blaze on Bay Street in the early hours of Friday morning. Photo: Tim Clarke/Tribune Staff

SHAMED BISHOP: 'I'M PRAYING FOR YOU'

IN a message to Pilgrim Baptist Temple, disgraced Bishop Randy Fraser, through a prison visit from his assistant pastor last week, told his congregation that he is praying for them and the leadership of the church, The Tribune has learned.

At the conclusion of the Sunday morning service at the St James Road church, assistant pastor Leroy Major shared with Pilgrim Baptist members a message given to him by Bishop Fraser during a two-hour visit at Her Majesty's Prison last Thursday - two days after the bishop had been convicted in Magistrate's Court of having unlawful sex with a minor.

However, before Pastor Major shared the words of Fraser with more than 100 members of the congregation, he spoke about last week's affect on church members and his feelings before meeting with Fraser on December 1.

He admitted: "I didn't know what to say, I didn't know how to encourage him. But when I saw him, he ended up encouraging me.

"We know," said Pastor Major, "that this last week has been very rough and tough for the members connected to Pilgrim Baptist Temple.

See page 5 MONEYGRAM SECURITY BREACH

By CHESTER ROBARDS
Tribune Senior Reporter
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A MONEYGram agent in the Bahamas may have lost hundreds of thousands of dollars this weekend as a result of its system being hacked, *The Tribune* understands.

Harvey Morris, managing director of MoneyGram, Omni Transfers, explained that the agent's system was likely hacked by someone residing outside of the Bahamas. He said his own system was not directly affected, but did not know which agent's system was.

However, he said the effect of the breach of security was that MoneyGram set a cap of \$400 on wire transfers on all their local agents this weekend until the threat was secured.

"It's the first time I have seen MoneyGram implement such draconian measures,"

See page 11

FORMER CANDIDATE LASHES OUT AT DNA

By DANA SMITH
dsmith@tribunemedia.net

A FORMER DNA candidate has criticised his former party for comments it made about him when giving the reasons for his removal as its candidate for South Beach.

Sammie "Star" Poitier, former DNA South Beach candidate, in a statement made online, said the DNA made comments "with no regard for how this would affect my credibility, my reputation, and of course my family."

See page 9

MORTGAGE COMPANY 'WAS NEAR BANKRUPTCY'

By AVA TURNQUEST
Tribune Staff Reporter
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THE Bahamas Mortgage Corporation was headed to bankruptcy as a result of "reckless lending habits" under the PLP administration, chairman Dr Duane Sands said yesterday.

Dr Sands said that 65 per cent of the corporation's now-delinquent loans were created during the Progressive Liberal Party's five-year tenure and with Senator Shane Gibson at

See page 13

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LOCAL NEWS

Waiting for months to see roads repaired

BY CHESTER ROBARDS
Tribune Senior Reporter
crobarbs@tribunemedia.net

HARBOUR Island residents said they are incensed that their roads have yet to be paved following infrastructural upgrades that have been completed for months.

Chief Counsel for the island Jermaine Johnson said the pitted roads may have contributed to two deaths on the island and a decline in tourist satisfaction.

He explained that a woman died after she fell from the back of a golf cart and hit her head, while traversing Harbour Island's roads.

"It's dampening the tourism industry and it's doing us really bad," Mr Johnson said.

He said Central Government has not yet told him when the roads will be repaired. "I pray (they will be fixed) soon, but there's no concrete answer yet, but I pray it's extremely soon," he explained.

According to Mr Johnson, the community came together to attempt to fill the worst parts of the road with fill they obtained from local companies and old tar that was found at the local government office.

"We just tried to get out and do it ourselves because we can't wait for government to do it because it might take too long," he said.

PLP candidate for North Eleuthera Clay Sweeting said



PITTED ROADS have been blamed for contributing to two deaths on Harbour Island and a decline in tourist satisfaction.

the roads have only gotten worse since October 2010, when the road project began. And he added that the reputation of the island has taken a hit as well.

"Tourists have been making complaints at the tourism office there by the airport in the complaints box and nothing is being done to protect Harbor Island," he said.

"It took the people of harbor island once again to care about the community to try to make the roads smooth, but without central govern-

ment to pave the road it's really not too much they can do. People are getting hurt."

Owner of Hibiscus Landscaping in Harbour Island Peter Higgs insisted that Harbour Island could be one of the top islands in the world once again if the roads are repaired.

"If the government can come and help us out with the roads - that's first," said Mr Higgs

"We had the water fixed, now we have to have the roads fixed."

ONE OF the rutted roads on Harbour Island.

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LOCAL NEWS

PLEA FOR HELP IN MURDER HUNT

POLICE are appealing to members of the public to help them in investigating the murder of a woman whose body was discovered on Friday.

Just after 10am, police received information that a body was found in Blue Water Cay, south of Fox Hill Road.

Police responded and upon arrival found a woman's body in a rocky area.

The woman appeared to be in her late teens or early twenties, and was found fully clothed with injuries to her upper body.

Press liaison officer Sgt Chrissy Skippings stated last week: "At present, police are uncertain of the circumstances surrounding her death."

Police are presently requesting the public's assistance in locating the person(s) responsible for the woman's death, asking anyone who may have any information regarding the incident to contact police.

MAN SHOT IN BOTH ARMS

A ROADSIDE ambush left one man with gunshot injuries in both of his arms.

The victim, 41, of Monastery Park, was driving his truck on Williams Lane off Kemp Road around 6.45pm on Saturday when two men approached his vehicle, attempting to stop him.

The victim sped off, and the suspects opened fire on the fleeing man, injuring him.

He was taken to the hospital where he was treated and discharged.

WOUNDED MAN ARRESTED

A MAN wanted for questioning in a previous matter is in police custody after he was shot and hospitalised.

The man, 19, was walking with two other men, in the area of Florida Court, at around 1:30am on Sunday when he heard gunshots and realized he was shot in his arm. He was taken to hospital where he was treated and discharged.

However, following his discharge, he was taken into police custody on an outstanding Warrant of Arrest.

The other two men were not injured.

BOY, 15, SUSPECT IN STABBING

A 15-YEAR-OLD boy was arrested on Saturday in connection with a stabbing that left a 21-year-old man hospitalised in serious condition.

The victim was reportedly walking on Marlborough Street in the area of West Street around 8pm when two men approached him, robbed him, and subsequently stabbed him.

Shortly afterwards, police found a 15-year-old in possession of the stolen items.

The boy was arrested and remains in police custody for questioning in connection with the armed robbery and stabbing.

The victim remains in the hospital, in serious condition.

GRAND BAHAMA TARGETS LAW BREAKERS WHO DUMP WASTE

FREEPORT - Having just celebrated its fifth anniversary, the Keep Grand Bahama Clean organisation got a major boost when Acting Assistant Commissioner of Police Emrick Seymour again pledged his officers' full support in the fight against environmental crimes.

"Please be assured that we on the Police Force view all offences in the same light," said Mr Seymour. "Whether it's murder, indiscriminate dumping, littering, etc, they are all breaches punishable by law."

The Assistant Commissioner was addressing KGBC members gathered at police headquarters for a special



WASTE left abandoned in Grand Bahama.

monthly meeting.

Along with continuous littering by drivers and pedestrians, environmental officials at The Grand Bahama Port

Authority, Limited (GBPA) have identified what is quickly becoming another vexing problem on the island, that of indiscriminate dumping.

"People are dumping anything from refrigerators to other appliances, furniture, roofing materials, sheetrock, you name it. These are some of the items that are being dumped everyday unfortunately, in some of the remotest areas on the island," said Nakira Wilchcombe, environmental manager of GBPA and KGBC chairperson.

She added that along with health hazards, the practice is demeaning to the country. "Even visitors travelling over our airspace can see the debris from the air, so it's definitely something that shouldn't be synonymous with Grand Bahama."

Gun recovered after man hospitalised in shooting

By DENISE MAYCOCK Tribune Freeport Reporter dmaycock@tribunemedia.net

FREEPORT - Grand Bahama Police recovered a firearm in a shooting over the weekend that has left a 26-year-old man hospitalised with injuries to the upper right arm.

According to reports, the shooting incident occurred sometime around 4.56am on Saturday in the area of East Sunrise Highway.

Asst Supt Loretta Mackey reported

that officers from the Mobile Patrol Unit were at the scene of a traffic accident on Coral Road in the vicinity of the Independence Park when they heard what appeared to be gunshots.

She said officers went to Candy's Cabana where they observed gunshots to the right rear passenger window of a Nissan Altima car.

A male resident of Lucaya, an occupant of the vehicle, had been shot in the upper right arm.

He was transported to the Rand Memorial Hospital for medical atten-

tion. His condition is not known.

While officers were conducting investigations at the scene, a man was observed running away from the area.

An officer gave chase, but was unsuccessful in capturing the suspect. Police, however, recovered a black .40 Glock pistol in the area.

Ms Mackey said investigations are continuing into the matter. Anyone with information that can assist the police is asked to call 350-3107/8, 352-9774/5 or 911.

POLICE LAUNCH SEARCH FOR MISSING ABACO TEENAGER

POLICE are currently investigating the disappearance of an Abaco teen.

Renade Oradin, 19, of Bahamas Coral Island, Central Abaco, was last seen around 3pm on Friday at Central Abaco High School.

Renade is described as being of dark brown complexion, small build, and standing at 4'9" tall.

She was last seen wearing a blue skirt, white blouse, blue jean jacket, black shoes, and white socks.

Anyone with information

as to the whereabouts of Renade is asked to contact police at 911, 919, or the Marsh Harbour Police at 367-2560 or 367-3437.

Also, two sisters reported missing last Thursday have been located.

Christina Austin Brown, 14, and Shaniece Austin Brown, 12, both of Wright's Lane, were located around 10.15am on Johnson Road on Saturday.

According to police, the sisters were found "in good health".



RENANDE ORADIN, who was last seen at about 3pm on Friday at Central Abaco High School.

13 ARRESTS OVER FIREARMS FIND

THIRTEEN men were taken into police custody over the weekend in connection with three separate incidents of firearm possession.

Last Thursday, around 6.30pm, officers of the Central Detective Unit arrested a man after he was found with a handgun and ammunition.

The man, 21, of Hope Gardens, was found and arrested at Prince Street, Nassau Village.

Around 9:20pm Friday, officers of Rapid Strike were on patrol in the area of Market and Wilson Streets when they noticed a group of 11

men "acting suspiciously."

The officers conducted a search of the surrounding area where the men were, and discovered a handgun and ammunition.

As a result, all of the men were taken into custody.

Later around 10.30pm that same day, Rapid Strike officers arrested a man after a search of his residence revealed a firearm and ammunition.

The 28-year-old man of Rupert Dean Lane was found to be in possession of a high-powered weapon and a large quantity of ammunition.

POLICE SEEK STOLEN VEHICLES

THE police need the public's assistance in locating the following vehicles:

The first, a white 2001 Vol-

vo, plate No. 33315 was stolen from the parking lot of Jerry's Sports Bar on Cedar Street, on Wednesday, November 9.

The second, a Blue 2006 Ford Explorer plate No. 40400, was taken during an armed robbery that occurred sometime around 11:54pm Friday, November 25, on Princess Lane near the Perfume Factory.

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WOMAN LEFT HOMELESS BY HOUSE FIRE

By DENISE MAYCOCK Tribune Freeport Reporter dmaycock@tribunemedia.net

FREEPORT - An elderly woman is homeless following a house fire in Lucaya early Friday morning.

Fire officials went to a home at Amelia Place off Albacore Drive, where a single-story structure was ablaze.

Asst Supt Loretta Mackey, press liaison officer, reported that firemen received the call shortly before 2am.

She said officers discovered the house completely engulfed in flames when they arrived at the scene.

The occupants were able to escape unharmed.

According to reports, a 71-year-old woman was at home with a friend at about 1.28am when they saw smoke coming from the back of the house.

They were able to escape and get help.

The flames were extinguished, but the building and its contents were completely destroyed.

ASP Mackey reported that the damage is estimated at around \$270,000.

The cause of the fire is not known and police are continuing their investigations into the incident.

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ARTHURS CHRISTMAS	A	1:10	3:35	N/A	6:00	8:30	10:35
THE TWILIGHT SAGA	T	1:00	3:25	N/A	6:15	8:25	10:50
HAPPY FEET 2	A	1:15	3:45	N/A	6:00	8:40	10:40
IMMORTALS	C	1:00	3:25	N/A	6:10	8:25	10:40
JACK AND JILL	T	1:00	3:40	N/A	6:05	8:35	10:50
TOWER HEIST	T	1:05	3:25	N/A	6:05	8:30	10:45
IN TIME	T	1:15	3:30	N/A	6:15	8:25	10:40
PUSS IN BOOTS	B	1:15	3:40	N/A	7:00	8:40	10:35
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ARTHURS CHRISTMAS	A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6:10	8:30	N/A
THE TWILIGHT SAGA	T	1:05	3:30	N/A	6:05	8:25	10:50
HAPPY FEET 2	A	1:20	3:35	N/A	6:10	8:35	10:40
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Global emissions jump to new high

GLOBAL emissions of carbon dioxide from fossil-fuel burning jumped by the largest amount on record last year, upending the notion that the brief decline during the recession might persist through the recovery.

Emissions rose 5.9 per cent in 2010, according to an analysis released Sunday by the Global Carbon Project, an international collaboration of scientists tracking the numbers. Scientists with the group said the increase, a half-billion extra tons of carbon pumped into the air, was almost certainly the largest absolute jump in any year since the Industrial Revolution, and the largest percentage increase since 2003.

The increase solidified a trend of ever-rising emissions that scientists fear will make it difficult, if not impossible, to forestall severe climate change in coming decades.

The researchers said the high growth rate reflected a bounce-back from the 1.4 per cent drop in emissions in 2009, the year the recession had its biggest impact.

They do not expect the extraordinary growth to persist but do expect emissions to return to something closer to the 3 per cent growth of the last decade, still a worrisome figure that signifies little progress in limiting greenhouse gases. The growth rate in the 1990s was closer to 1 per cent.

The combustion of coal represented more than half of the growth in emissions, the report found.

In the United States, emissions dropped by a remarkable 7 per cent in the recession year of 2009, but rose by just over 4 per cent last year, the new analysis shows. This country is the world's second-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, pumping 1.5 billion tons of carbon into the atmosphere last year.

The United States was surpassed several years ago by China, where emissions grew 10.4 per cent in 2010, with that country injecting 2.2 billion tons of carbon into the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide emissions are usually measured by the weight of carbon they contain.

The new figures come as delegates from 191 countries meet in Durban, South Africa, for yet another negotiating session in a global control effort that has been going on, with minimal success, for the better part of two decades.

"Each year that emissions go up, there's another year of negotiations, another year of indecision," said Glen P Peters, a researcher at the Centre for International Climate and Environmen-

tal Research in Oslo and a leader of the group that produced the new analysis. "There's no evidence that this trajectory we've been following the last 10 years is going to change."

Scientists say the rapid growth of emissions is warming the Earth, threatening the ecology and putting human welfare at long-term risk. But their increasingly urgent pleas that society find a way to limit emissions have met sharp political resistance in many countries, including the United States, because doing so would entail higher energy costs.

The new figures show a continuation of a trend in which developing countries, including China and India, have surpassed the wealthy countries in their overall greenhouse emissions. In 2010, the combustion of fossil fuels and the production of cement sent more than 9 billion tons of carbon into the atmosphere, the new analysis found, with 57 per cent of that coming from developing countries.

Emissions per person, though, are still sharply higher in the wealthy countries, and they have been emitting greenhouse gases far longer, so they account for the bulk of the excess gases in the atmosphere. The level of carbon dioxide, the main such gas, has increased 40 per cent since the Industrial Revolution.

On the surface, the figures of recent years suggest that wealthy countries have made headway in stabilizing their emissions. But Peters pointed out that in a sense, the rich countries have simply exported some of them.

The fast rise in developing countries has been caused to a large extent by the growth of energy-intensive manufacturing industries that make goods that rich countries import.

"All that has changed is the location in which the emissions are being produced," Peters said.

Many countries, as part of their response to the economic crisis, invested billions in programmes designed to make their energy systems greener. While it is possible those will pay long-term dividends, the new numbers suggest they have had little effect so far.

The financial crisis "was an opportunity to move the global economy away from a high-emissions trajectory," said a scientific paper about the new figures, released online on Sunday by the journal Nature Climate Change. "Our results provide no indication of this happening."

by Justin Gillis, New York Times

DNA falling apart at the seams

EDITOR, The Tribune.

I would like to comment on a very interesting article which appeared in the November 30th edition of The Freeport News. The article, which made the front page of the daily, was about the Democratic National Alliance (DNA) candidate for the Constituency of High Rock, Philip Thomas.

According to the article, Thomas will no longer be running for the DNA party in High Rock. In my view, this is the last thing that the DNA needs right now. Just when Bamboo Town Member of Parliament and Leader of the DNA Branville McCartney thought things couldn't get any worse for his new party, it has.

I am referring, of course, to the recent spate of nomination withdrawals and outright resignations from the DNA party.

I understand that the DNA candidate for the Constituency of South Beach, Sammie "Starr" Poirier, has also abandoned the party.

Furthermore, there are news reports on an Internet daily that the DNA candidate for the Constituency of Pineridge, Osman Johnson, has resigned from the party, too. The same Internet daily is reporting that another candidate will be leaving the party.

With respect to the alleged resignation of Osman Johnson from the DNA, I would like to know why he has left the party.

There are rumours that he had left the party because of the lack of support from the leadership.

If this story is indeed true, then the party will have to find replacements for Thomas and Johnson.

An election has to be called on or before May 2, 2012. This means that the DNA has at least five months in order to find two new candidates.

What amazes me about the DNA is the fact that the party hasn't even been in existence for one year, yet it has more twists and turns than William Shakespeare's Othello.

The leadership of the DNA party continues to project an image of solidarity and unity among its party supporters and candidates in the Press,

LETTERS

letters@tribunemedia.net

yet behind closed doors the party appears to be falling apart at the seams. I don't think any objective Bahamian would deny that the DNA party is facing a serious problem.

Again, if it is true that Johnson has resigned from McCartney's party, then that makes him the second DNA candidate from Grand Bahama who will not be running in 2012 for the party.

As was mentioned already, the nomination of Philip Thomas has been withdrawn by the DNA party.

According to Thomas, he was sacked for a simple disagreement he had with McCartney over whether or not a new hospital could be built in Grand Bahama. McCartney said no.

Thomas, on the other hand, argued that "we (a DNA government) could align ourselves with Ross University or we could align ourselves with anybody from the private sector if need be, but it's a priority we really need a hospital on Grand Bahama".

Apparently, no one is allowed to disagree with McCartney in the DNA.

The former DNA candidate even went as far as alleging that McCartney is an authoritarian leader and that he is worse than Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham.

Quite frankly, I am taken aback that Thomas was sacked by the party over such a trivial matter. Even more alarming is the claim made by Thomas that a lot of the DNA candidates believe that McCartney has all the answers.

If this startling claim is true, then it appears as if the DNA is rapidly degenerating into a cult with McCartney as its demigod.

Furthermore, Thomas griped over the fact that DNA party members came to Grand Bahama to meet with Port Authority officials, but did not invite any of the local candidates to the meeting. Thomas viewed this as a slight to the candidates on the island.

That McCartney would dis his party's candidates isn't my main concern, however.

What I am concerned about is the fact that the party would withdraw the nomination of a candidate for simply voicing an opinion which differed from McCartney's.

What Thomas told the Press about the DNA leader should cause the hair on the back of every Bahamian's neck to stand up.

If McCartney is already showing signs that he is a dictator and that he is ruthlessly opposed to anyone who has a divergent view from his within the DNA party, what would he do as prime minister if an opposition supporter openly disagrees with him?

If McCartney and the leadership team of the DNA could treat a candidate like Philip Thomas in such a shoddy fashion, what would he do to his political detractors if his party wins the next general election?

Good leaders take suggestions from their followers. When a leader reaches a point in his life when he rejects the good advice of the persons around him, then that leader is treading on dangerous soil. It is very dangerous when you become unteachable.

That the members of McCartney's party would even call themselves the "Democratic" National Alliance is really a misnomer.

Judging from what the former High Rock candidate said to the Press, the leaders of the DNA wouldn't recognise true democracy if it were to roll over them in a Mack truck.

Many of the supporters of the DNA claimed to have left the FNM because of Ingraham's dictatorial behaviour, yet it appears as if McCartney is no different from the prime minister.

If Thomas is telling the truth about McCartney, then the many former FNMs who had joined the DNA might as well go back to the governing party.

At least the FNM has proven that it can win elections in this country.

On the other hand, the DNA party has proven nothing so far. The DNA has yet to contest a single seat in an election, yet there are already numerous defections from the party.

The Bahamian electorate should monitor McCartney's party more closely before they decide to cast their ballots for his candidates.

I am very concerned about what I am hearing in the Press, particularly the incident with Philip Thomas.

KEVIN EVANS
Freeport,
Grand Bahama.
December 1, 2011.

Do Not Sue the Brethren 1 Corinthians 6:1-11

Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers! Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren! Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

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PLP criticises boundary changes

By DANA SMITH
dsmith@tribunemedia.net

THE PLP has criticised the recent boundaries change and has called on Bahamians to "fire" the FNM Government.

At a Bamboo Town rally held at South Beach Shopping Centre on Saturday, PLP Deputy Leader Philip Davis described the period under the FNM as a "long nightmare".

He also stated that the government "cannot justify" the reduction in House seats to 38.

"Like people all across the length and breadth of the Bahamas, we are counting down the few weeks ahead of us before this bad, wutless,

outgoing FNM government is voted out of power," Mr Davis said.

The audience was encouraged to register to vote so that they could vote against the current, "callous and insensitive" FNM government.

"It is time to vote them out," Mr Davis said. "It is time for the bell to ring. It is time to fire this FNM government."

He criticised the recent boundaries change, questioning if the Constituencies Commission report is fair to voters and "conforms to constitutional norms".

"The PLP's position on this has to do not with what is fair to politicians, but with what is fair to the voters of the country," Mr Davis said.

"It means that you cannot simply have a more or less equal distribution of electors in a seat and then say that this brings about a fair result. That is clearly and blatantly wrong. The government cannot justify reducing the number of seats to 38."

He continued: "We in the PLP accept that the constituencies have to be more or less equal, but we say that one must have regard for the status quo, the existing electors and constituencies, and the ability of voters to make a judgment on the individual or party who has served them in the preceding years," Mr Davis said. "When you eliminate that possibility, there is an unfair result."

SHAMED BISHOP: 'I'M PRAYING FOR YOU'

from page one

"I want to let you guys know that we are a great church, and without contradiction by the grace of God, I am here because of Pilgrim Baptist Temple Church," he said before reading the bishop's note.

The clergyman read the note which contained the words, some paraphrased, of Fraser: "He is in good health. He is in good spirit. He says that he is constantly praying for the leadership and is constantly praying for the membership."

Fraser went onto say that his current experience behind bars felt similar to Joseph's experience in the Bible, adding: "Pastor Major, I know God gets this. I know God gets this. This too shall pass and tell Pilgrim, their struggle is over."

He asked his congregation not to treat this present situation "as a defeat," but "treat it as a part of the process."

Pastor Major also took this message to his congregation



RANDY FRASER, convicted of having unlawful sex with a 16-year-old girl.

from their imprisoned leader: "Tell Pilgrim, let the law and the Lord have its way. No rowing. No fighting. Let the Lord have His way."

With regards to the leadership of the church, Pastor Major said Fraser suggested the church leaders "decide

what steps should be taken going forward."

The assistant pastor said Pilgrim Baptist leaders have decided to wait three months before deciding the future of the church.

The three months, Major said, are to allow the church to heal from this ordeal.

Fraser, 54, was found guilty last Tuesday of having unlawful sexual relations with a 16-year-old girl between July 2005 and February 2006. Prosecutors argued the minister abused his position of trust by having sexual relations with a girl he had agreed to counsel.

He was originally charged with the offence in the summer of 2006, but freed a year later. A retrial started in 2008.

After several delays, Deputy Chief Magistrate Carolita Bethell handed down the "guilty" verdict.

Fraser's defence attorney Jiam Mangra informed the magistrate that he intended to appeal the ruling and sentencing, and have the execution of the sentence at the prison stayed.

ABUSE OF CHILDREN 'PROBLEM IN SOCIETY'

THE abuse of children by church leaders, teachers and parents who take part in youth programmes is a problem in the Bahamas, and reflective of a deep problem in society, according to Dr Sandra Dean Patterson, the director of the Bahamas Crisis Centre.

Speaking to *The Tribune* in the aftermath of the verdict involving Bishop Randy Fraser

who was found guilty of having sexual intercourse with a minor on Tuesday, Dr. Patterson said that "people need to be aware when they go seeking special services that there are people they trust that pose threats to them".

Dr Sandra Dean-Patterson opened the Crisis Centre in 1982.

The non-profit organisation

provides services to people who are victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

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LOCAL NEWS



FROM LEFT, Dana Jea, Political Officer, US Embassy; Davis Hawn, US speaker; Tony Eames, U.S. speaker; Sheila Culmer, President, BNCD and Ernst Rumer, Honorary Consul for Austria.

Week of activities to support disabled

THIS week is the annual Disability Awareness Week.

On December 2, the Bahamas National Council for Disability launched activities in observance of the week with a one-day forum focused on "Independent Living and Legislation for All".

The theme for the week of activities is "Differently Able" with the focus of raising awareness of disability issues, addressing the fundamental rights of persons with disabilities, and the integration of the disabled into the social, political, economic and cultural areas of society.

The week of activities is in support of the "International Day of Persons with Disabilities", which is celebrated internationally on December 3, 2011.

"There also remains the global challenge in many countries to combat prejudice against disabled people who often face discrimination in the form of social exclusion, violence, discrimination in employment, lack of access to public facilities, discrimination in education and women with disabilities are at particular risk for sexual and gender-based violence."

Dana Jea, US Embassy political officer

In addressing the opening session, the US Embassy's political officer, Dana Jea, noted that while global progress has been made in recent years in advancing the rights of persons living with disabilities, there is much more to be done to ensure full inclusion, both in The Bahamas and in the

United States.

"There also remains the global challenge in many countries to combat prejudice against disabled people who often face discrimination in the form of social exclusion, violence, discrimination in employment, lack of access to public facilities, discrimination in education

and women with disabilities are at particular risk for sexual and gender-based violence," she said.

The conference facilitator, Tony Eames, of California, who is totally blind, gave an informative lecture about advancing the rights of people living with disabilities and some of continuing challenges they face in their everyday lives.

She also provided insights on the role of service and guide dogs in providing independent mobility to the disabled.

Friday's conference also addressed education, employment, housing and transportation challenges faced by the disabled community.

For more information about the work of the BNCD, visit www.bncd.org.

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Tribune Trivia

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How many points did Paul de Souza end up with to claim victory in the Gold Fleet division of Optimist Fall Regatta??

Friday's Answer

10 POINTS

Friday's Winners

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Donnalee Rolle	2pts
Tishrea Grey	1pt

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LOCAL NEWS

EXTRA HOMES AT LOW PRICE

By DENISE MAYCOCK
Tribune Freeport Reporter
dmaycock@tribunemedia.net

FREETOWN – The government is actively pursuing development of an additional 100 low-income housing lots at a Freeport subdivision, Minister of Housing Kenneth Russell announced.

He said notice has been given to the Grand Bahama Port Authority of acquiring some more lots in the Heritage Subdivision at a cost of \$1 million.

Mr Russell said the government continues to place much emphasis on housing in Grand Bahama, having spent just under \$8 million over the past two and a half years developing six subdivisions on the island.

On Thursday, the first phase of the new Wellington Pinder Heights Subdivision was officially opened. Some 58 homes completed the first phase and ground was broken on the second phase, which will comprise around 50 homes.

During his address, Minister Russell also noted that some 80 lots are available for sale at the new Freetown subdivision in East Grand Bahama.

Work on a park for the subdivision will start before Christmas, however, he noted that the ministry will not build any houses unless people come forward to buy the land or get funding for the land and housing.

The same, he said, applies for the High Rock and McCleans Town subdivisions.

“We will not go to East End and build a bunch of houses...without having persons come and pre-qualify.”

“We did that in West End and some of the houses sat for 10 years before they were occupied. It is a waste of money for houses to be sitting around for 10 years,” said Mr Russell.

He noted that persons with Crown Land can present their deeds to the property and the government will build the house for them once they qualify for a mortgage.

Mr Russell said the Ministry of Housing is also planning to develop waterfront lots at McCleans Town and at Pine Forest in Eight Mile Rock.

He explained that the status of the subdivision in Eight Mile Rock would be raised tremendously.

While pointing out that the Ministry of Housing has achieved much success, the minister has admitted that all

has not been “rosy” for the housing programme in Grand Bahama, Nassau, and to a lesser extent in Abaco.

According to Mr Russell, the ministry has been required to repair 60 houses in the Heritage, Sunset, East Coral Estates, Forbisher Circle, Pine Forest and the West Height Subdivisions.

“We want to urge builders to be competent and take pride in their workmanship. We have learned much from the past and we have now in place new measures designed to mitigate against poor construction and the resulting drain on the public purse,” Mr Russell said.

He noted that testing in various stages of construction have been implemented, inspections of plumbing and electrical, and modifications have been made to house plans to mitigate problems that have developed in the past.

Mr Russell said his ministry has also joined forces with the Ministry of Environmental Health to reduce termite infestation in new houses.

“I am pleased to say the results we’ve gotten so far from the testing we put in place are working beyond our expectation,” he said.

Mr Russell said the houses in West Heights, Pride Estates, the second phase of Dignity Subdivision, and the new Sunset subdivision in Nassau are among the best ever houses built by the government.

“There is no sense having citizens purchase a house which is in need of major repairs after one year and causing the government to spend \$40,000 to \$60,000 in repairs,” he said.

Mr Russell called on qualified builders not registered at the Ministry of Housing to register.

“Builders who are interested in moving forward with us must be an approved builder under the Ministry of Housing list. You must become a Housing registered builder because we cannot contract you unless you register with us at Housing,” he said.

While there is room for improvement, Mr Russell said the ministry is in a good place with respect to the housing programme.

“As long as I sit in this chair as Minister of Housing, I will continue to ensure that Grand Bahama gets its share because Grand Bahama has suffered much over the past 10 years as a result of the economic downturn, and we have to do what we can to keep people working,” he said.



MEMBERS of the Inter-Ministerial committee appointed to review the United States Government’s 2011 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report on The Bahamas. Shown seated third from left is Carl Smith, permanent secretary; Missouri Sherman-Peters, consultant in the Ministry of National Security, Vinette Graham Allen, director of Public Prosecutions, Franklyn Williams, deputy director of Public Prosecutions. Photo: Letisha Henderson/BIS.

Committee aims to tackle trafficking

By KATHRYN CAMPBELL
Bahamas Information Services

THE Inter-Ministerial committee appointed to review the United States Government’s 2011 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report on The Bahamas and to make recommendations on these matters to Cabinet held its inaugural meeting Wednesday.

The committee is made up of senior officials of ministries and agencies concerned with trafficking in persons, many of whom have been following such matters in regional and international forums.

The committee includes representatives of the Ministries of National Security, Foreign Affairs, Office of the Attorney General, Health, Labour and Social Development, Finance, the Royal

Bahamas Police and Defence Forces and the Department of Immigration.

According to the US Department of State’s website, the objective of the report is to raise global awareness regarding trafficking in persons, to spur countries to take effective action to counter this trafficking and to give guidance to governments to understand what is required to fight trafficking in persons.

A release from the Ministry of National Security states that in producing the report the United States Government seeks to encourage compliance with obligations arising from the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime.

The Bahamas was ranked as Tier 2

Watch List. The report uses a three Tier system to rank the efforts of countries worldwide, including those of the United States in countering trafficking in persons. The release states that this ranking is given to countries not fully in step with the minimum standards outlined in the United States Government’s 2000 Trafficking Victims Protection Act, as amended, but that are making significant efforts to do so.

To carry out its mandate, the committee will hold consultations with Bahamian non-governmental organisations concerned with issues of trafficking in persons.

The committee will report to Cabinet ahead of the February interim assessment report to the United States Congress and preparation for the 2012 Report.

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LOCAL NEWS



THE SIGN to the Wellington Pinder Heights Subdivision is unveiled.



BREAKING GROUND at the new Wellington Pinder Heights Subdivision.

Photos: Vandyke Hepburn

Latest housing division opened

By DENISE MAYCOCK
Tribune Freeport Reporter
dmaycock@tribunemedia.net

FREEPORT – The first phase of the Wellington Pinder Heights Subdivision was officially opened on Thursday by Minister of Housing Kenneth Russell, who unveiled plans for a complete \$21 million, four-phase housing development in Hawksbill.

The first phase is comprised of 60 houses, and infrastructure work has already started on the second phase where an additional 50 houses will be built.

Mr Russell said the new subdivision in Hawksbill was named in honour of the late Rev Dr Wellington Pinder for his outstanding contributions to the community of Grand Bahama.

The wife and son of Rev Pinder, Valurine Pinder and Rev Peter Pinder, unveiled the sign for the new subdivision.

“We want to thank all of Reverend Pinder’s family for



MINISTER OF HOUSING Kenneth Russell speaking at the official opening of the Wellington Pinder Heights Subdivision.

coming here. This is an historic day because if you look at the history of Rev Wellington Pinder, you will know that he is a man deserving of this recognition,” Mr Russell said.

He said WPH Subdivision will be further developed to include phases three and four.

Mr Russell said a good deal of the land has already been

paid for, with future plans for various amenities, including land set aside for a shopping plaza, playground and pre-school.

“The government would have invested just around \$21 million in the development of WPH subdivision,” he said.

The minister said the complete subdivision will include 200-300 houses, and will provide business opportunities for persons interested in building a shopping plaza or pre-school.

“When completed there will be almost 300 homes, so a pre-school will do wonderful here and also cater to residents of Pinder’s Point and Lewis Yard,” he added.

“Today is a very important one for both homeowners and contractors. This is indeed among one of the finest subdivisions ever developed by the Ministry of Housing, and it is a tangible recognition of the government’s acknowledgment of the outstanding contribution made by Rev

Wellington Pinder,” Mr Russell said.

According to Mr Russell, the government has spent just under \$8 million over the past two and a half years completing repairs and developing six subdivisions on the island.

The subdivisions are: East Coral Estates, Pine Coral Estates, Forbisher Circle, West Heights, Heritage, Sunset, and Wellington Pinder Heights.

Mr Russell also noted that the ministry is embarking on another ambitious housing programme.

“The MOH continues to place much emphasis on Grand Bahama,” he said.

“This is demonstrated by the fact we have placed in-house value of just under \$33 million on works now being planned for the island, which includes all of the six subdivisions.

“We are cognisant of the economic challenges facing the people of Grand Bahama and it is for this reason my ministry sees its role as being a dual one.

“We realise we are not only required to assist persons in realising the dream of home ownership, but to stimulate the local construction industry by providing jobs for builders, artisans, and other persons who rely on the construction industry.

“We have sought expeditiously to proceed with development of the WPH Subdivision, and our aim has been to move through four phases for this subdivision.”

Mr Russell said he expects to meet with the Grand Bahama Port Authority to discuss infrastructural work on other two phases. “so we can put more contractors to work.”

“I feel the pain of Grand Bahamians who are not working. And whatever the MOH can do to ease that pain, we will do,” he said.

Mr Russell said he believes the subdivision’s name is a fitting tribute to Wellington Pinder.

“The government could not have chosen a more worthy individual to serve as this subdivision’s namesake,” he said.

He described Rev Pinder as a respected man of God, who served as moderator for the Zion Churches in Grand Bahama.

He was also honorary president of Grand Bahama Christian Council, member of local Board of Works for many years, member of the Independence Committee, and an officer in Grand Order of Fellows Lodge.

He was also a Justice of the Peace.

Mr Russell also acknowledged David Jordine, deputy chairman of the Bahamas Mortgage Corporation, the financing agent for most of the homes in Wellington Pinder Heights.

He commended Mr Arthur Jones, vice president of building and development at the GBPA, for ensuring that the houses were built to good standards.

Rev Arnold Pinder Jr, president of the Grand Bahama Christian Council, blessed the houses.

WPH was built by the government following devastation caused by Hurricane Wilma in Mack Town, Hunters, Lewis Yard, and Pinder’s Point, to provide relocation for residents in those vulnerable settlements on the southern shoreline.

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LOCAL NEWS

from page one

Last Wednesday, DNA leader Branville McCartney explained the ousting of Mr Poitier, stating: "There are certain requirements that we expect of each candidate in each constituency, certain procedures and policies we have implemented for the better representation of each con-

stituency, and when candidates don't comply with those procedures and policies, we have to look and see what is best for the constituency. In this case, many things were not complied with over the last six months and we had no other choice than to revoke (Mr Poitier's) candidacy."

Mr McCartney claimed Mr Poitier failed to complete the

FORMER CANDIDATE LASHES OUT AT DNA

required monthly reports for his constituency, failed to compile assessment data of people within his constituency, and was absent from party initiatives.

Mr Poitier has denied all the allegations.

"They inferred that I was not prepared to participate in

the electoral process at this time," he said. "This is fictitious; and it is blatantly false."

"There were a number of DNA representatives that stated on many occasions that my team and I did not perform well, and that I, in particular, was inefficient as a candidate," Mr Poitier said.

"They also said that I did not deliver reports required by the party, started no community programmes, did little to no work on the ground and that for these reasons, among others, that I was not fit to be a candidate and therefore released. Contrary to those assertions, all of the aforesaid requirements were met."

Mark Humes, chairman of

the DNA, refused to comment on Mr Poitier's statements, only offering that it's "unfortunate" that Mr Poitier feels slighted.

"We are on a serious mission right now and this mission is not for everyone," Mr Humes said. "It is for those people who are ready to take on the job, and the job is not an easy one."



BARRY RASSIN, Rotary International Director 2006-2008, addresses an audience at the UN Headquarters. (Photo: Rotary International)

Help for Haiti earthquake victims

BAHAMIAN Rotarian Barry Rassin recently addressed more than a thousand Rotarians and other guests at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City.

Mr Rassin described to the audience how tens of thousands of earthquake victims in Haiti have had some semblance of normalcy restored to their lives thanks to the efforts of Rotary and the kindness of corporate and private citizens of 60 countries.

The Rotarians and others in The Bahamas put our country as the second highest contributing nation out of the 60.

Speaking at the Rotary-UN Day earlier this month, Mr Rassin discussed how the work in Haiti is helping prevent and treat disease, combat cholera, help with peace and conflict resolution, provide maternal and child healthcare, ensure citizens have access to potable water and sanitation, provide basic education and literacy and generate economic and community development.

To date, more than 2,000

people have been immunised, and biomedical repairs are being conducted at four hospitals in Haiti.

Midwives have been trained, nearly 30,000 children have received basic education, 36 schools have been built or are under con-

struction, three bridges have been built and 150 wells have been created as well as a 200,000 gallon water reservoir.

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LOCAL NEWS



AN Elva Mk 2 rips around the Arawak Cay track yesterday.

Photo: Tim Clarke/Tribune Staff



MINISTER OF YOUTH, Sports and Culture Charles Maynard, fifth from left, and Minister of Tourism and Aviation Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace, to his right, are flanked by organisers and sponsors of Bahamas Speed Week Revival. EFG is represented by managing director Ludovic Chechin-Laurans, 2nd row, far left.

SPEED WEEK LIKELY TO RETURN AFTER DEBUT SUCCESS

THE first Bahamas Speed Week Revival has proven to be a success, say organisers - with the promise that it can return both bigger and better.

As events drew to a close yesterday, UK organiser David McLaughlin revealed that talks were already well advanced about a follow-up, with plans being drawn up to create a racetrack on the area of Arawak Cay currently occupied by containers.

Mr McLaughlin praised the government for its support throughout the build-up to Speed Week and the event itself, saying that organisers had all the help they could have wished for. He also praised the event's sponsors.

"We have been so fortunate getting great sponsors for Bahamas Speed Week Revival," he said. "But I really want to single out EFG International because it was EFG that gave us the push we needed when we first started talking about this. They started the engine revving."

For private bank EFG, it was natural. The company has a long association with classic cars, and is one of the two main sponsors of the Le Man Classic.

"A number of our clients have a passion for cars in terms of driving, collecting and racing and we are involved in supporting a variety of historic motoring events," said a company statement.

Ludovic Chechin-Laurans, managing director of EFG Bank & Trust (Bahamas) Ltd, was born inches from the Le Mans track in France, his first recollection of sound the purr of an engine, his first car a classic followed by sports and racing Porsches and other exotics.

Mr Chechin-Laurans, who used to live in Nassau, was working in Luxembourg when he first heard about the revival of Nassau Speed Week, a highlight of the social calendar from 1954-1966.

He said: "As the private bank for historic motor racing, EFG International is proud to have helped make the revival of Bahamas Speed Week a reality. It has been a pleasure working with such enthusiastic individuals and I am convinced the event will be a great success, in car terms and for the Bahamas."

In preparation for Speed Week, vendors on Arawak Cay have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on upgrades.

Roads have been paved. Foreign entrants stayed at luxury hotels and on mega-yachts at Atlantis Marina. A slew of foreign media came from France, the UK, Canada and the US.

"The beauty of this," said Jimmie Lowe, the hands-on president of Bahamas Speed Week, "is that it affords every Bahamian an opportunity to see these amazing classic and vintage racing cars up close, to talk to the drivers and to experience this in a more personal way than they can anywhere else in the world."

"At the same time, it is an opportunity to showcase the Bahamas. If you look around, it feels like the whole island is getting dressed up for the party."

There was also an impressive list of Bahamian entries, and organisers hope future events will draw even more entrants from around the world.

• For more, see business B1



ACTION ON Arawak Cay yesterday. Photo: Tim Clarke/Tribune Staff

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LOCAL NEWS



TAKING THE chequered flag at Arawak Cay. Photo: **Stephen Hunt/Tribune Staff**



A MODEL poses for a calendar shoot during a break in action at Bahamas Speed Week Revival. Photo: **Stephen Hunt/Tribune Staff**



BEAUTIFUL CARS in a beautiful setting during the final day of the Bahamas Speed Week Revival. Photo: **Stephen Hunt/Tribune Staff**



FULL SPEED AHEAD for one of the racers at Arawak Cay track yesterday. Photo: **Tim Clarke/Tribune Staff**

MONEYGRAM SECURITY BREACH
from page one

said Mr Morris.
 "So it is evident that something went drastically wrong for them to have done that."
 While Mr Morris said he could not say exactly how much money might have been involved in the scam, one source said the loss could have been in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.
 Mr Morris contended: "It must have been pretty severe."
 He explained that Bank of the Bahamas and Cash 'N Go are also Money Gram agents.
 "One of the agents, not our office, had a problem which resulted in MoneyGram having to take some action and change limits able to be sent from the Bahamas," he said.
 According to Mr Morris, the hackers likely used the agent's system to send false money transfers that would be charged to the agent.
 He said this weekend was not the first time individuals have attempted to hack into their system. However, he explained that he was surprised that someone was successful.
 "I'm a bit surprised to see that this has taken place," said Mr Morris.
 "There have been various attempts to get into the system and this has happened for years.
 "We've been in the business for six years and seen several attempts like this."
 He revealed that MoneyGram sends its agents regular fraud alerts in order to curtail any attempt on its systems.
 One source claimed that "fraudsters have been calling Moneygram agents in the Bahamas claiming to be officers of MG International and directing them to bogus websites that look identical to the MG website. The agents are then directed to download software which compromises their system."

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LOCAL NEWS

Guyana crisis follows election

By SIR RONALD SANDERS

NOVEMBER 28 general elections in Guyana have resulted in a crisis for the country.

While it is being suggested that the elected President, Donald Ramotar, of the Peoples Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) can appoint and run a minority government, it is an unrealistic proposition.

Ramotar was elected President by a plurality of the votes but the PPP/C failed to get an overall majority in the National Assembly.

The complex Guyana constitution provides for an electoral system of proportional representation under which the country is divided into 10 regions returning 25 members of the National Assembly and another 40 being allocated nationally on the proportion of votes cast for a party. To control the National Assembly, a party must secure more than 50 per cent of the votes cast.

However, the President in whom executive authority lies, according to the Constitution, only requires a plurality of the votes to be elected.

Thus, since the PPP/C got the highest number of votes cast for a party (48.7 per cent), Ramotar is elected President but the PPP/C as a

insight

WORLD VIEW

party does not control the National Assembly which makes the laws of the county and initiates its money bills, including the Budget.

Of the 72.9 per cent voter turn-out at the poll, the three opposition parties combined secured 51.3 per cent of the vote. The breakdown is: 40.8 per cent for A Partnership for National Unity (APNU); 10.3 per cent for the Alliance for Change (AFC) and 0.2 per cent for the United Force.

Even if the three opposition parties were now to form an alliance – something they failed to do before the elections – they cannot form a government.

Under the Guyana constitution, the President appoints the Prime Minister and Ministers of the Government from “among the elected members of the National Assembly”. There is no requirement for him to appoint persons to form the government from among a party or parties that command the majority in the National Assembly.

This has to be the worst nightmare for any President, but it has to be particularly harrowing for Ramotar who has no experience of government, except as a member of the National Assembly for the PPP/C of which he has been general secretary over the last few years.

As this commentary is being written (shortly after the announcement of the election results on Thursday), it has been reported that Ramotar will try to operate a minority government. In other words, he will appoint a government from among PPP/C elected members only.

This would not be a sensible proposition. For, if the opposition parties in the National Assembly decide to work together, they would defeat any legislation, including a Budget which the government would require to function. In such a circumstance, Government would be crippled, and the only resolution of the problem would be fresh elections in an effort for one party, or an alliance of



parties, to secure an overall majority.

It is ironic that had the AFC joined the APNU alliance that comprises the Peoples National Congress (PNC), founded by the late President Forbes Burnham, and the Working People's Alliance (WPA), founded by the late historian Walter Rodney, the combined parties would have won both the Presidency and the overall majority of the National Assembly. In this sense, they have only themselves to blame for their failure to topple the PPP/C.

But more importantly now is what happens going forward.

Ramotar and the PPP/C have a rare and golden opportunity to retrieve

Guyana from its long history of racial and divisive politics by recognising that the majority of the people of the country did not support them at this election notwithstanding the economic success they have achieved in the last few years.

Other issues played a much larger role and those issues included a perception of neglect of disadvantaged communities by the PPP/C including sugar workers of East Indian descent; marginalisation of Guyanese intellectuals of African descent who have been excluded from top government positions; and a general view that high PPP/C officials had benefited hugely from their time in government.

In this context, if Ramotar and the PPP attempt to form and operate a minority government, they will be doing so against a backdrop of considerable popular hostility. It would be a prescription for disaster.

Good sense should prevail in this very troubled situation and Ramotar should make every effort to talk to the leaders of the two main opposition parties to form a government of national unity.

It would be the best thing for Guyana, and it would ensure that prosperity and stability can be built on its recent economic success and the definite prospects for immediate and continuous economic growth as a result of recently signed contracts for the mining of gold, bauxite and manganese, expected to earn the country billions of dollars, as well as the real possibility of oil production.

The future for the Guyana economy and the Guyanese people could be glowing if such a course is followed. If it isn't, then Guyana and the Guyanese people will be headed for great political instability, social unrest and a major reversal of their recent economic good fortune.

At the same time, if Ramotar and the PPP/C reach out a hand of co-operation to the APNU and the AFC the two latter parties also have an obligation to accept it and sit down to work out the mechanics of a government of national unity that could secure Guyana's future.

If ever there was a time in the tides of a country's fortunes that requires its politicians to put their narrow political interests to one side for the greater interest of the nation, that time is now.

The vast majority of people of Guyana are now frightened and worried. The country's political leaders have the chance to turn that fear and worry to relief, hope and confidence.

Guyana, at last, could begin to realise the potential it has long held out.

Other leaders in the Caribbean and the world should call on Ramotar, and the leaders of APNU and AFC not to condemn their country to ruin and their people to the rack. History is in their hands.

• Responses and previous commentaries at: www.sirronaldsanders.com

The writer is a consultant and former Caribbean diplomat.

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LOCAL NEWS

MYSTERY OVER BAY STREET BLAZE

from page one

vendors, some of whom claimed they – for a second time – had lost everything in the blaze. The temporary market site was hit by natural disaster in August when Hurricane Irene ripped through portions of the tent on Bay Street. Vendors split up following the storm with some moving their wares to the Prince George Wharf, while others continued to sell their goods at the front of the tent

facing Bay Street.

The government announced plans to partner with the business community to implement closed circuit television earlier this year.

Mr Greenslade said he could not confirm last night whether or not the market site or surrounding area was under surveillance; however he said the matter would be explored and a further update provided.

Last night, Mr Turnquest also said he could not confirm

whether or not the collaborative surveillance system implemented in the downtown area covered the scene.

The Tribune understands that fire investigators met over the weekend to discuss updates in the case; however, Mr Greenslade could not provide any more details on the matter. Deputy Commissioner Quinn McCartney, the police liaison to Fire Services on the investigation, did not respond to a call placed last night.

MORTGAGE COMPANY 'WAS NEAR BANKRUPTCY'

from page one

the helm.

The FNM senator's comments follow claims by the party that Dr Sands, supported by his administration, had ordered the "heartless" eviction of a family of seven.

Dr Sands criticised Mr Gibson for "capitalising" on the emotional impact of a family losing their home instead of sharing ownership of the root cause.

"A huge number of individuals were placed in a situation where they were granted mortgages that there was no possible chance for them to service the debt," Dr Sands said. "It created a situation whereby millions and millions of taxpayers dollars were squandered."

Dr Sands explained that the family – whose story was published in a newspaper – had been in arrears for five years, and, after "every possible effort" had been exhausted, a Supreme court order granted vacant possession to the BMC.

Last night, Mr Gibson challenged Dr Sands to produce evidence to support his accusations. He also urged the government to exercise greater care in the eviction process.

Mr Gibson said: "I challenge him to bring the proof to show where government ministers instructed staff to give mortgages to Bahamians who didn't qualify. Bring the cases, present the paperwork. Now if a person's circumstances change that's different but the (BMC) staff assess the clients and determine whether they are eligible."

While he said he did not have enough information on that particular eviction to determine whether it was a valid exercise, Mr Gibson cried shame on the government for not coordinating with other agencies to provide assistance to the ousted family.

"If you're a government senator, and you're about to put people on the streets, wouldn't you coordinate with social services?" Mr Gibson asked. "These are difficult times for individuals. You don't have people who have money and not paying – you have people that do it - but this family don't fall in that category."

"The government has taken a business position, but then a humanitarian position should have kicked in and said let's contact social services."

Mr Gibson referred to statements made by Dr Sands and Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham on the sidelines of the Mackey Yard subdivision two weeks ago. At that time, Dr Sands revealed that the BMC faced some \$80 million in debt from more than 1,000 defaulted loans.

Acknowledging the delinquency rate as "unacceptably high", Mr Ingraham also advised the corporation to seek compensation from the Mortgage Guarantee Fund to cover delinquent mortgages insured by the Ministry of Housing.

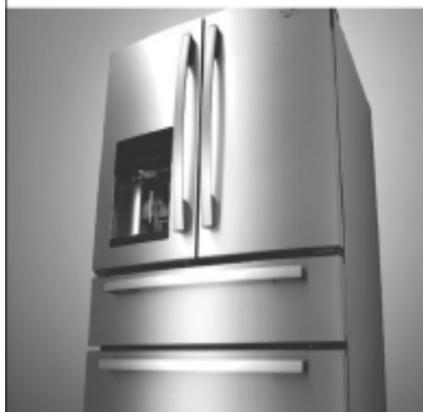
Also highlighting the presence of such a fund, last night Mr Gibson called Dr Sands' statements an attempt to justify the government's position and said the BMC did not stand to lose as much money as previously stated.

The PLP senator maintained that the default percentage rose by more than 10 per cent under the FNM administration's 1992 to 2002 term.

"In 1992, the default percentage was less than 20 per cent. In 2002 when (FNM) left it was around 32 per cent and it was unchanged when we left office. It didn't increase," Mr Gibson said.



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Walkers on the march



HUNDREDS of Bahamians came out last weekend to take part in the AIDS Foundation's awareness walk.

Under the theme "Moving to Zero" (aiming towards achieving zero transmission of the HIV virus), participants last Saturday walked a route that started at 6am at Arawak Cay, continued on to Goodman's Bay and then returned to the starting point.

The AIDS Awareness Walk was just one in a series of events surrounding World AIDS Day 2011, which was observed last Thursday.

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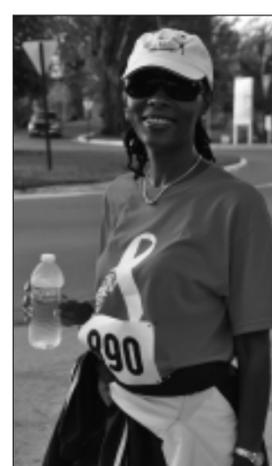
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Organisers said that they were pleased to see the event attract more participants compared to previous years.

They said they were especially happy to see so many young people come out for the walk. Many of the youngsters who took part belong to the Governor General's Youth Award (GGYA) programme.

During the walk, several persons tied the iconic red AIDS ribbons to trees along the route.



Photos by Jamaal Davis



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- Sells consultatively and makes recommendations to prospects and clients of the various solutions the company offers to their business issues.
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Only persons who meet the qualifications will be contacted. Resumes should be submitted by December 07, 2011 via e-mail to mark.cabrelli@cablebahamas.com.

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LOCAL NEWS

United in song to mark start of Christmas season

DOCTOR'S Hospital held a tree lighting ceremony on Thursday night to mark the beginning of the

Christmas season.

A staff choir joined children in singing hymns and carols before the tree was lit.



DOCTORS HOSPITAL staff choir and children's choir sing a selection of Christmas hymns at the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony. Photos: **Tim Clarke/Tribune Staff**



OLYMPIAN TAKES YOUR ORDERS

ON the eve of another World Children's Day, the golden arches of McDonald's in downtown Nassau opened its doors with Golden Girl Debbie Ferguson-McKenzie at the till and ready to go.

"Welcome to McDonald's. May I take your order please?" she said repeatedly, smiling. With the same gusto, class and grace that have become her signature traits on the track, the 4-time Olympian and Gold-medallist greeted customers, assembled their orders and thanked them for supporting McDonald's.

"World Children's day at McDonald's was first launched in 2002," explained Shanendon Cartwright, McDonald's marketing and development manager. "In 10 years, the event has grown and expanded to more than 100 countries and raised more than \$100m. Here in the Bahamas, we are pleased to participate and even more

pleased to welcome back Debbie Ferguson-McKenzie who is always willing and ready to support this worthy cause."

In Nassau, McDonald's celebrates World Children's Day by inviting customers to purchase a "Give A Hand" sticker for \$1 with proceeds earmarked for specific children's causes within the community. Beneficiaries have included the Centre for the Deaf, the National Children's Choir, the Down's syndrome Association and for the past four years, a child who has courageously battled cancer.

"Javon Knowles' bravery and positive attitude have touched us all. He has worked his way into our hearts and earned his place as our poster boy, setting an example for others," said Cartwright.

It is this spirit of giving that lures Ferguson-McKenzie to lend her support. This is the 10th year she has served up Happy Meals, smiles and

helped raise funds for children's causes.

"Giving back to the community, especially for causes related to children, is a natural and easy thing for me," acknowledged the Gold Medallist. "Where would any of us be, were it not for the support of others?"

With this said, she sprinted to her post to welcome another approaching customer, Robert Romano, the mayor of Vineland, New Jersey.

"I live about 40 miles away from famed Olympian Carl Lewis," said the Mayor, "and have never met him. It is quite a twist to be on vacation in Nassau and to be served by another wonderful Olympian whose contributions are so noteworthy. I'm loving it."

Similar sentiments were expressed by Kristal Bethel, a high-ranking manager with the Ministry of Tourism. "In Tourism, we are always taking note of those good ambassadors who represent our



OLYMPIAN Debbie Ferguson-McKenzie with Mayor of Vineland, New Jersey, Robert Romano.

country," she said. "Debbie has represented The Bahamas beautifully over the years, so I feel quite privileged to be served by her. I am also so impressed by her willingness to give back and serve in this manner."

McDonald's in Nassau is among more than 30,000 restaurants worldwide celebrating World Children's Day November 20.

THE TIME IS ALWAYS RIGHT

By **MIKE LIGHTBOURN**

PERHAPS you've thought about selling your present home, but have put off that decision, thinking that now is not a good time to sell. Want some advice? Wait no longer!

Consider what happens during the "bad times." Most homeowners want to sell their homes for the highest possible price in the shortest possible period of time. So, during those periods that are perceived as "a bad time to sell a home" or a "buyer's market," those homeowners put off their selling decision until a more favourable selling climate exists.

Since the so-called "bad times" can last from a relatively short period to several years, a backlog of frustrated would-be sellers builds up. It is sort of like the force that builds up in a pressure cooker.

Then, finally, comes the good news: "Home sales are

rising – buyers are buying!" Guess what happens? Like the pressure cooker, the lid blows right off the top. Sellers begin to flood the market with homes to sell. The competition is incredibly fierce and prices must be competitive to generate a sale.

The best time to sell a home is when you are ready to sell. Make sure your home is in top condition, price it properly and employ the best BREA professional available. Through careful planning, your house will sell successfully in any market!

DON'T FORGET: How much you need is not necessarily how much you will receive on a sale. The market determines what a property can sell for.

REMEMBER: Often the best offer you will get is the **FIRST** one!

Mike Lightbourn is president of Coldwell Banker Lightbourn Realty.

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- DEC. 6th 10% 16oz. Holiday Red To Go Mug
- DEC. 7th 20% off 12oz. Frosty Morning Gold Mug
- DEC. 8th 10% off the Tumbler of your choice
- DEC. 9th 10% off the Mug of your choice
- DEC. 10th 20% off 12oz. Frosty Morning Red Mug
- DEC. 11th 20% off Stainless Steel Holiday Tumbler
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