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PLP ministry's $7m transfer

'Procedures not followed over NIB cash'

By AVA TURNQUEST
Tribune Staff Reporter
aturnquest@tribunemedia.net

EXCLUSIVE

HOUSING Minister Kenneth Russell confirmed that $7 million was borrowed from the National Insurance Board without going through the proper procedures under the previous Progressive Liberal Party administration.

Drawing similarities to the Ministry of Housing's relationship with the Bahamas Mortgage Corporation, Mr Russell said the unusual transfer fuelled recommendations to remove the board from Housing's portfolio, a decision implemented in 2008.

"A (report) found where $7 million was borrowed from the National Insurance Board without going through the proper procedure, because the Minister of Housing was the Minister of National Insurance," Mr Russell said.

"It was discovered that there was a lot of room for the same thing to happen between Housing and the Mortgage Corporation."

Underscoring the importance of "checks and balances", Mr Russell reaffirmed his position that the Bahamas Mortgage Corporation should be removed from the Ministry of Housing's portfolio.

While Mr Russell made it clear that he was not suggesting that the following scenario occurred, he used it as an illustration of what could possibly happen under the current set up.

"For example," he said, "the Housing minister decides to put Jane in a home, Jane goes through the Mortgage Corporation, she is not qualified but the same minister is the minister for the Mortgage Corporation and the minister

SEE page 11

JUNIOR JUNKANOO TAKES OVER THE STREETS

IN FABULOUS colours and fabulous outfits, youngsters took to Bay St last night for Junior Junkanoo. For more pictures, see pages 8 and 9. Photo: **Felipé Major**/Tribune Staff

NEW YEAR'S DAY DEADLINE FOR MANGROVE CAY

By AVA TURNQUEST
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THE Department of Local Government is working feverishly to ensure independent services are operational in Mangrove Cay by January 1.

State Minister for Local Government Byran Woodside confirmed officials were in the process of installing the full machinery of central government by selecting a Family Island administrator and establishing fiscal independence.

Residents protested the removal of former administrator Gilbert Kemp outside the Local Government office in June.

SEE page 11

'WILL $1M DRUG HAUL BE SECURE?'

By LAMECH JOHNSON
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CONCERN was raised in a Magistrate's Court yesterday over the security of the $1 million worth of cocaine that was seized during a drug bust by police a few days ago in Freeport.

During the arraignment of Ronald Joseph, 27, and Aline Pierre, 24, in connection with the seizure, defence attorney Dion Smith raised a point about how secure the drugs would be in Grand Bahama until trial next April.

He said that despite the convenience of hearing the matter before Magistrate's Court in Grand Bahama where the witnesses are, he pointed out that most drug

SEE page 11

CONSTRUCTION COMPANY FACES LAWSUIT

By KHRISNA VIRGIL
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A PROPERTY owner claims Jose Cartellone Construction Company owes her almost $90,000 in damages and materials.

According to a statement of claim filed in the Supreme Court, Olga Smith alleges that the company contracted to complete the government's road works breeched a legal contract almost two years ago.

Under the agreement, the Argentina based company was allowed by Ms Smith to extract fill from a large pit on eight acres of land in the area

SEE page 11

PRIDE ESTATES OPENS LATEST SUBDIVISION

By SANCHESKA BROWN
Tribune Staff Reporter
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PRIDE Estates Three was officially opened yesterday, the fifth government subdivision to be opened and completed under the Ingraham administration.

Housing Minister Kenneth Russell said this subdivision is in keeping with the Government's commitment to "reduce the presence of unregulated communities" in the Bahamas.

According to Mr Russell, the Ministry of Housing has

SEE page 2

LOCAL NEWS

Pride Estates opens latest subdivision

MINISTER FOR HOUSING Kenneth Russell MP, left, joins others at the groundbreaking ceremony.
Photo: **Felipé Major**/Tribune Staff

from page one

already constructed 480 houses and sold 237 serviced lots in this current term, with an additional 180 houses now under construction in New Providence, Grand Bahama and Abaco.

He said: "I am pleased to report that we have not only met our goal to construct 600 homes, but we have surpassed it. We have estimated that $63 million is needed to complete what we have planned and we will continue to move forward ever increasing our numbers until either the money runs out or my position expired."

Mr Russell said the development of the 27-acre Pride Estates Three plot and Fire Trial Gardens will cost around $17.6 million of which $7.9 million has already been spent.

"We have completed in Pride Estates 110 homes and 16 are under construction. We are also in the process of regularizing a number of squatters in this subdivision. We have also provided jobs for 52 contractors and their workers," he said.

"We are pleased that we were able to provide homes for Bahamians while at the same time contributing to the economic advancement of our country. These three-bedroom, two-bath, and two-bedroom, one-bath homes range from $83,000 to $135,000."

In addition to the homes, Mr Russell said the government is also building a children's park, a basketball court, a tennis court and maintaining a public open space with a pond.

The Housing Minister said a similar exercise is under way in Fire Trail Gardens.

"A groundbreaking ceremony is being held for 25 houses now under construction on this 35-acre site with 20.9 acres being built on and 14.3 being slated for lots. Additionally efforts are underway for the regularization of 40 to 50 squatters who took up residence on the land."

The official opening of the Pride Estates comes two days after *The Tribune* learned that 12 homes in six government subdivisions are being occupied without mortgages.

According to *Tribune* sources, the homes are located in Sunset Subdivision, 5; Dignity Gardens, 2; Pride Estates I, 2; Hope Gardens, 1; Jubilee Gardens, 1; and East Coral Estates, 1. The keys to eight of the homes were given out in 2006, two in 2004, and one in 2003 and 2007.

Sandra Storr, acting managing director at the Bahamas Mortgage Corporation (BMC), said both front and back-end mortgage lending guidelines have since been tightened to guard against further mismanagement.

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LOCAL NEWS

BISHOP ANNOUNCES HE WILL STEP DOWN FROM PASTORAL DUTIES NEXT OCTOBER

By AVA TURNQUEST
Tribune Staff Reporter
aturnquest@tribunemedia.net

BISHOP Simeon Hall has set a date for his retirement from pastoral duties after 30 years at the helm of New Covenant Baptist Church.

The veteran anti-crime and human rights activist said he plans to continue his ministry after he steps down from his post as senior pastor in October next year.

The move had been postponed for two years, Bishop Hall said, as a result of financial challenges stemming from the "CLICO debacle".

"I've been preaching for 45 years. I'd hoped to retire two years ago but I was a part of the CLICO plan. [NCBC] had an annuity there, a retirement financial plan, but that debacle threw my retirement off," he said. "I can only imagine other persons who have been affected by that incident who are perhaps in awkward positions. As a pastor, I had something to fall back on. What about those who had no recourse?

"I can only imagine the elderly that have been affected by that. It seems that both governments, both political parties fell asleep at the wheel."

Bishop Hall said he will officially announce his retirement, and his three successors, at Sunday's 11am service.

The three pastors chosen to serve in his stead will train under him for the next year to ensure a smooth transition.

Reflecting on memorable campaigns, Bishop Hall said he hopes his church will continue to develop its missionary work.

Bishop Hall has preached at 11 conventions held by the Progressive Liberal Party and four held by the Free National Movement.

"Sometimes it has stirred some misgivings on either side, but I believe it was the right thing to do at the time," he said.

"I want to make it clear that I'm retiring from pastoring but I will preach until I die – that's my calling.

"The day-to-day burden of pastoring is what I want to release and just do some other things, maybe I'll learn to play golf, but after 30 years of this you begin to get tired."

As chairman of the last Crime Commission, Bishop Hall became aware of how serious the country's crime problem has become, and said he will continue to speak out on this issue.

"Like any pastor, you carry vicariously on behalf of others the burden of crime, and as pastors we have to keep hope alive and believe that tomorrow is going to be better.

"We have to keep that vertical line straight between us and God Almighty, once we do that the horizontal line falls in place."

Search for remains after human hand found

By SANCHESKA BROWN
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POLICE continue to comb area of Cable Beach where human remains were discovered on Wednesday, sources close to the investigation say.

Baha Mar workers were shocked after they unexpectedly unearthed the bones during routine road works.

Superintendent Stephen Dean said police are still in the preliminary stages of the investigation.

"I can confirm we found a human hand and it appears the hand has been there for quite some time.

"We are doing our police work and we will update the press when we know more," he said.

THE SCENE near Superclubs Breezes where the bones were found.

A police source said officers have been digging in the area where the hand was found, looking for other body parts.

The hand was discovered Wednesday afternoon near Superclubs Breezes resort, coincidentally close to the former residence of the serial killing mother-son team, the Kimes.

The discovery has sparked speculation that the remains could belong to a victim of murderers Sante Kimes and her son, Kenneth.

The duo are presently serving a life without parole sentence in a California prison on several counts of murder.

In 1998, the mother and son murdered businessman David Kazin in Las Vegas after he exposed Sante Kimes' loan fraud. That same year, they also murdered New York socialite Irene Silverman while attempting to steal her Manhattan mansion.

In 1996, they murdered banker Syed Bilal Ahmed in their Cable Beach home.

According to testimony from Kenneth Kimes, the banker had flown to Nassau from the Caymans to investigate irregularities in a bank account belonging to the late Kenneth Kimes Sr – Sante's partner and Kenneth Jr's father.

He said he and his mother drugged the banker and drowned him in their bathtub before throwing his body in the sea.

However, neighbours of the Kimes' were convinced the body was buried on the site, possibly under the patio of their Cable Beach home.

In July of 2004, police began digging at the Kimes' home and the surrounding area, looking for the body of the missing banker.

However, the search was suspended after Kenneth testified that he and his mother dumped the body at sea.

Syed Bilal Ahmed's body has never been found.

APPEAL OVER $400,000 TRUST FUND DISMISSED

By LAMECH JOHNSON
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AN APPEAL filed by a religious conference concerning a $400,000 trust fund left by the widow of a former church minister was dismissed yesterday.

The appeal sought full rights over the Rev WJ Smith Trust Fund for the Bahamas/Turks and Caicos Islands District of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas.

It was denied by Court of Appeal president Justice Anita Allen on the basis that the 1987 will of the late Florence Smith indicated that trust was to benefit all members of the conference – including the trustees of her home church, Trinity Methodist Church.

The ruling said: ". . . I agree with the conclusion of the Chief Justice, which was based on the language used in the will itself and the extrinsic evidence, which revealed the fact that Mrs Smith's own home church of 30 years would be excluded if the appellant's case were to succeed.

"That is, when the surrounding circumstances known to the testatrix at the date of the making of the will are looked at, it is evident that the testatrix's intention was to benefit all Methodists in the Bahamas through the furtherance of its work and purpose."

Chief Justice Sir Michael Barnett made his ruling on August 6, 2010 when the matter was first brought before the Supreme Court.

Attorneys Anthony Thompson, Glenwood Rolle and Maurice Glinton, on behalf of the plaintiffs, appealed the Chief Justice's ruling on the grounds that the judge digressed in finding that the intention of the Will was to benefit all Methodist churches in the Bahamas and not the conference as sole beneficiaries, among six other grounds for appeal.

The story behind the appeal begins in 1967, when the Methodist Church in the Bahamas joined the Methodist Church of the Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA) conferences, departing from the English Methodist church.

Rev WJ Smith was a minister of the MCCA and when his widow Florence Smith died in November 1993, she left a will dated September 3, 1987 which established a trust in the name of her husband.

A rift developed in the MCCA and three months before Florence Smith's death, the new Methodist Church of the Bahamas Conference was established by Act of Parliament.

The Act allowed the new conference, along with the trustees of Trinity Methodist Church (who joined it), to retain all assets previously belonging to the Bahamas District.

The will was probated in February 1994, and the proceeds of the trust fund, amounting to $418,789.88, were paid to the trustees.

The BTC-MCCA conference was not made aware of the trust until 2008, leading to the plaintiffs filing an action in the Supreme Court in 2009, to declare that on the construction of the will, the monies were for the sole benefit of the BTC-MCCA.

Justice Allen ordered that each party pay its own costs.

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J. EDGAR	NEW	1:05	4:05	N/A	7:05	N/A	10:05
THE IDES OF MARCH	C	1:10	3:30	N/A	6:10	8:35	10:45
THE MUPPETS	A	1:05	3:25	N/A	6:05	8:30	10:30
ARTHURS CHRISTMAS	A	1:10	3:35	N/A	6:15	8:30	10:35
THE TWILIGHT SAGA	T	1:00	3:25	N/A	6:00	8:25	10:50
HAPPY FEET	A	1:15	3:45	N/A	6:15	8:40	10:40
IMMORTALS	C	1:00	3:25	N/A	6:00	8:25	10:40
JACK AND JILL	T	1:10	3:40	N/A	6:10	8:35	10:50
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NEW YEAR'S EVE	NEW	1:00	3:25	N/A	6:05	8:25	10:40
THE MUPPETS	A	1:00	3:35	N/A	6:00	N/A	N/A
ARTHURS CHRISTMAS	A	1:15	3:40	N/A	6:10	8:30	10:35
THE TWILIGHT SAGA	T	1:05	3:30	N/A	6:05	8:25	10:50
HAPPY FEET	A	1:20	3:35	N/A	6:10	8:35	10:40
IMMORTALS	C	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	8:25	10:45

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Bahamas gets special mention in Geneva

AN Associated Press story from Geneva reported that Liberia and Senegal have pledged to reform their laws so that women can confer citizenship on their children.

The West African nations are currently among at least 30 countries, AP reported, that let only fathers pass their citizenship to children from marriages with a foreigner. Among those 30 countries are the Bahamas, Iran, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

The UN refugee agency said that the discrimination against women has contributed to the estimated 12 million stateless people around the world.

Liberia and Senegal made the pledge Thursday at a ministerial meeting in Geneva marking the 50th anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the AP reported. US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton urged diplomats Wednesday to amend discriminatory citizenship rules.

This is what the government of Hubert Ingraham tried to do by referendum in February 2002, but failed. In our opinion, Bahamians were duped when the referendum process was deliberately hijacked by PLP politicians. The Ingraham administration not only lost the referendum, but a few months later also lost the government.

And so today, the socially unenlightened Bahamas heads the list in AP's international report of countries that are notorious in their discrimination against women.

To avoid marriages of convenience, it is the policy of the FNM government to grant spousal residence on marriage with the right to work, but not give citizenship until after a five-year waiting period to make certain that the marriage is sound — this applies to the foreign spouses of both men and women. Before this a foreign woman got automatic status on marriage to a Bahamian man. Not so a foreign man married to a Bahamian woman.

The tragedy of this second state was that politicians used this at election time to control the vote of the Bahamian woman. If these women were unlucky enough to be out of political favour, their foreign spouses stayed at home doing the household chores, while their wives went to work. Some even had to leave the country because they could not get residency. Many Bahamian women have many sad stories to tell as marriages not strong enough to bear the injustice, failed. Under the FNM, the male partner no longer has to stay at home, he is granted a spousal permit to work and support his family.

When the question came up in the House of Assembly in 2002 the PLP agreed that Bahamian men and women should be equal, and should both be able to confer nationality on their spouses and their children. In other words in the House of Assembly the PLP voted for that item in the referendum. After all when history is written they did not want to be seen to be on the wrong side of the fence. However, the most incredible thing happened. When the question went to the people, the PLP urged them to vote against it. It was said at the time that the PLP could not bear the thought of history recording that it was Hubert Alexander Ingraham who gave Bahamian women the same rights as Bahamian men.

Even some of the clergy got into the act suggesting that maybe the electorate needed more time to think about the matter. Catholic Archbishop, the late Lawrence Burke, refusing to be caught up in the "political football" scoffed at the thought. He wondered just how much time a person needed to decide that a Bahamian woman should have the same rights as a Bahamian man.

The scandal was that many — too many — Bahamian women put their politics before their rights and voted against the referendum. As time passed many lived to regret it. Over the years when a few came to us with their sad tale involving either themselves or their daughters, before engaging in discussion we would ask how they voted on the referendum. Their answer usually closed the conversation before it could get started.

The night before the referendum went to the vote, we got a call from one of the Family Islands. The caller told us that a rumour was being spread that if women were given equal rights with men, they would marry Haitians, and Jamaicans and take over the Bahamas. All sorts of bogey men were pulled out of closets to play on the ignorance of Bahamians — both men and women.

The question had to go to a referendum to amend the Bahamas' constitution. However, in many Caribbean islands the constitution can be amended by the legislature. Neither is a referendum required to amend the US constitution — only their Senate, House of Representatives and a certain percentage of their State Legislatures must agreed to do so.

And so a clause put into our constitution by its drafters to protect the people from ruthless politicians failed them when the people let the politicians trick them into surrendering their rights.

And so today on this issue alone the Bahamas is shamefully and wrongfully classified with Muslim states – states that believe in keeping their women hidden at the back of the class.

Update needed on job scheme

EDITOR, The Tribune.

IT HAS been approximately 14 weeks since the commencement of the government initiated "Job Creation Programme". For the first time on such a large scale, the government decided to stimulate employment of young persons with the involvement of the private sector. This is a move away from the past established practice (of both the PLP and FNM administrations) of cramming these groups of persons within the public (Public Service) sector.

The government must be commended for endeavouring to change the status quo when it comes to hiring young unemployed people en masse. There are, however, three carry-overs from the former method of engagement of these persons. Let us for argument's sake, accept that the recent change has initiated a period of transition, which is and will be taking place for a not too long period hereafter.

There should be no doubt in the Bahamian public's mind that the primary purpose of hiring young Bahamians is an honourable one. Whenever there is a breakdown or failure in the economy of a democratic society, to the extent that the environment does not facilitate job creation and or expansion, then it is incumbent upon any responsible government to take necessary alternative action. This action must be without fear or favouritism.

Let us now consider the following three factors relative to the hiring practice that have not changed with the newly introduced programme:

1) Consciously or otherwise, the programme is still being introduced just prior to a general election. This has been the practice for so long, so very long that the only surprise most Bahamians will have is if it fails to be introduced during the approach to an election. We must ask the question: is there a legitimate reason for such unrelenting consistency practised in hiring by both governing parties

LETTERS
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every time a general election is pending?

2) As in the past, persons to be hired under a Job Creation/Relief Workers programme must in most instances be recommended by a politician. In such situation the chances are that the MP's supporter or a member of his/her family would be given priority over others, some of whom may be more desperate. This type of bias would prevail on both sides of the political divide.

While this method of getting persons into the programme may appear fair, it is grossly unfair to many well deserving young Bahamians. Therefore, we can conclude that allotting x number of spaces to each MP does not engender fairness in the process.

In this post-modern era within The Bahamas, are we to believe that the Department of Public Service is incapable of initiating the application process and coordinating such a programme? Is it such a complicated matter to be put in place? On the other hand we must also ask: what value does the involvement of the politician bring to the issue.

3) Payment of wages for these persons hired under the programme will be made by the government. This is an acceptable feature of the programme, as there is no departure from the remuneration process for group of persons employed under the direction/auspices of the government.

Under the current job creation programme there are numerous unofficial reports by employers of the following: attitude of some workers; attendance and punctuality; lack of willingness to learn; and some general behavioral issues. Persons who are frequently absent from the workplace without legitimate excuse still receive a full week's wages. The question is whether there is an effective system of check and balances in place? Further, is there an effective reporting system in place for discipline or dismissal of persons for misbehaviour or misfits?

There appears to be a serious disconnect, between the government representatives and the employers and it leaves one to wonder whether any input from the employers were sought prior to commencement of the programme. There are complaints of lack of information sharing regarding the rules, policy and standard operating procedures in the programme.

Further consideration by the government could have included those hundreds and maybe thousands of homeowners who stand to lose their homes. They could have been considered a cohort to benefit from the programme. The persons affected could have been asked to secure proof of their delinquent status from the bank(s). Once this would have been done then thereafter they could have been given opportunity for employment under the programme. They could then seek some grace period from the banks while endeavouring to pay if only the interest on their accounts.

After all these weeks since the programme has been in place, the public (whose funds are paying the wages) should be given an update status report. We need to know whether the programme is functioning as intended or if it is serving some other purpose. Maybe this would be like the programmes of the past, where the public would not be given the privilege of seeing nor hearing a report. If this programme was a well thought out and planned one, then a major component should be that of evaluation. This can take place by way of interim assessments as well as a final one at the end of the programme.

Would it be wise for us to hold our breath while waiting for a comprehensive progress report?

MICHAEL E TURNER
Nassau,
December 1, 2011.

Disappointed in Jollification

EDITOR, The Tribune.

THE annual National Trust Jollification was, I believe, intended to be a family affair and the advent to a festive Christmas season. In recent years, it has become anything but. The events of Sunday, November 20, clearly demonstrate that it has become a dunk fest for a growing group of social misfits. I have attended too many events large and small, in too many countries to list here, but suffice it to say none of those events found it necessary to dispense alcoholic beverages to be successful.

I have witnessed over the years a steady decline in attendance by the members of the Trust and the older generation who no longer find it a pleasant outing for the very reasons witnessed on Sunday the 20th. I have heard from some of the exhibitors themselves who are rethinking their participation.

The liquor distributors do not need this venue to promote their products. I am told that controls are to be in place to prevent distribution to minors but there is no way to control friends from passing it on.

It is not just the minors who are at fault, those who should have more sense, but obviously do not, also need to share some of the blame. Not only do they over indulge but then proceed to drive, creating potential for more disaster.

I do not know what the Trust will do going forward, but I believe the time for the loose dispensing of alcohol at public outdoor events, drinking and driving and openly displaying alcohol on the streets has run its course. It is time to become a more responsible society. I hope those with the power to do something about this will take the necessary steps to curtail this unnecessary activity.

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New court to be ready next month

By CELESTE NIXON
Tribune Staff Reporter
cnixon@tribunemedia.net

THE new Magistrate's Court Complex is expected to be operational next month.

Giving a progress update and tour of the "practically completed" facility, Attorney General John Delaney said it will strengthen the judicial system moving forward.

He said: "This facility represents a tremendous improvement in the physical facilities for the Magistracy."

Construction began in 2005 and in 2008, Adler Construction was awarded a $6.4 million contract to complete the job.

With the exception of the Coroner's Court, which will remain in Victoria Gardens; and the new Magistrate's Court being constructed in Fox Hill, which will be dedicated to remand hearings, the modern complex on South Street will house all Magistrate's Courts, Mr Delaney said.

As part of the raft of anti-crime Bills passed in the House of Assembly in October, amendments to the Evidence Act were made to allow for live TV feeds from the courts.

In accordance with the Act, the complex will be connected by video link to the Remand Court, the Supreme Court, courts in Freeport and any other facility equipped with the necessary technology.

The new complex will include a security system including metal scanners at the entrance, an internal police station, a treasury and registry, and CCTV monitoring.

The three-story building will have separate elevators for the public and magistrates and will also be equipped with a separate entrance for prisoners and male and female holding cells.

While the complex is practically completed, restoration efforts and renovations of other government buildings are continuing in an effort to "strengthen the justice system", the Attorney General said.

The current Magistrate's Courts will be worked on once the renovations of what Mr Delaney termed the "Supreme Court Campus" downtown, have been completed.

This is not in the immediate future however, as "once the traditional buildings – the Supreme Court Building with the addition of the former Ansbacher House – are completed, it will provide additional physical capacity that will be adequate in the near term to absorb any needs," said Mr Delaney.

He said the improvements to the Corner's Court are expected to be completed in a few weeks.

"It is my hope going forward that things will be done on a continual basis," Mr Delaney said.

ATTORNEY GENERAL John Delaney said the new complex was a "tremendous improvement".

SCRAPYARD ARMED ROBBERY

BY DENISE MAYCOCK
Tribune Freeport Reporter
dmaycock@tribunemedia.net

FREEPORT – Police are investigating an attempted armed robbery at Hanna Hill, Eight Mile Rock.

Asst Supt Loretta Mackey reported that at about 1.40pm on Wednesday, police received a report of an armed robbery at a scrap metal yard on Jack Smith Corner.

According to initial reports, three men were at the yard when they were approached by a man armed with a shotgun.

He demanded cash and proceeded to gun-butt one of the men in the head. There was a scuffle for the weapon.

Ms Mackey said the culprit held onto the shotgun and managed to fire the weapon in the air, causing the three men to run for safety.

The culprit fled the scene. No one was harmed and nothing was stolen.

• A fire caused around $40,000 in damage to a duplex apartment block in the Freeport area on Wednesday.

According to reports, fire officials were called to the Beaconsfield area around noon.

They were able to extinguish the flames, but one of the single-storey units sustained extensive damage.

MINISTRY ISSUES UPDATE ON ROADWORKS IN COMING WEEKS

THE Ministry of Public Works and Transport has issued an advisory on the progress of the New Providence Road Improvement Project.

According to the ministry:

• Baillou Hill Road South, northbound between Ameryllius Drive and Independence Drive, closed on Wednesday and will remain closed for one full week between 9am and 6pm, to facilitate the installation of water mains and service ducts.

• Asphalt works have begun on Robinson Road between Third and First Streets. By the end of this week, traffic should be allowed on the entirety Robinson Road.

• The western side of the Soldier Road/East Street junction and the eastern side of the Baillou Hill Road/Solider Road junction are closed to allow trenching for underground works. The alternative route is Malcolm Road.

• Most of the junction of Marathon Road, Robinson Road and East/West Highway has been paved. The outstanding area will be completed by the beginning of next week.

• Prince Charles Drive between Pine Barren Road (just east of the back entrance to St Augustine's College) will be paved by the end of the third week of December.

• Wulff Road from the roundabout at Marathon Road to Kemp Road will be opened to traffic the third week of December.

Road paving

The western section of the following side-roads off Market Street have been paved:

• Young Street
• Bimini Avenue
• Palmetto Avenue

Paving of the western section of the following side roads continued this week:

• Bahama Avenue
• West End Street
• Poinciana Avenue
• Cordeaux Avenue

Drivers should expect closures in these areas. Traffic will be permitted on Market Street at all times

• Final paving on Market Street north between Wulff Road and Brougham Street is now completed.

• Final paving on Baillou Hill Road between Cockburn and Duke Streets is now completed. This section is now open to traffic.

• Drivers are reminded that the section of Kemp Road between Wulff and Chesapeake Roads is open to northbound traffic only.

Those travelling east should use Jerome Avenue, Bar 20 Corner, and Parkgate Road to Village Road.

Drivers travelling west should use Jerome Avenue, Wulff Road, Kemp Road, and Chesapeake Road as alterna-

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****

Regular office hours for
ALL Branches will resume
Monday, 12th December, 2011

We apologize for any inconvenience caused

MINISTER OF HEALTH Dr Hubert Minnis gives a speech during Governor General Sir Arthur Foulkes' annual visit to the Princess Margaret Hospital on December 5. Photos: **Patrick Hanna**/BIS

As economy falls, visits to emergency rooms rise

HEALTH statistics reveal an increase in visits to local Emergency Rooms since the country began feeling the effects of the global economic crisis.

According to Minister of Health Dr Hubert Minnis, the higher frequency of medical emergencies came a result of "the many crises resulting from financial shortfalls due to the economic meltdown".

He said: "As a country, we were not immune to the international challenges that impacted every aspect of our lives.

"When external pressures mount, so does the presentation of health problems – problems that must be immediately addressed."

But regardless of the financial hurdles of the last few years, the minister said, the government rose to the challenge.

"In spite of these increased demands, and in spite of other, national commitments, the government was able to increase its approbation to health care which has allowed the Princess Margaret Hospital to not only empower its team, but to realise a significant number of accomplishments," he said.

Dr Minnis cited the completion of the Medical Records Warehouse and the recent groundbreaking for the new Critical Care Block on the grounds of the Princess Margaret Hospital, as two of several major accomplishments recorded by hospital officials during the course of 2011.

He said the construction of the warehouse was another step in improving the "efficient location and retention" of patient records in the Bahamas.

An "impressive" ground-breaking ceremony for the $53 million Critical Care Block was held two weeks ago.

Dr Minnis said the executive management team at the PMH were also able to facilitate the relocation of the Family Medicine Clinic to First Terrace, Centreville; launch a LIS system that is used for recording and tracking laboratory results for all patients; and introduce a specialised nursing course.

He said hospital officials were able to accomplish these objectives because of the government's ability to provide the necessary resources, despite the sluggish economy.

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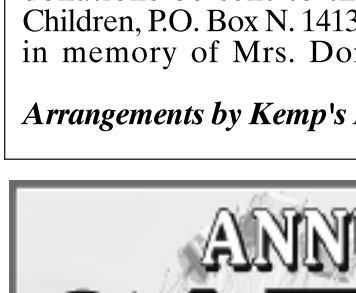
Funeral Service

Mrs. Dorothea Christine Thompson, 85



of Brace Ridge Road, Nassau, The Bahamas, who died at her residence, on Monday, 5th December, 2011, will be held at Ebenezer Methodist Church, East Shirley Street, Nassau, on Tuesday, 13th December, 2011 at 12:00 Noon.

Reverend Godfrey A. Bethell, Minister of Ebenezer Methodist Church and Reverend William "Bill" Higgs, President, Bahamas Conference of the Methodist Church, will officiate. Interment will follow in Ebenezer Methodist Cemetery, East Shirley Street, Nassau.

Mrs. Thompson was predeceased by her husband, Roscoe W. Thompson, Sr., and son, Ross Thompson.

She is survived by a daughter, Bonnie Hazlewood; son-in-law, Fred Hazlewood, C.M.G., daughter-in-law, Jane Thompson; brother-in-law, Chester Thompson; brother, Roy Newbold; grandchildren, Roscoe Thompson III, Jason Thompson, Jeffrey Thompson and Rick Hazlewood; granddaughter, Marnie Hazlewood-Reid; great grandchildren, Olivia Hazlewood, Whit Hazlewood, Matthew Reid, Sofia Reid, Alex Thompson, Rocky Thompson, Dylan Thompson, Kimberly Rivet, Britini Thompson, Alyse Thompson and Leah Thompson.

Instead of flowers the family request that donations be sent to the Ranfurly Home for Children, P.O. Box N. 1413, Nassau, The Bahamas, in memory of Mrs. Dorothea C. Thompson.

Arrangements by Kemp's Funeral Home Limited.

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LOCAL NEWS

Project could lead the way in psychiatric services

CLINICIANS at the Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre in Nassau and the Orange Creek Clinic in Cat Island are involved in a pilot telemedicine project that could result in on-island psychiatric services across the country.

The project allows patients in northern Cat Island to receive psychiatric diagnosis or follow-up consultation at the local clinic, rather than having to travel to the capital.

"The programme is in its infancy but it is hoped that as protocols are developed, it will be eventually used in most Family Island clinics," Minister of Health Dr Hubert Minnis said.

"This, along with the team visits that have been carried out over the past years, will certainly help to improve mental health delivery across the nation."

He said the pilot project is one of the many steps being taken at the state-owned and managed Sandilands to increase the number of specialised services – and by extension, the quality of mental health care delivered throughout the country.

"The centre remains committed to providing mental health care to all Bahamians and thus, has extended specialised services to the Family Islands," Dr Minnis said.

"This is all part of the journey of providing comprehensive care with the ultimate goal of assisting clients to attain and maintain their optimum level of functioning, and becoming productive citizens."

Dr Minnis said a number mental health clinics were conducted by teams of professionals in Eleuthera, Long Island and Abaco during 2011.

Other teams visited Long Island, Cat Island, Acklins and Crooked Island in the wake of Hurricane Irene, "to render mental health support and services."

GOVERNOR GENERAL Sir Arthur Foulkes presents senior nursing officer Adrella Gibson with the Star Employee of the Year Award during the governor general's annual visit to Sandilands. Esther Gray, senior attendant and the 2010 Star Employee of the Year Award recipient, is at far left. Photo: **Patrick Hanna**/BIS

"This helped to bring the centre a step closer to accomplishing its goal of improving accessibility to mental health services in all islands of the Bahamas," Dr Minnis said.

He said the Public Hospitals Authority (PHA), the body which oversees public health institutions, has embarked upon an aggressive programme to help improve access to patient care information and to promote an integrated patient information system.

Dr Minnis said one such feature is the Integrated Clinical Environment (ICE) System, launched in May, 2011, which now allows physicians and nurses to review results of laboratory tests online.

"The implementation of this new technology is an invaluable asset to our centre by aiding in the timely diagnosis and care of our clients," Dr Minnis said.

He said the expansion of the technological infrastructure at Sandilands has been strategically aligned with the expansion of the health care infrastructure in order to effect greater inpatient care.

Renovations to the northern and western wings of the Geriatric Hospital have resulted in more space, additional facilities and greater comfort for patients and visiting family members," Dr Minnis said.

Ongoing renovations are also being conducted on the Thompson, McClennan and Culmer's Wards.

Sandilands officials are also preparing for the opening of the new Robert Smith Child and Adolescent Special Education Building.

"Training programmes continue for all grades of staff deployed to the Child and Adolescent Unit and the Robert Smith Ward, to facilitate their efficient and effective work with children and adolescents who are mentally and physically challenged," Dr Minnis said.

"To date, 23 registered nurses, 12 trained clinical nurses and 24 support staff, including staff from the Recreational and Occupational Therapy Departments, have completed training," Dr Minnis said.

MESSAGE TO CENTRE STAFF

GOVERNOR-General Sir Arthur Foulkes urged staff at the Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre to continue to manage their patients "with love and care".

Sir Arthur visited the mental health facility this week accompanied by Minister of Health Dr Hubert Minnis, Lady Joan Foulkes and senior officials from the Ministry of Health, Department of Public Health and the Public Hospitals Authority.

"Staff of Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre, you have a responsibility to thoroughly and effectively care for the clients who are entrusted to your care, some indefinitely and some for a short period of time," he said.

"If you manage, build, maintain, repair or beautify; whatever you do, do it with love and do it with care."

Sir Arthur challenged nurses and attendants to lead the charge, adding that they have a greater responsibility where patient care is concerned, because they "come in direct contact with clients on a daily basis".

"When you give the client on Eloise Penn Ward his medicine, bathe and older adult on the Thompson Ward, conduct a group therapy session on the Lignum Vitae or Detox Unit, or take a client from the Robert Smith Ward for a walk, do it all with love and care," he said.

The governor-general also spoke to those who work behind the scenes, but who he said play major roles in delivering the "best possible patient care".

"Some of you may not have direct contact with clients, but if you prepare their meals, launder their linens and clothing, deliver needed supplies, or clean their environment, I implore you to do it with love and care," he said.

Sir Arthur told employees of the facility that he was grateful for the work they do every day for "the senior citizens who have made their contribution to the building of our nation".

The Tribune's Trivia WINNER

Sidney Albury Jr is the Tribune Trivia winner for the month of November. By logging onto The Tribune's Facebook page on **www.facebook.com/tribune242** and answering the daily questions, he amassed the highest points total to win a roundtrip flight to Miami, one night in a hotel and a one day car rental.

And Sidney has his eye on a trip to the US after the festive season to target the January sales. ***"I have never won a prize this grand, The Tribune have given me a great Christmas gift,"*** he said, and added "Courtesy of my late grandmother who died this October, she knew how much I wanted this prize. Thanks Grammy."

Congratulations Sidney.

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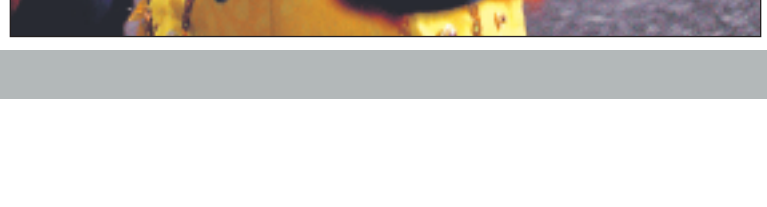
LOCAL NEWS

Bay St welcomes JUNKANOO

JUNIOR JUNKANOO took over Bay St last night, filling the street and the bleachers with the sights and sounds of the festival.

The junior festival saw schoolchildren of the Bahamas creating music and costumes to get into the party mood.

Picture special by **Felipé Major**/ Tribune Staff



Bay Street CLOSED

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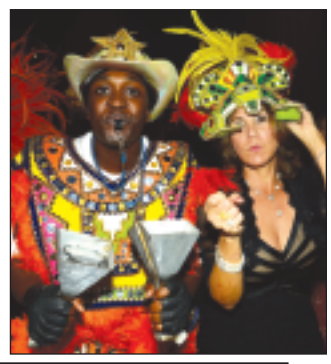
ATLANTIS WELCOMES

SPEED WEEK

ATLANTIS Hotel sponsored the gala ball of Speed Week last Saturday, sponsored by Pictet Bank & Trust and hosted by managing director Yves Lourdin.

The event saw 275 Speed Week entrants, sponsors and guests taking part in the ballroom, decorated elegantly in red velvet, black and white.

For more pictures, see the Big T tomorrow.



Photos: **Joshua Yentis**/Blue Wave Imaging

Tribune Trivia

Yesterday's Question

Tribune Question: Which artist showcased his latest work in the Renewal of Life' exhibition?

Yesterday's Answer

Omar Richardson

Yesterday's Winners

Lorraine Rolle	3pts
Deborah Imgraham	2pts
Eurydice Kemp	1pt

Click the '*Like*' button on the Tribune News Network Facebook page to play Tribune Trivia

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LOCAL NEWS

PLP ministry's $7m transfer

from page one

instructs them 'look here, I say put Jane in a house'. Now here is Jane in this house who's not qualified to be in this house and we know sooner or later she's gonna get into trouble, but the minister put her there. If it was under two different ministries, you would have checks and balances."

BMC officials confirmed this week that 12 homes in six government subdivisions are currently being occupied without mortgages. Mr Russell said that there were over 100 unregularised homes when the FNM administration came into power in 2007. He explained that sometimes approved persons, whose loans were not yet finalised, were placed in homes with a rental agreement equal to estimated mortgage payments. Ideally, the money would then be added to the mortgage once it was finalised. However, Mr Russell said due diligence was not always performed.

"Over 100 persons were found living in homes that were not paid, some persons claimed the homes were given to them, some were put in homes and proper checks not done.

"We found persons had claims against them so couldn't finalise and so the mortgage is in limbo," said Mr Russell. "Persons put in houses that weren't the same person who applied, but had the same name."

Mr Russell's comments follows reports this week of the significant debt troubles faced by the BMC. Amidst a high delinquency rate, BMC Chairman Dr Duane Sands said the corporation also owed $2.6 million to homeowners for a "contingency" fee that was never reconciled.

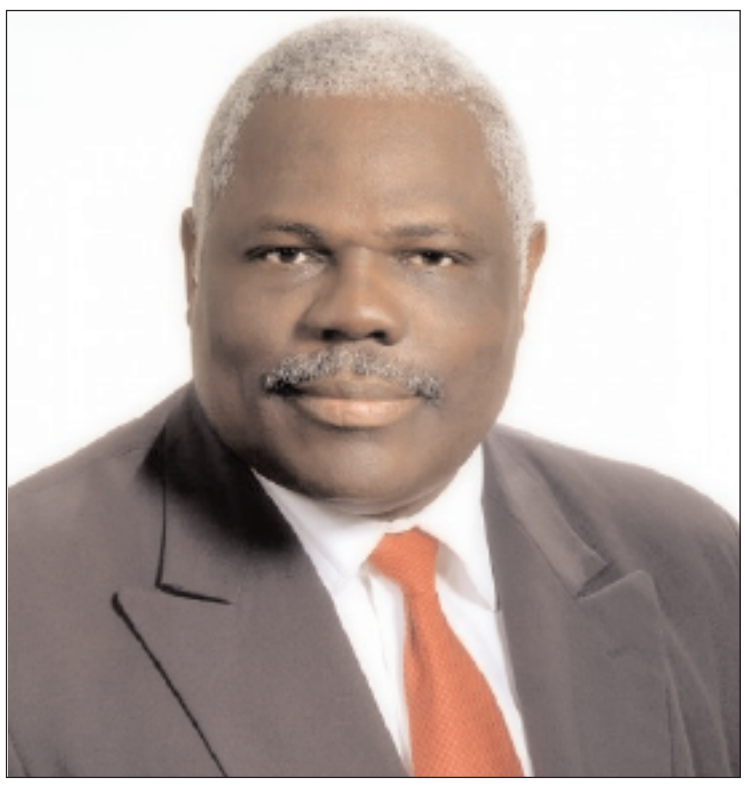
Mr Russell said he understood that the fee was set aside to pay the salaries of contracted employees as there was already a line item that addressed cost overruns.

He said the minutes of the meeting discussing the rationale of the contingency fee has disappeared.

"The idea, as I understood it, was to use that money to maintain employment of persons here at the ministry and the department."

Mr Russell added: "It should have been a government decision to do (add on a contingency fee) because you are increasing your customer's debt without any kind of consent. The government should have made the decision, and not just the minister and his group."

Although a directive was issued by the Housing Department to the BMC requesting the transfer of the funds, Mr Russell said the money was never handed over because of the ministry's long standing debt with the corporation.



KENNETH RUSSELL MP says he believes in checks and balances to prevent abuse of the system.

The Tribune can confirm that the request was issued in 2005 and signed by technical director Gordon Major.

Mr Russell added: "I believe in checks and balances. I believe that I should not be left alone to act like God, to make decisions without thinking about the impact, without understanding what's gonna happen down the road.

"To make decisions to put people in jeopardy, because that's what you're doing when you give somebody a house that's not qualified to buy one."

NEW YEAR'S DAY DEADLINE FOR MANGROVE CAY

from page one

While underscoring the success of Mr Kemp's "Crabs for Computers" scheme, Mr Woodside explained the department decided not to renew Mr Kemp's contract after key deficiencies brought to his attention were not addressed.

"In assessment of the department (Mr Kemp) was viewed as someone who exhibited very strong community development skills, and certainly good protocol skills," he said. "Unfortunately Mr Kemp did not seek to have his contract renewed with the department, in addition there was a failure to adhere to certain directives put to Mr Kemp and to make a long story short it was determined to part ways."

Residents staged further protests over the current administrative system, which residents described as "outdated and counterproductive to the growth of Mangrove Cay". According to residents, the externalised government services triples the cost of doing business in Mangrove Cay.

One of the main frustrations for the people on the island is having to travel to South Andros, some 25 miles away by a water taxi to have basic local government services handled. Total autonomy is expected to boost the settlement's economy by providing jobs and retaining wealth. However, some residents said they will have to see the change to believe it as the community had been promised an independent district in previous years.

Mr Woodside said the department will assign a complement of public officers to assume posts in various sectors, including customs, social services, port department, marine resources and Environmental Health services.

"There will also be the need for the district to have shared responsibility in terms of the Public Treasury, but more importantly as we go forward we want to ensure that the operation of the district will be in full compliance with the Financial Administration and Audit Act," he said.

The presence of central government authority will also bring oversight on matters of environmental concern and disaster management, Mr Woodside said, as well as reduce the department's travel costs. "It restores Mangrove Cay to the level it was in its heyday, and that it will be separate of South Andros and then there will be no need for residents from Mangrove Cay to go to South Andros for services provided by the central government."

'WILL $1M DRUG HAUL BE SECURE?'

from page one

matters are heard in Nassau, and not in Grand Bahama.

Gun court Magistrate Joyanne Pratt-Ferguson, who presided over the arraignment, acknowledged Mr Smith's point as he went on to express concern about the $1 million drugs being held in that location, and joked that there are "big rats that like cheese".

The magistrate then asked the police prosecutor his thoughts on the points raised, to which the prosecutor agreed and said it was also a concern.

Joseph, of Coopers Town, Abaco, and Pierre, of Freeport, Grand Bahama, appeared on four possession charges, including possession of cocaine with intent to supply, alleged to have been committed on Tuesday, December 6, in Freeport.

The prosecution said the accused were in possession of a quantity of cocaine, two black Glock handguns and 53 live rounds of .9mm bullets with intent to supply.

Drug Enforcement Unit officers found the items as they searched a house on Midshipman Road.

Joseph and Pierre deny the charges. Magistrate Pratt-Ferguson reminded defence attorneys Dion Smith and Carlson Sherlin that the court no longer had the discretion to grant bail.

Before the conclusion of the arraignment, Mr Smith informed Magistrate Pratt-Ferguson that his clients were not given their medication while in police custody, nor allowed to consult with their attorneys.

Joseph is reportedly a diabetic while Pierre is said to have a severe kidney condition. The magistrate acknowledged the request and made the order, asking a Nassau Street police officer present to ensure that the defendants were fed and given their medication.

The two were remanded to Her Majesty's Prison until they return to Court 9, Nassau Street, April 11 and 12, 2012, for trial.

CONSTRUCTION COMPANY FACES LAWSUIT

from page one

of the Tonique Williams-Darling Highway.

Clauses in the contract stated the company was to report the amounts of fill extracted from the site and provide Ms Smith with all reports.

The statement of claim said Ms Smith was never made aware of the amount of fill removed. To date, the actual amount has yet to be determined, it said.

The property owner also made it known to the company, according to the statement of claim, that all vegetation, including trees, shrubs and soil were to be transferred to a location of her choice for reuse, but this did not take place.

While the company was allowed to work as an independent entity, Ms Smith did request the right to determine how the pit would be cut to preserve the property's usability.

Instead, according to court papers, the pit was left unusable and now floods.

Ms Smith alleges that the company lacked professionalism and care as several verbal and written requests to correct the issue were made.

She was then left in debt as surveyors, engineers, heavy equipment operators and their machines had to be hired to complete the work while consultations, and expert advice continue.

The Jose Cartellone Company further breeched their agreement when the property was turned into a dumping ground for garbage and debris, said the claim.

In the process, continued the statement of claim, Ms Smith alleges that the company damaged a $5,000 45-foot container by unlawfully entering it.

Its $2,000 alarm system and other related items were also damaged.

Added to those claims, the statement of claim outlined Ms Smith's special damages totalling $88,300 due to the company's negligence.

- $14,400 for expert reports and maps.
- $4,900 site clean-up and over mined hole.
- $1,900 videographer charges
- $1,000 to place the 45' container
- $1,500 for initial reports
- $7,500 consultation and site rectification
- $50,000 estimate to rectify the site that is ongoing.

Calls made to the construction company were not answered.

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Marching band to bring street to life

TOMORROW, Mackey Street will "come alive" with the sizzling smell of steak and the amazing sounds of the popular Bahamas Youth Alive Marching Band.

Up to 100 members of this dynamic group of talented young Bahamians will throw a live performance outside Nassau Hotel and Restaurant Supplies at 116 Mackey Street, under the direction of none other than Dustin Babbs, former leader of the world renowned Royal Bahamas Police Force Band.

What's the occasion? A steak-out to raise funds for a most worthy cause.

This is a major fundraiser for Bahamas Youth Alive, an outstanding youth programme formed under Children Missions Outreach.

The band has grown from a handful of children in the Kemp Road area into one of the hottest acts in Nassau.

With 65 active members and a full complement of 132, Youth Alive members are spread throughout the island.

The group is well-known locally – they just performed at the tree lighting ceremony on Bay Street – and last year, they were invited to perform at the White House.

But it all costs money.

So from 11am to 4pm on Saturday, a team of volunteers will be grilling steaks and offering full dinners for $10 to help raise funds to purchase musical instruments and uniforms for the young performers.

The highlight of the day will take place around 2pm at Nassau Hotel and Restaurant Supplies, when members of the marching band put on a full performance to thank the public for supporting them.

The band promises to thrill their audience with Junkanoo, Bahamian music and contemporary gospel.

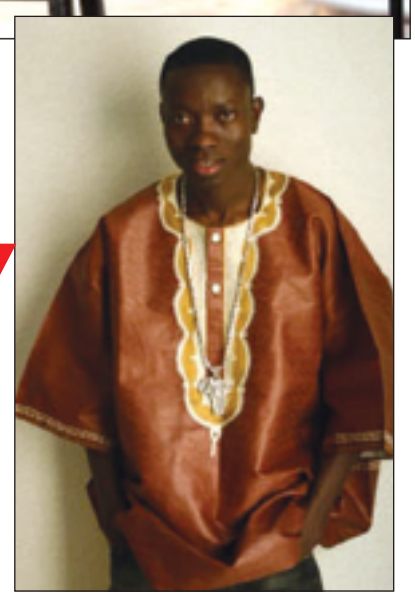
The event is a team effort between Nassau Hotel and Restaurant Supplies, Children's Mission Outreach and volunteers from the wider community.

Children's Mission Outreach was formed In March, 1994, by its president, Rev Ruby Saunders. Their mission is to help the needy with special emphasis on youth development.

Organisers urge the public to come out in support "so you can hear and see the bright future of our country for yourself."

To Advertise In The Tribune Call 502-2396

ARNEZ J, above, will be performing tonight at the Sheraton Nassau Beach Resort, along with Michael Blackson, right.



Nassau visit for COMEDY KINGS

TONIGHT is shaping up to be a laugh out loud affair with Arnez J and the African King of Comedy Michael Blackson lining up to take the stage at Comedy Night.

Paragon Concierge and Event Management along with Bacardi are staging the comedy event tonight at the Sheraton Nassau Beach Resort.

"Arnez J is rapidly becoming one of the most talked about comedians of our times.

"His charisma and physical agility are unique and have been known to evoke gut wrenching laughter and standing ovations," said Nelson Armaly, event promoter.

The St Louis Post Dispatcher described his comic style as primarily physical. He runs, jumps, spins, slides and slips through his performances.

Arnez J had performed on Comedy Central, Def Comedy Jam, BET's Comic View, the Keenan Ivory Wayans Show, Showtime at the Apollo, Shaq's "All Star Comedy Jam", The Mo'nique Show, Wendy Williams Show, his own BET Comic View Grandstand half hour special and many others.

His avoidance of profanity makes his shows attractive to family-oriented fans of all races. When asked about his broad base appeal he stated: "I don't curse in my daily life, why would I do it on stage?"

Featured with Arnez J is the one and only African King of Comedy Michael Blackson.

After his scene stealing performance in *Next Friday,* fans demanded more.

In 2005, Blackson did not disappoint. He released his top-selling sketch comedy album entitled, "Modasucka, Welcome to America".

With Blackson, the work never stops. Along with special guest appearances on some of the hottest music videos, he stole the stage on P Diddy's Bad Boys of Comedy on HBO and starred in a commercial for The Chappelle Show on Comedy Central.

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