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Volume: 108 No.35

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2012

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WOMAN THE WOMAN BEHIND FLORAL ARTS

SEE WOMAN ON PAGE 12B



PROVIDENCE HOLIDAY BASKETBALL CLASSIC CLASSIC TITLE FOR RATTLERS

SEE SPORTS SECTION E



2012's first murder victim

One stabbed, and skeleton discovered

By **KHRISNA VIRGIL**
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POLICE are investigating the first recorded murder of the year which claimed the life of a man in his late 30s.

And last night, officers also discovered human skeletal remains at Marshall Road.

The gender of the body, which was found shortly after 6pm, could not be determined as the remains were said to be severely decomposed.

With last year's record murder toll at 127, police have called a joint press briefing with the Bahamas Christian Council today.

The first murder victim of the new year was stabbed in front of his home on St Michael's Road, off Prince Charles Drive, on Sunday.

According to police, the man was discovered with multiple stab wounds about his body shortly before 11.30pm.

The victim was then taken to hospital by ambulance

where he later died.

Meanwhile, police are questioning a 30-year-old man in connection with a shooting incident which occurred earlier in the day.

According to reports, the 32-year-old victim was shot in his arm on Homestead Street, off Wulff Road, shortly before 3pm.

The victim was taken to hospital and has since been released.

Police are also investigating two separate Friday shootings.

In the first incident, a 36-year-old man was shot on Doyle Drive, Yellow Elder Gardens, shortly before 11pm. According to police, a man wearing dark clothing shot him in his abdomen.

The second incident occurred around the same time at a house on First Street, Coconut Grove, when a man was shot in his arm.

See page 6

THE VALLEY BOYS STRIKE BACK



A DANCER from the Valley Boys at the New Year Junkanoo. After a disappointing result on Boxing Day, the Valley Boys struck back to claim the New Year title. For more pictures and all the action from Junkanoo, turn to pages 2 and 12.
Photo: **Felipe Major/Tribune Staff**

AIRPORT HIT BY DELAYS

AIR traffic at the Lynden Pindling International Airport was hit by widespread delays yesterday, one of the busiest and most profitable days in the industry.

Last night, carriers lamented costly delays in excess of two hours with a much broader impact on goodwill as customers suffered through grounded and returned flights.

Executives at the Nassau Airport Development company pointed to flight congestion, and the saturation of Miami airspace, which resulted in a hold on traffic.

However, a person close to the situation said that with the exception of a one-hour maintenance delay, at least five flights — from Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Orlando and Freeport — were affected by the action of Air Traffic Controllers yesterday.

See page 6 ZERO TOLERANCE PROVES A SUCCESS

By **LAMECH JOHNSON**
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POLICE hailed the New Year's day Junkanoo parade as a "success", underscoring their zero tolerance mandate yesterday.

Supt Stephen Dean, National Crime Prevention Office, said there were a few minor incidents which led to several arrests.

The "minor infractions", according to Supt Dean, were the "regular unlawfully carrying arms, disorderly behaviour and possession of a quantity of dangerous drugs".

Regarding to changes to their strategies from the previous parade he said: "We have closed in all the gaps that we deemed necessary and that is working extremely

See page 2

TRIBUTES TO FNM CAMPAIGN CHIEF

By **DENISE MAYCOCK**
Tribune Freeport Reporter
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FREEPORT: LOVED ones yesterday mourned the death of Free National Movement campaign general Stephen Cartwright.

Mr Cartwright, 58, of Arden Forest, was killed and another man seriously injured following a traffic accident in the Lucaya area on Friday evening.

See page 6

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LOCAL NEWS



A MUSICIAN from the Roots group, right, and one of the Valley Boys on parade, far right.

Photos: Felipe Major/Tribune Staff



A FLOAT by One Family.

Valley Boys strike back

By LAMECH JOHNSON
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DEFENDING champions The Valley Boys have been declared the unofficial winners of the New Year's Day Junkanoo parade for a second straight year, redeeming themselves from a fourth place Boxing Day finish.

With more than a half a century under its belt, the historic group edged out One Family and the Shell Saxons Superstars, who ranked second and third respectively.

The Roots, Music Makers, and the Prodigal Sons ranked fourth, fifth and sixth place.

Six Category A groups and a greater number of Category B, D and F groups stormed the main strip of downtown in the glowing costumes and huge banners, attempting to sway thousands of spectators with their music, vibrancy and energy.

Yesterday's parade kicked off exactly at midnight, and without incident, as more than a dozen groups came to Bay and Shirley streets with different themes but a common goal.

For Valley Boys, the New Year's win makes up for a less than stellar performance at Boxing Day, as group leaders admitted to *The Tribune* last week.

For One Family, it was a chance duplicate and improve their splendid performance from the Boxing Day parade and wow the crowd once more to pull off a victory they felt was theirs at last week's parade.

A "two straight" victory for the Shell Saxon Superstars would have quelled talks that their victory during last week's parade was handed to them and not deserved.

The Saxons were out of the gates first with the theme "Soaring to New Heights - Forward, Upward, Onward, Together".

The moment the group hit

the downtown strip, screams filled the air as the spectators were forced to their feet by the level of energy given off by the Saxons. Their theme, according to a synopsis submitted by the group, called for the people of Bahamas "to live in prosperity, peace, love and unity".

The crowds grew even more intense as the brass sections of the group began playing well known songs such as "I'll fly away" written by Albert E Brumley (1929) and "Everything's Gonna Be Alright" by Bob Marley, sending the crowd into a frenzy as they joined in singing.

The Saxons were followed by the Prodigal Sons who performed with the theme "Junkanoo: A Celebration of Life." The group, hoping to change their placing from fifth to first, focused their theme on the deep history of Junkanoo, which was reflected most through their choreograph and off the shoulder performances.

Next in route, with theme "Carnival World", the Music Makers came to Bay Street and lived up their name as they dazzled the crowd with "Stop the world and let me off" by Ian Clarke and "Amazing Grace."

Following after them were the One Family Junkanoo Group who came ready to battle with a theme focused on "The Glitz and Glamour of Fashion." They stunned the crowd with their banner, a fashion hall, which held beautiful female models who exited the banner and "catwalked" for the audience, much to their delight.

The next banner brought to Bay and Shirley Streets by an A group was perhaps the most impressive seen up to that point. The Roots Junkanoo Group, bearing the theme "Atlantis: Sunrise to Sunrise" displayed a banner depicting the Royal Towers of the Atlantis Resort, "the Mayan water slide and the mystique of an enchanted rising sun."

According to their submitted synopsis, their theme and costumes paid tribute to Sol Kerzner, "whose dream of Atlantis encouraged other men who have passed on but played significant roles in the idea, design and development of Atlantis, notable the late Gordon 'Butch' Kerzner and Jackson L Burnside III."

Once Roots and a few of the smaller division B and D groups exited Rawson's Square, the crowd went crazy as they gazed upon a huge

float making its way towards the centre of that strip. The group that promised to deliver a first place performance were on their way.

The Valley Boys pulled through Bay Street and wowed the crowd with their bright, colourful and well designed costumes based on their theme "The Magnificent Wetlands of The Bahamas." Their dozen-plus off the shoulder dancers displayed the main point of their theme, which was to "portray life in the Wetlands" and many things persons would experience if they lived or visited three habitats that come under the protection of the Bahamas National Trust.

At the parade yesterday, spectator Ronicka Jones predicted a Saxons victory.

"I think the Saxons executed their theme the best," Ms Jones said. "I like them and I thought they were very lively."

Shelby Gordon, a youngster, said: "I think Valley Boys won the parade because they came out to win. Their costumes were really pretty and creative. It was designed really nice."

Krysta Smith and Bryan Bastian, attorney and intern at Murrio Ducille Attorney at Law Chambers gave their views on the parade itself and their winners of the event.

Ms Smith said: "I think Junkanoo was good. I thought the groups could have come a little bit harder but still enjoyable." "Well I missed the Saxons first lap, so I'm waiting to see them but I thought Roots did a very good job. And of course, I'm a Music Maker so of course I'm gonna be biased."

Mr Bastian, a One Family "warrior" said this: "I thought they (One Family) performed really well and the music was good. Their performance and everything was smooth sailing. They executed their theme and I hope they will New Year's Parade."

Having resided in The Bahamas for a few years, first time Junkanoo goer Keithley Woolward, St Kitts and Nevis native and lecturer at the College of The Bahamas, said that the fans were the real winners of the parade.

"All the groups did really well but I think the real winners are the spectators because they're getting a wonderful experience being out here and enjoying thrilling hours of music and culture from different groups."

SEE page 12 for more pictures

ZERO TOLERANCE PROVES A SUCCESS from page one

well." Last week, police issued a strong warning to would-be criminals that they would continue with their "zero tolerance" mandate.

Sgt Chrislyn Skippings, police press liaison officer, had spoken to the press on the sidelines of several

arraignments related to criminal matters occurring during the Boxing Day parade and advised persons that "if you feel like you're not going to behave yourself at the Junkanoo parade, stay home. There will be no room for you. We will seek you out and we will put you before the courts".

Officers were praised and applauded by spectators during the New Year's parade for their strong presence and action taken against persons looking to cause disturbances.

Yesterday morning, during the breaks between groups coming into Rawson's Square, officers escorted at least three men in handcuffs through the square to be taken to the Central Police Station.

The officers received hand claps and positive shouts from the crowd.

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Police have 'significant' leads into man's murder

By **KHRISNA VIRGIL**
kvirgil@tribunemedia.net

POLICE say they are following significant leads into the murder of a 27-year-old man who was shot dead on Fire Trail Road two days before the new year.

Three men, ages 25, 24, and 18, are being questioned about the incident.

The shooting occurred at 1pm on Friday, December 30. Police believe the victim was walking on the street when he was approached by a Honda Accord occupied by three men.

According to police, two of the men exited the vehicle, one of whom was armed with a handgun. He then shot the victim in the head.

The man was pronounced dead when emergency medical services arrived to the scene.

Ali McIntosh, leader of the Bahamas Constitution Party (BCP), told what happened shortly after shots were heard.

She said: "I was eating brunch when I heard about

"I ran outside and saw a man lying there with blood coming out of his head - he had two shots to the head."

Ali McIntosh

two shots. My mother thought it was a car backfiring so I continued to have breakfast, but when I saw the police, that made me realise that something had happened.

"I ran outside and saw a man lying there with blood coming out of his head - he had two shots to the head."

While Ms McIntosh did not see the attackers, she claimed the men could have been waiting on the victim as he walked home from a nearby convenience store.

She said she has been left "distracted" by the murder and questioned: "What could be so desperate that you would want to kill somebody? To take somebody's life?"

"I wish these young men would stop the carnage."

Not long after, police can-



THE scene of the crime as the body is taken away, as reported in Saturday's Big T.

vassed the area for clues and information.

Superintendent Stephen Dean said: "We are going

door-to-door trying to ascertain whether we can determine who might be responsible."

He added the police were confident that the motive as well as those responsible would soon be determined.

CRITICAL CARE BLOCK ON SCHEDULE

THE team working on the construction of the new Critical Care Block at the Princess Margaret Hospital have reportedly been making significant progress.

The contractors say the project is still on budget, and remains on schedule for its June 2013 completion date.

"The biggest excitement is the fact that the project has been designed and is being constructed by Bahamians. I'm really proud of the fact that we are predominantly Bahamian consultants," said Michael Diggiss of Michael Diggiss and Associates, lead consultant for the project.

"We are working along with Beck in Atlanta which is



headed by a Bahamian. We are working with Cavalier which is a Bahamian company and they are hiring Bahamian subcontractors - which really is a testament to the fact that with a collaborative effort, with Bahamian professionals in the construction industry, we can really develop a first class product for the benefit of the country."

Doug Thompson, president of Cavalier Construction, noted that the excavation of the

site is complete. Construction of the compound's retaining walls is the next step. He said: "Along Shirley Street, the retaining walls are well on their way and ahead of schedule. We are proceeding with the back-fill and compaction of that area. We've completed the majority of the enabling works except for the garbage enclosure and Ministry of Education additional parking. Next, we will continue on with the new entry block."

URGENT CALL ISSUED TO ALL GOVERNMENT PRINTING STAFF

STAFF at the Government Printing Department are asked to report to work immediately, according to an urgent request sent by the Cabinet Office.

Deputy Permanent Secretary Anita Beneby issued the directive to employees of the department at Old Trail Road in a statement sent Saturday.

The Bahamas Government Printing Department is responsible for the printing

of all Acts and Statutory Instruments.

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TRIPLE MURDER RUMOUR QUASHED

By **KHRISNA VIRGIL**
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THE Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPFF) last night quashed rumours of a murderous start of the new year after word spread of a possible triple homicide.

On January 1, users on two major social media websites discussed the alleged massacre.

One Facebook user said: "It's only the first day of the new year and people already killing, a whole three in one day!"

A Twitter user tweeted: "Three murders and its day one, something is wrong my people."

However, the RBPFF said in a press statement: "No mur-

ders have been recorded for the year (January 1)."

The release went on to remind persons how official crime news would be provided to the public.

"Additionally, police wish to inform the public that any information relating to crime (ie murders, armed robbery, etc.) will be disseminated through the official office of Public Affairs & Communications Department of the Royal Bahamas Police Force."

They urged the public to be vigilant in their contributions in making the Bahamas safer for all.

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CRIME IN BRIEF

POLICE are hunting two men after an armed robbery.

The robbery took place at Hill Top Convenience Store, on Prison Lane, at about 7.45pm on Friday, December 30.

According to police, two men, armed with handguns, entered the store and robbed it of an undisclosed amount of cash.

One man was wearing a grey hooded jacket and jeans pants, the other wore dark clothing. The pair fled the area on foot into McCullough Corner.

Meanwhile, a number of motorists have been issued traffic tickets in New Providence as police continue to crack down on a range of traffic rule breaches.

During the past week, police cited 103 drivers for various traffic infractions and placed two matters before the traffic courts.

Offences included driving in the wrong direction on a one-way street, failing to keep left, unlicensed and uninsured vehicles, and failing to change ownership.

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MY WEEK WITH MARILYN	NEW	1:05	3:40	N/A	6:15	8:35	10:40
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE	T	1:10	3:50	N/A	6:30	N/A	10:40
THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TAT	C	1:00	4:45	N/A	8:40	N/A	N/A
ADVENTURES OF TIN TIN	B	1:10	3:30	N/A	6:00	8:30	10:35
SHERLOCK HOLMES	T	1:00	3:50	N/A	6:35	N/A	10:00
SHERLOCK HOLMES	T	2:00	4:45	N/A	8:40	N/A	N/A
ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS	A	1:15	3:40	N/A	6:15	8:40	10:30
THE TWILIGHT SAGA	T	1:00	3:25	N/A	6:00	8:25	10:50

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MISSION IMPOSSIBLE	T	1:00	4:00	N/A	7:00	N/A	10:30
THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON	C	1:05	4:35	N/A	8:45	N/A	N/A
ADVENTURES OF TIN TIN	B	1:15	3:25	N/A	6:05	8:30	10:35
SHERLOCK HOLMES	T	1:05	4:05	N/A	7:05	N/A	10:05
ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS	A	1:10	3:35	N/A	6:15	8:35	10:30

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Published Daily Monday to Saturday

Shirley Street, P.O. Box N-3207, Nassau, Bahamas
Insurance Management Building., P.O. F-485, Freeport, Grand Bahama

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Unionists want right to be late for work

UNIONS seem to follow a pattern, they rattle their sabres at tourism's busiest time of the year, or when an election is nearing. The reasoning seems to be that these are the times when the boss is most vulnerable, so they toss him to the ground and pick his pockets.

True or false, that is the perception. For several days now, there has been discontent at the airport. A strike for the busy new year's weekend was threatened. Although a strike did not materialise there was chaos at the airport yesterday. We know that at least one businessman cancelled plans to travel to the US over the weekend because of strike talk - union leaders refused to confirm or deny whether the strike was on or off. The businessman feared that if he left the country he might not be able to return for early morning meetings on Tuesday. There were probably others in the same situation. Of course, no one knows how many weekend visitors coming into the country might also have cancelled because of the uncertainty.

As one businessman close to the tourist industry commented yesterday: "Today's union leaders are a different breed, they have no interest in nation building."

It seems unconscionable that anyone would try to destroy new business coming into a country that has suffered such a long economic downturn. But that is just what all this "work-to-rule" and "strike" at the airport did over a weekend that promised good business for the country.

It is interesting to note that the union making the most noise, is a breakaway union, which as yet has no contract with the government. Union leaders are to meet with Labour Minister Dion Foulkes next week - Tuesday, January 10 - to negotiate their first contract.

When a Tribune reporter tried to get information on Friday as to whether the newly-formed Bahamas Customs, Immigration and Allied Workers Union (BCIAWU) intended to go through with its strike threat, all union vice-president Sloane Smith would say was: "I offer no information today on what may possibly be going on at the airport. I will not say there is a strike or there isn't a strike. Things are unfolding the way they should. That is all I am prepared to say."

In other words, the travelling public can go you-know-where as far as unionists are concerned. They forget that these are the tourists who put bread on their tables and when the tourists are gone so is the bread.

Members of the BCIAWU were once a part of John Pinder's Bahamas Public Services Union (BPSU), which does have a government contract. The BCIAWU is negotiating a contract for the first time. They have listed several items that they

want clarified and incorporated into their contract. "Employees are repeatedly being disciplined for lateness, although the contract states this should not occur more than four times per month," is one of their complaints. Obviously, they are referring to the BPSU contract, which the BCIAWU abandoned on breaking away from the BPSU. At the moment, they have no contract as a reference point.

We had to read this "lateness" demand several times, and still we cannot believe that persons interested in holding down a job are trying to negotiate slackness into their contract. It's an absolutely preposterous demand, which should be tossed out before any negotiations begin. Anyone interested in giving an honest day's work has no right to demand the right to be late for work.

Just imagine everyone in a department deciding to have a lie in on a Monday morning. There would be chaos in that department. The taxpayers of this country have the right to demand more. What man or woman in the private sector can arrive late on the job without a valid excuse, and when that so-called "valid excuse" starts to form a pattern, the man or woman is eventually written up, and if there is no improvement, he or she is fired.

That is the general problem with the public service - there are many exceptions, of course - but as a general rule too many are not serious. They are not serious about work and they are not serious about serving the public. However, they are very serious about their days off, their overtime, and being allowed to be late for work one day in every week of the year.

Four late days a month, translates into 48 late days a year. What private company would tolerate this? What taxpayer would expect to get away with such dumb shenanigans at his own place of business, yet he is expected to foot the bill for a public servant to have the right to do so. It's now time for the public to have a say in some of these contracts, after all they are the ones footing these bills.

We hope that the right to be late for work is removed completely from all contracts. The main trouble with the public service is that it lacks discipline. What we have found in our years in business is that what is granted as a generous consideration when built into a contract suddenly becomes a right. One can be certain that every week of each month a staff member will be late because it is now his right - no reasons are needed for the lateness. How can a department head manage a department efficiently if he/she has to work with staff who have such "rights."

We still can't believe that union leaders would insult the public's intelligence by threatening to strike for such nonsense.

FNM-DNA coalition a clever move

EDITOR, The Tribune.

There apparently is a lot of furore in New Providence over the persistent rumour that the leadership of the Free National Movement (FNM) has secretly teamed up with Bamboo Town Member of Parliament Branville McCartney's new political organization, the Democratic National Alliance (DNA).

Rumours of an alleged deal by the two political parties to join forces were first brought to the public's attention by journalist Steve McKinney on his radio talk show Hard Copy.

Apparently many rank-and-file Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) supporters are unsettled by this latest turn of events. The rumour that McCartney has merged with Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham and the FNM is very disconcerting to many Opposition supporters for one obvious reason: The PLP would face an insurmountable task in winning the government in the 2012 General Elections if it is indeed true that the DNA has joined forces with the FNM. McCartney, however, continues to deny these persistent rumours. Interestingly, Opposition Leader Perry Christie and Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham have been silent on this issue.

I understand that Steve McKinney was supposed to run as a DNA candidate in the Fort Charlotte constituency in 2012. However, the popular talk show host and the DNA Leader have had one or two minor disagreements that have been played out in the public domain.

McKinney has accused the DNA Leader of making a backdoor deal with powerful operatives of the governing party. McKinney alleges that McCartney has made a backdoor deal for himself as well as six other prominent DNA candidates; the so-called Elite Seven, as they are called by McKinney.

Apparently, this is the reason why McKinney has changed his mind about running on the DNA's ticket. The DNA, on the other hand, contends that McKinney decided not to run because of a money dispute he had with the party. McKinney, however, has gone as far as producing a letter which allegedly proves that he was ratified by the DNA party. Clearly, the onus is on McCartney and his leadership team to prove that McKinney is bluffing, to put it mildly.

Nevertheless, if it is indeed

LETTERS

letters@tribunemedia.net

true that a coalition between the FNM and the DNA has been formed, why is this such a big deal with McKinney and his rabid listeners?

This wouldn't be the first time that two political parties have joined forces. Just recently, members of the Bahamas Democratic Movement (BDM) had joined the FNM. Also, several members of the National Development Party (NDP) had joined the PLP. So, why all the hoopla over rumours of an FNM-DNA coalition? What's the point?

We must bear in mind that McCartney is a politician. McCartney knows that he could lose Bamboo Town to either the PLP or the FNM if he doesn't do something drastic to save his political life.

Every politician has a sense of political self-preservation. And Branville McCartney is no different. I have stated before that the Bamboo Town incumbent is in grave danger of losing his seat now that he has severed ties with the governing party.

It must also be remembered that the FNM has been in existence now since 1971. The FNM has played a pivotal role in the deepening of true democracy in The Bahamas.

These people talk as if McCartney has signed up to join either the Nazi Party or the Klu Klux Klan. There is nothing wrong with the DNA and the FNM joining political forces. The two political parties would be a force to be reckoned with at the polls.

Had it not been for Hubert Ingraham, McCartney would not have been the current MP for Bamboo Town.

Further, there would not have even been a DNA party. But as I have said earlier, McCartney has denied these rumours.

I will take the Bamboo Town MP's words at face value. Perhaps the instigators of this rumour have planned to derail the DNA campaign by accusing McCartney of being a closet FNM.

These people are well aware that the FNM will go limping into the 2012 General Elections. It is quite possible that these people want the Bahamian electorate to believe that the DNA and the FNM are one and the same party. McCartney and his team have gone to great lengths to prove to the

Bahamian electorate that the DNA is a genuinely new political party. Quite frankly I cannot understand why these PLP supporters are so up in arms over this rumour. Maybe this is proof that they are really afraid of an FNM-DNA coalition. If the PLP is so confident that it will form the next government of The Bahamas, why are so many of its supporters so fixated on this rumour?

Initially, I was one of many Bahamians who believed that the DNA had made very little headway among the Bahamian electorate since its inception in early 2011. But I was proved wrong by the strong, enthusiastic support that the party currently has on its Facebook page and the many street rallies that the party has held throughout Nassau in recent times. There are many young Bahamians who are attracted to the new party. It remains to be seen, though, if this enthusiasm will translate into votes on election day. Personally, I don't think it will. All the same, McCartney has assembled a cadre of talented and successful Bahamians to run under his party's banner in the upcoming election. However, the party's main Achilles' heel is the Bahamian people's penchant for voting mostly for the two major political parties. This will be a major hurdle facing the new party in 2012.

If McKinney is correct, then McCartney has made the right decision from a political standpoint. As it stands right now, the candidates of the DNA party will not collect their election deposits on election day. Therefore, it would be a shrewd move by McCartney to go back home to the FNM. I believe that Ingraham would accept him and his talented candidates without hesitation.

KEVIN EVANS

Freeport,
Grand Bahama.
December 27, 2011.

(There is one point in this letter that must be corrected. Mr Evans claims that although Mr McCartney continues to deny that there has been a secret deal for him to rejoin the FNM, Opposition Leader Perry Christie and Prime Minister Ingraham have both been silent on the matter. This is not true. Although Mr Christie has made no comment, in an article published in The Tribune on December 21, Mr Ingraham denied the rumour. - Ed).

Double standards

EDITOR, The Tribune.

ACCORDING to the law, stealing by reason of employment is a crime. There should be no difference in profession, class or connection, whether it is political or professional.

There are many who have been arrested, charged, tried and imprisoned for stealing while employed.

How come the small man from over the hill, the people who have no connections and the less educated have to endure the indignity of being paraded through Bank Lane, shuffling in "slave style" chains around their ankles while others are almost rewarded.

The consistency of complaints for people who retain lawyers and get nothing in return, is greater more than ever these days. Very recently a few lawyers have been accused of using clients monies and could not give an account for how or what it was used for in the client's interest.

The puzzling part of all of this is that the ordinary people who are humiliated doing the Bank Lane Shuffle have stolen or misappropriated hundreds of dollars, but some of these lawyers use hundreds

of thousands and even millions of dollars of client's money.

These lawyers never are seen through Bank Lane and even have the option of negotiating with the victims. How come? The small people from over the hill are disrespected and treated like dogs while the lawyers are almost celebrated for "being slick".

Why is this happening? How come the police are not pursuing these persons as they do others for petty crimes? Why is the public getting the impression that only a few could break the law and get away with it "scott free"?

The politicians seem to totally disregard the reputation of its candidates.

My friend George Smith saw something written on the wall, but no one is paying attention. Time will tell exactly what he saw.

By the way, there are some who still occupy a seat in the House of Assembly who I believe "must be thoroughly investigated", the results made public so the people can see that "membership does not have its privileges."

IVOINE INGRAHAM

Nassau,
December 30, 2011.

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Man drowns as canoe capsizes

BY DENISE MAYCOCK
Tribune Freeport Reporter
dmaycock@tribunemedia.net

FREEPORT: Police are continuing their investigations into the apparent drowning of a 60-year-old man in waters off Eight Mile Rock.

According to reports, the victim and another man were out fishing when the canoe they were on capsized in waters off Russell Town, Eight Mile Rock.

Asst Supt Loretta Mackey, press liaison officer, said the men left on a fishing trip around 4pm on an 18ft canoe-style boat on Saturday.

While returning to shore, the boat capsized a short distance from the shoreline and the men started swimming for safety.

One man disappeared under the water. The second man, aged 51, was able to make to shore, and alerted police his fishing partner was missing at sea.

Asst Supt Mackey said Police, BASRA and Defence Force officers conducted a search for the missing man.

The body of the victim was recovered in waters around 6pm in the Hanna Hill area. It was transported to the Rand Memorial Hospital, where a doctor pronounced him dead.

Police have not released the name of the deceased. An autopsy will be conducted to determine the exact cause of death.



THE CANOE in which two men went fishing and which capsized, leaving one man dead.

RBDF DELIVERS THE FESTIVE FEAST

DEFENCE Force officers delivered hams and turkeys to families across New Providence on Christmas Eve.

The initiative was launched by Commodore Roderick Bowe, who said he chose to use the Defence Force

Rangers for this effort, to give the young officers an opportunity to learn about national service and the importance of giving.

At the same time, the Welfare, Morale and Recreation Department of the Royal Bahamas Defence Force, headed by force chaplain Pastor Prince Bodie, distributed hams and turkeys to the families of Defence Force officers who died in the service.

A statement from the force said: "During this festive season Commodore Bowe wishes to thank all who have assisted the Royal Bahamas Defence in fulfilling its mandate. Additionally, he wishes to express sincere gratitude to the government of the Bahamas for its continued support and commitment to RBDF. Finally, the commander of the Defence Force wishes the people of the Bahamas a merry Christmas and a prosperous new year."



DIANNA ROLLE receiving a ham from the Royal Bahamas Defence Force. From left: Sub Lieutenant Origin Deleveaux (Rangers director), Dianna Rolle, Roberto Larrimore (Ranger), Anishka Collie (Ranger) and Petty Officer Maxwell Lloyd (Rangers administrator).

SANTA VISITS HOSPITAL PATIENTS

AS HE does every year, Santa Claus paid a special visit to the patients and staff at Doctors Hospital on Christmas Day.

He and his elves, as well as a violinist and a cellist, came bearing music and holiday cheer.

Santa even had a gift for every patient and staff member.

"It was a nice surprise that he came in to see me," said patient Claude Quant. "When you're in hospital and going through what you're going through, especially at this time of year, it's really nice to have someone come in and cheer you up."



SANTA and Mrs Claus chat with patient Claude Quant and give him a Christmas present.

DNA DENIES CLAIMS OF CANDIDATE DEFECTION

THE Democratic National Alliance last night hit out at rumours that the party's South Abaco candidate has chosen to join the Free National Movement.

DNA chairman Mark Humes said the false claims are merely political mischief in the run-up to the next general elections.

Mr Humes said the FNM was only interested in seeking out weak links in the party.

He added: "This is political season, they have to do that in order to try and get people to second guess us."

"Every rumour so far this season has been false."

"The FNM is courting a lot of DNAs because now they recognise the value of the DNA."

"The FNM is gonna play a game, gonna try and see if there are any weak links in the DNA, not because they are really interested in these

guys. They are only paying a game."

"They play games with the Bahamian people. This is what we're tired of."

In an interview with *The Tribune* last week, DNA candidate for South Abaco Roscoe Thompson denied claims that he has been in "talks" with the FNM.

The rumours intensified with reports that Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham was on the island yesterday.

However last night, FNM chairman Carl Bethel dismissed the rumours as "purely speculative", pointing out that Mr Ingraham was the representative for North Abaco, and Mr Thompson is a resident of the island.

Mr Thompson said while the FNM and the Progressive Liberal Party have approached him about joining their respective parties, he has chosen the DNA - a decision he upheld last night.



DNA CANDIDATE Roscoe Thompson, who has denied claims he has been in talks with the FNM.

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LOCAL NEWS

TRIBUTES PAID TO FATHER THEOPHILE

FUNERAL services for Father Theophile Brown, O.S.B., former Prior of St Augustine's Monastery and teacher at St Augustine's College, were held Friday morning at Mary Mother of the Church Benedictine Abbey, in Richmond, Virginia. Interment followed in the church cemetery.

Fr Theophile, 86, died on Christmas eve after suffering for several months with tongue and throat cancer.

Born on August 24, 1925 in Richmond, Va., the third son of Thomas and Sarah Brown, he is survived by an older brother, and several nieces, nephews and cousins.

On July 11, 1950, Father Theophile professed his first vows at St John's Monastery, Collegeville, Minnesota, and was ordained to the priesthood on May 19, 1956. He was the first Afro-American priest to be ordained from the Diocese of Richmond.

After his ordination he was assigned to St Augustine's Monastery in Nassau where he was prior for 10 years. He also taught at St Augustine's College and assisted at parish-



FATHER THEOPHILE BROWN, who has died, aged 86.

es in Nassau for 38 years.

In 1994 he transferred to Mary Mother of the Church Abbey in Richmond to be nearer his family. He served his new community as Prior and later as novice master. He was spiritual director to the Benedictine Oblates. He also taught French at Benedictine College Preparatory School. Father Theophile was an accomplished musician and played the organ at the liturgy at the Abbey. He also assisted

in celebrating weekend Mass at various parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Richmond and served many years as chaplain of the Little Sisters of the Poor. Father Theophile was very active in his monastic community until three months before his death.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at 10 am Friday, December 30, at Mary Mother of the Church Benedictine Abbey.

Airport hit by delays

from page one

It is understood that a US pilot arriving at Odyssey Aviation complained about waiting four hours for taxi clearance. A Delta passenger from Atlanta told of how many times they had to circle the airport and go sightseeing in the air before being given clearance to land.

It was further reported that Pineapple Air had to refund two Junkanoo groups for the charter flights they had booked to Freeport because its aircraft was number 25 in line to taxi. The aircraft had to return to the gate after waiting more than an hour for clearance.

The delays will also be costly for Bahamasair. Reports indicate the airline will have to provide ground transportation, meals and hotel accom-

modation for passengers who will have a lay over. It is feared passengers from Seattle, San Francisco and New York might not be able to get flights out before January 4.

The long delays will increase the fuel bills for all airlines, including Bahamasair. Because of the public holiday, Bahamasair also will have a heavy overtime bill for ground crew, who will have to service flights finishing more than two hours after schedule.

It was speculated last night that Flight 327 from Nassau to Fort Lauderdale by way of Freeport would be too late for US preclearance in Freeport, which would mean that passengers will have to clear US Customs in Fort Lauderdale. For Bahamians traveling on to Fort Lauderdale, unless they have a US visa, they will not be able to travel. Those Bahamians who are traveling on a police certificate only must pre-clear in the Bahamas. If this happens, then Bahamasair is obliged to house these passengers in Freeport overnight which will be another heavy cost for the airline.

The industry was reportedly dealt a major blow over the Christmas weekend due to the work-to-rule initiated by bargaining agents, the Bahamas Air Traffic Controllers Union (BATCU).

The union ceased industrial action on Friday after two weeks, a decision that has been upheld according to BATCU president Roscoe Perpall.

"The system is operating at capacity due to NAD's Phase 2 construction," Mr Perpall said. "There are no more gate facilities for airplanes to park. Several aircrafts are waiting for gates, but there is a lack of availability of gate facilities at this point."

Mr Perpall explained that controllers were working to ensure optimum use of the airport, and highlighted that there has been a drastic improvement due to their

concerted efforts.

In a statement yesterday, NAD's vice-president of marketing and communications, Vernice Walkine maintained that "every effort" was being made by air traffic controllers to expedite flight arrivals and departures.

Last night, Sky Bahama chief executive Randy Butler said that pilots and crews were unconvinced that the labour dispute did not have an impact on yesterday's debacle.

"This system runs like a science, it's planned," Mr Butler said. "It is always expected that New Year's or the day after is the busiest time of travel. There's just no excuse for that, no excuse ever."

Mr Butler explained that delays on the runway account for up to 7,000 gallons of additional fuel. Paired with holiday wages and conciliatory items for customers, Mr Butler said that the labour dispute has challenged an already fragile industry and economy.

"When you have people not enthused, this happens," he said. "I sympathise with them, it's bad that the air traffic controllers have to take this type of action to get their concerns addressed."

However, Odyssey guest services manager Zelda Evans contended that the delays were largely due to the saturation of Miami airspace. Ms Evans explained that due to the proximity of Nassau and US airports, all flights must be cleared through the Miami flight centre after saturation levels reach a certain point.

"This had absolutely nothing to do with the union," Ms Evans said. "This is one of the busiest days of the year for departures, everybody just trying to get back home and we had an exceptional Christmas/New Year season."

Last night, staff within the department of Civil Aviation said they were to busy dealing with the influx of traffic to provide an update on the extent of delays.

STATE FUNERAL FOR SIR CLIFFORD

By KHRISNA VIRGIL
kvirgil@tribunemedia.net

FORMER Governor General Sir Clifford Darling will be laid to rest on Thursday.

The state funeral will take place at the Zion Baptist Church, on East and Shirley streets, at 11am. His body will be interred at the Western Cemetery.

According to the Cabinet Office, the fourth Bahamian-born governor's body will lie in the state foyer of the House of Parliament from today at 2.30pm to sunset tomorrow.

Sir Clifford, described as one of the major nation builders of the modern Bahamas, died in the Princess Margaret Hospital at 5am on Tuesday, December 27, after battling a long illness.

He was sworn in at Government House on January 2, 1992, by Chief Justice Joaquim Gonsalves-Sabola, succeeding Sir Henry Taylor, who retired the previous day.

A former taxicab driver, he served as general secretary of The Bahamas Taxicab Union for eight years and as president for ten.

In the early 1950s, Sir Clifford bargained with hotels for

better treatment for taxi drivers. In 1957, as president, Sir Clifford blockaded and closed the airport. A general strike followed in January, 1958. With Sir Clifford's help, an agreement among hotels, tour services and taxicab operators was reached.

Sir Clifford served as a PLP senator from January 1964 to January 1967. He then served as an Englerston MP from January 1967 to October 1969, when he was appointed to the Cabinet as Minister of State.

In November 1971, he was named Minister of Labour and National Insurance. He was responsible for the introduction of the National Insurance programme on October 7, 1974.

Sir Clifford was elected Speaker of the House in 1977 and knighted by the Queen the same year. He was a Stalwart Councillor, the highest honour that can be bestowed on a member of the Progressive Liberal Party.

Sir Clifford is survived by his second wife, Lady Ingrid Darling, and seven children, Clifford Darling Jr., Andrea Darling-Thompson, Sharlene Hanna, Theresa McPhee, Rushena Darling, Lakreisha Darling and Charles Darling.

TRIBUTES TO FNM CAMPAIGN CHIEF

from page one

Last night, family members expressed their gratitude to the Grand Bahama community for support offered. Mr Cartwright, operations manager at Deluxe Cleaners, has been classified as the island's 10th traffic fatality for 2011.

Asst Supt Loretta Mackey said investigations are continuing into a two-car crash that occurred shortly after 11pm at Midshipman and Balao roads.

According to reports, a red 2004 Lincoln LS, which was being driven by a 22-year-old male resident of Fortune Point, collided with the gray Nissan Frontier driven by Mr Cartwright. Both vehicles were extensively damaged. The victims were taken to the

Rand Memorial Hospital. The 22-year-old victim was reportedly airlifted for further medical treatment in New Providence.

Meanwhile, police are urging motorists to drive with care and to obey speed limits and road signs. More than 30 motorists were found in breach of the traffic laws during a road check exercise conducted by police on Saturday.

A spokesman said officers were at Sea Horse Road in Lucaya around 4pm checking for traffic violations. She reported that motorists were cited for various offences, including dark window tints, speeding, not wearing seat belts, unlicensed vehicles, invalid inspection sticker, defective windshield, and missing license plates.

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LOCAL NEWS

POLICE GIVE A FESTIVE TREAT TO SUMMER STUDENTS



POLICE officers hosted a special party at the headquarters on East Street on Friday.

The force welcomed in a host of summer students who were rewarded for their hard work with a party.

The youngsters took part in games, tucked into the food on offer and were given prizes for taking part in competitions and events during the day.

Photos: Tim Clarke/
Tribune Staff



Synergy Bahamas Spring 2012 Training Schedule

	Course	Description	Schedule
DESIGN	Certified Graphic Designer	Start a career in professional graphic design. Create stunning ads, flyers, cards in the world's most popular design software. Students will explore proper methods for selecting image areas, and modifying and manipulating selections.	Jan 16-Mar 14 Mon & Wed
	Certified Web Developer	Learn from a genuine Adobe certified webmaster and jumpstart your new exciting career in web design and website development.	Jan 21-Apr 21 Saturdays
BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL	Accounting 1	Learn the principles of Accounting in a learning friendly environment. This course provides a starting foundation for students seeking entry level positions in book-keeping/ accounting.	Jan 21-Mar 10 Saturdays
	Certified Business Manager (CBM)	A complete and immersive business management certification program offering international credentials in management and covering some of the most important aspects of professional managerial skills development in the field.	Begins Jan 21 Saturdays
	QuickBooks Pro Accounting	Guess what is the world's most powerful and most used small business accounting management program. Learn from our certified Accountant how to best use QuickBooks Pro in your business environment.	Feb 7-Feb 23 Tues & Thurs
	Microsoft Office 2010 Business User Program	Everyone should have a working knowledge of Microsoft Office as it remains the world's most popular and most utilized business application. Our Microsoft Office Master Instructors will guide you through the latest version of Office 2010. Small class sizes - comfortably paced delivery.	Jan 16-Apr 4 Mon & Wed
TECHNOLOGY	CBP Project Management Certification	Project Management skills and certification are the highest demanded corporate job requirements in the world today. Learn from a fully certified project manager and earn those skills and credentials right away.	Jan 17-Feb 23 Tue & Thurs
	Certified Computer Technician	A complete and comprehensive IT certification program for students pursuing a career as a computer technician. At the end of this program you will have working skills of a true (certified) computer technician.	Begins Jan 17 Tue & Thurs
	CompTIA Network+	There are many different fields in Information Technology. IT networking is one of the highest in demand. If this is your career choice then here is where you begin.	Jan 21-Apr 14 Saturdays
	CompTIA A+ IT Technician	The most demanded and respected entry level IT certification in the world. If you are planning a career in Information Technology - get A+ certified.	Jan 21-Apr 14 Saturdays
	Windows Server 2008: Microsoft Certified IT Professional	This official Microsoft certification course is designed to provide the student with an expert level foundation in Managing and Configuring Windows 2008 Server.	Begin Jan 17 Tue & Thurs

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"The course was a wonderful experience. It engaged my interest, enhanced my abilities and provided a new sense of motivation to expand my IT skills." - *Duran*

"It was very informative and enlightening. It was very intensive but it was worth it." - *Lukson Toussaint*

"Participating in this class was a great experience for me. The instructor was very helpful and made the subject material very clear and easy to understand. I feel very confident and prepared for this examination. Overall it was a great experience for me!" - *Gian Smith*

"I found the course to be quite interesting and would recommend these programs and courses to anyone." - *Nelson Johnson*

"I really enjoyed the course and the professional yet friendly manner of the instructor. The information was well organized and well presented. I loved the interactive presentation by the instructor." - *DeShaun Roberts*

"This entire course was indeed educational and entertaining at the same time. I don't regret one day and will recommend anyone that is interested in training to try Synergy Bahamas!! Thank You Synergy!!!" - *Deniro Wells*

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A gloomy start to 2012 for the Caribbean Community

By SIR RONALD SANDERS

2012 DAWNS on a gloomy horizon for the 15 countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

It is a dawn whose breaking, although foretold, was largely ignored. If the inertia continues in the vague hope that external conditions will improve to the extent that global buoyancy will lift the region, it is a hope without basis.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) apart from Guyana, Suriname and St Lucia – each of whose economies grew by 4.4 per cent in 2010 – the other 12 CARICOM countries experienced no meaningful growth and the economies of most of them contracted, including oil-rich Trinidad and Tobago (-0.6 per cent).

Although official figures are not yet available for 2011, it is clear that economic and financial conditions continued to deteriorate with rising debt and weak fiscal performance in the majority of countries. In the seven Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), there is increasing concern about the quality of assets in the banking system, particularly of indigenous banks with urgent action required to improve the situation.

The debt burden of many CARICOM countries – and the region as a whole – is quite alarming. Apart from Suriname, no CARICOM country has a debt to Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

insight

WORLD VIEW

ratio below 50 per cent. The ratio is over 100 per cent in St Kitts-Nevis, Jamaica, Barbados and Grenada. It is pretty close to that figure in Antigua and Barbuda and Belize.

It is significant that while Caribbean countries watch, with increasing unease, the unproductive debates in the European Union (EU) over its crisis in sovereign debt, and in the US on its rising debt and fiscal weaknesses, regional authorities have not even started a discussion about their own encircling predicament.

Of paramount importance is how can CARICOM countries achieve a higher sustainable rate of growth to help reduce their serious debt burden and improve their peoples' living standards? IMF programmes are in place in Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Jamaica and St. Kitts-Nevis, but these are aimed at preserving economic stability, they cannot produce the required economic growth.

The solution to the problem lies in both national and regional approaches. The government of each country has to devise programmes of recovery and growth linked to creative utilisation of its resource endowment. They also have to stop the pretence that, acting alone, they have the capacity to overcome their

overwhelming difficulties.

The seven small member-states of the OECS, in particular, have to turn words into action by intensifying their proclaimed integration arrangements at every level.

Not one of them will recover or prosper by clinging to barren sovereignty. For them, it should be more not less integration including joint Regulatory authorities for onshore and offshore banks, and for insurance companies. They should also establish joint missions for overseas representation and, where this cannot be achieved at institutions such as the UN agencies and the World Trade Organisation, joint support offices should be put in place manned by the best available persons.

Donor countries and regions, such as the EU, Canada and the United States have grown tired of waiting for the region to propose sustainable projects and programmes for which they could provide financial support. They are unwilling to continue to prop-up the region's traditional uncompetitive production in circumstances where they too must be watchful of the cost of living in their own countries, and the use of tax dollars.

The region has to forget the idea that Europe, America or



anywhere else owes it help because of past relationships. The decision of the British government to maintain the oppressive Air Passenger Duty on travel to the Caribbean despite regional protestations should have made that reality crystal clear.

Even if it is true that some European countries do owe the region, they feel that debt has been paid and, while they remain willing to be helpful as part of their assistance to developing countries, they want Caribbean countries to demonstrate that they are overhauling their arrangements to make themselves more competitive and less reliant on aid.

They would also like to see the Caribbean put up regional projects to utilise 200 million Euros (US\$258 million), set aside for the area over the period 2006 to 2011, that has been languishing in the European Development Fund.

CARICOM as a whole requires new external diplomatic/economic planning strategies and initiatives in

The regional ship needs an extensive overhaul and the regional journey needs a revamped chart to guide it through the turbulence which lashes it on every side. It also urgently requires dedicated captaincy at the highest political level not only to pilot it but also to inspire all its crew and all its passengers to work together for its safe passage.

order to be effective. Old ways of doing business are no longer viable.

These strategies and initiatives, including re-thinking the priorities of the Caribbean Single Market, should be part of a new policy direction that takes full account of the changed global dynamics.

But where is the leadership to produce them coming from? Where is the new thinking responsive to the new realities?

In 2011, both the technical and political leadership of CARICOM failed to inspire the people of the Caribbean with a sense of hope in fulfilment of their desire for improved standards of living, for more employment, for greater food security, for personal safety and for the assurance that their countries could compete in the world and be respected.

Regional authorities, such as the CARICOM Secretariat, the OECS Secretariat, and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) should have already provided new policy directions for the consideration of the political leadership.

At least by now, they should have posed the relevant questions about what

new direction, and how its elements can be financed.

But, this has not happened. The regional private sector has also not produced proposals for new arrangements that could diversify and expand the region's production and make it competitive.

Too many companies continue to rely on governments to protect them from competition and to subsidise their operations either directly or through donors.

The regional ship needs an extensive overhaul and the regional journey needs a revamped chart to guide it through the turbulence which lashes it on every side. It also urgently requires dedicated captaincy at the highest political level not only to pilot it, but also to inspire all its crew and all its passengers to work together for its safe passage.

In 2012, it cannot be business as usual. The passengers on the regional ship – the Caribbean people – expect better.

The writer is a Consultant and former Caribbean diplomat

• Responses and previous commentaries: www.sir-ronaldsanders.com.

2012

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ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- Applicants must be Bahamian citizens & residents of New Providence between the ages of 18 & 60 years
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- Applicants must be committed to complete the entire 12 week programme and all of its requirements. Official programme ends on **April 23rd**, however, 4 weeks of wellness-monitoring follows, until **May 14th** when Challenge winners will be announced.
- Applicants must have their own transportation and be present at all required meetings and appointments
- Applicants must be willing to appear in all publicity for the Get Well Bahamas Challenge, including but not limited to television appearances and interviews, photography, print and radio interviews.
- Employees of The National Insurance Board, Body Zone Fitness, Jemi Health & Wellness, and The Counselors Limited are not eligible to participate.

APPLICATION FORMS

Application forms will be available as of **Friday, 30th December**. They may be downloaded from www.nibdrugplan.com or collected from the Reception Desk at NIB headquarters, Sir Clifford Darling Complex, Beilou Hill Road, The Drug Plan Office at Wulff Road, Jemi Health & Wellness, Body Zone Fitness, and from The Counselors Ltd. Marketing Firm on 1st Terrace Centreville.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

All application forms and photos must be returned to The Counselors Ltd. Marketing Firm, First Terrace Centreville by **Friday, January 20th, 2012**. Please address submissions to: Get Well Bahamas c/o The Counselors Ltd., Nassau, Bahamas.

SELECTION PROCESS

Participants will be selected by Jemi Health & Wellness and Body Zone Fitness. Personal interviews will be conducted with prospective participants before selection of the final 40 participants. NIB will not be responsible for selection of any participants in the Get Well Bahamas Health and Fitness Challenge.

GET WELL BAHAMAS is funded by the Healthy People component of The National Prescription Drug Plan.

LOCAL NEWS

CONCERNS RAISED OVER LACK OF NATIONAL HONOURS FOR BAHAMIANS

By **KHRISNA VIRGIL**
kvirgil@tribunemedia.net

CONCERNS have been raised over the government's failure to name any Bahamians as recipients of national honours for 2011.

Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham, on Monday, December 13, 2010, awarded 24 persons who were honoured in the Queen's Birthday Honours during a ceremony at Government House.

Mr Ingraham told the group their contributions were important to the country's progress and development.

Receiving the highest award was Kerzner International CEO Sir Sol Kerzner. He was given the Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George (KCMG).

In light of that fact, the Progressive Liberal Party is now

calling for an explanation of why there has been no honours given to Bahamians for more than a year.

In a press release yesterday, PLP spokesman Fred Mitchell took the government to task on their "disgraceful" actions regarding the awards.

He said: "The Free National Movement administration must explain to the Bahamian people why for the second time in a row, the government has not provided national

honours for deserving Bahamians.

"They did not do so for the Queen's birthday list and now have not done so for this New Year. This is surely disgraceful. Each year there are deserving Bahamians who should be honoured by their country."

Noting that the PLP, had passed a law to abolish the Queens Honours system, Mr Mitchell said the FNM has refused to enact the law. He

said as this is the case, the system should be used.

"So what we have is the system left to us by the British. Since we have it we should use it."

In addition, Mr Mitchell said he has made recommendations for recipients of the prestigious award, however nothing has crystallized.

"I have on two occasions provided recommendations to the Prime Minister regarding Queen's honours, one for a

former Parliamentarian and the other for a deserving police

"The Prime Minister last year personally assured me that the honour for the Parliamentarian would be considered. Nothing has been done."

Mr Mitchell is now calling on the government to fully enforce the National Heroes Day legislation that will create the opportunity for deserving Bahamians to receive national honours.

Concern over 72 job losses

By **DENISE MAYCOCK**
Tribune Freeport Reporter
dmaycock@tribunemedia.net

FREEPORT: The Progressive Liberal Party candidates on Grand Bahama expressed concern over the firing of 72 employees from Hutchison Whampoa's business operations.

Senator Michael Darville, candidate for Pineridge; Attorney Gregory Moss, candidate for Marco City; and Julian Russell, the candidate for Eight Mile Rock, issued a statement about the increasing unemployment rate on the island.

"We express our deep concern and absolute shock about the distressing news that some 70 employees of Hutchison Whampoa's business operations here in Grand Bahama have been terminated, adding to this island's already painfully high unemployment rate that is estimated to be well in excess of 20 per cent," the statement said.

"We are told that the massive downsizing exercise that has taken place affected workers here at the Container Port as well as at the air-

port and Hutchison's hotel operations.

"Obviously, given the state of Grand Bahama's depressed economy, Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham will use this as an excuse to ward off criticism of his FNM government's cruel neglect of Grand Bahama over the past four-plus years, which has created an economic environment that makes it difficult for businesses to meet their responsibilities to their employees."

Dr Darville said companies which have closed under this FNM government in the last few years include, Fenestration Glass Company, the Home Center, Freeport Concrete, the Yamaha dealership, the Bowling Alley, Stone Crab restaurant, three restaurants operated by Rick Hayward, the Native Hut restaurant, Papa John Pizza, a McDonald's franchise, and countless small shops.

He also stated that many other businesses are operating with reduced staff levels.

"That's how bad the situation is here in Grand Bahama as a result of the mismanagement of this country's economy generally by Mr. Ingraham and his FNM govern-

ment," Darville said.

"To make matters worse, the Prime Minister himself chose to personally contribute to the problems that have crippled Grand Bahama's economy by engaging in an acrimonious dispute with Sir Jack Hayward, one of the principal owners of the Grand Bahama Port Authority (GBPA), for reasons that are still unclear to residents of Grand Bahama."

"This dispute escalated in December of 2009 when Mr. Ingraham, at a press conference at Sir Lynden Pindling International Airport in New Providence shortly before leaving for a climate change conference in Europe, announced that his government would not renew the work permit of Hannes Babak, the then chairman of the GBPA."

Mr Darville claims that Babak had been hand-picked by Sir Jack and Lady Henrietta St. George, widow of the late Edward St. George, the other co-owner of the GBPA, to be the company's chairman because it was believed that he was the best person to do what Edward St. George did so well, and that was encour-



SEN Michael Darville makes a statement to the press on the 72 terminations at Freeport Container Port, Grand Bahama Airport Company, and Freeport Harbour Company alongside, left, Julian Russell, PLP Candidate Central Grand Bahama, and Gregory Moss, PLP Marco City Candidate.

age investors and new businesses to come to Grand Bahama.

"Since then, Mr. Ingraham has chosen to ignore the fact that as a result of technological advances, we live in a shrinking world in which the decisions he makes as Prime Minister are instantly known globally by persons who are interested in doing business in The Bahamas."

Senator Darville believes that due to Mr Ingraham's ongoing dispute with the leadership of the GBPA, even to the extent of reportedly refusing to meet with them to try and resolve their differences, will continue to do serious damage to Grand Bahama's economy.

He said the PLP is ready and prepared to restore good

governance to the country.

Minister of State for Finance Zhivargo Laing said the termination of Hutchison workers "is not good news for a very troubled Grand Bahama economy".

He said: "It is a sad situation, especially for the persons involved, who I am sure would not have wanted this kind of news at any time - especially around the holiday season just before the beginning of the new year."

Minister Laing, MP for Marco City, said arrangements will be made to provide assistance to the displaced workers.

He said government will provide some assistance through the Social Services Department and the Unemployment Benefit Pro-

gramme, as well as offering counselling.

Mr Laing said that the global economic situation continues to affect some places more than others.

He said: "I am told that what (Hutchison) is doing is a reflection of some restructuring the company is seeking to do.

"We ourselves have to be mindful of the global economic situation that continues to be tentative in many ways, and continues to have some downside even though in some places there is mixed story about positive news, and in other places the news not so positive."

"But here in Grand Bahama things continue to be very difficult and we have to be vigilant."



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