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FEATURES A COB PROFESSOR IN THE MAKING

SEE WOMAN ON PAGE 12B



BASKETBALL C R WALKER KNIGHTS DOMINATE

SEE SPORTS SECTION E



Diplomat's son shot with AK47

WOMAN, AGED 31, MURDERED

By DENISE MAYCOCK
Tribune Freeport Reporter
dmaycock@tribunemedia.net

FREEPORT - The brutal murder of a young woman in Hanna Hill, Eight Mile Rock, on Monday has left residents in that small community devastated and police searching for her killer.

The body of the victim was discovered outside on the porch of a residence on Jack Smith Corner.

Police are searching for a 36-year-old man who was involved in an argument with the victim shortly before her death.

Although police have not yet officially released the victim's identity, the woman is believed to be 31-year-old Tasha Mondulus, of Hanna Hill.

Her death is classified as Grand Bahama's first homicide for 2012.

SEE page 8

COUNCIL DENIAL OVER FILMS

TAKING exception to an article printed in *The Tribune* last week, the Bahamas Christian Council vehemently denied its members watched any pornographic films while researching their position on broadcasting standards.

The article in question, published on Friday, January 6, said the council called for a ban on pornographic movies from Cable Bahamas' channel programming, "after watching 12 X-rated films from the home of a senior citizen."

SEE page 8

TRIAL CHANGE 'NOT PRIORITY'

By SANCHESKA BROWN
Tribune Staff Reporter
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ATTORNEY General John Delaney said a shift from trial by jury to trial by judge is not a top priority at this time.

He was responding to comments made by former Chief Justice Sir Burton Hall, who last week, while speaking at a lecture series at the Harry C Moore Library hosted by the Eugene Dupuch Law School, recommended the Bahamas move away from a jury system as it is "inefficient" and "costly."

SEE page 8

'Man known to police as drug peddler'

THE 33-year-old man killed with an AK47 assault rifle yesterday morning was the son of a Bahamian diplomat and former acting president of COB.

Police sources say the victim was Pheron Chipman, also known as Pheron Johnson, the son of Rhonda Chipman-Johnson, who is currently serving as Bahamas Consul-General to New York.

While police are uncertain about the circumstances surrounding his death, *The Tribune* understands the man was well known to police as a drug peddler who had been charged with assault and gun possession in the past.

He was shot several times in the head, chest and legs. It is believed that the killing was an execution to send a message to someone else.

Police responded to the scene shortly before 2am after receiving calls that gunshots



PERON CHIPMAN, also known as Pheron Johnson, were heard in the Farrington Road area, near Ajax Street.

When police responded, they discovered the lifeless body of the victim.

Police are urging anyone with information about this

SEE page 8

VOTER CARDS NOW AVAILABLE



THE FIRST DAY of distribution of voters cards. The event was held at Sir Kendell G L Isaacs gym and saw voters from across the new electoral districts in Nassau collect their cards. Photo: **Tim Clarke**/Tribune Staff

COLOMBIAN'S BAIL PLEA IS DENIED

By LAMECH JOHNSON
ljohnson@tribunemedia.net

A COLOMBIAN man's plea to a magistrate to be given bail was denied yesterday in Magistrate's Court.

The bail rejection by Chief Magistrate Gomez in Court One, now in the new Magistrate's Court Complex at Nassau Street, came as a result of 30-year-old Anderson Cossio, having no ties to the Bahamas, being considered a

flight risk.

Cossio, 30, of Bogota, Colombia, was arraigned on a charge of possession of forged documents - fake US currency notes - on Friday, January 6.

It is alleged that on the day in question, the accused was in possession of 13 fake US \$100 notes, knowing that they were forged, but purporting them to be genuine.

The Latin American denied the allegation and pleaded not

guilty to the charge.

When given the chance to explain himself with the assistance of a Spanish interpreter, he said he had no idea that the money he had received back in his home country was fake.

The prosecution objected to the accused being granted bail on the basis that he was a flight risk and had no legal ties to the country.

SEE page 8

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LOCAL NEWS

ROTARY BED RACE IS BACK AT MARATHON

THE Rotary Clubs of the Bahamas will once again be hosting their Bed Race for Polio at the Mall at Marathon.

The event will take place in the parking lot of Bennigan's on January 28 at noon.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Rotary in the Bahamas and the Bed Race will be the final event in a month-long celebration.

Everyone is invited to come out and see this year's bigger and more exciting race.



PICTURED ARE a few members of the mall's host bed racing team from last year, along with the mall general manager, Bob Stevenson.

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JEANINE FOX displays gifts with film commissioner Craig Woods (left) and Ranfurly Home administrator Alexander Roberts. Photo: Derek Smith/BIS

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Fox helps out Santa

CHILDREN at the Ranfurly Home traded in the traditional plump and round Santa and received some extra gifts during the Christmas holiday from a tall, slim and beautiful Santa's helper, Jeanene Fox.

Fox, who is a Bahamian working steadily as an international model and actress, returned to Nassau from Italy recently to spend time with her family and spread a little holiday cheer.

She was in Rome shooting a dramatic comedy by Robert F Kennedy III, starring Alec Baldwin (The Departed, The Aviator) and Giancarlo Giannini (Quantum of Solace, Casino Royale, Man on Fire). The film, AmeriQua will be in theatres this year.

The striking model said she worked with Virgin Radio in Italy to raise money for earthquake victims in Haiti and decided that she wanted to do something charitable for her own community as well.

"I thought of the Ranfurly Home because I grew up going to Faith Temple," she said.

"I used to pass the Ranfurly Home every Sunday and my mom would always

tell me that those kids were less fortunate."

The children were delighted that a famous Bahamian living far away in Italy remembered them. Ms Fox said giving gifts was not the only reason for her visit; she also wanted the opportunity to motivate and inspire children to dream big.

Starting out as a model at the Yodephy Dance and Modeling Academy, Fox is now well on her way toward international fame. She plans to produce some projects with her brother, former basketball player and actor Rick Fox.

Ranfurly Home administrator, Alexander Roberts expressed gratitude for the visit and said the home welcomes anyone who has something to offer the children, whether financial or the gift of their time.

"The kids here need that human interaction, whether it's helping to tutor them after school or just being a mentor," Mr Roberts said.

After her brief visit home, Ms Fox was back to business, flying to the Seychelles for yet another modelling engagement.



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DNA: Major parties have pact

By CELESTE NIXON
Tribune Staff Reporter
cnixon@tribunemedia.net

THE Democratic National Alliance has again claimed a secret collaboration exists between the leaders of the two major parties – this time hitting out at the PLP's Perry Christie for keeping silent on the sale of Atlantis.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday, DNA chairman Mark Humes called on the opposition leader to break his silence on the deal, which transferred ownership of the mega-resort to the hedge fund Brookfield Asset Management.

As the official opposition party, Mr Humes said, the PLP "should have made a stink" about the matter, demanded the details of the agreement be made public, and fought for the best interests of the Bahamian people.

"Ever since the announcement, Mr Christie himself has been completely silent on the matter," said Mr Humes, "the DNA asks, where is Mr Perry Gladstone Christie on this matter?"

He said Mr Christie's relationship with Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham, with whom he operated a law firm for many years, "has compromised his ability to effectively lead or oppose".

Mr Humes said the DNA believes the two leaders have been "always together – Christie, Ingraham, and Co".

He said: "Mr Christie for years has put his friendship with his former law partner and political colleague in the Pindling PLP administration above the best interest of the Bahamian people."

When announcing the \$175 million debt-for-equity swap, which saw Brookfield assume ownership of the Atlantis and the One&Only Ocean Club in late November, the government insisted the new owners had no plans to make staff cuts and would continue to invest in the resort, the second largest employer in the country, at the same rate as before the sale.

However, the DNA has claimed that lay-offs are indeed likely, particularly considering the new owner's aim of a 20 per cent increase in profits every year – and party leader Branville McCartney has accused both major parties of being well aware of this fact.

Responding to these claims, president and managing director of Kerzner Bahamas Limited George Markantonis said: "As the Prime Minister has stated before, there will be no employee lay-offs as a result of this transaction. The same management team continues to operate the property and, as always, the employment of labour will be based on the general global economy and, more specifically, how our occupancies are impacted."

"We believe there are positive signs the trend will be upward, but time will tell."

BRAN MCCARTNEY has accused the PLP and DNA of running a secret collaboration following the PLP's lack of comment on the sale of Atlantis.



TWO TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS, ONE DRIVER KILLED

POLICE are investigating two traffic accidents, the first involving a fatality.

In the second, accident a motorcyclist was sent to hospital.

In the first accident, a 53-year-old Cowpen Road resident was crossing Carmichael Road near Unison Road before 7am Monday when he was accidentally hit by a 2007 Ford Ranger truck, driven by a 47-year-old woman.

The victim was seriously injured and died at the scene.

In the second accident, a 55-year-old visitor from Minnesota is in hospital after being involved in a collision at 1:30pm yesterday at the intersection of Blake Road and John F Kennedy Drive.

The visitor was riding his motorcycle west on JFK when it and a burgundy coloured Astro Van, travelling east, collided.

Police are also investigating a drowning incident that involved a 34-year-old man, believed to be a Jamaican.

The incident is reported to have occurred shortly before 4pm Sunday when it was said that the deceased was spearfishing with another man in the West Bay Street area.

BRAN RUBBISHES BASTIAN'S CLAIMS OVER PARTY

By SANCHESKA BROWN
Tribune Staff Reporter
sbrown@tribunemedia.net

BAMBOO Town MP Branville McCartney denied claims yesterday that he started the DNA party with former MP for South Andros, Whitney Bastian.

Mr Bastian told reporters at a press conference on Sunday that he and Mr McCartney formed the DNA after both were fed up with the two major political parties.

"Both Mr McCartney and myself joined together to form the DNA party. I played a role and he played a role. We had many meetings for many hours in his office. But it all changed when I was rejected by the party," he said.

"I saw him one day in his

office after I was interviewed by the candidates committee and he said to me: 'It's so sad that out of 10 only nine persons agree for you to be a candidate, but I could not get the other person to agree'. So I said to Mr McCartney, 'Go to hell'. I asked him if he told them I gave him permission to use green as the DNA's colour and if he told them he asked me to wait until he quit the FNM to form the DNA. But you know what, all will be revealed on the campaign trail."

In June, Mr Bastian was denied a nomination to run for the DNA in the 2012 general election.

According to Mr Bastian the DNA felt that he would be more of a "liability" rather than an asset because of his storied past, having been placed on the "restricted list"

of the United States of America.

Mr McCartney, DNA leader, laughed off the claims saying "he is not the first to say these things."

"My God, everyone is claiming the DNA. John Bostwick said one thing, Renward Wells said another, now this. The truth is Mr Bastian applied to be a candidate. He was denied because the vote was not unanimous. Tell me this, if he helped to form the DNA why would he have to apply to be a candidate? That just makes no sense," he said.

"He came around to meetings just like many others who were interested in receiving nominations for the DNA. He had nothing to do with giving me permission to use green that was made by the full committee. I am sorry Mr Bastian feels this way but I

still consider him a friend and I hope he feels the same way."

Mr Bastian recently announced he will be running for South Andros and Mangrove Cay as an Independent candidate.

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MITCHELL HITS OUT AT ROLE FOR MOREE

OPPOSITION MP for Fox Hill Fred Mitchell has attacked the appointment of McKinney, Bancroft and Hughes managing partner Brian Moree to the chairmanship of the Public Service Commission.

In a statement issued yesterday, Mr Mitchell called the choice of Mr Moree "inappropriate and a travesty of public administration".

He said Mr Moree is someone who has no experience with the Public Service.

More importantly, Mr Mitchell said, the FNM government's first term in office is about to end, and such an appointment should be the choice of the next administration and the next prime minister.

He said: "The Prime Minister should know the point well, since it is an objection which he has taken in the past."

Mr Mitchell said the FNM should be careful to avoid creating the impression they are engaging in "cronyism" by appointing people who are openly aligned to the party.

Mr Moree could not be reached for comment before *The Tribune* went to press.



FRED MITCHELL MP said Brian Moree has no experience with public service.

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US argues it is immune from STD lawsuit

THE Obama administration argued Monday that Guatemalans unknowingly exposed to sexually transmitted diseases by US researchers in the 1940s cannot sue the United States, no matter how shameful and unethical the studies were.

In its first response to a lawsuit filed on behalf of the experiment's subjects, the US Justice Department late Monday said sovereign immunity protects federal health officials from litigation stemming from the study. The experiment conducted in the 1940s exposed Guatemalan prostitutes, prisoners, mental patients and soldiers to STDs to test the effects of penicillin. The studies were conducted without the test subjects' consent.

President Barack Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius have apologized for the research, hidden for decades until a Wellesley College medical historian uncovered the records in 2009.

The Justice Department filing Monday said the studies were "a deeply troubling chapter in our nation's history".

"As a result of these unethical studies, a terrible wrong has occurred. The United States is committed to taking appropriate steps to address that wrong," the filing said, without elaborating on what steps might be planned. But the government attorneys argued, "This lawsuit is not the proper vehicle — and this court is not the proper forum — through which the consequences of this shameful conduct may be resolved."

The government says the Federal Tort Claims Act protects the United States from lawsuits based on injuries suffered in a foreign country, even if acts that caused the harm were planned in the United States.

Attorneys for the Guatemalans said the immunity assertion contradicts the apologies made by Obama and his advisers. They also said failure to accept responsibility for the human rights abuses violates the international prohibition against non-consensual human medical experimentation that the United States and other nations renounced during the Nuremberg trials following World War II.

"We will continue to vigorously fight for the rights of the Guatemalans wronged in this matter to obtain a remedy for the harms done by US officials," plaintiffs'

attorney Terrence Collingsworth said in a statement in response to the filing. "But we remain open to the United States deciding to do the right thing, consistent with long-established human rights law and basic morality."

Guatemalan President Alvaro Colom said he wants the US government to compensate six survivors who have been identified.

The lawsuit also seeks compensation for heirs of all the victims who have died, some of whom have experienced their own health problems possibly linked to their parents' exposure, with the amount to be determined by a jury.

Attorneys representing the Guatemalans first asked the Obama administration to set up an out-of-court claims process similar to those established in the Gulf of Mexico oil spill and the Sept 11, 2001, terror attacks against the United States, but they got no response and filed the suit.

Guatemalan officials said last month that they have found 2,082 people were involved in the experiments conducted from 1946-1948 to infect subjects with syphilis, gonorrhea or chancroid. US officials put the figure at 1,308 subjects.

The STD study was designed to test the effects of penicillin, then a relatively new drug. Among the goals of the research, funded by the predecessor of the US National Institutes of Health, was to see how well differing dosages of penicillin worked against different venereal diseases.

An American team persuaded officials at prisons and mental institutions to cooperate by giving them other equipment and supplies such as refrigerators and difficult-to-get medications for malaria and epilepsy.

Sometimes, individual subjects were paid with cigarettes and, in the case of prisoners, infected prostitutes were used to expose them to the disease.

The US has been involved in numerous other infamous medical studies on human subjects. The most notorious was the Tuskegee syphilis research on 600 black men in Alabama who were studied without being offered any treatment. The physician involved in that study, Dr John Cutler, directed the Guatemalan research.

By Nedra Pickler, Associated Press

Concern over APD share offer

EDITOR, The Tribune.

I WOULD like to express my views on the recent IPO of shares on APD Limited.

I believe it is necessary to reiterate and to expand on the recent concerns and views expressed by Franklyn Wilson and the office of the Prime Minister and also to put some pertinent questions to the Securities Commission.

While I'm not attempting to repeat what has already been printed in the newspaper, I will say that I support Mr Wilson's position. And I believe we ought to be appreciative for persons like Mr Wilson, who has the courage and intellectual ability to recognise, expose and reveal the loopholes in the IPO that the average person may not be aware of.

More importantly, where is the voice of the Securities Commission? Aren't they supposedly looking out for the investor?

According to the press, APD is hoping to raise \$10 million from investors which will represent a 20 per cent minority interest. However, presently there is no representation for minority

LETTERS

letters@tribunemedia.net

investors on the board.

Personally, I believe there is something sinister about the manner in which the prospectus was prepared, intentionally omitting board representation for minority investors.

I believe it is incumbent upon the Securities Commission to immediately ensure that the above investors are represented.

It is not enough for a Principal to remark that it will be dealt with at the first board meeting. That can't be right.

And to add fuel to the fire, he goes on to say, "that person should bring something to the table".

Like Mr Wilson said, "they are bringing \$10 million."

One would have expected the Securities Commission to immediately put a halt to the IPO and insist that APD Limited correct the concern the office of the Prime Minister has.

I can almost guarantee you that if it was a group of a darker shade, the Securities

Commission would have been all over them.

You know some of our journalists, sometimes they make you wonder and question their ability to be a journalist or a reporter, while some are glorifying the IPO and talking about an upcoming whirlwind tour as if this is the second coming.

What they ought to be doing is examining and investigating the concern raised by the office of the Prime Minister and putting pressure on the regulatory body to act so that the integrity of the body will not come into question.

I've been following this scenario since its inception and I certainly would not buy into it. And I would advise that others follow suite until the concern is corrected.

In conclusion, it is also rumoured that the majority of shareholders of APD Limited at some time were attempting to get the office of the Prime Minister to convey title to Arawak Cay in fee simple.

PAT STRACHAN

Nassau,
January 7, 2012.

Making a wishlist for 2012

EDITOR, The Tribune.

Now that we have celebrated Christmas and are preparing to usher in the New Year of 2012, I would be obliged if you, the Editor of this fine and outstanding publication would permit me to submit a "wish list" for the nation as we go into a brand new year.

2011 will remain forever etched in the collective memory of The Bahamas as the most dangerous year to date as it relates to alleged homicides.

Countless business establishments were forced to shut down or to curtail their activities due to the massive and dysfunctional management of the ongoing road works here in New Providence.

Scores of workers were laid off and found themselves without a pay cheque during

the holidays.

Our politicians, across the board, continue to apparently shuck and jive while the nation appears to be going straight to hell down a slippery slope.

No doubt, most of them mean well but is that intention good enough? Very little real legislation was enacted during the last quarter of this year.

In fact, Parliament came back from a three months summer break in August and promptly embarked on a six week Christmas break a week or so ago.

There is any number of other economic, societal and cultural problems; which beset us and, no doubt, as we evolve as a nation, we will find relevant solutions. Until then, however, with your leave, I wish for the following:

- Less partisan rhetoric and posturing from our clueless and erstwhile politicians and their hungry bellied allies and cronies. What they call debates are, in fact, sound bites and bogus in your face small talk;

- A drastic and pragmatic re-approach to the ways and manner in which we seek to educate and socialise our school aged children, from the primary level straight to tertiary levels. The model being utilised in Barbados and Jamaica could be adopted in our own country. Additional fully funded and staffed trade and vocational institutions must be established to train those students who may not wish to go further from a pure academic stand point.

- The traditional inner city areas of New Providence are in rapid decline and have become blights and eyesores. We are able to borrow huge sums of monies for all sorts of infrastructural works but nothing to encourage the modernisation of these ghetto centres?

Not only would the environment be transformed but the tourism plant would be expanded as tours could be arranged for these inner city historical areas as in days gone by.

- The criminal and legal justice systems must be upgraded and better managed. The current status quo, where the Chief Justice is the effective Chief Executive Officer of the judiciary, is not working.

With all due respect to Sir Michael, to my knowledge, he's never managed a large

scale business, as the legal and judicial systems have become. The appointment of a dedicated individual, with the necessary support staff, to actually run the day-to-day affairs of these vital areas of governance is long overdue.

- A form of National Health Care should also be looked into and legislated into law. There are far too many Bahamians who are dying due to lack of medical insurance or access to finances to take care of serious illnesses. Some complain that it would be too expensive. Well, I do not subscribe to that because each citizen in a nation is equally as valuable as the next and there must be a social net to provide universal basic health care.

- The Small Business Act, long promised by successive governments, must come on stream in the first half of 2012. Small businesses all over the world in democratic countries account for over 60 per cent of jobs and newly created jobs. In this incarnation of the FNM, such businesses and the middle class, have been taxed almost to death and persons and firms are afraid to invest in new businesses or to expand existing ones.

- Lastly, the collective church and proponents of traditional values must step up to the plate and engage the minds and spiritual concepts of the average Bahamian. In short, they must come down from their high horses and emerge from their ivory towers before the nation implodes before our very eyes. The politicians and community leaders, on their own, are incapable and clueless about the effective ways and means to bring about the renewing and transformation of an individual's mind and thought process.

And so, I don't wish or ask for much for The Bahamas in 2012 but what I do wish and ask for will, I submit, arrest the decay in our society and will revitalise our country. Once these things are done, the sky will be the limit for The Bahamas and her people.

To God then, in all things, especially for His Mercies and Providence towards us, in all things, be the glory.

ORTLAND H BODIE Jr
Nassau,
December 26, 2011.

NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that **RENOT BELLOT** of Carmichael Road, P.O.Box SB-52580, Nassau, Bahamas is applying to the Minister responsible for Nationality and Citizenship, for registration/naturalization as a citizen of The Bahamas, and that any person who knows any reason why registration/naturalization should not be granted, should send a written and signed statement of the facts within twenty-eight days from the 10th day of **JANUARY, 2012** to the Minister responsible for nationality and Citizenship, P.O. Box N-7147, Nassau, Bahamas.

NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that **VIOLETTE GEDEUS** of Marsh Harbour, Abaco, Bahamas is applying to the Minister responsible for Nationality and Citizenship, for registration/naturalization as a citizen of The Bahamas, and that any person who knows any reason why registration/naturalization should not be granted, should send a written and signed statement of the facts within twenty-eight days from the 10th day of **JANUARY, 2012** to the Minister responsible for nationality and Citizenship, P.O. Box N-7147, Nassau, Bahamas.



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Judith Claudine Underwood, 75

of Nassau, Bahamas who went to be with her Lord on January 6, 2012, will be held on Tuesday, January 10th, at 11a.m. at Evangelistic Temple, Collins Avenue. Officiating will be Rev. Dr. Gary Curry.



She is survived by two daughters, Melanie and Crystal Underwood; one brother, Alfred Sands; one sister, Olivia Pinder; three brothers-in-law, Joel, Thaddeus, and Kemuel Underwood; five sisters-in-law, Evelee Sands, Patricia Newbold, Janet, Debbie and Maggie Underwood; nine nephews, Ellerton and Gary Sands, Marvin, Gilbert, and Raymond Pinder, Chuck, Rory and Esdale Underwood and Vince Newbold; seven nieces, Sharon Griffin, Sandra Williams, Nancy Lowe, Lucy Newbold, Camille and Dances Underwood, and Suzy Pinder; many great nephews and nieces and numerous other relatives. The family wishes to express a sincere and special thanks to Junie McIntyre, Marvin and Nancy Pinder and the staff of Home Fabrics, Basil and Juanita Russell and family, especially Myrtle Pinder and Tanya Mosko, David and Kathryn Kaiser, Gary and Sheena Lowe, Debbie Pinder, Betty Allen, Cynthia Sergeant, Pastors Gary Curry and Vaughan Cash and the Evangelistic Temple Church family, Pastors Allan Lee, Tommy Albury, Fredrick Arnett and the Calvary Bible Church family; and many other friends.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to the Christian Counseling Centre care of Calvary Bible Church P. O. Box N-1684, Nassau, The Bahamas.

Funeral arrangements are being handled by Pinders Funeral Home, Palmdale Avenue, Palmdale.

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This invitation is open as of January 9 through 13, 2012.



A WOMAN learns to walk on crutches after being injured during 2010's earthquake in a tent that is home of a number of displaced Haitians.

UNION STILL UNSURE OVER MEETING

By CELESTE NIXON
Tribune Staff Reporter
cnixon@tribunemedia.net

UNION representatives for Customs and Immigration officers are still on the fence about whether or not to show up to a meeting with Labour Minister Dion Foulkes today.

Last month, Trade Union Congress (TUC) president Obie Ferguson confirmed that Mr Foulkes had scheduled a meeting to discuss contract negotiations for January 10, but the unions said the minister had acted arbitrarily, as the 16-day statutory period to resolve a dispute had already passed.

A strike vote was passed by union members on December 2, 2011.

"The minister is acting outside of his statutory function," said Mr Ferguson. "As their lawyer, I cannot advise (the unions) to do anything outside of the law or that will put them at a disadvantage."

Speaking with the Tribune yesterday, Bahamas Customs, Immigration and Allied Workers Uniaion (BCIAWU) vice-president Sloane Smith said while the minister scheduled the meeting, the union has never agreed to it.

Mr Smith would not confirm whether union representatives would show up, saying: "Tomorrow is another day and we will have to see what happens".

In an earlier interview, Minister of Foreign Affairs Brent Symonette said union officials seem to be unwilling to negotiate. Mr Symonette, who has ministerial responsibility for both departments, explained that during the last conciliatory meeting, the union gave the impression it was only interested in obtaining a strike certificate.

"The role of labour is reconciliation. I trust in the new year, union officials will meet again with the department in an attempt to discuss issues," he said.

Among the employees' concerns are: that staff members are not getting hazard pay; that staff are not being confirmed after years of probation without any credible reason; and that employees are repeatedly being disciplined for lateness although contracts state this should not occur more than four times per month.

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Activists looking to reach out to Haiti

By DANA SMITH
dsmith@tribunemedia.net

A LOCAL activist group is working to increase public awareness of the plight of the Haitian people, who continue to struggle following 2010's devastating earthquake.

The United Association of Haitians in the Bahamas held a press conference yesterday at the Diplomat Centre on Carmichael Road to highlight the suffering in Haiti and announce a relief concert.

The concert, to be held at the centre, is a part of the association's ongoing earthquake relief efforts, co-ordinated under the Haiti Direct Aid programme.

Association President Antoine St Louis said the situation in Haiti is only "two or three per cent" better than it was immediately following the earthquake.

Robertson Dieudonne, the group's administrative assistant, said: "The primary purpose of the concert is to sensitise the community at large - that's the Haitian community living in the Bahamas, Bahamians of Haitian descent, and to sensitise the Bahamian community of Haiti's plight and pain."

"Raising monies to assist with our ongoing efforts under the Haiti Direct Aid programme is a secondary purpose."

Mr Dieudonne spoke of a need to "bridge the gap" between Haitians and Bahamians, but also recognised that the support from many Bahamians has been "tremendous."

"I think it's clearly noted that the Bahamians have actually opened up their hearts from the inception of this calamity," he said. "They have actually been on the ground. We've had a number of Bahamian businesses who without any media exposure, flew down to Haiti repeatedly."

"I think the support from the Bahamian public has been tremendous to say the least."

"A number of persons, when we spoke to them and challenged them as to their responsibility, obligation, need to help their fellow brothers and sisters in Haiti, we were surprised by the amount of monies that they would have sent," Mr Dieudonne said.

The amount of money the association raised "has been



SOME of the damage in the wake of the earthquake.

really minimal" in comparison to other organisations, Mr Dieudonne admitted.

Yet, he said, the "credibility of our claims" places their organisation on par with others.

"We have actually been able to document every indi-

vidual who received aid and we were able to verify every receipt," Mr Dieudonne said.

Dr St Louis said the organisation has raised more than \$30,000, but "the need is still huge."

"Haiti may even be just two or three per cent better than

how it was," he said. "People are still living in the tents, they are still in the hospital. Haiti is still in a dire need."

However, according to Dr St Louis, Haitians are "resilient."

"Even though they lost everything, they still have hope that things can be better and will be better, or that it could have been worse," he said. "It is our goal, we pray, that everyone will keep that hope alive in helping in whichever way you can."

The Haiti relief concert will be held at Bahamas Freedom Ministries' Diplomat's Centre on Saturday, January 14.

The event will be free, but the public is asked to bring any donations they wish to make.

The concert will feature local artists such as Benedict Larmantine, Landlord and Anna Calixle.



A BABY in a tent in Haiti.

MAN CHARGED OVER RECORD HOMICIDE

By LAMECH JOHNSON
ljohnson@tribunemedia.net

A MAN was remanded to Her Majesty's Prison yesterday after being arraigned on the country's record-breaking 96th homicide of 2011.

Andre Wallace, 25, appeared before Chief Magistrate Roger Gomez in Court One at the new Magistrate's Complex on Nassau Street.

It is alleged that on September 15, 2011, the accused shot and killed Leontis Louis.

Louis, 35, of Crooked Island Street, was reportedly leaving a home on Palmetto Street at around 5am when he was shot multiple times.

Wallace, a resident of First Street, the Grove, was not required to enter a plea to the charge. He was told a Volun-

tary Bill of Indictment would be served against him on March 7. This will forward the matter directly to the Supreme Court for trial.

When the accused was told he would be remanded into custody, as a new law had removed the court's discretion to grant bail in such cases, his attorney Jiram Mangra claimed his client was brutalised while in police custody.

Chief Magistrate Gomez noted the complaint and made an order for the accused to be examined by a prison physician.

He was remanded until the completion of his trial and returns to court Wednesday, March 7.

Twelve witnesses are expected to give evidence, according to court dockets.

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LOCAL NEWS

Bright prospects ahead for a happy new year

YOUR SAY
By DR HUBERT MINNIS
Killarney MP,
Minister of Health

WE HAVE now passed the holiday festivities and I am certain that we are all looking forward to a bright new year.

Based on recent trends, the Bahamas seems poised to hit the ground running as it pertains to the tourism industry, both from an improved level of occupancy and enhanced tourist product.

Those in the hotel industry are marketing their special brand of services and uniqueness to existing and potential new markets, targeting countries that are not part of the traditional areas of focus.

Bahamian entrepreneurs from other parts of the economic pie are preparing to tap into new markets while working on improving their service levels to create loyal customers for their business.

At the same time, govern-

persons across all socioeconomic levels.

In many cases, even experts will struggle to explain how this has happened and in many respects it is similar to putting hard earned money into the bank and being told that it is no longer there.

The substantial loss on the stock markets has been exacerbated by the growing debt experienced around the world, on a personal and public basis.

Countries – particularly those in the European Union – have been forced to put in place austerity measures that have, in some cases, never been tapped before.

When debt grows to such high levels as it did last year, we see the inevitable increase in lay-offs from both the private sector and public sector in some countries.

The convergence of these issues results in the increase in home mortgage defaults and some persons ultimately lose

in tough financial times.

While the government was not able to give pay increases at a level that many would have liked, it has sought to take the overall good of the masses into account as it dealt with the country's urgent priorities in a prudent manner.

It is in these types of situations that I look to us to make a paradigm shift to truly be our brother's keeper, recognising that a particular industry or sector may not have received an increase in recent times, but that these resources would have been used to ensure that others did not have to be forced out of a job.

We need to be aware of what's happening in the world and seek to change our spending and saving habits, as well as our expectations of employers.

We need to share in the responsibilities and not be selfish in our requests, and take on the attitude of sharing what little may be available.

'In spite of the global economic challenges, the Bahamas government moved forward with several large projects that will bring great benefit in the future.'

ment sectors are looking at customer service improvement initiatives while continuing to reduce costs in their respective ministries.

As we reflect on all these measures in the pipeline, one cannot help but consider a fundamentally important question:

Should we expect a happy new year?

I believe that it is instructive to traverse the globe to get a sense of how others are preparing for a new year.

While reading the December 31 edition of *The Financial Times*, a very interesting article by Robin Wigglesworth caught my interest.

The article highlighted the loss of \$6.3 trillion during 2011 on the global stock markets, which no doubt creates very real problems for many

their homes and lifelong investments.

Unfortunately, in some extreme cases, this leads to an increase in suicides and financial crimes, like armed robberies and home invasions.

Governments around the world, even in some counties as close as Florida, were forced to lay off civil servants, police officers, firefighters and teachers so as to reduce budget overruns and allow for the continuance of essential services.

It is noteworthy that the Bahamas government, however, made a concerted effort to ensure civil servants retained their jobs, giving them every opportunity to maintain their livelihoods and standard of living.

Even in the face of continued difficulty, the government of the Bahamas is committed to protecting its people – even

Sometimes it is better to give everyone a piece of the pie as opposed to a few receiving the entire pie.

Throughout the world, there are examples of companies and individuals who are accepting salary cuts to ensure that their brothers and sisters remain employed.

They recognise that the world as it exists today is very different from yesterday's world. I remember growing up, and how as a little boy we had to share, eg clothing was handed down from big brother to little brother (me being little brother).

Tough economic times brought about changes in the governments of St Lucia, Jamaica, Spain and many European countries.

The newly elected governments promised many changes including new austerity measures but in some instances they are finding it difficult to execute the change they hoped for. Regardless of the political promises, each government must face the realities of these harsh economic times.

Decisions have to be made based on true leadership as there will always be problems and issues, but it is how one manages these problems that speaks to how a country progresses.

Some governments were forced to increase taxes to offset their budgetary shortfall,



while others continue to explore new ways to increase their income and reduce costs.

As food prices soar, agriculture has become one of the avenues worth exploring for many countries, with governments finding innovative ways to incentivise farmers and increase farmland acreage.

Land that was previously zoned for commercial ventures like golf courses, housing and shopping malls, is being converted to agricultural space, giving those in the industry more land to expand their farms.

Here in the Bahamas, we know the importance of agriculture, but we have not truly provided enough incentives for a shift in local economic activity toward this industry.

It is my strong belief that we should be exploring our natural resources and those industries we can build from

them.

When we explore our natural resources, the natural progression is to review resources as an alternative energy source.

We are very fortunate to have glorious sunshine and the roar of the Atlantic Ocean upon our shores, which provides us with an advantage in the pursuit of solar and hydro energy alternatives.

The price of oil is the underlying or most significant cost factor we all encounter in our daily lives – for example, both in business and personal life, it is electricity costs which continue to cause great financial strain.

In spite of the global economic challenges, the Bahamas government moved forward with several large projects that will bring great benefit in the future.

A few examples are: the

Critical Care block at the Princess Margaret hospital; a new and improved accident and emergency unit at the Rand Memorial Hospital; two new state-of-the-art operating theatres and out-patient facilities at the Rand Memorial hospital; a new government complex in Grand Bahama; extensive road work and infrastructural improvement in New Providence; a new straw market; dredging of the harbour to accommodate mega vessels; the new Lynden Pindling International Airport; a new dual carriage road way from our major airport in New Providence; a new port facility and many others.

All of these infrastructural improvements are the foundation on which the Bahamas can move forward in 2012, so that we can indeed expect a happy new year.

US CONCERN OVER CHINESE-MADE OIL RIG OFF CUBA

By PETER ORSI
Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — A US inspection of a Chinese-made oil rig due to begin drilling in waters off Cuba has determined that it meets international safety norms, the American government said Monday.

A statement issued by the US Department of the Interior said members of its Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement and the US Coast Guard completed its review of the Scarabeo-9 rig on Monday in Trinidad.

The inspection covered everything from the platform's drilling equipment and safety systems to generators and the blowout preventer.

"US personnel found the vessel to generally comply with existing international and US standards by which (Spanish oil company) Repsol has pledged to abide," the safety bureau said in a statement.

Plans to drill for oil off Cuba have raised concerns from some environmentalists and US politicians who fear a repeat of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster, which

killed 11 workers and spilled more than 200 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico.

Repsol YPF, which holds the rights to an exploration block off Cuba covering more than 1,700 square miles, has repeatedly said the Scarabeo-9 meets US specifications and technical requirements. Havana officials say it boasts the safest, most modern technology available.

The safety bureau added that neither it nor the Coast Guard have any authority over the Cuba operation, and noted that the review "does not confer any form of certification or endorsement under US or international law". It also said US authorities are stepping up local spill-preparedness efforts and coordinating with other countries in the region.

"In anticipation of an increase in drilling activities in the Caribbean Basin and Gulf of Mexico, the United States is participating in multilateral discussions with the Bahamas, Cuba, Jamaica and Mexico on a broad range of issues including, drilling safety, ocean modeling, and oil spill preparedness and response," the statement said.

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9th day of January 2012.
**Donna D. Newton
REGISTRAR**

Supreme Court justice sworn in

JUSTICE Indra Charles has been sworn in as a Justice of the Supreme Court by Governor-General, Sir Arthur Foulkes.

Justice Charles served as a Justice of the High Court of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court since January, 2000. She served as a resident Justice in the British Virgin Islands from January, 2005, until her retirement from that Court in December, 2011.

She also served as an Acting Justice of Appeal of the Court of Appeal of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court on three separate occasions.

Educated at the University of the West Indies, Justice Charles received her Certificate of Legal Education from the Council of Legal Education in 1983. Prior to her appointment as a Justice of that court, Justice Charles served as a Magistrate, and Chief Registrar of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court.

Chief Justice Sir Michael Barnett said he is pleased the Supreme Court has been able to have such an experienced judge on the Bench.

He said: "Justice Charles brings a wealth of experience both on the criminal and civil side.

"Having served in the British Virgin Islands, Justice Charles has presided over civil trials relating to the financial services industry as well the usual criminal matters that are found in the countries of our region."



The Chief Justice said Justice Charles will be assigned to the criminal side of the

Supreme Court to enable the Court to adjudicate on at least five criminal trials in New

Providence at the same time. Justice Charles is the mother of two sons.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL Sir Arthur Foulkes (right) is pictured swearing in the Hon Justice Indra Charles as Justice of the Supreme Court at Government House. Photo: Derek Smith/BIS

CITIZENS JOIN FORCES TO CLEAN UP ENVIRONMENT

FREEPORT: In their fight to protect Grand Bahamas' natural beauty, the Keep Grand Bahama Clean (KGBC) Committee has been joined by a cadre of exceptional 'green citizens' throughout the residential and business communities, and civic organisations, who are doing their part to keep the environment clean.

According to KGBC chairman Nakira Wilchcombe: "These individuals have shown deep concern regarding the state of the environment of the island and have made a point to do something about it by going above and beyond what is expected of one to do. They are therefore worthy of recognition."

Some of the exceptional residential 'green citizens' are Don Mitchell, of Port of Call Drive, and Peno Capron, of Pioneers Way. Joined by other persons from the Port of Call Drive area, Mitchell began the fight against littering and indiscriminate dumping in his community by cleaning the beaches and roadsides every day, as well as installing garbage bins on the beach to encourage proper waste management.

Upon meeting with the KGBC Committee, he expressed his interest in keeping a cleaner community and has stood by the motto of the KGBC initiative that "It's everyone's business and everyone's responsibility to keep Grand Bahama clean".

"The Keep Port of Call Drive group was formed from their dedication and efforts and continues to prove that many hands make light work," noted Wilchcombe.

Similarly, Peno Capron, a homeowner on Pioneers Way, stood out from the others along his street by taking pride in his own yard. When Pioneers Way, a main thoroughfare of the island, was

bare of any landscaping, Capron decided to beautify his area by planting beautiful shrubs and trees around and in front of his home. By doing so, he has set an example for other residents alike to not only keep your area clean, but aesthetically pleasing as well.

In October, in commemoration of the 5th Anniversary of the KGBC initiative, approximately 21 civic organisations and corporate groups volunteered their time to conduct clean-ups in various locations around Grand Bahama.

"The simultaneous clean-up was a true testament of the results of working together," said Wilchcombe. "These bodies are saluted and encouraged to continue doing their part."

Specific exceptional business and corporate 'green citizens' include individuals like Tony Newbold, of Grand Bahama Nature Tours and Presto Recycling.

As a person whose livelihood is based on the pristine conditions of Grand Bahama, Tony Newbold was deeply disturbed upon travelling his regular tour route and seeing debris spewed along the way. Newbold expressed that many visitors indicated that they loved the nature-based jeep and kayak tours but hated the constant view of garbage. "And why shouldn't they? As persons paying to see the beauty of the island, beauty is what should be provided," he stated. Spurred by these incidences, Newbold, along with his family and colleagues, have engaged in many area clean-ups and brought public awareness to the ills of indiscriminate dumping which occur in our communities, directly or indirectly, and are affecting our tourism dollars. He has dedicated his time, as well as his company's efforts, to continue to keep Grand Bahama clean and has willingly joined along with the KGBC committee.

As a long standing member of the KGBC committee, Trevas Hall, of Presto Recycling, has always expressed his interest in keeping Grand Bahama clean which shines through in his business model. As of 2008, his company incorporated recycling bins throughout the schools as well as many different establishments to allow persons to become more environmentally friendly.

Additionally, the hard-working staff of Presto Recycling have always volunteered their time and efforts to assist the KGBC committee in any

way possible by spreading the message of being environmental stewards and participating in various community clean-ups. As the nature of their business of recycling has expanded, they have now relocated to a larger facility and continue to provide excellent environmentally-safe service to their customers.

"These 'green citizens' are commended for their unwavering commitment," said Wilchcombe. "Furthermore, as we enter a new year, we encourage even more individuals to join our cause for the betterment of our communities and inevitably our island, by always remembering as echoed in our 5th Anniversary celebrations: "Keep Grand Bahama Clean. It begins with ME!"



TONY NEWBOLD (3rd from right) is joined by family, friends and fellow colleagues as they scoured Fortune Beach, removing discarded refuse, during KGBC's 5th Anniversary island-wide clean-up.



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LOCAL NEWS

DIPLOMAT'S SON SHOT WITH AK47

from page one

incident to contact them by calling 919 or 322-3333; the Central Detective Unit on 502-9991 or 502-9910; or Crime Stoppers on 328-TIPS. It is still unclear if drugs played any part in this, the second murder for 2012, but officials have pledged to crack down on this aspect of the criminal underworld, as they believe it is fuelling many violent crimes.

On Sunday, National Security Minister Tommy Turnquest said drug trafficking will be comprehensively addressed in 2012.

"As we continue to tackle this vexing problem, the Bahamas National Anti-Drug Plan for 2012 to 2016 is currently being reviewed by stakeholders and it is expected that the Plan will be finalised and approved by the end of this month," he said.

"The plan outlines a comprehensive strategy to address, in a collaborative and cohesive way, all aspects of the illicit drug problem, including production, trafficking and misuse."

Mr Turnquest also used the opportunity to impress upon those officers present at Sunday's annual church services the importance of enforcing the laws of The Bahamas without fear or favour.

He said: "All police officers must know that no politician or any other individual who believes they may have influence, is to tell you who to charge or not to charge for an offence. You are required to do your job professionally and once you have the evidence to charge an individual for an offence, you must proceed with doing your work, confident of the fact that no harm whatsoever can come to you for doing your job."

MP calls for end to Arawak shares

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

FOX Hill MP Fred Mitchell called for government to "cease and desist" all future plans for the Arawak Port Development sharing agreement.

His statement came after Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham urged civil servants to buy shares in the project.

In an historic bid to further build a "share-owning" society, Mr Ingraham said over the weekend that persons employed by the government for more than five years will be eligible to apply for a salary advance to facilitate the purchase of these shares. The advance will serve as an interest-free loan, he said,

repayable to the Treasury Department over a 12-month period.

Yesterday, Mr Mitchell said "it was mind boggling that the prime minister would just decide to make such a move" after the PLP had pledged to review the terms of the agreement.

"I personally feel that this so-called 'sharing agreement' is just a ploy to block the PLP's original plan to reverse the port move.

"We have public servants who just complained that they cannot get advances to do things that they need to do, the necessities. Now he is going to give the government money away to do something speculative."

When asked what should

be done now that the offering has already been advertised to the public, Mr Mitchell said: "The Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) should amend their prospectus to let the public know that the plan does not look out for their best interest.

"Should the SEC make it known, the public may not buy as many shares as the FNM expects."

Mr Ingraham said weekly paid persons who have been working for the government for five years or more and have not been made permanent will be treated as though they are permanent for this exercise.

Persons in local government on the Family Islands will benefit with policemen,

teachers, nurses, customs, immigration, public servants in general administration, public corporations, and Bahamasair employees.

Private sector companies and the government own 40 per cent each of APD shares, with 20 per cent shares now available for public offering.

Potential investors will be purchasing shares virtually risk-free, said ADP general manager Mike Maura, who underscored the IPO's "awesome" benefits for both Bahamians and the government.

The Gladstone Road freight terminal is expected to be completed by the end of February, with the port operational in March. The facilities will allow for the consolidation of Customs and Immi-

gration services, which opens up the possibility of 24/7 port services, Mr Ingraham said.

While nearly 100 per cent of the deal has been subscribed, CFAL principal Anthony Ferguson, financial advisers/placement agents, explained that larger investors will not be allowed to dominate the offering due to the "bottom up" process.

The first 50 shares of each applicant is honoured first, and in subsequent tiers, Mr Ferguson said.

Each share costs \$10, with minimum purchase of 50 shares. Additional share must be purchased in multiples of \$25. The maximum number of shares that may be purchased through salary advance will be 500.

SCHOOL NAME TRIBUTE TO REVEREND

Red Bays, Andros – The Red Bays Primary school was renamed the Bertram A Newton Primary School at a ceremony held on Friday, January 6.

Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham said he was "pleased" to join the people of Andros in honouring Rev Bertram Newton.

"The renaming of the Red Bays Primary School serves as our recognition and appreciation of Reverend Newton's 40 years of service to education in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas," said Mr Ingraham. "Through his efforts, the children of Red Bays have learned about both their

African and Seminole Indian ancestry and also of the efforts of the settlers in Red Bays to bring development to North Andros."

Rev. Newton said he was "humbled" to receive such an honour.

"You must suffer sometimes before you have success," said Rev Newton. "I thank God for this day. Thank you God."

Rev Newton dedicated more than 41 years of his life to educating the children of Red Bays. The school was founded in 1935 by his father, Eldrick E Newton, who taught until his drowning death in Nassau in 1949.

Stepping into his father's shoes, Bertram Newton applied for and was granted the post of head teacher of the school and started teaching as the only teacher in 1951.

He taught the children of Red Bays under a thatch-roof tent for five years until it collapsed in 1956. After much perseverance, in 1959, John McDonald led the men of Nicholl's Town in constructing the first stone building in the history of Red Bays to house the school.

Rev Newton was handed the keys to the building in 1960. He went on to The Bahamas Teachers College in Nassau for training and



REVEREND BERTRAM A NEWTON looks on as the Prime Minister unveils the plaque.

returned to Red Bays one year later.

Rev Newton taught at the school until his retirement in

1991. Today, although retired, the Rev Newton still works with the children of Red Bays.

from page one

However, the council said this suggestion misrepresents what actually took place, as its members only took note of the titles and descriptions, at no time watching any pornographic content.

In its response to the draft

COUNCIL DENIAL OVER FILMS

Code of Practice for Content Regulation released by the Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA), the council gave a list of pornographic movie offerings, including titles and on-screen descriptions of each film.

The council said, "this information was viewed and noted from a TV with the Prime package (Basic Cable), on Sunday, December 25, 2011, around 3pm."

The statement also said: "These pornographic movie titles and descriptions were viewed from the home of a senior citizen who is ignorant about parental controls and who in any event can't operate her set top box."

Despite writing that the movie titles were "viewed" by the group of pastors, one of them, Cedric Moss, wrote: "In

each statement, we clearly indicated that it was the movie titles and descriptions that were viewed.

"We never said we viewed the films, and in fact we have not viewed any of the films listed or any other pornographic film for that matter.

"Why would we or anyone else need to view such films to know that they are pornographic? The titles and descriptions supplied by Cable Bahamas are sufficient to know that they are pornographic."

Pastor Moss said that in its response to URCA, the council "appealed to professional, scholarly studies that have consistently shown that viewing pornography is harmful to individuals who view it, their families, and the wider society."

Among these was a study by Dr Patrick Fagan, which

concluded that pornography "is a major threat to marriages, the family, and the society at large. It is not a private choice without public consequence. Pornography alters both sexual attitudes and behaviour, undermining marriage, which in turn, undermines the stability of the entire community."

Pastor Moss said the article also misrepresented what the council said concerning Satellite TV, as it gave the incorrect impression that the pastors singled out DIRECTV.

The council's statement said: "While we recognise that it is not within the scope of URCA's mandate, we believe that URCA should seek to prevail upon the government to either enforce laws (if they exist) or pass laws (if none exist) to address the practice of installing Satellite TV (like DIRECTV) in the Bahamas."

TRIAL CHANGE 'NOT PRIORITY'

from page one

He said the jury system in the Bahamas is not the most efficient process for the criminal justice system and is not worth the time and expenses spent.

Speaking exclusively with *The Tribune*, Attorney General Delaney said while it seems like a good idea in theory it is not very practical at this point.

"Many countries in the Commonwealth have moved away from juries, over 20 jurisdictions moved away from it in some way. A change like this for us would require constitutional amendments because every criminal trial in the Supreme Court is guaranteed to be heard by a jury," he said.

"I think it is an issue that will probably be discussed more and more going forward. Sir Burton has put it on the table for us to start discussing as a way to expedite the processing of criminal matters. However, at this point I do not feel it is first on the list. There are a number of other things we could do to yield results. It is something to consider going forward but not as an immediate action."

If the Bahamas moves away from jury trials, the alternative would be bench trials also called court trials. The trial would be held before a sitting judge who will determine the verdict.

With bench trials, the judge plays the role of the jury as finder of fact, in addition to making conclusions of law. They are usually faster than jury trials due to the fewer number of formalities required. For example, there is no jury selection phase, no need for sequestration and no need for jury instructions.

In 2007, the government passed a Bill to Amend the Juries Act. The Bill decreased the number of Supreme Court jurors impaneled in a non-capital case from 12 to nine. A provision of the Bill keeps the number of jurors required in capital cases of murder or treason – at 12.

Mr Delaney said more legislative changes came in November of last year that improved the judicial system and has had a major impact.

"We have doubled the capacity to have criminal trials running at the same time. We have also assigned prosecutors in teams to advise police in real time rather than after a suspect is questioned. This will assist them in building a better case because they have expert advice and also the quality of the evidence is better making the case more sound."

WOMAN, AGED 31, MURDERED

from page one

Asst Supt Loretta Mackey, press liaison officer, said sometime around 12:47pm plain clothed and uniformed officers went to the Hanna Hill area where it was reported a woman had been killed.

She said that on arrival at Jack Smith Corner, the officers discovered the body of a woman with a wound in the upper part of her body.

"The investigating team is following significant leads into the death of this 31-year-old woman and we encourage persons with information to call 350-3107/8, 352-9774/5 or 911," Asst. Supt. Mackey said.

Police has issued an all points bulletin for the suspect, 36-year-old William Leslie Forbes, of Freeport.

When *The Tribune* arrived at the scene around 1:30pm, a crowd of onlookers, including Eight Mile Rock MP Vernae Grant and local Pastors Lindy Russell and Raymond Pinder, were there. Police were still on the scene.

An elderly Haitian woman wailed loudly, calling the victim's name as the body was being put into a hearse by morticians from Russell & Pinder Funeral Home.

The distraught woman, known as Antoni, told *The Tribune* that she knew Tasha well and described her as a nice girl. Overcome by grief,

the woman suddenly collapsed to the ground. Several women rushed to her aid, and helped her to her feet.

Another woman who also knew the victim well, but did not wish to be named, said Tasha was living with her aunt.

"I knew her well from since she was a little girl; she used to play with my children," the woman said. "She grew up through here and I watched her grow. She was raised by her grandmother from the time she was three months old."

The woman said after the grandmother died, Tasha went to live with her aunt.

"She was a very nice young girl. She did not deserve that – not to die like that," the woman said. "I am deeply hurt and very disturbed by it because I am a mother and I have four daughters and young grand-daughters. I don't understand why it happened, but it (the killing) really needs to come to a stop."

WOMAN ON DRUGS CHARGE

A TEENAGE girl is behind bars at Her Majesty's Prison after being charged in connection with a \$45,000 cocaine seizure.

Atika McPhee, 18, of Misty Gardens was arraigned before Deputy Chief Magistrate Carlita Bethell on a charge of possessing three kilos of cocaine and taking steps to export the

dangerous drug into the US.

It is alleged that the accused committed the offence on Wednesday, January 4. She denied the allegations and pleaded not guilty. She was denied bail in last Friday's arraignment and the Marshall Road resident will return to Magistrate's Court for trial on Wednesday, May 30.

COLOMBIAN'S BAIL PLEA IS DENIED

from page one

Cossio, already in tears, pleaded with the chief magistrate to be given bail as he had a family to support.

However, Chief Magistrate Gomez told the accused that

he understood his plight, but told him that "these are very serious charges". He reiterated the prosecution's basis for denying bail. However, he let the accused know that he would ask presiding Magistrate Guilmina Archer if it was possible

for him to get an early trial date.

The accused will return to Magistrate's Court for a fixture hearing on January 13, this time in Court 10, located on the first floor of the Magistrate's Court Complex at Nassau Street.

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LOCAL NEWS



UNEXSO Dive Team has re-moored 24 of the 25 active dive sites on Freeport's south side.

Teams mark out dive sites

BY DENISE MAYCOCK
Tribune Freeport Reporter
dmaycock@tribunemedia.net

FREEPORT: The Underwater Explorers Society (UNEXSO) has re-moored some 24 active dive sites at Freeport's south side.

UNEXSO has been financing the mooring systems on Grand Bahama for the past 20 years, spending between \$8,000 to \$12,000 annually to keep moorings up to date.

This year, the effort is being partially funded by a grant from PADI (Professional Association of Dive Instructors) Project AWARE.

Project AWARE is a non-profit, worldwide organization dedicated to "conserving underwater environments through education, advocacy and action".

The foundation was established in 1995 in response to growing concerns by some scuba divers about potential harm inflicted on coral reefs by recreational and commercial water activities.

In an effort to preserve the sensitive aquatic environment, UNEXSO has spearheaded a campaign to execute moorings around Grand Bahama.

Since September 2011, the UNEXSO Dive Team has re-moored 24 of the 25 active dive sites on Freeport's south side.

These mooring systems consist of spliced polypropylene and/or dacron line attached to an inflatable mooring ball, which is subsequently secured to a mooring anchor eye on the sea floor or wreck site.

The mooring systems eliminate the use of anchors that can destroy or damage delicate underwater terrain.

Niall Christoffersen, UNEXSO Dive manager,



UNEXSO dive staff secure a new mooring in GB waters.

said other dive operators and boaters benefit from the mooring systems which are provided to all free of charge.

The UNEXSO team is concerned about residents who are intentionally removing the moorings or running them over while on the sea.

"We are the only dive operator here doing the work," said said Christoffersen.

"We are asking all dive companies and residents to be aware of these moorings, to use them correctly, and to leave them for others to enjoy."

Mr Christoffersen said persons should contact UNEX-

SO Dive Center at 373-1244 if they encounter a damaged mooring.

He said that callers should supply the coordinates to UNEXSO.

Mr Christoffersen also noted that any parts of a mooring that is found should be returned to UNEXSO (all mooring balls are marked), so that they can be quickly replaced.

"The Dive Team and the staff at UNEXSO are dedicated and unified in their effort to provide a sustainable underwater environment in Grand Bahama and feel that together everyone will benefit from these moorings," he said.

PAIR RESCUED AFTER PLANE SPLASHES DOWN

MIAMI (AP) — The U.S. Coast Guard came to the rescue of two Alabama residents whose single-engine plane splashed down in the Bahamas.

According to the Coast Guard, 59-year-old pilot Richard McGlaughlin and 25-year-old passenger Elaine McGlaughlin alerted author-

ities Saturday that their small plane was going down due to engine trouble.

Coast Guard crews found the McGlaughlins floating in an inflatable raft about 2 miles west of Andros Island, Bahamas. Pictures provided by the Coast Guard show their plane's tail and one wing sticking up out of the water,

along with the plane's red-and-white parachute.

No injuries were reported.

The McGlaughlins are from Birmingham, Ala. They told WSVN-TV in Miami that they deployed the plane's parachute to soften their landing. The pair said they had been flying to Haiti for charity work.

MAN ACCUSED OF STABBING

FREEPORT: A 44-year-old man is in police custody in connection with a stabbing that left a 35-year-old man in hospital over the weekend.

The incident happened at around 4am on Saturday at a business establishment on East Sunrise Highway.

When police arrived at the scene, they found a man with a stab wound in his chest.

The victim, a resident of Sea Horse Village, was taken to the Rand Memorial Hospital, where he is detained. A man is helping police with inquiries.

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The Tribune wants to hear from people who are making news in their neighbourhoods. Perhaps you are raising funds for a good cause, campaigning for improvements in the area or have won an award.

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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 web-site 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
	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
TECHNOLOGY	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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