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SPORTS: GOLFERS TEE OFF IN TOP REGIONAL TOURNAMENT

PLP rejected \$700m power rescue plan

CHRISTIAN COUNCIL TO BE GIVEN LAND

By **KHRISNA VIRGIL**
Deputy Chief Reporter
kvirgil@tribunemedia.net

PRIME Minister Dr Hubert Minnis has committed to awarding the Bahamas Christian Council Crown land to build a "proper" headquarters following a meeting with the organisation last week, Press Secretary Anthony Newbold announced yesterday.

SEE PAGE SIX

Albany offer also covered landfill crisis

By **SANCHESKA DORSETT**
Tribune Staff Reporter
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ALBANY'S Managing Partner Christopher Anand revealed yesterday that Joe Lewis and his Tavistock Group, the principal developers of the \$1.4 billion project, offered the former Progressive Liberal Party government \$700m to "fix the issues" at the former Bahamas Electricity Corporation and the city landfill.

However, Mr Anand said, for "some reason" the offer was never accepted.

During a tour of the luxury resort community, with

Prime Minister Dr Hubert Minnis and members of his Cabinet, Mr Anand in an impassioned speech railed against what he described as "two and a half years of banging our heads against the wall."

He urged the Minnis administration to "work with them" to solve the problems plaguing the electricity company as well as the consistent burning at the New Providence Landfill.

In response, Dr Minnis told reporters: "We look for the best deal possible that is in the best interest of the Bahamian people."

SEE PAGE TWO



THE BODY of a young man who was murdered in Fox Hill yesterday is removed from the scene by investigators. It was the 80th murder of the year according to Tribune records. see page six for the full story. Photo: Shawn Hanna/Tribune Staff

REFUGEES REVEAL ORDEAL OF YEARS IN DETENTION

By **AVA TURNQUEST**
Tribune Chief Reporter
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HELD for years without charge at the Carmichael Road Detention Centre, refugees yesterday described the facility as a prison that operated with no regard for human rights, international conventions, or the law.

"If you stay in one place and you have no rights, how do you feel?" asked one refugee yesterday as he ex-

plained that "you feel like a piece of stone, like an animal, you have no rights. To whom can you say something if nobody hearing you?"

"I was suffering inside, there (was) too much stress, I almost get depressed. Sometimes I had to go to the doctor to get pills for the depression. I don't like to get too much pills, but sometimes I had to do."

SEE PAGE FIVE

POLICE CHIEF WARNS - LAY DOWN YOUR GUNS AS KILLERS STRIKE AGAIN

By **RICARDO WELLS**
Tribune Staff Reporter
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IN the face of the country's growing homicide list, Acting Commissioner of Police Anthony Ferguson said the Royal Bahamas Police Force has launched an "aggressive" approach to apprehend

prolific offenders and increase police visibility.

He warned criminals to cease breaking the law or face "the stiffest law enforcement resistance."

Acting Commissioner Ferguson said every homicide recorded sends "shock waves" across the country and should be ad-

dressed in kind. However he sidestepped questions about the actual homicide count for the year thus far.

"So, I try not to worry about the (homicide) count," he told reporters summoned to police headquarters for a press conference in response to the spate of homicides, in-

cluding one that occurred Tuesday morning.

He added: "As a Bahamian, I want to be able to prevent anybody from being killed and I encourage all Bahamians to think about the life. Don't think about the count."

SEE PAGE SIX

'DAVIS SORRY - BUT WHERE'S THE APOLOGY?'

By **SANCHESKA DORSETT**
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PRIME Minister Dr Hubert Minnis said yesterday while he appreciates Progressive Liberal Party Leader Philip "Brave" Davis admitting the opposition party made mistakes during its last term in office, he is still waiting to hear "a real apology."

In an interview with reporters after a tour of the luxury resort community

Albany, Dr Minnis said he listened "attentively" to Mr Davis' address to the nation and said he noticed the words "I am sorry" were missing.

However, he said he understands that Mr Davis is "fighting for his own survival" and may have simply forgotten.

On Monday night, Mr Davis admitted the former government was not perfect, made "serious" mistakes and lost the "trust"

of Bahamians, but offered no outright apology for the missteps of the previous Christie administration.

Instead he sought to justify the former governing party's actions saying that during its last term in office the Christie administration was always thinking of the people affected by its policies.

Despite conceding his party's mistakes, Mr Davis also castigated Dr Minnis saying his national address

last week left the Official Opposition "perplexed" and offered no vision, concrete policies or credible plans for taking the country forward.

"He (Mr Davis) said that they have made mistakes, they made big mistakes. I listened and if you made mistakes and you know you made mistakes, I was listening for the apology, there was no such apology," Dr Minnis said.

SEE PAGE SIX

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PRIME Minister Dr Hubert Minnis speaking to the press during yesterday's tour of Albany.

Photos: Yontalay Bowe

PLP rejected \$700m power rescue plan

from page one

During his speech, Mr Anand said to the government delegation: "The electricity problem is ridiculous, let me tell you the havoc it causes is unbelievable. We may have generators but let me tell you the people back there, they do not have it, so their milk goes bad, their kids go bananas, like it sucks. What can we do about it guys?"

"Hey Joe (Lewis), how do you feel about putting \$700m up to rebuild the power infrastructure in The Bahamas? Oh, we can get rid of the smoke stacks, we can stop putting oil into the sea and we can actually put more money in everyone's pocket and we can invest in the country. What a great idea. So why don't you spend two and half years, working with the Bahamian government and BEC to restructure their debt put an offer on the table and let



THE FNM delegation at Albany yesterday.

us know how it goes. Our guy Jim, spent two and a half years and ten minutes later, someone else has it.... I am making a point we have spent many, many years, this man with a commitment to spend hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars in this country and honestly, it feels like we have been jerked around.

"Now you don't have to take our \$700m if there is someone else who wants to give you \$700m to make everything better, take it, for God's sake take it, but what are you doing? I mean it is unbelievable."

Mr Anand said a part of the \$700m offered would also have gone to fix the issues at the landfill. He urged the government to work with them, or anyone, to find a resolution as soon as possible.

"... And the dump, we can't even talk about that, in fact we are all still coughing up the crap out of our lungs to even form a sentence on that subject. Let's

talk about the dump, guess what, as part of our \$700 million, we were going to fix the dump. The point is this, we have been a willing counterpart to invest a lot of money to help fix the problems, we are part of the solution, not part of the problem," Mr Anand said.

"We have spent two and half years, banging our heads against the wall and Joe is a little fed up because not everyone has \$700m kicking around waiting for something to do. The Ministry of Finance would know that. You have a willing counterpart willing to solve problems, but let's get on with it, because we will make this country great together and it is time that you understand we are here and we are ready to help but we need to feel love back because this whole thing felt like something wasn't right."

Dr Minnis told reporters after the tour the BPL issues and the landfill are at the top of the government's



PRIME Minister Dr Hubert Minnis during the tour of Albany yesterday.

lists of priorities.

"I live in the west," the prime minister said. "That is a plea made to me and my constituency and a plea made by every Bahamian in The Bahamas. They have been screaming about the dump and the dump fires, especially those who live in the close vicinity.

"It causes health problems and health issues in the immediate as well as long term, you and I may not necessarily be around to see what long term effects may occur. Therefore as government it is our job to improve the quality of life, not only to Bahamians but also to

our visitors and guests and therefore when we came into power, we said that we would improve the quality of life for Bahamians, we know that the electricity is compromising the quality of life, we know that the dump site is compromising the quality of life in The Bahamas and therefore those must be priority issues."

American company PowerSecure was contracted to take over management at the government-owned utility provider in early 2016, which was renamed Bahamas Power and Light.

The new management deal was promoted by the

Christie administration as being the answer to sub-par electricity service and high electricity bills.

However, the country has still been plagued with repeated power outages, especially in the summer months.

The city dump has been plagued with recurring fires for a number of years. Renew Bahamas was engaged by the government in 2014 to manage the landfill and help address the matter, however the company suspended its services and eventually walked away in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew.

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No word on completion of repairs after hurricanes

By **KHRISNA VIRGIL**
Deputy Chief Reporter
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THE government does not yet have a timeline of when repairs will be completed on homes damaged as a result of Hurricanes Joaquin and Matthew, which ravaged part of the country in 2015 and 2016.

According to press secretary Anthony Newbold, while it is certain the homes must be repaired there will be no hurricane czar as was the case during the Christie administration.

He said the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Ministry of Works will oversee these efforts.

During a press briefing yesterday, Mr Newbold said as each member of Parliament has received their

\$100,000 capital grants, the public should see some repairs to homes shortly.

“(We) don’t have a timeline yet,” Mr Newbold said.

“We just got budgets and ministers can start to get to work. I imagine we will see some of that happening now. For example, as I said the constituency allowances are now available (and) the parks and beaches board has now been constituted. I spoke to the minister of the environment and he says ‘listen we are ready to go with this thing’.

“The next thing they are going to be addressing (is) the dump. As I said the prime minister convened a ministerial committee to deal with the dump. Again it’s taken time for these things to happen, but they

are happening.”

Regarding the capital allowances, Mr Newbold said checks and balances are in place to ensure these public funds are spent properly.

“All MPs should now be in possession of their constituency capital grants. The act came into force on July 1. So there should be some work starting soon in a lot of these constituencies. These grants are for development in the various constituencies. Those developments could include the maintenance of roads and parks, beautification or anything else to do with development, education or culture.

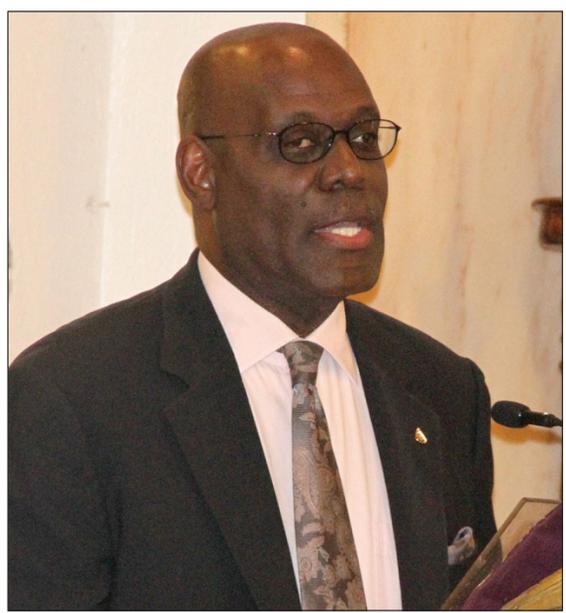
“This annual grant is in the amount of \$100,000. It’s not to be used for anything political. Like political meetings, fundraising, pay-

ments, maintenance, upkeep, salaries or any other expenses related to a constituency office.”

He continued: “For each development from a member of Parliament a proposal must be advanced with quotations, any required approvals and permits and, of course, a tax compliance certificate for the person who is carrying out the project.

“The minister of finance, the deputy prime minister is the only person who can authorise such a payment and proper accounts must be kept because a report must be prepared for the Auditor General at the end of each fiscal year.”

Last week, NEMA director Captain Stephen Russell said nearly 2,000 homes have still not been repaired.



ANTHONY NEWBOLD



THE ENTRANCE to the General Post Office building.

DETAILS STILL TO BE ANNOUNCED OVER RELOCATION OF GENERAL POST OFFICE

By **RICARDO WELLS**
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DESPITE weeks of shortened shifts and chaos in its sorting system, the government still has not provided a timeline for the relocation of staff and operations from the General Post Office, according to Bahamas Public Services Union President John Pinder.

Extending a plea for the government to “come to some resolution,” Mr Pinder said plans have been in place since 2015 to have operations relocated from East Hill Street to the Town

Centre Mall, but have not been carried out for various reasons.

Mr Pinder told *The Tribune* he has remained in contact with officials at the post office, receiving daily updates on the situation.

“We’ve been waiting for some time,” he said. “And while we wait, the workers have tried everything they can to keep things running as smoothly as they can. But, I don’t know how much longer these small makeshift systems can sustain an operation this big.”

Following a recent flood at the General Post Office, officials introduced four-

hours shifts for employees. However, those shifts were further reduced to three hours due to a broken air-conditioning system.

Since then, Mr Pinder himself has called on institutions that depend on the General Post Office to issue important or time sensitive documents to clients, to work directly with the post offices’ sub stations to ensure that those important documents are delivered on time.

In addition to this strategy, Mr Pinder has also been working with post office and airport officials to have a group of sorters per-

manently stationed at the airport, to properly sort international packages and mail as they come in, with the view to have them delivered directly to the sub-stations.

Last year, Mr Pinder threatened industrial action if the Christie administration did not immediately move employees from the “unsanitary” East Hill Street location. At the time, he said his members were forced to work in a mould-infested building with rats and termites and a leaking ceiling.

Mr Pinder maintains that since that time, issues at the

facility haven’t improved, but have got worse.

The former Christie administration had started efforts to have the main post office relocated to a new building off Tonique Williams Darling Highway by the end of May, however, according to Mr Pinder, the Free National Movement administration stopped those plans and is considering moving the post office to the Town Centre Mall.

The Minnis administration hasn’t officially addressed the status of the General Post office since being elected on May 10.

‘MOTHER’ PRATT WELL DESPITE SOCIAL MEDIA RUMOURS

CYNTHIA “Mother” Pratt, speaking from her Coconut Grove home last night, wanted to assure the public that she is alive and well. And, like members of the public, she too would like to know when she died.

Circulating on social media yesterday was a report that “Mother” Pratt was dead. However, although “Mother” Pratt is in excellent health, there has been a tragedy in the family. Her 36-year-old niece, Lashanda Percentie, who was in a traffic accident early Monday morning, is critically ill in hospital. Doctors do not expect her to live.

Mrs Percentie is an Immigration officer who was on her way to work at the Immigration Department on Hawkins Hill when shortly after 5am her car crashed into a wall near Bamboo Shack and a police station. Last night her condition was critical. Death was expected momentarily.

Mrs Percentie lived with Mother Pratt before her marriage a year ago. Someone hearing of a pending death in the family, assumed it was “Mother” Pratt and without checking, put the news out on social media that “Mother” Pratt was in fact dead. At her home last night “Mother” Pratt was taking calls to assure her friends that she was still with them.

“No truth,” said a healthy “Mother” Pratt late last night. “I am in good health and would really like someone to tell me when and where I died.”

ADJUSTMENTS TO BE MADE TO BOARD APPOINTMENTS

By **KHRISNA VIRGIL**
Deputy Chief Reporter
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PRESS Secretary Anthony Newbold said “adjustments” will be made to the list of statutory board appointments and committees, adding that despite there being errors inclusive of at least two deceased appointees, he could “absolutely give no assurance” that these blunders won’t recur.

However, he said, the only assurance he could give is that both Prime Minister Dr Hubert Minnis and the secretary of Cabinet are going to be vigilant over what comes out of the Cabinet Office in the future.

He was yesterday unable to give answers on how erroneous information was included in the published list last week, suggesting it was

human error despite there being an application process in addition to lengthy Cabinet meetings over the appointments.

“There are some adjustments that need to be made to the boards,” Mr Newbold said yesterday during a press briefing at the Office of the Prime Minister.

“(There were) some oversights.”

The Tribune confirmed last week that Mildred Williamson, of Mayaguana, was listed as having been appointed to the Advisory Committee on Cooperative Development; however, it was confirmed that she died in 2015.

Brian Gibson, who was appointed to the National Junkanoo Committee, is also deceased, *The Tribune* was told.

Another discrepancy highlighted was the listed appointment of “Charley

Reubin” to the Anti-Doping Commission.

This newspaper was advised that the correct name for the appointee is Charles Robbins. Errors were also said to include repeated names from the previous year, according to a government official who did not have authorisation to comment on the matter.

Mr Newbold also said on Tuesday: “We want to be as good as we possibly can. From the prime minister’s standpoint he would like perfect, but what he promised was effective and so whatever boards we have they better be effective and that’s his ultimate aim for these boards that were appointed to be effective.

“(The oversights) were brought to his attention right away and I assure you because I had a conversation with him, the secretary to the Cabinet and the PS

(permanent secretary) in his office and those are being addressed.”

Asked to explain how deceased persons were appointed in view of applications needing to be submitted, Mr Newbold said: “They probably couldn’t have gotten an application and that is one of those boards that you have to look at and say ‘What happened with this board?’ There were individual applications. Were they all looked at or did they look at this board and say this board looks good, reappoint them?”

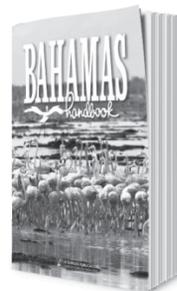
“They can slip through them because they are human. We wouldn’t want it to happen again, but it can happen as it obviously did,” he further explained.

“There is absolutely no assurance that anyone can give you that it won’t happen again. I can give you an

assurance with it happening the one time the prime minister and the secretary of Cabinet are going to be very vigilant with what eventually comes out to the Cabinet,” he added.

As for remuneration, Mr Newbold said respective ministers have some oversight over this, adding that not all board appointees receive a stipend for participation.

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Venezuela's president threatens to rewrite Constitution

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Teams of heavily armed security agents seized two of Venezuela's top opposition leaders from their homes in the middle of the night Tuesday, dragging one into the street in his pyjamas as President Nicolas Maduro's government defied US sanctions and international condemnation of a plan to assume nearly unlimited powers.

Leopoldo Lopez and Antonio Ledezma were being held at the Ramo Verde military prison south of the capital, accused by the government-allied Supreme Court of violating the terms of their house arrest by plotting to escape and releasing video statements criticizing Maduro.

Both men's allies denied the charges and vowed to continue to try to push the ruling party from power. But they gave little indication of how they planned to do that, and the capital was unusually quiet after months of sometimes violent protests. While the United States and some Latin American allies condemned the arrests, many other nations and international organizations were silent or limited themselves to expressions of concern.

Lopez's supporters released a video he taped last week saying he expected to be imprisoned again soon, and calling on Venezuelans to be firm in resisting Maduro.

"If you are looking at this video now, it's precisely because that occurred, because they came and they illegally imprisoned me again unjustly, a prisoner of consciousness, a prisoner for my ideas, a prisoner for wanting a better Venezuela," the 46-year-old Lopez said.

He also said that his wife, Lilian Tintori, is pregnant, touching her belly and saying he has "one more reason to fight for Venezuela." He called the pregnancy "the best news I've received in the last 3 1/2 years" — the time he spent behind bars before being released to house arrest last month. The couple had been allowed some conjugal visits.

Maduro appeared undeterred in his plans to seat a special assembly this week with powers to rewrite the country's constitution and override any other branch of the Venezuelan government. He has threatened to use those powers to go after his opponents and the arrests Tuesday appeared to show he was willing to proceed with full force.

Maduro appears to have the full support of the country's most important institutions.

Venezuela's powerful vice president, whom the US has accused of drug trafficking, said the newly elected constituent assembly would be convening "within hours."

In remarks aired on Venezuela's state television, Tareck El Aissami said that results from Sunday's election have been reviewed and the 545 assembly members would soon take the reins of the nation's government. He didn't give a specific time.

Venezuela's defense minister, Gen. Vladimir Padrino Lopez, also appeared on television Tuesday to affirm his loyalty to Maduro.

"We ask for respect for our democracy, for the way in which we have decided to take the road that we deserve to take in peace, in democracy, with tolerance, without violence and without heading toward a coup," Padrino said.

Lopez was released from the Ramo Verde prison on July 8 after serving three years of a 13-year sentence on charges of inciting violence at opposition rallies. Many human rights groups considered him a political prisoner.

Ledezma, 62, was also detained in 2015 and has been under house arrest. Like Lopez, he also recently posted a video denouncing Sunday's vote.

Shortly after midnight, black-clad members of Venezuela's state security force forced Ledezma from his east Caracas home in his blue pajamas, yanking him out into the night as a woman

screamed for help.

"They're taking Ledezma!" the woman can be heard crying on a cell-phone video released by Ledezma's allies. "It's a dictatorship!"

Lopez's wife posted security-camera video of him being taken from their home and bundled into a waiting car.

"They've just taken Leopoldo from the house," Tintori wrote on Twitter. "We don't know where he is or where they're taking him."

Attorney Juan Carlos Gutierrez said the government's decision to return Lopez to prison was "completely arbitrary" and said Lopez had obeyed the conditions imposed on his house arrest and never had plans to flee.

Tensions escalated in Venezuela after government-allied electoral authorities said more than 8 million people voted Sunday and the turnout was disputed by the opposition and independent analysts and condemned by many nations in the region and beyond.

On Monday, the Trump administration added Maduro to a growing list of high-ranking Venezuelan officials targeted by financial sanctions. For now, the Trump administration has not delivered on threats to sanction Venezuela's oil industry, which could undermine Maduro's government but also raise US gas prices and deepen the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela.

Maduro said Monday evening he had no intention of deviating from his plans to rewrite the constitution and go after a string of enemies, from independent Venezuelan news channels to gunmen he claimed were sent by neighbouring Colombia to disrupt the vote as part of an international conspiracy led by the man he calls "Emperor Donald Trump."

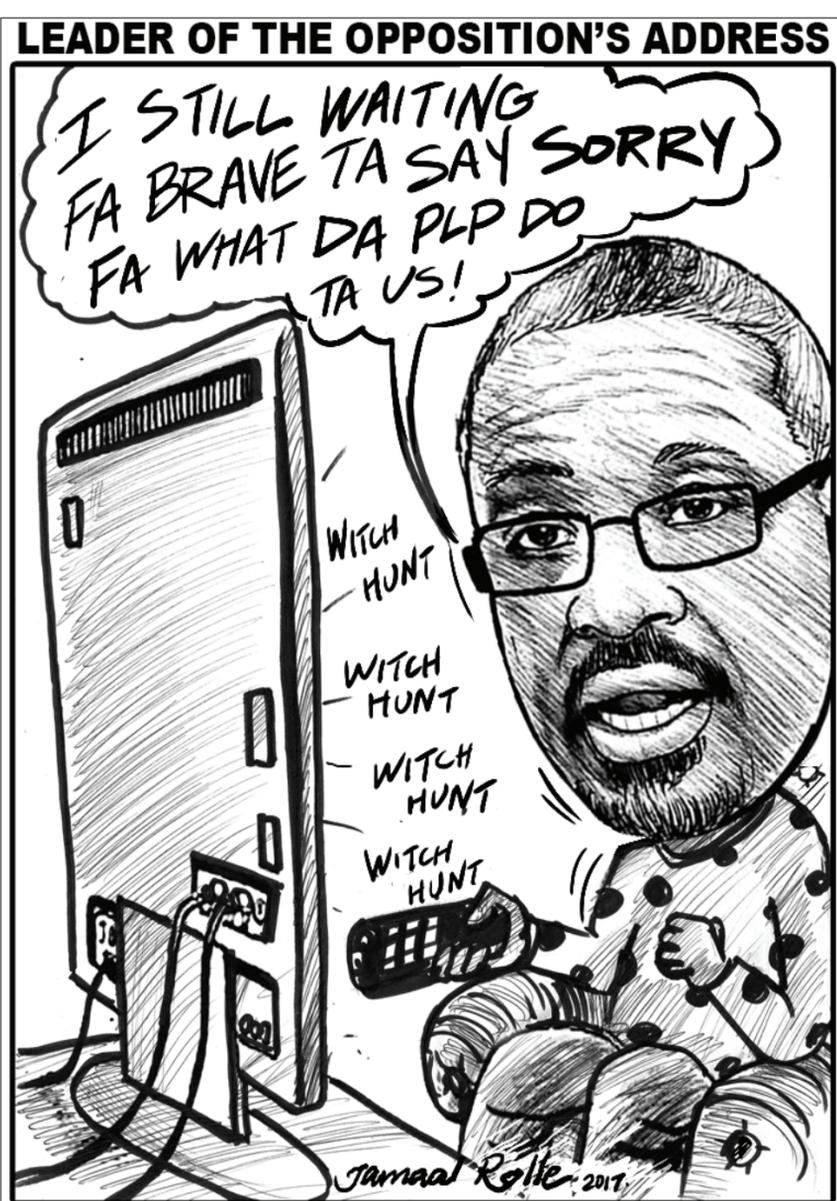
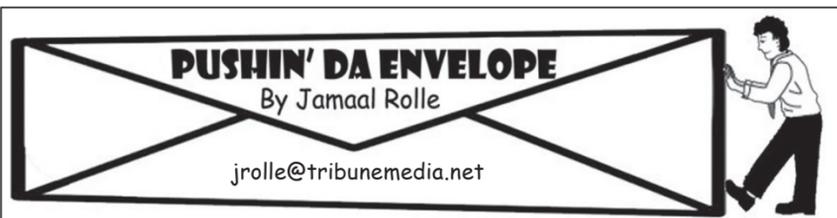
Maduro has also said he would use the assembly's powers to bar opposition candidates from running in gubernatorial elections in December unless they sit with his party to negotiate an end to hostilities that have generated four months of protests, leaving at least 120 dead and nearly 2,000 wounded.

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Tuesday that the Trump administration was "evaluating all of our policy options as to what can we do to create a change of conditions where either Maduro decides he doesn't have a future, and wants to leave of his own accord, or we can return the government processes back to their constitution."

Panamanian and Argentine officials and the Organization of American States condemned Tuesday's arrests, though other nations in the region were silent. A spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he "has taken note" of the jailings and was sending "an overall message of concern for the increase in political tensions and the country moving away from a path to finding a peaceful solution."

The French, British, Spanish and Mexican ambassadors to Venezuela visited the opposition-controlled National Assembly on Tuesday and met with legislators as a show of support. After they left, members of pro-government motorcycle gangs surrounded the building and some threw rocks and tomatoes at a legislator and another person as they left the building. Three legislators said they were breaking with the pro-government Great Patriotic Pole party and forming a new faction opposed to rewriting the constitution.

Maduro called the vote for the constitutional assembly in May after weeks of protests against his government, which has overseen Venezuela's descent into a devastating crisis during its four years in power. Due to plunging oil prices and widespread corruption and mismanagement, Venezuela's inflation and homicide rates are among the world's highest, and widespread shortages of food and medicine have left citizens dying of preventable illnesses and rooting through trash to feed themselves.



Achilles heel of the PLP

EDITOR, The Tribune.

AN Official Opposition (PLP) member has exposed his party's Achilles heel when expressing contempt for the newly elected Prime Minister's national address.

The spokesman's comments that follow confirm the last government lived in an alternate universe.

PLP Comment: "What concerned me about the speech is why do they keep talking down this economy?"

Response: Providing an honest assessment of the state of the economy is not talking it down. Those of us that live in reality understand how long the economy has been on a downward trend and this must be reversed. The policies of the former government were compounding the economic problems.

PLP Comment "This is a rich country. This is not a poor country."

Response: Yes, by many standards this is a rich country, but was being made poorer each passing year by government spending more than it takes from the taxpayer all the while expecting investors (both local and foreign), businesses and the taxpayer to support the leviathan that has been created.

PLP Comment: "But everything that comes out of their mouths is woe is me... doom and gloom."

Response: It is obvious now that living at the expense of the taxpayer insulates one from the reality of the economy.

PLP Comment: "I was surprised when I was minister of immigration the extent to which major businesses depend on government spending."

Response: This shows a complete lack of understanding and is the oppo-

LETTERS

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site of how the economy should be structured. The smaller the government is in relation to the economy the better it is for economic growth and job creation.

PLP Comment:

"And now you say you're going to take 10 per cent off government spending and in addition you're laying off staff in an economy which is consumer driven."

"Custom duties depend on consumers spending money."

"VAT is a consumer tax so the more people buy the more government's coffers increase."

"So now you're going to take measures to suck life out of the economy and now on top of that you're talking down on the economy?"

Response: The burden of excessive government spending has placed the current administration in this position as a result of spending beyond the taxation capacity. These measures, government spending within its means, are long overdue.

PLP Comment: "So every investor who is looking out will say 'Oh My God. We can't go to The Bahamas, things are terrible there. Its' falling apart. The government said it's not going to happen and so on and so forth!'"

Response: Let's ponder this. Investors are happy investing in a country where governments increase deficits and debt and implement unfriendly business policies as the PLP were doing? Not to mention the allegations of corruption by government officials that have surfaced since the PLP lost the election. Once again, the PLP spokesperson shows an obvious lack of economic understand-

ing.

PLP Comment: "There's a reason they said when you put a moratorium on hiring, you develop a skills gap."

"So when I came back to the foreign ministry in 2012, you had senior officers on top, junior officers down at the bottom but nobody in the middle."

"So you don't have the experience, you don't have the institutional knowledge so what you try to do is you get some from every birth cohort every year."

"So even if you can't hire six, you should hire three."

Response: Here again, this issue has been known for at least a couple decades. Why wasn't this fixed in their last term? Or even the term before that? Packing government payroll with the unemployed is not a solution to unemployment or economic growth. Rather, creating an environment where people are willing to invest to create jobs and economic growth is the idea.

What would be useful, since the Opposition consider themselves so learned, is offering some ideas that might improve the economy. This rhetoric only confirms why the economy is in the state it's in.

But keep talking. It exposes the shallowness of your policies when your party was the government.

I am not a fan of politics nor big government for that matter, but I must give the new government some credit at this point for at least mouthing that they will attempt to rationalise spending. The taxpayer cannot bear any more of what took place during the last administration.

RICK LOWE
 www.weblogbahamas.com
 June 30, 2017.

Bail's bad for your health

EDITOR, The Tribune.

Re: Gunmen Murder Bailed Teenager. - The Tribune, 31 July, 2017.

Bail can be very detrimental to one's health. It should be prescribed in small doses with much caution, and without any re-

peats
KEN.W.KNOWLES,M.D.
 Nassau,
 31 July, 2017



DETAINEES at the Carmichael Road Detention Centre.

Refugees reveal ordeal of years in detention

from page one

The refugees, who were released last month, recounted a demoralising experience of subsisting with inadequate food, hygiene and housing while struggling to understand their status with no clear explanation of their fate.

The allegations raise serious questions about the regulatory framework, or lack thereof, guiding operations at the Carmichael Road Detention Centre (CRDC), specifically as it relates to the medical treatment and mental health of detainees.

"In the three years I've been there," one refugee said, "they don't give me no toothbrush, no toothpaste, no deodorant, and the soap you have to almost have to fight with them to give it to you. The last time they gave soap before I left, one of the immigration ladies she came with a bag of soap and she said with the words 'these are not for Cubans.'

The refugee continued: "In any place you can find good people and bad people. The majority of (officers) when you ask something to them as simple as that it's like you're talking to the wall.

"Every country have their own culture and laws, but if they want to charge me with something they have to talk to me since the beginning and explain what's going on, not keep me so long like that because I have family too. My family don't know nothing about me, my family is suffering that too."

The Tribune was asked not to identify the refugees by legal counsel due to the sensitive nature of their re-



settlement.

An Eritrean man and three Cuban men, who petitioned the courts over the lawfulness of their detention, were released on July 13.

Their times ranged from two years, to up to four years and four months in the case of the Eritrean.

In separate cases, the men claimed that they were

never questioned by immigration officers during processing, and highlighted their refugee status with the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR).

The Bahamas acceded to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and its 1967 Protocol, in 1993.

In one case, a refugee



PHOTOS showing the interior of the Carmichael Road Detention Centre.

said he was not formally processed until there was a change in management at the facility and he was questioned concerning his status.

The refugee said he often begged for deportation in desperation to be free from the facility.

"Every day only sleep, wake up, and sit down that's it. No TV, no nothing, no (books) nothing. They don't allow anything even newspapers they don't allow. So sleep, wake up, sit down, talk with someone, your friends that's finish.

"Sometimes I say even if I go back (to my home country) it's better for me.

Even if I go back there I was thinking it's better because they lock me here and don't tell me anything."

After his second year in detention, the refugee said he began to agitate to be formally charged and sent to the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services.

"I see they take someone to Fox Hill prison, he get two years and serve 18 months and come back, and I'm still in here. So I say even if I go and they say five years, ten years, you do your time and be finished. Somebody in the detention centre now for eight years and he's still there."

The refugee added: "So when I see all that I say better that they give me time and let me finish the time. It's prison (at CRDC) because you can't do anything, you can't come outside."

"It's jail," another refugee said, "it's the same like jail because they take us to Fox Hill. I see the same thing how they count us is how they count in jail. If you stay for long maybe you will get the bed to sleep, but if you first come you have to be sleeping on the floor until when they deport plenty Haitians or plenty Cubans."

The men were represented by Martin Lundy, of Callenders & Co.

LAWYER BLASTS FAILURES TO FOLLOW CONVENTIONS ON MIGRANTS

By AVA TURNQUEST
Tribune Chief Reporter
aturnquest@tribunemedia.net

ATTORNEY Martin Lundy yesterday condemned the failure of successive governments to adhere to international conventions concerning the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers, or its own law in the processing of illegal migrants.

Mr Lundy said the government was obligated to follow the law or amend it as he spoke out about the injustices and human rights violations that occur due to the blatant disregard of existing legislation.

He argued that an irregular system allowed for human lives to slip through the cracks, and suggested the establishment of an

immigration court, which would function solely to process migrants.

"Before any individual is deported there must be a deportation order," Mr Lundy said, "they must be taken to court, they must be tried. None of that happens, or it rarely happens. I personally haven't been involved in a matter where that was the case.

"We need an immigration court just like we have a civil court and a criminal court, we need an immigration court.

"It can be by the detention centre or near to the detention centre and you have a judge that only hears immigration matters, charge the individuals, get the requisite orders and then deport on the basis of that order.

"That is the only way to respect the laws that we currently have," he said. "If that's not what we're seeking to do then we need to amend the law altogether."

Mr Lundy spoke to *The Tribune* against the backdrop of the release of his clients, four refugees who had been held at the Carmichael Road Detention Centre without charge for more than two years.

In an interview with *The Tribune*, one of the refugees said: "The quality of life is very low because people sleeping by the ground, people sleeping outside. The meals, they give you whenever time that they want to give it to you.

"I get the breakfast almost 11am, sometimes lunch at 4pm in the afternoon and then 7pm you

get the dinner. So, until the next day at 11am you don't get nothing else. Most of the times the food is coming in cold, and sometimes it's spoiled, especially the dinner sometimes."

One of the men had been in detention since 2013.

"From the international standpoint with respect to refugees," Mr Lundy said, "there is a fundamental difference between a refugee and a regular migrant. From a humane standpoint, how do you expect to treat someone who has come and said to you I'm being persecuted in my home country, if I return to my home country I will be killed? How do you respond to that with 'oh I'll lock you up forever' and when asked your only response is to just wait."

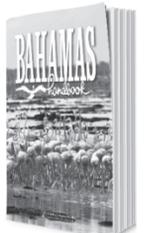
Mr Lundy added: "Two

years, three years, one year is too long when you're dealing with human beings. How many birthdays did they miss, Valentines, Christmases, New Year's?"

"Can you imagine a person saying I'd rather be in jail than be held here? Someone begging to be imprisoned only so that they can have some clarity on their situation? It's about how we're perceived internationally, it's about integrity. Why sign on to something if you're not going to abide by it? I'm not casting blame on any one government, because we've had several administrations since 1993. The issue I have is we're now in 2017.

"It's time for us to get our act together, get it together because we're dealing with human beings," Mr Lundy told *The Tribune*.

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Ninth murder in two weeks as man killed after argument

By RICARDO WELLS
Tribune Staff Reporter
rwells@tribunemedia.net

A SHOOTING following an argument between a group of men in Fox Hill on Tuesday morning ended with the country recording its ninth murder in two weeks.

According to officer-in-charge of the Central Detective Unit, Chief Superintendent Solomon Cash, the scene was played out on Armbrister Street as the deceased, and another man, got out of a blue 2007 Honda Accord just outside of an apartment complex on the western side of the street.

CSP Cash said the two men were then attacked by a group of men gathered on the block, with one of those men producing a firearm.

The deceased, who The Tribune was told is Rahajio Wright, 21, was shot several times in his body. He died on the scene.

Shortly after officers cleared the area on Tuesday, the victim's loved ones, some of them overcome by grief, were sobbing on the ground.

One of them, dressed in a blue top and black slacks, knelt near the spot where the deceased's body had fallen, rubbed her palms in the dirt where his blood was still fresh, and cried out.

When she stood up, she



FAMILY members grieve at the murder scene in Fox Hill.

Photos: Shawn Hanna/Tribune Staff

embraced others around her, all of whom had looks of despair.

Many residents stood in disbelief Tuesday as the victim's lifeless body was carried from the scene.

CSP Cash said police are currently following several "significant leads" related to the homicide, but were still appealing to members of the public to come forward with any information that could lead to the arrest of those involved.

Police have said they want to speak with a man named Deon "Hatchet" Demeritte

for help in their investigations into the Armbrister Street shooting.

Armbrister Street was one of several streets toured by a team of officers about four weeks ago as the Royal Bahamas Police Force conducted a walkabout in the community, gathering information and giving residents safety tips.

Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police Stephen Dean at the time said the walkabout was "the first of many" officers plan to conduct in the area known to police as a crime hotspot.

Also, Police Chief Superintendent Maxine Rolle, officer-in-charge of the Eastern Division, appointed to the post in June, also indicated that she would canvass the area "at least twice a month".

Residents on the scene told *The Tribune* that police have "kept to their promises to come around," however many said these efforts by police are not enough.

Anyone with information about this shooting or any other crime should contact police at 919, 502-9991 or the Crime Stoppers hotline anonymously at 328-TIPS.



TEARS at the scene of yesterday's shooting in Fox Hill.

POLICE CHIEF WARNS - LAY DOWN YOUR GUNS AS KILLERS STRIKE AGAIN

from page one

Tuesday's homicide, which occurred in the Armbrister Street section of Fox Hill around 10.45am, marked the ninth homicide in the past two weeks.

Addressing these homicides, Acting Commissioner Ferguson stated: "While other crimes continue to trend down, we recognise that the killing of a human being by another human being sends shock waves throughout the island, especially when the circumstances is criminally motivated."

He continued: "There's been a total of nine killings within sections of New Providence over the past two weeks."

Despite this alarming fact, however, Acting Commissioner Ferguson moved

to quell public concerns, warning that these killings are "predominately restricted (to) a small group of persons," most of whom he insisted are involved in a life of crime.

He said: "Police have identified most of them. Some of whom have already been charged with murder before."

"In an effort to further ensure a safer Bahamas, we have embarked upon an aggressive approach to prevent and bring to justice those persons who believe that they can't be caught."

"The public can be assured of high visibility of police presence in the communities going forward, as of today."

"I now speak directly to the criminal element, that as of today, you must discontinue your criminal behaviour because you will

be met with the stiffest law enforcement resistance.

"Mothers, I encourage you to speak to your sons, fathers, I encourage you to speak to your sons, so that all issues could be resolved peacefully."

Tuesday's murder was the third fatal shooting in the eastern district of New Providence over the last month. Police are working to determine if these killings are connected.

"I can assure you that based on the intelligence that we have gathered so far, particularly as it relates to this matter this morning, our detectives are doing some things as we speak," he added.

Police have said they want to speak with a man named Deon "Hatchet" Demeritte for help in their investigation into the Armbrister Street homicide.

Also, Acting Commissioner Ferguson revealed plans to roll out several new initiatives later this week. He suggested these new initiatives will revolve around increased police visibility and communication with communities where crime is prevalent.

"You can expect to see increased visibility. We have the visibility now, but we will continue to increase that to be able to reduce the criminal element from running up and down the street and we want the public to assist us in providing information on that," he said.

"What people have to understand, policing is a partnership. All of us are from different communities and if you want to make your community safe, members of the public are urged to continue to support police and provide information."

"Again, you don't have to

give your name, all you have to do is provide the information and we will find the way of presenting the evidence excluding you from having to stand in front of the criminal element."

"We are getting information from the tip line. We are very happy because we are getting information from persons in various communities who are in touch with detectives, are in touch with various police officers; so, they are coming forward and passing those information on to police, which is very, very effective."

Asked if the RBPF was in need of any resources that could aid in its crime fighting strategies, he stated: "I would say we need the Bahamian people. A lot of information lies in those same communities (we spoke of). A lot of information that

will prevent crime and prevent these criminals from running about the streets with guns, lie within the communities."

"I want to appeal particularly to those persons who know those persons who are running around with guns, those guns kill, don't wait until you are injured by those guns. Now is the time to turn those people in."

Acting Commissioner Ferguson also sidestepped questions over the status of Police Commissioner Ellison Greenslade, who has been out of the public spotlight since reports indicated that he was offered the post of high commissioner to London.

The Tribune understands that Acting Commissioner Ferguson, who is deputy commissioner of the force, would assume the post of commissioner.



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Memorial Service for

LESLIE ELAINE GRANGER KINCAID, 71



and a resident of Lucayan Towers North, will be held at 12:00 p.m. on Thursday 3rd, August 2017 at the Pro-Cathedral of Christ the King, East Atlantic Drive and Pioneer's Way, Freeport. Officiating will be Rev. Marie Roache Hepburn.

Leslie is survived by **children:** Michelle Major (Mark), Kelly Lemmers (Peer), Chad Kincaid (Khristina); **stepmother:** Eugena Granger; **sisters:** Patricia Isaacs, Michelle Hepburn (Philip); **stepsister:** Natalie Clarke; **stepbrother:** Noel Clarke (Britton); **grandchildren:** Alexis Kincaid, Myles and Morgan Major, Annika Lemmers, Chad Kincaid Jr., Kayci Kincaid; **nieces and nephews:** Karen Elsdon, Edmund Nettell, Gillian Thompson, Aynda Gibson, Kelè Isaacs, Meaghan Jolly, Jordan Hepburn, Nathan Hepburn, Elliot Hepburn; **grandnephews:** Joshua and Matthew Thompson, Sam Gibson, Fidel and Isiah Jolly; **grandnieces:** Hannah Thompson, Salene and Saleste Gibson, Gabrielle Jolly; **other family members and friends:** The Albury Family: Michael, Gary, Stephen, Edward, Robert, Anthony, Carl, Andrew, Vaughn, Charles, Keith, Carla, Anthony, Adrienne, Carol, Douglas, Sterling, Angela, Charles, Ken, Brian. The Monroe family: Noel, Philip, Dyhann, Cécille, Donna, Terry-Jeanne; Hillary Deveaux. The Armbrister family: Blanche, Kathy, Peter, Patricia, Edward "Butch" Barrett. The Major family: Wilbur, Brenda, Brigitte and Brianna; other friends, including the staff at Rocky Mountain Cancer Center in Denver Colorado who provided dedicated service and came during her treatment. The entire staff of Callender's and Co in Freeport and Nassau with a special thank you to Fred Smith.

The book of condolences may be signed at the church from 11:00am until service time.

CHRISTIAN COUNCIL TO BE GIVEN LAND

from page one

He could not reveal the size of the land to be given to the group of clergymen or a timeline when this would be done. However, Mr Newbold said the BCC would have to do some things before getting back to the government with more specifics to their request for land.

He told the press yesterday: "(The) prime minister is constantly meeting with various groupings. I know he met with Citibank yesterday."

"He met with the Bahamas Christian Council last week. The prime minister committed to providing some land for the Christian Council so that they could build the proper headquarters."

"(The) prime minister says it's a group for which

he has the highest respect and admiration. He respects them as the earthly representatives of God. He's not going to judge them as some people do. He has no problems working with them."

"I know the ministers have been in the news recently. He says he won't judge them. He will leave that to God."

"The Christian Council, they probably have to do some things themselves before they come back to the government and say 'this is the amount of land we need or this is where we would like to have the land if possible.'"

"And the prime minister again has said he is committed to working with them hand in hand," Mr Newbold explained when he was asked about a timeline for this transaction.

Mr Newbold said the only

way the BCC will be given the go ahead for the Crown land was for them to provide assurances the land will be used for its headquarters and no other purpose.

"It's the only way. The prime minister again speaking about land and he said it, 'if I find that there is some land that was allocated for a certain purpose and is not being used for that I am going to take it back and put it in the land bank for the Bahamian people.'"

He added the prime minister is a "church man" so it was not a stretch for him to consider the BCC's request.

In June, the prime minister pledged to take back Crown land from people who are using it for purposes outside the "original intent," particularly those hoarding it for future investment.

After touring the Department of Lands and Surveys, Dr Minnis said: "People will not be receiving the people's land just to sit on it, believing that they can use it as investment later, just hoarding the land for speculation."

"That won't happen, so those who got land and are not utilising it and doing what they are supposed to, I will take it and put it in the bank of the people so it can be given fairly," Dr Minnis said previously.

The leasing and granting of Crown land has been a notoriously non-transparent process.

Dr Minnis vowed that as the minister responsible for Crown land he will ensure both transparency and "that land is placed in the hands of the people and used for what it is supposed to."

'DAVIS SORRY - BUT WHERE'S THE APOLOGY?'

from page one

"I was hoping that he would say 'yes we have made mistakes and so going forward we would like to see these type of mistakes never occur again and I am sorry for what happened and I would like to enter into discussions with not only the prime minister but the attorney general so that we can deal with the mistakes

we made to ensure we put systems in place and deal with those who were wrong or who did wrong so it never, ever happens again and be it FNM, PLP, Bahamians whatever, we deal with it."

"It has nothing to do with seniority, political affiliation or financial status we just want it eradicated and that is the approach the opposition should take," Dr Minnis said.

On Monday, law-

yer Wayne Munroe, QC, told *The Tribune* he has completed his list of alleged "corrupt members" of the Free National Movement, but won't send it to the police "just yet" because he doesn't trust the Royal Bahamas Police Force's Anti-Corruption Unit.

Mr Munroe said he has a list of eight FNM members — six current and two former members of Parliament — who he believes fit the current government's defi-

inition of being "corrupt."

While he did not directly respond to Mr Munroe, Dr Minnis said he is not afraid to go before the Anti-Corruption Unit because he has nothing to hide.

"And If they feel like I did wrong, I have no objection to the attorney general and the Anti-Corruption Unit calling me forward and interviewing me," Dr Minnis said.

"And I hope that he too has no objection."



SIR Lynden Pindling's leadership of the PLP saw him set against the Bay Street group, that became organised as the United Bahamian Party. Party politics were born in The Bahamas.

The history of race and politics in The Bahamas

A FEW years ago, my company — Media Enterprises — published a new edition of *Race and Politics in The Bahamas*, under licence from the author and the University of Queensland in Australia.

Originally published in 1981 and long out of print, *Race and Politics* was a groundbreaking book because it offered a straightforward examination of the racial polarisation of the day. It was written by a Bahamian-born British-Australian lawyer and academic named Colin Hughes, who liked to describe himself as a “Welsh Conch”.

Mr Hughes was born here in 1930 because his Welsh father, John Anfield Hughes, was a colonial civil servant. He was educated in Britain and the United States, married an Australian woman, and made a name for himself as a political scientist in Australia, where he died in June at the age of 87.

In a 2011 online interview he describes his background as “slightly complicated”. His grandfather was a coal miner. His father applied for a teaching job in The Bahamas, and later became chief out island commissioner and head of immigration and labour matters in the colony.

John Hughes helped run the contract, a scheme which provided migrant labour to American farms

TOUGH CALL



Larry Smith

during World War II. He was posted to the West Indies Labour Organisation in Washington, DC.

At the end of the war, Colin joined his parents in Washington as a high school student. His father then got a job at the United Nations consolidating labour reports, but later returned to The Bahamas and went into business.

After completing his PhD in London, Colin passed the bar exam before returning to Nassau in 1954. He practised in the law firm of McKinney, Bancroft & Hughes for a couple of years, before marrying an Australian woman and taking a job at the University of Queensland.

“I was interested in politics but was on the wrong side of white opinion in Nassau,” he said. “I was concerned with starting a reform party that was neither white nor black, and even thought of myself as a possible candidate in a bye-election on Eleuthera at the

time.”

That project was the short-lived Bahamas Democratic League, started by *Tribune* Publisher/Editor Sir Etienne Dupuch in 1955. According to Sir Etienne's daughter, Eileen Carron, “My father and Colin's father were very close friends, and dad was close to Colin because the latter was keen on politics and political systems. If Colin had remained the party might have lived, but as dad was not a political animal, the BDL eventually died a quiet death.”

As a political scientist, Colin Hughes was deeply interested in electoral politics - both here and in Australia, where he was in charge of the Electoral Commission for a time.

In the mid-fifties, he was secretary of the Bahamas Democratic League, which started out as a sort of multi-racial reform society, “more concerned with policies than office”. However, the crescendo of attacks from Bay Street on the one

hand and the newly formed Progressive Liberal Party on the other led to a decision to contest the 1956 general election as a party.

Under the chairmanship of Sir Etienne, the BDL initially focused on issues like opening gateways in the Collins Wall (that separated the black population of western Nassau from the mostly white residents of the east), ending racial discrimination in hotels, and redistributing seats in the House of Assembly.

The PLP ran 14 candidates in the 1956 general election, while the BDL hoped to retain the seats of Sir Etienne and his half-brother, Eugene Dupuch, and perhaps pick up a third. Meanwhile, the ruling Bay Street group presented itself as “the backbone” of the country.

In the event, Sir Etienne and PLP Leader Henry Taylor were both defeated. The all-white Bay Street group took 21 seats, while the PLP won eight, although the votes were divided almost evenly between the two groups.

Crooked Island candidate, Eugene Dupuch, was the only BDL member of the House. And the result made it clear that reform efforts would now be led by the PLP, which had undergone a transition of its own from the original moderate leadership to the more “radical” (in the context

of the times) leadership of men like Lynden Pindling, Milo Butler and Randol Fawkes.

Significantly - as historians Michael Craton and Gail Saunders pointed out - the 1956 election marked the first time that an organised party - the PLP - began acting as “a coherent parliamentary opposition”. This led the ruling Bay Street merchant-lawyer group to organise itself as the United Bahamian Party two years later. Party politics had been born.

But despite this historic development, the 1956 election produced little change in the colony's social and economic relationships. In fact, as Colin Hughes noted, the roles that one might have expected of the UBP and PLP at this time were ironically reversed.

It was the governing UBP that wanted constitutional advancement and freedom from interference by the governor and the Colonial Office in London. The PLP, meanwhile, wanted British support for the electoral reforms that were necessary for the Bahamas to become a functioning democracy.

Colin Hughes gives an excellent account of Bahamian electoral politics and the racial polarisation that prevailed through the 1970s. His concluding chapter sums up Doris Johnson's “quiet revolution” as “the transfer of power from the

colonial power and its local allies, the Bay Street Boys, to an independent black government”.

He writes that race was always more significant than class in shaping political conflict and party competition in The Bahamas. And he was proven correct in saying in 1981 that “it is quite possible that (the PLP's) combination of middle class leadership and working class electoral support can survive another decade or so”.

He ends with the observation that modern Bahamians will find their place in the modern world “through identification with the man who fought and won the racial battle, which was the (country's) most significant chapter in (a) long story”.

But he was writing before the full extent of the Pindling government's collusion with foreign drug gangsters became known. And at least a decade before the regime was displaced in another major political transformation.

• Colin Hughes was professor of political science at the University of Queensland, and the first Australian Electoral Commissioner in the 1980s.

• What do you think? Send comments to lsmith@tribunemedia.net or www.bahamapundit.com

Davis must reach out to those who deserted PLP

YOUR SAY
By GEORGE A SMITH

“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.” - Henry Ford
“Honesty is the first step to wisdom and truth.”

THE Bahamian people have spoken loudly and unambiguously.

Their verdict was decisive, as was their rejection of the former government. Their voice thundered across the archipelago. Anyone who did not hear them is either deaf or in serious denial.

The Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) secured 37 per cent of the vote, the lowest in the post-independence Bahamas. The Free National Movement (FNM) received 57 per cent of the vote. However, there is

good news for the PLP in the FNM results - 54 per cent of the persons who voted FNM did so to be rid of the former government. They want the PLP to return to its original core values and its commitment to ordinary Bahamians. They want the leaders of the party to show humility and to listen to them.

I have previously said that it is my firm belief that the PLP has always been a populist party and hence, the natural party to govern The Bahamas. For most of the last 64 years, the PLP was at the heart of and attuned to the people's struggles, including the right for all Bahamians to vote, for Majority Rule, for independence, for workers' rights, for better health care, for educational opportunities, for the aged, for the infirm and most im-

portantly for the youth of our land.

The former government made many mistakes. They ignored sound advice from well-intended persons. They disregarded the views of Bahamian professionals over foreign consultants and they took the voter for granted.

To their credit, the former government achieved many laudable milestones. They advanced programmes for economic growth, national health insurance and border security. They negotiated and facilitated the opening of Baha Mar and the transition of the College of The Bahamas to the University of The Bahamas.

The control of Bahamian air space was negotiated by the former government and during its tenure, great progress was made in sports.

All of these are noteworthy accomplishments.

Admittedly the PLP's brand is injured and we all know why. The party is hurting, but it is not dead. It is down, but it is not out. A noble idea like the PLP, with its rich history and its incomparable legacy, must not be permitted to die. It must recover and continue to do many great things for the benefit of all Bahamians.

It is the responsibility of Philip Davis to take the lead in bringing us together, to heal the wounds, so that we could restructure the party. It falls to him to be the undisputed voice of the party, to articulate a visionary course and to craft a unifying agenda. He must reassure the party's base that the PLP remains viable and still represents the best hope to fulfil the

dreams and aspirations of Bahamians who are too often left behind. He must reach out to those who voted for the FNM just to be rid of the former government.

Philip Davis is expected to restructure and reorganise the PLP to be responsive to the diverse ideas, talents, energy and fully engage our young people.

Since it was a PLP government that established the University of The Bahamas, it would be farsighted to embrace the ideas of the brilliant minds at the university in formulating plans to realise the immense wealth that is contained in and under our 100,000 square miles of sea. I think of the expansion by Bahamians of our fishing industry, the development of the aragonite industry and the realisation of the benefits of

our oil deposits. It must be clearly understood that all Bahamians must be shareholders in the entity that owns the aragonite and oil industries.

The PLP must progressively proclaim a message of economic empowerment of the average citizen and clearly demonstrate how such empowerment will be achieved.

I encourage the leader and all PLPs to remain resolute and to stand firm. If we accomplish the work that is necessary, always seeking God's guidance, we will succeed.

• George Smith is a former Progressive Liberal Party Cabinet minister and former member of Parliament for Exuma. He is one of the surviving delegates of the 1972 London Constitutional Conference.



Appeal Court squashes conviction in \$51,000 money laundering case

By **LAMECH JOHNSON**
Tribune Staff Reporter
ljohnson@tribunemedia.net

THE Court of Appeal quashed the convictions and has not ordered a retrial for a Bulgarian man a Supreme Court jury had convicted in a \$51,000 money laundering case.

Kostadin Karchav, 40, returned to New Providence for his scheduled substantive hearing in June after his lawyer Stanley Rolle, in November, indicated in Karchav's absence that his client still wished to pursue his appeal against the conviction which was filed before his October 30, 2016 release from the Department of Correctional Services.

At two hearings in June and July, Karchav appeared in the Claghton House courtroom where the Crown conceded to the appellant's argument raised

that the attorney general was wrong in law to move the case to the Supreme Court through a voluntary bill of indictment.

Karchav and his attorney relied on the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council's judgment, which upheld the Court of Appeal's decision to quash the human trafficking convictions of Chevanese Hall.

However, there was an issue of contention between the appellant and the Crown as to whether there should be a new trial.

Crown respondent Ambrose Armbrister argued for the court to issue a writ of venire de novo which allows the appellate court to annul the entire trial process, rather than quash the conviction.

Mr Rolle argued that this was not raised, nor asked for by the Crown in the Hall case, nor at the Privy Council level and that his client

was seeking the court not to order a new trial.

In a 14-page judgment published on Tuesday, Justices Jon Isaacs, Stella Crane-Scott and Roy Jones did not believe it was in the interest of justice for Karchav, having completed a sentence, to undergo another trial process.

"Mr Armbrister presented a formidable argument for the proposition that we have the jurisdiction to issue writs of venire de novo in limited circumstances, but he faced a more daunting task of convincing us that this would be a proper case for the court to exercise that jurisdiction," the presiding judges noted.

"His argument for its implementation in the present case relied solely, in our view, on the outrage any right-thinking person must feel if the appellant was allowed to retain a portion

of his obviously ill-gotten gains. Those persons must be reminded, however, that once the convictions are overturned, the appellant returns to the status quo ante, that is to say, he is again covered by the mantle of the presumption of innocence."

The court further noted that the respondent "conceded the appeal on the appellant's first ground of appeal, namely, that the attorney general had no right/power to prefer a voluntary bill of indictment against the appellant, based on the authority of Chevanese Sasha Gaye Hall (CSGH).

"As was the case in CSGH, the appellant was not a person charged before a Magistrate's Court with an indictable offence and therefore the filing of the VBI was done without jurisdiction and unlawful. As such, since the VBI was issued unlawfully, the purported commitment of the appellant to the Supreme Court could not validly occur. Therefore the appellant's trial and conviction before the Supreme Court amount to a nullity.

"Having conceded the appeal, the respondent argued that the proper course for the court to take would be to issue a writ venire de novo to set aside the convictions and annul them, rather than quash them and remit the matter to the Magistrate's Court for proceedings to resume at the point where the error occurred.

"Section 13 of the Court of Appeal Act gives the court the power to either quash a conviction and order a retrial or, if the justice of the case so merits, not order a retrial. In the

premises, there was no need to have regard to a writ of venire de novo; the only issue before the court was whether the justice of the case required the appellant to undergo a retrial.

"As the appellant has already served the entirety of his sentence, the court determined that the public interests would not be served by the order of a new trial," the ruling concluded.

Karchav stood trial before Justice Bernard Turner in April 2016 on three counts of money laundering concerning nearly \$51,000 found in his Royal Bank of Canada account and the purchase of a Suzuki Swift and an iPhone 6 from the alleged proceeds of crime.

The Crown alleged that Karchav gave an oral confession to the crimes prior to a record of interview that was done in the presence of his then lawyer Roger Gomez II.

Sergeant Donovan Martin of the Central Detective Unit testified of a conversation with Karchav under caution in the presence of Inspector Deborah Thompson on February 15, 2015.

Karchav allegedly told police he had been in the country since 2014 and was a part of a credit card group in Bulgaria. It was alleged that he told officers he used his time in The Bahamas to obtain information about the models of the ATM machines he observed. His accomplices replied in kind with information on credit and debit cards, which he uploaded to gift cards he had brought with him when he travelled to The Bahamas.

He allegedly told Sgt Martin that all of the funds seized by police during his

arrest were proceeds from the machines, some of which were deposited to his RBC account. He also stated that he purchased a 2005 Suzuki Swift with some of the funds obtained from the bank.

A record of interview was held following this conversation later on that afternoon.

Karchav, who elected to remain silent to allegations, called Mr Gomez II as a witness in his defence where the latter confirmed to defence attorney, Stanley Rolle that he sat in on a record of interview, but it was not on Sunday, February 15, 2015.

Mr Armbrister asked the lawyer if Karchav had made any complaints when he went to see him. Mr Gomez said his then client's complaint only concerned the cell and food.

The jury, following Justice Turner's summation of the brief case, deliberated for two hours before returning 7-2 guilty verdicts on money laundering with respect to the funds found in the RBC account and the purchase of the Suzuki Swift.

The jury returned a unanimous not guilty verdict on the count concerning the cell phone, of which Justice Turner said he was discharged.

On April 21, 2016, Karchav was sentenced to 24 months on the two counts to run concurrently from the date of his arrest, February 14, 2015.

The judge also ordered that the funds in bank account as well as the Suzuki Swift be forfeited to the Crown.

He ordered that the iPhone 6 be returned to Karchav at the completion of his sentence.



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EX-MARINE'S ROBBERY CASE TO GO TO SUPREME COURT

By **LAMECH JOHNSON**
Tribune Staff Reporter
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A FORMER marine accused of being the culprit behind a gunpoint robbery had his case transferred to the Supreme Court yesterday.

Lloyd Carl Johnson, 24, was originally due to appear in Magistrate's Court on Monday for the presentation of a voluntary bill of indictment nearly a month after he was arranged on an armed robbery charge on July 5.

However, Johnson was not brought down from the

Department of Correctional Services, resulting in an adjournment of the matter to Tuesday, August 1.

In yesterday's proceedings, Magistrate Jeanine Weech-Gomez explained to Johnson that the VBI contained the Crown's case against him and would facilitate the transfer of the case from the Magistrate's Court to the Supreme Court.

She further informed the accused that he could not offer an alibi at trial if he did not enter one at the VBI presentation or within 21 days to the Office of the Attorney General.

After consulting with his

lawyer Tai Pinder, Johnson chose the latter and is now scheduled to appear in the Supreme Court before Justice Bernard Turner on August 18 to receive a date for trial.

It is there that he will be allowed to enter a plea to the armed robbery charge at his Supreme Court appearance.

It is alleged that he, on June 22, while armed with a silver coloured handgun, robbed Chinique Gray of a 2012 Honda Accord valued at \$19,000, a \$600 iPhone and a blue leather bag containing identification.

SUSPECT HELD AFTER GUN FIND

By **DENISE MAYCOCK**
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POLICE on Bimini arrested a 25-year-old man on Monday who is suspected of firearm and ammunition possession.

Inspector Terecita Pinder reported that police were

on mobile patrol in Alice Town shortly after 2am on Monday when they saw a suspicious-looking vehicle parked in the middle of the road.

She said that a man got out of the vehicle and ran, prompting officers to give chase. The suspect was caught and during a search

of the area, officers discovered a black .380 automatic pistol with six rounds of ammunition.

Insp Pinder also reported that a short time later, officers acting on information, discovered a .380 pistol with four rounds of ammunition while in the area of Bailey Town.

Celebrating the best



THE PUBLIC School Scholars Programme Awards Ceremony held at The Courtyard Marriott. Mark Humes, Fort Charlotte MP and Lionel Sands, Director of Education, are pictured as they present awards to the scholars. More pictures from the event will feature in The Tribune's Back To School supplement in coming weeks. Photo: **Shawn Hanna/Tribune Staff**

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MISS World Bahamas Geena Thompson during her visit to The Tribune yesterday after her victory in the beauty pageant.

Photos: Shawn Hanna/Tribune Staff

Port Lucaya event lined up to boost marketplace

By DENISE MAYCOCK
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KWASI Thompson, Minister of State for Grand Bahama, announced plans for the implementation of 'A Taste of Port Lucaya' to boost and stimulate economic activity at Port Lucaya Marketplace.

The announcement was made on Sunday afternoon, in conjunction with other major stakeholders on the island, including the Grand Bahama Port Authority, Ministry of Tourism, Grand Bahama Island Tourism Board, and the Bahamas Telecommunications Company.

Merchants and vendors at Port Lucaya Marketplace have been severely affected by the 10-month closure of the Grand Lucayan Resort properties, which sustained significant hurricane damage last year.

The government is also



KWASI THOMPSON

involved in negotiations for the sale of the resort. Some time last week, Mr Thompson announced the government would help Port Lucaya Marketplace.

'A Taste of Port Lucaya'

will start on Thursday, August 3, and will showcase the Bahamian musical and entertainment talents at the Count Basie Square.

Mr Thompson said: "In an effort to bring economic

boost to the area the government has partnered with the Ministry of Tourism, the Grand Bahama Port Authority, and a number other stakeholders to bring economic activity to this area.

"We are happy that we are launching 'A Taste of Port Lucaya' and we are happy that one of our celebrity MCs is well-known personality 'Sawyer Boy' from Nassau," he said.

Some of the Bahamian artists who will be performing are Stileet, Wilfred Solomon, the Police Pop Band, Rhythm Band and other entertainers.

Mr Thompson also said Prime Minister Dr Hubert Minnis plans to visit Grand Bahama every month.

"The prime minister has indicated that the third Friday of every month he would be in Office of the Prime Minister in Grand Bahama to deal with Grand Bahama matters," he said.

BNT TEAMS UP WITH AIRPORT FOR ENVIRONMENT WORK IN ABACO

THE Bahamas National Trust (BNT) is partnering with Leonard Thompson International Airport (LTIA) to promote national parks and raise funds for nature conservation on Abaco.

The island's six national parks protect a range of ecosystems from the north to the south, as well as the plants and animals that depend on these habitats for food and shelter.

The BNT has a comprehensive corporate partnership programme to build relationships that will help protect the environment. The Inter-American Development Bank recently costed the BNT's statutory mandate to manage the national park system at \$10m a year. Currently, corporate donations to the BNT nationwide total just over a million a year.

In 2016, the BNT had a total income of just over \$3.8m. This amount was made up of a government grant, project support funds from other non-governmental organisations, investment income, proceeds from special events, and private donations.

Airport Manager Vivian Miller has allocated the BNT a key space in the Marsh Harbour terminal for the promotion of Bahamian biodiversity. A cash donation box also encourages visitors to leave their leftover local currency to help support Abaco's national parks.

"The travelers who pass through the airport all benefit from the use of our natural resources in one way or another, and have a shared responsibility to diminish negative impacts on the environment," said BNT

Chief Park Warden David Knowles.

"The corporate leadership demonstrated by LTIA helps us to raise public awareness as well as money in support of important conservation goals that benefit everyone."

The island's protected areas range from the two-acre Black Sound Reserve on Green Turtle Cay to the 20,500-acre Abaco National Park on the southeast portion of Abaco. Others include Tilloo Cay National Reserve, Pelican Cays Land and Sea Park, Fowl Cays National Park and Walkers Cay National Park.

The BNT is a non-governmental, non-profit, membership organisation working to protect Bahamian natural resources through a network of national parks and by promoting environmental stewardship.

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We apologize for any inconvenience caused.

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