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THE PEOPLE'S PAPER: \$1

Weekend



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what's your plan for summer?

WEEKEND: ICE CREAM PARLOUR A COOL NEW ADDITION AT ATLANTIS

Sands steps in on nurses owed \$1m

FORENSIC AUDIT FOR GAMING BOARD PAYOUTS

By **AVA TURNQUEST**
Tribune Chief Reporter
aturnquest@tribunemedia.net

GAMING Board Secretary Verdant Scott was this week directed to take a vacation as the regulatory body prepares to issue a request for proposals for a forensic audit, *The Tribune* has learned.

A senior executive, who spoke on the condition of

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By **RASHAD ROLLE**
Tribune Staff Reporter
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ABOUT 45 nurses were working for months without the salary and benefits full-time government employees expect, a predicament Health Minister Dr Duane Sands found "heartbreaking" and said he has moved to remedy.

Maria Butler, a 32-year-old mother-of-two, told this newspaper of troubles involved in affording even "basic necessities" while living off the \$475 monthly stipend the government gave her and her peers during those months—a stipend that was often given well behind schedule.

"The majority of us have children," she told *The Tribune* yesterday. "Part

of becoming a nurse was we've been trying to build ourselves for our families. It's been a struggle being on the mercies of people who wonder how we are going to work if we aren't being paid. They have been shocked and can't believe it. I would send my kids to school and a relative there would assist them because I had such problems."

When contacted by *The Tribune*, Dr Sands explained the ordeal the nurses faced.

"It's 45 (nurses) in total (that have had this issue)," the Elizabeth MP said. "One group is a group of 18. They passed exams, some in December, some in April, some in May. They graduated with a certificate in

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...But police pay backlog delayed

THE latest installment of the budgeted \$5.6m for police overtime pay has been shelved due to a lack of public funds, according to an official from the Police Staff Association.

PSA Executive Chairman, Sergeant Sonny Miller, yesterday confirmed that officers still owed for overtime hours worked at separate periods in 2013 and 2014 will have to wait until September for their next payout, or possibly longer.

His comments came yesterday evening after a text message from the PSA executive to members of the association was leaked to the press.

The text message indi-

cated that after recent communications with National Security Minister Marvin Dames, it was confirmed that the latest instalment of the payment would be postponed, despite a serious push by the Mount Moriah MP.

The message read in full: "Good evening members of the Police Staff Association. I would like to inform you that after speaking with our minister of national security it is confirmed that as hard as he was pushing to have us paid (the) next portion of our overtime money for the end of August, it won't happen."

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DRUG MULES JAILED AFTER LENIENCY PLEA



NICOLE AKOELA, a 23-year-old from Suriname, at court yesterday where she is accused of smuggling cocaine.
Photo: **Terrel W. Carey/Tribune Staff**

By **NICO SCAVELLA**
Tribune Staff Reporter
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A SURINAMESE woman yesterday told a judge that she only attempted to smuggle cocaine into the country as a way to secure funding to house her displaced grandmother after their South American home burned down.

Nonetheless, Magistrate Jeanine Weech-Gomez told 23-year-old Nicole Akoela that her "flagrant lack of respect" for this country's laws on drugs warranted two years imprisonment and/or a \$10,000 fine.

The same applied to Guyanese national Iesha Graham, who referred to the recent death of her mother and consequent duty to raise her teenage

brother and sister as her reasons for attempting to smuggle drugs into the Bahamas.

Both Akoela and Graham were arraigned and subsequently sentenced in connection with the seizure of a quantity of cocaine in separate incidents on Tuesday.

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POLICE SET TO MOVE ON BPL FRAUD

By **RICARDO WELLS**
Tribune Staff Reporter
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POLICE could conclude their probe into that multi-million-dollar theft scheme at Bahamas Power and Light as early as today, with sources in the power company suggesting that at least two managers could be terminated by this evening.

Assistant Commissioner of Police Paul Rolle, the officer in-charge of the Royal Bahamas Police Force's Anti-Corruption Unit, yes-

terday when contacted for comment on the status of the investigation confirmed a conclusion could be "expected pretty soon".

ACP Rolle, appointed to the post in June, also told *The Tribune* that once his office has concluded its probe, he would be in a position to update the press on the extent of its findings.

Moreover, sources have told *The Tribune* that two managers are expected to be terminated at the company today.

However, those sources could not confirm if those

firings were in connection with the more than \$2m defrauded from the company as a part of that five-month long scheme uncovered earlier this year.

The scheme, which involved approximately 44 cheques paid out to 16 vendors from December 16, 2016 to May 9, 2017, resulted in the termination of three junior employees Wednesday.

The scheme prompted a wide-ranging audit by Ernst and Young of the electricity provider.

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100 A DAY LANDFILL SCAVENGERS

By **AVA TURNQUEST**
Tribune Chief Reporter
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ENVIRONMENTAL Health is reviewing bids for a new security firm to guard the New Providence Landfill, according to Director of Environmental Health Services Melanie McKenzie, who revealed that the previous firm's contract ended with the last budget cycle.

SEE PAGE THREE



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Don't miss breaking news throughout the weekend and a video review of the week's most important stories with The Tribune's Top 5. And, on Monday, start the week as The Tribune returns to news-stands with a round-up of all the weekend news, business and sport. Plus Insight – news, analysis and comment on the big issues of the day. Check out the latest properties for sale and rent in the Home Buyers' Guide. And The Tribune's Classifieds Trader – the best guide to cars for sale, real estate, help wanted and more.



THE National Bursary Scholarship Award ceremony at St Joseph's Hall on August 16.

Photos: Raymond A Bethel Sr/BIS

Scholars hailed at ceremony

By SYDNEI ISAACS
Bahamas Information Services

MINISTER of Education Jeffrey Lloyd told nearly 400 scholarship winners of the National Bursary Scholarship to the University of The Bahamas (UB) at a ceremony on Wednesday to invest in their country. The event took place at St Joseph's Church Hall, Boyd Road. The National Bursary Scholarship to UB is awarded for receiving either five or more Bahamas General Certificates of Secondary Education (BGCSE) inclusive of mathematics and English language, or maintaining a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher for a minimum of one year at UB. Among them, 288 scholars received the National Bursary Award which covers tuition and fees up to a maximum of \$2,500, and 101 scholars received a limited scholarship in the amount of \$1,875 per se-

mester for one year. A total of 27 high school seniors who had taken BGCSE's in grade 10 and 11 and had obtained the necessary passes also prequalified. To maintain the scholarship, students must achieve a minimum GPA of 3.0 to be eligible to keep the award. Mr Lloyd indicated that the Ministry of Education has afforded over 1,000 grants and scholarships to students this year of which 60 per cent was afforded to students from government schools. An atmosphere of immense gratitude was created when 2017 Bursary Scholar from St Augustine's College, Ariel Kirlew said: "I may not be as rich as my friends, classmates, or neighbours but I do believe that I deserve the same opportunities.... I am truly grateful for this bursary award." She will be pursuing a bachelor's degree in accounting.



MINISTER of Education Jeffrey Lloyd to students at the National Bursary Scholarship Award ceremony at St Joseph's Hall.

A 2017 Outstanding Bursary Scholar from Nassau Christian Academy, Christina Small also expressed how necessary the scholarship is to her. "The word scholarship was slipped into almost every conversation involving college," she said. She will be pursuing a career in medicine. Both scholars thanked the Ministry of Education and their parents for such great support and the opportunity afforded for their hard

work. Dr Rodney Smith, president of UB, contributed many wise words of encouragement to the audience. He said he was also a recipient of the bursary scholarship. His father passed away when he was six years old and he was raised by a single mother of four who worked as a waitress to support them all. The scholarship allowed him to be the first in his family to attend college and allowed him to become what he is today. He said this to show the scholars how important it is to "work hard because you don't know what you are destined to be... you are the future builders and owners of the UB". He also gave insight into what UB has to offer in its upcoming semester, such as new 2-5 bedroom suites along University Commons in Nassau and Grand Bahama, along with many other improvements that he hopes will make UB "the most beautiful campus in the entire world". This concept is especially significant because UB is said to be "the only university that considers the entire country to be its campus". The university is also working on study abroad programmes so that "by the end of their junior year, all students will be afforded the opportunity to study abroad," he said. He also announced his "Thursday open-door policy from 3-5 pm for both students and parents."



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TALL Pines MP Don Saunders hosted a town hall meeting at Garvin Tynes Primary School to hear from constituents impacted by landfill fires.

Photos: Shawn Hanna/Tribune Staff

100 a day landfill scavengers

from page one

Mrs McKenzie underscored security as a major concern for officials as the unlit 225 acre site was frequented daily by more than 100 scavengers, who look for scrap and burn wires that can potentially spark dump fires.

She also pointed to the accumulation of more than 300,000 tyres on the site as she spoke during a town hall meeting at Garvin Tynes Primary School organised by Tall Pines MP Don Saunders on Wednesday night.

The meeting was attended by some 100 area residents, who voiced concerns about their proximity to the landfill and its management, and responsibility for

health issues arising from the massive fires at the site earlier this year and in recent years.

"As you know the landfill is not closed off," Mrs McKenzie said. "So you can access the landfill by foot from Fire Trail Road, from Milo Butler Highway, from Harrold Road and many people do. Every single day that we go there we have on a daily basis at least 100 people we're running, every day. And they never leave, so you're doing this constantly."

She continued: "We had engaged a private firm, and, of course, the budget ended and we could not retain them any longer. The government has given approval for us to retain a private firm from 6pm to 6am in the morning. Those tenders

have been put out, we have done evaluation but we have not yet selected."

In June, an environmental activist raised concerns over the alleged stoppage of the compacting of waste material deposited at the New Providence Landfill, charging that such inaction leaves the site "vulnerable" to yet another massive fire.

However, Mrs McKenzie maintained this week that compacting continues at the Harrold Road site.

"Our major initiative is the active face (at the landfill) it is where everything happens," she said.

"It's where you find your scavengers, people disposing of what they ought not dispose. It's where we concentrate all manpower. We try very hard to compact every day."



TALL Pines MP Don Saunders addressing the town hall meeting at Garvin Tynes Primary School.

POLICE SET TO MOVE ON BPL FRAUD

from page one

Several employees were initially suspended on May 15 in connection with the scheme.

The group included managers and line staff. However, all managers suspended were allowed to return to work Tuesday.

Bahamas Electrical Workers Union Secretary General Astrid Bodie, in an interview with *The Tribune* outside of the company's Blue Hill Road headquarters Wednesday, demanded clarification on the process that had led to the firings.

She took issue with treatment of junior employees, as compared to the managers implicated in the scheme.

When contacted Thursday, she contended if rumours were correct, the managers expected to be terminated today are not the ones implicated, rather managers caught in other alleged egregious acts dis-

covered as a result of the probe into more than \$2m defrauded from BPL.

BPL Chairwoman Darnell Osbourne has maintained that more firings are on the way as the investigation continues and will include those who are "higher up" in the company if found culpable.

In a statement that came hours after the initial firings, Ms Osbourne said the company takes the matter surrounding the missing funds very seriously and intends to "go through the necessary channels" to reclaim all money lost, adding that BPL will "follow up" with police to "ensure justice and guard against similar actions in the future."

When contacted by *The Tribune* on Thursday on the latest developments, Ms Osbourne offered no comment.

In May police announced that an investigation was launched into the alleged theft of a large amount of money at BPL.



BAHAMAS Electrical Workers Union (BEWU) members from left Deron Adderley, assistant secretary general; Astrid Bodie, secretary general; Selvin Rolle, trustee; Norma Fernander, trustee; and Antonio Dean, chief shop steward. Photo: Ava Turnquest/Tribune Chief Reporter

CASE OF OFFICERS SEEN DRINKING ON VIDEO STILL UNDER REVIEW

By AVA TURNQUEST
Tribune Chief Reporter
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COMMISSIONER of Police Ellison Greenslade is still reviewing the file on the two officers caught drinking on video while riding in a police squad car,

The Tribune was told.

In the video, which went viral last month, one officer is seen holding a bottle of Kalik while they appeared to ignore a call from the Police Control Room.

The officers were suspended and given 14 days to show cause letters.

Yesterday, Assistant Commissioner of Police Stephen Dean said: "They had 14 days in which to reply, and then it has to be reviewed. So, the commissioner is still reviewing that."

In the video, the officers appeared to drive without

seatbelts on and they ignored a call from the control room because as one said, they were "f***** getting drunk."

The video appeared to be recorded by the driver on his cellphone who said in the expletive laden recording: "Don't send this video

out you know."

It was viewed and shared thousands of times on Facebook, prompting widespread condemnation and

calls for the men to be fired.

Key details, such as when the video was recorded, were still not known up to press time.

POLICE HUNTING MEN AFTER ARMED ROBBERIES

POLICE are seeking the public's help in solving two separate armed robberies that occurred on Wednesday.

In the first incident,

shortly after 1.30pm, two men armed with handguns robbed a business located on West Bay Street of cash before fleeing on foot.

Then shortly after 3.30pm, a gunman robbed a business located on Deans Lane of cash before fleeing on foot. Investigations are ongoing.

Anyone with information is asked to call police at 919, the Central Detective Unit at 502-9991 or the Crime Stoppers hotline at 328-TIPS.

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Time for a new approach to tourism promotion

IN JUNE, we called in these columns for a major reassessment of the government's tourism policy and promotion in the face of growing competition from our Caribbean rivals, including Cuba.

We were inspired to urge such action by the appointment of a new Minister of Tourism with a reputation for a vigorous and down-to-earth approach.

We were also encouraged by the Prime Minister's welcome call in an address to the Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association for diversification of the country's tourism to cover more of our history and culture.

The tourism sector of the economy employs thousands of Bahamians and brings in much of the foreign exchange needed to import the goods and services on which we rely for our way of life.

As such, the government should provide appropriate official support to the sector. It follows that the work of the Ministry of Tourism – its objectives, priorities and staffing – should be under constant scrutiny. Its activities need to be reassessed regularly to enable it to keep up with the competition from other countries that are forever changing and developing their tourism product.

It appears that Mr D'Aguiar's principal concerns are about visitor safety and the importance of increasing expenditure by tourists. Although our overall visitor levels are up, our level of spending is down so there is a need to attract more stopover visitors who will spend more money than cruise ship passengers.

In addition, as an indication of his willingness to consider fresh ideas and reform, he was reported to have told tourism stakeholders during an address last week that "a radically different approach to tourism development" was required.

The primary role of his ministry must be to promote The Bahamas as a desirable destination for visitors. It makes sense to re-engage the experienced global public relations agency which has already been successful in gaining extensive exposure for the country in sophisticated tourism markets like the USA and which has won international recognition for its work. As before, we hope that a Ministry of Tourism communications team will be able to work alongside them.

To assist them, one innovative and low-cost idea which may be worth considering would be to develop a small cadre of resident expatriates from European countries who might be willing to become involved. Based on their own first-hand experience of local life, they would be well positioned to help to explain – credibly and convincingly to tour operators and others in their country of origin – the merits of our nation as a leading tourist destination.

While fears about crime and the safety of our visitors are justified to some extent, the dangers should be kept in proportion. Travel advisories by foreign governments tend to be unnecessarily alarming about local conditions and can be misleading.

For example, description of the criminal threat level in New Providence as critical looks to be an exaggeration, as is the listing of The Bahamas on an international travel website as the sixth out of ten most dangerous places for unaccompanied women to visit.

Those of us who live here know that

overall, apart from drugs or gang-related crime and domestic violence, the threat of serious lawlessness in the form of personal assault is low while crime generally in the Family Islands is relatively rare. People can walk down Bay Street without feeling threatened.

But, as in most countries, venturing out in the early hours of the morning would be unwise.

Mercifully, here at home we have so far escaped the scourge of terrorism whereas there is a real threat of continuing ISIS-inspired terrorist attacks in major cities like London, Paris and Brussels.

We agree with the minister about fears of a major tragic event locally in whatever form that might take, but it is fair to say that the threat of a serious incident involving terrorism is much greater in European capitals than in the relative safety of New Providence.

An important issue that should be addressed is the low numbers of visitors from Europe compared to the USA and Canada from where most of the annual total of some six million come.

Jamaica's Minister of Tourism was reported recently to be seeking to increase last year's total of 210,000 visitors from the United Kingdom to his country which is marginally less than the number of British tourists who visit Barbados annually.

By comparison, a Google search reveals that the number of such visitors coming to The Bahamas is only about 30,000.

From what we hear about Britain, the general view seems to be that, while considered a high class and desirable destination, The Bahamas is too expensive and predominantly a playground for wealthy Americans rather than for the average Briton who prefers Jamaica and Barbados or the Dominican Republic.

With the burgeoning vacation home rental sector here, perhaps costs will come down and perceptions change. But we suggest that more attention should be given to this potentially lucrative UK market, particularly in relation to package tours.

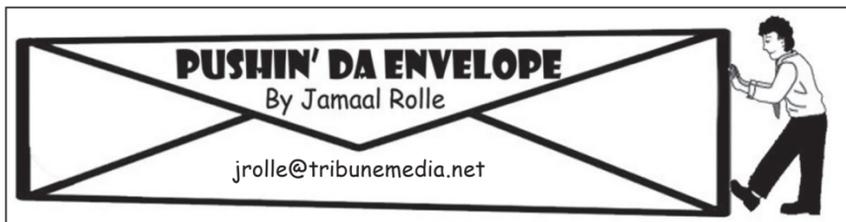
After a nine-hour flight, visitors from Europe are likely to stay longer and spend more money than short-term stopover visitors from the US. Moreover, if the demand is created, the airlift will follow as airlines or charter companies look for new and profitable routes.

The quality and variety of our tourism product is of a high standard. In addition to the top of the range Ocean Club, Atlantis with its own famous brand name, and Baha Mar soon to come fully on stream, the country has so much to offer in the way of good hotels, varied facilities and myriad attractions for visitors.

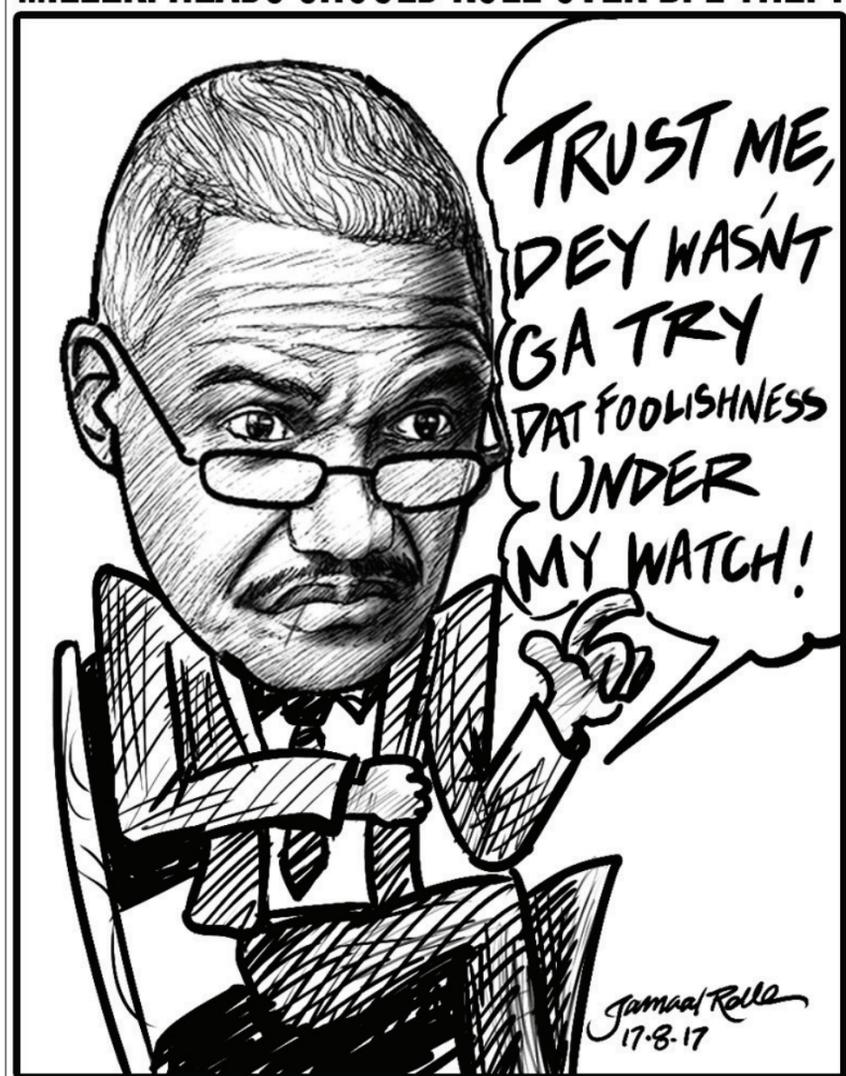
What is surely needed now is to build on existing practice by developing a more imaginative and active approach to marketing – in particular, further afield in Europe rather than concentrating on North America.

We have a good story to tell about an interesting, safe and desirable destination providing an exceptional experience and increasingly good value for money, not just for the rich and famous but for all.

The aim must be for visitors to go away genuinely believing that it really is better in The Bahamas. But first the ministry needs to attract greater numbers of stopover visitors to our shores.



MILLER: HEADS SHOULD ROLL OVER BPL THEFT



Equality in The Bahamas

EDITOR, The Tribune.

THE most venerable Pastor Cedric Moss threw down a gauntlet in his passé crusade to deny rights to some Bahamians. His crusade is drenched in intolerance, obstinacy and biblical irony.

First year law students are allowed to prattle on as they attempt to impress their professors with their intellect. At the end of their soliloquy they are brought crashing back to earth by a simple question: "Where's the legal argument?"

Pastor Moss' latest misdeed is proselytising disguised as a legal argument. His argument does not pass muster in a democracy. Pastor Moss seems more like a theocrat living in a country like Iran rather than like someone committed to democracy.

He could have made a textual argument that current practice supports his civil union blockade. I doubt he canvassed the framents of our constitution to see what their intent was back in 1972. But even the most belligerent in that bunch would have evolved on many issues, including marriage equality.

The core of the argument was (is) that marriage and civil unions are legal constructs and any application for relief must be settled by the judiciary not the clergy.

We were treated instead to an argumentum ad populum. In Pastor Moss' world his anti-civil union proposition is justified because it is what many people, maybe even a majority of Bahamians believe.

But civil rights must never be subjected to a popularity contest. And it certainly won't be judicial activism, as the Pastor believes, should a judge eventually extend equal protection rights to same-sex couples wishing to marry.

When it comes to equal rights our courts are legally bound not to infringe the rights of minorities in society.

This point is completely lost on the pastor. He meandered into a circular log-

LETTERS

letters@tribunemedia.net

ic implying that marriage equality opens the door to polygamy and incest. He completely missed the point that same-sex couples are being denied access to marriage while it is available to everyone else.

Polygamy and incest are banned for straight people and therefore the very precept of equal protection under the law would ban same-sex couples from partaking in either.

It boggles the mind how the good pastor can't appreciate the very foundation of human rights. All persons are equal before the law and have the right to enjoy its protection without discrimination.

The reference to a ban on marriage by minors was this writer's, who never meant to put those worshippers in Pastor Moss' mouth. He's got enough there to chew on, most of which he has great difficulty digesting. The intent of the reference was merely to show that the law is proactive in its zealous protection of our children.

Pastor Moss knows that our laws do not allow a father to marry his daughter or a mother to marry her own son. Why then would he expect that civil unions would give consent to a father marrying his son or a mother her own daughter?

Equal protection before the law is about leveling the playing field for all citizens. If one citizen is allowed to do something (marry), then all must be afforded this privilege. If any citizen is prohibited from doing something then that prohibition must apply to all.

The state presently allows marriage between a man and a woman who are not related and who are not already in connubial habitation with someone else. Justifiably, it rules out incestors and polygamists. Sadly, it also rules out same-sex couples.

The problem for the pastor

is that his reasoning seems to equate being gay with incest and polygamy. His is an illogical, unloving, prejudicial mindset which seeks to demonize fellow human beings as being less equal to himself. This is the same inhumane ground tread by those who do not support racial or gender equality.

Pastor Moss twisted the words of the learned President of the Court of Appeals who observed in a lucid legal presentation that a courageous and astute advocate might someday argue for marriage equality here.

Where else but in the fertile mind of a crotchety curate can that harmless observation be interpreted as legal jujitsu? Her words are reminiscent of the late US Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, the 96th person and first black man on that Court.

Mr Marshall was a "courageous and astute" 32-year-old lawyer when he successfully argued against the practice of busing black students over great distances to keep them in segregated schools. His case, Brown vs Board of Education said that separating black children from white kids didn't make them all equal before the law.

If that is what Pastor Moss sees as judicial activism then my prayer is for a young officer of the court to show us similar courage and tenacity in this modern-day equality challenge.

The pastor might ponder a quote from Nelson Mandela who was a staunch advocate for marriage equality: "For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."

It is sad that Pastor Moss is unable to say amen to equality for all God's children, whether straight or LGBT, who are equally and wonderfully made in the image of their Creator and equally protected by our democratic constitution.

THE GRADUATE
Nassau,
August 16, 2017



SUPERINTENDENT SHANTEL KNOWLES, of the Missing and Exploited persons division, updating the media of the latest information surrounding the missing persons bulletin issued by police. Photo: **Terrel W. Carey/Tribune Staff**

Police call for public help in search for missing people

By **RASHAD ROLLE**
Tribune Staff Reporter
rolle@tribunemedia.net

CHAROME Green, a 15-year-old girl who was reported missing on August 12, has been found, Police Superintendent **Chanta Knowles** said yesterday.

The officer-in-charge of missing and exploited persons said police are still searching for a number of other missing people, however, including siblings **Faylisha Louis** and **Orien Knowles**, 14-year-olds who were last seen in the West Bay Street area last week.

"We definitely have a lot of concern for these two," Supt Knowles said. "It's unusual to have brother and sister reported missing at the same time."

Another child, 12-year-old **Dominique Johnson** of Farrington Road, was last seen on August 11 when she left home wearing a leopard print dress.

"We are encouraging parents of young children to build relationships with your kids especially during summer, Easter, Christmas times when they are away from school to structure activities so we would know where they are at all times," Supt Knowles said.

"We're asking parents to get to know friends of your children, know where they live, have telephone contact so in cases where they may come up missing we would have some place to start."

Police are also looking for a pair of senior citizens. These include 60-year-

old **Derrick Mackey** who was reported missing on August 4 after he was last seen in the Mall at Marathon area and 89-year-old **Charles Lightbourn** reported missing last August. The family of Mr Lightbourn is offering a \$5,000 reward for information that could lead to his return.

Mr Lightbourn has a medical condition that has left him partially disabled.

Assistant Commissioner of Police **Clayton Fernander** said Mr Lightbourn lived on "acres of land".

"We organised a big search team," he said. "The family assisted with K9s and we had drones. We flew over and got excellent photos from the top to assist us with the search."

Supt Knowles also said: "We are asking persons who have family members who are elderly who are sick, have failing health or memory loss to pay attention to them especially if they are not staying in the same home, know their doctor visits, know their medication so if they too go missing we can possibly have direction."

Police are also searching for a pair of missing Family Island residents.

Brian Burrows was reported missing on July 1. He was last seen between Fiddle Cay and Little Hog Cay, Abaco.

And the family of **Nathaniel Higgs**, of Eleuthera, who was reported missing three years ago seek an update from police every month on his whereabouts, Supt Knowles said.



CHARLES THEODORE LIGHTBOURN, aka Teddy.



BRIAN Burrows.



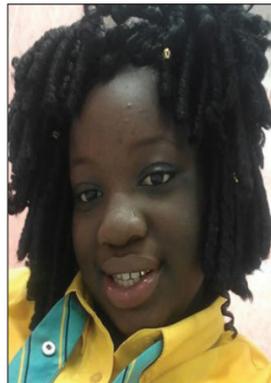
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ORIEN Knowles and Faylisha Louis.



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Sands steps in on nurses owed \$1m

from page one

nursing. The total due to them from the time they graduated, inclusive of budgetary allowances, is \$426,161.

"Another group of 25 nurses are owed \$567,239 in salaries and uniform allowances. That includes arrears and budgetary allowances for this fiscal year. The problem is there was no budgetary allocation for

these individuals or arrears from the time they completed their examinations despite the fact that they would've been assigned to various clinics."

Dr Sands said he has had to give assurances to some of the landlords and creditors of the women after they began to doubt the employment statuses of the nurses.

"The hardships these people have faced will break you up because this is not an issue with someone

getting a contract to build a sidewalk to nowhere," he said. "These are people who were trained by the government and assured they had a job.

"They were being told the Department of Personal Records in the Ministry of Public Services didn't have a record of them. They were told by the nursing hierarchy to keep working, we'll make sure you get straight. Yet other people rolled up, no paper work but were get-

ting paid."

Dr Sands said the problem the nurses faced is not out of the ordinary for the public sector.

"I wish I could say this was unusual but these kinds of human resource challenges are typical of the civil service. It's unusual only in the sense that you have thousands of Bahamians beginning to be added to the payroll without any references to dotting I's and T's but these people no one

could suggest are not essential have had such troubles."

Despite the hardship, Ms Butler said the nurses love what they do and their morale for their jobs has not suffered.

"We still believe in providing quality healthcare but we are taking care and looking after the public while we are putting our children and our families on hold," she said. "It's not been easy. I literally have only seven more years to

have a significant impact or impression on my son. Without being paid, my kids have had to sacrifice vacation and meaningful outings because I couldn't afford it. They often asked me, 'mommy when you start to get your salary can we...?'"

The nurses included clinical and registered nurses.

Dr Sands said they will receive their arrears in portions, a process that should start in a few weeks.

DRUG MULES JAILED AFTER LENIENCY PLEA



IESHA GRAHAM, a 24-year-old from Guyana, outside court yesterday.

Photo: Terrel W. Carey/Tribune Staff

from page one

They each faced one count of possession of dangerous drugs with intent to supply and one count of importation of dangerous drugs. They each pleaded guilty to both charges against them, though informing the court of their desire to offer an explanation for their actions.

According to police reports, shortly after 2pm on Tuesday, Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU) officers on duty at the Lynden Pindling International Airport (LPIA), conducted a search of a suitcase owned by a woman from Suriname, who had just arrived on a Caribbean airline.

During the search, the officers uncovered just over nine pounds of cocaine. The woman was subsequently taken into custody.

Then, shortly before 4pm, DEU officers acting on information, conducted a search of a hotel room located in the downtown area, where they uncovered just over nine pounds of cocaine hidden in a suitcase. A woman from Guyana who had arrived earlier on a Caribbean airline was

subsequently taken into custody.

Before being sentenced, Akoela, with the assistance of a translator, told Magistrate Weech-Gomez that she smuggled the drugs in an attempt to make some money following the destruction of her grandmother's place approximately six months ago.

The Surinamese mother of two told the court that despite being employed as an administrator in a casino where she lives, things were still tight financially - she said she even considered sleeping with men and other things as ways to make ends meet.

In her attempts at securing more money, Akoela said she eventually met with an individual named Alvin, who allegedly told her that if she smuggled the cocaine he would provide a new place to stay for her 83-year-old grandmother.

Akoela admitted to knowing the potential ramifications of committing such a crime, but did so not only as a quick way to acquire the funds she needed, but also because she was assured by Alvin that she would encounter no problems in her attempts

at smuggling the drugs.

However, Magistrate Weech-Gomez said while she has the "greatest of sympathy" for Akoela, her children, grandmother and general circumstances, she found it "very difficult" to accept Akoela's actions.

She shared similar sentiments with Graham, stating that while she acknowledged Graham's plea for lenience and the mitigating factors of the matter, her dire circumstances should have further compelled her to "walk the straight and narrow."

They were both sentenced to two years at the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services (BDCS) and a fine of \$10,000 for possession of dangerous drugs with intent to supply. Failure to pay the fine would result in an additional year at the BDCS.

They were also fined \$10,000 each or two years at the BDCS for the second charge.

Both of their respective sentences are to run concurrently, the magistrate said. Upon completion of their respective sentences both women are to be turned over to the Department of Immigration.

POLICE PAY BACKLOG DELAYED

from page one

It continued: "He has assured us that they are honouring the court ruling and by September payday, we should be getting something. With that said, again I say thank you to the hard-working officers who continue to make this our beloved country safe. If there is any concerns or suggestions, please feel free to contact Sgt Sonny Miller."

When contacted by *The Tribune*, Sgt Miller stressed that he has been in constant communication with Mr Dames on the matter.

He also confirmed that a follow-up meeting is scheduled for later today, to "pin-down September" as a "sure thing".

Sgt Miller said he was unsure how the message was made public, adding that despite the tone of the mes-

sage, the government has remained "open and upfront" with the process and has given the PSA "all indications that a conclusion was imminent".

"When things took a turn, we knew. The minister has kept us informed and we are working together on a resolution," he told *The Tribune*. "After the first payment, we gave the government two months to come up with a date for the second payout, within that time, it was agreed that August would be it. Things happened and we are working on the next best date."

Sgt Miller said he was told that limited finances made the expected August payout "impossible".

The Tribune understands that as many as 1,799 officers are eligible for the overtime benefits.

This does not include reservists and retirees, nor

does it include officers who have since died and whose estate is entitled to collect the cheques.

People who fall into those categories are reportedly being dealt with separately.

The PSA took the former administration to court in 2015 over the overtime issue, ultimately winning its case and forcing a payout by the government. However the Christie administration stalled on making the payments.

Former Prime Minister Perry Christie at a rally on April 27, days before officers voted in the May 3 advanced poll, announced that the government would finally pay RBPF officers for working 12-hour shifts, with the first payment of the outstanding sum to be issued on May 29.

The Minnis administration honoured that promise after being elected.

FORENSIC AUDIT FOR GAMING BOARD PAYOUTS

from page one

anonymity, confirmed that Mr Scott received the directive on Monday.

Deputy Secretary Bridgette Outten was designated as acting secretary, the executive confirmed.

"[Mr Scott] had a lot of vacation time, so it was decided that he use those days while the audit is carried out," the executive said.

The pending audit will also investigate the board's decision to award bonuses and increase salaries. One reported bonus was awarded as a result of the completion of Baha Mar's casino license.

Gaming Board Chairman Kenyatta Gibson declined comment when contacted yesterday.

He told *The Tribune* last month that an audit of the board's finances and a status review of the gaming house industry were first on the new panel's agenda.

Mr Gibson, at the time, said these things would need to be done before any potential recommendations from the board are given to the government of The Bahamas.

It was also revealed this week that at least five employees of the Office of the Attorney General have been let go, according to an internal email released Wednesday and seen by the media.

They included two people engaged in case management, a consultant in the Attorney General's Office and two consultants in the Registrar General's De-

partment.

Asked about the matter earlier this week, Attorney General Carl Bethel said: "We conducted a needs assessment and also looked at duplication of staff doing the same things."

The Minnis administration has pledged a conservative approach to the size of the public sector, proposing a freeze on hiring while looking for ways to reduce the size as a way of cutting back on expenditure.

On Monday, 15 people were let go from the Bahamas Agriculture & Industrial Corporation (BAIC). They had been hired days ahead of the general election in May. Their firing followed similar exercises in the Ministry of Tourism recently.



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Generator donated to aid Children's Home in GB

By DENISE MAYCOCK
Tribune Freeport Reporter
dmaycock@tribunemedia.net

THE prayers of the Grand Bahama Children's Home were answered when a local financial institution donated a much-needed power generator valued at more than \$30,000 to the facility on Thursday.

The home, which was in dire need of a generator following Hurricane Matthew, was presented with a 240kw Caterpillar generator capable of generating power to its entire facility on Jobson Avenue where the facility cares for some 27 children.

Fidelity Bank President Gregory Bethel was in Freeport for the presentation and said that another corporate citizen, Mechanical and Engineering (M&E), has agreed to maintain the generator at no cost to the home.

Sheila Smith Johnson, executive director of the GBCH, was overjoyed when she learned that Fidelity Bank was donating a generator, which she had just prayed for a week earlier.

The GBCH, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, depends on donations from the community and corporate citizens to keep the home running. The facility has cared for some 4,000 children since its founding. Board member Leslie Baptista thanked the group of volunteers who throughout



GRAND Bahama Children's Home.

the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew lent them generators and supplied gas.

"To not have power and have up to 30 children running around scared, hungry and tired - it was a tremendous village effort. And this day is a wonderful day," she said.

Willie Moss, the co-chair of the 40th Anniversary Celebrations Committee, said the home had been a "haven" for some 4,000 children over the past four decades.

"It's been a place of safety, not just during the time of hurricanes, but for those who are neglected, abused, or find themselves on hard times," Ms Moss said. "It's been a place of care, not just a roof over the heads of the children who come here, but a place for them to receive the kind of care, attention, and love that they perhaps could not get where they were, and so they were brought here."

"It's been a shelter in the time of the storms which wreaked havoc in the lives of those who are most vul-

nerable in our society and who through no fault of their own find themselves in dire need."

The GBCH, Ms Moss said, is still operating today because of donations received from Fidelity and countless others who have over the years made charity the focus of their lives.

"So the GBCH is here today because of love, and love of countless persons who found it in their hearts to give to those in need. And it will only continue through the generosity of those who are continuing to support the work that is done here," she said.

Ms Moss announced that a gala event is planned for November 4 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the children's home, as well as other fundraising events leading up to it.

"The home needs assistance and the support of every person in this community to carry on the work that it is doing. No amount is too small; we need hundreds of thousands one dollar bills to make the home

work," she said.

Mr Bethel noted that Fidelity established a donation committee that has an annual budget which is a percentage of their profits.

"We have a charity that we assist every month. The donation committee is out there looking for people who need help. I want to pay tribute to my colleagues who do all the work to generate the profits and the donation committee that give us the opportunity to share those blessings," he said.

Mr Bethel said that Fidelity had grown significantly in Nassau and Freeport, despite the financial crisis that caused the Great Recession nearly ten years ago.

"This August marks the anniversary of the beginning of the financial crisis that caused the great recession that has impacted just about every life around the world, and we are still seeking to recover from that financial crisis and the great recession."

"But through the Grace of God and some awesome colleagues, even through that 10 year period Fidelity has gone from strength to strength, and has grown tremendously during that time whether in the size of the balance sheet, the number of customers, the profits, and the staff," he stated.

"We are really delighted to be here in Freeport... I am in Freeport every month, and people say that the Grand Bahama and Freeport community has

been especially hard hit, but even in Freeport, we have had tremendous growth. In fact, we are expanding our branch and renovating and expanding as we speak."

The bank has hired ten people in the last year and is still looking to employ additional people, Mr Bethel said.

Mr Bethel, who believes in giving to others, is not one for publicity but felt the importance to do so at this time to encourage others also to come forward

and give.

"I never do this," he said. "I do this even though I do not like the publicity; I accept publicity for this reason to say to those who will watch this account of what is taking place that the children at the GBCH need you. It is not one donor, it really takes all of us to touch lives. And this is how you store treasures in heaven, by reaching out to the most vulnerable in our community and helping them."

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This guide offers a look at the benefits of five varieties of Hurricane Shutters

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\$1,000 FINE FOR SWISS WOMAN CAUGHT WITH COCAINE

By NICO SCAVELLA
Tribune Staff Reporter
nscavella@tribunemedia.net

A SWISS woman tourist was ordered to make a near \$1,000 donation to two local institutions after being caught with a small amount of cocaine yesterday morning.

According to a police prosecutor, Anita Wenger, 31, of Switzerland, was found with half a gram of cocaine

shortly after 8.30am when officers on foot patrol in the Bay Street area searched a car she was in.

She was subsequently arrested and charged with one count of possession of dangerous drugs.

Wenger told the court that she received the cocaine from someone on the beach as a birthday gift. She claimed she was very drunk at the time and simply accepted it and placed it in

her purse.

Magistrate Jeanine Weech-Gomez ultimately ordered Wenger to make a \$750 donation: \$375 is to be made out to the Ranfurly Home for Children while another \$375 is to be made out to the Persis Rodgers Home for the Aged.

Failure to do so would result in six months at the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services.

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TUNE INTO TODAY !!!



BPL CEO Pamela Hill.

Photo: Shawn Hanna/Tribune Staff

BPL in the dark

WHEN Bahamas Power & Light CEO Pamela Hill defended the company's \$1.1m performance bonus under the former Christie administration, I couldn't control the hysterical fit of laughter, her comments put me under.

When Mrs. Hill noted that BPL's service and power provision showed "step by step improvements" and "higher reliability" of BPL's services, to justify the undeserved \$1m incentive.

Ms. Hill's statements only added fuel to the bouts of laughter I was combating.

Higher reliability?

Of what, more blackouts?

In an interview in Thursday's *Tribune*, Ms Hill conceded that the questionable million dollar bonus awarded to BPL "does seem like a 'strange animal' considering BPL's ongoing struggles to consistently keep the lights on, BPL has worked to make sure that there have been improvements in the company over the past year."

Improvements? Where?

Acknowledging that while the company has been "experiencing some maintenance issues, lately,

A Comic's View

By INIGO 'NAUGHTY' ZENICAZELAYA



which have affected multiple islands in the country inclusive of Abaco, Bimini, Exuma and New Providence, BPL officials are "working diligently in order to be able to resolve them."

Ms Hill also reminded all concerned that, BPL is not in a position to be able to resolve the "issues" of the affected areas immediately.

When asked if a contract renewal was still an option, Ms Hill said: "We are not focused on any such thing."

"My focus entirely is on the three things that I know our customers are focused on, and that's around improving the reliability, the affordability and the customer service aspect of our product. And everything else is really not core to our mission, to our mission here at the company."

Translated into 'Bahamanees': "We ain't checking for dat, we ain't on that run right now, we just get

burst with a million dollar bub, cause we doing what we 'posed to do. So Minnis dem, could do whatever."

Ms Hill can be quite flip-pant it seems, I see now why both Deputy Prime Minister K Peter Turnquest and former Bahamas Electricity Corporation (BEC) Executive Chairman Leslie Miller have spoken out boisterously against the reported bonus, with Miller saying that BPL "Is inconsistent with the desire for improved results" in electricity service for Bahamian consumers.

Ah, I miss the 'Potcake', you knew when he was going to "make you sweat."

Note to self: "Stock up on batteries, water and ice, keep the coolers full and ready."

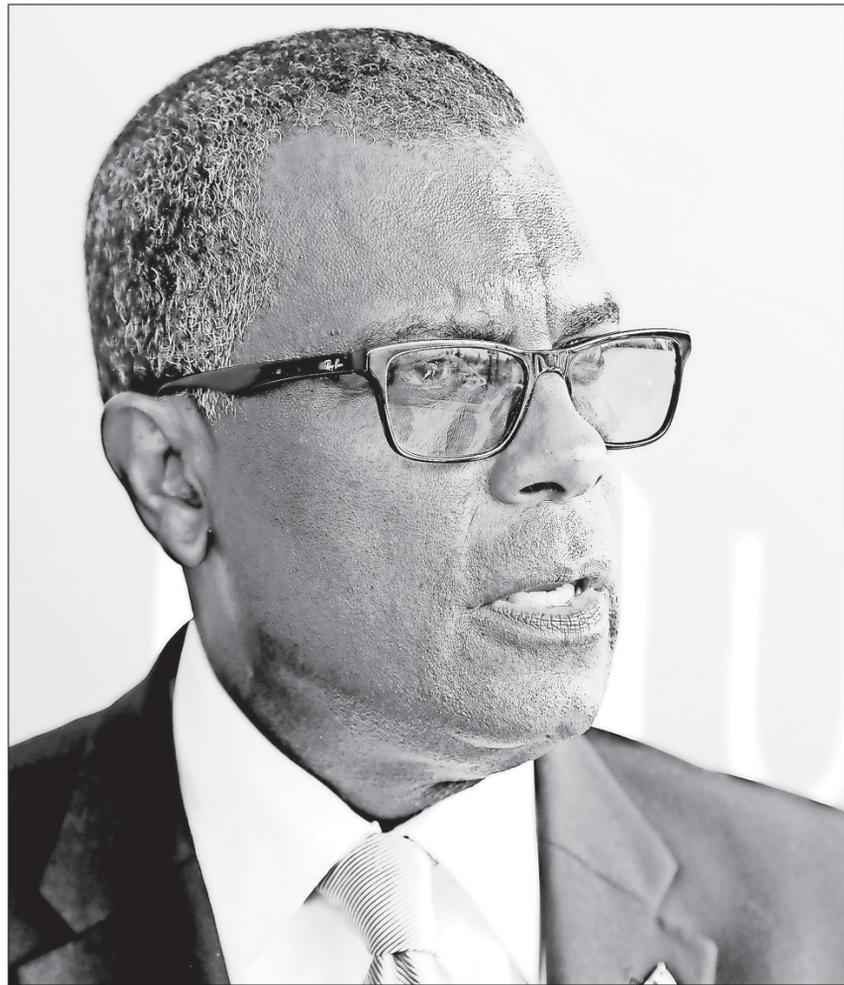
What's really dumbfounding, is that according to the dailies and social media, allegedly Ms.Hill flies out of town on Thursday night, only to return on Monday.

Coincidentally, did anyone take note when the bulk of the blackouts occur?

You guessed it, on the weekends!

MITCHELL STILL A BITTER 'PUCK'

PLP Senator Fred Mitchell is no stranger to this column, his antics make my job very easy as a comedian,



SENATOR FRED MITCHELL

and his role reoccurring.

From his time as Minister of Foreign Affairs, in the former government.(Or Minister of Affairs in Foreign as I referred to him as, because it often seemed he was abroad more than not). Mitchell was infamous for suffering from reoccurring cases of "hoof in mouth".

In one of his more famous outbreaks, Mitchell got all

Shakespearean and said that the former Foreign Affairs minister Brent Symonette should "go hide under the rock from whence he came".

Mitchell was a bitter 'Puck' then, and remains so to this day. His latest target, Dame Joan Sawyer!

For all of his scholastic pedigree Mitchell comes off like an educated fool more times than not.

Why Dame Joan Sawyer? (of whom I am a huge fan of by the way) You should know in all your intelligencia Mr. Mitchell, that she is the wrong "fire" for you to play with "Scarecrow Fred".

In his latest soiree into lunacy, Mitchell, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, in an interview with the *Guardian* said that former Court of Appeal President Dame Joan Sawyer was "outrageous" to accuse two prominent clergymen of attempting to divide the country, when they expressed concern over what they deemed to be "inhumane" treatment of a former PLP Cabinet minister during his recent arraignment.

"You have to be judicious in your statements and not outrageous."

"So, it appears to me it is an attempt to remain relevant. [She is] irrelevant."

At this point I'm amazed Mitchell's incisors didn't completely sever his tongue, after those statements. FYI Mr Mitchell, your sentiments regarding Dame

Joan, are exactly how the majority of the voting populous in this country feels about you!

Ah, irony is such a humorous thing!

(Is Mitchell playing the role of the "pot" or "kettle" in this one?)

"This is a lady who got to the highest levels of government in the country and then did not support gender equality, so from that point of view she is out of step with the times, and therefore not relevant. "Simply, you just need to ignore her opinion."

Translated into "Bahamanees": "Well mudoos, I been hot with dis old gal, ever since she didn't support me on my gender vibe. And now she running out, don't penny her, ain't nobody on her run, her time done."

Yes, it's seems like Mr Mitchell is all in his feelings, when it comes to Dame Joan Sawyer for not supporting his stance for gender equality. It also seems that jealousy has reared its ugly head in this equation also, despite his attempts to paint Dame Joan as obsolete, she remains more intelligent than Mitchell, more dignified, better versed and vastly more popular.

Harness that inner misogynist, Mr Mitchell, and accept the fact she's a GOOD woman, and focus more on being 'judicious' rather than 'outrageous' as you try to remain 'relevant' yourself.

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INJURED people are treated in Barcelona, Spain, yesterday after a white van jumped the sidewalk in the historic Las Ramblas district, crashing into a summer crowd of residents and tourists and injuring several people, police said. Photos: Oriol Duran/AP

13 dead in Barcelona van attack

BARCELONA, SPAIN
Associated Press

A VAN veered onto a promenade and barreled down the busy walkway in central Barcelona on Thursday, swerving back and forth as it mowed down pedestrians and turned a picturesque tourist destination into a bloody killing zone. Thirteen people were killed and 100 were injured, 15 of them seriously, in what authorities called a terrorist attack.

Two people have been arrested but the van driver, who fled on foot, remains at large. Early Friday morning, police killed five suspects engaged in an attack that injured six people in a seaside resort town. Police suspect the attacks are related.

The late afternoon attack in the city's Las Ramblas district left victims sprawled in the historic street, spattered with blood or writhing in pain from broken limbs. Others were ushered inside shops by officers with their guns drawn or fled in panic, screaming and carrying young children in their arms.

"It was clearly a terror attack, intended to kill as many people as possible," Josep Lluís Traperó, a senior police official for Spain's Catalonia region told reporters late Thursday.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility, saying in a statement on its Amaq news agency that the attack was carried out by "soldiers of the Islamic State" in response to the extremist group's calls for followers to target countries participating in the coalition trying to drive it from Syria and Iraq.

Early Friday, Catalan police said they shot and killed five suspects in response to a terrorist attack in the seaside resort town of Cambrils, south of Barcelona. They said the suspects carried bomb belts, which were detonated by a police bomb squad.

Media reports said a car crashed into a police vehicle and nearby civilians and police shot the attackers, one brandishing a knife. Police did not immediately say how the attack was being carried out. A police officer and five civilians were injured and two were in serious condition. Police are working on the theory that the Cambrils and Barcelona attacks are connected, as well as a Wednesday night explosion in the town of Alcanar in which one person was killed.

The Catalan regional government said citizens from 24 countries were among the people killed and injured during the Barcelona van attack.

Authorities said the dead included a Belgian and a Greek woman was among the injured. Australia confirmed three of its citizens were injured; two others were Taiwanese and one was from Hong Kong, according to their governments. Germany was investigating whether its citizens were among the dead or injured.

Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy called the



AN INJURED person is treated in Barcelona, Spain, yesterday after the attack with a van.

killing a "savage terrorist attack" and said Spaniards "are not just united in mourning, but especially in the firm determination to beat those who want to rob us of our values and our way of life."

After the afternoon attack, Las Ramblas went into lockdown. Swarms of officers brandishing hand guns and automatic weapons launched a manhunt in the downtown district, ordering stores and cafes and public transport to shut down.

Several hours later, authorities reported two arrests, one a Spanish national from Melilla, a Spanish-run Mediterranean seafaring enclave in North Africa, and the other a Moroccan. They declined to identify them.

Traperó said neither of them was the van's driver, who remained at large after abandoning the van and fleeing on foot. The arrests took place in the northern Catalan town of Ripoll and in Alcanar, where a gas explosion in a house is being investigated for a possible connection.

Spanish public broadcaster RTVE and other news outlets named one of the detained as Driss Oukabir, a French citizen of Moroccan origin. RTVE reported said Oukabir went to police in Ripoll to report that his identity documents had been stolen. Various Spanish media said the IDs with his name were found in the attack van and that he claimed his brother might have stolen them.

Media outlets ran photographs of Oukabir they said police had issued to identify one of the suspects. The regional police told the Associated Press that they had not distributed the photograph. They refused to say if he was one of the two detained.

Barcelona is the latest European city where attackers used a vehicle as a weapon of terror against a popular tourist destination, after other deadly attacks in France, Germany, Sweden and Britain.

"London, Brussels, Paris and some other European cities have had the same experience. It's been Barcelona's turn today," Carles Puigdemont, president of Catalonia's government.

Thursday's bloodshed was Spain's deadliest attack since 2004, when al-Qaida-inspired bombers killed 192

people in coordinated assaults on Madrid's commuter trains. In the years since, Spanish authorities have arrested nearly 200 jihadists. The only deadly attacks were bombings claimed by the Basque separatist group ETA that killed five people over the past decade but it declared a cease-fire in 2011.

"Unfortunately, Spaniards know the absurd and irrational pain that terrorism causes. We have received blows like this in recent years, but we also that terrorists can be beaten," Rajoy said.

During the search for the perpetrators, troopers shot and killed a man who was in a vehicle that hit two officers at a traffic blockade on the outskirts of Barcelona. But Traperó said the driver's actions were not linked to the van attack.

Las Ramblas cuts through the center of Barcelona and is one of the city's top tourist destinations. It is a wide avenue of stalls and shops with a pedestrian-only walkway in the center while cars can travel on either side.

A taxi driver who witnessed the attack, Oscar Cano, said the white van suddenly jumped the curb and sped down the central pedestrian area at a high speed for about 500 yards (457 meters), veering from side to side as it targeted people.

"I heard a lot of people screaming and then I saw the van going down the boulevard," another witness, Miguel Angel Rizo, told The Associated Press. "You could see all the bodies lying through Las Ramblas. It was brutal. A very tough image to see."

Jordi Laparra, a 55-year-old physical education teacher and Barcelona resident, said it initially looked like a terrible traffic accident.

"At first I thought it was an accident, as the van crashed into ten people or so and seemed to get stuck. But then he maneuvered left and accelerated full speed down the Ramblas and I realised it was a terrorist attack," Laparra said. "He zigzagged from side to side into the kiosks, pinning as many people as he could, so they had no escape."

Carol Augustin, a manager at La Palau Moja, an 18th-century former palace on Las Ramblas that now

houses offices and a tourism center, said the van passed in front of the building.

"People started screaming and running into the office. It was such a chaotic situation. There were families with children," she said.

Dutch visitor Tamara Jurgen said she and a friend were inside a clothing store steps from the scene and were kept inside until it was safe to leave.

"We were downstairs when it happened and everyone was screaming and running. We had to run up to the roof and throw our bags over a wall," Jurgen said. "We were all together along this wall and we were scared we were going to have to jump."

Barcelona Mayor Ada Colau announced a minute of silence to be held Friday in Barcelona's main square "to show that we are not scared." The prime minis-

ter announced three days of national mourning.

Leaders around the world offered their support and condolences to Barcelona after the attack.

President Donald Trump tweeted that the US condemned the attack and "will do whatever is necessary to help. Be tough & strong, we love you!"

British Prime Minister Theresa May said the UK "stands with Spain against terror" while French President Emmanuel Macron tweeted: "All my thoughts and solidarity from France for the victims of the tragic attack in Barcelona. We will remain united and determined."

Spain has been on a security alert one step below the maximum since June 2015 following attacks elsewhere in Europe and Africa.

Cars, trucks and vans have been the weapon of

choice in multiple extremist attacks in Europe in the last year.

The deadliest targeted Bastille Day revelers in Nice, France, in July 2016, killing 86 people. In December 2016, 12 people died after a driver used a hijacked truck to drive into a Christmas market in Berlin.

Multiple attacks occurred in London this year. A man in a rented SUV plowed into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge, killing four people before he ran onto the grounds of Parliament and stabbed an unarmed police officer to death in March.

Four other men drove onto the sidewalk of London Bridge, unleashing a rampage with knives that killed eight people in June. Another man also drove into pedestrians leaving a London mosque later in June.

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*restrictions may apply) (Draw date: Thursday Aug. 10)

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THE RBDF Pop Band is pictured performing at the farewell reception yesterday for Haitian Ambassador Jean Victor Geneus hosted by Minister of Foreign Affairs Darren Henfield.

Photos: **Shawn Hanna/Tribune Staff**



FROM left, Darren Henfield, Minister of Foreign Affairs and his wife, Dieder; Jean Victor Geneus, former Haitian Ambassador to The Bahamas; Patricia Minnis, and her husband, Prime Minister Dr Hubert Minnis.

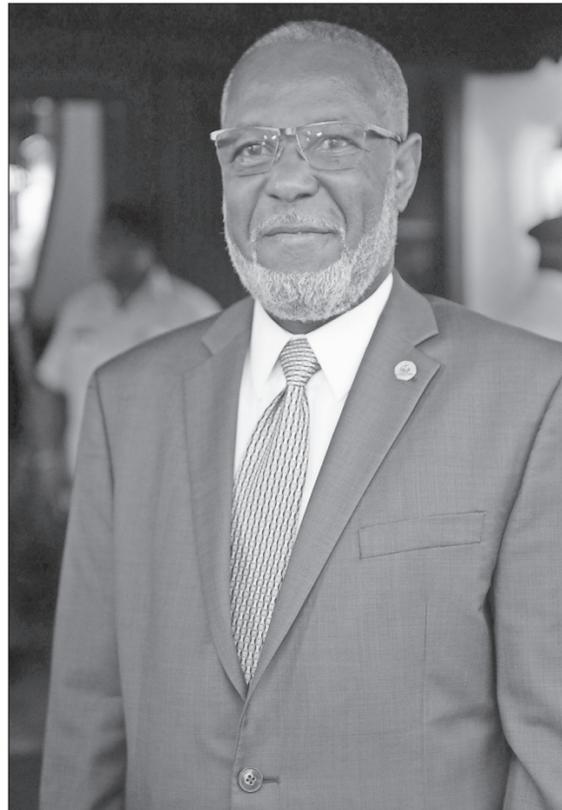


FROM left, Claudy Blaise, Pierre Felix, Prime Minister Dr Hubert Minnis and Beaulan Maurange.

Farewell to Haitian ambassador



FORMER Haitian Ambassador to The Bahamas Jean Victor Geneus at his farewell reception at Luciano's.



FORMER Haitian Ambassador Jean Victor Geneus yesterday evening at his farewell reception.

READERS RESPOND TO ISSUES OF THE DAY

READERS on tribune242.com have been giving their views on the stories making the news this

week. After Education Minister Jeffrey Lloyd said classes at Stephen Dillet Primary

School are likely to be delayed by one week as officials await the arrival of furniture and other equipment. Tell_it_like_it_is said: "Oh boy, here we go again! Can we ever get this right?"



HIGH COMMISSION MOVE

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced for public information that the new address of The Bahamas High Commission in Ottawa, the capital city of Canada, is now: 99 Bank Street Suite 415, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

addition to additional space this new location offers greater security.

Acting High Commissioner Roselyn Dorsett-Horton noted that the move should be seamless for Bahamians and others using the services of the high commission because the telephone (613-232-1724) and fax (613-232-0097) numbers remain the same.

The high commission is

Sheeprunner12 asked: "What purpose do school boards serve if the Minister has to supervise the projects?????"

Birdiestrachan had this to say: "These fellows have nothing to do or even better they do not know what to do so they run around having Kodak moments."

Former Minister Obie Wilchcombe criticised the Ministry of Tourism's re-hiring of global PR firm

Weber Shandwick, prompting Regardless to respond with: "The new minister should have put the PR contract out for bids so all interested parties, including Bahamians, could participate."

BahamasForBahamians said: "While Obie is very unpopular at the moment and should've allowed this statement to be released by someone who has more public reception, the outgo-

ing minister is correct. How can you rationalise making Bahamians redundant, regardless of political persuasion, but on the back end contract a foreign firm.

Are Bahamians not capable of marketing The Bahamas, is this the message D'Aguilar is sending? Do Bahamian's not deserve the opportunity to - at minimum - submit a proposal to do the same? Wow D'Aguilar, continue to lose popularity by the day."

And 10 months after Hurricane Matthew, major rebuilding work still needs done in the West End, Grand Bahama community.

DDK7 had this to say: "It is so hard to see what happens to folks who have no

building and contents insurance. It is even harder to pay for homeowner's insurance. Yet how can Government be expected to pay for all those who receive damage during natural disasters who have no insurance? Our Government does not even seem able to insure The People's edifices. Is there not some form of 'blanket' insurance policy that can be implemented in order to assist in some measure when necessary? Some of the proceeds from a national lottery would go a long way to self-insuring."

• Don't miss your chance to join the debate on tribune242.com.

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FROM left, Rotarian Christiana Sawyer, Tonya Adderley and club president Chris Dorsett.

Bahamas Cycling Club

Rotary Club of West Nassau. - The Rotary Club of West Nassau held its weekly luncheon on August 10. The guest speaker was Tonya Adderley, project manager for the \$30m Public Financial Management and Performance Monitoring (PFM/PMR) Project, a comprehensive public sector reform effort initiated by the Bahamian Government funded by the Inter-American Development Bank.

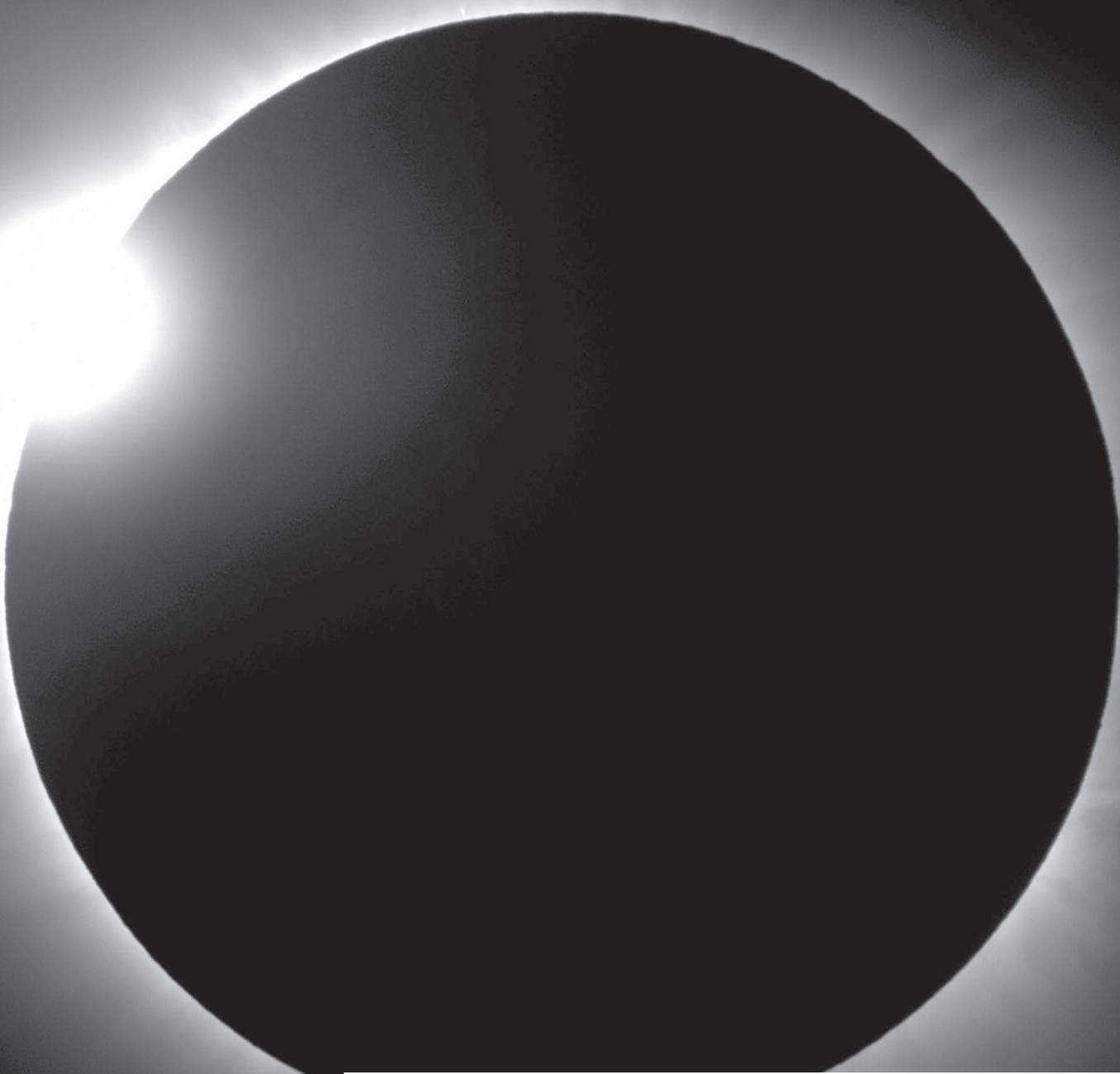
Ms Adderley's presenta-

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tion was engaging and informative, particularly for small business entrepreneurs.

See the eclipse - but be safe



NEVER look at the sun directly - your mom may have told you more than once.

And she was right. This is also true during the long-anticipated total or partial solar eclipse that will take place Monday, August 21.

Anyone within the "path of totality" will see a total solar eclipse. This path is where the moon will completely block the sun. Many individuals should experience a partial solar eclipse — that's about a 75 per cent effect. The last contiguous eclipse, meaning that it was visible across the United States, was February 26, 1979. After August 21, this type of event won't happen again until October 14, 2023, according to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

In the Bahamas, the partial solar eclipse will begin at about 1.30pm and end about three hours later. The maximum eclipse should be visible around 3.05pm.

NASA has stressed that it's "never safe to look directly at the sun's rays — even if the sun is partly obscured."

NASA recommends the use of solar filter eclipse glasses or pin-hole projectors if you wish to watch the partial eclipse. The American Astronomical Society offers a list of reputable vendors of solar filters and viewers.

"When watching a partial eclipse you must wear eclipse glasses at all times if you want to face the sun, or use an alternate indirect method," NASA recommends on its website. "This also applies during a total eclipse up until the time when the sun is completely and totally blocked."

"During the short time when the moon completely obscures the sun — known as the period of totality — it is safe to look directly at the star, but it's crucial that you know when to take off and put back on your glasses."

An eclipse is a rare event, but protecting your eyes from the sun should be a daily occurrence, said Dr Keith Skolnick, an ophthalmologist with the Baptist Eye Surgery Centre in Florida.

Solar retinopathy refers to eye damage which has been caused by looking directly at the sun, at any time or during an eclipse. The retina is made up of delicate tissue that is sensitive to light. Harmful radiation from the sun can reach the eye and damage the retina. This burns the retina and destroys the cells that enable you to see. The retina's cells are sensitive to light, which helps form visual images via the optic nerve.

"With the eclipse, if you look directly at the sun that can lead to permanent damage of the macular, the centre and most important part of the retina," explained Dr Skolnick. "It's basically a sunburn of the macula."

Baptist Health South Florida said people should always protect their eyes from the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which is also a major risk for skin cancers. Sunlight is the main source of UV rays, which is why ophthalmologists urge all patients to wear sunglasses with UV protection when outside, the group noted.

Sunlight reflected off sand and water can cause photokeratitis, the condition responsible for snow blindness, so beach and pool-goers should exercise caution by wearing sunglasses with UV protection.

"I tell my patients that the colour of sunglasses doesn't matter, nor does how dark the lens is," said Dr Skolnick. "The important thing is for your glasses to have UV radiation protection. And cost shouldn't be a factor. You don't have to spend a lot of money for glasses that protect your eyes."

• See Weekend for more

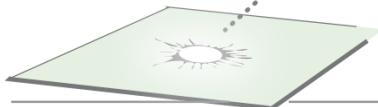
Pinhole projector

A safe way to view the solar eclipse

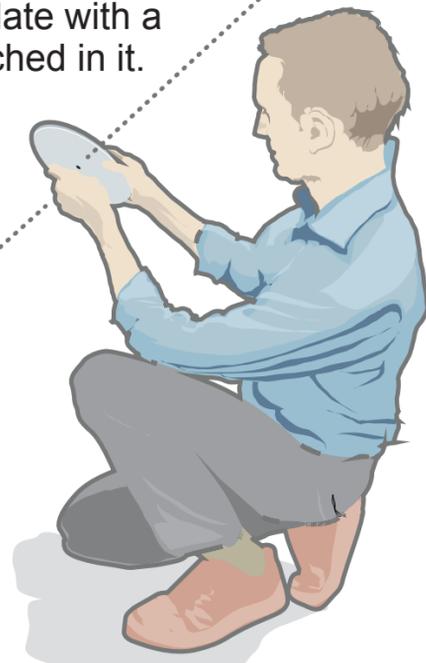
With your back facing the sun, raise a paper plate with a small hole punched in it.

Aim the beam from the hole onto another piece of cardboard.

The farther away you hold your pinhole, the bigger the projected image will be.



SOURCE: NASA



AP

Eclipse Eyeglass Safety:

Don't be Blindsided!



Eclipse-viewing glasses should meet all the following criteria:

Have certification information with a designated "ISO 12312-2" international standard.

Have the manufacturer's name and address printed somewhere on the product.



DO NOT use glasses, if they are older than three years, or have scratched lenses.

DO NOT use homemade filters, even very dark ones.

ONLY FIVE MANUFACTURERS ARE MAKING ECLIPSE GLASSES THAT MEET THE "ISO 12312-2" INTERNATIONAL STANDARD:

American Paper Optics, Baader Planetarium, Rainbow Symphony, Thousand Oaks Optical, TSE 17.

Source: NASA.gov