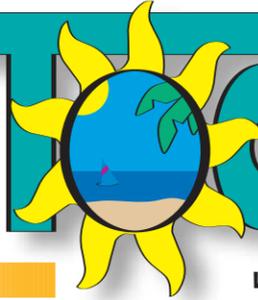


Caribbean Today

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Glenmore Hinds, assistant commissioner of police in Jamaica, who oversees Operation Kingfish, a sweeping measure established to disrupt organized crime on the island, visited Florida recently to talk about just how tough his job is, [page 2](#).



Not since 1988, when Evander Holyfield did it, had a boxer been acclaimed undisputed cruiserweight champion of the world. But last month Caribbean-born O'Neil Bell rose to the occasion at Madison Square Garden and crowned himself king in the ring, [page 7](#).



Buju, Beenie, Bounty. For years the reggae/dancehall music charts have been dominated by virtually the same names. Now Bobby Clarke, a radio station exec in New York, is launching a contest to find fresh new talent to challenge the old guard, [page 17](#).



HER BATTLE, OUR VICTORY

~ Coretta Scott King died last month, but her contribution to the struggle for civil rights in America had a lasting effect on people from the Caribbean as well, [page 15](#).

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NEWS

CaribChat

Jamaica rounded out 2005 with more than 1,600 murders. Last month members of the Jamaica Constabulary Force made a stop in South Florida as a part of the Jamaican Diaspora Foundation Southern United States' efforts to discuss issues of crime and violence on the island nation of more than 2.5 million people. Assistant Commissioner Glenmore Hinds, who oversees Operation

Kingfish, a sweeping measure established to disrupt organized crime on the island, participated in that forum and Caribbean Today's Deputy Managing Editor Damian P. Gregory spoke to him. The following is an edited version of that interview:

Caribbean Today: One of the things that you discussed tonight was the number (of murders in Jamaica in 2005)

the dubious distinction of 1,600 murders. You and your colleagues have implied that number is not accurate. What number are you comfortable with?

Glenmore Hinds: I am not disputing the number we have. I'm merely clarifying the numbers and to indicate where the challenges (are) from. For example, 1,600 (or) whatever the number is accu-

rate. What we're saying is that when you interrogate the numbers, you (need to) know what are the drivers, what are the motives. A good percentage tends to come out of gang and gang confrontations. Persons who are aligned to gangs being killed for reasons best known to gang members, even women who are aligned to gang members they are killing. If you were to remove the gang-on-gang confrontations, then you would have very little murders in Jamaica.



Hinds

- Photograph by Damian P. Gregory

C.T.: You said that if we were to take away all that Jamaica would be the safest place in the world. Could you clarify that statement?

G.H.: What we are saying is if you look at the statistics as it relates to other offenses, like robberies, larcenies, and canal abuses; these are comparable to almost any other country in terms of the numbers that we have. Murderers are not. And it is because we really have a violence problem, and we are not really dealing with conflict as best we might...

C.T.: Your operation, Operation Kingfish, has garnered a certain amount of praise. However, there was a curious item that I read recently that "Bulbie" (an alleged major figure in organized crime in Jamaica who was shot and killed by the police) had a journal in which he detailed all of the people he worked with. My question is, if such a journal exists, why is that not public record?

G.H.: Because the journal is currently a part of the ongoing investigation. His empire is being investigated to see whether or not we are able to build some cases in this regard. So it would be inappropriate to make that a public record at this stage.

C.T.: To the issue now of (officer Reneto) Adams and his role now in the Police Force, what do you foresee that as being?

G.H.: I can't properly comment on that situation. That is a matter presently for the commissioner of police and the Police Services Commission.

C.T.: Do you foresee him being a part of the Force once more?

G.H.: You would be asking me

to speculate and I operate on the basis of evidence he's going to play, if any.

C.T.: One of the criticisms of Operation Kingfish is that it has gone after certain 'king fish' and not others. That it is not an equal netting. How would you respond to that criticism?

G.H.: We are very disappointed that that would be a view held by persons. But the truth is the mandate is to look at the entire major organized criminal networks. And whilst we continue our efforts there are going to be some targets that provide better opportunities at a given period of time than others. We cannot sit back and say because we are balancing the scales, don't pursue this target because you are not in a position to pursue this one. In other words, whichever target presents the best opportunity, at any given point in time, we continue to (go after), up against others.

C.T.: Operation Kingfish is relatively new. At what point will you say to the diaspora here as well as the society in Jamaica that it has been a success?

G.H.: Certainly the mandate is to dismantle the major organized criminal networks. There are about 12 of these. We are confident that we would have totally dismantled one. We've disrupted others.

So to the extent that we would have been able to dismantle all of them, then we would have said that we are completely successful.

However, there are other strategies, there is a murder reduction strategy that has been unfolded, and elements of it is what Kingfish does. That is to total investigators fully focused on these, using the legal supports investigative techniques in terms of the operation to arrest persons

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

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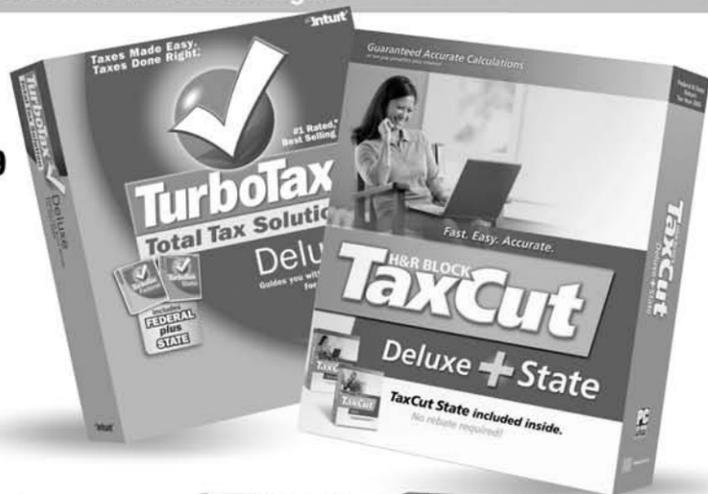
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Seaplane crash spoils holiday celebrations in The Bahamas

DAMIAN P. GREGORY

The reality of loss is just beginning to settle in. A mother who will never celebrate her birthday or spend lunchtime with her two young sons. A father struggling with the finality of it all.

"My loss could never be replaced," Kendrick Sherman, who lost his young daughter Bethany and wife Sophia in the tragic pre-Christmas crash of a seaplane filled with Caribbean nationals heading to the tiny island of Bimini in The Bahamas.

The toddler died just one day before her birthday. Sherman must now raise his two young sons - ages nine and 12 - alone. Sophia taught at the school her children still attend.

"Do you know how hard it was to explain (to them) what happened?" Sherman said, his voice filled with emotion and disbelief. "This was not an act of God."

Also devastated by the same tragedy is Denise Rolle. She is learning to face the reality that she will never see her beloved aunt, sister or young cousins, again.

"It real hard," she told **Caribbean Today**.

Rolle, 26, lost five members of her family in the Dec. 19 tragedy. Her aunt, Jacqueline Stewart, 39, "who (she says) was like my step mom," was one of those rela-



Bishop Lazar and the rest of Bimini are still mourning victims of the seaplane crash. "This is very, very close," he says.

tives.

So many memories come rushing back in waves. Passing Aunt Jackie's house on the way to work, speaking to her by cellphone throughout the day, the excitement her cousin, Neisha, felt about starting school in late January. Neisha, just 18, had plans to study business.

"There is nothing that

they can do or say to bring them back," Rolle said.

Sherman and Rolle are two of the plaintiffs in a lawsuit filed last month seeking \$50 million in damages for wrongful death against Chalk's Ocean Airways.

"I feel that they just put those people out there to burn," she said.

STING

The last two months have been filled with the sting of sudden death. As family and friends of the victims sat in the lobby of the Cadillac Hotel on Miami Beach in Florida, days after the crash, Red Cross Disaster Relief workers tried to comfort them. But in between the polite conversation, sadness, disbelief and tears trickled out. Some took comfort in singing gospel hymns like "Farther Along" and "It's Alright Now", and listening to Bible verses in between bursts of emotion, during an impromptu memorial service in a conference room filled with family and friends. Some preferred to stay outside the room, away from the service, to have their tears soothed by the gentle reassurances of others.

How different this scene was from just a few days before. Filled with holiday excitement, their relatives had come to Miami from Bimini



Mitchell: "Bimini is a pretty stunned community."

hoping to shop and return to family and friends in time for Christmas. Those plans never materialized. Instead the seaplane carrying them, Chalk's Ocean Airways Flight 101, lost its right wing shortly after takeoff and plunged into Government Cut - a shipping channel off the coast of Miami Beach - while beachgoers, divers and area residents looked on in disbelief.

All 20 passengers and

crew members on board were killed, including 12 Bahamians, many of whom were related to each other.

GONE INSTANTLY

So many of their friends and family members were gone in an "instant," one family member told **Caribbean Today** in a soft voice on Dec. 22, her eyes welling up with tears.

"Now I will have to go about trying to explain why it happened to my children," said the woman who would only identify herself as a relative.

As she tried to wrap her mind around the dizzying swirl of events that had happened just days before, one thing was for sure - Christmas 2005 and New Year 2006 were going to be unlike any other. It would be a season of sadness and funerals.

"Many times death does not give us the warning that we look for," Virginia Lightbourne, who lost her cousins on Flight 101, told **Caribbean Today**.

Lightbourne, who has lived in Boynton Beach, Florida for more than 21

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

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Brooklyn to rename road in honor of Bob Marley

A bid by a group of community activists, to rename a section of a road in Brooklyn, New York in honor of reggae icon Bob Marley, has been given the green light by the Brooklyn Community Board.

The motion to rename a three-mile stretch of the thoroughfare "The Hon. Bob

Marley Avenue", received unanimous support.

The motion and the endorsement by the members will move to the next phase of the hearing process at the New York City Council Chambers and is



Bob Marley

expected to be an agenda item at a meeting of city lawmakers this month.

The renaming, if approved, will cover the section between 98 Street and Beckford

Avenue, noted for its high concentration of Jamaicans. Amir Abdullah Muhammed Abdul-Akbar, community activist and founder/executive director of the Caribbean American Program for Empowerment (CAPE), whose organization initiated the motion to rename the avenue, said the move could

go a long way in the planned economic revitalization of the area by the New York City Department of Transportation.

The 61st anniversary of Bob Marley's birth will be observed on Feb. 6.



Seaplane crash spoils holiday celebrations in The Bahamas

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

years, said that, like so many other people from the Caribbean, her cousins frequently came to Florida to shop. The holiday season would make this particular trip all that more special.

"They were excited to go back, they were thinking I can wrap this gift for my child. All of that is on the back burner now," she said.

"It is alright being here (in Miami), but when you go home to that island, when you go home to that house and there's that vacant chair where this one sat or that one sat that is when it becomes so fresh."

Bishop Lazar Thompson, too, lost a relative on Chalk's flight. She and the family had been joined to him by so much

joy. The crash ripped into the center of that connection.

"My cousin Sophia, I walked her mother down the aisle, I coordinated her wedding and everything," Thompson told Caribbean Today. "So this is very, very close."

HEAVY LOSS

The effects of the crash hit Bimini hard. Residents spent much of the holiday season mourning the loss of those who perished aboard the flight.

"Bimini is a pretty stunned community," Fred Mitchell, Bahamian minister of foreign affairs, told Caribbean Today.

Chalk's Ocean Airways has been traveling to The Bahamas since the 1920s, with a good safety record, accord-

ing to the company.

"This is a company that has been serving Bimini safely for decades. They've grown up around Chalk's, both the crew and the people in the community know each other, like family on a first name basis and to have this happen is just unbelievable," Mitchell said.

Numerous attempts by Caribbean Today to speak to a Chalk's spokesperson following the crash were unsuccessful.

Bimini - one of the many islands in The Bahamian chain - has an estimated population of about 1,600 and is about 50 miles off the coast of Miami. Preliminary investigations showed a stress fracture on the plane's right wing. Shortly after the tragedy, the airline voluntarily grounded

its flights, but the precise cause of the crash had not yet been determined up to press time.

"We've reached no conclusions," National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Spokesman Paul Schlamm told Caribbean Today.

Schlamm said the NTSB is reviewing the records of the 58-year-old airline, and that "a good portion of the plane," had been recovered and was being examined in Washington, D.C. Findings from that investigation could take up to a year.

John Ruiz, the Miami-based attorney representing Kendrick, Rolle and families of other victims, says that he will be working with investigators as they try to determine what happened to the doomed

seaplane.

They point fingers of blame toward the airline.

"Who else do you think could have been responsible?" Sherman asked.

Since the end of December, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) ordered inspections and groundings of seaplanes similar to Flight 101 in light of the crash.

"The hardest thing for me is that Bimini made Chalk's," Rolle said. "They should have been more responsible."

Damian P. Gregory is Caribbean Today's deputy managing editor.



Operation Kingfish aims to net organized crime in Jamaica

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

involved in the commission of murder...But for now that is the major organized network that we're concentrating on. Once we have dismantled them then I would want to say we've been completely successful.

C.T.: How much of the networks are based in the diaspora, outside of Jamaica?

G.H.: Almost all of these have persons who are a part of those organizations in the diaspora, in Florida, New York, and some in Toronto. In other words some of these organized networks do (have) persons who are running drug bases on their behalf.

C.T.: What are you doing, with the help of other law enforcement agencies, to combat that?

G.H.: Operation Kingfish is a multi-national, multi-agency task force. That means, apart from the law enforcement agencies in Jamaica, we are working with our international counterparts. Certainly ours in the U.S.A., the U.K. and Canada, and wherever this kind of support and coalition

is required. So it is not necessarily only a Jamaican operation, it is necessary that international support is coming from other countries.

C.T.: And cooperation, does that exist?

G.H.: Certainly. We will share with other law enforcement agencies, share and we will benefit from them and they will benefit from us.

C.T.: What is being done to ensure that there is a certain amount of synergy between what happens in Jamaica and with law enforcement in Canada and the United States and elsewhere?

G.H.: Certainly. When Operation Kingfish was launched, in the U.K., there was a companion program. We tried our approach based those efforts and tried them, and they launched them very much at the same time that we launched Kingfish. So there is indeed relevance (as) it relates to our activities and the activities in other countries. And secondly, there (are) situations where we

would ask other countries to do some work up on some investigations...and pool them together, investigations for a collaborative effort.

C.T.: By dismantling one of the major organized crime organizations and disrupting several others, could you make that concrete for my readers, what effects, if any has that had on crime overall?

G.H.: Certainly. You would have to look at the areas where these organizations operated. The one we dismantled operated in the Papine, August Town, Gordon Town areas. We arrested a number of the persons...The net result is that crime in this area went down to almost nothing, as we speak. This was a group that was involved in robberies, kidnapping, extortion, and these crimes are down in those areas to almost nothing.

C.T.: And you are hoping to do the same with the other 11?

G.H.: At least five of these we have severely disrupted their activities. Albeit that some of the members still exist and are

active, but there is a level of disruption that makes it more difficult and displaces them.

C.T.: When you talk about organized crime you talk about it as if it is a relatively new phenomenon. Is it a new phenomenon (in Jamaica)?

G.H.: It isn't. That is why we have set in place (for) organized criminal network. It has existed for a while. The levels of organization might change from period to period, and from decade to decade. But these are those that we consider to be major organized ones.

C.T.: Operation Kingfish faces a public perception battle if you will. If a politician or elected official is nabbed in connection with your investigations, how would you assure the public that you will get whomever is involved in organized crime?

G.H.: From the very early inception we made the statement that we are unconcerned about the political affiliation or any other affiliation with these networks. Wherever the evidence leads us, that is

where we will go. We are certainly not concerned, not for a moment wary, of one's political connections. The only thing that drives us is where our intelligence tells us we can find evidence and we will pursue leads.

C.T.: One of the things that we spoke about today was the fact that everybody associated with those involved in crime are being killed. We have women and children being killed. Is that different from what has happened in the past?

G.H.: Yes. There is some difference. But you have to put it into context...The case of women, the majority of those women were gang members themselves. Yes, women are involved in gangs. They were spouses of gang members and they also were relatives of gang members. And the phenomenon that if you can't catch the person, then the next available target that is associated with the person is fair game. It doesn't matter. It is all in the name of making a statement that if you don't pay up this is what happens.



Trinidadian-born labor leader suffers crushing blow from N.Y. transit workers

NEW YORK, CMC – Members of New York City Transit Workers' Union have given their Trinidadian-born leader a crushing blow by rejecting the contract settlement he reached with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) in the aftermath of December's paralyzing subway and bus strike.

The rejection, which seemed to catch city officials off guard and derails a painfully wrought agreement, represents a stunning defeat for union President Roger Toussaint.

It also opens a potential Pandora's Box of complications in any future negotiations. Both sides, however, said that another strike, while a possibility, was unlikely.

At the center of the rejection seemed to be a last-minute concession by the union in December that its members pay 1.5 percent of



Toussaint

their wages toward health insurance premiums, in return for the authority dropping its insistence on less generous pensions for new workers.

NO VOTE

The unpopularity of that decision became starkly clear at last month's vote. Of 22,461 votes cast, 11,227 workers voted to ratify the contract, and 11,234 voted to reject it, a margin of just seven votes or 0.03 percent.

Toussaint, president of Local 100 of the Transport Workers Union, which represents 33,700 subway and bus workers at the authority, said he was very disappointed "to go back to the drawing board." He accused New York Governor George E. Pataki, union dissidents and the authority's negotiators of dampening support for the vote.

"The net effect was that members came to doubt that the key benefits of the deal were forthcoming," he said, declining to indicate whether he will order a recount.

Peter Kalilow, the authority's president, said he, too was disappointed with the vote "after hundreds of hours of negotiations.

"The MTA is amenable to meeting with the union in the coming days," he said. "However, in order to ensure a timely resolution of this matter for the sake of all New Yorkers, we will also begin to take the necessary steps to pursue binding arbitration."

Toussaint had urged members to ratify the deal at a series of town hall-style meetings. The union also placed automated phone calls

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

Immigration lawyers protest deportation of Haitians

NELSON A. KING

NEW YORK, CMC – Dozens of immigration lawyers around the United States have joined forces in protesting the Department of Homeland Security's decision to continue deporting illegal immigrants to Haiti.

The lawyers have filed motions in dozens of cases, asking immigration judges to stop the deportations because their clients' lives may be threatened.

The U.S. State Department has warned Americans against traveling to Haiti, citing the lack of an effective police force and the presence of armed gangs engaged in kidnappings and violent crime.

The lawyers, who held news conferences last month

in New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Miami, said they were acting because homeland security officials had not given Haitians temporary protective status, which temporarily prevents the deportation of immigrants who cannot return to their native countries because of armed conflict, natural disasters or other extraordinary conditions.

GROWING WORSE

The immigration lawyers said the situation in Haiti has been far worse than in El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua since a violent uprising and intense pressure from the United States forced President Jean-Bertrand Aristide from power in Feb.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

Jamaican court orders Bahamian extradited to U.S.

KINGSTON, Jamaica, CMC – A Bahamian man was ordered extradited to the United States when he appeared in a local court last month.

Darren Ferguson, an alleged Bahamian drug dealer wanted by U.S. prosecutors on drug trafficking charges, waived his right to challenge his extradition and agreed to be extradited to the U.S. to stand trial.

Ferguson, a trained pilot from Nassau who has been living in Jamaica for some time, is wanted in the state of Washington on drug charges. He was captured in April last year by police during a special operation along the Mandela Highway in Jamaica.

U.S. prosecutors alleged that Ferguson is a member of a powerful drug network that has shipped large quantities of cocaine to the U.S. over an unspecified period. They alleged that he was placed in charge of the Jamaican leg of the international drug network. He was indicted by a U.S. grand jury in Feb. 2003.



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UWI Foundation honors international public figures

NEW YORK, CMC – The American Foundation of the University of the West Indies (UWI) is honoring an American television host, banking executive and a Brazilian minister.

The awards were scheduled to be conferred at the Foundation's ninth annual "The Legacy Continues" awards ball in Manhattan this month.

Al Roker, a host of NBC television's "Today" show; William Rhodes, chairman and chief executive officer of New York's Citibank; and Gilberto Gil, Brazil's minister of culture are the honorees.

Gil has been singled out to receive the inaugural University of the West Indies Bob Marley Award for his outstanding achievements in arts

and culture. The foundation also lauded former UWI Chancellor Sir Shridath Ramphal and former vice chancellors of the university Sir Alister McIntyre and Professor Rex Nettleford for their work.

In addition, a host of prominent public and business figures have been cited as UWI "builders", and some were scheduled to receive the vice chancellor's award, including Laurine Fenton, the Montserrat-born, former Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) high commissioner to Canada.

The American Foundation, which has raised millions of dollars for UWI, is the university's primary vehicle in its capital campaign in the U.S.



Cable television, vehicle repair, for-hire transportation top complaints in 2005

Cable television, motor vehicle repairs, for-hire transportation, home services and stores which sell electronic goods topped the list of areas about which consumers complained to Florida's Miami-Dade County Consumer Services Department (CSD) last year.

According to a press release issued by the CSD, the majority of complaints received about cable television concerned outages and service/reception problems relating to hurricanes Katrina and Wilma.

The CSD enforces county laws that require cable television companies to provide credit to consumers for outages. Under these laws the cable companies must take timely corrective actions in resolving service problems.

An examination of CSD's complaint information for 2005 showed that among the consumers who called the department's Mediation Center about motor vehicle repair problems, many had complained about faulty repairs. Miami-Dade's Motor Vehicle Repair Ordinance requires that motor vehicle repair mechanics pass a test to demonstrate competence in their area of expertise and then obtain a license from CSD. With regards to shops, the ordinance prescribes that these businesses, whether they do mechanical repair, body-work or painting, be licensed by the CSD. The ordinance also requires that repairs be

completed in accordance with automotive industry repair standards.

BAD RIDE

Of 568 complaints received from passengers about the private transportation industry (mainly taxicabs, limousines, jitneys and private school buses) lost and found items, and issues of driver behavior, such as discourtesy, over-charging and refusal to transport passenger on short trips, were most frequent.

In the area of home services, many of the complaints had to do with service providers taking deposits, but failing to perform the work, faulty installations, or failure to honor warranties.

In electronic product sales many of the complaints were about refurbished goods being passed off as new items, other forms of product misrepresentation, accusations of overpricing and disputes about return policies. Many of these complaints involved visitors.

Other major complaint areas were credit related scams, towing, automotive sales, Internet fraud and furniture sales.

The CSD is the county agency charged with educating, informing and protecting consumers in Miami-Dade through enforcing consumer protection laws and business regulations, licensing certain businesses and investigating consumer complaints.



Caribbean nationals honored in New York

NEW YORK, CMC - Baroness Valerie Amos, the Guyanese-born leader of the British House of Lords, was scheduled to deliver the keynote address at the Caribbean-Guyana Institute for Democracy (CGID) award ceremony in Brooklyn, New York this month.

Baroness Amos is lord president of the Council in the United Kingdom. She previously served as secretary of state for international development, and is the first black female minister in a British Cabinet.

Baroness Amos has served as parliamentary under-secretary for foreign and Commonwealth affairs from June 2001, in which her portfolio include responsibility for Africa, the Commonwealth, the Caribbean, Britain's overseas territories, consular affairs and personnel issues. She was government whip in the House of Lords from 1998 to 2001 and spokesperson on social security, international development and women's issues.

Baroness Amos was born in Guyana, and moved to Great Britain with her family in 1963. She took degrees at

the Universities of Warwick and Birmingham before pursuing doctoral research at the University of East Anglia.



Baroness Amos

Between 1989 and 1994, she served as chief executive of the Equal Opportunities Commission of the United Kingdom.

WINNERS

The CGID bestowed its signature award, the prestigious "Democracy Prize", on the 2005 winner St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, who joins two previous Caribbean recipients: Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Patrick Manning (2003) and

Barbados Prime Minister Owen Arthur (2004).

The institute also announced that Dr. Carol Jacobs, chairman of the Global Fund to Combat HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, has won the International Crystal Public Health Award.

Trailblazing former New York City Councilwoman Una Clarke, the first Caribbean-born elected official in New York City, has received the Crystal Lifetime Achievement Award.

Councilman Dr. Kendall Stewart, the Vincentian-born chair of the City Council Immigration Committee, received the Crystal Leadership Award; and Dr. Marcia V. Keizs, the Jamaican-born president of New York's York College, received the Distinguished Educator of the Year Award.

CGID is a non-profit organization and think-tank, whose mission is to promote, among other things, educational, cultural and economic development of the Caribbean diaspora.



Trinidadian-born labor leader suffers crushing blow from N.Y. transit workers

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

and ran radio advertisements.

Toussaint, a former subway track worker, who has led the union since 2000, had faced mounting dissent. In the news conference, he said the

authority "tried to back out of the deal by sabotaging the vote" and accused union dissidents of distorting the value of the settlement with "down-right lies." New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg called the vote "disappointing

news to all New Yorkers."

He urged the union and the authority to "work together on an amicable resolution to their contract dispute."



Immigration lawyers protest deportation of Haitians

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

2004. Those Central American countries have been given temporary protective status by the U.S.

The United Nations said it has documented widespread cases of unlawful arrests and has received credible reports of police involvement in executions and banditry. The U.N. also said that 10 members of its peacekeeping force have been killed in the unrelenting violence.

The State Department says over two-dozen Americans were kidnapped in Haiti last year. Haitian officials said kidnappings peaked over the Christmas season to over 12 a day. The American Embassy in Haiti has prohibited personnel from leaving their homes at nights.

The lawyers want immigration judges to close the deportation cases until the sit-

uation in Haiti ameliorates. Maggy Duteau, an immigration lawyer in New York, said she cannot fathom why Salvadorans, Nicaraguans and Hondurans are granted protected status while Haitians are not.

"How bad does it have to get before something is done?" she asked.

"I don't think it makes any sense for the United States to send people back to a country where such devastating human rights violations are occurring," said Paromita Shah, associate director of the National Immigration Project in Boston.

"Those Haitian deportees face grave risks to their lives, and that's not acceptable."

'HORRIFIED'

Candace Jean, an immigration lawyer in Miami, said her clients were terrified about what they would experi-

ence when they return to Haiti.

"They're horrified," she said. "Many are going into hiding."

The State Department, which ordered the departure of non-emergency personnel and family members of embassy officials in Haiti last May, lifted the order several months later. But embassy officials have been told that dependents under 21 are still not permitted to travel or remain in Haiti.

"It's a tough decision," said Bill Strassberger, a Department of Homeland Security spokesman. "The country itself is in a desperate situation. But, at this point, the United States government feels the situation can be corrected by providing more aid as opposed to providing temporary protective status."



FEATURE

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Jamaica's Bell wins undisputed world boxing crown

~ Stunning knockout secures WBA, WBC and IBF cruiserweight titles

GORDON WILLIAMS

Two days after his most compelling show as a professional boxer, Jamaica's O'Neil Bell strolled along Manhattan's famous Broadway, past the theaters and stores on a sunny January afternoon, sifting easily among the big city's bustling commuters.

None of the passers-by, some of whom would later stop to watch a tango dance scene being filmed on the sidewalk a few yards away, turned a head towards the newly crowned undisputed world cruiserweight boxing king. As Bell paused to greet a familiar face near the intersection at 42nd Street he jokingly took a jab at his lack of recognition in the Big Apple.

"I'm being a tourist now," said the fighter, carrying a bag in one hand as he looked up, scanning the looming skyline around him, "just doing some shopping."

On Jan. 7, at Madison Square Garden, just blocks along Broadway, at 33rd Street, Bell had gone "shopping" for more prized goods. He cashed in on some great



_ Photograph by Gordon Williams

Bell is now number one in the world.

bargains too. In one night he knocked out Jean-Marc Mormeck in the 10th round,

took the Frenchman's World Boxing Association (WBA) and World Boxing Council

(WBC) titles to add to his own International Boxing Federation (IBF) belt, and became a revelation to many of boxing's keenest observers in the process.

"I think that he has a great future," noted American boxing historian Bert Sugar said immediately after the fight.

None since the great Evander Holyfield in 1988 had unified the 200-pound division, and Bell remains the only man born in the English-speaking Caribbean currently holding a world boxing title.

RECOGNITION

If only he could get the whole world to come along for the get-to-know-Bell ride, it would all be much sweeter to the fighter who now lives in Atlanta, Georgia. Despite his current record of 26 victories, 24 by knockout, with a loss and a draw, the Montego Bay-born fighter is still largely unknown. So when told, as he stood on the New York sidewalk, that a radio station in Jamaica wanted an interview, Bell shrugged and granted permission for the station to call him directly on his per-

sonal cell phone later that evening.

"It's the publicity," he admitted, still only a straight right from the Manhattan studios of ESPN, the major American sports network.

Bell does need to be better known. At age 31, he is on the top of his profession, but at the shorter end of a normal boxing career. He fights in a division which has often been overshadowed by glamorous heavyweights, welterweights and, more recently, even light heavyweights, led by American Antonio Tarver and Bell's fellow Jamaican Glen Johnson.

Last month, as he moved towards the ring in step with Bob Marley's "Soul Rebel", Bell was more accurately a rebel with a cause – to get the boxing world to sit up and take note of him. The majority of the large Garden crowd did not embrace Bell. Their warmth was spared for Mormeck. Yet as the fight heated up and Mormeck was eventually beaten into submission two minutes and 50 seconds inside the 10th round,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

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FEATURE

CARICOM launches heralded single market

PETER RICHARDS

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad - The University of the West Indies (UWI), regarded as a major symbol of regional unity, was the venue for the launch of the much-heralded Caribbean community (CARICOM) single market that was quietly implemented at the start of the new year.

The signing took place at the Mona campus of the UWI in Jamaica on Jan. 30 in an elaborate ceremony carried live across the region and the West Indian diaspora.

Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Patrick Manning, who has assumed the chairmanship of the 15-member regional grouping, said that the single market component of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) had come into force from Jan. 1, involving six nations namely, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and his own country.

The CSME is designed to allow goods, services and skilled workers to move more easily throughout the region.

Manning said The Bahamas and Haiti, the latter not invited to CARICOM deliberations following the controversial departure of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide from office in Feb.

2004, have "not signified their intention to participate in the CSME process." But last month, Haiti's interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue visited Port of Spain for talks with Manning and later told



Manning

reporters he was confident that at the July summit, Port au Prince would be welcomed back into the fold of CARICOM.

"As a

student of Caribbean, as a student of development, I believe Haiti cannot stay and remain isolated from the rest of the Caribbean," said Latortue, who noted that despite its status of being the poorest nation in the world, Haiti has a 20 percent population with spending powers comparable to any of the CARICOM states.

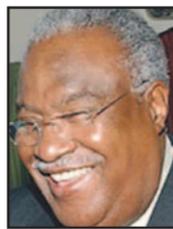
OPEN SEASON

Under the trade accord, the governments have agreed to lift tariffs among participating members, and all citizens can open businesses, provide services and move capital throughout the single market without restrictions. The governments will also replace national travel documents with a regional passport by 2007.

Member nations will have access to bilateral free-trade agreements that CARICOM has already made with Colombia, Cuba, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, and Venezuela.

CARICOM Secretary General Edwin Carrington has said that the people of the region were ready to avail themselves of the opportunities available under the single market.

"People of the community have taken us at our word. It is our duty to ensure all the relevant procedures are in place to guarantee its efficient function," he said



Latortue

in an address to the opening of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) meeting in Guyana last month. Caribbean officials have remained optimistic that the other nations - mainly those in the smaller Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) - would join the initiative that regional governments have said is a suitable response to the changing global environment characterized by mega trading blocs and the loss of preferential treatment for

their goods and services on the world market.

"To put together a single market and economy is a historic thing," said Barbados Prime Minister Owen Arthur, who has lead responsibility for the CSME within the region, last month. "Over the course of the next few weeks, I think a very clear, definitive position will

be made in relation to the entire process."

TREATY HUMP

Arthur acknowledged that getting the OECS on board was not the only issue that needed to be addressed with the CSME. Another relates to the actual Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas that sets out the legal context in which the CSME is created. Even with the full support of the OECS, Arthur explained there was need for an amendment to the treaty to allow CSME-ready countries to proceed to ratification.

Article 234 currently prescribes that the treaty will enter into force when all CARICOM countries ratify the agreement.

"We are trying to have that process completed to have 12 countries agree to the ratifica-

tion rather than 14 to allow the Treaty to enter into force," said Arthur, who appeared confident that OECS countries would honor their obligations.

Arthur had been mandated by CARICOM leaders to visit a number of OECS states "to discuss issues and measures which relate to implementation of the special and differential treatment provisions under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and which also related to their ability to meet the December 2005 deadline for the establishment of the single market."

-CMC



Jamaica's Bell wins undisputed world boxing crown

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

the crowd was suddenly sharing its allegiance, rising in appreciation of two skilled warriors who had entertained them thoroughly. Still, the sting of the earlier neglect had hit a mark and could not be easily erased. After the fight, Bell said being overlooked inspired him to take the popular Mormeck's title.

"I proved them dead wrong," he said. "I'm coming in a fight underestimated. The crowd was basically on Mormeck's (side) versus me. But look, I've always been the underdog."

The lack of recognition lingered after the fight too. As Bell left the Garden with his handlers, he was not met by screaming fans, flashing cameras or hungry reporters pressing for last minute quotes from a new undisputed champion. Instead Bell, a sweatshirt hood pulled over his head, arm draped around his longtime boxing trainer Plenty James, and walking gingerly from the effects of battle, was greeted by biting New York winter chill. Bell drew almost no attention as he made his way back to his hotel across the busy street,

except for a few men who stopped to talk with him briefly. And, as they walked away, one was heard admonishing his friend: "I told you he was a boxer!"

WHO'S NEXT?

A good one too, based on the performance against Mormeck. Yet Bell himself is still trying to get a clear picture of his immediate future in the ring. Shortly after the fight, as he sat in his dressing room, exhausted, drenched to his underwear, a slight swelling above his right eye and an icepack attached to his side, Bell hinted he would give Mormeck a rematch if the Frenchman wanted it. But Dale Brown, the Canadian who Bell defeated to win the IBF title has already started to taunt the champion into a rematch. Bell has suddenly become the hunted, with potential opponents willing to play almost any card to get his attention.

"Bell should stand up and give me the rematch I deserve," Brown was quoted as saying.

But two days after the Mormeck fight Bell appeared leaning towards defending his title against mandatory IBF

challenger Steve Cunningham of the United States, a fight which seems possible by June. Whatever Bell decides, he explained, will depend largely on the quality of the opponent and the purse. Bell, who now negotiates his own fights, told **Caribbean Today** that he would like to attract large purses to the cruiserweight division - in the \$1.5 million to \$2 million range. If that doesn't work, he is willing to move up to the heavyweight division to find bigger purses.

"If there is a fight for me in the heavyweight, I'll go ahead and defend that. I'll go ahead and take that," Bell said. "I'll vacate (my cruiserweight titles) and go to the heavyweights and go down in history again."

His father agrees that his eldest son should take full advantage of being suddenly thrust among boxing's elite.

"I think he should stay there and make them come after him so that he can make the (big) money," said Charles Bell.

When they do "come after him", Bell said, he will be ready. Just like he was for Mormeck - or even better.

"I was in excellent shape," he said after defeating

the Guadeloupe-born Frenchman.

James said the fight plan was to weaken Mormeck with body shots to expose his head as a target for the knockout.

"I told him, 'keep digging to the body'," James explained. "He (Mormeck) took some good shots, but he can't last like that, taking them kinda shots. O'Neil has dropped a lot of guys with them shots...My thing is kill the body and the head will show...Don't worry about the head, the head will fall right in our lap."

It did fall, except in Mormeck's lap as he slumped to the floor after being hammered in a neutral corner. It was the first time Mormeck had been knocked out in his pro career. Yet it still stunned observers to hear James claim that Bell did not follow the fight plan precisely, despite the impressive win.

"(Bell) didn't show, he didn't execute, but he didn't need to," James said.

That may be the worst thing Bell's future opponents would want to hear.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



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VIEWPOINT

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Shame on delinquent student loan borrowers

GORDON WILLIAMS

It is a common complaint, in many of the poorer sections of Caribbean nations, that higher education and, by extension, a chance at a prosperous life, are limited to the "haves", or those born with money.

The "have nots", or those from backgrounds of poverty, are often shut out of the very process that can push them towards that so-called better life.

Yet for years many governments have extended a helping hand - filled with much needed dollars - to thousands of those who find going to school a major struggle. That assistance comes in student loans, which have helped to produce some of the region's finest scholars who, in turn, have gone on to become productive members of society.

The deal is simple: the loan is granted to the needy student, who completes his or her education, then gets a decent job. Then the loan must be repaid. That is the only so-called "catch", and it is not much of a catch at all really.

For every needy student who has used a student loan to successfully complete higher education surely knows that the money is not free. They should also know that for every student loan that is not repaid there are students in positions like they themselves were in not long ago - desperately needing help to pursue the dream of a better life.

SEARCH

Yet we learn that Caribbean countries, like Jamaica recently, have launched a desperate search for people who have ignored the call to repay student loans. Money is being spent to hire collectors overseas, like in the

United States, to track down delinquent borrowers.

Needless to say, that money could have been used to provide more loans for more needy students. Yet it is the selfishness of the delinquent borrowers that has forced the hand of the Student Loan Bureau in Jamaica. The SLB has to hunt them down to get back the money they borrowed in good faith, under an agreement that they would pay it back in a timely fashion. I hope the SLB finds them, those delinquent borrowers, and I hope the SLB manages to squeeze every last cent they owe from them...interest, penalties and all. I also hope that there are means to send a stronger message to them too. Jail time would not be a bad idea, but that seems unlikely.

Many people who have borrowed student loans have turned out to be quite successful. They have moved abroad, to countries like the U.S., and now earn big money. There is no excuse for them not to repay the loans on time and in full. They just don't care.

Even if they are not making big bucks, they can still pay back the loans over a period of time. Either way, they should pay so that someone else can get the opportunity they had.

REFUSE

But many flat out refuse to pay. Some boast they are simply beating a system that beat up on them for a long time. Others even refuse to acknowledge that the money from the SLB was a loan. They claim it was rightfully their money, that it is long overdue to them. That is a frightening thought, because the SLB is out more than \$4 million dollars.

Think about it. Think how many poor students could

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

Victoria's secret?

Who knows what Victoria's secret really is, or who Victoria was.

What we do know is that those line of products would never be named after a man, as men are not inclined to keep secrets. As soon as a man do sumpting so, him have to chat 'bout it.

That's why many women will say to a man: "I would give you a little piece yu nuh, but I 'fraid say yu will go tell yu fren dem."

Meet a woman and you'll hardly know anything about her, plus most of them act as if they can't mash ants anyway. There she is, looking so angelic, demure, chaste and virginal, while beneath that veneer, that veil, is no vestal virgin. So many church sisters show up with a telltale bulge that I've lost count.

Women will be secretive and mask their past, while men will boast about and indeed embellish whatever deeds they may have done. Whatever a man says, divide it in two, but whatever a woman says multiply it by four.

Ask the man, "So how many lovers you ever had?" "Oh, about 40." But the woman in response to the same query will say, "Including you...just three, and those other two didn't really mean anything. In fact, one was from high school days and we barely even kissed, and the other didn't last very long."

That's Victoria's secret in action. Wasn't it the late superstar American basketball great Wilt Chamberlain who boasted about bedding over 20,000 women in his lifetime? No woman would ever make that claim about her past sexual exploits, for that's Victoria's secret. Women know that no man wants to hear, "I slept with 20 men...last year." It's a rule handed down from generation to generation.



TONY ROBINSON

Another area where Victoria's secret holds sway is in the bedroom. Women will act like they have no experience, begging the man to, "Do, please take time with me, be gentle, I'm not so experienced in this sort of thing."

Ha, if he only knew. She could have been the technical advisor for the book or movie version of the Kama Sutra and could teach him a trick or two. But Victoria's secret tells her to act otherwise. So while he thinks that he's the one leading her, she's the one who's leading him, by the nose, down the garden path, round and round the mulberry bush.

Shh, it's Victoria's secret.

FAKING

There was a time when women even faked being virgins, and recently I read where quite a few have tried, some successfully, to surgically replace their hymens so they'll appear to be spanking brand new again. That's like reversing the speedometer numbers on a used car so that the unsuspecting buyer will think that it has less mileage than it really has. That's a lesson learnt from Victoria's secret.

Have you ever noticed that women will always go to the ladies room together, but men always alone? It's the Victorias, discussing their

secrets. If men only knew what women said about them in ladies rooms they'd not be so self centered and smug.

"So what yu told him last night?"

"Oh, exactly what he wanted to hear."

"And how was he?"

"Oh, just so so, I've had better."

When they emerge from the ladies room and the guys ask, "Is what oonoo chat 'bout in deh?" The unanimous reply always is, "Oh, nothing." Victoria's secret catch dem again.

Another area of secrecy is not telling men what they really think. For some reason men always want to know and have a comparative analysis regarding their performance.

"So baby, how was I, was I the biggest, the best, the hardest, the longest?"

You'd think that he was selling bananas in a produce shop. Naturally, Victoria's secret dictates that she says, "Oh honey, you were the bestest, the mostest, the longest, the hardest, and I have never had better, you deserve an S on your chest."

And she deserves, not an Oscar, but a Victoria's Secret Award for telling all those tales, keeping the truth to herself while keeping a straight face.

The secret also goes even to the desires of women, who have been trained throughout the centuries not to let their men know what is really happening in that area, especially in the first part of the relationship. Don't for one minute

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What Martin Luther King Jr. might protest today

WASHINGTON - I knew we had entered an interesting new phase of American history when I saw a discount mattress company's jubilant television ad for a "Martin Luther King Day Sale".

Contrary to their slogan, I did not "have a good night's sleep" that night. I lay awake instead, rationalizing that King Day is not really selling out. Rather, America is buying in.

But, into what?

Forty years ago, King did not want us to get a good night's sleep. As historian Taylor Branch recounts exhaustively in "At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965-68" (Simon and Schuster), King and the rest of the civil rights movement were making an important transition in 1966, a transition from concerns about race to concerns about class, poverty and economic opportunity.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were passed, banning legal racial segregation and paving the way to an explosion in black elected representatives (in the United States). Soon would come an additional concern, the Vietnam War, which would divide the movement and the nation.

REVEALING

With more than 1,000

pages, "Canaan's Edge" is the third and final doorstop of a book for Branch to produce on the King years and it may be the most revealing of the racial and political dynamics that shape and haunt American politics today.

While most King Day tributes focus on his hope-filled 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech and its attractive vision of little black and white boys and girls, the descendants of slave and descendants of slave-owners sitting together at the table of brotherhood, his final three years offered a less-unifying prescription of what America needed to do to bring his dream alive.

The vast majority of Americans had little problem agreeing with King's notion that the dream of equal opportunity was "as old as the American Dream." But when it came to taking steps to help those left behind economically and politically to catch up, even at the expense or inconvenience of those who were further ahead, he ran into opposition from outside and within his movement.

Branch reveals a King who was constantly trying to hold his movement together and stay up to date with emerging issues like the war, while trying

to maintain his own moral authority. Angry young colleagues of my generation rallied around "black power", which would prove to be a slogan forever in search of an agenda as flames erupted in urban riots. Many of my fellow boomers, our Afros leaping to the skies, ridiculed King as too conservative and over-the-hill-hard as this may be for our hip-hop-era offspring to imagine.

J. Edgar Hoover's FBI, the world would later learn, was secretly eavesdropping and harassing King from another angle, particularly about his marital infidelities, which Branch describes King confessing to his wife during a guilt-ridden moment in 1968, astonishingly while she is recovering from an operation.

BACKLASH

King moved increasingly from the South into the more-vexing racially-related problems of discrimination in jobs, schools and housing in the urban North. With that came a new white backlash against school busing, open housing and eventually affirmative action plans. Northern white working-class and middle-class ethnics didn't mind King's movement until it came to their neighborhoods. One

major example: In confronting Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley over slumlords and housing discrimination, King suffered a tactical defeat unlike any setback he had faced in the South.

Forty years later, we see all of these issues bearing new fruit. We can hear the voices of white backlash in Judge Sam Alito's recollections of the middle-class and lower-middle-class whites among whom he grew up in Trenton, traditionally Democrats who would become Ronald Reagan Republicans. Cultural politics divided the Democratic Party between anti-war liberals who followed King and the cold war warriors who followed the late Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson of Washington State. Prominent neo-conservatives like Paul Wolfowitz, Elliot Abrams and Douglas Feith in the George W. Bush administration got their starts working for Jackson, who lost two tries to win the Democratic presidential nomination.



CLARENCE PAGE

Yet, King and his movement forced Americans to reexamine ancient prejudices and the one elusive dream of opportunity shared by pioneers and immigrants across this very diverse nation. Were he to look down on us today, he would see that his movement has become more localized. Racial and ethnic relations vary widely from one town to another. Yet there are new public-private partnerships springing up to build low-cost housing and there are new advances made by women and non-whites that would have been hard to imagine 40 years ago.

The next frontier, the growing divide between Americans who see opportunities opening up and those who see opportunities shrinking, remains to be conquered. That revolution calls on more than one black leader. It calls for all of us to be leaders in every corner of American life, as long as we feel what King used to call "divinely dissatisfied."

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Shame on delinquent student loan borrowers

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

benefit if the \$4 million is repaid. But some very selfish people are holding back those students,

preventing them from getting to the dream they want and helping to break the cycle of poverty that straps the country.

If the SLB manages to track down the delinquent borrowers overseas, the penalty should be something that hits at the heart of the "crime": If the offender, by not repaying the loan, deprived a poor student of inheriting the fat of the land, then the delinquent bor-

rower should be deprived of the fat of the land too. Persons who scampered overseas and refuse to repay student loans in the Caribbean should be banned from returning to the region for a while, even while they are forced to pay up.

After all, if they take

away someone else's dream, then their dream of enjoying their homeland should be shattered too.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



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(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

think that on that first date the man is the only one who is feeling all sorts of urges.

Most foolish men will express their desires and act the idiot, as they are not blessed with Victoria's secret. The

Victoria's secret?

woman though, will have an aching in her loins, a palpating heart, goose bumps on her skin which catches a fire, dilating pupils, hair stand up on her neck back, primed like a diesel engine, yet on the outside you would never know, as she remains as cool as a cucumber. Victoria's secret again.

Maybe that's another reason why they have to go to the ladies room so often. Meanwhile, no man can mask his desires, especially while dancing, prompting the famous line from movie star Mae West, "Honey, is that a gun in your pocket, or are you just happy to see me?" Victoria's may have a gun too, but it has a secret silencer.

One huge area of Victoria's secret also is that of the big 'O' in women. That's where the secret really pulls the wool over men's eyes. She will wail like a banshee, howl like a baying wolf, scream like a screech owl, sing praises to the most high

like the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, while secretly she's not feeling a thing. But that's her secret, and only she and Victoria know for sure.

When a man has an affair there is something in his psyche, his, male genetic makeup that makes him want to boast and tell the world about it. Just like a rooster crowing after the act, or a bull bellowing after he went for heifer and heifer and heifer. I guarantee that no man would ever sleep with J-Lo, Halle, Demi Moore, Angelina Jolie, Maria Carey or any other superstar beauty and not boast about it. But conversely, so many women have had, are having, and will be having affairs with famous people and not breathe a word about it. Is she or isn't she? Only Victoria knows for sure.

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VALENTINE'S DAY

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~ A Caribbean Today feature

Resolve to fight fairly with your significant other

FeatureSource - What was your New Year's resolution last year? Get in shape? Read the classics? Watch less television?

Typically, the problem with a New Year's resolution is that it requires radical change in your day-to-day life. Cutting back on coffee doesn't seem so difficult at 11:59 p.m. on Dec. 31, but by Jan. 2 it is another matter.

A better New Year's strategy is to work on an existing issue that needs only a tweak. What better place to start tweaking than your significant other?

"A relationship is defined by its ups and downs," says Liya Lev Oertel, author of "Couple Care" (Meadowbrook Press). "The trick is, as the song goes, to accentuate the positive. Learning how to fight fairly, when those inevitable squabbles break out, is perhaps the most critical aspect of a healthy rela-

tionship. As is all too often the case in this world, the most difficult things are also the most



Ground rules make for better lovers' quarrels.

important."

Indeed, fighting fairly is one of the most difficult aspects of a relationship to master. The flair of emotion a good, old-fashioned fight stirs

short circuits the higher functions of the brain. In this agitated state, our ability to reason abandons us, and we're left mashing defensive emotional responses with our partner - not a recipe for consensus, understanding and reconciliation.

"The idealized, fairy-tale relationship is just that, unless of course you happen to live in a tower with exceptionally long hair or are routinely picked up for gala balls in pumpkin carriages," Oertel says. "Once you accept that fighting is a natural aspect of a relationship, you'll be better prepared to deal with fights when they occur."

GROUND RULES

Laying out ground rules for a fight can be an invaluable tool in keeping things under control. Here are five fair-fighting guidelines from Oertel's "Couple Care" to get you started:

No name calling - Words like stupid, idiot, moron and other insults should never cross your lips when talking about your partner.

Think before you speak - Don't say whatever comes to mind in the middle of an argument. Censor yourself. Say only what's relevant, and avoid saying hurtful things.

Do it...or else - Offer choices rather than issuing ultimatums. An ultimatum can have only two outcomes: Your partner obeys your will, usually with anger and resentment, or your partner suffers the consequence, which hurts you both.

I can hear you - Yell only in case of an emergency, such as a fire. Yelling suggests a lack of control, which will usually lead to words and actions you'll later regret.

Recognize that person - Look at each other when you argue. Eye contact implies that you're actually listening and not just pretending to do so. Also, when you make eye contact, you'll find it more difficult to throw out hurtful accusations.

If an argument breaks out over laying the ground rules for fighting fairly, you want to keep another of Oertel's guidelines in mind.

"Sometimes fighting is funny," Oertel says. "You'll fight, and that's normal. But if you see the humor in fights over silly things, you'll fight less and laugh more."

When you fight fairly, you free up time to get a head start on another new year's resolution - replacing the sparks of conflict with the sparks of passion.

Author: FeatureSource Staff



Valentine's Day for the romantically challenged

FeatureSource - Being romantic may not be as hard as you thought. Your name doesn't need to be Casanova to have a genuinely romantic evening.

Liya Lev Oertel, author of "52 Romantic Evenings to Spice Up Your Love Life", says, "A close relationship is nourished by small, sweet, gestures: holding hands while taking a walk; stealing kisses



The right words can make someone feel extra special.

between errands; slowing down long enough to give a hug; telling her she looks beautiful (and

meaning it) in the morning before she combs her hair."

You don't have to spend a lot of money or make a big deal out of Valentine's Day. It is simply an opportunity to be romantic and express the love you feel all year. Try wooing your sweetheart with poetry and music.

Even if you're not a poetry lover, you should consider giving it a try. Oertel says, "Poets have been writing romantic verse for hundreds of years, so there must be something in it to further the cause of love. Why not try it and see?"

If you're not up to writing your own, try these classic lovers' poems:

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

- "How Do I Love Thee"
- "If Thou Must Love Me"
- "My Heart and I"

Emily Jane Bronte

- "Remembrance"

Lord Byron

- "She Walks in Beauty"
- "To Caroline"

Ted Hughes

- "September"

Percy Bysshe Shelley

- "Love's Philosophy"

Christina Rossetti

- "The First Day"

William Shakespeare

- "Let Me Confesse"
- "Mine Eye Hath Play'd the Painter"
- "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?"

MUSIC

Valentine's Day isn't complete without music. The right song can make you feel sexier, sultrier and more in the mood for romance. Take advantage of music's seductive power to create an evening that will have you and your sweetie humming for weeks afterward. Here are some classic romantic songs that Oertel recommends:

- **Eric Clapton:** "Wonderful Tonight"
- **Harry Conick Jr.:** "A Wink and a Smile"
- **Chris deBurgh:** "Lady in Red"
- **John Denver:** "Annie's Song," "Perhaps Love"
- **Celine Dion:** "My Heart Will Go On," "Because You Loved Me"
- **Enya:** "Sail Away"
- **Whitney Houston:** "I Will Always Love You"
- **Jewel:** "Near You Always"
- **John Lennon:** "Grow Old With Me"

- **Sarah McLachlan:** "Fumbling Towards Ecstasy"
- **Van Morrison:** "Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?"
- **Righteous Brothers:** "Unchained Melody"
- **Savage Garden:** "Truly Madly Deeply"
- **Seal:** "Kiss From A Rose"
- **Barbara Streisand and Brian Adams:** "I Finally Found Someone"
- **U2:** "All I Want Is You"

This Valentine's Day, don't worry about creating the perfect evening. Open a bottle of wine, follow these tips and

let the music and poetry sweep her off her feet.

- Carla Beuning



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Commissioner Dennis C. Moss, Vice Chairman will host an information meeting on the Mom and Pop Business Grant Program for Miami-Dade County District 9

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The application deadline is Tuesday, February 24, 2006 at 5:00 pm.
Businesses that received grants in 2005 are not eligible to apply.

* Businesses must be located in the Targeted Urban Areas (TUA) and non TUA may apply. TUA's are: Richmond Heights, Perrine, Goulds, South Miami Heights, Naranja, Leisure City, Homestead and Florida City.

FOOD


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Savoury soups: flexible starter or full meal deal

Nothing hits the spot like a bowl of hot hearty vegetable soup on a chilly evening. Or a savoury serving of chicken soup when a cold is ravaging your system.

Ahhh...soup...that great starter or main dish that chases away chills and fills you up like nothing else.

Soup is a mostly liquid dish which contains solid components of vegetables or meat. It differs from a stew in that it has much more liquid and much less solid contents.

The nutritional value varies depending on the ingredients added. The types vary according to the consistency and ingredients. When preparing a soup it is important to note when different ingredients are added as this will have a major effect on the nutritional value, texture and flavor of the soup.

Usually quick cooking vegetables are added near to

the end of cooking time while hardy vegetable may go in with or just after the meat. Seafood like shrimp may also be added to the pot close to the end of cooking time.

THE WORLD OF SOUP

In western cuisine, this meal is usually savory, although in China and Japan there are some sweet and even fruity versions. In the Caribbean, soups have played a major role. Traditionally in Jamaica, for example, no Saturday was complete without soup. Whether it was beef soup, pumpkin soup, red peas or chicken soup.

This tradition has changed somewhat with the proliferation of fast food restaurants, but soup has by no means left the Saturday menu.

TYPES OF SOUP

- A broth or a bouillon is unclarified liquid in which



Eat up, soup is delicious.

meat has been boiled.

- A consommé is like a broth, but it is clear liquid and may contain egg whites.

- A thickened soup is one which contains bread, flour, grain, or any other thickening agent such as corn starch

- Puréed soup is made with blended ingredients and is then strained before serving.

- A cream soup is one in which the main ingredient is puréed with cream added.

- Bisque is also a type of puréed soup normally made from seared seafood.

- Court Bouillon is a spe-

cial type of bouillon, which has vinegar; white wine or lemon juice and the other contents are poached.

- Cold soups, which may be fruity as well, are served mostly in hot seasons and tomato soup is the most popular.

- Noodle soups, of which chicken noodle is the most popular, may contain a host of different types of noodles.

- Dessert soups are usually fruity with even an addition of milk such as Ginataan, Filipino soup, which is made with fruit and coconut milk.

- Fruit soups, popular in Asia and Scandinavian countries are served hot or cold depending on the recipe.

- Japanese soups, which feature tofu, are rarely seen in western cuisine. One example of this is Miso soup.

Contrary to popular thinking, stock is not a kind of soup. Stock, which is the base

of most soups, is made from boiling meat, bones and/or vegetables and then straining the solids from the liquid.

Stock is actually an ingredient for soup and is usually bland. Also, a stock is not a complete meal, while soup is.

QUICK SOUP

Prepared soups are available in different forms, the most popular of which are condensed or powdered. Condensed soups need an addition of water, usually one part soup to one part water. Powdered soups can be used to form the base for soups to which you may add vegetables and cuts of meat to add more body.

Soup may be served as the first course of a meal but it can be the main meal as well.

Article and photographs edited and reprinted from Gracefoods.com



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WHERE SHOPPING IS A PLEASURE

U.S. extends passport requirement deadline for travel to Caribbean

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, CMC – American citizens will now need passports to return home from the Caribbean from Dec. 31, 2006, instead of the Dec. 31, 2005 date that was originally proposed, Director General Officer of the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA) Alec Sanguinetti has said.

Last year Washington announced that as of Dec. 31, 2005, all citizens traveling to the Caribbean would need passports to return home and the same rule would apply to those returning from Canada and Mexico by plane or ship, from Dec. 31, 2006. Caribbean tourism officials had raised concerns that the new regulations would result in millions of dollars in losses, as visitors would choose to go to other destinations.

"If we had to do it in January this year, which was the initial plan, we would be at a disadvantage in relation

to Canada and Mexico. And also traffic could gravitate from other Caribbean islands to those territories that do not require U.S. passports," said Sanguinetti.



Sanguinetti

HEAVY LOSSES

He said an economic impact assessment showed US\$1.8 billion would be lost and some 118,000 jobs in the direct tourism industry would be lost.

"The cost of a passport for a family of four is just a little shy of \$400. That could represent an airfare to travel within the United States; it could represent three nights of accommodation at a very nice hotel, so that is where we face a challenge," Sanguinetti explained.

"Will the American citizens say I'm going to spend \$400 more to come to the Caribbean, rather than go to the Lake District in Michigan?"

The CHA plans to use the extension of the deadline to mount a unified public and private sector campaign to educate the traveling American public on the issue.

"We're planning to do this on a regional basis working with the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) so that the message is the same," Sanguinetti said.

"There's only one way of telling U.S. citizens that they need a passport to come to the Caribbean and that has to be very clear so it doesn't confuse them."

The Bahamas has already started distributing flyers at the airport and hotels, advising visitors of the need to obtain passports before Jan. 1,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)

Jamaica eyes Asian market

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, CMC - Jamaica is looking to tap into the Asian market in order to increase visitor arrivals to the island, according to Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook.

Jamaican tourism officials say they would attend the Beijing International Travel and Tourism Market (BITTM) and the World Fair in Shanghai in April, in an effort to capitalize on the Chinese tourism market.

"We've always gotten some Japanese business, we're working to have that grow and we're working on China," Pennicook told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)**.

Kingston is also seeking to expand business in its regu-

lar markets as well as other areas, said Pennicook, who attended last month's Caribbean Marketplace at the Puerto Rico Convention Centre.

"Currently we get about 70 percent of our business from the U.S., however we are doubling our efforts in other markets in order to keep up with the growth of rooms; we're having a lot of new rooms being built in Jamaica and we obviously need to fill them," Pennicook said.



Pennicook

Hoteliers doubtful over World Cup preparedness

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, CMC - One year before the start of the International Cricket Council (ICC) World Cup in the Caribbean, regional hoteliers are questioning the Caribbean's preparedness for the event.

The Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA) said a number of issues were yet to be settled, regarding hotel rates, accommodation and contracts for tour operators.

CHA President Berthia Parle said the organizers had turned down the CHA's request to be included in the planning process, but "when things started going like as we say in the Caribbean, 'Ole Mas', we were called into try and solve these issues."

Antigua, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago will host matches during the inter-

national tournament that runs from Mar. 11 to April 28 next year. However the hoteliers say the competition would take place during the peak



Parle

season and there have been concerns of insufficient rooms during the event.

Parle said another major concern is the failure so far to reach an agreement on hotel rates.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)

SISTAHS JAMMIN' IN JAMAICA



"The Joys and Pain of Sista'hood" will again be celebrated this year at the Sixth Annual Sista's Jammin' In Jamaica Free to Be Selfish By Putting Self First Retreat this summer. Women from across the United States are scheduled to be in the Caribbean island from July 2-9. Photograph shows last year's participants living it up. Karaine Holness, Jamaican-born business owner in New Haven, Connecticut, has taken more than 70 women to Jamaica as a past facilitator. For more information, visit www.sistahsjammin.com or call Holness at 203-509-1516.

St. Kitts presents appealing plan for tourism

BASSETERRE, St. Kitts - The Tourism Authority in St. Kitts has developed an eight-point tourism plan for 2006-2007 that emphasizes the important role the industry must play in the island's economy.

In an effort to broaden its marketplace appeal and accentuate its natural assets, following the cessation of sugar production on the island, the short-term plan aims to focus on the product's attributes which set the island apart from the competition, while also outlining various ways in which the destination

will expand its tourism offering and infrastructure.

"With the emphasis and urgency that has been placed on the closure of and transformation from sugar production, it is critical that government approach the tourism industry with even greater care and planning," said Ricky Skerritt, St. Kitts's Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism, Sports and Culture, in a press release issued last month.

"Thus we have implemented an eight point short-term tourism plan for 2006-2007. Details of a revised

National Tourism Policy and Strategic Plan for the medium term will be developed during the first six months of 2006."

St. Kitts is known for its natural beauty, namely the reef and forest ecosystems, the heritage, culture, genuine hospitality of the Kittitian people, and the overall ambiance of the island.

THE PLAN

Based on these assets the St. Kitts Tourism Authority has developed the following eight-point tourism plan that will attempt to:

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)



MMAP HOMEOWNERSHIP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM LOTTERY INITIATIVE

Metro-Miami Action Plan Trust (MMAP) Homeownership Assistance Program (HAP) will be accepting applications from Participating Lenders for its Homeownership Lottery Initiative. The MMAP HAP program has created a new product called the Homeownership Lottery Initiative. The new product is designed to provide first time low income homebuyers up to seventy-five percent of the purchase price in the form of a forgivable, zero percent interest deferred, non-amortized, second mortgage. MMAP will utilize a lottery process to select eligible applicants to participate in this initiative. Lottery applications can be picked up at the Pre-Application Conference on Thursday, February 9, 2006, 10:00 A.M., at the Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel, 16500 N.W. 2nd Avenue, North Miami, Florida. All participation details will be discussed at that time. Please RSVP no later than Tuesday, February 7, 2006 by contacting MMAP at (305) 372-7600. After February 9, 2006, applications can be picked up at South Florida Board of Realtists located in The Mortgage Experts Bldg., 610 NW 183rd Street, Suite 206.



St. Kitts presents appealing plan for tourism

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

- Promote the national assets to attract more upscale travelers to the visitor mix by leveraging nature, culture and heritage, which add perceived value to a destination and attract a more discerning and well traveled visitor.

- Introduce a wider variety of accommodations and attractions that appeal to the more sophisticated traveler, including luxury hotels and villas, world class golf courses, marinas, spas and wellness centers, a thoroughbred race track, gourmet dining and high-end shopping.

- Improve and upgrade the existing tourism infrastructure to ensure that a quality product is provided across the full range of accommodation options.

- Expand the training for the front-line and other service providers to ensure they have the tools to enhance the visitor experience and provide a globally competitive service product.

- Maximize the destination's status as a host nation for the

ICC Cricket World Cup in 2007 to position St. Kitts to be a significant player in the world of sports tourism and events tourism in general.

tourism in the development project planning.

- Improve the ability to track the source of tourism arrivals



The colorful attraction of St. Kitts at night.

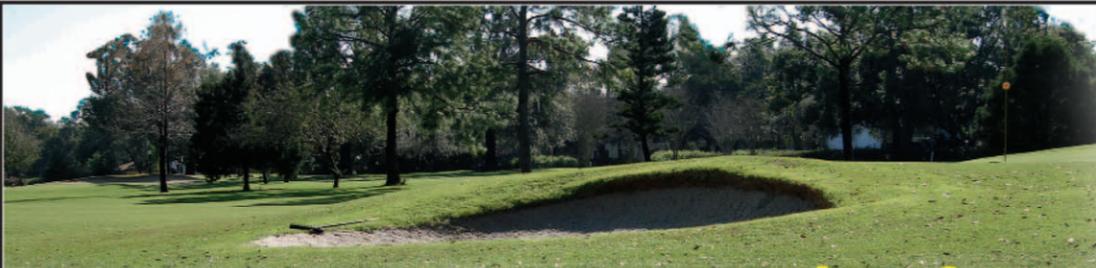
- Facilitate the economic empowerment of small- and medium-sized local enterprises and help to increase awareness within the communities, especially our youth, of the opportunities that the tourism sector provides.

- Give full respect to the principles of sustainable

and the details of tourism expenditure with the objective of assessing performance and impact of the sector on government revenue and the national economy.

St. Kitts is located in the northern Leeward Islands of the Caribbean.





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TOURISM BRIEFS

• Suriname against inter-regional flights by U.S. carriers

Suriname will not allow United States-based airlines to operate inter-Caribbean flights at the expense of regional airlines. Transport, Communication and Tourism Minister Alice Amafo said last month that while Suriname would negotiate an "Open Skies" agreement with the U.S. government, it would make sure that the negotiated air transport agreement would not breach the interests of the Caribbean community (CARICOM).

• Sandals to build hotel in Grenada ~ minister

The Grenada government says the Jamaica-based Sandals Group is to construct a multi-million dollar hotel on the island.

Finance Minister Anthony Boatman said that discussions were well advanced for the construction of the \$60 million 200-room hotel, which the Keith Mitchell administration hopes would begin by the middle of this year.

• JetBlue to start flights to Bermuda

Low-cost airline JetBlue Airways has announced it is to begin flights to Bermuda in the spring following five years of wooing by that country's government.

The fast-growing American company has been a target since 2001 in the expectation that its low cost tickets will entice more visitors to the island and break the stranglehold of higher-cost carriers, industry sources said.

• St. Lucia welcomes return of Air Jamaica

President of the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA) Berthia Parle says the return of Air Jamaica to St. Lucia will help achieve the government's forecast of 300,000 visitors from the United States market this year.

Compiled from CMC and other sources.



U.S. extends passport requirement deadline for travel to Caribbean

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

2007, and CHA President Berthia Parle said the other destinations plan to take a similar approach.

"What we want to do is use The Bahamas template and ask a number of our hotels and destinations...to look at developing something

along the same lines, and ensure that we work closely with our tour operators and all our other travel partners to really impress upon people the need to start applying for those passports," Parle said.



Hoteliers doubtful over World Cup preparedness

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

On the issue of accommodation, the CHA president said the traditional travel partners stand to be marginalized if they are not included in the deals. She insisted that the hotels need to maintain their agreements with their partners during the event.

Some of the destinations have a limited room count and the governments have provided incentives for construction of new facilities. However, Parle is not optimistic that work would be completed in time for next year's matches. She also told reporters she

believed the number of benefits for World Cup 2007 was grossly overstated, in terms of number of visitors "and everything that's supposed to come to the islands." Despite these issues, she said it is too late to turn back, as regional governments have borrowed large sums of money to prepare for the games.

"The papers have been signed, the documents have been signed, we will look at ways of working with our governments and hosting this event. And I have no doubt it will be an exceptional event," Parle said.





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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

www.caribbeantoday.com

~ A Caribbean Today feature

Coretta Scott King: a champion for Caribbean people

Coretta Scott King, who stood shoulder to shoulder with her more illustrious husband in the battle for civil rights in the United States, a movement which ultimately paved the way for Caribbean immigrants to better integrate into American society, died on Jan. 31.

She was 78.

Scott King's contribution helped people of color go from the back of the bus, and from eating at segregated lunch counters, to a more tolerant and accepting environment, especially for immigrants who would come from the Caribbean in ever increasing numbers to pursue the American Dream.

The wife of the late civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had battled a variety of health ailments, including a heart attack, and was in Mexico recovering from a stroke when she succumbed to respiratory failure while being treated for ovarian cancer.

During her adult life she stood tall in the civil rights struggle and was instrumental in keeping the legacy of Dr. King alive for almost 40 years after he was gunned down on the balcony of a Memphis, Tennessee hotel.

"The work of Coretta Scott King and her husband opened the doors for black people and as a black person I

have walked through those doors and benefited from it," Mervyn Solomon, a Trinidadian-born associate senior professor and faculty librarian at Miami-Dade College, told **Caribbean Today**.

WIDE IMPACT

Yet the influence of the Kings was felt not only in the U.S. History scholars believe that the strength of the civil rights movement stirred Caribbean people into action to address their own plights of inequality.

"The struggle for civil rights in the United States contributed greatly to the black consciousness movement in the Caribbean," Dr. Clinton Hutton, a political philosophy professor at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica told **Caribbean Today**.

"The legacy of non-violence in conflict resolution is important in the struggle for human rights. She (Coretta Scott King) was an important link to that tradition. That link is now broken."

"She was the grandmother



Coretta Scott King hugs her husband after his release from jail in the 1960s.

we all had in Jamaica," said Marcia Magnus, the Jamaican-born founder of the Caribbean American Politically Active Citizens, told **Caribbean Today**.

"She was the keeper of the flame on every front, the political struggle, the economic, the social struggle and family struggle. She never gave up."

Despite her contributions to the movement, and being one of the most respected figures in black America, Coretta Scott King lived

largely in the shadow of her husband.

"Most people don't know enough about her," Dr. Magnus said.

Scott King was a classically trained opera singer, but stayed at home during the early days of the civil rights movement to raise the couple's four children, Yolanda Denise King, Martin Luther King III, Dexter Scott King and the Reverend Albertine King.

Yet she did not escape the wrath of racism. In 1956 the Kings' Montgomery, Alabama home was bombed as Coretta, her daughter and a friend were inside the house.

MORE INVOLVED

However, before Dr. King's death in 1968, his wife gradually became more involved in the movement, accompanying her husband on civil rights marches.

Mrs. King also stood beside her husband through some of the greatest triumphs of the civil rights movement, including the Civil Rights Act

of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act a year later.

King was a key figure in helping to make her husband's birthday a national holiday in the U.S.

She also worked tirelessly to ensure that his legacy was kept alive after his assassination in 1968. She founded The King Center, a rich resource for documenting the life of her husband, which began in the basement of the couple's home.

"Getting ideas from ideas to action is what separates the dreamers from the producers," Magnus said.

But to many the work done by both Coretta and her husband played an important role in creating opportunities enjoyed by all people, particularly those from the African diaspora who have settled in the U.S.

Staff, wire service and other reports contributed to this story.



Miami Library System offers celebration

The Miami-Dade Public Library System will commemorate Black History Month this year with a series of literary and cultural events that will include nationally known authors, jazz concerts, storytelling performances and art exhibitions.

This year's theme pays tribute to black fraternal, social, and civic institutions.

African American activist and author Sister Souljah will discuss her novel "The Coldest Winter Ever", a gritty coming-of-age story about the teenage daughter of a successful drug dealer, at the North Dade Regional Library at 2 p.m. Feb. 25.

The Library System will feature additional visits from authors Irene Smalls, James Ransome, Joyce Carol Thomas, Preston Allen, Eloise Greenfield and illustrator Jan Spivey Gilchrist.

Two presentations will highlight the cultural and artistic significance of jazz. "Elements of Jazz" is an interactive program featuring artist Nicole Yarling, who teaches children the anatomy of a jazz song. "Curing the Air of its Fever" is a program that demonstrates the genius of artist Gwendolyn Brooks

through poetry, dance, and music. Storyteller Madafo Lloyd Wilson will perform at seven library branches, transporting audiences to Africa through descriptive folktales and song.

Art exhibitions include contemporary works by Miami artist Bayunga Kialeuka; sketchbooks by Overtown artist Purvis Young; a collection of masks from the female-only Sande Society of Sierra Leone and Liberia; a photographic exhibition of Little Haiti by Gary Monroe; Harlem photographic portraits by the late Carl Van Vechten; and the artwork of James E. Ransome.

Teens, ages 12-19 years, are invited to participate in the "2006 Black History Month Teen Essay" and Poetry Contest. To participate, they can contact their nearest library by Feb. 18 for details.

A schedule of events can be found online at www.mdpls.org

For more information, call 305-375-BOOK. All events, made possible through the support of Citibank, are free and open to the public.



Ethiopia's Prince Ermias returns to South Florida to discuss 'Legacy'

Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie, the president of the Ethiopian Crown Council and the grandson of Haile Selassie I, will be the main presenter during a series of lectures in South Florida beginning this month.

The theme for his lectures will be "Ethiopia and its enduring Legacy of a Solomonic Dynasty".

The lectures are being presented by T.A.F.A.R.I. and the Black Graduate Student Organization at Florida International University (FIU), along with the Africana Studies Program and the Department of Multicultural Student Affairs at University of Miami (U.M.).

The prince is slated to speak at 8 p.m. Feb. 28 in the Graham Center Ballrooms, at F.I.U.'s south campus, 11200 S.W. Eighth St., Miami and then at 7 p.m. Mar. 2. at U.M.'s Flamingo Ballroom,



Prince Ermias

University Center, 1306 Stanford Dr. in Coral Gables. For more directions to FIU, call 305-348 2138; or the U.M., call 305-284 2211. For more information about the events, or to R.S.V.P., call 305-227-3149 or 305-284 6340.

Information about Prince Ermias and the Ethiopian Crown Council may also be obtained at his official website, www.ethiopiancrown.org



www.caribbeantoday.com
BLACK HISTORY MONTH
~ A Caribbean Today feature

Miami Dade College celebrates African American culture

A motivational speech by Mary Wilson, former singer with the pop group The Supremes, titled "Dare to Dream", will be among the highlights of "Black History Month" celebrations staged at Miami Dade College (MDC) cam-

puses in Florida during February to recognize African American culture.

Wilson is scheduled to appear at **11:15 a.m. Feb. 16** in the McCarthy Theater, Room 6120 at MDC's Kendall campus.

Other highlights of the

month include:

- **Feb. 11, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.** The Homestead campus hosts its Black Heritage Storytelling Hour, providing activities in celebration of Black Heritage Month for children ages three to eight and their families.

- **Feb. 18, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** at the Medical Center, health issues in the black community will be addressed at a "Community Health Expo". In addition to learning more about diabetes and high blood pressure, attendees can get general health screenings, eye exams, teeth cleanings, and checkups for their pets or even a relaxing massage, while browsing

through a variety of merchandise showcased by local vendors.

- **Feb. 18, from noon to 5 p.m.** at the Wolfson campus there will be a presentation by African American media mogul Catherine Elizabeth "Cathy" Hughes, who will discuss her keys to success.

- **Feb. 20,** at the Wolfson campus there will be the First Annual Bid Whist Tournament. Entry fee is \$20 per person.

All events are free and open to the public unless otherwise indicated.

For more information about MDC's Black History Month events, call or visit the following campuses:

North - 11380 N.W. 27th Ave. - **305-237-1250.**

Kendall - 11011 S.W. 104th St., Miami - **305-237-2884 or 305-237-2777.**

Wolfson - 300 N.E. Second Ave. - **305-237-3720,**



Wilson

305-237-3932, 305-237-3285 or 305-237-7533.

Medical - 950 N.W. 20th St. - **305-237-4336, 305-237-4103, 305-237-4316, 305-237-4102 or 305-237-4316.**

Homestead - 500 College Terrace, Homestead - **305-237-5046.**

Details of Black History month activities at all MDC campuses can be obtained by **visiting www.mdc.edu.**



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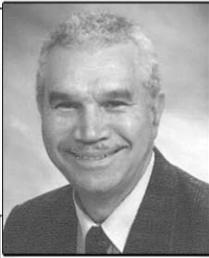
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'Irie Jam' searches for stars in Caribbean music talent pool

DAWN A. DAVIS

Think you have what it takes to become a reggae or dancehall star? Well, here's your chance.

Beginning this month, New Rochelle, New York-based reggae radio station Irie Jam is launching a Caribbean talent contest in search of the next big names in reggae, dancehall and dub poetry.

The brainchild of popular Irie Jam disc jockey DJ Roy (Roy Walters) and the first of its kind in the New York tri-state area, the Caribbean talent contest will attempt to discover raw singing talent. Not just another "American Idol" clone, organizers claim, the contest, dubbed "Give the Youth a Buss", promises to energize the Caribbean music scene.

"There is a lot of great talent here, and throughout the Caribbean that doesn't get heard," Bobby Clarke, Irie Jam Radio's president/chief executive officer, explained to **Caribbean Today** recently.

"For the past 10 to 12 years we've been stuck with (dancehall artistes) Beenie (Man), Buju (Banton), Bounty (Killa). So, our challenge here at Irie Jam is to cultivate new talent.

"We have a responsibility to the music and culture," Clarke stressed, adding "we decided to give them (the tal-



Clarke

ent) what they need - promotion and to be heard. We are here day and night anyway, keeping Caribbean culture alive here in the U.S. So we decided to try and make stars."

A stalwart in the industry, Irie Jam Radio has been on the air for 14 years enjoying a "very decent market share," according to Clarke. Competing with major radio stations, including the Clear Channels, Irie Jam has carved out a niche for itself among the Caribbean populace throughout the New York tri-state area, which includes New

York, Connecticut and New Jersey. The organizers hope the talent contest will spread the radio station's cultural message even further.

RULES

"Give the Youth a Buss" is open to male and female artistes of reggae, dancehall, dub poetry, and just about any Caribbean music genre. Five entries will be selected and played on the air each week on Thursday evenings during the 9 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. segment. Winners will be decided by an Irie Jam panel, public voting

via the radio station's website (www.iriejamradio.com), and through call-ins at their on-air number 914-235-9786 or by calling their offices at 888-IRIE-NYC during the Thursday night timeslot. Each month the station will announce winners on Saturdays during the 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. program. Semi-finals, quarter-finals, and finals will be held to determine the top winners. Organizers have also put a lid on lyrics that degrade women or promote violence.

"We don't play songs with cursing, gun lyrics, songs that are derogatory to women," Clarke emphasized.

Winners will be judged based

on voice quality, delivery, writing and originality. Clarke explained that because every song cannot be entered, the radio station will play some of the entries randomly - those that don't make the final cut. There should be no shortage of entries.

"For a couple of years DJ Roy has been receiving CDs, records, and tapes from would-be stars," Clarke said. "After getting hundred of tapes and CDs he decided to 'Give the Youth a Buss'. It came on the air one day and it took off; it made a big impact on the community. So we

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 18)

Telling stories to preserve the culture

- **TITLE:** *A Jamaican Storyteller's Tale*
- **AUTHOR:** Lorrimer Burford

No matter how sweet life gets for average Caribbean immigrants living in "farrin" - the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, for example - there are always times when they will think back to the unique experiences of home, however humble that background might have been.

In Lorrimer Burford's world, those experiences were bonded to the traditional art of storytelling, which was tied to the natives of the region long before their foreparents ever left Africa aboard slave ships for the Caribbean.

So Burford's book is about the old becoming new through storytelling, essentially a story about stories, told by a gifted storyteller determined to preserve the traditional art. That most of the stories told by Lester Jenkins, father of a Jamaican family which migrated to the United States after World War, also scared the 'bejezus' out of those who heard them, making a night time stroll to the bedroom a harrowing journey of self doubt and fear, is beside the point.

WORD OF MOUTH

Long before Internet

exchanges and sophisticated libraries, the richness of culture was best continued by word of mouth, through stories passed along in time, added to or subtracted from, reworked and presented in a fascinating color through clever description.

Yet even with Lester Jenkins' insistence on sticking to the passion of retelling the tales, his way of somehow preserving a culture left behind in Jamaica, his wife Isabel is not so happy with the idea. She somehow sees the clinging to the things

"old" as taking a step back. She is upset that her husband insists on speaking "patois", although he has moved to the United States, and she is even more furious when her children try to do the same. Yet, it annoyed Lester that Isabel was always badgering him to "talk good".

To those outside the Caribbean culture, that may seem a bit surprising, but sadly it is true. There are many immigrants who would rather be cut off from any links to the region. Speaking "properly", some will insist for example, means weeding out any trace of the regional twang.

Yet despite the obstacles

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 18)

'Jamaica 2 Rahtid' hits South Florida stage next month

"Jamaica 2 Rahtid", a musical revue which takes a funny look at Jamaica's state of affairs, is set to take the stage in South Florida early next month.

Aston Cooke's comedy, which has been playing at the Barn Theatre in New Kingston, Jamaica, presents colorful Jamaica characters in a collection of sketches and songs covering a wide range of social, cultural and political issues.

Cast members for "Jamaica 2 Rahtid" include Deon Silvera, Dahlia Harris, Christopher Daley, Christopher McFarlane and Everaldo Creary. It is directed by Michael Nicholson. Grub Cooper of Fab 5 is responsible for the musical component while Orville Hall choreographed the movement for the musical numbers.

The production will be



The cast of "Jamaica 2 Rahtid" sound off in protest.

staged in North Miami on Mar. 4, and then plays in Palm Beach the following day. It is then scheduled to head west to Tampa on Mar. 11 and returns to South Florida for a performance in Coral Springs on Mar. 12.

"Jamaica 2 Rahtid" is

being presented in South Florida by Jamaica Awareness, Inc., and Ridims Marketing Network. For more information, call 305-891-2944 or 305-891-1242.



London drama explores impact of migration on the lives of families from the Caribbean

LONDON, CMC - A drama production exploring the impact of the migration of Caribbean nationals on their families, was scheduled to open last month at the British Museum in London.

Titled "The Ones We Left Behind", the production features a 30-minute play, a monologue and an interactive discussion.

Sponsored by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the production looks at the exten-

sive migration of people from the Caribbean and other countries during the 1950s and 1960s and explores the cultural, emotional and economic experiences of leaving behind one's homeland, children, and traditionally extended families.

HERITAGE

Jamaican-born Lorna Holder, founder and producer of Full Spectrum Productions, that produces the feature, said

the presentation highlights the Caribbean heritage and the courage and bravery of the early Caribbean pioneers, many whom were highly skilled professionals who went to work and study in the United Kingdom.

The production was also expected to feature a play entitled "Homeward Bound", written by Troy Fairclough and directed by British actor Eamonn Walker. Fairclough based his play on a series of workshops led by elders from the Caribbean community last year in London and Nottingham.

Homeward Bound is set in the departure lounge at Heathrow Airport and centers on a woman's dilemma over whether or not she should return to her native Jamaica to live out her retirement. Holder said it was written with a view to encouraging cross-generational participation, and an interactive discussion, led by historian and broadcaster Alex Pascall, which was scheduled to take place after the performance.



'Three Generations' of Bajan art on show at Diaspora Vibe Gallery

An exhibition of work by artists who live in Barbados will be the focus of "Three Generations: Barbadians Contemporary Art", which opens Feb. 9 and runs through the end of March at the Diaspora Vibe Gallery in downtown Miami, Florida.

The exhibition, being presented by the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation (BIDC) and the gallery, will showcase a group of 10 juried artists of different generations who work with a wide range of materials, processes and ideas. Participating artists include: Natalie Atkins, Virgil Broodhagen, Wayne Hinds, Caroline Holder, Juliana Inniss, Neville Legall, Terrence Piggott, Gail Pounder-Speede, Leslie Taylor, Kraig Yearwood. Some 40 works in varied media, including painting,

sculpture, photography and ceramics, will be available for viewing.

The public viewing of the



Caroline Holder's "Red Baby" will be on show.

art will be complemented by an array of special events, scheduled from Thursday through Saturday, including gallery walk, meet-the-artist talks and slide presentations.

For more information on special events, call the gallery at **305-573-4046**.



ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS

• **Popular Grenadian artiste dies**
Michael DeGale, a popular dramatist, drummer and lead actor from Grenada, died last month. He was 40.

DeGale had been drumming for over 25 years and made tours to England, Jamaica and St. Vincent with the National Folk Group, the Veni-Way DanceGroup and TUMDA, whose first major production was entitled "Trouble Down Dey".

• **VP Records launches new website**
VP Records has launched a new

website where consumers and businesses can order directly from one of reggae music's leading distributors. The site, www.vpreggae.com, will hold one of the largest archives of reggae on the Internet and offers music in a variety of formats including CDs, DVDs, seven-inch vinyl, 12-inch vinyl, VHS cassette, and audio cassette.

Compiled from various sources.



'Irie Jam' searches for stars in Caribbean music talent pool

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17)

decided to give it some structure and do it as a contest.

"About the quality of the material we have received, honestly, I would say 50 percent of the songs are pretty good and 50 percent are pretty bad," he added.

The station will partner with local papers to reach the Caribbean public and eventually will seek television part-

ners as well. So far, 85 percent of the contestants reside in the New York area, according to Clarke.

'DROUGHT'

Asked about his view of current Caribbean talent, the radio entrepreneur lamented, "I think drought is a mild word. It is a horrible situation right now. This is one of the reasons we are doing the con-

test. I think the caliber of current DJs bring down the music."

He did add, however, that based on the quantity of cultural music made last year and some positive music in the dancehall, "the drought is hopefully coming to an end. "We will take the lead in trying to elevate the kind of material we think is positive," the CEO noted. "Some material promotes violence and a certain kind of situation that causes oppression... We are sending out a warning to those who glorify a certain lifestyle. We are starting a rebellion against what's been happening. We are trying to uplift the music."

Adding that positive movement has already started in Jamaica, Clarke remarked

that "it is our turn to take the baton and do what we can on this side to make sure that the music moves on."

JAMBOREE

Part of the radio station's contribution to Caribbean music's upliftment is through its annual reggae concert - Irie Jamboree, now in its fourth year. Held each summer, the concert has steadily grown and has included artistes like Sean Paul, Wayne Wonder, Shabba Ranks, Luciano and Damian 'Junior Gong' Marley. This annual concert will also be used as a launching pad for the contest winners, Clarke said. In addition to being heard on the radio station, contest winners will perform on Irie Jamboree. They will also get a chance to record

their music at a professional recording studio in New York. Distribution is guaranteed, according to Clarke.

The next step will be to harness talent from more genres and promote the contest throughout the Caribbean islands.

"But first, we want to make sure the structure is strong because from there the sky is the limit," Clarke said.

Check out the station's website to listen to the contest entries during the Thursday night timeslot. All programs are streamed online.

Get ready fi buss!

Dawn A. Davis is a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.



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(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17)

shared by most immigrants, and Lester Jenkins's family faced segregation in the American South, it becomes obvious that the stories, and other fascinating aspects of Caribbean culture, are among the key ingredients that keep the family tightly knit. Even when the Jenkins family starts to find the American Dream - bettering themselves financially - they cannot completely let go of their roots.

"It seemed like us Jamaicans carried our customs and lifestyle with us wherever we went", the narrator says in "A Jamaican Storyteller's Tale".

How true it is today. Isolated pockets of Caribbean people in the U.S. have grown to huge communities all over the country; they are almost impossible to ignore. Now the tales are often more evident in the lyrics of songs, as reggae, soca and other forms of

music from the region take firm hold in the U.S. And that is "scary", in a good way, and should make a great story all by itself.

• **154 pages**
• **PUBLISHER: LMH Publishing Ltd.**

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



Jamaican entrepreneurs receive newspaper's business award

Jamaican entrepreneurs Catherine and Desmond Malcolm, of Jerk Machine, Incorporated, were among the four recipients of the Sun-Sentinel 2005 Excalibur Awards.

The recipients were honored for outstanding leadership and community service at a ceremony at the Boca Raton Resort and Club in Florida last month.

The Malcolms were cited as outstanding small business leaders in Broward County, along with architect Jorge Garcia of Garcia Stromberg in Palm Beach County. Chief Executive Michael Jackson of Auto Nation, and Patricia Lebow, of Broad and Cassel, were also honored as outstanding corporate leaders in Broward County and Palm Beach County respectively.

PIONEERS

Described as pioneers of Jamaican jerk-style cuisine in the South Florida area, Catherine and Desmond Malcolm opened their first Jerk Machine restaurant in Lauderhill, Fort Lauderdale, in 1989. Today, they are owners of a thriving food franchise and warehouse commissary employing some 65 persons in the South Florida region, and boasting annual revenue of \$3 million.

They now have eight loca-



Entrepreneurs, from left, Desmond and Katherine Malcolm, owners of Jerk Machine, Inc.; are congratulated by Marie Gill, president of Jamaica USA Chamber of Commerce; and Ricardo Allicock, Jamaica's consul general to the southern United States.

tions in operation and successfully market Jamaican delicacies such as jerk chicken and pork, oxtail, curried goat and other dishes.

Both Catherine and Desmond were born in Jamaica and migrated to Canada in 1977. The idea of food business evolved when the Malcolms catered for their wedding in 1982 in Canada. Then they started a small catering operation, planning events for families and other customers. Having grown tired of the long winters they decided to move to South Florida where Desmond combined his culinary expertise with his wife's business sense and

opened the first store of the now successfully run food franchise.

With a vision for success in the food operation, the Malcolms began bottling their own "jerk sauce" and a line of natural juices. They plan to launch those products in supermarkets. Their business acumen has also allowed them to look into extending the franchise in other cities throughout the United States and Canada.

Jamaica's Consul General Ricardo Allicock congratulated the couple for their success as business leaders and also

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 20)

Job, business expo targets the Caribbean community

South Florida's Caribbean job seekers and small business owners will get to meet representatives of some of the United States' leading companies and government agencies, plus the opportunity to develop partnerships with Caribbean professionals, during "The 2006 Florida Diversity Job and Trade Expo" this month in Miami.

The event is scheduled for 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Feb. 9 at The James L. Knight Center, 400 S.E. Second Ave.

According to the organizers, representatives of top corporations and government agencies will be actively interviewing Caribbean professionals and business owners in an effort to develop lucrative

business partnerships and professional employment relationships in a variety of fields. Among the corporations and government agencies that will be on site at the expo are Miami International Airport, FedEx, Home Depot, JC Penney's, CVS Pharmacy, Office Depot, Lowe's Home Improvement, Winn Dixie, Broward Community College, The Florida Lottery, The South Florida Water Management District, Burger King Franchise Division, Jackson Memorial Hospital, North Broward Hospital District and Enterprise car rental.

Admission to the event is free. However, reservations are required by calling 954-364-6260.



Tax information exchange keeps tab on earnings abroad

LESLIE A. SHARE AND
MICHAEL ROSENBERG

The United States has a broad network of comprehensive income and estate and gift tax treaties that include special provisions enabling the fiscal authorities of each country to swap tax-related information with each other.

However, none of these types of treaties have traditionally existed with so-called "tax haven" jurisdictions.

In the early 1980s, the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Treasury Department began a concerted effort to implement more basic and specific tax information exchange agreements (TIEAs) with countries and territories located in the Caribbean basin and elsewhere. In essence, a bilateral TIEA provides a legal mechanism for two governments to assist each other in the accurate assessment and collection of income and certain other taxes, to prevent fiscal fraud and evasion, and to develop more sophisticated information sources through sharing

collected tax-related data.

Depending upon the TIEA in question, such information could be used for civil or criminal tax enforcement by a treaty partner.

BENEFITS

Since 1983, special U.S. tax benefits and concessions have been available to those of the 29 jurisdictions which are eligible under the related Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) program and which enter into a TIEA with the United States. The most significant of these benefits is the ability of a U.S. taxpayer attending a convention, seminar or similar meeting in a qualifying country to deduct travel expenses.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the U.S. successfully implemented TIEAs with Barbados, Bermuda, Costa Rica, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, the Marshall Islands, Mexico, Peru, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago (some of which have also entered into more detailed

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 20)

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'Caribbean Business Growth' confab set for Jamaica Feb. 16

Harvard Business School Professor Clay Christensen will be the featured presenter during an 'Innovation: For Caribbean Business Growth' seminar for the region's business leaders set for Feb. 16 at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel in Kingston.



Christensen

The focus of his presentation will be "Leading the Innovation Process: Delivering Sustainable, Profitable Growth".

Prof. Christensen is the author of "The Innovators Dilemma" and "The

Innovator's Solution: Creating and Sustaining Successful Growth".

"Managers today have a problem. They know their companies must grow. But growth is hard, especially given today's economic environment. Managers know innovation is the ticket to successful growth. But they just can't seem to get innovation right," he said.

The seminar is being organized by Growth Facilitators and Knowledgeworks Consulting as part of their efforts to contribute to the region's overall socio-economic, political and cultural progress by exposing the public to world class leadership strategies.



Tax information exchange keeps tab on earnings abroad

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19)

other tax treaties with the United States). However, the U.S. remained interested in obtaining such agreements with what it considered to be the most "hard core" bank secrecy countries in an attempt to force them to provide tax-related information when requested by the Internal Revenue Service.

RESULTS

These concerted efforts have now paid off, as a number of the main offshore financial countries (surprisingly to some) have now, in effect, capitulated and have agreed to become part of the U.S. TIEA network.

In this regard, since 2001, the U.S. has signed new TIEAs with Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, The Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Colombia, Guernsey, the Isle of Man, Jersey, and the Netherlands Antilles. The agreements with Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba and The Bahamas are present-

ly in force. For example, the U.S.-Bahamas TIEA became effective with respect to criminal tax matters as of Jan. 1, 2004, and as of Jan. 1, 2006 it also applies to civil tax matters.

As of the latter date, The Bahamas correspondingly became eligible for the related CBI tax deduction benefits. Investors should also be aware that in addition to the U.S. TIEA, the Cayman Islands is reportedly negotiating TIEAs with at least eight other major industrialized countries in an attempt to obtain various financial benefits.

The U.S. TIEA network will undoubtedly continue to expand in the future as former offshore bastions of secrecy continue to do what is necessary to avoid fiscal blacklisting.

Leslie A. Share and Michael Rosenberg are shareholders with the Coral Gables law firm of Packman, Neuwahl & Rosenberg, and can be reached at 305-665-3311.



Miami launches business link website

A website designed to offer current and potential partners of Miami direct access to major markets of the western hemisphere, availability to financial services and foreign country representation, has been launched.

The City of Miami Mayor's International Council recently launched the website to keep with the council's mission to assist and provide support to the city's international partners, while helping share the vision of Miami as a diverse and vibrant metropolis to audiences worldwide.



Diaz

The website also highlights its Sister City relationships in the hemisphere, as well as initiating some in

Florida's emerging international partners, focusing on exploring trade and business opportunities, in addition to cultural and educational exchanges.

The Mayor's International Council was created in 2003 by Mayor Manny Díaz to consolidate Miami's international programs, including the International Trade Board and the Sister Cities Board. Commissioner Joe Sanchez is the current chairman of Mayor's International Council.

For more information, visit www.miamigov.com/imc



BUSINESS BRIEFS

• **Business grants available**
Miami-Dade County Commissioner Carlos A. Gimenez has announced the availability of grants for businesses located in District 7 through the Mom & Pop Small Business Grant Program. The application deadline for the grants is **Feb. 10**.

The Mom & Pop Small Business Grant Program is one of several economic development projects administered by Miami-Dade County's Office of Community and Economic Development in conjunction with the Neighbors and Neighbors Association. Grant awardees in District 7 are eligible to receive up to \$10,000 for the purchase of supplies, equipment, marketing and advertising services, or otherwise improve or expand their businesses. They also receive technical assistance with business plans, financial planning and other business-related tools.

For more information, contact Commissioner Carlos Gimenez's office at **305-375-5680** or Neighbors and Neighbors Association at **305-756-0605**.

• **2005 a good year for securities market**
The Eastern Caribbean Securities

Exchange (ECSE) says 2005, its fourth full year of operations, turned out to be a year of successes, with the market outperforming all other regional markets in terms of returns to investors.

An ECSE report said that the total overall return to investors was 15.5 percent, surpassing the returns available on any other regional markets or on any other traded or non-traded publicly available financial asset class.

• **Consultant wants regional banking regulatory body**
Faye Jacobs, the executive director of Caribbean Integrated Financial Services Limited (CIFS), says Caribbean countries should consider establishing a regulatory banking body for the region.

She said one of the benefits of the Caribbean community (CARICOM) Single Market, could be the introduction of the regional regulatory body, separate from a regulatory organization for the financial services sector.

• **T&T's economy grows by seven percent in 2005**
The Trinidad and Tobago economy grew by seven percent last year,

supporting robust job growth and reducing the unemployment rate to historical lows, the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago (CBTT) said.

In a review of the economy, CBTT said that the growth was led by the energy sector and that non-energy growth of four percent, led by construction and marketing, also contributed to the good economic performance.

• **Finance minister outlines economic reforms**

Grenada's economy needs to grow by at least four percent over the next three years if poverty and unemployment is to be reduced, according to Finance Minister Anthony Boatman.

Boatman said last month that the private sector must take the lead in economic development with the government putting in place the appropriate policies for strengthening the business environment in the country.

Compiled from CMC and other sources.



Jamaican entrepreneurs receive newspaper's business award

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19)

commended them for raising the standard of excellence in the Jamaican community. Their success is an inspiration for other Jamaicans as they continue to make a positive impact in our community, he added.

GIVING BACK

Catherine and Desmond Malcolm have remained committed to their roots as they continue to give back to the Jamaican and the broader South Florida community. They have overwhelmingly supported several community

organizations, making contributions to charitable, civic and educational projects.

In 1998, they established a non-profit organization, "It Takes a Village", working with at-risk youth ages 14 to 22 years. Through this endeavor, they have created educational opportunities emphasizing the arts and technical skills, and a job-training program providing training and placement services.

In accepting the award, the Malcolms expressed appreciation to the **Sun Sentinel** for setting the example of encouraging community involvement and leadership

through their daily newspaper in Broward and Palm Beach counties.

As business partners, they both spoke of their pride and enthusiasm as they imparted Jamaica's heritage and culture to the South Florida community.

Mrs. Malcolm was also recipient of the Caribbean Business Women of the Year 2000 Award from the National Association of Caribbean Business Women in South Florida.

- JIS



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HEALTH

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International experts warn Caribbean could be hit by bird flu

WASHINGTON, CMC – A panel of health experts at an Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) conference in Washington has warned that the avian influenza virus could affect the Caribbean and Latin America.

The experts, from the IDB, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the World Bank and the United States' Agency for International Development (USAID), concluded that given the trends in the virus's behavior, there is a strong risk that human-to-human transmission could occur, creating the possibility of a pandemic situation.

Some officials at WHO say that the risk of a pandemic is not a question of "if" but "when."

Influenza experts consider

the risk of avian flu in the Caribbean and Latin America to be relatively low, since birds flying south from the U.S. are not believed to intermingle with birds heading to America from Siberia, where one of the latest outbreaks occurred among birds, not humans. But they warned that the current perception of low risk could change, given the presence of the H5N1 strain of the virus in the Canadian waterfowl.

"Many countries in the region are vulnerable to global pandemics because their epidemiological surveillance systems are weak, especially for animal surveillance," said IDB health specialist André Medici.

RISK RANK

The British consulting firm Maplecroft has devel-

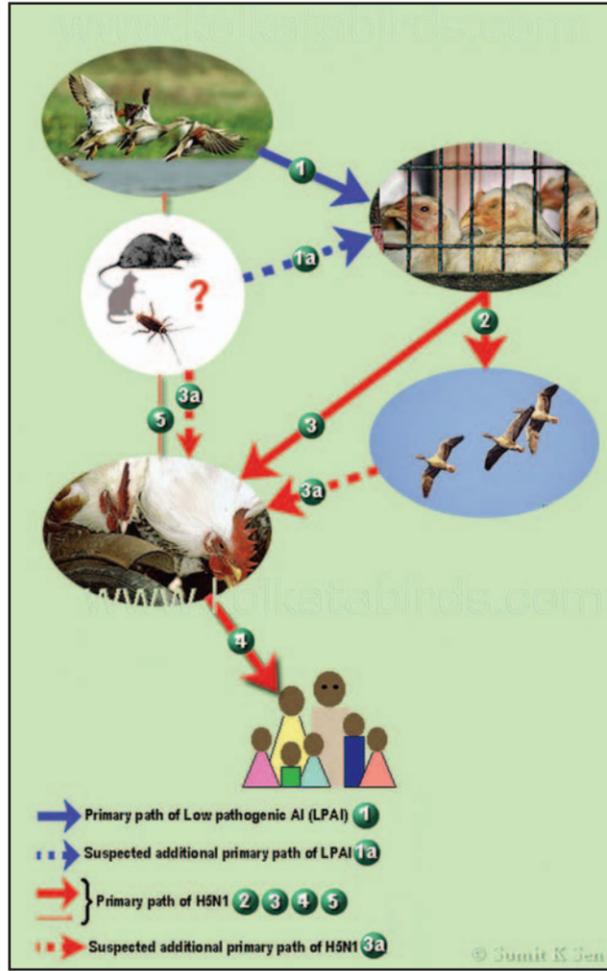
oped a Pandemic Risk Index that ranks 161 countries. In that study, seven countries in the Caribbean and Central America are considered at extremely high or high risk, including Haiti, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, El Salvador.

PAHO's Dr. Oscar Mujica estimates that if a moderate flu pandemic infected 25 percent of the Caribbean and Latin American population, more than 334,000 people would die over the course of the first eight weeks. If the pandemic were severe, the number of deaths could rise to 2.4 million.

But health is not the only factor to consider, though. An avian influenza pandemic could also have significant economic consequences for the region.

"Over 515 million work days could be lost if a moderate pandemic hit the region; a severe pandemic could increase that number to almost 730 million,"

Dr. Mujica said, noting that



Then there are the risks to the region's poultry products industry, which produces \$18.5 billion in poultry and \$5 billion in eggs annually, according to PAHO's Dr. Cristina Shneider. Poultry accounts for 40 percent of the protein consumed in the Caribbean and Latin America. Each person in the region consumes 25 kg of poultry and 2.5 kg of eggs annually.

On a worldwide scale, a global flu network has been established, led by the U.S., Australia, the United Kingdom and Japan, to work toward avian influenza prevention and monitoring. As part of the global network, 113

National Influenza Centers (NICs) have been established worldwide, of which 25 are located in the Caribbean and Latin America.



his estimates are only illustrative and not meant to be taken as absolute predictions. "The direct costs for this lost time could be US\$15 billion in the former case, or US\$21 billion in the latter."

HEALTH BRIEFS

• Flu shots for Florida's seniors

Florida residents who are age 65 and older can receive flu vaccines through the Senior Immunization Project, a partnership of the Health Foundation of South Florida and Health Choice Network.

Vaccines are free for uninsured seniors. For the nearest clinic location and schedule, call the project's hotline at 1-866-NO-TO-FLU (1-866-668-6358).

• Belize condemns HIV/AIDS discrimination by employers

Belize authorities have condemned the decision by employers to require workers to undergo testing for HIV/AIDS.

The National AIDS Commission reminded citizens that the government had late last year "adopted both the National and Workplace HIV/AIDS Policies which promote a human rights and responsibilities perspective regarding the epidemic".

Compiled from CMC and other sources.



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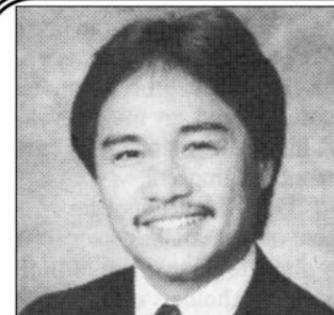
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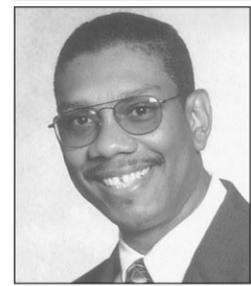
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Jamaicans set for 'Hard Rock' title fight

GORDON WILLIAMS

Boxing's "Road Warrior" and "The Destroyer" wanted to come home to settle a score. Instead Jamaican-born ex-light heavyweight champion Glen Johnson and Richard Hall will have to take care of pressing business at their home away from home this month.

While Jamaica, according to Johnson's manager Henry Foster, could not be convinced to stage a bout between his fighter, the former International Boxing Federation (IBF) light heavyweight king, and Hall, South Florida, where both fighters are currently based, has gladly accepted them.

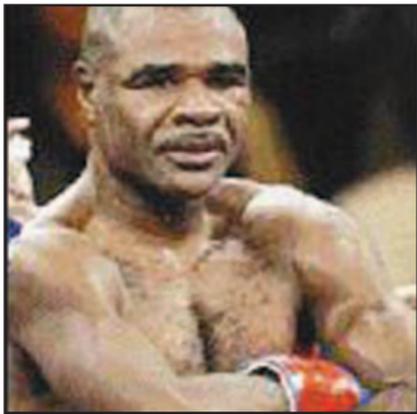
Johnson will fight Hall on Feb. 24th at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel in Hollywood for the vacant International Boxing Association (IBA) title.

For Johnson, who has been in ring battles all over the world to earn his "Road Warrior" nickname, the fight will be the Miami resident's first bout in South Florida for 10 years, according to Foster. It also offers an opportunity to stay sharp for his mandatory challenge against current IBF titleholder Clinton Woods of Britain, the belt he really wants.

"It's just keeping in tune," said Johnson, who has a ring record of 43 wins, 10 losses and two draws. In two fights with Woods he has drawn

once and won, a result which gave him his initial hold on the IBF belt.

"I could sit around and wait for June (the deadline for



Johnson



Hall, right

Woods to make the fight with him or risk being stripped of his IBF crown). But I have to stay busy."

That does not mean Johnson is looking beyond "The Destroyer" Hall, a power puncher with 25 knockouts in 27 wins, coupled with five losses, who has gone toe-to-toe with the likes of former American great Roy Jones Jr., who Johnson knocked out.

"Hall is a tough guy,"

Johnson admitted.

"Right now Hall is our focus," Foster added.

Both fighters left Jamaica as young adults and started boxing at a relatively advanced age – Hall at 19, Johnson about a year later. They retain strong ties to Jamaica. That, according to Foster, made Jamaica a logical place to stage the bout. Yet Jamaica made no solid offers, according to the manager, and that proposal fizzled.

"I wish this fight was in Jamaica," he said. "But we couldn't get an interest."

The Florida-based Warrior's Promotions, which is putting on the bout at the

Hard Rock, is hoping that the Feb. 24 match-up featuring different boxing styles will pull fight fans, especially those Jamaicans living in the area. More than 300,000 Jamaicans are estimated to reside in South Florida.

"Hall is a big puncher, Glen is a great boxer, not a big puncher," said Leon Margules, Warrior's

Promotions' executive director. "Both guys are action fighters. It's gonna be a war. Styles make fights. These guys don't run."

Even if they tried, they couldn't get far anyway, because they are right at home...or close enough.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



No 'looking back' as West Indies seeks return to form against N.Z.

GORDON WILLIAMS

The West Indies cricket team will be in New Zealand this month trying to bounce back from a disastrous Test series against Australia in its last outing.

But according to the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) hierarchy, the team should not be focused on its prolonged poor form, but instead turn to improving in the future, although success may not come immediately.



Chanderpaul

What we have to do is stop looking back," WICB President Ken Gordon told **Caribbean Today** in an interview at the end of the

Australian tour in November.

"Let's understand what has happened, put it into perspective and decide from here on let's get the essentials right. There is no quick fix to our problems."

There are no "serious" discipline problems related to the current crop of West Indies players, Gordon said. However, although talented, they must develop a more professional approach to the game, similar to the Australians, who are now rated the best cricketers in the world. Without that approach, he added, the Caribbean cricketers may continue to show flashes of brilliance, but not consistent team excellence.

"We're gonna try and we're gonna do the best and we're gonna hold up a bold front," Gordon explained.

"The reality is, those guys (the Aussies) are tough, they're professional.



Gordon

We're sending young guys who are ill prepared, in a sense, against them. And they will do well occasionally, but the consistency has to

come out of that innate toughness, which we have to go about building."

With that approach, Gordon believes the team can turn its fortunes around in time for next year's showpiece event to be hosted by the Caribbean for the first time.

"We have the time to do it if we work assiduously from now 'til the World Cup," he said.

LARA IN, OUT

The month-and-a-half-tour to New Zealand, scheduled to begin Feb. 16 with a Twenty/20 game at Eden Park, Auckland and end after the final Test at McLean Park, Napier on Mar. 29, will feature five one-day internationals and three Tests.

The Caribbean team has selected two squads to compete in the Test and one-day series. Brian Lara's request to be left out of the one-day squad, in a hope of prolonging his Test career, has been granted by the West Indies selectors. Lara holds the record for the most runs scored by a batsman in Test cricket – 11,204 – a feat he accomplished on the tour of Australia, passing the mark set by the Aussie Allan Border.

Both squads will be led by Shivnarine Chanderpaul, who was at the helm when the West Indies was beaten 3-0 by Australia in a Test series late last year.

The full one-day squad is: Chanderpaul, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Chris Gayle, Daren Ganga, Runako Morton, Dwayne Bravo, Dwayne Smith, Denesh Ramdin, Jerome Taylor, Ian Bradshaw, Ravi Lewis, Fidel Edwards, Deighton Butler and Wavell Hinds.

The Test squad includes: Chanderpaul, Sarwan, Gayle, Lara, Ganga, Morton, Bravo, Smith, Ramdin, Taylor, Bradshaw, Lewis, Edwards, Daren Powell and Devon Smith.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



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POLITICS

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PNP to elect a new leader to replace P.J. Patterson on Feb. 25

KINGSTON, Jamaica, CMC - The ruling People's National Party (PNP) said it would elect a new leader on Feb. 25 to succeed outgoing leader and Prime Minister, P.J. Patterson.



Phillips

The new leader will be chosen at a special conference, where nearly 4,000 delegates are expected to elect the new leader from a field of four candidates, namely Local Government Minister Portia Simpson Miller, Finance Minister, Dr. Omar Davies, National Security Minister Dr.

Peter Phillips and former Government Minister Dr. Karl Blythe.

In an address to a special meeting of the National Executive Council (NEC) last month, Patterson outlined the timetable for his departure



Davies

form active politics. He said whoever is elected to succeed him would "before the end of this legislative year, which is the 31st of March, would have already taken the oath of office of prime minister of Jamaica and assume the reigns of leadership of the

People's National Party."

NO VOTE

Patterson, who joined the PNP in 1958, served as prime minister for 14 years following the death of Michael Manley in 1996. He is the longest serving head of government in this country, surpassing Alexander Bustamante, Donald Sangster, Hugh Shearer, Edward Seaga and Manley.

Patterson said, like former presidents of the PNP, he would not be casting any ballot in the upcoming leadership race.

"Thank God Norman Manley did not vote in the election for his second leader. Michael Manley did not vote in the election for his third leader and I am not going to

vote in respect of the succession of my fourth leader," he said.

"I want to stay in a position that between the time of the election and when I finally hand over the baton, I don't want the person to get just a little tip of the baton, because it might drop, I want to make sure that the person has the baton in their hand, and when



Blythe

they have the baton in their hand I say go successor go," Patterson said.

Patterson appealed for unity as the campaign to replace him intensifies, warning the contenders and the members of their campaign teams that they must ensure that the PNP remained united.



Simpson

Opposition parties call off merger in St. Lucia

CASTRIES, St. Lucia CMC - A plan for the merger of two Opposition parties to contest elections this year has been called off.

The torpedoed pact has also led to a call for the resignation of Sir John Compton as leader of the main United Workers Party (UWP).

"As far as we gather the issue has essentially to do with the NDM asking for concessions. We have come a long way and tried to bring about a merger because we believe this is the only way in which the Opposition could be successful at the elections," said Ausbert d'Auvergne, leader of the small New Democratic Movement (NDM).

Sir John and d'Auvergne recently confirmed that they had put a seal on a tentative agreement for a merger between the two parties, but that was rejected by the UWP executive.

"Sir John, as leader of one organization having entered into an initialed agreement with another, if he cannot get past his executive, should resign," d'Auvergne added.



Compton

agreement called for d'Auvergne and willing members of his party to join as ordinary members and operate under the UWP symbol, color and name. In return, the NDM leader wanted a guarantee to be the endorsed candidate for Dennery North, one of his members to be given the green light to run for Vieux Fort North, and that three NDM members would be allowed to vie for selection as candidates for Castries South east, Babonneau and Soufriere.

d'Auvergne, who has long expressed his interest in forming an alliance with the UWP, appeared bitter over the rejection and said there would now be no merger as his party would not entertain any further discussions with the UWP, and would contest the election on its own.

TERMS

One of the terms of the

POLITICS BRIEFS

- **EOJ to oversee PNP elections**
The Electoral Office of Jamaica (EOJ) will supervise the election of a successor to the leader of the ruling People's National Party (PNP) and Prime Minister P.J. Patterson.
PNP General Secretary Burchell Whiteman said the EOJ would be called in to supervise the PNP's special delegates conference on Feb. 25.
- **Lewis not contesting St. Lucia by-election**
Former Prime Minister Dr. Vaughan Lewis says he will not be contesting the upcoming by-election in St. Lucia on a ticket of the main Opposition United Workers Party (UWP).
Lewis, a lecturer at the St. Augustine campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI), told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) last month that he had decided not to contest the general election that political observers in St. Lucia say would most likely be held before year-end. He said he had communicated his position to the party, now headed by another for-

- mer Prime Minister Sir John Compton.
- **General secretary of Dominica's ruling party resigns**
Dr. William "Para" Riviere, general secretary of the ruling Dominica Labour Party (DLP), last month resigned, claiming that the party had abandoned the ideals and principles of its founding fathers.
In a letter to the party's Vice President Cecil Joseph and copied to Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit, Riviere said that senior members of the organization had been seeking to frustrate his attempts to carry tasks associated with his position in the party.
- **Mascoll jumps to BLP**
Former Opposition Leader Clyde Mascoll has joined the governing Barbados Labour Party.

Compiled from CMC and other sources.



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St. Lucians get ready for a general elections preview

ERNIE SEON

CASTRIES, St. Lucia - There are mixed feelings as to whether the recent decision of Sarah Flood-Beaubrun to resign from the St. Lucia Parliament was indeed a brilliant political strategy.

But whatever her reasons, the sudden resignation as representative for the Central Castries constituency, has presented an interesting side show to the campaign ahead of a general elections that some observers say might be called before yearend.

"It is my belief that the resignation has without a doubt caused some ripples and panic both for the ruling party and the main Opposition", wrote newspaper columnist Denys Springer.

Flood-Beaubrun, the former health minister whose

public spat with Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony and his administration over plans to allow abortion under certain conditions led to her dismissal from the government last year, submitted her resignation saying that her small

Organisation for National Empowerment (ONE) party was being sidelined over the ongoing house-to-house enumeration exercise. She took the matter to court and lost and the resignation on Jan. 4 paves the way for a by-election within 90 days that interestingly she says she will also contest.



Flood-Beaubrun

While there is the likelihood of four political parties contesting the by-election, political observers predicted it would be a straight fight between the incumbent St. Lucia Labour Party (SLP) and the main Opposition United Workers Party (UWP) and would also provide answers to the political future of former Prime Minister Dr. Vaughan Lewis, over whom there has been lingering questions as to his political affiliation.

Lewis, who won the Central Castries seat in a 1996 by-election when the long standing incumbent, Sir William George Mallet retired, had criticized Flood-Beaubrun's resignation, saying the financial cost involved in a by-election could be as high as EC\$200,000 (\$74,074). He said she was only interested in boosting her ego.

"We cannot afford to put the country in that kind of expense when a general elections is due months later, it makes no sense, and clearly Flood-Beaubrun's resignation is not in the interest of her constituents, but solely intended to big her up," he added.

But Lewis, who was named by the UWP Leader Sir John Compton as its candidate, did not give the party the green light regarding his availability to contest the by-election.

"While Dr. Lewis indicated his interest in contesting the seat in his statements to the media, there was nothing from him to the party execu-

tive which indicated his intentions," a UWP spokesman confirmed.

The UWP gave Lewis a written ultimatum to declare himself available to contest the seat. Lewis subsequently withdrew from the race last month.

The SLP last month announced the names of the five new candidates to contest the general elections, but there was no mention of a candidate for the by-election. The party appears split on a possible candidate. Attorney Petra Nelson appears to be the leading contender from among a field that includes the incumbent Attorney General Phillip La Corbiniere, but she faces strong opposition, including the party's Chairman Thomas Walcott, who insiders say are opposed to her candidacy.

A similar situation faces businessman Peterson Francis, who last month threatened to run as an independent-Labour candidate if he was overlooked by the SLP.



Lewis

"My interest in contesting the seat was formally made known to the party long before the other contenders. I have reached the stage where if I have to run as an independent, independent Labour I will," he told reporters.

For her part, Flood-Beaubrun has been making the media rounds explaining her decision of giving up the seat she first won in the SLP landslide of 1997, and which she retained when the constituency was expanded to ensure the defeat of Lewis, her rival, who contested the Dec. 2001 polls on behalf of the UWP.

"If the people of Central Castries re-elect me that will be saying to the prime minister and government that I was unfairly treated in Parliament when my party was denied scrutineers as part of the Elections Act. Standing up for what is right can never be a waste of time," she told constituents at an indoor meeting last month.

As the campaigning heats up, the UWP has turned down a request from prime minister to stage a number of public debates.

- CMC



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Single market will transform the Caribbean ~ Carrington

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, CMC - The formal launch of the CARICOM Single Market (CSM) late last month signals a new beginning for the Caribbean, according to Secretary General Edwin Carrington.

A document to officially launch the CSM, the first component of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), was signed during a Jan. 30 ceremony held at the Mona campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI) in Jamaica.

Carrington described the launch as an historic and unprecedented step in the regional integration process, and a new dimension that will change the way the people of the region live and work. He said the CSM, which allows for the free movement of goods, service, skills and labor across the region, would "transform, safeguard and advance the future of our region and its people in this globalized world."

At the start of 2006, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago became the first CARICOM countries to enter into the CSM, with the other member states expected to sign on to the accord by Mar. 31.

NOT YET IN

The Bahamas, which has said it would not participate in the CSME, and Haiti, which has not been invited to participate in CARICOM activities following the controversial departure of its elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004, are among three CARICOM states that did not sign the CSM agreement.

A CARICOM Secretariat statement last month said: "Haiti has not completed its accession to the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and is therefore not a participant in the Single Market". It said Montserrat, a British dependency, is awaiting the necessary instrument of entrustment from the United Kingdom government in order to participate.

While acknowledging that there would be challenges along the way, Carrington was optimistic about the future of the CSM, noting the likeli-

hood of the Caribbean diaspora returning to utilize their skills and the retention of university graduates within the region.

General Counsel of the CARICOM Secretariat Dr. Winston Anderson said that the Revised Treaty defined the legal framework within which nationals of the Single Market participating countries must operate, including the Right of Establishment under which entrepreneurs might acquire land, not for speculation, but exclusively for the establishment of their businesses.

"There are significant safeguards provided for in our treaty arrangements which

"I believe that CARICOM has reached a stage where we can really embark on a road to economic development" - Robert Corbin

would make sure that complying with this obligation does not cause any difficulty or problem in our OECS Member States," he said.

CRITICAL ROLE

Former Dean of the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors Programme, Valerie Lalji said that youths had a critical role to play in the CSM and that they needed to educate themselves on the issue in order to enjoy the full benefits of the regional initiative.

President of the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) Lincoln Lewis viewed the CSM as "a process of attacking poverty in the Caribbean," which he noted required regional participation from both a political and cultural position.

"We believe that where there is trade there must be an economy to sustain that trade," he added.

Meanwhile, Robert Corbin, leader of the Parliamentary Opposition of Guyana and a member of the Committee of Heads of Government and Leaders of Parliamentary Opposition, said CARICOM heads of government must be applauded for staying the course started by the founding fathers of regional integration.

"I believe that CARICOM has reached a stage where we can really embark on a road to economic development," he said, adding that the CSM represented an important step for CARICOM's survival in a globalized world.



America's mixed signals helped tilt Haiti towards chaos ~ U.S. envoy

NEW YORK, CMC - A former United States ambassador to Haiti has charged that mixed signals from Washington helped tilt Haiti towards chaos.

Brian Dean Curry, who was ambassador up to the waning days of the presidency of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, said in a published report here that the U.S.'s action did not always match its words. He told the **New York Times** newspaper that the U.S. often spoke with two contradictory voices in a country where its words carry enormous weight. Consequently, Curry said, the mixed message made efforts to foster political peace "immeasurably more difficult."

Curry accused the International Republican

Institute (IRI), a democracy-building group close to the White House, of trying to undermine the reconciliation process after disputed 2000 Senate elections threw Haiti into a violent political crisis. He charged that the group's



Aristide

leader in Haiti, Stanley Lucas, an avowed Aristide opponent from the Haitian elite, counselled the Opposition to stand firm and not to work with Aristide, as a way to cripple his government and drive him

from power.

His account is supported in crucial parts by other diplomats and Opposition figures many of whom spoke publicly about the events for the first time.

Curran, a 30-year foreign service veteran and a former President Bill Clinton appointee retained by President George W. Bush, also accused Lucas of telling the Opposition that he, not the ambassador, represented the Bush administration's true intentions.

He said he had warned his bosses in Washington that Lucas's behavior was contrary to American policy.



CARICOM nationals apply to move freely in T&T

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad - Thousands of Caribbean community (CARICOM) professionals applied last month to the region's Single Market and Economy (CSME) Unit here for certification to allow them to move freely for work and business purposes in the country.

Early statistics here showed that more Jamaicans have been approved for free movement in Trinidad and Tobago than any other nationals.

The certificate allows for a

six-month stay from the time of entry into a member state.

The single market component of the CSME came into operation on Jan. 1, 2006 with six member states. The other members of the 15-member regional grouping are expected to come on board sometime during the course of the year.

As it stands, only six categories of workers have been cleared for free movement within the region. They are

university graduates, artistes, musicians, sportspersons, media workers and managers/technical and supervisory staff attached to a company.

Trinidad and Tobago is also expected to bring on stream its CARICOM machine-readable passports by Mar. 2006, after Grenada and Suriname.

- Compiled from CMC report.



Seeking Volunteers for the Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust

The citizens of Miami Dade County passed a half-percent surtax in November 2002 to implement the People's Transportation Plan. Oversight for the Plan is provided by a 15-member board known as the Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust (CITT).

The CITT monitors, oversees, reviews, audits and investigates the implementation of the transportation and transit projects listed in the Plan and all other projects funded in whole or in part with the surtax proceeds.

Members of the CITT serve on a voluntary basis. Trust members will not have any interest, direct or indirect, in any contract with the county or in any corporation, partnership, or other entity that has a contract with the county.

A Nominating Committee is charged with developing 15 diverse slates of four candidates from which the County Commissioners, the Mayor and the Miami-Dade League of Cities will make appointments to the CITT.

The Nominating Committee seeks applications from all persons interested in serving as voluntary members of the CITT who are residents and electors of Miami-Dade County who possess outstanding reputations for civic involvement, integrity, responsibility and business and/or professional ability and experience or interest in the fields of transportation mobility improvements or operations, or land use planning.

Although the Committee will be accepting applications from all interested applicants, the Committee will only be considering applicants from Miami-Dade County Commission Districts 6, 7, 8, and 9. All other applications are kept on file for a period not to exceed two years for future consideration. If you submitted an application within the past two years, you do not need to reapply.

Persons wishing to be considered by the Nominating Committee for inclusion in the slates of candidates from which appointments to the CITT will be made must submit a completed application form on or before 4 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Monday, March 6, 2006, to the following address:

Miami Dade County Clerk of the Board
Stephen P. Clark Center
111 NW 1st Street, Suite 17-202 • Miami, Florida 33128

APPLICATIONS NOT RECEIVED BY THE TIME AND DATE AT THE PLACE SPECIFIED IN THE PRECEDING SENTENCE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED. THE REQUIRED APPLICATION FORM IS AVAILABLE AT www.miamidade.gov/citt/ OR BY CALLING 305-375-3481. Members of the CITT will be subject to the Florida Open Records, Government in the Sunshine and Financial Disclosure laws, the Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance and the investigatory powers of the Inspector General.

Focus on energy in new Barbados budget

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC – Prime Minister Owen Arthur last month presented a near two billion Barbados dollars (one Barbadian dollar equals 50 United States cents) budget in Parliament, in which there was a focus on energy conservation measures.

The finance minister, who is projecting a deficit of 1.7 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), outlined a number of measures aimed at drastically effecting savings to the island's energy bill, which stood at over Bds\$350 million in 2005.

During a two-hour presentation in the House, Arthur announced a national energy conservation program, which advocates the increased use of diesel and reduced dependence on gasoline on the nation's roads. At present, the minimum rate of excise tax of 46.9 percent is applied to gasoline vehicles with an engine size under 1600ccs and a chargeable value of under Bds\$45,000. Arthur said the same would be applied to diesel vehicles.

Effective Sept. 2006, all taxi operators and operators of vehicles for approved tourism ventures, desirous of accessing duty free concessions, can only do so by purchasing diesel oil vehicles in the future, the finance minister said.

ENERGY AUDIT

He also announced the creation of a Bds\$10 million energy audit and retrofit fund

for the key tourism industry. Additionally, householders will be able to claim up to Bds\$2,000 annually in income tax allowances for energy conservation programs.

To further reduce the country's energy bill, he said Cabinet has given the green light to the Barbados Agricultural Management Company to establish a fuel cane generation plant by 2008.

The finance minister also used his statement of economic and financial statement to announce changes to the exchange control regime, including new provisions for foreign currency accounts held by Caribbean community (CARICOM) nationals. He said Barbados residents and CARICOM nationals resident in Barbados, who earn foreign exchange, may hold up to \$20,000 in their foreign currency accounts without exchange control permission. For limits in excess of the amount, exchange control permission is necessary.



PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC - Former Miss Universe Wendy Fitzwilliam, who chose to announce her pregnancy at a Catholic school here last month, has become the center of a raging controversy over her decision to do so.

Fitzwilliam won the Miss Universe title in 1998 and has been a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations as well as a frontline voice for HIV/AIDS in the world. But the unmarried 33-year-old beauty queen, a lawyer by profession, stunned Trinidadians when she chose to announce her pregnancy at a top Catholic girls school, Corpus Christi College in Diego Martin.

Following her announcement, the top model, known for her love for the social lifestyle, has been criticized by many, including the Education Minister Hazel Manning and a former President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Sir Ellis Clarke. Manning said it was "most unfortunate" for her to address the students about

her pregnancy.

GUIDELINES

On Jan. 27, the Catholic Education Board of Management jumped into the controversy in a bid to stop



T&T's Wendy Fitzwilliam winning Miss Universe in 1998.

such problems from occurring in the future. The board is to release a handbook entitled "Guidelines for speakers at Catholic schools".

Fitzwilliam revealed that she was expecting her first child and that marriage was not in the foreseeable future

for her while speaking at the school as part of the Trinidad Guardian/Education Ministry series "Making a Difference". The series is aimed at having local role models visit schools throughout the country to meet and talk with the students.

Fitzwilliam, shortly after winning the coveted Miss Universe title, was asked then what was the most important message or lesson someone in her position could convey. She answered: "I recognize that this unique position allows me the platform from which I can obtain people's regard. Though I do not have one important message or lesson to convey, one lesson I have learned is to teach good values by your example."

Now she is being criticized by many here for not teaching those good values.

Fitzwilliam is vice president/general manager, business development, at Evolving TecKnologies and Enterprise Development Company Ltd.



REGION BRIEFS

• Haiti extends invitation to CARICOM

Haiti's interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue last month extended an invitation to the Caribbean community (CARICOM) to send a fact finding mission to his country, as Port au Prince renewed efforts to re-join the regional grouping following the controversial departure of its elected leader, Jean Bertrand Aristide in Feb. 2004.

Latortue spoke with Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Patrick Manning, in his capacity as CARICOM chairman, and said the visit could

take place either before or after the former French colony hold presidential elections on Feb. 7.

• T&T's Opposition party calls for inquiry

The main Opposition United National Congress (UNC) last month called for a public inquiry into allegations that officials of the ruling People's National Movement (PNM) were behind a plot to frame two Opposition legislators nearly four years ago.

UNC Chairman Basdeo Panday told reporters he would discuss the

issue with Prime Minister Patrick Manning when the crime talks between the government and the Opposition resume.

• OECS countries to join single market by March

The Caribbean community (CARICOM) Secretariat last month announced that six countries within the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) had agreed to complete all arrangements and join the CARICOM Single Market (CSM) on Mar. 31.

"The Ministers and officials repre-

senting, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts/Nevis, Saint Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines assured CARICOM's Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) at its 20th Meeting held in Georgetown, Guyana on (Jan. 12) that all would be ready by the set date", according to a statement issued by the CARICOM Secretariat.

Compiled from CMC and other sources.



Livin' with the Waters
"Waters in Motion"

US Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District

America's Everglades

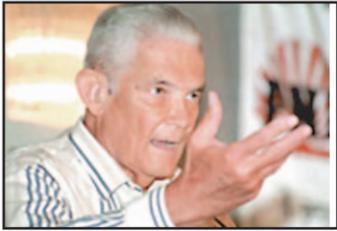
The Journey to Restore America's Everglades
A partnership of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, South Florida Water Management District, Everglades National Park, and many other federal, state, local and tribal partners.

Fun Facts:

Livin' with the Waters is an urban portrayal of "The Waters," a family facing everyday challenges in south Florida, while learning about the **Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP)**. CERP is a plan to save the Everglades that is spearheaded by the **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** and the **South Florida Water Management District**. For more information about America's Everglades, visit www.evergladesplan.org.

F Y I

www.caribbeantoday.com



MANLEY LECTURE

Professor Rex Nettleford will be the main presenter at the second annual Michael Manley Memorial Lecture to be held on **Feb. 10** at the Steele Auditorium, Nova Southeastern University, 3200 S. University Drive in Davie, Florida.

A reception begins at **6 p.m.** with the main lecture set for **7 p.m.** The lecture is being presented by Jamaica Awareness Inc. in association with Jamaican Diaspora Foundation.

Admission is free. For more information, call **305-891-2944**.

ADOPT A PET

The Miami-Dade Animal Services Department will hold a "Open Your Heart and Your Home Adoption Awareness Event" on from **5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Feb. 11** at the Animal Services Shelter, 7401 N.W. 74 St. in Miami.

The event will offer the opportunity for persons to adopt one of the shelter's many dogs and cats.

Activities and attractions will

include a "Singles' booth" with baked goods and coffee, free digital safety identification cards for newly adopted pets, a "pooch smooch" and a professional dog trainer offering advice and training tips.

FREE FAMILY DAY

"Friendship Pins" will be the theme of next month's Family Day presented by The Art and Culture Center of Hollywood, Florida.

During the **Feb. 19** event, children can create unique and personal friendship pins using colorful beads. Supplies will be made available on a first-come, first-served basis.

It is scheduled to run from **1 p.m. to 3 p.m.** in its upstairs gallery, 1650 Harrison St.

There will be free admission to the center's galleries. For more information, call **954-921-3274**.

WATER MATTERS

Broward County in Florida will host its fourth annual "Water Matters Day" **9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mar. 11** at Tree Tops Park in Davie.

The public is invited to the environmental education event, which focuses on water conservation and personal stewardship. The day will include live music, educational workshops and booths, tree and plant giveaways, hands-on activities for all ages, food, and more.

Admission to the park is \$1 per person, free for children ages five and under.

Tree Tops Park is located at 3900 S.W. 100th Ave. For more information, call **954-519-1222**.

PASSPORTS

The National Passport Information Center (NPIC), the United States Department of State's single, centralized public contact center for U.S. passport information, is offering a toll free service and has expanded its service availability/options.

Persons with questions or need status checks on pending passport applications can call **1-877-487-2778**. Customer service representatives are available from **8 a.m. to 8 p.m.** Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays. Automated information is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

For e-mail access, visit: npic@state.gov Website of passport and other international travel information is available at travel.state.gov

NEW 'GREEN CARD' FILING

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has announced that aliens must mail applications to renew or replace permanent resident cards, commonly known as "Green Cards", directly to the Los Angeles Lockbox.

The Lockbox is a processing facility used by USCIS to accelerate the collection of applications and petitions. The announced change allows the agency to improve the processing of Form I-90 (Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card) by electronically capturing data and images and by performing fee receipting and depositing from one central location, rather than at the local district office, service center, or application support center (ASC).

Aliens filing a Form I-90, regardless of their state of residence, must mail those applications with an application fee of \$185 and a biometrics fee of \$70 to one of the following addresses:

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) deliveries:

- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, P.O. Box 54870 Los Angeles, CA 90054-0870;

Or for non-USPS deliveries (e.g. private couriers):

- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Attention: I-90, 16420 Valley View Ave., La Mirada, CA 90638

Applicants should not include initial evidence and supporting documentation when submitting the Form I-90 to the Los Angeles Lockbox.

Applicants will receive a notice for a biometrics pro-

cessing appointment at an ASC and will submit their initial evidence during that appointment.

Applicants will receive their biometrics appointment in the mail.

PARENTS NIGHT OUT

The Art and Culture Center of Hollywood, Florida will hold "Parents Night Out" events on **Mar. 10 and May 12**.

"Parents Night Out is a chance for parents to have an evening out on the town alone while their children ages four to 12 create art, participate in creative movement activities, play games, eat and watch movies at the center, 1650 Harrison Street.

During the event, parents will drop their children off at **6 p.m.** and pick them up at **10 p.m.**

"Masquerade Night" is the theme of March's event, so children should come dressed as a secret identity. For May's event, which will be a "Luau Party", children should wear luau attire.

Each event costs \$15 per child for center members or \$20 per child for non-members. For more information and reservations, please call **954-921-3274**. More information about the center is available at www.artandculture-center.org



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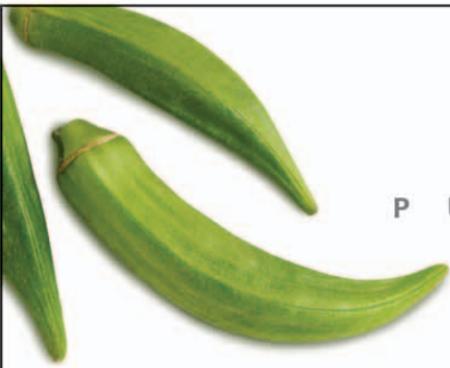
 my recipe for living, my **history.**

Marvin Woods

TV Host, Turner South's Home Plate
Chef, Author, Restaurateur - Restaurant M. Woods | Miami, FL

Main ingredient: Knowledge

Long before he started "Droppin' Knowledge" on Home Plate, Marvin Woods considered it his duty to feed minds on the African, Caribbean and Southern history of ingredients used in his health-conscious Low Country cooking. Believing "there is drama in how things like okra migrated from Africa," Chef Woods has made it his mission to serve up more than delicious cuisine, but to also inspire the world with foods rooted in his culture.



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