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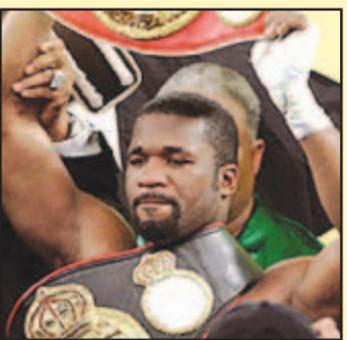
THE MULTI AWARD-WINNING NEWS MAGAZINE



Haitian medical practitioner Mathieu Eugene created history by becoming the first ever national from the French-speaking Caribbean country to hold elective office in New York City, page 4.



CARICOM leaders like Dr. Ralph Gonsalves left last month's mid term summit with a vision of 2008 as a "date with destiny" and set the Caribbean's focus on 2015 for the regional integration movement, page 11.



Boxer O'Neil Bell returns to the ring this month for his first fight in more than a year. His title of undisputed world cruiserweight champion is on the line, but the Jamaican says he is ready to rumble, page 23.

WORLD IS WATCHING



~ Billions across the globe will see Brian Lara lead the West Indies team into historic Cricket World Cup battle on home soil, the biggest international sporting spectacle to hit the nations of the Caribbean, **page 2.**


Barbados


Antigua and Barbuda


St. Kitts and Nevis


Trinidad and Tobago


Jamaica


Grenada


Guyana


St. Lucia

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Caribbean aims to stage spectacular CWC 2007

GORDON WILLIAMS

Cricket, a sport the Caribbean inherited from its colonial past but which bonds its people to this day, will, beginning this month, showcase its grandest spectacle when the region hosts the ultimate championships for the one-day version of the game.

The International Cricket Council's (ICC) Cricket World Cup (CWC) 2007, featuring 16 countries, including the Caribbean's representative the West Indies, will be played in eight countries across the region.

Official activities begin with the Mar. 11 opening ceremony in Trelawny, Jamaica. The first match is on Mar. 13, when host West Indies plays Pakistan at Sabina Park in Kingston, Jamaica. The tournament culminates with the final on April 28 at Kensington Oval in Barbados.

A total of 51 official games will be played, with an estimated live and broadcast audience of close to two billion worldwide. It will be the largest sporting event ever held in the Caribbean. The winning team is set to earn \$2.2 million and the ICC expects to generate more than \$230 million in revenue from the tournament.



Despite doubters, Cricket World Cup's Chief Executive Officer Chris Dehring, left, and WICB President Ken Gordon are confident the Caribbean can pull off a grand show for the world.

Administrators in the Caribbean have long expressed confidence in delivering an exciting, safe and well-organized tournament.

"We do rise to the occasion," CWC's Chief Executive Officer Chris Dehring told **Caribbean Today** earlier in the preparations.

"We're very confident that we're going to deliver," he would add later.

FEVER

The CWC fever has been steadily heating up over the past few months in the Caribbean. Host countries have spent millions of dollars getting match venues ready

while also sprucing up tourist attractions for the expected massive influx of visitors. Teams began arriving late last month.

Caribbean leaders have also bonded for the event with widespread co-operation in many areas, including the

delicate area of security, for which help has been sought from international agencies worldwide.

It also appears most people from the region are expecting grand success as well, although some recognize that there are still doubters who may not believe the Caribbean can put on an efficient show.

"(CWC 2007) has got to be the greatest spectacle we would have had here for many a year," Clive Lloyd, who captained the West Indies to the first two CWC titles in 1975 and 1979, told the **Caribbean Media Corporation** late last month.

"It is a situation where we

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

U.S. residents conned in Jamaica lotto scam

Law enforcement authorities said last month that several suspects held in connection with a multi-million dollar lottery scam in Jamaica could be extradited to the United States.

"The scam is becoming wider and more intense than we first anticipated...there is a distinct possibility that some of these persons who have been charged could be extradited to

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

American investor apologies to Antigua's prime minister

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua, CMC - Billionaire American investor Sir Allen Stanford has extended the proverbial "olive branch" to end his verbal feud with Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer.

Both men have been engaged in a recent war of words over Sir Allen's decision to take his plans to develop the off-shore Guiana Island into a top class resort and launch a community development initiative in select constituencies including that of the prime minister.

ACCUSATIONS

Spencer accused Sir Allen of political meddling and branded him "haughty, obnoxious and arrogant" to which Sir Allen said the outburst was designed "to deflect the attention of the citizens of our nation away from your inept leadership."



Spencer

Stanford

Sir Allen has published an apology in his **Antigua SUN** newspaper and the **Daily OBSEVER** newspaper, calling for an end to the public squabble.

"My only desire is to see Antigua and Barbuda be developed to its fullest potential", the statement read in part. "I recognize the need for cooperation to attain that goal and in that spirit apologize to those who may have deemed my actions offensive".

Up to press time Spencer had not yet responded to the latest development.



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HOLLYWOOD

Haitian wins council seat, creates history in New York

NEW YORK, CMC - A Haitian medical practitioner created history last month by becoming the first ever national from the French-speaking Caribbean country



Eugene

to hold elective office in New York City.

With the strong backing of newly-elected Caribbean American Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke, Dr. Mathieu Eugene, 54, convincingly won the special election for the 40th Councilmanic District seat in Brooklyn that was vacated by Clarke after she was elected to the United States House of Representatives in last

November's general elections.

"This is the Haitian sensation," shouted Eugene, flanked by the Clarkes.

"This victory is not only my victory, it's our victory. This is going to give hope to all the children, no matter their background. It was not easy," he continued, referring to his campaign. "This is proof that what money cannot do, people can do."

'LANDSLIDE'

Eugene, who is also a youth counselor, beat nine challengers including four Caribbean nationals, for the seat in the heart of the Caribbean community in central Brooklyn.

In what some political observers considered to be a "landslide", he secured 1,982 votes, or 33.6 percent, of the 5,898 ballots cast. His closest rival was Costa Rican-born Jennifer James.

James, a former finance campaign manager for Clarke and her mother, Jamaican-born, ex-New York City Councilwoman Una Clarke,

the first Caribbean woman to hold elective office in the city, received 887 votes, or 15.07 percent.

Jamaican-born educator and entrepreneur Wellington



Yvette Clarke

Sharpe placed third with 719 votes, or 12.19 percent, while Harry Schiffman, who observers had predicted could be a "spoiler" in the race, received 454 votes, or 7.69 percent.

African American lawyer Jesse Hamilton, a district leader in Brooklyn who traces his roots to Barbados, placed fifth with 433 votes, or 7.34

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

Chavez accuses U.S. of dividing Caribbean

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent, CMC - Venezuela President Hugo Chavez has accused the United States of wanting to keep the Caribbean and Latin



Chavez

America divided and improvised. Speaking at a rally to signal the end of his 24-hour working visit to St. Vincent and the Grenadines last month, Chavez said the

Caribbean and Latin American did not know where it stood and unless there was unity the region would remain under the control of "the American Empire".

"We need to make a huge effort to put back together those pieces so that we become again a powerful Latin America and a powerful Caribbean. As long as we do not do that we will remain under the control, we will continue being dominated and improvised," Chavez said.



Caribbean aims to stage spectacular CWC 2007

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

have got to be proud that we can host something of this nature, it is the third largest event in the world (behind soccer's World Cup and the Olympic Games), there will be two billion people watching...and they will be looking for all the little nasty things," the 62-year-old Lloyd added.

"They are not going to be looking at too many of the great things, but let's hope we can surprise them and show that we can perform and put on a great spectacle."

UP AND DOWN

The region's top cricket administrators have also admitted that there are people anxious to see the Caribbean fail in CWC - on and off the field. The West Indies has had an up time in recent years, and despite possessing one of the greatest batsmen of all time in captain Brian Lara and a host of promising youngsters, the former two-time CWC champions is not currently ranked among the top three one-day international teams in the world today.

The team has also been plagued by internal political issues, involving players and the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB), which have also spilled over into the region's general political arena. At times the issues surrounding the region's cricket have caused bitter divisions. However, many are looking

at CWC as a shot at redemption for the Caribbean as a whole.

"We have a propensity to shoot ourselves in the foot," WICB President Ken Gordon told *Caribbean Today* just over a year ago. "We've got to realize that this (CWC) is an opportunity to rise above that."

In many corners of the Caribbean, the team's on-the-field performance will determine the ultimate success rate of CWC 2007.

"It would be magnificent effort to do so (win the World Cup)," said Lloyd. "People are calling other teams but they are still thinking that West Indies have a very good chance. It would give us that type of boost that is needed in the region."

No nation has ever won CWC while serving as hosts. For Lara, now 37 and likely playing his final CWC tournament, there could be no more fitting end for the region than raising the winner's trophy on April 28. Yet while the batting genius is confident the West Indies will do well in its backyard, he acknowledged the best approach would be a bit more caution.

"We have a very good record at home," Lara said recently. "... We are looking to make the semi-finals and then take it from there."

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



U.S. residents conned in Jamaica lotto scam

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

the United States of America," said Inspector Steve Brown, the spokesman for Operation Kingfish, the task force to deal with drug trafficking and criminal organizations in Jamaica.

Brown said that local law enforcement officials had been holding discussions with their U.S. counterparts "and people who have been fleeced have been giv-

ing us some useful information."

Police uncovered the multi-million racket in sections of western Jamaica and held several suspects.

Police said that as a result of the scam U.S. citizens were tricked into sending large sums of money to Jamaica after being told that they had won the lottery.



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World Bank launches first ever Caribbean disaster insurance plan

WASHINGTON – The World Bank has launched a disaster insurance plan that will benefit at least 18 Caribbean countries in the event of natural disasters.

The bank said that the “Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility” (CCRIF), launched late last month, would be restricted to hurricanes and earthquakes.

“The facility will allow CARICOM governments to purchase coverage akin to business interruption insurance that would provide them with immediate cash payment after the occurrence of a major earthquake or the passing of a hurricane”, it said in a statement.

The World Bank said last month’s donor meeting in Washington, involving the European Union, Britain, France and Japan, would seek to raise between \$30 million and \$50 million in reserves for the CCRIF.

Most Caribbean community (CARICOM) member states will be beneficiaries of the fund, the World Bank said, pointing out that they would be required to pay a “one-off, non-refundable entry fee and an annual premium”.

“Countries still need to engage in mitigation and improve territorial building codes and emergency services,” said senior World Bank urban specialist Francis Ghesquiere.

The Caribbean countries have been hard hit by hurricanes in recent years, with Grenada’s economy being devastated two years ago when hurricanes Ivan and Emily lashed the island. Caribbean countries have also complained in the past of the slow pace of immediate relief to their reconstruction efforts in the wake of natural disasters.



Angela King, former U.N. diplomat, dies

Angela King, former assistant secretary-general of the United Nations and special adviser to the secretary general of the U.N. on gender issues and advancement of women, died last month at New York’s Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Centre. King had been battling cancer for sometime.

King, who retired from the U.N. in April 2004 for health reasons, after 40 years of service, was born in Kingston, Jamaica and attended St. Hilda’s High and Wolmer’s High schools. As assistant secretary general, she made history in being the first woman and first Jamaican to hold that post.

Besides advising the secretary general on women’s affairs,



King

King was also chairperson of the U.N. International Committee on Women’s Rights.

“Angela King led the United Nations’ efforts for the empowerment of women with knowledge, passion and courage”, read a statement issued recently by the spokesperson for U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon.



Bahamas government minister resigns in Anna Nicole Smith controversy

NASSAU, Bahamas, CMC - Prime Minister Perry Christie last month accepted the resignation of his Immigration Minister Shane Gibson, who



Gibson

severe criticism and calls for him to step down after a newspaper published a photo showing him in bed with the late model, who died last month in a hotel room in the U.S.

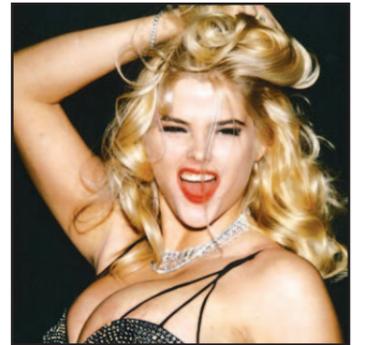
Gibson had also been accused of favorably fast tracking Smith’s immigration application for a resident’s permit.

“I unconditionally deny that I ever abused my ministerial office by granting Anna Nicole Smith any permit of which she was undeserving or for which she was not qualified under the laws of The Bahamas,” Gibson said in a television broadcast announcing his resignation.

APOLOGY

Gibson apologized “to all persons who may in any way have been offended by anything that I have said, done or perceived to have said or done.”

He was critical of those “mischievous” persons, who in the political season had sought



Smith

to create an impression that did not exist.

“I didn’t have an individual relationship with her, it was a family relationship,” Gibson said, telling viewers that family members were present when the pictures were taken out with Smith.

Christie is preparing to call general elections later this year.

Meanwhile, Smith’s body was flown back to The Bahamas for burial.



had become embroiled in a controversy involving the late United States Playboy model Anna Nicole Smith.

Christie described Gibson’s resignation as “the correct course of action.”

Gibson had been facing

N.Y. City Council challenges status of newly elected Haitian legislator

NEW YORK, CMC - The Speaker of New York City Council last month said she is seeking legal advice from the New York state’s attorney general regarding the appointment of the council’s first-ever elected Haitian legislator.

Speaker Christine Quinn said that she had sent a letter to Attorney General Andrew Cuomo requesting his opinion on the fate of Dr. Mathieu Eugene, who convincingly won last month’s special election, in a 10-way race, for the predominantly Caribbean 40th Councilmanic District seat in Brooklyn.

“Is it your view that a council member must be a resident on the date of the election?” she asked Cuomo, citing the Public Officers Law.

RESIDENCY

New York City Board of



Quinn

Elections officials said last month that the city council is the one to determine Eugene’s residency in order for him to be formally sworn-in as the duly elected representative for the district. The council last month postponed Eugene’s official swearing-in ceremony amid reports that he does not live in the district.

City council officials, however, said they expected to

swear-in Eugene early this month after confusion about his residency is clarified.

The seat was vacated by newly-elected Caribbean American Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke, who replaced retired veteran African American Congressman Major Owens as representative for the 11th Congressional District in Brooklyn.

Paul Wooten, Eugene’s lawyer, said he had asked the council to postpone his client’s swearing-in ceremony until the election results are certified. He claimed that Eugene had moved into the district before the elections.

“It wasn’t a factor from our point of view,” Wooten said, alluding to questions about Eugene’s residency outside the district.



Haitian wins council seat, creates history in New York

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

percent, and Pakistani Mohammad Razvi got 420 votes, or 7.12 percent.

Jamaican-born community activist Leithland “Rickie” Tulloch received 299 votes, or 5.06 percent. Former Vincentian United Nations Ambassador Joel Toney fell close to the bottom of the race, receiving only 369 votes,

or 6.25 percent, while Panamanian entrepreneur Zenobia McNally secured 269 votes, or 4.56 percent with Jamaican domestic violence counsellor Karlene Gordon in the cellar position, receiving just 66 votes.

COMING OF AGE

Eugene urged his rivals to work with him for the advance-

ment of the community.

“We’re blessed with another extraordinary constituency,” Congresswoman Clarke said.

“We have demonstrated that we have come of age, socially and economically, and, as we take our seat at the table, no one will be left behind.”



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STRUGGLE AND TRIUMPH



Photograph by Sharon Bennett

Howard Dodson, left, executive director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, explains aspects of the transatlantic slave trade route ("Middle Passage") to United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, who earlier this month declared open an exhibition commemorating the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade at U.N. headquarters in New York. The exhibition, entitled "Lest We Forget - The Triumph Over Slavery" and scheduled to run through Mar. 30, covers the Caribbean's link to the slave trade. Some 35 such pieces are on display at the U.N. Visitor's Lobby in Manhattan, including a freshly minted Jamaican \$500 bank note featuring National Hero Nanny of the Maroons, as a heroine of the abolition movement.

The exhibition is being presented with the cooperation of CARICOM, the Permanent Mission of India to the U.N., UNDP, UNESCO and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, New York. It is the first in a series of events leading up to Mar. 26, 2007 when member states of the U.N. will recognize the day with a global celebration New York.

U.S. reveals new travel booklets with enhanced security features

WASHINGTON - United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has issued a redesigned travel booklet as part of ongoing security improvements to update agency documents.

The identification booklets, which the USCIS claims are fraud resistant, include digital photographs and signatures and other enhanced security features to deter potential counterfeiting schemes.

Additional improvements include a new teal blue cover and color images of patriotic symbols of the U.S., such as the Statue of Liberty and the American flag.

"We intend to periodically update our documents to capitalize on advances in security technology and to stay ahead of efforts to circumvent our legal immigration system," said USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez in a press release issued in mid-February.

PERMITS

The personalized passport-style booklets contain either a Permit to Reenter the United States (Form I-327); or a Refugee Travel Document (Form I-571). The reentry permit establishes that permanent or conditional residents do not abandon their legal status when they travel outside the U.S. for more than one year.

A person with refugee or

asylum status who wishes to travel abroad should carry the Refugee Travel Document to return and maintain their status. In most cases, a refugee may use the document for travel purposes in place of a passport.

Travel documents currently in circulation are valid until the expiration date in the booklet. USCIS issues approximately 200,000 travel booklets each year.

USCIS said it has notified federal and international law enforcement and homeland security agencies of enhanced forensic security features included in the booklet so that agents and inspectors may recognize and validate the redesigned documents.

Permanent and conditional legal residents may find more information on the reentry permit on the USCIS web site at: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/article/B5.pdf>.

Details on how to apply for a refugee travel document is available online at: http://www.uscis.gov/files/article/d4_english.pdf.

On Mar. 1, 2003, the USCIS became one of three former Immigration and Naturalization Service components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing the integrity of

our nation's security.



IMMIGRATION KORNER

QUESTION: I was wondering if someone who is a United States citizen can file for a child that is not biologically his but names him as the father on the birth certificate?

ANSWER: The only means that this can happen legally is through adoption, says attorney Kerry William Bretz of the Manhattan-based law firm of Bretz & Coven, LLP. A U.S. citizen can bring his/her adopted child to live permanently in the U.S., but note that merely naming a U.S. citizen on the birth certificate does not satisfy the complex rules regarding overseas adoption, added the attorney. Your best option to make this work is to consult a competent immigration attorney.

Note that U.S. law allows the adoption and immigration of children who are under 16 years of age, with two exceptions: biological siblings of a child adopted by the same parents may be adopted if under 18 years of age; and orphans over the age of 16 may be adopted, as long as the I-600 petition was filed on their behalf before their 16th birthday, or in the case of an orphan who is the sibling of a child adopted by the same parents, before their 18th birthday.

QUESTION: I would like to

How to adopt a non-U.S. resident; and getting a job or work permit

QUESTION: I was wondering if someone who is a United States citizen can file for a child that is not biologically his but names him as the father on the birth certificate?

ANSWER: You cannot work in the U.S. when you are present on a B1/B2 non-immigrant visa, advises attorney Courtney Smith of the Bronx-based law firm of Palma & Smith.

The avenues you can seek to obtain employment legally in the U.S. are to apply for a H-1B and H-2B non-immigrant visa, he added. You should seek the advice of an immigration attorney before applying for a H-1B or H-2B non-immigrant visa.

Additionally, where an immigrant visa petition has been filed on your behalf - example, through a parent, spouse or sibling sponsorship - and a visa is immediately available, you can apply for work authorization. But note that it is of the utmost importance that you do not over stay on your current visa, Smith added.

Compiled by Felicia Persaud
The above column is created

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HONORING OUR HERITAGE



- Photograph by Sharon Bennett

Five recipients were cited for outstanding service to the community at the annual Sons & Daughters of Jamaica (S&DoJ) Ancestral Heritage Awards presented during last month's celebration of Black History Month (BHM) at the Jamaican Consulate in Manhattan, New York. Photograph shows, from left, Junior Jawara Blake, radio host of The Meeting In The African Village Square-WVIP, 93.5 FM; Hyacinth Simms, president of Simms Tax Services of Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y.; Violet Russell-Forrest, fashion designer; Aubrey Campbell, from the Jamaica Information Service, N.Y., who represented recipient Dr. Basil K. Bryan, Jamaica's consul general; and E. Wayne McDonald, artistic director of the Caribbean Cultural Theatre, Inc., Brooklyn. The BHM celebration was co-sponsored by the Jamaican Consulate and S&DoJ, Inc.

Go online for your 1099 tax form

With tax season well on its way, millions of taxpayers in the United States are busy gathering all the forms and documents needed to file federal, state and local tax returns.

Some people who receive Social Security may have to pay taxes on a portion of their benefits. For them, a Social Security Benefit Statement (Form SSA-1099) is an important tax document.

The SSA-1099s for tax year 2006 were all automatically mailed to beneficiaries by Jan. 31, 2007. Anyone who receives Social Security but has not yet received a Form SSA-1099 for 2006 can request a replacement online at www.socialsecurity.gov

BENEFITS

The SSA-1099 shows the total amount of benefits received in the previous year and is used to find out if any benefits are subject to tax, and to complete a federal income tax return. Basically, the fed-

eral tax laws about Social Security benefits state that:

Up to 50 percent of Social Security benefits may be subject to income tax for individuals with a combined income between \$25,000 and \$34,000, or for couples with a combined income between \$32,000 and \$44,000; and

Up to 85 percent of Social Security benefits may be subject to income tax for individuals with a combined income above \$34,000, or for couples with a combined income above \$44,000. (Note: "Combined income" means adjusted gross income, plus nontaxable interest, plus one-half of Social Security benefits.)

Less than a third of current Social Security beneficiaries have incomes that exceed the thresholds, requiring them to pay taxes on a portion of their Social Security benefits.

For more information on taxation of Social Security benefits, call the IRS's toll-free telephone number, **1-800-829-3676** and ask for

Publication 554, "Older Americans' Tax Guide". The publication is also available from the IRS website at www.irs.gov

For more information about Social Security, or to request a replacement SSA-1099, visit www.socialsecurity.gov

Or call Social Security's toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213 (TTY1-800-325-0778) and ask for a replacement SSA-1099.



How to adopt a non-U.S. resident; and getting a job or work permit

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

especially for immigrants concerned or unsure of issues pertaining to United States immigration law. It aims to answer some of our readers' frequently asked questions and provide responses from qualified immigration attorneys and advocates lobbying for the U.S. immigration cause. The

answers provided here are for information purposes only, and does not create attorney-client relationship, nor is it a substitute for "legal advice", which can only be given by a competent attorney after reviewing all the facts of the case.



Antigua demands 'tangible results' for world's women

WASHINGTON - Antigua and Barbuda has called for greater efforts so that there would be "more tangible" results for women.

In her first address before the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS), as president of the Inter-American Commission (CIM), Antigua and Barbuda Labor, Public Administration and Empowerment Minister Jacqui Quinn-Leandro said these results should make women "enjoy their rights to the fullest extent."

The OAS Permanent Council, which comprises member state diplomats, is chaired by Uruguay's Permanent Representative María del Luján Flores.

Quinn-Leandro said the empowerment of women and gender equality "are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security among all peoples."

In quoting a statement at the historic 1995 World Conference on Women, in Beijing, China, Quinn-Leandro said "the advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are matters of human rights and conditions for social justice." She said every effort should be made to ensure that women play a pivotal role in the decision-making process in the public and private domains, and that they have access to resources and bene-

fits of development, an OAS statement said.

"The CIM objectives of equality must be fulfilled, not only because they are mandates but also because they are an indispensable component of the development process of our countries," said Quinn-Leandro, who was elected last November to head CIM for a two-year term.



Quinn-Leandro

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ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN



- Photograph by Derrick A. Scott

Lissette Wade, left, a Jamaican who resides in Lake Park, Florida, shows off an award he recently received from United States President George W. Bush to Jamaica's Ambassador to the U.S. Professor Gordon Shirley.

Wade was the only Jamaican among the 100 African Americans who were honored as business and community leaders for "Black History Month" at a reception held at the White House in Washington D.C.

VIEWPOINT

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Right man for her



The right man for her is so elusive, for women are never satisfied, as men are loved, hated, reviled, cursed, despised, wanted, sought after, chased away, yet chased after by women.

Women seem to be so confused when it comes to men, that either they don't know what they want, or don't want it when they have it.

As usual, many New Year's Eve and Valentines' nights saw many attractive women out at functions, either by themselves, or in a collective herd. Whatever, there they were, all dressed up on perhaps the most romantic nights of the year, with no man beside them. It is a common scenario, and while I would not dare to ask them about their plight on that occasion, I have spoken to them at different times about their manless existence. For some it was by fate, for others it was by choice.

Usually the response was the same, "I just can't find the right man, why can't the right man come into my life?"

One lady, who was divorced twice, even told me that she wants to get married again, and that if the third one failed, she'd go at it a fourth time. "You see, I'm not one of those women who can live alone, I have my needs and I need a man to fulfill them, so I won't stop looking until I find the right man."

The right man, there goes that term again. But what makes a right man, what sets him apart from other men, what makes him different?

MADE MAN

Well, the right man is rarely born, but is made. A

young man growing up has to be molded the right way, steered in the right direction if he is to become the future right man.

There are a few parents who recognize this and pass on these values to their sons. The mothers make sure that the boys are able to cook, sew on buttons if needs be, wash and iron, and generally take care of themselves. As one old time mother told me, "I made sure that he could do all those things, so that he'd not be at the mercy of any woman."

Can you imagine the fiasco if a man marries a woman who is as helpless as a fish on dry land? There they are, both of them in the house and neither of them can do a damn thing to help themselves, not even water they can boil, but have to depend on a maid or fast food for every single thing that passes through their mouth. It starts with simple chores, that eventually leads to independence, which then leads to self-confidence.

The right man has manners, and that too has to be learned and cultivated from an early age. Over the past few months I chatted with a lot of people, and I heard stories of young men coming to pick up young women that were simply horrific. One parent told me how this young man drove up to his gate to attend his daughter's sweet 16 party. The lad was dressed in a washrag type of tee shirt, torn

rolled up jeans, uncombed hair, and more rings through every part of his body than a circus freak. "Yow, yow dads, is Lisa party this, a ya so me and my crew a buss!"

Now that must be every parents' nightmare, and he is certainly not the right man that most women are always seeking. But he wasn't born that way, so the twig is bent it grows, they say.

RESPECT

The right man respects his woman. I always find it strange how American black males have this habit of calling their women bitches and ho's. Our men don't use those said terms, but the lyrics of some of the songs are oftentimes worse.

This lack of respect towards women makes you wonder if those guys were spawned in a test tube. But then again, you'll say that some women respond to it and even call for it. No matter, it should not be done, and

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)



TONY ROBINSON

CARIB Comments

• "They expect us in the Caribbean to fail" - Caribbean soccer administrator Austin "Jack" Warner expressing his view on what the world believes will happen at Cricket World Cup in the region.



• "We have come here to the Caribbean to win it, otherwise it wouldn't have made much sense coming" - Australian captain Ricky Ponting after arriving in the Caribbean for Cricket World Cup.



• "We've got a good catch" - David Wimhurst, spokesman for MINUSTAH, the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Haiti, on successfully completing the first phase of a crackdown on armed gangs in one of the violence-ridden neighborhoods in Port au Prince last month.



• "You have to look out for what is best for you as a country" - Mary Ourisman, the newly-appointed United States ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, last month saying that Caribbean states were free to develop relationships with any country they saw fit, including Venezuela.

• "We remain concerned by the level of violence that currently threatens our way of life" - Barbados's Police Commissioner Darwin Dottin last month expressing alarm at the country's rising crime rate.

• "Merger is not the panacea people like to think it is and the next time somebody throws the merger word out, you should ask them for a copy of the plan as to how it all will come together" - Air Jamaica's President and Chief Executive Officer Michael Conway offering his views on a proposed single airline for the Caribbean.

• "Down with U.S. imperialism! Long live the people of this world" - Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez during a visit to St. Vincent and the Grenadines last month.

• "Europe has apologized to several other peoples across the world so why can't they apologize to us?" -



Dominica's Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit last month backing a call from Caribbean community (CARICOM) Chairman Dr. Ralph Gonsalves for European countries to issue an unqualified apology for slavery.

• "The event is too important for anyone to think of disturbing it" - Trinidad Islandwide Cane Farmers Association Chairman Raffique Shah last month dispelling talk that the organization would participate in a protest during the Trinidad leg of the 2007 Cricket World Cup to seek compensation from the government to get out of the sugar industry.

• "We (are) going to shut the island down" - Lester Bird, Opposition leader in Antigua and Barbuda, last month threatening action to protest the government's introduction of a new sales tax.

• "It seems, however, that things have literally fallen apart and we are not surprised at this because they were not done properly in the first place" - Jamaica's Opposition spokesman on Energy Clive Mullings criticizing a deal between his country's government and Trinidad and Tobago.

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Right man for her

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

perhaps if more parents stressed the need to respect women from an early age, then the cycle would stop. At times this lack of respect stems from the man's own low self esteem. So, to big up himself, he tears down women.

The right man has man-

ners. Now I know that many nowadays youth have no idea what I'm talking about, but good manners goes such a far way and is so sought after by women. All the ladies who I've spoken to have expressed this, how it's so refreshing when a man takes them out and displays good manners. He opens the car door, holds

the door open for her when entering a building, pulls out her chair, offers her food and drink, generally makes her feel comfortable and secure.

"Those are the qualities that I look for in a man, believe it or not, good manners," this lady told me.

Some may not know the term, but know when a man

shows it to them. "Him treat me right, mek me feel good, me check fi him." And that's another thing, a good man takes out his lady, and it doesn't have to be anywhere fancy either, but most women love to dress up and go out once in a while. That's why movies are still so popular, even though we have cable and satellite

dish. Women still love to dress up and go out, and the right man recognizes this. And I don't mean taking out a new woman just to impress her either, but taking out your wife or long time woman.

The right man has eyes only for his woman. Okay, let's get realistic and rephrase that. The right man has eyes only for his woman when he's around her. She must feel special, he can't be with her yet ogle other women. As long as he's with her, she must be the one. Which leads naturally into the next prerequisite of the right man, fidelity. The right man must deal with only his woman and nobody else. Now I know that's a tall order, but it's what women want in the right man. "I want my man to only be with me alone, I don't want to share him with any other woman," so many ladies have told me.

Others qualified it by saying, "As long as him don't dash it in my face and disrespect me and have woman calling me and tracing me off, I won't mind, although I would rather he didn't, but man is man I suppose."

The right man commits, no stringing along business, but really commits. Oh, the right man is so hard to find.

HIT AND MISS

Women are forever seeking the right man, this elusive being that somehow keeps slipping from their grasp. Some women meet the right men who eventually turn out to be wrong, while others just can't seem to meet even a hint of a right man.

Others caught the right man but couldn't hold on to him, as their jealousy and insecurity drove him away. Still, there are others who will never stop looking for the right man, the man who will fulfill all their needs, their desires, their wants, their obligations. "I won't settle for any and anybody, I want the right man for myself." "Why can't I find the right man, either they're married, gay, too young, too old, worthless, thieves, liars or unemployed."

But still, so many women find men but also find faults in all of them, so they are forever seeking this elusive impossible person and end up alone. That seems to be the fate of many women who are seeking the right man. And anyway, are you the right woman for the right man?

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FEATURE

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CARICOM eyes 2008 as Caribbean's 'date with destiny'

PATRICK KNIGHT

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – Caribbean community (CARICOM) leaders left last month's mid term summit in St. Vincent and the Grenadines with a vision of 2008 as a date with destiny even as they firmly set the region's focus on 2015 as the marker for a new milestone in the regional integration movement.

In many respects Chairman Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, the St. Vincent and the Grenadines prime minister, was accurate when he identified 2008 as "the region's date with destiny," as that year will see the ushering in of the CARICOM Single Economy and the start of new trade relationships with Europe, the United States and globally through the World Trade Organization.

But while the first feeble steps towards the Single Economy – the second component of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy – will be taken in 2008, it will not be until seven years later in 2015 that the long held vision of a fully integrated Caribbean community could become a reality.

While some regional commentators view the 2015 date as a delay, Barbados Prime Minister Owen Arthur, the man charged with the responsibility for overseeing the CSME, said it was never the intention of regional leaders to implement the Single Market as a "done deal" in 2008, but only to have the framework in place to start the complex task. "Do not expect to see the Single Economy coming in one fell swoop, we have sequenced the activity in two phases, that which will take place between 2008 and 2009 and then up to 2015," Arthur said, noting that the plan was not about offering "quick fix" solutions.

REALISTIC OR NOT?

But is the seven-year window to achieve the CSME a realistic target?

Arthur believes that once the timelines in the Professor Norman Girvan study – "Towards a Single Economy and a Single

Development Vision" – are strictly adhered to, the Single Economy can become a Caribbean reality by the 2015 target.

"The Single Economy will not simply appear. We are seeking to take 15 separate economies and put them together, developing the sectors together, have similar policies, have regional institutions that support the functioning of the sectors, address matters relative to whether we are going to have a monetary union or not and have social institutions to make the economy func-



Gonsalves

tion," Arthur said.

"This is now spelt out for the first time in the Girvan paper but it does not mean that the economy comes into existence merely because this document has been prepared and approved, but it now means that we have set out how we are going to approach it."

The paper by Girvan, a former secretary general of the Association of Caribbean States, sets out the sequencing for the implementation of the Single Market in two phases – up to the end of 2008 and from 2009 - 2015. Key areas included in the first phases to be implemented by mid-2008 are:

- Political approval for the broad outline of the development vision and regional development strategy;
- Extension of the categories of CARICOM nationals benefiting from free movement;

- Full implementation of the free movement of service providers;

- The implementation of legal status for the CARICOM Charter for Civil Society.

- The establishment and commencement of the Regional Development Fund;

- Establishment of the Regional Stock Exchange;



Duncan

- Political approval of the CARICOM Investment Regime and CARICOM Financial Services Agreement; and

- Collaboration with stakeholders on regional policy frameworks for energy related industries, agriculture, sustainable tourism and agro-tourism, new export services, transport and small and medium enterprises.

AGREEMENT

Needing political agreement by July 2008 and to be implemented no later than Jan. 1, 2009 are:

- Negotiation and political approval of the protocol on enhanced monetary cooperation;

- Agreement among central banks on CARICOM currency numeraire (generally a commodity in terms of which all goods are valued);

- Implementation schedule for harmonization of taxation regimes and fiscal incentives; and

- Implementation schedule for harmonization of financial regulatory environment.

PHASE TWO

Phase two 2009 – 2025 provides for the consolidation and completion of the Single Economy through:

- Implementation of common sectoral policies, e.g. tourism, transport, energy etc.;

- Harmonization of taxation systems, incentives and regulatory environment;

- Harmonization of fiscal and monetary policies;

- Implementation of regional competition policy and regional intellectual policy regime; and

- Implementation of CARICOM Monetary Union.

'MYSTIFIED'

While leaders emerging from the summit appeared happy with the staged implementation scheduled, regional political scientist Professor Neville Duncan told the Caribbean Media Corporation he is "mystified" that governments still feel they have some major hurdles to overcome before full implementation of the CSME.

"If you have established a development fund which is supposed to ease the challenges and burdens to countries which are likely to be initially disadvantaged by the single market and economy why then should one have to wait until 2015?" Prof Duncan asked.

"But I guess 2015 is another magical date because that's when there's a hope that the millennium development goals will be fulfilled, but that doesn't look the case for many countries," the director of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social Economic Studies (SALISES) at the Mona campus of the University of the West Indies added.

He said Caribbean people were fully supportive of the integration movement and suggested that if they were unsure of where the region's people story, CARICOM leaders could engage an agency such as SALISES to conduct a regional survey to gauge the region's position on the matter.

"Maybe then they would be persuaded but clearly the study done in Jamaica shows conclusively the strong commitment of Jamaican people in general towards integration and we see from Caribbean business people that they are not laggard in what needs to be done," Prof. Duncan said.

As they continue the march towards the 2015 vision, the words of Dr. Gonsalves, a poet as much as a prime minister, will remain relevant to Caribbean leaders:

"We, who have come with our limiting burdens of yesterday, face today with immense possibilities, amidst an amazing grace for our glorious tomorrows. We remember, we know, we dream, and we act for our people and for generations unborn. It is our destiny."

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Dr. Wentworth Jarrett

Caribbean has much to gain from sport tourism ~ expert

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – The Caribbean has much to gain by developing its sport tourism potential, an expert in this field has said.

“There are considerable economic, sport and community benefits to be gained through developing the niche market that is sport tourism,” said Andrew Preece, a director of the consultancy firm PMP.

Preece explained last month that sport tourism can take several forms, but primarily involves hosting sports events - like the International Cricket Council Cricket World Cup (CWC) which begins in the Caribbean this month – which bring both competitors and spectators who spend money in the community generally, and in tourism amenities such as hotels and restau-

rants in particular.

Preece, who has been part of the PMP team working on legacy planning for the Barbados leg of the CWC, will be a panelist at the “9th Annual Caribbean Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development”, otherwise called the “Sustainable Tourism Conference (STC-9)”, in the Cayman Islands in May. The

general session, “Securing Environmental and Human Capital”, takes place on May 23. Preece’s presentation will be on community sport tourism.

“Community sport tourism can lead to improved sport development, enhanced community pride, and more active populations,” Preece said.

EFFECTIVE APPROACH

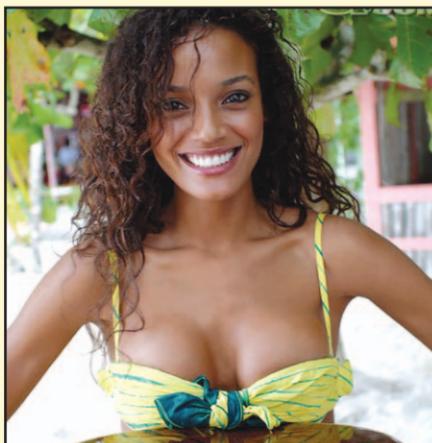
Preece’s presentation is expected to examine the approach to effective planning for community sport tourism in order to maximize the benefits, and will include as a case study, the four step “Community Sport Tourism Planning Program” developed by 2010 Legacies Now and Tourism British Columbia. Themed “Health and Wellness: Communities, Environments & Economies”, STC-9 will be held May 21-24 at the Westin Casuarina Resort & Spa in Grand Cayman, the



Enthusiastic fans will often follow their teams to other countries, including those in the Caribbean.

Cayman Islands. General sessions include: Health and Wellness Tourism: Opportunities and Challenges; Securing Environmental and Human Capital; Defining the Way Forward and Stakeholders Speak Out featuring discussions about “Developing Valuable Tourism Resources Within Our Communities: the Grand Cayman Go East Initiative,” “Preserving Our Culture: Preserving a Caymanian Identity,” “Raising the Bar: Customer Service Standards for the Tourism Sector,” and “The Role of the National Trust in Tourism Development.”

SWIMSUIT SPLASH



- SI.com photographs

Some of the world’s most beautiful models visited the Caribbean recently to shoot photographs for the pages of **Sports Illustrated** magazine’s 2007 swimsuit issue.

The models, including Bar Refaeli, Marisa Miller, Anne V. and Selita Ebanks, graced the property at The Caves hotel in Negril, Jamaica, using the ocean-side bluffs, Caribbean sunsets and lush tropical flora as the setting for their work.

The photographs above, taken by Raphael Mazzucco, appear at SI.com. At left model Selita Ebanks wears a swimsuit by Amare. At right, Bar Refaeli shows off swimwear by Pompei Beach.

Caribbean free movement expansion plans put on hold

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent, CMC - Caribbean community (CARICOM) leaders have put a hold on plans to expand the categories of Caribbean nationals enjoying free movement across the region.

Antigua Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)** that regional leaders, during their 18th inter-session meeting here last month, decided against expanding the list to include artisans as was originally planned at a previous summit.

“It was felt that member states who are in a position to implement that immediately (free movement of artisans) should so do, but it was also felt that it was necessary to look at individual situations emanating from the various territories in terms of how soon and this matter obviously will be reviewed when next we

meet,” said Spencer.

“In July hopefully the situation would have undergone some change in terms of some territories implementing and others being in a position to report how far they have reached in terms of the implementation of artisans as part of the free movement.”

WORK IN PROGRESS

He told **CMC** the year-old CARICOM Single Market (CSM) was still a work in progress and most countries were yet to implement all legislative changes necessary to allow for the free movement of the six categories previously approved to benefit from free movement across CARICOM states.

“One of the things that ought to be borne in mind is that in every territory certain legislative underpinnings have to be put in place and all of us



Spencer

have not completed that exercise, for example in the case of Antigua and Barbuda, although we passed the free movement of skills legislation there was some problem attendant to that so we have to go back to Parliament now,” Spencer explained.

“Countries are updating their legislative agenda and doing the things that are nec-

essary, so yes the CSM is in place as it stands but every aspect of it is not likely to come on board in every territory at the same time because there are different considerations, but we are all committed to the idea.”

Spencer said the leaders had also agreed to mandate the Guyana-based CARICOM Secretariat to conduct a study on the free movement exercise in Antigua and Barbuda before the country was asked to implement the free movement of teachers and nurses.

SPECIAL CASE

At last July’s summit it was agreed that all members states, with the exception of Antigua, would add nurses and teachers to the categories of persons enjoying free movement. But Spencer said Antigua was a special case

since 40 percent of its workforce originated from other Caribbean countries even before CSM.

“Clearly this represent a significant percentage and while it is true that we will continue to play our part and we will continue to have Caribbean nationals coming to Antigua living and working and so on, we have to look at the impact that it is going to have on Antigua and Barbuda in a comprehensive and a realistic way and for us to make decisions based on that study,” he said.

Presently university graduates, media workers, athletes, performing artists, teachers and nurses are covered under the free movement initiative.

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ISLAND VACATIONS™

Ziggy Marley captures 'Best Reggae Album' at Grammy Awards

LOS ANGELES, CMC - Ziggy Marley, the eldest son of the late legendary Jamaican reggae superstar Bob Marley, last month captured the "Best Reggae Album" at the 49th Annual Grammy Awards at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, California.

Ziggy won the award with his "Love Is My Religion" solo-studio album, eclipsing compatriot Buju Banton, Jewish reggae artist Matisyahu, Sly and Robbie, and the British group, UB 40.

"Love Is My Religion" was released on the Tuff Gong Worldwide label. It was Ziggy Marley's fourth Grammy award. Ziggy's previous win in the



Marley

"Best Reggae Album" category was in 1997 for "Fallen Is Babylon" by Ziggy Marley & the Melody Makers.



Iwer George is T&T's new 'Soca Monarch'

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC - Soca artiste Iwer George was crowned the 2007 "International Power Soca Monarch" after outclassing his rivals in the finals of the competition at the Hasely Crawford Stadium in Trinidad last month.

Bajan artiste, Biggie Irie, captured the "Groovy Soca Monarch" title in that competition.

Both competitions were part of annual carnival celebrations.

Iwer, singing "Fete After Fete", and Irie performing "Nah Going Home", each wrested the respective titles from Shurwayne Winchester, who placed third in the Power Soca Monarch with "Open The Gate" and fourth in the Groovy Soca Monarch singing "Alequa".

Winchester, who captured the People's Choice Awards for both competitions, delivered elaborate presentations that featured troupes of

dancers, additional musicians and several stylized props.

Iwer and Irie kept their presentations simple, depending mainly on raw talent and synergy with the audience to



Iwer

pull off their respective victories. Iwer took home TT\$400,000 (\$63,994) for his efforts, while Irie received TT\$150,000 (\$23,998).



ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS

• Stephen Marley's tour kicks off in March

Stephen Marley will launch his much anticipated tour this month, kicking off on **Mar. 30** in the United States and running through more than 40 cities.

The three month tour of the U.S. and Canada, billed as the "Mind Control" North American tour, will also feature special guest "Jr. Gong" Marley, Stephen's brother, and K'naan. It will include performances at the World Ski and Snowboard Championships in Whistler, British Columbia on April 15, Coachella Music Festival in Indio, California on April 27, and Jazzfest in New

Orleans on May 5.

• 'Best of the Best' reggae

Some of the biggest names in reggae/dancehall music are scheduled to perform at the "Best of the Best" show on **May 27** at Bicentennial Park in downtown Miami, Florida.

Buju Banton, Shaggy, Bounty Killer, Elephant Man, Lady Saw, Capleton and Barrington Levy are among the top acts. For more information, call **305-438-9488**.

Compiled from CMC and other sources.



Caribbean performers to feature at Miami's 'Jazz in the Gardens'

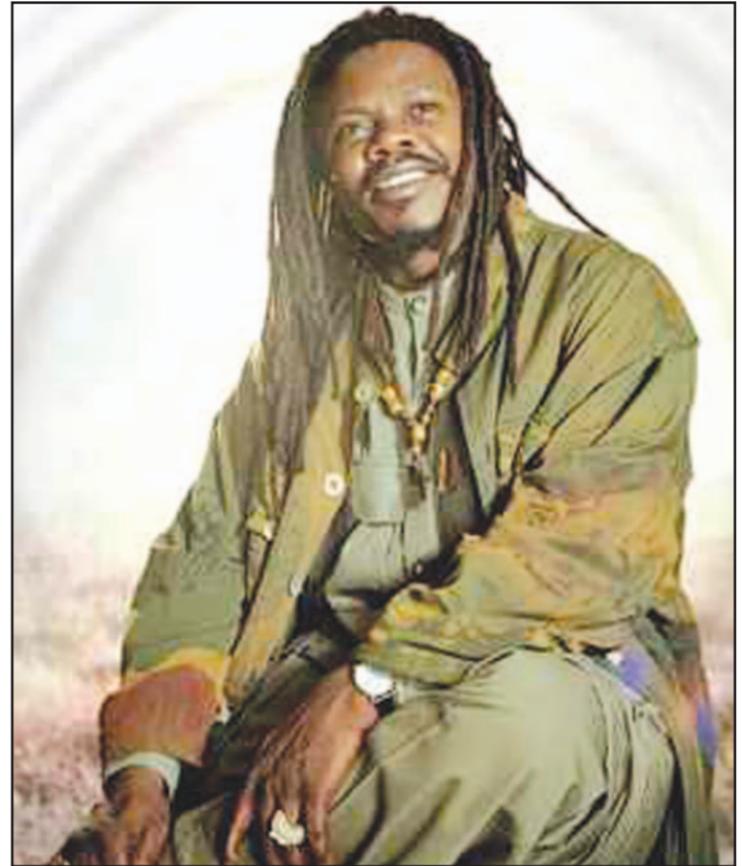
Prominent Caribbean artistes are listed among those scheduled to perform at the two-day "Jazz in the Gardens" music festival this month in Miami, Florida.

Jamaican singer/songwriter Luciano, and renowned saxophonist Dean Fraser and the Jah Messenjah Band will be joined during the second annual jazz and R&B festival by India Arie, Sergio Mendes, Boney James, Will Downing, Paquito d'Rivera and Pieces of a Dream, **Mar. 24-25** at Dolphin Stadium.

"We want people to know 'Jazz in the Gardens' as a celebration of the music and culture that lives and grows in Miami Gardens," the city's Mayor Shirley Gibson said in a recent press release.

While Luciano is known for a soulful, articulate blend of "roots reggae", India Arie is a neo soul icon, and Sergio Mendes is often touted as the undisputed king of Brazilian jazz.

Boney James, whose latest release "Shine" rose rapidly on the Billboard Contemporary Jazz charts, is also scheduled to perform along with the international contingent that includes



Luciano

Cuban legend Paquito D'Rivera.

For more information about the event visit

www.jazzinthegardens.com or call the event hotline at **305-622-8043**.



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Port Royal, Jamaica is sponsored in part by The Miami Herald, ExxonMobil, The Jamaica Committee, Air Jamaica, Jamaica Tourist Board and Jamaica Awareness. Additional support was received from the State of Fla., Dept. of State, Div. of Cultural Affairs, Fla. Arts Council & Div. of Historical Resources; the Miami-Dade County Dept. of Cultural Affairs, the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor & the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners; and the members of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida.

www.caribbeantoday.com

B O O K S

Colorful guide to the Caribbean for Cricket World Cup 2007

Visitors to Cricket World Cup 2007 will have a colorful guide to some of the most attractive spots in the Caribbean.

Want to know the best restaurants, places to party and what's happening while they're in town for the event during this month and next? Try getting "The ICC CWC 2007 Official Visitor's Guide", a fan companion, especially for first-time guests from outside the region.

The full-color pocket reference of the Caribbean features 140 pages of information which visitors will find useful as they

traverse the nine host venues, following the ICC Cricket World Cup.

SHOWCASE

Produced by Jamaica-based companies Great House Publishing and MAPCO Printers, it showcases many elements regarding the countries staging CWC matches, including: Overview of the territories; ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 match schedule and related information; things to see and do; restaurants and bars; beaches in the region; carnival attrac-

tions; historic sites, museums, etc.; entertainment and nightlife; environmental/wildlife attractions; and essential telephone directories (taxis, emergency, etc.).

The guide, being sold in bookstores and other retailers throughout the Caribbean, will also be available through concessionaires, as well as itinerant vendors at CWC matches.

The guide to the West Indies is being distributed in Jamaica by Novelty Trading and MAPCO Printers and in the Eastern Caribbean by Trinidadian style magazine, MACO, and its distribution company, Moving Magazines Caribbean Limited.



A neat little pocket piece when setting out for 'Yard'

• **TITLE: JABARI AUTHENTIC JAMAICAN DICTIONARY**

• **AUTHOR: RAS DENNIS JABARI REYNOLDS**

• **REVIEWED BY: GORDON WILLIAMS**

There is a never-ending quest to capture the flavor of Jamaica's popular patois or creole language in writing.

Reading publications which attempt that task will make most Jamaicans chuckle, because they do not believe anyone can fully capture that flavor in writing. Not down pat anyway.

But it is worth a try, especially since the language has been spread globally, mostly through reggae music. People outside Jamaica are always interested in the words, how they are pronounced and exactly what they mean.

"Jabari Authentic Jamaican Dictionary of the Jamic Language" offers another attempt to tame the slippery patois. The book makes its own bold claim to snare "Jamaican Patwa and Rasta Iyeric Pronunciations and Definitions" in "The First Jamic Dictionary" right there on the black, green and gold cover complete with the Jamaican flag. In 142 pages and more than 3,000 entries, it goes quite a distance to try and back up the claims. In some ways, it succeeds - admirably. In others, like spelling - there is no 'correct' spelling of patois words - it is not as convincing.

AID

The thumbnail pronunciation guide on every other page

is useful. First, it offers the reader a quick glance while going through the various words and phrases on each page. There is no need to go back and forth from the page in question to another section of the book just to figure out how to pronounce a word.

Also, the bold print of each word or phrase, followed by the non-bold meaning, makes the dictionary's contents easy to follow. And the "Guide To The Dictionary", near the front of the book, which offers, for example, explanations and pronunciation tips, is helpful as well.

But after that, the tame, academic stuff ends and the rollicking ride through Jamaica's delicious home-spun language

begins. From taunt of "a-bey" to the insulting "zut-tupek", "Jabari" dives into patois head first.

Most of what's delivered in the book is not unique, but it is definitely informative and interesting. It could prove quite useful this month and next when thousands of tourists are expected to flock to Jamaica for Cricket World Cup as several matches will be played in the Caribbean island. Maybe they should take the "Jabari Authentic Jamaican Dictionary" along with them. More than likely they will need it.

PUBLISHER: Around the Way Books, Waterbury, Connecticut.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



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Resource guide available for parents in Miami-Dade

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools and The Education Fund have co-published a free Parent Resource Guide 2006-2007 for the public.

The 88-page guide, sponsored by global financial services provider ING, gives parents information they need to know about their child's school, curriculum and student requirements.

The guide is printed in three languages -English, Spanish and Haitian creole. Each school in the system will

receive additional copies for use in parent-teacher meetings.

The guide may also be viewed online at www.educationfund.org (under "Our Publications") and www.dade-schools.net (under "Resources").

The 2006-2007 guide provides a wealth of information including revised curriculum requirements, test schedules, immunization requirements, student services, legal rights and parental involvement.



CULTURE

www.caribbeantoday.com

Port Royal exhibit offers more than 'wicked' past

DAWN A. DAVIS

The mention of Port Royal conjures up images of swashbuckling pirates, hidden treasures, lewd and lascivious lifestyles, and murderous debauchery. But in its heyday in the 17th and 18th centuries Port Royal was an important commercial center colonized by the English. It was the center of the slave trade, imported goods and naval power.

But its "wicked" past lives on in folk tales as many believe that the massive earthquake that swallowed up the city on June 7, 1692 was punishment for its evil history.

An exhibition at Miami's Historical Museum of Southern Florida, opened recently in collaboration with the Institute of Jamaica's Museums of History and Ethnography, showcases this infamous city. The display of over 150 unique artifacts, some discovered by historians and underwater archeologists, representing life in the port city then and now, will be on display until through June 3, 2007. The elegant pewter tableware, dishes, hair combs and chamber pots ("chimmey") tell of people going about their daily lives.

NOT 'DIBBY DIBBY'

In declaring the exhibition offi-



Assamba

cially opened, Jamaica's Minister of Tourism, Entertainment and Culture Aloun Assamba, reminded the audience: "Our findings reaffirms that tourism to our shores is much more than beaches. More and more tourists come for our culture and to learn about our way of life."

"Port Royal is no dibby dibby place," she added.

The audience, including Jamaicans, Americans, and other Caribbean islanders, were drawn to a series of old Spanish coins with unique symbols and numbers still intact. A large map of Port Royal depicted the shoreline as it was before and after the earthquake. A 19th century picture of Port Royal shows a city strikingly similar to the Port Royal of today. Pictures taken by Jamaica's noted photographer Maria LaYocona, show a vibrant city teeming with life amidst buildings still standing from the pirates' days.

This port city that has rebounded from disaster, once again rose from the ashes after Hurricane Charley destroyed it in 1951. Today it comes alive for people who come to sample the famous fish and bammy, the old fort with its grand canons, and the giddy house, a structure half sunken in the earth after the great earthquake.

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



Caribbean trade negotiators push culture as new creative sector

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC - Regional trade negotiators have identified the cultural industry as a sector which could give Caribbean community (CARICOM) countries clear comparative advantages in a global trading environment.

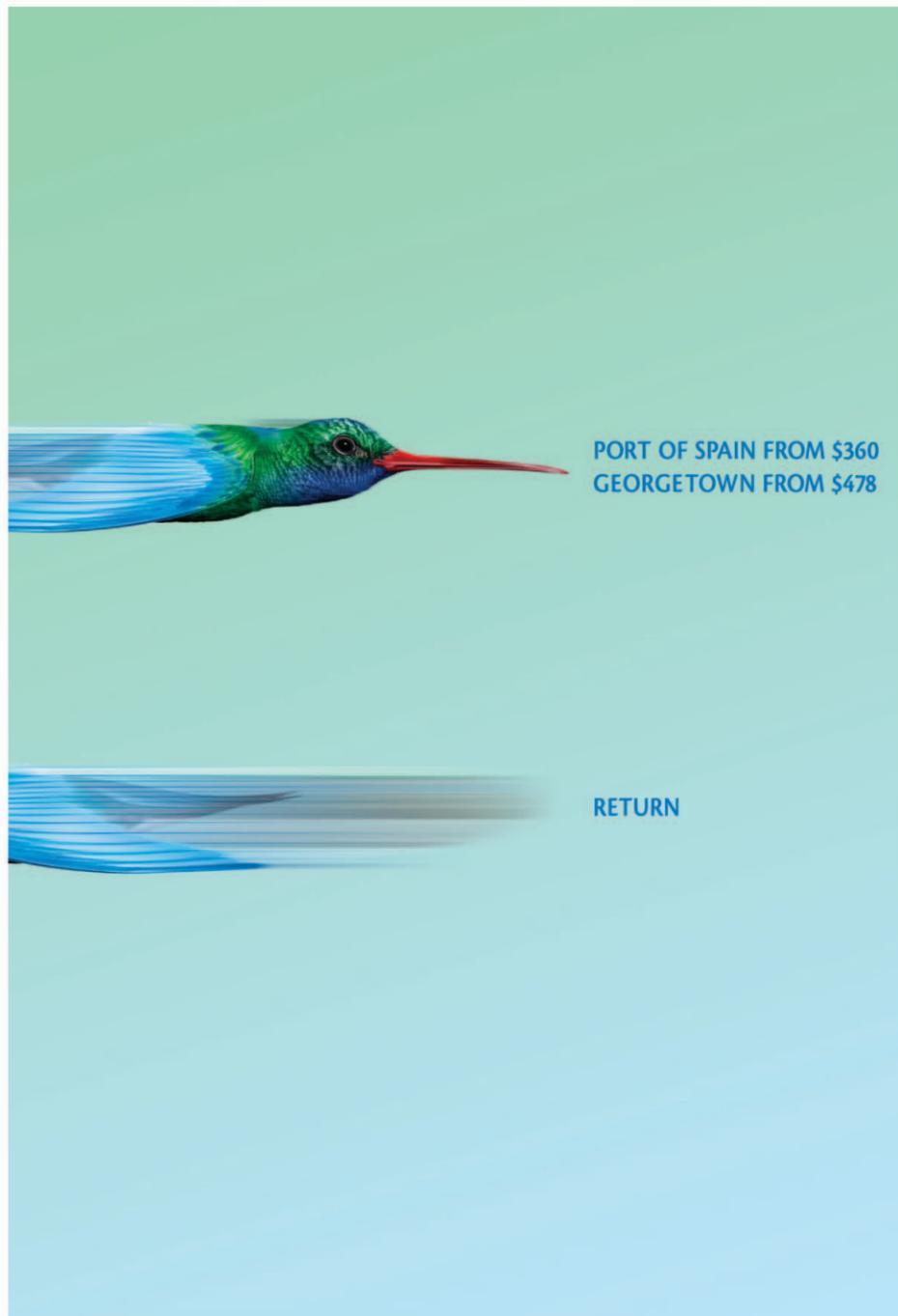
With this in mind, Dr. Richard Bernal, director general of the Caribbean Regional Negotiation Network (CRNM), said the region's ability to leverage benefits for the sector

would be boosted greatly by a new study on the cultural industries, which would be presented to all CARICOM governments and cultural stakeholders.

"The creative sectors hold tremendous potential for promoting the development and economic diversification of this region. This study is therefore critical as it will assist the region in formulating the policies that address the key issues and challenges currently affecting this

region," Bernal said recently.

According a CRNM release, the study, titled "The Cultural Industries in CARICOM: Trade and Development Challenges", concluded that investing in the cultural industries would be beneficial to Caribbean countries as it would generate new, high valued-added and indigenous forms of employment, production and exports".



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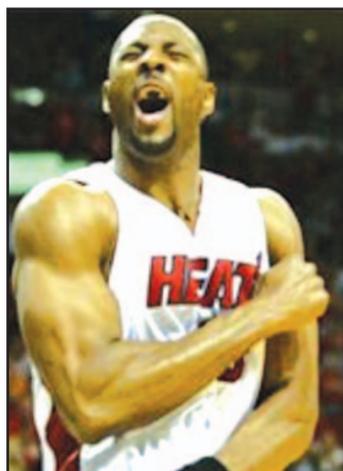


One of the Caribbean's biggest cultural attractions, the Trinidad and Tobago carnival, was staged last month. The streets of Port of Spain were filled with revelers dressed in colorful costumes and sequins like these ladies. The 2007 carnival drew an estimated 45,000 visitors, most of whom participated in the festivities, enjoying music, sunshine and the chance to play mas.

Basketball's Mourning teams up with Florida's organ, tissue donors

Professional basketball player Alonzo Mourning, who has overcome serious kidney problems, has agreed to become a spokesman promoting a new Florida specialty license plate, designed to promote organ and tissue donor awareness and fund research, transplant patient services and education.

Created and sponsored by The Transplant Foundation, affiliated with the Miller School of Medicine at the University of Miami, the specialty tag - Donate organs. Pass it on - is now available at County Tag Agencies, Tax Collector offices and online through the Transplant



Mourning

Foundation at www.transplantfoundation.org.

"I owe my livelihood, and

more importantly my life, to the fact that someone donated an organ to replace the one that had failed me," the Miami Heat player said in a recent press release.

Mourning was diagnosed with kidney disease in 2000 and had a kidney transplant in 2003.

"Now Floridians have the opportunity to help save someone else's life," he added. "And who knows? Maybe some day their own."

For more information, contact Transplant Foundation at 1-866-901-3172 or visit www.transplantfoundation.org.



Feel secure shopping for medication online

SUZY COHEN

QUESTION: Sometimes I have to take muscle relaxers, which make me sleepy and dizzy. Getting to the pharmacy as frequently as I need to is a challenge, but I'm scared of using my credit card online. Do I have other choices to get my toiletries and refills?

ANSWER: Yes, you can send a friend or family member in to purchase your medication, but they will be asked a few personal questions at the register before your medicine is handed over.

I know you're scared about shopping online and, with so many bogus pharmacies and counterfeit pills sold off the Internet, who could blame you? But trust me; there are respectable pharmacies that offer safe and secure shopping. Big-name retailers would not risk your security and they encrypt credit card information. If that doesn't persuade you, I'll give you another secret shortly.

Now, you will want to make sure your online pharmacy has VIPPS certification, another level of authenticity. Look at the home page; there should be VIPPS emblem clearly visible.

LESS STRESS

Personally, I feel very comfortable shopping with discount chain pharmacies that have web sites. Buying online reduces stress because you don't have to wait in long pharmacy lines, which means you don't have to breathe in germs. Hey, who wants to get sneezed on while waiting in line?

Shopping over the Internet is private, too. You can buy your tampons and toilet paper (and, ahem, private goodies) without the cashier yelling, "Price check, aisle 6, Preparation H" or "Manager, is Vagisil buy one, get one?"

You can get your medica-

tions with just a few clicks of a button. Most pharmacies will deliver everything to your door for a small shipping fee, including prescriptions, unless



they are Class II narcotics or other non-shippable drugs.

SECRET

Now, here's that secret I alluded to. If you call your bank (or go to its web site), it will issue a temporary credit card number you can use on the computer. This service is free, so consumers have a safe way to shop online without ever revealing their true credit card number.

I can't possibly list all the pharmacies that have online pharmacy web sites, but here are a few reputable ones: www.cvs.com; www.walgreens.com; www.costco.com; www.riteaid.com; www.kmart.com; www.albertsons.com; www.duanereade.com; www.samsclub.com; www.eckerd.com; www.walmart.com; www.kroger.com; www.drugstore.com; www.target.com; www.medicineshoppe.com

This information is not intended to treat, cure or diagnose your condition. Suzy Cohen is a registered pharmacist. To contact her, visit www.dearpharmacist.com.

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HEALTH BRIEFS

• Jamaica bans blood from countries with mad cow

Jamaica is maintaining a ban on blood donations from persons who have lived for over a year in countries where "mad cow" disease or a variant of the Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD), which causes dementia in cows, have been found.

• St. Lucia trying to avoid 'Bird Flu' outbreak

The St. Lucia government has announced measures to protect the island from the spread of the avian influenza (Bird Flu) during this month's Cricket World Cup that is likely to attract visitors from Britain and other countries affected by the disease.

• T&T recruit doctors, nurses from Cuba

More than 100 health professionals, including 40 doctors, are scheduled to arrive from Cuba to begin working in Trinidad and Tobago, Health Minister John Rahael announced recently.

Compiled from CMC and other sources.



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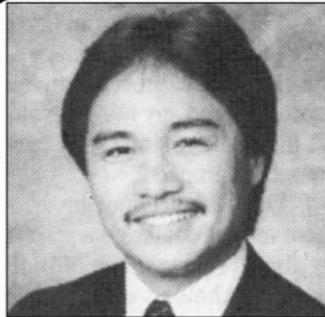
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Conference to focus on financial planning for disabled children

Planning for the financial future of children with disabilities will be the focus of a conference this month hosted by the University of Miami-Nova Southeastern University Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (UM/NSU CARD).

The conference will be held from **9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mar. 31** at Health Professions Division Nova Southeastern University Steele Auditorium in Davie, Florida.

It will feature a variety of topics related to planning for the financial future of your child living with a disability, including Social Security benefits, Med Waiver, estate planning, guardianships, special needs trusts, etc.

Registration is free, but required. To register, contact Maria Lis de Gisperi at **305-284-5263**.

UM/NSU CARD provides free family support,

outreach, and educational support services to children and adults of all levels of intellectual functioning who

have autism and autistic-like disabilities. Services for families throughout Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe coun-

ties in Florida include family support, technical assistance and consultation, parent and professional training pro-

grams, and public education activities.

Reconsidering U.S. citizenship or long term residency rules

DENNIS GINSBURG & MICHAEL ROSENBERG

In Dec. 2004, we wrote about the changes in the United States tax law that had then been made in the U.S. "expatriation" tax rules



that apply to U.S. citizens and certain long-term permanent residents who give up their citizenship or "green card".

Instead of completely overhauling the expatriation tax regime (as had often been proposed), the U.S. Congress instead attempted to close the perceived loopholes that existed under prior law.

Now, Congress is again considering a major revision in these rules and, even if no immediate change is made, it has been made clear that these changes might be made "soon" as a source of revenue that would allow for other "tax cuts" that Congress wants

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 18)



JOIN JM FAMILY ENTERPRISES IN CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR COMMUNITY!

March 15, 2007 • 6:15 p.m.
Broward County Convention Center
 1950 Eisenhower Boulevard
 Fort Lauderdale, Florida

JM Family Enterprises invites all community members to an evening of special celebration – our 15th annual African-American Achievers award ceremony. This year, we are honored to pay tribute to five outstanding individuals whose compassion, talent, and creativity have touched the lives and hearts of others in unique and unforgettable ways. Together, they have changed our community for the better and made a lasting difference.

Join us for this distinguished event and help celebrate extraordinary citizens of commitment and vision!

RSVPs are a must.
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 Call: 866-516-2497 or Fax: 800-728-0156
 Reservation deadline is Tuesday, March 13, 2007.







Reconsidering U.S. citizenship or long term residency rules

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17)

to put in place.

Therefore, we think that it is time for all who have ever considered expatriation to go through the analysis once again.

OVERVIEW

The following is a general overview of some of the major aspects of the expatriation tax regime and the major change that is proposed.

As an initial matter, an "expatriate" is generally defined as: 1) a U.S. citizen who renounces his or her U.S. citizenship; or 2) a long-term lawful permanent resident alien (a so called "green card" holder) who has held such status for eight of the prior 15 years and who then relinquishes his or her "green card".

In either situation, an expatriate is not automatically subject to the expatriation taxation regime, but instead, must violate certain qualifying tests meant to determine whether or not he has as one of his or her principal purposes in expatriating the avoidance of U.S. taxes.

Under current law, an expatriate needs to violate one of three tests to be conclusively considered to have a tax avoidance purpose - the "Net Income Tax Test", the "Net Worth Test", or the "Failure to Comply Test". Under the relevant law, the only exceptions to these objective standards are for certain adult and minor individuals with dual citizenship.

CAVEAT

However, these exceptions have a significant caveat, in that such an individual cannot have any "substantial contacts" with the U.S. at the time of expatriating, meaning generally that the individual a) never was a resident alien (RA) under the three-year weighted average substantial presence test; b) never held a U.S. passport; and c) was not present in the U.S. for more than 30 days during any calendar year which is one of the 10 calendar years preceding the individual's loss either of U.S.

citizenship or his or her green card.

Once it has been determined that an individual has a tax avoidance purpose in expatriating from the U.S., the individual then becomes subject to the "Alternative Tax Regime" for the 10-year period subsequent to the taxpayer's expatriation (the "tainted period") where he will be taxed, generally speaking, in a somewhat "hybrid" manner that is both more comprehensive than the taxation scheme for taxing a typical nonresident alien/nonresident alien domiciliary (NRA/NRAD), but less comprehensive than the worldwide tax scheme that applies to a U.S. citizen or resident alien/resident alien domiciliary (RA/RAD).

However, even if an individual has given up his or her U.S. citizenship or green card, that individual will continue to be taxed as a U.S. citizen or RA until he or she gives proper notice to certain prescribed U.S. agencies and files an information statement with the Internal Revenue Service on IRS Form 8854. The individual is then required to file the same form for each year during the "tainted period".

With a limited exception, should the expatriate during the "tainted period" be physically present in the U.S. on more than 30 days in any calendar year, the individual will be taxed as a U.S. citizen or as an RA/RAD during that year, and will, therefore, be subject to worldwide taxation for U.S. income, estate, and gift tax purposes for such year.

RULES REVISION

The U.S. Senate has now proposed a major revision of these rules. Under the Senate bill, generally, a "covered expatriate" will, with certain exceptions, pay tax on the net unrealized gain in all of their property as if the properties were sold at fair market value on the day before expatriation. The first \$600,000 of gain would be exempted from tax.

Special rules are provided for interests in trusts and retirement plans as well as certain U.S. real property interests.

While, in order to avoid immediate payment of the tax, it would be possible to make a special election to continue to be taxed as a U.S. citizen with respect to the property owned, that election would "lock in" continuing U.S. income, estate, gift and generation skipping transfer tax liability with respect to the property and require the posting of the deferred tax (including interest, penalties and certain other items). An individual would alternatively be permitted to elect to defer the payment of the mark-to-market tax on any one or more properties for which the election is made. Interest would be charged and security would need to be posted. The deferral would end upon the disposition of the property or the death of the taxpayer.

Obviously, these rules would be a marked change in the way in which expatriates are taxed. Most importantly, outlasting the 10-year "tainted period" or restructuring assets so that they would not be subject to the alternative tax would no longer be sufficient to avoid the new tax regime.

However, as proposed, these rules would only apply after the date of enactment and, as of the date this article was written, it appeared as though the House of Representatives would not include this provision in the tax provisions they were proposing.

In any case, as we noted at the beginning, it would appear that this mark-to-market tax regime is being looked at as a future source of funds that can be used to offset tax cuts elsewhere. Therefore, for anyone who has or would at all consider expatriating, it becomes critical to reconsider that action now.

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



RAGS TO RICHES



Businessman Vincent HoSang, left, receives a special award from Albert Lettman, president of the Greater Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce, during the GCACC's annual banquet and officer installation ceremony last month in Florida. HoSang is the president and chief executive officer of Caribbean Food Delights Inc., a division of Royal Caribbean Bakery Inc. He was born in Jamaica and dropped out of high school to help in the family business. He migrated to Bronx, New York in the 1960s and began his first job in the U.S. earning \$1.60 an hour assembling briefcases in a factory. HoSang currently owns and operates two factories with multi-million dollar sales. He was the guest speaker at the function.

Getting back to budget basics ~ Tips to create a realistic, workable budget

Financial experts have a myriad of tools and resources at their disposal - detailed reports, economic outlooks and market analyses that can be too complicated for the rest of us to comprehend.

But for your own personal finances, the most useful tool is actually one of the easiest to understand - and often overlooked.

It's the personal budget. A document that simply measures the amount of money that comes in, and the amount of money that goes out. Mike Sullivan, director of education for Take Charge America, says you don't have to be a finance guru to create a workable budget.

EASY

"Budgets are easy to create, especially with the free templates that are available online," he said. "Putting your budget on paper helps you track your expenses, recognize poor spending patterns and establish a savings plan."

In the United States,

where the average household has racked up more than \$9,000 in high-interest debt, it's obvious that many consumers are living well outside their means. Sullivan says a workable budget can help consumers prevent financial blunders, such as acquiring excessive credit card debt and not saving. He offers four tips:

- **Establish goals** - Before you create a budget, establish short and long-term financial goals. Are you trying to get out of debt? Do you hope to retire early? Do you want to put your children through college? Are you a travel enthusiast? It's important that your budget provides for avenues to accomplish these goals. The sooner you start working toward your goals, the easier they will be to accomplish.

- **Layout** - A budget can be easy to understand and create.

- **The "extras"** - Your budget needs to include "extras" outside of monthly bills. This includes entertain-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 20)



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Jamaican holiday periods offer sheer excitement no matter what the holiday. What better place to spend this holiday season than at home with family and friends, great food and lots of fun.

And though you may have been away for a long time, and are a green card holder, or became a US citizen, remember, all persons traveling by air between the United States and Jamaica now need to have a passport to enter or re-enter the United States.

We look forward to welcoming you home. For further information contact your travel agent or www.visitjamaica.com

JAMAICA

Property tax deadline for Broward County

Mar. 31 is the last day for Broward County, Florida property owners, which includes hundreds of Caribbean Americans, to pay 2006 property taxes without interest and penalties.

Pursuant to Florida statute, taxes become delinquent on April 1, at which time interest and penalties are assessed. Taxes not paid by May 23, 2007, will have a tax certificate (lien) sold to pay the delinquent taxes.

To make a payment via the Internet, using a credit card or electronic check, visit www.broward.org/revenue. A fee will be assessed for credit card payments, but no fee is charged for electronic checks.

To make a payment via the Integrated Voice Response System using a credit card, call **1-800-601-1069** (a fee will be assessed for credit card payments).

Caribbean will borrow more in 2007 ~ study

NEW YORK, CMC - Gross long-term borrowing by Latin American and Caribbean countries will increase slightly in 2007, the international financial ratings company, Standard & Poor's Ratings Services stated in a report issued last month.

The report, entitled "Borrowing By Latin American And Caribbean Sovereigns To Expand In 2007", is Standard & Poor's third annual survey of government debt issuance in the region.

"Standard & Poor's finds that gross long-term borrowing, including official and commercial debt, by 25 Latin American and Caribbean sovereigns should reach US\$427 billion in 2007," said the company's credit analyst Joydeep Mukherji.

"Gross borrowing by local and regional governments in Latin America and the Caribbean is also expected to grow very modestly in 2007."

Regional Development Fund operational by July ~ Arthur

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent, CMC - Barbados Prime Minister Owen Arthur says the much-touted Regional Development Fund (RDF) should be in operation by July and called on regional countries to pay up their contributions.

The anticipated \$250 million fund is a critical component of the Caribbean community (CARICOM) Single Market and Economy (CSME), Arthur

said. However, he explained that all CARICOM states must now be prepared to honor the contribution schedule, which would see countries collectively contributing \$120 million to the RDF over a four-year period.

The RDF is designed to support development projects in the sub-regional Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

CRICKET BUSINESS



Several business interests attended last month's luncheon session to promote trade and investment opportunities between a group of New York-based Pakistani entrepreneurs and the Caribbean during Cricket World Cup in the region. They included, from left, Junaid Mirza, director of Travel Treat, Inc.; Mahmood "Max" Shaikat, chief executive officer, Digital TV; Kirk Kennedy, executive director of JAMPRO, Jamaica's trade agency; and Dr. Basil K. Bryan, consul general of Jamaica to New York. A group of New York Pakistani entrepreneurs will be attending the CWC which begins this month.

Miami-Dade to conduct free business, counseling seminars

This month, the Miami-Dade Enterprise Community Center will conduct its "Emerging and Expanding Business Seminars Series".

The seminars, which are free and open to the public, are expected to offer information on local business taxes, certificates of use, tangible personal property taxes, sales and

use taxes, Miami-Dade County business incentives, business contracts, loans, lines of credit, business technology, how to start a successful business and a business plan lab series.

Those that register can receive the ECC Certificate Program upon completing the seminar series.

The seminars are to be

held at 3050 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 201 in Miami and are to be divided into two parts consisting of the "Emerging Business" and the "Expanding Business" series.

For more information, **305-579-2730** or visit the ECC at www.ezonetrust.org

Getting back to budget basics ~ Tips to create a realistic, workable budget

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18)

ment, child care, education, retirement and savings, among other specific interests, activities and goals. Savings are vitally important. Even \$25 a month can be a big help. A little cash cushion can prevent you from falling deeper into debt when emergencies occur.

- Monthly evaluations – A budget shouldn't be set in stone. As incomes and expenses fluctuate, budgets

need to be adjusted accordingly. Take a close look at your budget at the end of each month. Have you noticed any poor spending habits? Are there areas where you can trim funding? As you track your spending, you will inevitably come across areas where you can free up money to use more effectively.

To locate a reputable financial advisor, visit the Better Business Bureau at

www.bbb.org or visit www.takechargeamerica.org for more information.

Information obtained from Take Charge America, a nonprofit organization which offers a variety of services including financial education, credit counseling and debt management.

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~ A Caribbean Today feature

Caribbean transshipment emerges at crossroads for trade

Increased use of mega container ships in trans-oceanic trades is forcing the development and use of large transshipment hubs serving as container distribution and collection centers for large trading areas.

The Caribbean, though small in population and economic activities except for tourism, constitutes a major crossroads for international trade. This is not only because of its proximity to the Panama Canal, but also as a major focal point for north/south Atlantic trades and trades with the east and northern coasts of South America.

The major problem for lines serving Northern and Eastern South American countries are the lengths of their coastlines and the resulting huge inter-port distances, combined with significant but not

large container trades, mostly foreign trades. This makes it difficult to justify direct shipping by large container ships.

Similarly, the large distances to their principal trading partner ports make the use of smaller, less efficient container ships unattractive. This has led to the development of transshipment ports in the Caribbean designed to serve South America and the Gulf of Mexico.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of transshipment are not only to reduce the total cost of collecting and/or distributing the containers carried by a mega-mainline container vessel from and to numerous origin and destination ports, each of which only contributes a part of the mainline vessel cargo, but also to improve just-in-time

delivery of cargo, reduce in transit inventory, and make the total origin-to-destination movement of containerized cargo more seamless.

In other words, the purpose is not just to reduce origin-to-destination transport and handling or transfer costs, but to make the whole supply chain, including all involved transactions, more efficient and more responsive to the ever-changing market place.

Transshipment also offers opportunities for cargo consolidation or deconsolidation and value added activities such as assembly, calibration, and customizing to meet specific local or time varying demands. To make transshipment attractive the economic and operational benefits must outweigh added economic and operational costs such as additional handling

costs, port dues, and possibly extra voyage distances or deviations. At the same time, transshipment is often necessary to attain economies of scale in shipping as well as the overall logistics chain.

During recent years transshipment has caught on in the Caribbean and a large number

of transshipment ports have been developed. Additional transshipment ports are under construction or being planned.

The above article was edited from a paper written by Ernst G. Frankel.



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- Photograph by Derrick A. Scott

Sue Rosen, left, Air Jamaica's senior vice president of customer service, accepts a proclamation from Maryland's Secretary of Transport John Porcari, on behalf of the U.S. state's Governor Martin O'Malley, in recognition of Air Jamaica's 25 years of service to Baltimore Washington International Airport. Sharing in the presentation are, from right, Basil Smith, Jamaica's director of tourism; Will Rodgers, recently retired vice president of Air Jamaica; Sharon Miller, deputy chief of missions, Embassy of Jamaica; and George deMercado, the airline's vice president of sales. The presentation was held recently at the Baltimore Hyatt Hotel. Over the last 25 years the airline claimed it has carried more than a million passengers into Jamaica from the airport while maintaining an average load factor of over 79 percent.

Air Jamaica began service out of the airport on Feb. 16, 1982.



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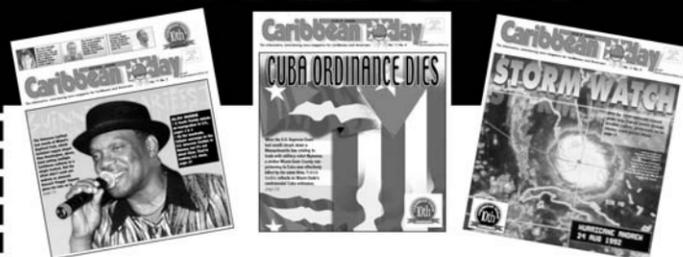
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~ A Caribbean Today feature

MAN IN THE MIDDLE



- Photograph by Sharon Bennett

Jamaica's Minister of Transport Robert Pickersgill, center, is greeted on arrival at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Queens, New York by Sabrina Hosang, left, daughter of Vincent Hosang, director of operations at Caribbean Food Delights/Royal Caribbean Bakery; and AnnMarie Grant-Brown, executive director, American Foundation for the University of the West Indies. Pickersgill was the keynote speaker at last month's Anniversary Charity Ball organized by the Children of Jamaica Outreach (COJO), Inc., held at the hotel. Dr. Basil K. Bryan, consul general of Jamaica, served as patron of the gala, proceeds from which will benefit charities in Jamaica and the United States.

U.S. authorities seize \$15 million worth of narcotics in Caribbean

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – United States Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection operations in San Juan, Puerto Rico, along with other members of the Caribbean Corridor Initiative, announced Feb. 28 the seizure of approximately 396 kilos of cocaine and 123.1 kilos of heroin with an estimated street value of \$15,056,400.

Six people were arrested in the operation.

After coordination between the crew of Coast Guard Cutter Northland and Caribbean Corridor participating agencies, Coast Guard intercepted a fast boat about 92 nautical miles north of Venezuela. The boat had six people onboard and 18 bales containing narcotics. Coast

Guard apprehended the crew and narcotics, and transported them to the base where Customs and Border Protection and other federal agencies provided additional assistance in the operation.

GETAWAY ATTEMPT

While the Northland Cutter was on its way to the base it encountered another fast boat that attempted to elude the cutter. The Coast Guard disabled the engines and rescued five people that were onboard the fast board. The captain of the vessel failed to abide federal regulations when attempting to outrun the cutter. All five crewmembers were detained and were also transported the base for questioning and processing.

Intelligence sources place high-caliber drug traffickers moving tons of drugs, and money through the Caribbean.

The Caribbean Corridor Initiative is a Drug Enforcement Strike Force that includes agencies such as Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Coast Guard, Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Attorney's Office.

"The Caribbean Corridor Initiative has once again proven that compiling resources provides results," said Marcelino Borges, director of field operations in the region for CBP.



CAN WE TALK?



Peter A. Webley,
Publisher

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Regional carriers defend pricing system for CWC

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC - A top regional airline official is defending the pricing structure now in use by Caribbean carriers for the International Cricket Council Cricket World Cup (CWC) 2007 which runs through April 28.

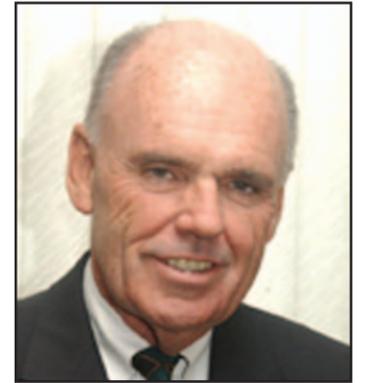
Michael Conway, president and chief executive officer of Air Jamaica, said while the airline is seeking to make a profit from the venture, it could not be accused of price gouging.

"Any time you have fewer entities providing the goods and services by definition there is less competition. And it's opposite of what a free market place is. The more people providing the goods, the better deal the consumer will get," Conway said.

COMPLAINTS

In recent months there have been complaints from passengers that the prices of airline tickets and accommodation have increased significantly as a result of the World Cup games that begin this month. Conway said he was not about to defend the charges now in

use for regional hotel rooms, but explained there was a logical reason for the recent hike in regional airfares.



Conway

"Any time you have a high demand for something that is going to drive prices up. I think the airlines will be full. I know we will be full on our trips from Jamaica to Barbados for the final. So what does one do? Do they keep the same prices or do you match your pricing with the demand? I think that's what people are doing," Conway said.



Tighter security demands at U.S. borders, ports

To ensure shipping and cargo security at its borders, the United States has implemented a Container Security Initiative (CSI), which consists of four core elements. These are: 1) establishing security criteria to identify high-risk containers; 2) pre-screening those containers identified as high-risk before they arrive at United States ports; 3) using technology to quickly pre-screen high-risk containers; and 4) developing and using smart and secure containers.

To be eligible to participate in CSI, the Member State's Customs Administration and the seaport must meet the following three requirements:

- The Customs Administration must be able to inspect cargo originating, transiting, exiting, or being transhipped through a country.

- Non-intrusive inspectional (NII) equipment (including gamma or X-ray imaging capabilities) and radiation detection equipment must be available and utilized for conducting such inspections. This equipment is necessary in order to meet the objective of quickly screening containers without disrupting the flow of legitimate trade.

- The seaport must have regular, direct, and substantial con-

tainer traffic to ports in the United States.

RISK MANAGEMENT

As part of agreeing to participate in CSI, a Member State's Customs Administration and the seaport must also:

- Commit to establishing a risk management system to identify potentially high-risk containers, and automating that system. This system should include a mechanism for validating threat assessments and targeting decisions and identifying best practices.

- Commit to sharing critical data, intelligence, and risk management information with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection in order to do collaborative targeting, and developing an automated mechanism for these exchanges.

- Conduct a thorough port assessment to ascertain vulnerable links in a port's infrastructure and commit to resolving those vulnerabilities.

- Commit to maintaining integrity programs to prevent lapses in employee integrity and to identify and combat breaches in integrity.

Edited from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's website.



S P O R T

www.caribbeantoday.com

Jamaica's O'Neil 'Supernova' Bell defends cruiserweight crown Mar. 17

GORDON WILLIAMS

Jamaican-born O'Neil "Supernova" Bell will defend his undisputed world cruiserweight boxing crown against Jean-Marc Mormeck in Paris, France this month.

Bell, with a ring record of 26 wins with 24 knockouts, wrapped up the bulk of his training in California late last month and returned to his Atlanta, United States home confident that he is in the best shape to defend the World Boxing Council and World Boxing Association titles he took from Mormeck when the two first met in Jan. 2006.

"I couldn't be more ready," Bell told *Caribbean Today*.

The much-anticipated Mar. 17 rematch in the 200-pound weight class will be Bell's first bout since knocking out Mormeck in New York's Madison Square Garden. He has since been stripped of his International Boxing Federation belt for failing to defend that title last year. Bell said he was unable to make the mandatory IBF fight against American Steve Cunningham because of a

medical problem.

FIT, READY

However, he claimed he is now fit and ready for Mormeck. Bell stepped up preparation dur-



Bell

ing a month-long training stint at Big Bear, California where he also had to overcome a legal problem. Last month the champion was charged with assaulting one of his sparring partners, but

the charge was later dropped. Bell claimed the incident has only served to rev him up for the Mormeck fight.

"It was definite motivation for me," he said.

Bell's camp said he sparred more rounds for the rematch than when he first fought Mormeck. With the physical aspect of his training now complete, the champion, who plans to leave the U.S. for France around Mar. 12, said he is currently working on sharpening his mental approach.

"It's just to focus, make sure everything is perfect," he said.

For the return fight Bell told *Caribbean Today* he expects Mormeck to be in much better physical shape, but he does not see the Frenchman changing ring tactics. Neither does he plan to change his own approach.

"It will be like two freight trains clashing head on," Bell said. "I don't expect him to box and I don't want to box him."

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



Miami F.C. boosts Caribbean soccer players

GORDON WILLIAMS

Two more Caribbean-born soccer players are hoping to boost their professional careers with Miami F.C., a Florida-based club which competes in the United Soccer Leagues (USL) in the United States.

Club sources confirmed to *Caribbean Today* late last month that Jamaican Sean Barrett and Gerghiny Obas of Haiti were among less than a dozen players who survived the cut at open tryouts with the club last month. Beginning this month, they will train with the team with the hope of making Miami F.C.'s 22-player official roster for opening day in mid-April.

Barrett, a forward, and midfielder/defender Obas competed for the coveted non-contract "walk-on" spots with more than 300 players at the tryouts. They are hoping to emulate the feats of countrymen Sean Fraser and Stephane Guillaume, who were both signed by Miami F.C. based on their performance at tryouts last season.

Fraser, from Jamaica, and Guillaume of Haiti both had

fairly successful seasons playing alongside Brazilian World Cup greats Romario and Zinho at Miami F.C., which advanced to the play-offs in its first USL season. Both players started numerous games and later received contract extensions at Miami F.C. They were also selected for their national team to play in the Digicel Caribbean Cup.

Fraser's career earned an added boost when he was selected for a loan spell with top Brazilian club Boavista. He is set to rejoin Miami F.C. for the start of the USL season.

TRIAL

According to club sources, Barrett and Obas will be on trial when they participate in pre-season training, which was scheduled to start earlier this month.

"The pre-season is an excellent opportunity to further analyze the players who already signed with Miami F.C. and also the ones chosen at the tryouts, especially the latter," said Chiquinho de Assis, head coach for Miami F.C.



USA Cricket Association suspended by world body

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, CMC – The International Cricket Council has suspended the membership of the United States of America Cricket Association (USACA).

An ICC release said the suspension was as a result of the USACA's failure to meet

"the agreed and subsequently extended deadlines for the adoption of the new USACA constitution and the holding of elections".

The West Indies Cricket Board, the only full member in the ICC Americas region, has been asked to monitor the progress of the USACA and

subsequently make a recommendation on the lifting of the suspension.

"It gives the ICC Board no pleasure to re-enact this suspension but given the lack of progress towards a functioning administration of USA Cricket it has been left with little alternative," ICC Chief

Executive, Malcolm Speed said.

Under the suspensions, the USACA will be hit by several sanctions. The team will be withdrawn from the World Cricket League Division Three Series scheduled for Australia in May and relegated from that division.

Additionally, the grant used to prepare for that event will be withheld along with the direct funding support from the ICC Americas Region Development Program. The USACA will also miss out on the annual ICC grant due on April 15.



ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 match schedule

The following is a listing of matches to be played during Cricket World Cup 2007, Mar. 13-28, in the Caribbean. All matches start at 9:30 a.m. local time.

GROUP STAGE GAMES

Group A – St. Kitts and Nevis

- Mar. 14 – Australia v. Scotland
- Mar. 16 – South Africa v. The Netherlands
- Mar. 18 – Australia v. The Netherlands
- Mar. 20 – South Africa v. Scotland
- Mar. 22 – Scotland v. The Netherlands
- Mar. 24 – Australia v. South Africa

Group B – Trinidad and Tobago

- Mar. 15 – Sri Lanka v. Bermuda
- Mar. 17 – India v. Bangladesh
- Mar. 19 – India v. Bermuda
- Mar. 21 – Sri Lanka v. Bangladesh
- Mar. 23 – India v. Sri Lanka
- Mar. 25 – Bermuda v. Bangladesh

Group C – St. Lucia

- Mar. 14 – Kenya v. Canada
- Mar. 16 – England v. New Zealand
- Mar. 18 – England v. Canada
- Mar. 20 – New Zealand v. Kenya
- Mar. 22 – New Zealand v. Canada
- Mar. 24 – England v. Kenya

Group D – Kingston, Jamaica

- Mar. 13 – West Indies v. Pakistan
- Mar. 15 – Zimbabwe v. Ireland

- Mar. 17 – Pakistan v. Ireland
- Mar. 19 – West Indies v. Zimbabwe
- Mar. 21 – Zimbabwe v. Pakistan
- Mar. 23 – West Indies v. Ireland

SECOND STAGE – SUPER EIGHT. TOP TWO TEAMS FROM EACH GROUP ADVANCE MARCH

- Mar. 27 – Second place in Group D v. winner of Group A in Antigua and Barbuda.
- Mar. 28 – Second place in Group A v. winner of Group B in Guyana.
- Mar. 29 – Second place in Group D v. winner of Group C in Antigua and Barbuda.
- Mar. 30 – Winner Group D v. second place in Group C in Guyana.
- Mar. 31 – Winner in Group A v. second place in Group B in Antigua and Barbuda.

APRIL

- April 1 – Second place in Group D v. winner of Group B in Guyana.
- April 2 – Second place in Group B v. winner of Group C in Antigua and Barbuda.
- April 3 – Winner of Group D v. second place in Group A in Guyana.
- April 4 – Second place in Group C v. winner of Group B in Antigua and Barbuda.
- April 7 – Second place in Group B v. second place in Group A in Guyana.
- April 8 – Winner of Group A v. second place in Group C in Antigua and Barbuda.
- April 9 – Winner of Group D v. winner of Group C in Guyana.

- April 10 – Second place in Group D v. second place in Group A in Grenada.
- April 11 – Second place in Group C v. second place in Group B in Barbados.
- April 12 – Winner of Group B v. winner of Group C in Grenada.
- April 13 – Winner of Group A v. winner of Group D in Barbados.
- April 14 – Second place in Group A v. winner of Group C in Grenada.
- April 15 – Second place in Group B v. winner of Group D in Barbados.
- April 16 – Winner of Group A v. winner of Group B in Grenada.
- April 17 – Second place in Group A v. second place in Group C in Barbados.
- April 18 – Winner of Group D v. winner of Group B in Grenada.
- April 19 – Second place in Group D v. second place in Group B in Barbados.
- April 20 – Winner of Group A v. winner of Group C in Grenada.
- April 21 – Second place in Group D v. second place in Group C in Barbados.

SEMI FINAL ROUND JAMAICA

- April 24 – Second v. third

St. LUCIA

- April 25 – First v. fourth

FINAL

- April 28 – BARBADOS



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Guyana's Harris awaits boxing world title shot

BROOKLYN, New York – Guyana's world-rated light-welterweight boxer Vivian Harris is now awaiting confirmation of an International Boxing Federation (IBF) title shot against champion Junior Witter of Britain.

Harris qualified for the world title bout by defeating Mexico's Juan Lazcano in an IBF eliminator in Las Vegas last month.

It is expected that Harris and Witter will meet later this year for Witter's belt and the

Caribbean 140-pound pugilist is waiting patiently while his promoter negotiates the fight arrangements.

"I leave that up to Gary Shaw. He's a great promoter and I am happy to have him as a promoter," Harris said in an

interview recently on the BoxingTalk web site.

"I know he (Shaw) is going to come back to the table with what's best for me," Harris added.

IMPRESSIVE

Harris boasts a ring record of 27 wins (18 knockouts) against two losses and one draw, while Witter has 35 wins (20 knockouts) against one loss and two draws. In a competitive bout with Lazcano on Feb. 10 at the Mandalay Bay Resort in Las Vegas, Harris secured a unanimous points decision victory.

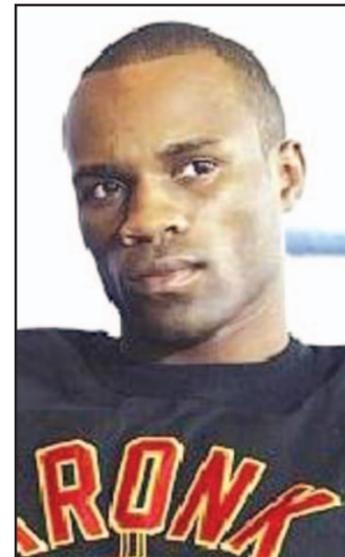
A former World Boxing Association (WBA) light-welterweight champion, Harris was classy early in the bout and dominated Lazcano, but the Mexican rallied with a strong third round and Harris was forced to fend off sustained aggression in some of the middle and late rounds en route to a victory, 115-112 (twice) and 114-113.

"I am pleased with my performance (against Lazcano) and ready to move on to the next one," Harris said of his latest win.

NEW CHAPTER

The 28-year-old Harris recently married his long-time partner and hopes this new chapter in his life will enhance his boxing career.

"We finally tied the knot at a small service...this is the woman I want to spend the rest of my life with. That's what life is, when the family is strong, everything else is strong," Harris said.



Harris

In Oct. 2002, Harris beat Cuba-born Diosbelys Hurtado in two rounds to win the WBA belt, becoming Guyana's third world boxing champion – after Andrew Lewis and Wayne Braithwaite. He defended the crown three times before losing to Colombian Carlos Maussa.

Photograph and story from CMC.



Jamaica, St. Kitts youth soccer world championship bids fizzle

The Caribbean's hopes of sending a team to soccer's under-20 world championships this summer in Canada fizzled badly last month.

Jamaica and St. Kitts and Nevis were both knocked out of the finals after suffering two losses in the last round of qualifiers in Mexico.

Jamaica was beaten 2-0 by both Costa Rica and the hosts during group play. St. Kitts and Nevis lost 2-0 to Mexico and 3-2 to Costa Rica to be eliminated.

The two Caribbean teams drew 1-1 in the final group game to secure a point each, but it was not good enough to advance to the world championships. Mexico and Costa Rica finished in the first two places of the four-team group and will represent the CONCACAF region in the tournament.



BEST BOYZ IN HONG KONG



Jamaican player Kavin Bryan tries to deceive his Chinese opponent with the ball during last month's final of the Lunar New Year Cup 2007 in Hong Kong.

Jamaica drew 0-0 with China, but the Reggae Boyz won the four-team soccer tournament by defeating the Chinese five to four on penalty kicks after extra time.

Australia finished third after beating the Hong Kong League XI also in a penalty shootout.

It was the first time that Jamaica had been invited to the tournament, which also marked the debut assignment for the Reggae Boyz' new technical director Bora Milutinovic. Earlier in the tournament Jamaica tied 1-1 with Australia, but advanced to the final by defeating the Aussies in a penalty shootout.

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CARICOM leaders agree on key economic issues

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent, CMC - Caribbean community (CARICOM) heads of government have agreed to fully implement the single economy component of the regional integration movement on a phased basis by 2015 and allow for the full free movement of the community's nationals by 2009.

Chairman, St. Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Patrick Manning and Barbados Prime Minister Owen Arthur said these were some of the major decisions coming out of an "extremely productive" 18th Inter-Sessional CARICOM Heads of Government conference which concluded here last month.

"It was a very positive three



Arthur

days of work done in a very joyous, warm spirit without rancour, with camaraderie and with love," Gonsalves said at the closing press conference.

PHASING IN

Arthur said while the framework for the single

market - the second component of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) - would be on target for the 2008 schedule, it was agreed to accept



Manning

the recommendation of a report on the CSME which suggested

the phased implementation of the schedule.

"Do not expect to see the single economy coming in one fell swoop, we have sequenced the activity in two phases, that which will take place between 2008 and 2009 and then from 2010 up to 2015," said Arthur, who has lead prime ministerial responsibility for the CSME.

He said while "simpler" components would be approached in the earlier period, more complex issues such as harmonization of fiscal and monetary policy and eventually a single currency would be in the last period.

Manning, the prime minister with lead responsibility for security issues, also announced that effective Feb. 16, CARICOM



Gonsalves

nationals traveling throughout the Single Domestic Space would not need to use passports. He, however, suggested that people still traveled with their passports as there would be random security checks.

P.M. marks Independence by urging St. Lucians to rise to global challenges

CASTRIES, St. Lucia, CMC - Prime Minister Sir John Compton has said that while St. Lucia achieved a lot in 28 years of Independence, he is not happy with life in the country.

In a national address to mark Independence Day, Feb. 22, Sir John lamented that there was great reason to be concerned about crime, security of person and property and general attitudes in the country.

"It is said of us that it is much easier to accumulate wealth that to acquire good manners, as it is in our standard of behavior and personal consideration for others that we have fallen sort. We have not necessarily prepared ourselves to get ahead but always to push to get in front," Sir John said.

CAUTION

He cautioned against allowing the saying to become a fact "that the children of St. Lucia have gone forth into the wilderness of materialism, where nothing is consecrated, nothing is ordained."

Sir John, who was addressing the nation on the occasion of the anniversary of Independence for the first time

in 10 years, also regretted the fact that St. Lucia was not prepared for the Caribbean community (CARICOM) Single Market and Economy.

Additionally, the prime minister said the education system was in shambles and the Universal Secondary Education "so hurriedly rushed into operation without preparation, would be a disaster if left in its current form."

He said that the free movement of skilled persons had already been agreed to by all CARICOM governments, but there was no certification process in St. Lucia.

CHALLENGE

The prime minister said that the challenge now was to educate, train and improve the nation's work force and repeated his intention to investigate what he said was millions of dollars in cost overruns under the previous administration.

"If we fail to inquire into these matters, this new government would be accomplices and would be just as guilty for not exposing, condoning the shortcoming and the conduct of government affairs," he said.



Compton

Sir John said that despite the many challenges facing the country, there were also opportunities available, adding that the nation must be prepared to take advantage of these opportunities.

With the Independence theme "Rising to the Global Challenges", Sir John urged his countrymen to prepare themselves through education and skills training for the local and regional job markets, adding that the country's exports must be of the quality to meet global competition.

Activities for the observance of Independence included a national parade,

competitions among schools in various educational, sporting and cultural events, and a

major national concert.

CARICOM re-appoints Carrington, Bernal

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent, CMC - Trinidadian Edwin Carrington has been re-appointed secretary general of the Caribbean community (CARICOM) for another term, according to the official communiqué issued at the end of the 18th Inter-Sessional summit here last month.

Carrington, the former

secretary general of the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group, was first appointed to the post in 1992. He is the fifth CARICOM secretary general and heads the Guyana-based secretariat. His new five-year term will begin Aug. 1.

The regional leaders also agreed to re-appoint

Jamaican-born Ambassador Richard Bernal as director-general of the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) for a further two-year term. The CRNM coordinates the region's negotiations at international forums.

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DOLPHIN STADIUM

Whites ready to run for Bermuda's ruling Progressive Labour Party

IVAN CLIFFORD

HAMILTON, Bermuda – All 22 of the governing Progressive Labour Party (PLP) Members of Parliament are black in an island where 40 percent of the population is white. But the political landscape could change considerably in the next general elections, which is due by 2008 but widely expected to be called this summer.

Businesswoman Jane Correia, a former commodore of the Royal Bermuda Yacht Club, once a bastion of white male supremacy, is the latest white person to confirm she wants to run for the PLP, which has been in power since ending 30 years of uninterrupted rule by the United Bermuda Party (UBP) in Nov. 1998.

The bi-weekly **Bermuda Sun** newspaper said 43-year-old Correia's plan to run for the PLP "will be seen by many as symbolic of our island's shifting political power base."

TURMOIL

The UBP had 14 MPs, six of them white, elected at the last elections, but has been in turmoil in recent weeks following two high-profile resignations and, according to opinion polls, now trails a distant second behind the PLP, which has been given fresh impetus by Ewart Brown since he ousted Alex Scott in the party's leadership battle last October.

"Brown's elevation to the

top post is said by PLP sources to have attracted new members, including whites, drawn by his reputation for getting things done", the **Sun** reported.

The newspaper earlier reported that construction company boss Zane DeSilva, a close friend and golfing buddy of the premier, who is also tourism and transport minister, will be a PLP candidate at the next polls, while former UBP Senator Wendell Hollis is now a PLP supporter, although he says he has too many commitments to run for Parliament. Both are white.



Brown

'WHITE FACE'

"The newly emerging 'white face' of the PLP might skew the widely-held belief that the PLP exists solely to serve black interests", the **Sun** stated.

Correia, a friend of Brown, a 60-year-old physician, and his wife Wanda, said she joined the PLP after Brown became premier. Asked by the **Sun** why she wanted to run, Correia said: "I feel it is important to be proactive in a community. I believe in the direction that the PLP is going."

She said she had never previously been a member of either political party but it was important to "become involved

instead of sitting back and complaining about issues."

Addressing the issue of race, she said: "I think it is time race is put aside. I believe the way forward for all Bermudians is to respect each other."

The UBP body blows came when Pembroke West MP Jamahl Simmons, at 35 the youngest member of the House of Assembly, and party Chairwoman Gwyneth Rawlins both resigned in protest against alleged manipulation and control of the party by the island's white elite.

UBP veteran Maxwell Burgess then stuck the knife in by claiming the party was divided and ailing and called on party leader, black businessman Wayne Furbert, to resign.

But Furbert dug his heels in, stating: "We are not down and out. We expect to win. We have reached rock bottom, the only way is up."

The PLP has had only one white face in Cabinet, Tourism Minister David Allen, who died of cancer five years ago. At the last election the PLP ran only one white candidate – hotelier Leopold Kuchler – who was heavily defeated in the UBP stronghold of Paget West. The UBP, which in the past received virtual blanket support from white voters, was finally driven from power when the black middle class deserted the party at the 1998 election.

CMC



Manning puts T&T on election alert

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC - Leader of the governing People's National Movement (PNM), Prime Minister Patrick Manning, has told supporters to put their houses in order and await his announcement of general elections.

"As we face the electorate in a little while, your responsibility as a political party is to be ready," Manning urged party faithful, following his walkabout in the Sangre Grande area in east Trinidad late last month.

Party members have been touring several parts of the country as the country waits on Manning to signal his intention to go to the polls.

Sangre Grande now falls within the ambit of a new constituency of Cumuto-Manzanilla in one of the five new electoral boundaries created by the Elections and Boundaries Commission. With the changes, the number of constituencies has now moved from 36 to 41.

'PAYBACK'

Manning described the

pending general elections as "payback time" for the 33-3 defeat of the PNM in 1986 by the National Alliance for Reconstruction. He said the party needed to put a "special" constitution in place before calling the elections, noting that he wanted a special majority in Parliament.

Manning warned supporters to not be complacent even as its main political rival - the United National Congress (UNC) - recovers from fractious political divisions and leadership squabbles. The UNC was split last year when its political leader Winston Dookeran walked out to start his own party - Congress of the People. Analysts have argued that this will benefit the governing party and lead it to a return to office in the elections due this year.

The PNM was expected to hold a special general council earlier this month to discuss matters relating to both the local and general elections.



Guyana celebrates republican status

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, CMC - Guyana last month marked the 37th anniversary of being a republic, with the Bharrat Jagdeo government appealing to the multi-racial nation to unite in the interest of accelerating national development.

President Jagdeo, accompanied by senior members of his Cabinet including Prime Minister Samuel Hinds; Culture, Youth and Sport Minister Dr. Frank Anthony, as well as the acting Police Commissioner Henry Greene, and the Chief of Staff Brigadier Edward Collins, attended the flag raising ceremony at Parliament Buildings in the capital on Feb. 23.

Jagdeo took the presidential salute, inspected the Guard of Honor, which comprised

more than 100 members of the Joint Services, before the National Flag was raised to the traditional 21-gun salute.



Jagdeo

Racial and political polarization have historically dogged this Caribbean community (CARICOM) country and Human Services and Social Security Minister Priya Manickchand, in a speech to mark the republican celebration, reminded the population that "each Guyanese has a role to play in the development of their country."



Turks re-elects PNP

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, CMC - A Caribbean community (CARICOM) mission that observed the general elections in the Turks and Caicos last month said the results reflected the will of the electorate, even while calling for better voter education programs in the Overseas British Territory.

In a preliminary assessment released here, the three-member team headed by

Carson Raggie, the chief elections officer in St. Lucia, noted that the preparations for the conduct of the elections were adequate, "despite concerns raised about the Voters List in relation to registration of voters."

Premier Michael Misick and his ruling Progressive National Party were re-elected to office.

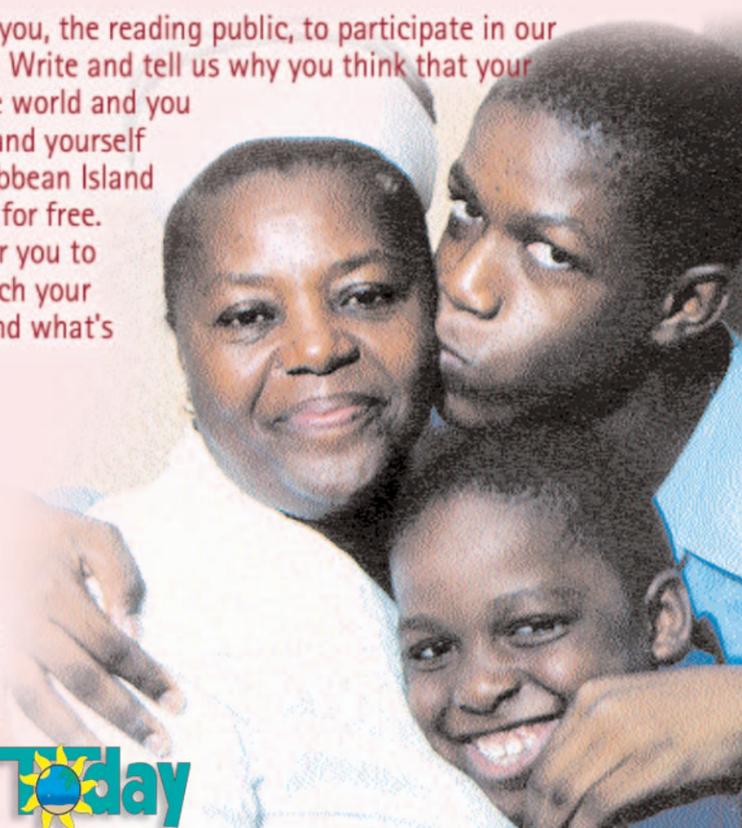


*Dear mamma,
How I love you. You have been there since birth for me, with your nurturing,
loving, caring self. You have made me into who I am today, and I want
to tell you how grateful I am to you, because there is no other like you for me.*

Caribbean Today invites you, the reading public, to participate in our "Dear Mamma" contest. Write and tell us why you think that your mother is the best in the world and you could find your mother and yourself jetting away to any Caribbean Island that Air Jamaica flies to for free. This is a great chance for you to show the world how much your mother means to you, and what's even better you could WIN!! WIN!! WIN!!

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FALLING IN LINE



- Photograph by JIS/NY

With the recent implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), mandating all air travelers returning to the United States to have a valid passport on arrival at all ports of entry, the Jamaican Consulate has seen a sharp rise in the number of persons applying for passports at its midtown, Manhattan, New York location. The rise in applications may also be attributed to those persons traveling to the Caribbean for Cricket World Cup 2007 which begins this month. Here, walk-in applicants wait in the crowded lobby area of the passport/visa section of the consulate to turn in paperwork for a passport that now takes anywhere from four to six weeks to be processed.

WOMEN'S HISTORY LUNCHEON

Pioneering women interred in the Miami City Cemetery will be honored during the ninth annual Women's History Luncheon noon **Mar. 19** at City of Miami Legion Park 6447 N.E. 7th Ave. in Miami.

During the event, presented by The African American Committee of Dade Heritage Trust in Florida, the women's lives will be portrayed in a skit written by Leome Culmer and performed by members of The Singing Angels - a community group under the direction of Dr. Richard Strachan.

The 2007 honorees are: Margaret Gilbert Amason, Vera Parks Albury, Monica Hanna, Bessie Forbes, Arlean McKenzie, and Olive F. Scavella.

For tickets and more information, call Enid Pinkney at **305-635-5130** or **305-635-5800**.

SERVICE AWARDS

The Consulate General of Jamaica will present its first Community Service Awards Ceremony and High Tea at **3:30 p.m. Mar. 25** at the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, Florida.

Jamaica's Governor General Kenneth Hall is the guest of honor.

For more information, call the consulate at **305-374-8431**.

KNOWING GOV'T

Starting this month, residents of Broward County, Florida are being invited to participate in a new program that offers them an opportunity to learn about the county's government.

During the free eight-week program, called the Broward County Academy, residents will learn how county government delivers services to enhance and promote the quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors. The goal is to raise public awareness about county programs and services, and to increase community involvement and participation in local government.

The academy will run through **Mar. 29**.

All county residents age 18 or older are eligible to apply. There is a limit of 25 students for each academy, and two academies will be offered each year. Acceptance will be granted on a first come, first serve basis. There

is no registration fee or cost to participants.

Applications for the Broward County Academy are available on the Broward County web site www.broward.org/academy, by e-mailing publicinfo@broward.org or by calling the Broward County Public Communications Office at **954-357-6990**.

PASSPORT REMINDER

The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) took effect in January.

The WHTI requires all those United States citizens traveling by air to the Caribbean to have a passport.

For information about applying for a U.S. passport, visit <http://usps.com/passport> or call **800-ASK-USPS**.

PASSPORT APPLICATION

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

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

Applicants will receive their biometrics appointment in the mail.

PAGEANT ENTRY

Partners for Youth Foundation is accepting applications the "Miss Jamaica Florida 2007 Pageant" to be held on **June 24** at the Coral Gables Center for the Arts.

The pageant is open to Jamaican-born females or those of Jamaican parentage. The categories are "Little Miss" (ages five to eight); "Junior Miss" (nine to 12); "Miss Teen" (13-16) and "Miss Jamaica Florida" (17-21).

The deadline for applications is **April 30**.

For more information, call Marcia Baker at **954-600-0334**.

Broward Community College

Call for Bids or Proposals

For a listing of available Broward Community College (BCC) open procurement solicitations visit:

www.broward.edu/purchasing/bids

or contact

954-201-7455

BCC strongly encourages participation by minority and women-owned business enterprises (MWBE firms)



Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust (CITT)

The CITT Nominating Committee is now accepting applications from citizens who wish to serve as CITT volunteers. The Nominating Committee will consider applicants countywide for the Mayor's selection without regard to District specific residency. Additionally, the Committee will screen applications for Commission Districts 6, 10, 11, 12, and 13. To maintain an ample pool of interested volunteers, applications will be accepted countywide for all Commission Districts and will remain on file for two-years should an additional vacancy become available. The CITT is a 15-member board created in 2002 to monitor, oversee, review, audit and investigate the implementation of the transportation and transit-related projects listed in the People's Transportation Plan and all other projects funded in whole or in part with the Charter County Transit System Sales Surtax ("Surtax") proceeds. Members serve without compensation for a four-year term. The Miami-Dade Mayor and Board of County Commissioners, upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee, will make their appointment to the CITT. Applications may be obtained online at www.miamidade.gov/citt or by calling **305-375-1357**. All applications must be received by the Clerk of the Board, at 111 NW 1st Street, Suite 17-202, Miami, FL 33128, no later than Monday, April 2, 2007, by 4 p.m.

INVITATION TO BID RFB 600000083 CANAL SIDE SLOPE MOWING SERVICES

The South Florida Water Management District will accept bids from qualified firms to provide side slope mowing services of canal embankments located in the Ft. Lauderdale Field Station service area.

Bids shall be submitted to the Procurement Department, 2nd Floor, B-1 Building, 3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach, Florida, 33406, on April 6, 2007, at 2:30 P.M. local time, at which time bids will be opened and publicly read.

An optional PRE-BID CONFERENCE will be held March 16, 2007, at 10:30 A.M. at the Ft. Lauderdale Field Station located at 2535 Davie Road Davie, FL 33317. All bids must conform to the instructions in the Request for Bids and include a properly executed Contract Compliance Disclosure Form.

Solicitation documents will be available March 2, 2007 in the SFWMD Procurement Department at the above address, by downloading a copy from the District's website at www.sfwmd.gov, or by calling (561) 687-6391. Interested bidders may also call the 24-hour **BID HOTLINE 800-472-5290**. The public is invited to attend the RFB opening. **Information on the status of this solicitation can be obtained at our web site - www.sfwmd.gov.**

For more information, please contact Don Hill, Contract Specialist at (561) 682-2045.

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