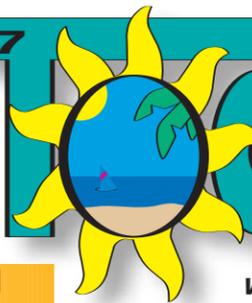


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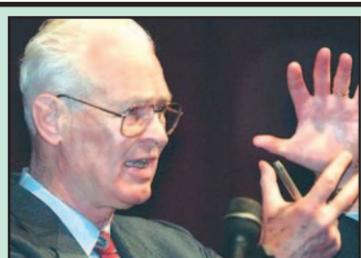
THE MULTI AWARD-WINNING NEWS MAGAZINE



Caribbean-born legislators in the U.S., like New York State Assemblyman Nick Perry, say the Bush administration's crackdown on illegal immigrants could send thousands of Caribbean nationals further into the underground economy, page 2.



The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is urging Caribbean and other immigrants with green cards without expiration dates to immediately replace them or face penalties, including hefty fines and jail time, page 4.



If the predictions of Colorado State University Professor William Gray and his forecasting team are correct, the destruction caused by Hurricane Dean last month may be the tip of the proverbial iceberg that the Caribbean can expect this year, page 7.



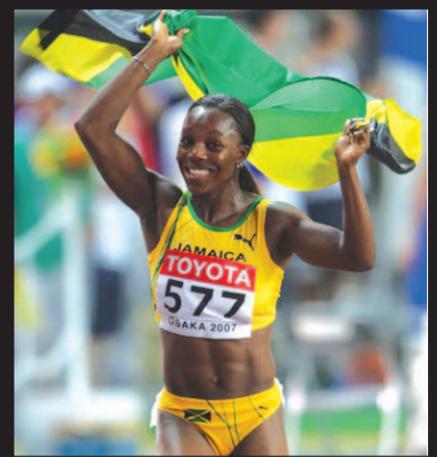
JAMAICA CHANGES COURSE

~ Bruce Golding leads the Opposition JLP to a close election victory over the PNP, ending the incumbent's 18-year, four-term run in government of the Caribbean island, page 5.

Champions of the World



Outstanding Caribbean athletes Donald Thomas, left, of The Bahamas, and Jamaica's Veronica Campbell won gold medals at the IAAF World Championships of Athletics, page 25.



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NEWS

New U.S. immigration rules concern Caribbean legislators

NELSON KING

NEW YORK – Caribbean legislators here say the Bush administration's crackdown on illegal immigrants in the United States could send thousands of Caribbean nationals further into the underground economy.

Jamaican-born New York State Assemblyman Nick Perry, a member of the Assembly's Task Force on New Immigrants, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines-born New York City Councilman Dr. Kendall Stewart, chair of the



Perry

City Council's Committee on Immigration, told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)** that Washington's latest initiative could do more harm than good to the U.S. economy.

"Are they going to make this a consistent policy?" asked Perry, who represents the largely Caribbean 58th Assembly District in Brooklyn. "I don't

think they will be able to do that because a lot of American businesses depend on immigrants to get their jobs done.

"These people take advantage of immigrants in any case," he added.

CONCERNS

The George W. Bush administration's new rules, unveiled last month, have been greeted with a wave of new concerns about labor shortages. The rules seek to consolidate enforcement against employers and toughen penalties for hiring undocumented or illegal



Stewart

Caribbean and other immigrants. Michael Chertoff, secretary of the U.S. Homeland Security Department, and Carlos M.

Gutierrez, secretary of commerce, minced no words in telling reporters that the measures essentially seek to strengthen border security and force illegal immigrants out of the job market.

The U.S. officials said under the new rules, employers have 90 days to reconcile any discrepancies between Social Security numbers furnished by workers and the records of the U.S. Social Security Administration.

SUFFER

But Perry said the U.S.

economy would suffer more than immigrants, because many immigrants take jobs that most Americans refuse to do.

"A lot of these jobs would go begging," he said. "How many Americans would want to do landscaping, how many Americans would want to pick fruits and work on farms in Florida and upstate New York and other places?"

"American labor complains that immigrants are robbing Americans of jobs, but do they really want to do the jobs that most immigrants do?" he added.

Stewart said that the Bush administration is "pandering to the conservatives," describing the new rules as "terrible" and "a disgrace."

"I will try to do a hearing shortly to see if we can, at least, condemn the Bush administration in the City

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

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'Hurricane Dean' pummels Caribbean, leaves death, destruction in its wake

A powerful hurricane ploughed through the Caribbean last month, causing deaths and destruction of property in several countries across the region.

It also forced the postponement of Jamaica's general elections, where the island's government declared a state of emergency, and pushed back the opening date for schools.

Hurricane Dean, packing winds up to 145 miles per hour, knocked out utility lines, ripped roofs off houses, triggered landslides and felled trees in Dominica, St. Lucia, Jamaica, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Martinique and Guadeloupe.

Several deaths were linked to the hurricane as thousands in the Caribbean fled their homes to shelters in an attempt to avoid the hurricane's wrath. The hurricane later picked up intensity and crashed into Belize and Mexico.

SCHEDULE CHANGE

In Jamaica, the Category Four storm pummeled the island on Aug. 19, whipping up huge sea swells and dousing the island with several inches of rain. The authorities confirmed that four people, including a teenaged girl, had been killed during the storm. The Jamaica Public Service, in anticipation of the hurricane, shut down the island's power system to protect its grid. The country's elections, which were scheduled for Aug. 27, were postponed until Sept. 3. Schools were re-scheduled to open on Sept. 10. The government also declared a state of

emergency after the hurricane, which was lifted several days later.

The southern tip of Haiti bore the brunt of Hurricane Dean's fury when the dangerous storm brushed past it Aug. 19, lashing the country with hurricane force winds and heavy rains, officials said. They said it appeared that the southern town of Les Engles was one of the hardest hit, with over 200 houses being destroyed or damaged, while three people were confirmed dead and 10 others injured when the hurricane continued on its westward track across the Caribbean Sea.

The system was also blamed for two deaths each in St. Lucia, Dominica and Martinique and one in the Dominican Republic, with Trinidad, which was not in the system's path, saying feeder bands whipped up high waves which killed two residents in a coastal district on Aug. 17.

HELP

Meanwhile, countries in the region rallied to aid their Caribbean counterparts. Caribbean community (CARICOM) Chairman Owen Arthur pledged to lend economic assistance to needy nations. Venezuela also promised help.

The Caribbean diaspora in the United States has also offered assistance. The Jamaican community in South Florida, for example, has made arrangements to assist the country. The Jamaica Consulate General and the Jamaican Diaspora Southern United (CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

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HOLLYWOOD

Antigua expresses confidence U.K. will approve online gaming site

NEW YORK – Antigua and Barbuda has expressed confidence that its online gaming site will be approved shortly by the United Kingdom.

The Baldwin Spencer administration said last month that it has applied to the U.K.'s Gambling Commission for permission to advertise its gaming services in that country.

In a statement issued here,

Finance and Economy Minister Dr. Errol Cort said he was optimistic that Antigua and Barbuda's application to the U.K.'s "whitelisting" will receive approval "in due course."

He based such confidence on the premise that "Antigua and Barbuda's regulatory and licensing objectives are parallel to the U.K.'s intended remote gaming regulatory regime,

which promotes the prevention of underage gaming, protection of the vulnerable, fairness in all games and the combating of illicit activities and financial crimes."



Spencer

Act is implemented on Sept. 1.

Antigua has taken the United States to the World Trade Organization's Dispute Settlement Body for Washington's non-compliance with a ruling favorable to

Antigua for the conduct of its online gaming site. The Caribbean country is also seeking millions of dollars in compensation from the U.S. in this regard.



U.S. sets new measures, prods Caribbean 'green card' holders

WASHINGTON, CMC – The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services is urging Caribbean and other immigrants with green cards without expiration dates to immediately replace them or face penalties.

The division of the Department of Homeland Security said that these immigrants may have to pay \$370 to replace these cards or face criminal penalties. It said immigrants who repeatedly fail to comply with the new requirement face up to 30 days in jail and a \$100 fine.

The U.S. said about 750,000 green cards with no expiration dates were issued between 1977 and 1989.

"It's a security issue; it's making sure the right person has the right card," said Bill Wright, a spokesman for the U.S. Citizenship and

Immigration Services.

DILEMMA

With the new requirement, some legal Caribbean immigrants with criminal records who obtained their green cards without an expiration date

between 1977 and 1989 may be in a dilemma.

Immigration officials said if they apply for the new green card they may face deportation

since, under the 1996 immigration law, immigrants are regarded as deportable for crimes, however minor, which occurred years ago.

Under the new measure, immigration officials said even if the immigrant served a prison term or paid a fine for the offense, he or she still faces deportation.



New U.S. immigration rules ...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)
Council," he disclosed.

WELCOMED

Conservative Republicans, who defied Bush in June by opposing a broad immigration bill he supported but failed in the Senate, have cautiously welcomed the measure. That bill included provisions to give legal status to an estimated 12 million illegal immigrants and to create a guest worker program for agriculture. But it collapsed when many senators called it an amnesty that invited

more illegal immigration.

Senator John Cornyn, a Texas Republican who turned against that bill, said the new measures were "a long-overdue step to regaining the trust of the American people that the federal government is serious about securing our borders and enforcing our laws."

But Senator Dianne Feinstein, a California Democrat, a champion of farmers, described the new measures as a "catastrophe."

"The crisis is that crops will not be harvested," she said.



'Hurricane Dean' pummels Caribbean...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

States Advisory Board established several drop-off spots in Miami-Dade and Broward counties for basic food and emergency items.

Relief organizations in South Florida teamed up in efforts to aid Jamaica. Food for the Poor, the largest aid provider to the Caribbean, said it was ready to help.

"We have an entire warehouse stocked with generators and supplies. We're ready to send out container-loads," said Ann Briere, spokeswoman for Food for the Poor, the day

after the hurricane struck the island.

She said the aid will also benefit hurricane-affected populations in Haiti, Dominican Republic, Dominica and St. Lucia.

In addition, The Lauderhill Fire-Rescue Department is also accepting donations for hurricane relief in Jamaica.

Compiled from CMC and other sources.

Hurricane Dean brings Caribbean more problems than wind, rain, page 7.



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- Claude Pepper Park Community Center
- Regional Head Start Center
- Northside Police Station
- New Bike Trail on Snake Creek Bridge
- Little Haiti Soccer Park

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NEWS

www.caribbeantoday.com

Opposition JLP secures victory in Jamaica's general elections

GORDON WILLIAMS

The Opposition has ended the 18-year rule of the People's National Party (PNP) in Jamaica.

Throughout the heated general elections campaign, Portia Simpson Miller insisted her PNP should get the mandate to continue its course as government. But after four consecutive terms, citizens of the Caribbean island decided on Sept. 3 that they had seen enough, and turned to hitch their wagon to the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), led by Bruce Golding.

Following a tight race, and the fear of a tie looming large as a tense election night wore on, the JLP, up to press time, had won 33 constituency seats to 27 by the PNP and will form Jamaica's government for the next five years. Golding was expected to be sworn in as prime minister on Sept. 7.

The JLP's victory meant the party increased, by at least seven, the number of seats it won in the last elections in 2002. Just over 60 percent of those eligible voted in the 2007 elections. Some 405,215 chose the JLP, while 402,275 voted PNP. Other votes went to minor parties and independents.

The defeat prompted a defiant Simpson Miller to delay conceding power to the JLP on election night, claiming she would wait for the recount of ballots the following day. She charged then that the elections were too close to call,

that criminal activities had interfered with the electoral process, and again challenged the system to expose JLP candidates who the PNP alleged before the elections hold dual citizenship and therefore should not be eligible for a seat in Parliament. On Sept. 4, after heavy criticism, Simpson Miller eventually conceded, but warned that the PNP reserved the right to challenge "a number" of seats won by the JLP.

But the JLP, so long in the nation's political wilderness, could not wait for post-election day recounts and burst into wild celebrations, even as rains showered them at party headquarters in New Kingston on election night, long before the final results were announced by the Electoral Office of Jamaica (EOJ).

"We are going to enjoy ourselves," said JLP Deputy Leader Derrick Smith. "...It's been a long time."

TRUST

When Golding took the stage just before midnight at the JLP's headquarters his tone was decidedly more measured. The prime minister-designate, who returned to the JLP a few years ago after earlier leaving the party to help form his own National Democratic Movement, vowed to heavily involve the PNP in his government. He also called on the nation to "eliminate political violence," which had marred the campaign, and turn



Simpson Miller

to "constructive engagement among the political forces of the country." Reports of clashes between JLP and PNP supporters spilled beyond election day. Golding also assured the country's citizens that the JLP would not let them down.

"The majority of the people have placed their trust in us," Golding said. "We must honor that trust. We must not betray that trust."

Going into the elections, national opinion poll indicated that there was not much between the PNP and JLP. By early afternoon on Sept. 3 weather reports had indicated that tropical depression Felix would not be a threat to Jamaica, a relief for the citizens who on Aug. 19 were bombarded by Hurricane Dean, which forced the postponement of the polls from the original date of Aug. 27. Still, there were long lines at polling stations and the EOJ reported some hitches in the voting process.

SMOOTH

But overall, the elections

appeared to have gone smoothly. Early reports from local, regional and international observers, including teams from the Caribbean and the Organization of American States. Jamaica's own Citizens Action for Free and Fair Elections, did not indicate major inconsistencies. Director of Elections Danville Walker was convinced the process was free and fair.

"This is an election I can defend," he said.

While on election night Simpson Miller appeared ready to defend her party's hold on government to the last, it did not appear to matter. Jamaicans already seemed convinced that the JLP had taken back power they last won more than a quarter of a century ago.

"The fact is that the people have spoken," Golding said. "We accept and respect the decision of the people."

OVERSEAS

However, the possible influence of overseas countries on the election results could not be ignored. The PNP said it will pursue its investigations into the alleged dual citizenship of JLP candidates. The Jamaican diaspora also anxiously followed the Sept. 3 events, from countries such as the United States, Canada and

the United Kingdom, via telephone calls, television and the Internet. Many traveled to Jamaica to witness the elections and vote. Some believed that a JLP win at the polls would mean a fresh start for the country.

"The message (a JLP win) sends is that Jamaicans have decided that it is time for a change and this party has an opportunity to turn things around," Irwine Claire, managing director of the New York-based Caribbean Immigrant Services Inc. said a couple days before the elections.

Some in the diaspora were convinced that the recent national debates, especially the face-off between Golding and the popular Simpson Miller, may have turned the tide towards the JLP.

"I believe the debate did more harm than good to Portia Simpson," Claire explained.

"When the light shone on Portia Simpson, her weakness was amplified...The debate had a significant impact...The charismatic Portia never played and that hurt her."

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor. Information contributed from various sources, including live broadcast feeds from Jamaica on election day.



Labor Day Caribbean Carnival dazzles N.Y.

NEW YORK – An estimated three million spectators from around the world converged on Brooklyn's Eastern Parkway for the 40th anniversary of the West Indian American Day Carnival parade.

The massive extravaganza, held on Labor Day, Sept. 3, is the largest carnival parade in North America. It comprises a kaleidoscope of West Indian colors and a potpourri of sites, sounds and smells.

The event, organized by the Brooklyn-based West Indian American Day Carnival Association (WIADCA), is the culmination of five successive days of carnival activities that organizers say dazzle even the ubiquitous, 5,000-strong police officers who attempt to keep the peace.

The 40th anniversary of the parade was held in honor of the organizers' founder Carlos Lezama, who died in January.

"A lot of excitement is in the air," boasted Lezama's daughter and WIADCA President, Trinidadian Yolanda Lezama-Clark, who

succeeded her father six years ago when failing health forced him to pass on the baton.

CARIB VIBES

Reggae and calypso rhythms and the smell of jerk chicken, roti and other Caribbean delicacies waft through the air as 30 costumed bands and thousands of masqueraders jam down the three-and-a-half-mile-long route.

The spectacular carnival events actually blasted off on the night of Aug. 30, with "Divas Night" on the grounds of the Brooklyn Museum, featuring female artistes out of the Caribbean. Soca artistes FayAnn Lyons, Maurica, Miss Alysha, Michelle Sylvester, Lima Calibo, Patrice Roberts, Twiggy, Triad and Essence mesmerized carnival lovers. Carnival costumes portraying male and female characters of the band, and the Ole Mas competition also held the audience.

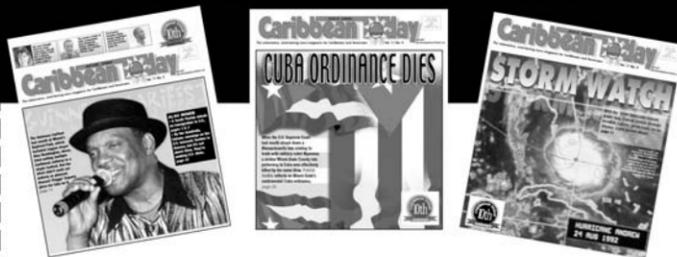
The following night, a star-studded show, featuring some of the leading soca bands and artistes in the

region, took center stage in "Brassfest 2007". They included Machel Montano HD, with soca star Machel Montano; Xtatik, with Patrice Roberts, Benjai and Zen; Traffik, with Sherwyn Winchester; and Lyrikal. Earlier that day, a free young people's "Stay in School" concert was staged, with steelband music and a fashion show, among other entertainment.

The Panorama competition took place on Sept. 1, pitting defending champions CASYM against D'Radoes, Sesame Flyers, Harmony, Demstars, Crossfire, Pantonics and Ad Lib. A host of Caribbean calypsonians and soca artistes were featured Saturday night during Dimanche Gras. Costumed participants in the King and Queen of the Bands competition, stilt dancers and a dance troupe interspersed with the Mighty Sparrow, David Rudder, Scrunter, Swallow, Singing Sandra, and Hunter, among others, in the grand finale at the Brooklyn Museum.



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'Dead broke' Grenadian-born ex-judge back in N.Y. jail over child maintenance

NEW YORK, CMC – A Grenadian-born former New York State Supreme Court judge was last month remanded in custody for failing to convince a court that he could not support his three children.

Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Joan Lobis sent ex-judge Reynold Mason back to jail after he said he could not raise \$35,000 in back child support payments.

"I have no choice but to recommit Mr. Mason," Lobis said after Mason's lawyers and those of his Guyanese-born ex-wife, Tessa Abrams-Mason, failed to reach a settlement.

In May, Justice Lobis sent Mason to the slammer for the first time after, she said, he had evaded child support payments for four years and allowed them to spiral to over \$250,000. Last month, Lobis said Mason must return to prison after he could not come up with the lowered bond of \$50,000 from \$75,000.

The judge said she was prepared to set Mason free if he had agreed to a compromise with Abrams-Mason of \$35,000 and a payment plan. Mason said he could only raise \$30,000.

Mason, who was kicked off the bench in 2003 and had subsequently worked as a real estate agent in Atlanta, Georgia, told Justice Lobis in July that he was "dead broke" and could not come up with the initial \$250,000 in court-ordered, delinquent child sup-



Reynold Mason, right, being escorted by police.

port payments.

"I made a lot of mistakes," he told the court, stating that he was trying desperately to honor the back payments without success.

"I was trying to set myself up to earn money," he added, disclosing, however, that he had purchased a \$9,000 car to sell real estate.

"You have to have a car to

do what I did," he continued.

Mason said he only made \$68,000 in 2005 and 2006, compared to \$136,700 annually when he sat on the bench, and that he was borrowing from relatives to get by. He said he declared bankruptcy in order to survive, and asked the judge to reduce his payments to his ex-wife and their children, Tiffany, 16, Dylan, 14, and Joshua, nine.

But Justice Lobis did not accept Mason's contention.

"I find his testimony lacking in credibility in a number of places," she said, stating that his financial statements, signed under oath, were "shocking" and "not complete."

Tessa Abrams Mason, who managed her ex-husband's 1994 campaign to get him elected to Brooklyn Civil Court then the Supreme Court, was instrumental in getting him kicked off the bench when she submitted evidence of alleged ethics violations to the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct.

"He would rather stay in jail than take care of his kids," she said after Mason's re-sentencing.



Judge grants psychological tests for Guyanese-born terror suspect

NEW YORK – A United States federal judge in New York has given permission for psychologists to examine the Guyanese-born alleged mas-terminid behind the plot to blow up John F. Kennedy International Airport.

In a brief ruling last month, Justice Dora L. Irizarry, of Federal District Court in Brooklyn, granted lawyers representing Russell M. DeFreitas, 63, permission to bring in two psychologists to examine their client, where he is held at the Federal Detention Center in Brooklyn.

The judge said the psychologists can examine DeFreitas "as long as necessary" before he goes on trial for plotting to blow up the airport and a huge swath of its environs in Queens.

'LIMITATIONS'

Last month, Andrew Carter, the lead attorney representing DeFreitas, had asked Justice Irizarry to allow the test to determine his client's "intellectual limitations." Carter told the court that DeFreitas understands that he has been charged in a terrorist plot but "cannot read" and may have a "fairly low intelligence."

"His analytical abilities are somewhat limited," Carter said.

Defreitas, who is also a U.S. citizen, has been in federal custody since early June when he was arrested at a Brooklyn diner and charged with conducting surveillance in a plot to blow up the fuel tanks and a capillary system of pipes that runs beneath the airport and a large swath of Brooklyn and Queens. Three other Caribbean-born men — Guyanese Abdel Nur, 57; Guyanese Abdul Kadir, 55; and Trinidadian Kareem Ibrahim, 62 — were also charged in the plot and remain in custody in Trinidad and Tobago awaiting extradition.

Carter declined to elaborate on his reason for requesting the psychological evaluation, which can be conducted only by order of a judge.

The case against Defreitas and the others revolves primarily around recordings by a government informant who managed to infiltrate the plot well before any concrete steps were taken. Marshal Miller, an assistant U.S. attorney, told Judge Irizarry that a "voluminous quantity" — nearly 300 hours — of conversations between Defreitas and the informant was secretly recorded during investigation of the case.



Grenadian elected to OAS post

Grenadian-born Gillian Bristol has become the first CARICOM national to be elected head of the 80-year-old staff association at the Washington D.C.-based Organization of American States.

Bristol was elected on a platform to address staff welfare matters, including representation, job security, fairness in the workplace, participation and inclusiveness, and respect.

Bristol invited OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza, Assistant Secretary General Albert Ramdin and all staff members to "have a talk," about creating a positive environment conducive to constructive engagement and interaction.

"Our ambition must be to achieve a synergy that inspires the best from us, transcends our differences, and builds on our commonalities," Bristol said.

Along with the president, the new Staff Committee comprises the following Washington D.C.-based mem-

bers: Luis Batlle, Rosana Martinelli, Jane Mohan, Bruce Rickerson, Patricia Quiroz, Luis Villalobos and Lucrecia Zea-Yonker.



Bristol

The OAS Staff Association was established in 1928 for the Pan American Union, the forerunner to what 20 years later became the OAS. The OAS 35 member states include those of CARICOM that began joining in the 1960s as they gained Independence.





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F E A T U R E

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Hurricane Dean brings Caribbean more problems than wind, rain

PETER RICHARDS

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad – If the predictions of the Colorado State University forecasting team are anything to go by, then the passage of Hurricane Dean last month through the Lesser Antilles is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

Professor William Gray and his team from the United States school said they expect 17 named storms to form in the Atlantic during the 2007 hurricane season that runs for a six-month period starting in June.

They said that nine of these storms would become hurricanes and five of them are expected to develop into major storms with winds in excess of 111 mph. The earlier forecast estimated 14 named storms and three hurricanes.

Gerry Bell, a hurricane forecaster at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Centre in Maryland, U.S., described as a “lucky aberration” last year’s 10 named Atlantic storms, which included five hurricanes and only two of them considered major. Experts say that a



Gray

change in tropical weather patterns called the Atlantic Multi-decadal Oscillation during the mid-1990s has created the conditions for a more active hurricane cycle that may last for 30 years.

WARNING

Whatever the predictions, Hurricane Dean has started the ball rolling and while it did not have a direct hit on any Caribbean island during its passage through the Lesser Antilles, it left enough destruction and death to worry Caribbean leaders with at least three months still to go before the end of the hurricane season.

Dean was the first hurricane to make landfall in the

Atlantic basin at Category Five intensity in 15 years. The last storm to do so was Hurricane Andrew on Aug. 24, 1992. Even though Dean’s Category Five landfall was in a more sparsely populated area, the damage it left behind has been estimated so far as being

an insurance pool set up this year by regional countries and the World Bank. In St. Lucia and Dominica, the latter emerging from a downturn in its economic fortunes that necessitated an association with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to help it rebuild,

ance program, said that at the time the hurricane was affecting those islands, it failed to surpass wind speeds and other thresholds to prompt payments from the disaster pool established in February.

For its part, Jamaica, where the hurricane killed four, uprooted trees, blew off the roofs, came close to being hit hard enough to receive payouts from the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF). Simon Young, who supervises the fund, said had the storm been 30 miles to the north it would have triggered immediate payment in Jamaica. Under the fund, countries pool their risks in order to reduce individual premiums by as much as 40 percent. The premiums for countries involved in the facility vary from \$200,000 to \$2 million and in return are eligible for disaster payouts of \$10 million to \$50 million.



Hurricane destruction to Caribbean mainstay crops such as bananas could severely hurt the region’s economies.

But Caribbean Risk Managers Ltd officials say the 15-member Caribbean community (CARICOM) and Bermuda purchased deductibles that were fixed to pay out for a 20-year hurricane or earthquake.

“By our estimation, (Dean) was a one-in-10 year (CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

between \$750 million to \$1.5 billion.

Particularly disturbing for the Caribbean islands – Jamaica, Haiti, St. Lucia and Dominica – that were pounded by Hurricane Dean with winds in excess of 145 miles per hour on some occasions, is the fact that the storm did not trigger

the hurricane virtually wiped out the important banana industry.

In St. Lucia, a government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the damage to the island could exceed \$37 million.

Caribbean Risk Managers Ltd., which oversees the insur-

Regional governments to place more emphasis on people

PETER RICHARDS

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – Nearly two decades after agreeing in Grenada to the initiative outlined by then Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister ANR Robinson for further integrat-



Leaders in the Caribbean, from left, Owen Arthur and Ralph Gonsalves, are pondering ways to further deepen the integration process in the region.

ing the Caribbean community (CARICOM), regional governments say they will place more emphasis on the peoples of the Caribbean as a means of further deepening the integration process.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, an avowed integrationist, has already warned his regional colleagues that their efforts would be meaningless if the integration movement does not address

“practically the day-to-day concerns of the people of the region.

“It must benefit all the member-countries in a way which is not unduly beneficial to some and not to others,” he added.

CARICOM Secretary General Edwin Carrington and other regional technocrats have long acknowledged that the successful operation of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME), first mooted in 1989 in the “Grand Anse Declaration”, hinges on improving the quality of life of Caribbean people as well as on the efficiency of the new institutions necessary to ensure a fair and equitable market and distribution of the benefits.

AMBITIOUS AGENDA

In a communiqué issued at the end of the July 1-4 summit, regional leaders requested a study of the movement of skilled persons in order to guide the future operations of the initiative. Barbados Prime Minister Owen Arthur, who is now chairman of the 15-member regional integration movement, conceded that “it is an ambitious agenda.

“But the progress we have made, despite the odds, in bringing the CSME into existence should give us the confi- (CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)



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Dr. Wentworth Jarrett

Caribbean workforce women being held back ~ U.N.

UNITED NATIONS – Although the rate of female participation in the workforce in the Caribbean and Latin America is at an all-time high, the United Nations says women are still being prevented from reaching their economic potential by their child-rearing and caretaking responsibilities, as well as their low status in some countries.

The U.N. said this was the main issue discussed as part of a recent United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)-

organized event in Quito, Ecuador, called “Toward a New Social and Gender Pact: Shared Responsibility for Productive and Reproductive Work in Latin America and the Caribbean”.

The statement said nearly 60 percent of the reasons given by women in the region for either not entering or leaving the job market are related to their roles as mothers and caregivers.

Marcela Suazo, UNFPA's director for the Division for Latin America and the

Caribbean, said women's salaries trail those of men by 20 percent to 30 percent, “despite the swelling numbers of employed women.” She said about 33 million women entered the job market between 1990 and 2004, with about 16 percent employed as domestic help.

“The countries which are among the region's poorest, have the highest birth rates, the largest informal economies and the weakest social policies,” she said, adding that they are also states with the highest

female participation in the workforce.

LINK

The U.N. pointed to statistics, which show a strong link between poverty and high birth rates, “which limit women's opportunities to make a better living.” The statement said in Bolivia, Guatemala and Haiti, among the poorest countries in the region, women give birth to an average of four children.

At the same time, it said in Barbados, Cuba and Trinidad

and Tobago, where economic prospects are better, the birth rate is lower than the population replacement rate – 2.1 children per woman.

The statement also said the Caribbean and Latin America also have high adolescent pregnancy rates, with nearly two out of 10 adolescents having children, “which limits their opportunities to stay in school”.



Hurricane Dean brings Caribbean more problems than wind, rain

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7) event,” Young said.

INITIATIVES

Prior to the start of this year's hurricane season, Caribbean countries had taken some initiatives to lessen the effects of possible hit by storms.

Jerry Collymore, the head of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), said Grenada, for example, was taking disaster management more seriously than it did before Hurricane Ivan struck the island two-and-a-half years ago.

Addressing the island's first ever Hurricane Preparedness Conference that brought together stakeholders from the Red Cross, government ministries, utilities, air-

port and seaport, Collymore said that the event was a “signal that the government and people of Grenada have not only identified lessons from the Ivan experience but are learning them.

“I see it as an important and essential step in building a local culture of living with risks of hurricane, not ignoring them,” he said.

DELAY

But in St. Lucia, a few days before the start of the 2007 hurricane season, local authorities were lamenting the delay in the implementation of Flood Early Warning Systems for communities which are prone to flooding. Disaster Preparedness Coordinator Dawn French said the intention was to have the systems in place for the start of the

hurricane season but this has not happened due to a delay in arrival of equipment on the island.

The Early Warning Systems, which are also being made available to other Caribbean states, will form part of the evacuation planning that is taking place in communities around the island. The Barbados-based Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) said it would provide emergency relief grants to regional countries affected by the hurricane.

The traditional friends of the Caribbean including Canada, the Organization of American States, have also pitched in to provide immediate relief to countries to help them overcome the devastation caused by Hurricane Dean. But officials are also wary that this influx of funds may prove to be of little comfort to the

islands already dealing with the loss of much needed revenue from rulings at the World Trade Organization (WTO) as they relate to the vital bananas and sugar industries that took another beating from Dean.

HOPE

Further, the decision of the European Union to revise its sugar protocol has done little to improve the economic situation of the sugar producing countries in the region that have to deal with rising oil prices on the world market.

When the World Bank launched the CCRIF it did so on the basis of a major storm hitting the region once every 10 years. Caribbean countries are hoping that Dean was that storm and that the predictions of Prof. William Gray and his

team that the region would be affected by at least four other major storms turns do not come true.

- CMC



Regional governments to place more emphasis on people

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

dence to take the road least traveled - that of collaborative effort in developing our social system, our common services and the institutions which directly affect the quality of life of our people,” he said.

“Can we not conceive of a program of integration outside and beyond the mere economic sphere, addressing fundamental quality of life issues in respect of education, health care, the protection of our environment...cooperation in the fight against poverty,” Arthur added.

The CSME allows for the free movement of skills, goods, services and labor across the region, but Caribbean leaders have been voicing concerns, both privately and publicly, that this has not always happened equitably. For instance, Guyana's President Bharrat Jagdeo, no doubt frustrated by the problems faced by

Guyanese citizens at various Caribbean ports of entry, has called on his fellow leaders to provide statistics on the number of Caribbean nationals denied entry to or deported from their countries.

“I have asked that documentation come to each meeting that we have (for) the heads to say how many people have been rejected by each country, because many of the heads keep saying it's not my thing, it's my immigration officers, but I will not allow an immigration officer in Guyana to treat the region's people badly because it is ultimately my responsibility,” he said.

“It's not just Guyanese, it's a free movement question,” Jagdeo added.

APPROVAL

Dominica's Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerit, who has lead responsibility for the free

movement initiative, said it was imperative for all regional states to approve the necessary legislation for the measure to take effect.

“People are already experiencing difficulties where we have agreed to proceed with the free movement, but there has not been a commitment in terms of our own legislation within the member states with respect to allowing for the free movement of persons,” he said.

Since the free movement initiative came into existence, Caribbean states have issued 4,000 certificates allowing for Caribbean nationals to work freely within the region, but Arthur told the opening ceremony of the CARICOM summit that “there is a very uneven concentration across the countries suggesting that only a few countries are carrying the weight of providing a market for the workers of the region.”

Head of the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) George de Peana said he was concerned that the initiative was skewed towards the business community.

“At the moment, there is a limited number of categories of people who can move without hindrance. We feel that the treaty is somewhat lopsided in

that it gives a lot of facilities to the business community to move without any kind of hindrance,” Peana said.

“It is our view that this matter of freedom of movement of Caribbean nationals, not only to travel, but to work is one which has to be expedited if we are to build what I call Caribbeaness,” he added.

Regional leaders agreed at their summit to introduce a new high-tech travel card and an automatic six-month stay for all nationals visiting other Caribbean nations.

Barbados Deputy Prime Minister Mia Mottley told journalists that the travel card would allow the region to create a virtual single domestic space similar to what implemented during the Cricket World Cup earlier this year.

“It has two forms of biometrics - the fingerprints and the facial, so that when you come to the airport and you have a CARICOM travel card you can swipe at a machine and the barrier would be opened and you walk through,” said Mottley, who headed regional security during the global cricket event.

- CMC



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VIEWPOINT

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Diversity is difficult, but really worth it

Robert Putnam's fears have come true. The Harvard political scientist worried that some people would use his latest research to argue against immigration, affirmative action and multiculturalism.

Sure enough, at least one favorable commentary has popped up on the web site of David Duke, the former Ku Klux Klan leader. But, not to worry. Putnam's findings are valuable for sane people, too.

Putnam is best known for the eye-opening "Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community", a 2000 best-seller about Americans withdrawing from civic engagement in recent decades. Now he has a massive new study, based on interviews with nearly 30,000 people across America, which comes up with what he called in a recent **Boston Globe** interview "an uncomfortable truth."

Contrary to the cherished American notion that our racial and ethnic diversity makes us stronger, Putnam has found quite the opposite, at least in the short term. The greater the diversity in a community, the less civic engagement it shows, he says. Fewer people vote. Fewer volunteer. They give less to charity. They work together less on community projects.

And they trust each other less, says Putnam, not only across racial and ethnic lines but also within the lines.

In other words, residents of the most racially and ethnically mixed neighborhoods show the least trust not only of other races, but also people of their own races.

'OWN KIND?'

Does that mean people are better off living with, as the old racist mantra goes, "their own kind"? Or that we should impose a moratorium on immigration, as my column-writing colleague Pat Buchanan suggests in the piece that Duke touts?

Not quite. In fact, in his first paper about his new research, "E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century", Putnam says he wants to make three points perfectly clear:

1. "Increased immigration

and diversity are not only inevitable" in modern societies, he writes, "but over the long run they are also desirable. Ethnic diversity is, on balance, an important social asset", as America's history demonstrates.

2. "In the short to medium run, however, immigration and ethnic diversity challenge social solidarity and inhibit social capital", he writes. "Social Capital" is the strength of relationships that bond you to people who are like you or "bridge" you to people who are different from you.

3. "In the medium to long run, on the other hand, successful immigrant societies create new forms of social solidarity and dampen the negative effects of diversity by constructing new, more encompassing identities," says Putnam. "Thus, the central challenge for modern, diversifying societies is to create a new, broader sense of 'we'."

LONGTERM BENEFITS

In other words, birds of different feathers do not flock together in the short run, but it's worth a try. They can benefit in the long run, especially if they develop a larger, more inclusive sense of identity to, say, their community, their country or some other larger sense of purpose.

In that sense, Putnam's "bunker buster", as one headline writer called it, confirms what many of us already know. Living with diversity is a lot like my first days in the army. It may not be comfortable at first, but you learn to get along. Our platoon at Fort Dix, New Jersey, offered a classic Hollywood portrait of young guys plucked by our draft boards from every race, region and religion. Many of us came from backgrounds that conditioned us to distrust people who didn't look or talk like us. But, united by a common sense of mission and no-nonsense orders from the top to observe no color but Army green, we learned.

The military, religious institutions and earlier waves of American immigration provide Putnam with good examples of how Americans learn to live comfortably with diversity. The military offers a particularly quick turnaround after the mid-1960s, when racial tensions on America's streets spilled into military outposts.

In a 1996 book that he footnotes, "All That We Can

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

Ill winds: good, bad and ugly

At time of writing this, Hurricane Dean was on a direct path to Jamaica, and our nerves were once again on edge, and with very good reason.

So many hurricanes have come, and left in their wakes trails of death, destruction and despair. What awful hurricanes Gilbert and Ivan were, the mothers of all hurricanes, so to speak.

It was only a few weeks ago that I was speaking to a friend of mine who said that most hurricanes seemed to divert from Jamaica at the last minute. "Only the big and powerful ones will hit us, but all minor storms will shift at the last minute," he espoused. Gilbert sprang to mind, and his argument, although unscientific, had a ring of truth to it, especially when you checked out our hurricane history.

Only major, big time, name brand hurricanes hit us, and even mighty Ivan dipped ever so slightly, imperceptibly in the grand scheme of things, but just enough to spare us a full frontal onslaught. Even so, it did tons of damage, but had it hit full force we would be singing a different tune, that is if we could sing any at all.

NOT ALONE

Now the thing about hurricanes is, no one wants to ride them out alone. They're like birthdays, Valentine's Day, Christmas and New Year's Eve. All those single women knew exactly where they stood during the onslaught of storms. All the married men find dem yard and "had to be with the family". All those who thought that they really meant something to their significant other, were in for a rude awakening as the "other" was at some other location during the hurricane.

"So you really not spending the hurricane night with me?" "Honey, I would love to, but I have to go and stay with mamma, her roof not too stable and is she one at the house?"



ble and is she one in de house."

Blame it on the storm. Plenty people had to hug up pillow and have disc jockeys on the radio for company during the storm's wrath. I never dreamed that I could be in the midst of a major hurricane and still be able to listen to call in shows on the radio. I got calls from all over the world, both on my landline and on my cellular phone all through the night. That alone saved a lot of people their sanity, especially those women who were alone because their so-called men were nowhere to be found.

Blame the hurricane. It respects no one, large or small, and I remember that some places in Florida were without power for a very long time, and that's the wealthy United States I'm talking about.

COMPARISONS

So Ivan came and blew, making time stand still, providing us with the longest night in Jamaica's history. The comparisons to hurricane Gilbert ran rife.

"Boy, at least Gilbert came

in the day and pass through fast, but Ivan just sidding pon we like a bad riddim," said someone to me.

Some said Gilbert was worse, others said Ivan was badder, but it all depended on where you were. So you could be one part of the country and not feel much, but people elsewhere were catching hell. So it's no point comparing Ivan to Gilbert, it just depends on where you were during both.

So many roofs were blown off, western Jamaica looked like a war zone. Even the higher elevations of Kingston suffered great damage, as some roofs flew from as early as eight o'clock Friday night when many folks were still waiting on the first breeze to blow. Oh, so many areas were affected, as the sea swept in and wrecked so many houses. I am no engineer, but I question the wisdom of building a house at the mouth of a river, by the sea, and below the level of the road too. But foolish people do.

Like I said, I'm no engineer, and people will say, "But we always do it. For over thirty odd years now." Thirty years is nothing in nature. But I suppose that people have to live somewhere, and if Jamaicans can build dwellings not only on the banks of dry river beds,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)



CLARENCE PAGE



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CARIB Comments

• **"I was prepared for the long haul"** – Journalist Mark Benschop late last month saying he reluctantly accepted a pardon issued by President Bharrat Jagdeo, insisting that he wanted to prove his innocence in court. Benschop was set free from prison

under the "Presidential Free Pardon". He had refused to apologize for the deaths of two protestors during the storming of the Office of the President in July 2002.

• **"I felt him coming on and I started to panic and that slowed me down"** – 100 meters world record holder



Asafa Powell explains his disappointing defeat to American Tyson Gay in the event at the IAAF World Athletics Championships.

• **"Competition is fast becoming a staple in the business of world tourism"** – Caribbean Hotel Association President Peter



Odle last month warning that the region is in danger of losing its traditional tourist market if fundamentals are not adhered to.

• **"He's one of the worst coaches I have had"** – West Indies cricket captain Ramnaresh Sarwan last month criticizing the team's former coach, Australian Bennett King.

• **"The roads have become a war zone"** – A statement from the

Barbados Association for Masqueraders (BAM) last month saying its members would boycott next year's Crop Over festival if organizers could not provide adequate security.



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Diversity is difficult, but really worth it

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

Be: Black Leadership and Racial Integration the Army Way", authors Charles Moskos and John Sibley Butler explain how. After years of trying to ignore racial differences, the Pentagon did an about-face. Everyone was ordered to be on the lookout for discrimination and other sources of racial tension or inequality. The military, once a bastion of segregation,

became a model of interracial and interethnic cooperation.

Sure, diversity makes a lot of people uncomfortable. Differences cause tensions, at least in the short run. But history shows we can come out O.K., once we learn how much we have in common.

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Ill winds: good, bad and ugly

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

but also in the river bed itself, then who am I to question their wisdom.

MORE MISERY

As for those looters, they just added to people's misery. No wonder in foreign countries the decree usually is, "looters will be shot on sight". Even people who normally curse and chastise the police had to step back and declare that if they had the power, they would wipe out those looters one by one. It's only now some people realize how difficult police work is. They are seeing these "looters" every day of their lives, not just during hurricane, so don't blame hurricanes for this one. I heard that looters were diving into four feet of mud to try and salvage people's things.

"Man is how yu house mash up so, hurricane lick yu?!"

"No, looters came a calling."

I wonder what the human rights groups have to say about that? I spoke to a Grenadian friend of mine, who expressed how after Ivan had ripped through her island, the looting went crazy. The term she used was, "the normally placid, calm law abiding Grenadians turned crazy and started to loot like mad." The word out of Cayman too, was that many hoodlums carried out the looting.

Whether this was true or not, I do not know, but based on what started here, I have to wonder. Some say it's God's will, others say that God

spared us. I heard a dread recently as he chastised and rebuked this parson man who said that the reason why Jamaica was spared so often was because so many God-faring people who prayed, lived here. The parson man went on to say that if Jamaicans lived in Grenada, then Ivan wouldn't mash up that island so.

Like the dread, I found that argument so arrogant, self-righteous and audacious. Everyone prays not to get hit, everyone prays to win. Who does God answer? Are there no God-faring people in Cayman, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Florida? Let's not get carried away folks.

I also took note of the high number of churches that were destroyed during major hurricanes like Ivan and Gilbert. Plain coincidence or divine intervention?

Well, you can be sure, as expected, nine months time plenty babies were born. Many areas were without power for a while, so with no television, no cable, no satellite dish, no dance to go to, and with long dark quiet nights looming, what's better to do than to rediscover your partner. So that's one good from the ill wind.

The hurricanes came and left, leaving many horrible memories and broken lives, but they also left a legacy of hope and caring for our fellow-man. It left good and it left bad, but whatever happened, it was really an ill wind.

seido1@hotmail.com



IMMIGRATION KORNER

Question: I am a student from the Caribbean studying in the United States Virgin Islands and will be graduating soon. I would like to know what my options are to live and work in the U.S. legally. In Nov. 2004, I applied for optional training and (up to press time) have not even received a receipt from U.S. immigration. What are my options?

Answer: Your question is quite broad but I will try to narrow it down to your employment-based immigra-

tion options, says Attorney Kerry William Bretz of the Manhattan, New York-based law firm Bretz & Coven, LLP. As a first step, you need to find a job in the U.S. with which you will be able to apply for a H-1B temporary work visa, said Bretz. The H-1B visa is renewable after the first three years while the maximum length of time for a H-1B is six years with certain exemptions.

Bertz said what we usually sees in his practice is that depending upon your performance at employment, most employers would be willing to sponsor you for a "green card" towards the per-

manent resident status in the U.S. A U.S. employer must complete a labor certification request (Form ETA 750) for this process to begin and submit it to the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. Labor must either grant or deny the certification request. Then the USCIS must approve an immigrant visa petition, Form I-140, Petition for Alien Worker, for the person wishing to immigrate to the U.S.

Meanwhile, said attorney Bretz, if the date is correct in your questions, you have a serious problem with your immigration status, that is,

you might be out-of-status. You need to consult a competent immigration attorney right away.

PLEASE NOTE: To everyone reading this column who may be out of status and hoping for a passage of the Senate bill on immigration reform: the bill mentioned is not law. Before a bill becomes a law, it must be passed by both the U.S. Senate and the House and then signed into law by the president. That has not happened as the Senate bill has stalled. So do not be fooled by unscrupulous individuals who may claim they can get you a "green card" through an "amnesty" measure.

- *Compiled by Felicia Persaud. This is a column created especially for immigrants concerned or unsure of issues pertaining to U.S. immigration law. If you have an immigration question, log on to www.immigrationkornner.com. 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 facts of the case.*



Can't keep up with mortgage payments? How to avoid foreclosure

Question: What happens when I miss mortgage payments?

Answer: Foreclosure may occur. This is the legal means that your lender can use to repossess (take over) your home. When this happens, you must move out of your house.

If your property is worth less than the total amount you owe on your mortgage loan, a deficiency judgment could be pursued. If that happens, you not only lose your home, you also would owe HUD an additional amount.

Both foreclosures and deficiency judgments could seriously affect your ability to qualify for credit in the future. So you should avoid foreclosure if possible.

Question: What should I do?

Answer: Do not ignore letters from your lender. If you are having problems making your payments, call or write to your lender's Loss Mitigation Department without delay. Explain your situation. Be prepared to provide them with financial information, such as your monthly income and expenses. Without this information, they may not be able to help.

Stay in your home for now. You may not qualify for assistance if you abandon your property.

Contact a HUD-approved housing counseling agency. Call 800-569-4287 or TDD 800-877-8339 for the housing counseling agency nearest you. These agencies are valuable resources. They frequently have information on services and programs offered by government agencies as well as private and community organizations that could help you. The housing counseling agency may also offer credit counseling. These services are usually free.

Question: What are my alternatives?

You may be considered for the following:

Special forbearance - Your lender may be able to arrange a repayment plan based on your financial situation and may even provide for a temporary reduction or suspension of your payments. You may qualify for this if you have recently experienced a reduction in income or an increase in living expenses. You must furnish information to your lender to show that you would be able to meet the requirements of the new payment plan.

Mortgage modification - You may be able to refinance the debt and/or extend the term of your mortgage loan. This may help you catch up by reducing the monthly payments to a more affordable level. You may qualify if you have recovered from a financial problem and can afford the new payment amount.

Partial claim - Your lender may be able to work with you to obtain a one-time payment from the FHA insurance fund to bring your mortgage current. You may qualify if:

- Your loan is at least four months delinquent, but no more than 12 months delinquent;
- You are able to begin making full mortgage payments.

When your lender files a partial claim, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will pay your lender the amount necessary to bring your mortgage current. You must execute a promissory note, and a lien will be placed on your property until the promissory note is paid in full.

The promissory note is interest-free and is due when you pay off the first mortgage or when you sell the property. Pre-foreclosure sale - This will allow you to avoid foreclosure by selling your property for an

amount less than the amount necessary to pay off your mortgage loan. You may qualify if:

- The loan is at least two months delinquent;
- You are able to sell your house within three to five months; and
- A new appraisal (that your lender will obtain) shows that the value of your home meets HUD program guidelines.

Deed-in-lieu of foreclosure - As a last resort, you may be able to voluntarily "give back" your property to the lender. This won't save your house, but it is not as damaging to your credit

anything else?

Answer: Yes. Beware of scams! Solutions that sound too simple or too good to be true usually are. If you're selling your home without professional guidance, beware of buyers who try to rush you through the process. Unfortunately, there are people who may try to take advantage of your financial difficulty. Be especially alert to the following:

Equity skimming - In this type of scam, a "buyer" approaches you, offering to get you out of financial trouble by promising to pay off your mortgage or give you a sum of money when the property is sold. The "buyer" may suggest that you move out quickly and deed the property to him or her. The "buyer" then collects rent for a time, does not make any mortgage payments, and allows the lender to foreclose. Remember, signing over your deed to someone else does not necessarily relieve you of your obligation on your loan.

Phony counseling agencies -

Some groups calling themselves "counseling agencies" may approach you and offer to perform certain services for a fee. These could well be services you could do for yourself for free, such as negotiating a new payment plan with your lender, or pursuing a pre-foreclosure sale. If you have any doubt about paying for such services, call a HUD-approved housing coun-

seling agency at 800-569-4287 or TDD 800-877-8339. Do this before you pay anyone or sign anything.

Question: Are there any precautions I can take?

Answer: Here are several precautions that should help you avoid being "taken" by a scam artist:

- Don't sign any papers you don't fully understand.
- Make sure you get all "promises" in writing.
- Beware of any contract of sale of loan assumption where you are not formally released from liability for your mortgage debt.
- Check with a lawyer or your mortgage company before entering into any deal involving your home.
- If you're selling the house yourself to avoid foreclosure, check to see if there are any complaints against the prospective buyer. You can contact your state's attorney general, the State Real Estate Commission, or the local district attorney's Consumer Fraud Unit for this type of information.

The information above is applicable to homeowners in the United States with FHA insured loans. Contact your lender or a housing counseling agency.

Information provided by www.mortgageinfospecialist.com



rating as a foreclosure. You may qualify if:

- You are in default and don't qualify for any of the other options;
- Your attempts at selling the house before foreclosure were unsuccessful; and
- You don't have another FHA mortgage in default.

Question: How do I know if I qualify for any of these alternatives?

Answer: Your lender will determine if you qualify for any of the alternatives. A housing counseling agency can also help you determine which, if any, of these options may meet your needs and also assist you in interacting with your lender. Call 800-569-4287 or TDD 800-877-8339.

Question: Should I be aware of

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Granola: The tasty, healthy back-to-school breakfast

For those with children, the New Year doesn't really begin on Jan. 1. Instead, it comes some time between August and September, when the kids go back to school.

A family's whole approach to cooking changes at this time of year. Instead of relaxed meals at home, there's packed lunches put together in the morning and quick, nourishing menus to prepare for dinner. There's more attention to giving our families easy, flavorful and fun-to-eat breakfasts.

A favorite quick breakfast treat is granola, which can be made in large quantities and stored easily, so it's ready to serve in seconds. It's full of healthy whole grains, dried fruit and other good things. Best of all, it's delicious, waking you up with its delicious flavors and crunchy and chewy textures, which taste only better with a splash of ice-cold milk.

You don't have to be a health-food nut to enjoy granola. The recipe in this issue of **Caribbean Today** is a popular breakfast item at my Postrio restaurants in San Francisco and Las Vegas.

SECRET

The secret to its successful preparation is slow baking at a relatively low temperature until the ingredients reach a beautiful brown color. That's the differ-

ence between rich-tasting, crunchy granola and a bland, blond product. Then, come morning, just put some granola



Granola is nice and nutritious.

in a bowl, add milk or yogurt and maybe some fresh berries or banana, and breakfast is served. Or offer some as an after-school snack or after-dinner treat, sprinkled over ice cream.

POSTRIO GRANOLA

Ingredients

- 1 cup (250 ml) shredded unsweetened coconut
- 1 pound (500 g) rolled oats
- 1/4 pound (125 g) sliced blanched almonds
- 1/4 pound (125 g) raw shelled cashews
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon grated orange zest
- 1-1/2 teaspoons kosher salt

- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon grated nutmeg
- 10 ounces (300 g) unsalted butter (or less if you want a lower-fat result)
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) maple syrup
- 1 cup (250 ml) seedless raisins or assorted chopped dried fruit

Method

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. (165°C).

Spread the coconut evenly in a thin layer on a baking sheet or in a baking pan. Bake it until golden brown, five to seven minutes, keeping careful watch to ensure that it doesn't burn. Remove from the oven and immediately transfer to a bowl to cool. Set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the oats, almonds

and cashews. Add the brown sugar, orange zest, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg, and stir well to combine.

In a saucepan, combine the butter and syrup and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, just until the butter has melted and the mixture is hot but not yet boiling. Pour this mixture evenly over the dry ingredients and stir well to coat them evenly.

Lightly grease one or two rimmed baking sheets or baking pans. Empty the mixture onto the sheet or sheets and, with a large spoon or spatula, spread it and press it down to an even thickness of half inch (12 mm).

Transfer the baking sheet or sheets to the oven and bake for about 30 minutes. Then, very carefully invert the mix-

ture onto another greased sheet or pan and bake until it reaches a deep golden brown color, 10 to 20 minutes more.

Remove from the oven and transfer the sheet or sheets to wire racks, leaving them to cool completely. Remove the granola and, by hand, break it into bite-sized chunks, placing them in a clean mixing bowl. Add the raisins or dried fruit and the toasted coconut and toss well to combine. Transfer to one or more airtight containers and store at cool room temperature.

Makes about 16 servings.

Edited from an article written by chef Wolfgang Puck. © 2007 Wolfgang Puck Worldwide, Inc. Distributed by Tribune Media Services Inc.

'Jamaican Jerk Festival' set for Sept. 23 in Florida

Traditional jerk food, drink and a variety of entertainment offerings will again highlight the annual "Jamaican Jerk Festival" in South Florida.

The festival, now in its sixth year, is scheduled for **Sept. 23** at Markham Park in Sunrise.

This year, the hours of the event have been extended to run from **10 a.m. to 10 p.m.** Music, dominoes, cooking demonstrations and activities for the children are also among

the highlights.

Contestants in the "Jerk Cook-off" will bid for bigger prize money this year, with the winner earning \$1,500 or three times the amount of last year's prize. Second prize has been doubled from \$250 to \$500. Third prize is now \$250, up from \$100.

Two new cultural stages will provide festival patrons access to the island's cultural heritage. They will feature oral presentations, limbo dancers, a live steel

band and a performance by the Blue Glades Mento Band. Byron Lee and the Dragonaires band, soca singer Allison Hinds and Caribbean jazz musician Eugene Grey are also on the bill.

Cricket and netball matches are also scheduled in 2007.

For more information, call Jamaica Awareness, Inc. at **305-405-2712** or Riddims Marketing, Inc. at **305-891-1242**.



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H E A L T H

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Food watch: Beware high salt, sugar and fat

MAKEISHA LEE

There are many addictions that go unnoticed or get downplayed in today's society.

Others get absolutely too much airtime, like all the juicy gossip about alcohol and drug addictions of celebrities.

The addiction in question now is that of food, more specifically high fat, sugary and or salty foods. Most people are not aware of any possible food addiction because, like all other addictions, they are rationalized.

People generally are not looking for their addictions; rather they look for ways to conceal them and people who seek to help the addicted ave no luck in their efforts.

So the smartest move would be to just identify some possible areas of food addiction to raise them to a level of suspicion. Some symptoms of

food/sugar addiction are:

- Obesity
- Chronic constipation
- Hypoglycemia
- Chronic stomach upset
- Tooth decay
- Headaches
- Chronic candida infection
- Intestinal gas
- Arthritis

Food addiction is synonymous with compulsive overeating. Compulsive overeaters are often caught in the vicious cycle of binge eating and depression. They often use food as a coping mechanism to deal with their feelings. When they binge eat, it temporarily relieves the stress of these feelings, but unfortunately is followed by feelings of guilt, shame and disgust.

STRUGGLE

Food addicts are constantly struggling with their weight



and/or just plain unhappy with their weight. This kind of disorder commonly affects a number of obese individuals that can't seem to break free from the vice of excessive eating habits.

For such individuals having one cookie is never enough. They have to have another until the bag is gone

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)

Don't let PMS sink a healthy marriage

SUZY COHEN

QUESTION: My marriage is on the rocks. Recently, my husband told me: "If you don't do something for your PMS, I'm packing my stuff and leaving!" I honestly want to get well, and I've tried birth control pills, Midol, countless tranquilizers and antidepressants. I feel doped and still cry a lot and feel moody. Can you help? - E.R., New York, N.Y.

ANSWER: You're not alone in the quest to manage the monthly madness. Saving your marriage is going to require a few more months of patience on your husband's part, some compliance on your part, and forgiveness for one another's

"imperfections".

Hormones need to be in balance, so ask your doctor to do a hormone profile to see what your levels are for thyroid hormone, DHEA, cortisol, estradiol, progesterone and testosterone. If one of these is out of kilter, the others are affected too and premenstrual symptoms could get out of hand. Women often try to supplement randomly with herbs and vitamins in an effort to generate production of one of these hormones, but it's not smart. Too much of a good thing could fuel growth of cancer cells. Plus, you might sprout hair in places it shouldn't be (like your chest) and

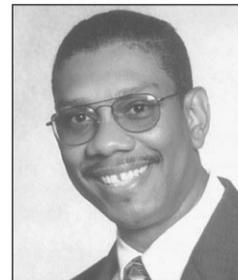
(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)

LEADING LADY ON HEALTH



Caribbean American actress Sheryl Lee Ralph, center, links up with Dr. Albert W. Morris, left, president of the National Medical Association (NMA), and Dr. Carolyn Barley Britton, NMA board chair, during the organization's recent Council on the Concerns of Women Physicians' annual awards luncheon at the NMA's annual convention in Honolulu, Hawaii. Ralph, who was born in Jamaica, is a long-time advocate for proper healthcare, particularly in the area of HIV/AIDS. "While my vocation is acting and producing, my avocation is healthcare," she said at the function. The NMA is the oldest African American medical organization in the United States.

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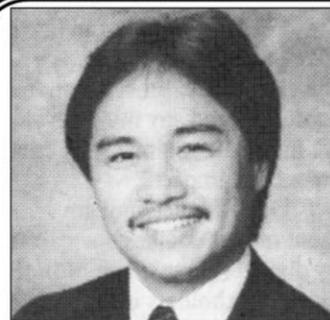


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Tips to beat the heat

The elderly and children under the age of five are most at risk to high temperatures, but everyone who shows signs or symptoms of heat-related illnesses need immediate medical care.

Heat-related emergencies can be avoided if you follow a proactive plan. The following tips are geared at minimizing the risk of heat-related problems:

- Drink plenty of cool fluids throughout the day, but avoid those that contain caffeine, alcohol or high sugar content since they actually

contribute to dehydration and make a heat-related illness worse.

- Stay indoors in an air-conditioned place and limit your outdoor activities to the early morning or evening hours,



Drinking cool fluids helps.

- Photograph by AP

- avoiding the mid-day sun.
- If you must exercise, drink

two to four glasses of cool, nonalcoholic fluids each hour. A sports drink can replace the salt and minerals you lose in sweat.

- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.

- Never leave anyone in a closed, parked vehicle.

- Check frequently on the elderly, young children and others at higher risk for heat-related illnesses.

- Don't forget your animals. Keep them in an air-conditioned area if possible and provide plenty of fresh water.

Food watch: Beware high salt, sugar and fat

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

and then do it all over again. They may have soda pop or some other sugary/salty and/or high-fat laden food to give them that comfort and that surge or high rush. The problem is that after initial consumption of these foods it gives the brain only a temporary fix and you crave even more of it. Thus, we live in a society with a prevalence of widespread obesity and obesity-related illnesses.

We recognize that this condition of food addiction is nothing more than the body's inner cry for help from the turmoil going on within. The body is begging you to feed it the proper balance of nutrients and minerals to keep good brain chemistry. When the body does not get it, it takes what you do give it, and then becomes confused and suddenly you have no control over it or over your mind itself.

SOLUTIONS

There is a growing body of evidence that nutritional deficiencies, along with food allergies, amino acid imbalances can all result from or

contribute to the cause of this addiction. So what can be done?

- Seek alternative professional care (as prescription drugs may exacerbate the condition);

- Check for and eliminate biochemical imbalances;

- Eliminate toxins from the body (regularly);

- Implement consistent nutritional supplementation into a healthy diet; and

- Exercise frequently (the body releases feel good hormones while exercising, thus food dependency is lessened).

Such persons are not alone in their struggle to overcome this type of eating disorder/addiction. Utilizing these strategies you can begin to bring the body back into harmony and balance so that it can once again function normally - addiction free.

Distributed through BlackPR.com. Makeisha Lee is a health and nutrition consultant. Learn more about cleansing and detoxifying your body by visiting www.CleanseFormula.com www.GuideToCleansing.com

Don't let PMS sink a healthy marriage

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

lose it in places you want it (like your head). Lovely.

A hormone specialist will know how to test you, or you can now order home test kits and take the results to your doctor. Home test kits usually involve saliva or urine samples and some of them optionally offer tests that require a "blood spot" (yes, this requires a gentle finger prick). You can order hormone test kits through ZRT Lab (www.zrtlab.com), Virginia Hopkins (www.virginiahopkinshealthwatch.com) and the late Dr. John Lee's website (www.johnleemd.com), or Meridian Valley Labs (425-271-8689 Pacific Time).

If you feel irritable or moody, you could try a little bit of magnesium (magnesium glycinate or citrate, about 200-300 mg once or twice daily). Combinations that contain calcium are fine, too. Green tea is meditation in a teacup; it contains a substance that's instantly calming. The Siberian herb Rhodiola rosea is calming, about 50-100 mg twice daily. Since tearfulness is a problem, magnesium could be particularly helpful, as well as St. John's Wort or 5-

hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP). These may also help you sleep better. Ask your doctor about these last two, especially if you take medications for anxiety, bipolar disorder or depression.

This is easy: Sprinkle ground up flax seeds on your food. They help curtail the effects of excessive estrogens in the body. You could also eat bucketfuls of broccoli or take the supplemental form called "I3C" (also "DIM") which can help safely process estrogen. Fish oil (with meals) can help reduce cramping and inflammation.

DID YOU KNOW? Dabbing age spots with a 50-50 mix of cider vinegar and lemon juice can lighten up those discolorations. Do it several times a day for a few months.

The above information is not intended to treat, cure or diagnose your condition. Suzy Cohen is a pharmacist and author of "The 24-Hour Pharmacist".

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Caribbean Int'l Film Festival set for Nov. 7-11 in B'dos

Sept. 15 is the early deadline to submit entries for the Caribbean International Film Festival (CIFF07) in Barbados.

Submissions for dramatic and documentary feature-length films, short films and music videos are being accepted.

The festival will be held in Barbados **Nov. 7-11**.

A screening of "The Harder They Come", written, produced and directed by the late Jamaican filmmaker Perry Henzell, who will be honored at a special gala event, will be among the festival's highlights. It will be accompanied by a special screening of "The Making of: The Harder They Come".

Submission forms and information regarding eligibility can be accessed online at the CIFF07 website:

www.caribbeaninternational-filmfestival.com

The late entry deadline is **Oct. 1**.

For more information,



Henzell

call **1-888-272-1490** or email us at entries@caribbeaninternationalfilmfestival.com



ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS

• **'Broward Caribbean Carnival'**

The "Broward Caribbean Carnival" will be held on **Oct. 7** at the Miramar Regional Park in that South Florida, United States county.

Among the attractions at the event, which is scheduled to run from **9 a.m. to 11 p.m.**, are costume parades and band performances. Also scheduled to be on stage are Byron Lee and the Dragonaires, Iwer, Red Hot Flames, The Kaiso All Stars, Leon Cordero, Code 868 and Claudette Peters.

For more information, visit caribbeancarnival.org or call **954-806-8396**.

• **Band leaders threaten Crop Over boycott**

Crop Over costume band leaders last month gave Barbadian authorities a December deadline to detail a new

security plan for next year's festival or face a boycott of bands on the road.

The Barbados Association for Masqueraders (BAM) said its members would not be taking part in next year's festival without firm assurances from festival organizers that bands traversing the parade route would be provided with adequate security on the road by the Royal Barbados Force.

• **Burning Flames take Antigua's carnival title**

Popular band Burning Flames reclaimed the road march title as Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer played mas with the band-of-the-year to bring down the curtain on the jubilee carnival celebrations in Antigua last month.

Compiled from CMC and other sources.



Collective 'WORK!' of Bahamian artists on show at Miami's Diaspora Gallery

'**WORK!**', an art exhibition featuring the efforts of several Bahamians, is currently on display at the Diaspora Vibe gallery in Miami, Florida.

The exhibition, presented by the gallery and Popopstudios and which runs through Sept. 22, features a collective exhibition comprised of artists John Cox, Heino Schmid, Blue Curry, Toby Lunn, Jason Bennett and Michael Edwards.

According to a press release from the gallery, Each artist has a unique body of work with differing inspiration, which transforms the gallery into an interactive space where the viewers can



John Cox's "Society"

experience different media such as painting, sculpture, installation, video and photography.

Cox, is a mixed media painter and printmaker. Schmid explores the subject of

Sean Kingston's favorite summer grooves range from Jay-Z to Marley

Expressing undying love for the "Beautiful Girls" has propelled teenaged Sean Kingston, the United States-born pop-reggae crooner with the strong Caribbean roots, among this summer's favorite artistes.

Yet the 17-year-old from South Florida has his own favorites as well, with a mixed range of choices. Here's what he told **Rolling Stone** magazine last month:

Jay-Z: "Lost One"

"I love the vibe," Kingston says of the Kingdom Come tune, on which Hova dissects fame's pitfalls over Christette Michele's sweet hook.

Stevie Wonder: "Ribbon in the Sky"

Kingston's mom used to play the Motown legend's 1982 ballad when Sean was a kid. "I like Stevie's soft stuff - he's one of my biggest influences."

Bob Marley: "No Woman, No Cry"

"It's heartfelt," Kingston says of the epic 1975 slow-burner, which he heard nonstop growing up, his grandfather Jack Ruby was one of Marley's producers.



Sean Kingston knows the Caribbean has his back.

Akon: "Don't Matter"

Akon talks back to haters dissing him and his girl on this bouncy "Konvicted" cut: "It

has a nice reggae beat, and he uses all the unique styles of his voice."



'Dog War' is classic Caribbean comedy

• **TITLE: DOG WAR**
• **AUTHOR: ANTHONY C. WINKLER**
• **REVIEWED BY: GORDON WILLIAMS**

When Caribbean people first stumbled on "The Lunatic" in cinemas many years ago, the

movie's humor not only sent many rolling in the isles, it also left them wondering what kind of quirky mind could have come up with a 'mad-man' that makes you laugh.

Well Jamaican-born Anthony C. Winkler, who wrote the book from which the movie was made, is back with another hilarious tale called "Dog War".

Again the author picks his Caribbean roots as the base for his story, which focuses on a middle-aged Jamaican woman, Precious Higginson, and her intense tussle with advancing years and a myriad of other moral dilemmas.

If Precious is not waging "dog war" with her husband, Theophilus, a strict headmaster with a "craving for rule and regulation", it is her children, her maid or her employer...and even her employer's dog!

HILARIOUS

Precious is framed as a pic-

ture of true Caribbean beauty, "invitingly padded in the way Third World women used to be" before people from elsewhere decided on other so-called standards. Precious is richly hilarious too, even if she is not actually trying to be.

Yet the real beauty is Winkler's writing - easy to read and funny as hell. For those familiar with Caribbean culture and tradition, "Dog War" will make take you back to your roots. But even if you have never been to the region, the humor is still delicious - like diving into your favorite bowl of ice cream - and inescapably refreshing.

The new novel, released in June, is among many notable works by Winkler, before and after "The Lunatic". And "Dog War" is classic comic-fiction. Imagine just how juicy the movie would be like.

PUBLISHER: Akashic Books, New York.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



Teenagers: Be wary of holiday sales-job pitches

My daughter gripped two envelopes as she drifted through the mass of people after her high school graduation ceremony. In one packet, of course, was her diploma.

The other? An invitation to join the sales force of a marketing company based in New York. According to my daughter, a company representative handed out informational packets to students as they gathered in a courtyard for a ceremonial toss of their caps.

It didn't end there. There was also company promotional material on our car. And there were follow-up letters from the company alerting my 18-year-old to "immediate openings for summer work" in customer sales and service.

No doubt, tens of thousands of high school- and college-age students have received the same employment enticements from this company that generates about \$177 million in cutlery sales annually.

The company recruits must be at least 17 years old. The company offers full- and part-time jobs, flexible schedules and intensive training in

how to sell kitchen knives that can cost hundreds of dollars. Workers are required to purchase a set of demonstration kitchen knives for about \$135 (which will be refunded if the samples are returned).

In our area, salesmen are paid \$15 per sales call regardless of whether a purchase is made. These in-home demonstrations must be booked in advance. Plus, workers can qualify for commissions and bonuses.

Are there many success stories?

Absolutely, including one employee I mentioned in a column four years ago. Although not a top producer, he still said the training, staff support and workplace experience during his three-month stint was invaluable.

Some former employees, however, would disagree with that assessment. I heard from

several after that column who said that they didn't like the way they were trained to make high-pressure sales pitches, that they were not fairly compensated, and that they had difficulty obtaining



Youths – and parents – must be careful when choosing a holiday job.

refunds on sample cutlery sets. The company, on its website, said these issues had long been resolved.

I have mixed feelings about companies that rely on young foot soldiers to sell everything from kitchen knives to books, DVDs and

magazines. For some students, this might be their ticket to starting off adult life on the right foot – both financially and with skill sets honed in the art of accepting rejection and communicating effectively.

But I'm wary, too.

Knocking on doors, even if you have an appointment, can be dangerous work in this day and age. Moreover, pay isn't always what it's cracked up to be. Ultimately, it is a numbers game. The more calls you can make, the more demos you can get and thus the potential for more sales.

If your son or daughter is still eyeing a job, it only makes sense to take an active role in that process. Here are some issues from the National Consumers League, an advocacy group, to cover with your young worker:

Set limits - Make decisions with your son or daughter about appropriate and safe employment. Make sure they know how many hours of work per week are permissible.

Check out the workplace - Make sure the company has a solid infrastructure and good field support. Meet your

child's supervisor, request a tour of the facilities, and ask about safety training, duties and equipment. The bottom line: "Don't assume the job is safe," the consumer organization said. "Every workplace has hazards."

Know the laws - State and federal child labor laws exist to protect younger workers. Parents and workers alike should become at least generally familiar with the rules and regulations.

Start with the U.S. Department of Labor's Web site, www.dol.gov. A section on youth and labor provides in-depth information on age requirements, wages and work hours. Here you'll also find resources for parents and young workers. Parents also can find more information relevant to working teens at the National Consumers League Web site, www.nclnet.org.

Edited from Tribune Media Services article written by Steve Rosen.

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Grenada to launch training program

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada, CMC - The Grenada government says it will launch a national training program for young people to meet the anticipated demands created by the establishment of several new projects.

"Very soon my friends we are announcing a massive national training program where thousands of young people will be brought in," Prime Minister Dr. Keith Mitchell said last month at a ceremony honoring students who have received scholarships to pursue higher studies in Cuba.

"They will be given stipends to be able to be there, the equipment and support services to train them in all aspects of job opportunities for the jobs that are coming."

TOURISM BOOST

The Mitchell administration has presided over the development of several major infrastructural projects, such as the construction of the national stadium, a new general hospital, a ministerial complex and a new cruise ship port and shopping centre. However, officials say the country's tourism sector is poised for an unprecedented phase of development with several multi-million dollar projects in the hotel and tourism sector at various stages of development including a Four Seasons Resort and

the Port Louis Marina project.

"In other words, we are not going to wait when the hotels say we need 3,000 persons in information technology (IT) services in security services in hospitality, arts cooks and others, we have to take people from outside to come in and do that for us," Mitchell said. "We are going to be doing all aspects, so the training will be diverse."

Schools across the tri-island state will be used to train an estimated 4,000 young persons in skills, ranging from IT and construction services to security services and food preparations.

INVESTORS' CHOICE

The decision to start a national training program for young people followed a meeting between government officials and some of the country's leading investors, Mitchell said.

At least six investors have agreed to help fund the program.

"In recent times we have seen the opportunity for major development projects but what we have done we have not sat there we have now met with our partners," said Mitchell, also the country's minister of finance.

Hundreds of school leavers currently participate in a government-paid internship program, re-started last year after a three-year break.



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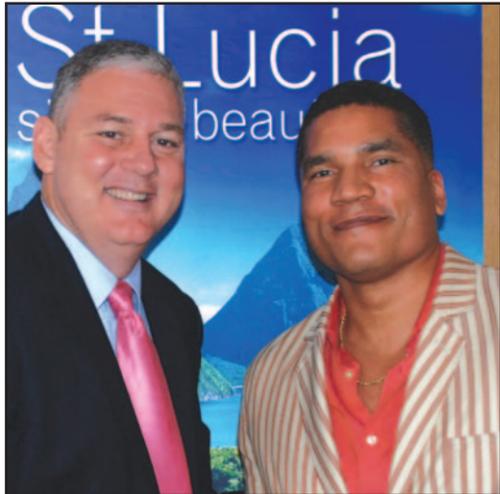
T O U R I S M / T R A V E L

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St. Lucia hopes to score knockout with 'Showtime in Paradise' event

St. Lucia will attempt to show itself as a knockout travel destination when it hosts a boxing extravaganza later this year.

"Showtime in Paradise",



Senator Allen Chastanet, left, St. Lucia's minister of tourism, seals the deal with Paxton Baker, president of BET Event Productions, following a recent announcement of the "Showtime in Paradise" boxing event.

scheduled for Nov. 16, will be held at the Beausejour Cricket Ground on the Caribbean island.

During a recent news conference at the Bay Gardens Beach Resort, in Rodney Bay Village, the planners announced that the event would feature top-ranked boxers, whose names are expected to be announced soon.

Senator Allen Chastanet, St. Lucia's minister of tourism, announced Showtime Networks Incorporated, a CBS Company, plans to air a live broadcast of the six-fight card in association with United States-based BET J, which will carry a rebroadcast and prepare other promotional material that will highlight St. Lucia as the destination for the fight and as a prime tourism destination.

"This boxing event will give us an opportunity to expose ourselves to markets we have not been in," Chastanet said in a recent press release.

"We will not only be known as a wedding destination, but now broaden our image to represent the planned growth that is taking place on the island," he added.

EXPOSURE

President of BET Event Productions Paxton Baker said that apart from the George Foreman-Joe Frazier fight, staged in Jamaica in 1973, and a couple of other fights in Puerto Rico and The Bahamas, the November telecast will be among the most recent from the Caribbean and the first to be done from the Eastern Caribbean.

"In addition to a rebroadcast on BET J, we will develop two additional 30-minute shows about the experience of the boxers in St. Lucia, while additional footage will be made available on other multi-media platforms which will allow St. Lucia to get additional exposure," Baker said.

U.S. boxing promoter Dan Goosen, president of Goosen Tutor Productions, said he hopes the event will attract many fight fans to the island for a week of festivities leading up to the November event.

"We compliment Minister Chastanet for his tremendous vision in using boxing as a

means of promoting the growth of the tourism sector in St. Lucia," Goosen said, pointing out that the successful casinos in Las Vegas had all used boxing as a growth instrument as it always attracted television audiences and fans to their venues.

"Showtime in Paradise" is being planned to coincide with the inaugural American Airlines non-stop service from New York to St. Lucia on Nov. 15.



Antigua signs major agreement with Miami International Airport

working committee. "Our agreement...comes at a time when this ministry is



Lovell

seeking to re-introduce direct Miami -Antigua services to enable us to tap into Miami's vital and direct linkages to the U.S. and Latin America and to increase direct access to Miami as a commercial and business center," Lovell said.

MIAMI – Antigua and Barbuda says it has signed a cooperation agreement with the Miami International Airport.

"A major advance was made within the aviation industry with the official signing of an International Sister Airports Agreement between the V.C. Bird International Airport and the Miami International Airport", according to an official statement issued here.

"The agreement officially linked the Miami International Airport and the V.C. Bird International Airport, allowing for the exchange of information pertaining to cargo and passenger movement in each airport; historical statistical information pertaining to each airport; planned airport infrastructure developments; and general marketing research aimed at increasing passenger and cargo traffic at both airports, among other things", the statement added.

"The agreement also allows for both parties to consider the creation of a working group, made up of a limited number of representatives from each party, for the express purpose of putting in practice the intentions of the agreement".

LINKAGES

Aviation Minister Harold Lovell, who signed the agreement late last month, said it would take four weeks for consultations to take place regarding the configuration of the

"This agreement is an important building block of that effort, and will enable us to expand our tourism and investment marketing and promotional efforts in the U.S."

The statement said Miami captures 50 percent of all U.S.-Caribbean trade, with an estimated amount of \$10 million.

Commissioner of the Miami Dade County Jose Diaz said there were "huge economic and intellectual benefits to be derived from collaboration such as this."

Lovell commended Miguel Southwell, the Antigua-born assistant director of Miami-Dade Aviation Department, for his "vision and hard work in helping to bring the Sister Agreement to fruition."



BOUND FOR BARBADOS



Air Jamaica says it is pleased with the recent launch of its service between Fort Lauderdale, Florida and Barbados and hopes that within a year the frequency will move from three to seven days a week. George deMercado, center, the airline's vice president of sales, said passenger loads have been encouraging, especially at the height of the recent Crop Over season which attracted Barbadians in the United States diaspora and other visitors. The new flight operates non-stop in both directions on Friday, Saturday and Sunday and connects with LIAT to Tobago, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Dominica, Martinique, Antigua, and St. Kitts and Nevis. Photograph shows deMercado celebrating the new partnership with Barbados's Minister of Tourism Noel Lynch, left, and Paul Pennicook, the airline's senior vice president of marketing. Since Air Jamaica began operations out of Fort Lauderdale in 1995, the airline has carried more than two million passengers.

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*Fares quoted are per person each way based on roundtrip purchase, economy class and are non-refundable. Reservations required at least 7 days before departure. Ticketing must be completed within 1 day after reservations are made or 7 days before departure. Valid for travel through December 17, 2007. Maximum stay 60 days. Change penalties of \$100.00 and other restrictions apply. Seats are limited and may not be available on all flights. U.S. and foreign government imposed taxes and fees of up to \$81.00 per person are additional and due with final payment. A September 11th security fee of \$2.50 per person per U.S. enplanement is additional and due with final payment.

Social Security issues warning about money-stealing 'scams'

The Social Security Administration in the United States has issued a warning to U.S. residents to be careful of several "scams", especially in the southeast section of the country, aimed at stealing Social Security numbers and then their owners' money.

According to the SSA, senior citizens are often among the most vulnerable.

The SSA has received many reports about telephone calls or visits from people who falsely claim to be Social Security employees. In each case, the person attempted to obtain personal information,

such as a Social Security or bank account number, from the Social Security recipient.

The scam artists, who identify themselves as Social Security employees, have used a variety of approaches to get information. In one case, a caller said that Social Security was experiencing a power outage and needed to verify the person's information. In another, the caller posed as an employee who needed to verify the person's direct deposit information. During a third scam, Social Security recipients were told that their monthly benefit payments were being cut because they have inherited a



house from a relative - an event which would not result in a reduction of Social Security benefits.

To help make the fraud seem authentic, the caller then placed the person on hold and played the same on-hold recordings used by SSA. When the caller got back on

the line, the recipients were then told that proceeds from the sale of the house will be sent to them if they pay the back taxes.

CAUTION

The SSA is advising the public to always take precautions when giving out personal information, including never providing their Social Security number or other personal information over the telephone unless they initiated the contact, or are confident of the person to whom they are speaking. If in doubt, the SSA said, do not release information without first verifying the validity of the call.

The SSA recommends contacting a local Social Security office or calling its toll-free number at **1-800-772-1213** to verify the legitimacy of the call. (The deaf or hard of hearing may call SSA's TTY number at **1-800-325-0778**.)

To report suspicious activity, call the OIG Hotline at **1-800-269-0271**. (The deaf or hard of hearing may call the OIG TTY number at 1-866-501-2101.) A Public Fraud Reporting form is also available online at the OIG's website: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/oig/>



SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET

Current and former political leaders will be honored at the Caribbean Bar Association's "11th Annual Scholarship Awards Banquet" this month in South Florida.

Former Jamaican Prime Minister P.J. Patterson, Jamaican-born Miramar City Commissioner Winston Barnes and Florida Governor Charlie Crist will be the honorees at the function, scheduled for **Sept. 29** at the Westin Diplomat Resort and Spa, 3555 S. Ocean Dr., Hollywood.

Nova Southeastern University will also be honored at the event, where Patterson is the scheduled keynote speaker. Cocktail reception is at **6:30 p.m.** Dinner is at **7:30 p.m.**

For more information, call Pamela Gordon at **305-653-5374** or **305-331-9912**.

JAMAICAN GALA

The American Friends of Jamaica is scheduled to hold its 26th annual gala and auction for Jamaican charities at **6:30 p.m. Oct. 9** at Cipriani 23rd St., 200 Fifth Ave. in New York.

Philanthropists Louise and Edgar Cullman will be this year's honorees.

For reservations and more information, call **212-626-6883**, or visit www.theAFJ.org/GALA.

SWAN DANCE

The St. Hugh's Alumnae Association of Florida will hold its annual "Swan Dance" on **Nov. 10** at the West Broward Hall, 178th Avenue and Pines Boulevard, Pembroke Pines.

The association was created to help support its Kingston, Jamaica-based alma mater St. Hugh's High School for girls. It meets the second Saturday of every other month (February, April, June, August, October and December).

For more information, visit <http://www.shaafl.org>.

HURRICANE AID

Drop off points have been set up at several South Florida churches, including the Holy Family Episcopal Church in North Miami, Kendall Community Church in Kendall, and the Holy Sacrament Episcopal Church in Pembroke Pines, for aid to victims of Hurricane Dean in Jamaica.

The Jamaican Consulate is accepting monetary donations in the form of money orders made payable to the Jamaica

Consulate General (Hurricane Relief) and mailed to the office at 25 Southeast Second Ave., Suite 609, Miami, Florida 33131.

Critically needed items include as non-perishable food, batteries, flashlights, first aid kits, battery operated radios and bottled water.

For more information, persons can call the Consulate office at **305-374-8431**, extensions **223** and **232**.

LIGHTNING TIPS

Lightning is a deadly weather hazard which claims many lives each year. Summer is the peak season for lightning. Therefore, next time a storm rolls in, remember the following tips:

- Use the "30-30 Rule" when you see lightning by counting until you hear thunder. If that time is 30 seconds or less, seek shelter immediately because the storm is close enough to be dangerous.
- When outside, avoid being the tallest object.
- Don't stand under or near an isolated tree or small group of trees.
- Get inside a sturdy structure before the storm approaches.
- Unplug all unnecessary

appliances.

- Don't use the telephone during a storm unless it's an emergency.
- Don't stand by open windows, doors or patios during a thunderstorm.
- Get out of boats and away from water.
- If a sturdy shelter is not available, get inside a hard-topped automobile and keep the windows up.
- Don't take a bath or shower during a thunderstorm.
- If you feel your skin tingle or your hairs stand on end, squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact with the ground. Do not lay flat on the ground.
- If someone is struck by lightning, call **911** immediately.

Also be aware of positive or "out-of-the blue" lightning. Lightning that originates at the top of a thunderstorm carries a positive charge. Positive lightning is particularly dangerous because:

- It frequently strikes away from the rain core, either ahead or behind the thunderstorm.
- It can strike as far as five to 10 miles from the storm, in areas that most people do not consider to be a lightning risk area.
- It has a longer duration making fires more likely.
- It usually carries a high peak electrical current, which increases the lightning risk to an individual.

IMMIGRATION HELP

The USCIS, Office of Citizenship, has launched [WelcometoUSA.gov](http://www.welcometoUSA.gov), the inter-agency web portal that presents a comprehensive range of resources and information for use by immigrants.

Visit the website at <http://www.welcometousa.gov/>

This website provides immigrants with practical information on settling in the United States and other information about participating in our civic culture. It also serves as the central web portal to locate all federal government resources available to immigrants and the organizations that serve them.

The site contains links to help new immigrants find English classes, links to www.volunteer.gov for information on ways to get involved with their community, and also contains helpful links to www.uscis.gov, the USCIS website, itself.

PASSPORT FEE HIKE

The fees to obtain a passport from the Consulate General of Jamaica in Miami, Florida have been increased.

The increase has been attributed to a recent hike in postal rates in the United States Postal Service.

The new fee schedule will be as follows:

- passport renewals \$110 for adults and \$80 for children under the age of 18 years;
- replacing passports is \$190 for adults and \$130 for children.

The general fees include mandatory mailing cost for all processed passports. Processed passports will be mailed to the applicants.

Processing time for all applications is approximately six weeks.

The office of the consulate is located at the Ingraham Building at 25 S.E. Second Avenue, Suite 609, downtown Miami.

Call the office at **305-374-8431** or visit the website at www.jamaicacgmiami.org for more information.



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B U S I N E S S

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CARICOM, Canada set to establish new economic partnership

DAWNE BENNETT

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados - The stage is now set for a new economic partnership agreement (EPA) between CARICOM and Canada.

Following a July meeting in Barbados between CARICOM leaders and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, it was announced that negotiations on the CANADA/CARICOM EPA will begin by year-end, with the North American leader pledging his government's support to helping the region over the next 10 years.

It was Harper's third stop in his four-nation tour of the Americas - the first time he has made such a trip since taking up office in February last year, and the first time a Canadian leader has visited the region since 2004.

With Canadians directly investing billions of dollars in the import and export of products and commercial and travel services, Canada and CARICOM already have a solid trade foundation on which to build this new pact. But the conservative leader admitted that it is also a relationship that has been neglected by successive governments in his country.

Last month, however, a move was made to court the Caribbean once again, as Harper met with most of the heads of government, outlining his government's new vision.

Both sides have agreed that the way forward is through an all-encompassing free trade agreement with locked-in benefits, to replace the narrow Caribbean Canada Agreement (CARIBCAN) which not only limits trade to goods, but is time-bound, requiring a

World Trade Organization (WTO) waiver every five years. It's a problem CARICOM is not unfamiliar with, as it now faces stalled Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) negotiations with the United States - an arrangement which also requires a WTO waiver.

GOOD TIME
So, as CARICOM Chairman

Owen Arthur pointed out, the more modern agreement comes at a good time.

"We need in the Caribbean...to have new economic and trade relationships that are not limited to liberalizing trade in goods, but that also address fundamental issues in respect of liberaliza-



Harper

tion of trade in services, investment and all the disciplines that now are before the WTO or could arise in the relationship between states.

"We need, therefore, to create certainty to the economic relationship by taking us out of what I call this situation of permanent contingency...so we want to have a deeper, more mature relationship with Canada that is expressed in the form of a modern trade agreement," the host prime minister added.

Just what the pact will

"Now I know there is some skepticism within the region about free trade, but frankly there is no better way to boost living standards over the long term."

entail has not yet been worked out, but a free trade agreement that will take into account the particular circumstances of the region's smaller states, will be at the centre of the wider economic partnership. Harper indicated it would pay significant attention to CARICOM's integration effort.

"A free trade agreement would complement and help further develop the regional cooperation that you are already undertaking through the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) initiative," he said.

"Now I know there is some skepticism within the region about free trade, but frankly there is no better way to boost living standards over the long term."

The Canadian leader added that his country was ready to help address the vulnerabilities that may come from the move to a more open trading environment.

"We will help to bolster individual economies to adapt to the changing terms of trade, to confront the excessively high cost of public services in small states, and to address the need for strong, accountable public institutions.

"We will contribute to strengthening the transition to the single regional market and economy by delivering assistance for effective implementation, for the building of internal trade, and for the negotiation and implementation of trade agreements."

NEW ARRANGEMENT

Both leaders have repeatedly

insisted that the new economic arrangement will be mutually beneficial. But what exactly is Canada getting out of it? That and other questions have not yet been answered, but the region's chief trade negotiator, Ambassador Richard Bernal, says when the two sides hold talks later this year - which



Bernal

should coincide with the completion of EPA negotiations with the European Union - more flesh will be given to the accord.

"We expect that in this agreement we will be trying to forge the type of arrangement that can promote economic development and structural diversification of CARICOM

economies," said Bernal, director general of the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery.

"We expect the traditional friendship and the special treatment which Canada has extended to us to continue to be the foundation of this new arrangement."

EDUCATION KEY

Off the economic agenda, though, there's more to this new partnership. Canada is proposing that education be used as a key instrument linking the two sides, and it's against this background that it will increase the number of scholarships provided to Caribbean students, particularly at the graduate level.

Harper has also acknowledged the importance of providing Caribbean youth with appropriate skills for future development and management and indicated his government will soon launch a Caribbean Institutional Leadership Development Program "to promote the principles of leadership, accountability and transparency."

It's an aspect of the deal that recognizes other ties that bind CARICOM and Canada in a shared history that goes back 100 years.

- CMC



BUSINESS BRIEFS

• **Digicel offers new service to Haiti**

Digicel Group, a popular mobile telecommunications provider in the Caribbean, recently announced a partnership with Caribbean Air Mail, Inc. (CAM), a money transfer firm, which will allow the Haitian diaspora in the United States and Canada to purchase mobile handsets and prepaid minutes for associates in Haiti.

The Haitian diaspora in the U.S. and Canada is estimated to be two million people, according to Digicel sources. A recent report from Inter-American Development Bank also revealed that global remittance to Haiti topped \$1.65 billion in 2006.

• **High food imports leave Caribbean vulnerable**

A senior official of the Caribbean

community (CARICOM) Secretariat has said that the region's dependence on imported foods to meet its nutritional needs has left it vulnerable to under-nourishment.

While noting that over the last decade there had been a "slight improvement" in the prevalence of under-nourishment in Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and some countries within the sub-regional Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), CARICOM Assistant Secretary General Irwin LaRocque was nevertheless uncomfortable with the broader regional picture.

Compiled from various sources.



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Three win Laparkan/Una Clarke Caribbean American Scholarships

Una Clarke, a Jamaican-born political trailblazer in New York politics, was recently named vice president of external affairs for the development of business and relationship at the United States-based company Laparkan Shipping.

Clarke has been involved with Laparkan for a while. Since April 2003, she and the company have awarded The Laparkan Una Clarke Caribbean American Scholarship, which provides aid to Caribbean/Caribbean American students who are involved in or have participated in projects related to the upliftment of the Caribbean community in New York City.

This year, scholarships were awarded to Kristi Ann Philius, Kessill Robinson and Shaneice Nicholls, along with three other student educational and book scholarships based on their commitment to



Scholarship winners Kessill Robinson, Shaneice Nicholls and Kristi Ann Philius, third, fourth and fifth from left, respectively, show their awards after last month's presentation ceremony. Also on hand were, from left, Robert Mitchell, Laparkan's vice president for the northeast region; former scholarship recipients Clyde Chapman and Lea Peters; Una Clarke, and Daneel Howe, another former recipient.

community service, academics and volunteerism.

Clarke, a former city councilmember for the 40th

District in Brooklyn and the first Caribbean-born person elected to the New York City legislature, is also the mother

U.S. Congresswoman Yvette Clarke.



Caribbean media confab to link-up in Jamaica

The second Caribbean Media Conference and Exposition will be held next month in Kingston Jamaica.

The two-day event, **Oct. 10-11**, is expected to attract senior and mid-level marketing, media and telecom executives, students and academics from the region.

The telecommunications sector is expected to play a

major role in the conference, which will be held under the theme: "Consumer engagement – the key to media success".

United States-based telecom firm International Network Operations Group (INOG) has reportedly been confirmed as a main sponsor. The conference has also attracted sponsorship from Businessuite magazine,

Caribvision, BNC3, Telegens Inc, AK Insights, Nationwide News Network, Caribbean Today and Caribbean Voice.

"Our international telecom clients business is driven by consumer demand, and our business is driven by the business of the telecom sector," said INOG's Andrew Jackson, president and chief executive officer, of his company's decision to sponsor and take part

in the conference in a recent press release.

"It would seem fairly obvious that knowing where consumer demand is heading and the technology following and often times leading this demand, will put us in a more strategic position to predict and forecast the future business demands of the telecom sector and our clients."



Small hoteliers to rendezvous in Barbados

In the spirit of fostering interaction between small hotel owners and operators in the region, the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), in conjunction with the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA), will hold a Caribbean Small Hotels Retreat, **Sept. 26-28**, at the Barbados Hilton hotel in Bridgetown.

The two-day meeting, sponsored by the Barbados Tourism Authority and Caribbean Airways, has a different approach from traditional hospitality conferences by emphasizing small group discussions of eight to 10 people and a departure from the formality of large conventions.

"It's a retreat in a true sense, inasmuch as for two days small hoteliers will with-

draw to focus on practical considerations and insight based on experience of the day-to-day operating issues particular to inn keeping," said Barbadian small hotelier and President of the Caribbean Hotel Association Peter J. Odle.

INFORMAL

He added that the informal tone should not be confused with a casual or indifferent disposition to serious issues, but rather a strategy to stimulate an uninhibited professional exchange among peers.

The agenda for the retreat was developed by small hoteliers for small hoteliers, so subject areas are tabled as they apply specifically to a



Odle

small hotel operation in the Caribbean. Discussion topics include: public relations strategies; budget redecorating; niche marketing for small hotels; hidden potential revenue streams; the advantages

of 'green' practices specific to small hotel operations; management issues; food and beverage considerations; insurance; and the all important technology trends, among others.

In addition, each day will culminate with a series of "bull sessions" – open forums where the discussion is driven exclusively by the issues tabled impromptu by delegates.

For more information and registration, contact the CHA Conferences and Events Department at **787-725-9139**, or e-mail: mmarrero@caribbeanhotelassociation.com, or visit www.caribbeanhotelassociation.com/SmallHotelsRetreat.htm



St. Kitts group offers grants

St. Kitts and Nevis Association of Florida, Inc. (SNAF) is inviting applicants for its Florida Scholarship Award – 2007.

The scholarship is worth \$1,000 per student and will be paid to the designated college or university. To be considered for a 2007 scholarship, applicants must:

- Main a grade point average of 3.5 or higher;
- Produce official transcript in any field of study, 15 days prior to the event so it can be verified;
- Be a student at a college/university within the state of Florida;
- Be Kittitian/Nevisian by parentage or birth; and
- Show proof of leadership within the college/university life and/or community.

Applicants can only qualify once for SNAF's Scholarship. They should mail entries to: Florida Scholarship Award – 2007, c/o St. Kitts and Nevis Association of Florida, Inc. (SNAF), P.O. Box 310236, Miami, FL 33231-0236.

Scholarship recipients will be announced on the night of the SNAF's Independence dinner and ball to be held on **Sept. 15** at Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel, 7707 N.W. 103rd St. in Hialeah, Florida. Cocktails are at **7 p.m.** Dinner at **8 p.m.**



NETWORKING BRIEFS

• 'Matchmaker' confab

The 2007 Matchmaker Conference and Expo will be held from **8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sept. 18** at the Palm Beach County Convention Center, 650 Okeechobee Boulevard, West Palm Beach, FL 33401.

Over 400 small businesses with certifying government agencies and large businesses wishing to conduct business are expected to attend. Visit <http://pbmatchmaker.com> for information.

• Lou Hammond gets CTDC nod

The Caribbean Tourism Development Company (CTDC) has appointed Lou Hammond & Associates to be its public relations agency of record, effective **Sept. 1**.

CTDC is a joint marketing and business development unit, owned equally by the Caribbean Hotel Association and the Caribbean Tourism Organization, representing 32 countries and their hospitality partners. Its mission is to own, promote, protect, advance and enhance the Caribbean brand.

Compiled from several sources.



REGION

www.caribbeantoday.com

T&T's government presents tax-free budget

PETER RICHARDS

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC – Prime Minister Patrick Manning, gearing up for general elections later this year, presented a \$7.03 billion tax free budget outlining increased benefits for old age persons, the disabled community as well as retired public servants.

In a presentation lasting just over three hours last month, Manning, who is also minister of finance, sought to downplay that the fiscal package was aimed at ensuring that his ruling People's National Movement (PNM) is returned to power in the next general elections that political observers say would most likely be held by October.

Manning said the budget was a continuation of the strategy to transform the oil rich republic into a developed nation by 2020 and that he had every confidence that the population was fully supportive of "this seminal project as they witness and benefit from the abundant positive developments in all areas of national life.

"Except for a handful of predictable, professional objectors, very visible from this distance, the citizens and government are in step, as we travel

this historic road together. This budget will strengthen that unity of purpose, much to the further confusion and desperation of the obvious mischief-makers," he added.



Manning

GROWTH STRATEGY

Manning said the budget is couched in the context of projected real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of seven percent and an average inflation rate of six per cent in 2008.

He said based on these assumptions, total revenue is forecast at \$6.7 billion, comprising energy sector revenue of \$2.5 billion and non-energy tax collections of \$3.1 billion.

On the expenditure side, he said the government intends to appropriate \$6.06 billion from the Consolidated Fund, while it estimates \$950 million as the direct charges on the Consolidated Fund and other special funds.

Manning told legislators that a minimum retirement pension of \$333 monthly would be paid from Jan. 1, 2008 and with effect from Oct. 1, this year, the senior citizens grant paid to old

age persons would increase from \$225) to \$275.

CHALLENGE

Manning said government has acknowledged that notwithstanding prudent fiscal and monetary policies, rising inflation levels continue to pose a challenge to the disposable incomes of our citizens especially pensioners.

As a result, he said the government would implement a minimum pension payable to retired public officers at \$275 per month.

"In addition, given that it is proposed to commence the new NIS monthly payment in January 2008, every retired public servant in Trinidad and Tobago will receive a lump sum payment of TT\$3,000 (\$500) to compensate for the months of October, November and December of this year until the new NIS payments are implemented. This measure will put more money in the pockets of 26,742 of our citizens," he said.

The prime minister also said that the Disabled Grant would be increased from \$150 to \$183 monthly as of October this year and there would also be an increased in the public assistance grants to households.



P.M. Arthur call for removal of CSME barriers in the region

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC - Prime Minister Owen Arthur has called on fellow Caribbean community (CARICOM) countries to remove blockages standing in the way of the full expression of the regional integration movement.

Sending a message particularly to Trinidad and Tobago, which is yet to conclude a fishing agreement with Bridgetown, Arthur said the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) will not resonate with the region's people until everyone thought they had a stake in it.

"I take seriously the undertaking that we have given the region that we will remove barriers and that we will create an environment where people have the right of establishment and capital can move freely and where people will move freely, but the project will never be completed in spirit until all feel that they have a place in the new Caribbean economy," Arthur said.

Arthur, the leader with



Arthur

prime ministerial responsibility for the CSME, said the two countries had worked out a draft fishing agreement which could

be signed as a matter of course, and called on Trinidad and Tobago to help bring the matter to a happy conclusion.

He said the region was never short of finance or labor to drive its economic development, but lacked the will to put them together to work for the Caribbean's development in a coherent and rational way.

"The initiative to take 15 Caribbean economies and put them together as one by the removal of the barriers for the first time gives a realistic chance to go for the economic development of the region," he said.



Suriname's financial sector shocked by bankers' sentence

PARAMARIBO, Suriname, CMC – Several high-ranking bank officials here have received suspended jail terms for their part in an illegal currency transfer case, sending shock waves through the financial community.

The ruling came in a high profile case in which DSB-bank - Suriname's oldest and leading commercial bank, casino operator Suriname Leisure Company (SLC), and United States-based Dorsett Hotels and Resorts Inc, were prosecuted for illegally transferring over \$10 million to the US between 1999 and 2001.

DSB President Siegmund Proeve and former President Edward Muller, were handed six-month suspended sentences for conspiring to transfer the funds from the casino to the U.S.

Patrick Bhagwandin, the bank's top legal official, received a three-month suspended sentence while Jeffrey Clague, a casino manager, was handed a suspended jail term of six months and fined \$3,600. Clague was also ordered to repay \$179,000 or spend a year in jail.

The bank was also ordered to repay \$356,000, failing which authorities would end its activities for one year.

COLLUSION

According to prosecutors, proceeds of Suriname Palace Casino were transferred without authorization of the country's

Currency Authority even after the authority and the Central Bank ordered DSB-bank to stop the money transfers.

Handing down his verdict, Judge Albert Ramnewash argued that the bank officials "willingly" assisted in the illegal money transfers and in doing violated the country's currency laws and endangered the Surinamese financial sector.

According to the judge, the officials were in the position to stop the transfers, but they choose not to do so. Lawyers for the bank and casino officials say they would appeal the ruling.

In a press release DSB Directors expressed shock over the ruling and insisted that the bank and its officials were not at fault.

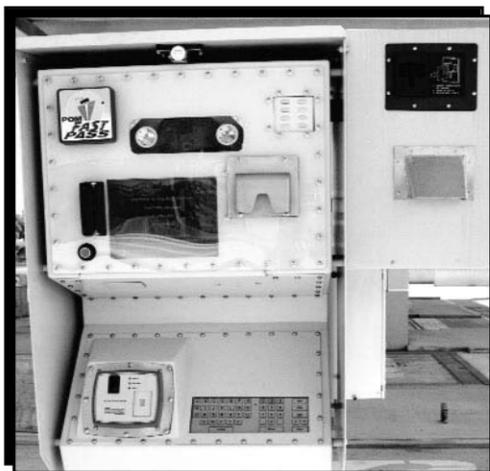
BLOW

Meanwhile, Central Bank Governor Andre Telting assured that the ruling would not effect the bank's daily operations. Telting said, however, that the ruling is a blow to Suriname's financial sector.

The Surinamese Banker's Association also expressed shock over the ruling and said it was as a result of the "ancient" Currency Act 1947, which needed major amendments. The bankers called on the authorities to overhaul the currency legislation as soon as possible.



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Government declares time of national reflection after tragedies in Barbados

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC – The government here late last month declared a weekend of prayer and reflection in response to an unprecedented wave of tragedies which recently plunged several Barbadian families into mourning.

Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Reverend Joseph Atherley said the nation was in shock from three tragedies – the latest a building collapse which claimed five lives – and government and religious leaders felt the country needed a time of national reflection if it was to move forward.

"We want to encourage those who do not on a weekly basis make a practice of going

to a religious assembly or going to church to find time to do so and in this way as a nation, we want to seek to express

our solidarity and express our sympathies to those who are bereaved among us over the recent tragic events and the one unfolding at Brittons Hill," he said.

COMFORT

The government minister said it decided against having one pray session at a central location as they wanted people to feel comfortable in their



Atherley

own worship space. Atherley said the weekend of reflection had the support of the full religious community.

Last month's partial collapse of an apartment block in a community just outside the capital followed closely on the heels of two deadly vehicular crashes which claimed the lives of 10 people. On July 29 a bus transporting patrons to a popular "Crop Over" event crashed into a wall in the hilly terrain of St. Joseph killing six people, to be closely followed by another crash which saw one adult and three children dying when a passenger van in which they were traveling and a minibus collided in the north of the island.



Test released prisoners for HIV ~ counselor

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent - A health official here is calling for mandatory HIV testing to be done on prison inmates at the end of their sentence, even as the prison chief reports that sexual activity among inmates at the all male lockup is down.

"I think prisoners should be tested for HIV before they are released; I think it is necessary," Samuel Joyles, a senior Ministry of Health counsellor attached to Her Majesty's Prison told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)**.

Joyles said he is concerned that prisoners who may have indulged in unprotected sex in prison, putting themselves at serious risk of contracting HIV, can pass on the virus to their wives and girlfriends when they are readmitted to society.

"I can't say it is rampant, but one or two persons have admitted that they are involved, I can't say how widespread it is," Joyles said in relation to sexual acts among male prisoners.

REDUCTION

However, prison chief Superintendent Eric Rodriguez

told CMC that he is convinced that sexual activity among the inmates prison has been reduced drastically. Rodriguez said when he took charge of the prison seven years ago sexual activity was rampant.

"We were dealing with eight to 10 cases a week," Rodriguez said, noting that a zero tolerance policy on the illegal activity saw a reduction in the acts.

"If it is happening it is being done under deep cover because over the last six months we have only had to deal with one clear cut case," he added.

He told CMC that one of the methods of control used is to transfer persons who are initiating homosexual activity to cells with inmates who are known to be very aggressively poised against it.

"We have some rastamen and other inmates here who you can't carry that to, so we change the inmates around accordingly," he explained.

CONCERN

According to the National HIV/AIDS program report for

2006, a survey conducted at the prison in April 2005 found that out of 344 prisoners who participated in the study, 14 were found to be HIV positive.

"The movement of prisoners in and out of the general population with and without communicable diseases such as HIV infection would be of great concern from a public health standpoint," the report said.

However, the prison chief said he would not support the distribution in prison as a means of controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS.

"I will rather resign first than to be involved in any such move," Rodriguez told CMC.

Head of the National AIDS secretariat, Dr. Del Hamilton, said while condoms are key tools in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS, because homosexual sex remained illegal, condoms could not be distributed.

"It will be a conflict, because you cannot condone an illegal act," she noted in a recent interview.

There are close to 400 inmates at Her Majesty's Prison.



Report on Grenada's P.M. due this month

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada, CMC – A Commission of Inquiry into allegations that Prime Minister Dr. Keith Mitchell was paid money illegally by a former Grenada trade diplomat ended here last month after receiving testimony from two witnesses.

Sole Commissioner Sir Richard Cheltenham, who said he will hand in his report by September, also turned down a request by Barbadian lawyer Elliot Mottley, he be allowed to make submissions on behalf of his client, Opposition Leader Tillman Thomas.

The inquiry followed alle-



Mitchell

gations that Mitchell received money from former trade counsellor Eric Rostenier during an overseas trip in June 2000. The prime minister has consistently denied any wrongdoing in the matter that first surfaced in a Miami-based newsletter Offshore Alert in April 2004.

Mitchell has filed a crimi-

nal libel lawsuit against Offshore Alert and its publisher David Marchant. He has also warned that he was prepared to take legal action against any media establishment saying that he had corruptly received money from Rostenier.

The Grenada government has said that Rostenier had offered to cover travel expenses for the prime minister's delegation on a 2000 promotional and investment tour of Europe and Kuwait.



Six-year-old among honorees at T&T's Independence gala

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC – Six-year-old Priya Seeram was among 32 persons honored on Aug. 31 at a gala ceremony at the new multi million dollar residence of Prime Minister Patrick Manning as Trinidad and Tobago celebrated 45 years of political Independence from Britain.

The ceremony, usually held at the official residence of the president, was been shifted to the Prime Minister's Residence and Diplomatic Centre as construction work continued on the original venue.

Seeram received the Humming Bird Medal (Bronze) for Gallantry after she was instrumental in saving her elder cousin from an attempted kidnapping last year. Police said that the Standard One student was with her cousin, Candice Beharry, in a motor vehicle when a man forced the car to a stop and dragged Beharry into the forest. Seeram, who jumped out of the vehicle, ran nearly a mile to alert villagers to the incident allowing police to rescue her cousin.

GORDON HONORED

Former president of the

Region optimistic about new trade pact

Dr. Richard Bernal, head of the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM), says while he is optimistic that a new trade accord will be signed with Europe by December, regional countries still have an option available in the event that agreement is not reached on the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

Bernal said that the Caribbean had the option of a Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), which he described as "less advantageous regime."

According to an article posted on the official website of the CRNM under the heading "Bernal Speaks", the head of the regional negotiating body said that as the deadline nears for the Caribbean community (CARICOM), the Dominican Republic to enter

West Indies Cricket Board, Ken Gordon, received the Chaconia Medal (gold), the second highest award, for his contribution to business. Gordon also played a major role in the success of several Caribbean newspapers and was a former trade and industry minister in Trinidad.

Apart from Gordon, the second highest award was also given to former Energy Minister Barry Barnes for energy development; Dr. Krishna Bahadoorsingh for business; Jizelle Salandy for boxing; and the Genesis Steelband Project Team for music innovation.

Retired banker Dunbar McIntyre, retired school principals Sister Mary Margaret Moloney and Patricia Ruddell, as well as the late businessman Jack Paul Ramoutarsingh, received the Chaconia Medal (silver).

West Indies opening batsman Darren Ganga received the Hummingbird Medal (gold) for his contribution to sports, as well as golf instructor Carlton Faustin.



into an EPA, there are fears as to whether the agreement can be signed before the current preferential trade regime under the Contonou Agreement in December.

"The hurdles seem to be many and the pessimistic voices that usually appear around this part of a negotiating process are heightening their chants", the article stated, noting that Bernal "is confident obstacles will be hurdled in time".

It said that Bernal, a seasoned diplomat, "is adamant about the fact that an EPA with the European Union would get done before the Cotonou Agreement ends in December". It said that the CRNM head noted that market access "is one of the biggest issues on the table among the nations that make up the Caribbean community".

Bernal said many of the Caribbean countries were fighting to protect their goods and tax revenue sources noting that many of the smaller Caribbean nations depended on customs revenues.



Bernal

POLITICS

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Scramble to replace ailing Sir John as St. Lucia's P.M.

ERNIE SEON

CASTRIES, St. Lucia – More than eight months after 82-year-old Sir John Compton led the United Workers Party (UWP) to a dramatic victory in a general election here, the hierarchy of the ruling party is now actively engaged in seeking a new leader to replace the ailing elder statesman.

While several commenta-

the country at heart.”

CONTENDERS

In recent months, several persons in the party have declared themselves ready to step into Sir John's shoes. In addition other names have been associated with ambitions to lead.

Ironically at least four of those believed to be in the running or to have an interest in

lapse, has launched a campaign it says is designed to unseat the government.

“Now is the time for people to speak and protest what passes for government in this country today; we have to ensure that the same thing they did us in 1979-82, we have to do it to them again,” Deputy Political Leader Phillip Pierre told his East Castries convention.

“We must now marshal our forces to save the country which has fallen in the hands of an inept government,” he noted.

As far as the SLP is concerned, St. Lucia is at the mercy of individuals who do not know how to govern and says that the current administration should not be allowed to remain to implode while the country becomes the laughing stock of the rest of the Caribbean.

“While we understand that John Compton is ill and we all will get ill some day, some of us will certainly not even get to the age of 83, but St. Lucia cannot wait on a sick man to determine its fate,” said SLP Chairman Tom Walcott.

At a recent public meeting of his SLP, party leader Dr. Kenny Anthony called on Sir John to save the country further embarrassment by calling general elections and allowing St. Lucians to choose who they want as the country's next prime minister. He told a crowd of supporters, who came from all parts of the island for the highly promoted public meeting, that St. Lucia's real problem was a crisis of leadership, noting that the country was “leaderless” while Sir John recovered from his illness.

- CMC



Opposition candidate wins Nevis by-election

CHARLESTOWN, Nevis, CMC - Attorney Mark Brantley, of the Opposition Concerned Citizens Movement (CCM), won last month's by-election for a seat in the St. Kitts and Nevis National Assembly.

But his victory in the closely fought contest does not affect the composition of the Parliament, with the ruling St. Kitts and Nevis Labour Party (SKNLP) having seven seats, the People's Action Movement (PAM) and the Nevis Reformation Party (NRP) one seat each, with the CCM taking control of the other two seats.

Preliminary results indicate that Brantley, who polled 1,475 votes, defeated Hensley Daniel, the deputy premier of the Nevis Island Administration (NIA) who contested the by-election on behalf of the NRP, by 30 votes. Daniel received 1,445 votes in the election called to select a replacement for Malcolm Guishard, the Opposition leader who died in June.

Supervisor of Elections Leroy Benjamin said that 4,758 persons were eligible to vote at nine polling stations in the Electoral District Nevis.



Present and past: Prime Minister Compton, left, and Anthony, the man he ousted.

tors had previously suggested that Sir John, who suffered a series of strokes in early May, would not be fit enough to return to lead the country, last month the administration finally acknowledged that the veteran would soon end his long political career.

Acting Prime Minister Stephenson King said he recently held talks with Sir John and it was agreed that the prime minister would be making his exit from the political scene before yearend, paving the way for the party to identify a new leader.

“This would be a timely moment for this to be executed. It will definitely happen before the end of the year,” King said.

With the UWP preparing to hold its annual convention in October, the run-up will be critical as the elected Members of Parliament, party hierarchy and wider membership seek to identify a new leader.

“In the coming weeks the intention is to rally the troops together and work together as a unit through a number of seminars and events which we hope will assist in that regard, because we have to save the government in an effort to do the work that we committed ourselves to,” King said.

“When the time comes for transition to new leadership, the UWP as a matured political organization, will make this transition in accordance with democratic party procedures and with the best interest of

leading the party have run into various problems with the law or have been allegedly involved in matters which have been the subjects of national debate and brought both themselves and the party under the microscope.

Sacked Foreign Affairs Minister Rufus Bousquet resorted to the airwaves to make his own case, but many believe that the main contest will be between King, the most experienced of all the members of the government, and the Sports and Social Transformation Minister Leonard Montoute, who is also the party's deputy political leader.

Bousquet was relieved of his portfolios in a Cabinet reshuffle presumably over a decision to establishing diplomatic relations with Taiwan, an action which led to mainland China ending his 10-year diplomatic relationship with St. Lucia.

ROCKED

It was hardly five months into its return to office that the UWP was rocked to the core when Sir John suffered a series of small strokes and was hospitalised in the United States at the height of intense public debate over the diplomatic tussle between China and Taiwan. News that the prime minister is improving, but is still unable to resume duties as head of government has done little to stave off attacks from the Opposition St. Lucia Labour Party which, warning that the country is heading towards col-



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St. Lucia awaits 'inevitable passing' of prime minister

CASTRIES, St. Lucia, CMC - Government officials here confirmed they were preparing for the "inevitable passing" of Sir John Compton, 82, the first prime minister of St. Lucia, as he was returned home on Sept. 4.

Top level government representatives, headed by acting Prime Minister Stephenson King, met the air ambulance transporting the ailing leader at the George

Charles Airport in the capital and watched as he was quickly transferred to an ambulance to be rushed to the private Tapion Hospital on the outskirts of the city.

The decision to return Sir John was taken on Sept. 4 after doctors at the Le Menard Hospital in Martinique concluded they were satisfied that there was nothing more they were medically capable of doing to

improve the health of the ailing leader, who remains on a life support system.

Meanwhile, acting Prime Minister Stephenson King said former prime minister Dr. Michael Pilgrim will chair a committee which was established with a mandate to "review all mechanisms and protocols necessary in the inevitable event of the passing of Sir John."



JLP win positive for CARICOM ~ political scientist

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC - A leading Caribbean political scientist has expressed optimism that the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) victory in the Sept. 3 general elections in Jamaica could have positive implications for the advancement of the regional integration movement within the Caribbean community (CARICOM).

Dr. George Belle, the dean of social sciences at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill campus, told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)** that Prime Minister-elect Bruce Golding "will be a new person in relation to where CARICOM is at."

Belle said because a lot of

work had gone into bringing CARICOM to where it was at the present moment, Golding would need to continue along that path.

He said he believed that Golding and the JLP would bring a new wave of thinking to matters pertaining to CARICOM.

Because of the Jamaican business community's historically close ties with the JLP, Belle predicted that it would be fairly easy for the incoming prime minister to push the idea of regionalism with them.

"They might have new views on some of the institutions that are being suggested for CARICOM and that is what might in a sense hold the

process back a bit.

"I would hope that they would not hold CARICOM back in terms of its evolution and maturation," Belle told **CMC**.

INCLUSIVE

Meantime, being mindful of the narrow margin of victory for the JLP, Belle said Golding would need to be inclusive in his role as prime minister.

The political scientist predicted that without that large majority, Golding would have to be "very careful because he is almost going to have almost absolute 100 percent turnout in Parliament otherwise the government is not going to get its policies through."



The Bahamas wants extension of U.S. passport deadline

NASSAU, Bahamas - The Bahamas says it wants the United States to extend the deadline for American citizens to be able to travel to the Caribbean without a passport.

Under the Western Hemisphere Travel initiative (WHTI), U.S. citizens are required to be in possession of a passport to re-enter the country after visiting Canada, Mexico, Bermuda and the Caribbean.

But they were given an extension to Sept. 30 because of the problems associated with acquiring the travel document.

Now, tourism officials in The Bahamas say they hope that there would be another three-month extension, at least until the end of the year.

"While we have not received any indication that this deadline will be extended, we are hopeful that it would be," Director General of Tourism Vernice Walkine told **The Nassau Guardian** newspaper.

"...I believe that through his organization, he is also seeking to make representation to the appropriate persons in the U.S. Congress to give further consideration to an extension. At the very least, we would like it to be considered for an extension through December 31 of this year."

The WHTI was mandated by Congress in the Intelligence

Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, to strengthen border security and facilitate entry into the U.S. for citizens and legitimate international visitors.

WHTI requirements for air travel took effect in January this year, but in June, U.S. citizens who had applied but had



not yet received passports were able to re-enter the U.S. by air if they presented government-issued photo identification and U.S. Department of State official proof of application for a passport.

Walkine said if an extension was granted until the end of the year, U.S. citizens would be given much more time to apply for and receive their passports.

"As I understand it, there is still quite a delay in terms of the processing period. We believe that the word has gotten out that passports are now needed, but I can't say that it has gotten out sufficiently," she said.

"The problem has been the

length of time it takes for the State Department to process the applications, so any kind of extension of that deadline would be helpful because it gives them more time to process more passports, which is obviously helpful to us in The Bahamas and the rest of the Caribbean. We are hopeful that all of our efforts will pay off.

"I know that CARICOM (Caribbean community) leaders, when they met with President (George) Bush, tried to make a case as strongly as they could, and were successful at getting consideration given to the deadline being extended up to September 30 in the first instance, but I still know that further representation was extended by those leaders to have (the U.S.) extend it further to December 31 of this year.

"So we are hopeful, but we have not yet received any further word on that."

Tourism officials here said that an analysis conducted by the World Travel and Tourism Council to assess the economic and employment impact of the (WHTI) revealed that its implementation could put some 13,300 jobs in The Bahamas in jeopardy.



Opposition legislator resigns, joins Antigua's ruling party

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua, CMC - The main Opposition Antigua Labour Party (ALP) said it had accepted the resignation of legislator Elmore "Tamo" Charles who has already announced plans to join the ruling United Progressive Party (UPP).

Opposition Leader Steadroy "Cutie" Benjamin confirmed that Charles had submitted a letter of resignation on Aug. 29.

"This serves to notify you formally that with immediate effect, August 28, and in accordance with the provisions of the Antigua and Barbuda Constitution Order 1981, I no longer wish to serve by the grace and on the advice of the Opposition Leader as Senator in the Senate of the Parliament of Antigua and Barbuda as an appointee of the Antigua Labour Party", the letter stated.

The resignation follows the resignation of the entire executive of the St. Phillip's South constituency, which Charles contested and lost in the 2004 elections, on behalf of the ALP.

'NO IMPACT'

Benjamin said Charles' departure would have no real effect on the party.

"His resignation will have no real impact upon the Antigua Labour Party and we have done our surveys and done our polls in the area and

we had some concerns about St Phillip's South," Benjamin said.

ALP Deputy Leader Gaston Browne said that Charles was doing the party a favor by joining the governing UPP.

"I see it as a blessing in disguise in terms of the UPP. I



Bird

believe it was intended to be a strategic move designed specifically to create confusion within the Antigua Labour Party, but in essence they have really done us a favour and it has really turned out to be a strategically dunced move," Browne said.

According to Browne, Charles was not necessarily the most appropriate candidate for St. Phillip's South.

"It was almost like an affirmative action situation to shield and to maintain that type of base with the grassroots people in terms of representation," he said.



Grenada's Opposition challenges government to call fresh elections

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada, CMC - The main Opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) is challenging the ruling New National Party (NNP) of Prime Minister Dr. Keith Mitchell to call fresh general elections.

The NDC has challenged recent claims by the NNP that a series of internal polls have shown the party to be recovering the support it lost since the 2003 general elections.

There has been growing speculation here that the Mitchell administration is planning to call a fresh poll before yearend, months ahead of the constitutional deadline.

NDC General Secretary Peter David said the Mitchell administration is facing a major headache in deciding the best time for elections.

"Our reading is that it may be called anytime this year," said David, who represents the Town of St. George in the Parliament. "Our anticipation is before the year is over. The signals are there. I think the

government is looking for an opportunity. The problem is that the NNP is just not ready."

In the 2003 elections, NNP lost seven seats to NDC after it won all 15 seats in the elections four years earlier. David said he is confident if election were to be called, the NDC of former Prime Minister George



David

Brizan would be swept back into government.

"And if the NNP is so confident that they are going to win I challenge them to pull the trigger tomorrow

because we are confident that anytime elections are called in this country we of the National Democratic Congress will form the government and we will embark on policies that will benefit the Grenadian people."



S P O R T

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Jamaica's record haul leads Caribbean charge at World Championships

GORDON WILLIAMS

Jamaica, with a record haul, led four Caribbean nations which earned medals at the 11th IAAF World Track and Field Championships held from Aug. 24 to Sept. 2 in Osaka, Japan.

Jamaica secured 10 medals, up from eight won in Helsinki two years ago, including one gold, six silver and three bronze to rank eighth on the medal table at the meet.

The Bahamas was the next best from the region with a gold and two silver, to rank ninth. Cuba finished with a gold, silver and bronze for 11th place, while the Dominican Republic earned a silver medal.



Jamaica's Veronica Campbell, far left, gets up just in time to win the women's 100 meters.



Derrick Atkins, left, of The Bahamas, earned a silver medal in the men's 100 meters, second to winner Tyson Gay of the U.S., center. Jamaica's Asafa Powell won bronze.

The U.S. topped the table with 26 medals, including 14 gold, four silver and eight bronze.

Jamaican sprint ace Veronica Campbell was the brightest Caribbean star, winning three medals – a gold and two silver – at the meet. Campbell added the World Championship 100-meter title to her 2004 Olympic 200-meter crown with a sensational win in the short sprint.

Donald Thomas became the second Bahamian world high jump title-holder when he equaled his career-best 2.35 meters to capture the event. Yargelis Savigne gave Cuba its gold medal by winning the women's triple jump title.

SPECTACULAR FINISH

Campbell won the 100 meters in 11.01 seconds, edging Americans Lauryn Williams, the defending champion, and Carmelita Jeter in a spectacular finish that resulted in 0.04 seconds separating the first five runners. For Campbell, 25, who also won World Youth and World Junior titles as a teenager, the victory completed the "missing" link in her list of global achievements.

"The title of world cham-



Yargelis Savigne of Cuba's leaps for gold in the triple jump.

...pion was missing in my collection," she said after the race. "I have done a lot for that and it was a very competitive race."

Campbell would return later in the meet to run 22.34 seconds and capture the silver medal in the 200 meters, and produce a blistering anchor leg that earned Jamaica a silver in the 4x100 meters relay. The 200 meters winner was American Allyson Felix in 21.81.

Thomas, who started high jumping less than two years ago, topped a quality field to join 1995 winner Troy Kemp as Bahamians to win the World Championship high jump gold. But he has bigger ambitions.

"Olympics is next target and after more training and learning the event, the goal could be also the world record," said the 23-year-old Thomas.

Savigne posted a world-leading 15.28 meters for her winning jump, to defeat two-time champion Tatyana Lebedeva, of Russia, who got the silver medal at 15.07 meters.

SILVER STREAK

It took a new meet record by American Tyson Gay to beat Jamaican Usain Bolt in the men's 200 meters. The 21-year-old Bolt settled for silver, clocking 19.91 seconds. Gay was timed in 19.76 seconds, 0.03 seconds better than his countryman Michael Johnson's record time 12 years ago.

The Caribbean claimed several more silver medals. Jamaica's Maurice Smith led for eight of the 10 events before a poor throw in the javelin event dropped him into second place with 8,644 points, behind Roman Seberle of the Czech Republic, who won gold with 8,676.

Jamaica also finished second behind the U.S. in both the men's and women's 4x100 meters relays and the women's 4x400 meters. The American women won their sprint relay event in 41.98 seconds, with Jamaica, fielding a team of Sheri-Ann Brooks, Kerron Stewart, Simone Facey and Campbell, second in 42.01.

In the men's event, Jamaica, with Marvin Anderson, Bolt, Nesta Carter and a determined final leg run from Asafa Powell, clocked 37.89 seconds to finish behind

the 37.78 run by the U.S.

In the 4x400 for women, Jamaica's team of Shericka Williams, Shereefa Lloyd, Davita Prendagast and Novlene Williams earned silver by clocking 3:19.73 seconds, behind 3:18.55 by the U.S.

The Bahamas, fielding a team of Avarid Moncur, Michael Mathieu, Andrae Williams and Chris Brown, also secured a silver medal by finishing second in the men's 4x400, clocking 2:59.18 seconds. The U.S. won in 2:55.56.

Dominican Republic's Felix Sanchez earned a silver medal in the men's 400 meters hurdles, clocking 48.01 seconds to finish behind Kerron Clement of the U.S., who won in 47.61.

Cuba's Yipsi Moreno also earned silver in the women's hammer throw with a toss of 74.74 meters, second to Betty Heidler of Germany with 74.76.

SHOCK

Among the most stunning results of the meet was the failure of Jamaica's Asafa Powell to win the gold medal in the men's 100 meters. The world record holder and favorite in the event finished third to Gay, with Derrick Atkins of The Bahamas, a

cousin of Powell's, earning silver.

Gay's winning time was 9.85 seconds. Atkins finished in 9.91 and Powell in 9.96. In post-race interviews, the Jamaican blamed a bad start and loss of composure during the race for his disappointing performance.

"When I realized he (Gay) was coming, I panicked," Powell conceded.

Atkins was beating Powell for the first time in a final and was thrilled with his achievement.

"A new (personal best time), a national record and a silver. I stuck to my race plan and it has come right," he said.

Caribbean athletes picked up medals in other events. Williams finished third in the women's 400 meters, while Delloreen Ennis-London also earned bronze in the 100 meters hurdles for women. Cuba's Yarelis Barrios also earned bronze in the women's discus.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor. Information compiled from the CMC, IAAF and other sources contributed to this story.



SPORT BRIEFS

• Sarwan, Gayle in charge of Windies

The West Indies has retained Ramnaresh Sarwan as captain and Chris Gayle has been named his deputy for cricket's ICC Twenty20 World Championship this month in South Africa.

Sarwan returns to the side following a shoulder injury that cut short his tour of England this year. Gayle, who led the limited overs squad during his absence, has been elevated to the vice-captaincy.

• Ziadies excel at Calder race-track

Jamaican trainer Ralph Ziadie delivered another stakes win with his four-year-old filly Cat Can Do in the \$50,000 Sambacarioca Stakes at Calder in Florida on Aug. 25.

Ziadie's son Kirk is the leader in the trainers' championship race at the thoroughbred racetrack in the United States.

• Soccer player shot dead

Shaki Crockwell, a 25-year-old former

member of the Bermuda Hogges, the island's new professional outfit which made its debut this season in America's United Soccer League Division 2, was shot and killed last month.

Police sources said Crockwell was shot once in the neck on the old railway trail near Loyal Hill, in Devonshire on Aug. 24.

• Boxing rematch for Guyana's St. Clair

Guyana's former super featherweight world boxing champion Gairy St. Clair has a world title eliminator assignment on Nov. 12 when he faces South African Cassius Baloyi in a rematch. The winner is guaranteed a shot at the current champion Mzonke Fana of South Africa. St. Clair beat Baloyi when the two met in July 2006 for Baloyi's IBF super-featherweight world title.

Compiled from CMC and other sources.



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Jamaican wins presidency of regional athletics body

OSAKA, Japan – Jamaican Teddy McCook won the vote last month to be the new president of the North American, Central American and Caribbean Athletics Association (NACAC).

McCook, a ex-president of the Jamaica Amateur Athletic Association (JAAA), edged former vice-president Keith Joseph, of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), for the top spot.

Former Olympic medalists from the Caribbean, Bahamian Pauline Davis-Thompson and Grace Jackson, of Jamaica, secured International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) Council positions.

In a close poll for NACAC's top position, left vacant because long-standing President Amadeo Francis did not seek re-election, McCook defeated Joseph 14-13. Joseph had been vice-president to Francis. The Dominican Republic's Jose Rubio will be vice-president to McCook, while St. Lucian Alfred Emmanuel was returned as treasurer.

Meanwhile, at the 46th IAAF Congress, Davis-Thompson secured a spot on the four-member Female Individual Council, and

Jackson was elected to the eight-member Women's Committee of the IAAF, the world's governing body for track and field.

Davis-Thompson, a Bahamian sprint relay gold



McCook

medalist at the Sydney 2000 Olympics, collected 130 votes to join Morocco's Nawal El Moutwawakel, Canada's Abby Hoffman and Anna Riccardi, of Italy, on the Female Individual Member Council.

Jackson, who won 200-meter silver at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, is elected with seven others for the Women's Committee.



T&T's Ames fails to tame Tiger Woods in PGA Championships at Southern Hills

TULSA, Oklahoma – Trinidadian-born Stephen Ames claims his final round flop at the PGA Championships last month had more to do with conquering himself than golfing marvel, Tiger Woods with whom he was paired.

"I wouldn't say I was going through what Mike (Weir) was going through (when he was paired with Tiger in the last round of a major back in 1999)," Ames told reporters.

"I don't know what (Weir) was feeling. I know what I was feeling out there. I was fighting myself more than anything else. I wasn't fighting (Woods).

"I was trying to play my game and trying to be me. Unfortunately I couldn't be me...from the start."

Ames started the final round at Southern Hills in second place, three strokes adrift of the World No. 1 Woods. But by the end of the day, had ceased to be threat with a 76.

While Woods claimed his 13th major and the final one of the year, Ames collapsed to 12th on the leader board and to another disappointing finish to a major after he seemed well placed.

"(It was the) same as the U.S. Open," said Ames, refer-

ring to the major at Oakmont in June where he ended tied 10th after entering the final round in third spot.



Ames, left, and Woods.

southwest where temperatures shot up to 39 degrees Celsius. The 43-year old, who is yet to win a tournament this year,

said despite his failure at Southern Hills, the outing had not been a total disappointment.

"At the end I realized where I fell apart, which is good. That's the positive I'm taking out of here," said the Trinidadian who now resides in Calgary and plays under the

Canadian banner.

"No. I'm not looking at the score itself. I'm looking at how I handled the day. I thought I handled it very well, considering the stress or strain or whatever that I was playing under – the first opportunity of playing in a major in the last group. All those things you have to look at."

Ames collected \$119,833 for his finish and a three-place climb up the world rankings to No.36.



STRUGGLE

"I just didn't swing well there either, coming down to the end. And here I didn't swing well again from the start. It was a struggle from the start, from the get go, and that's what made it difficult for me to get back into it."

Ames, who has struggled this year, and has been forced to remodel his swing, was brilliant over the first three rounds at Southern Hills, but shot seven bogeys to wilt in the stifling heat of America's

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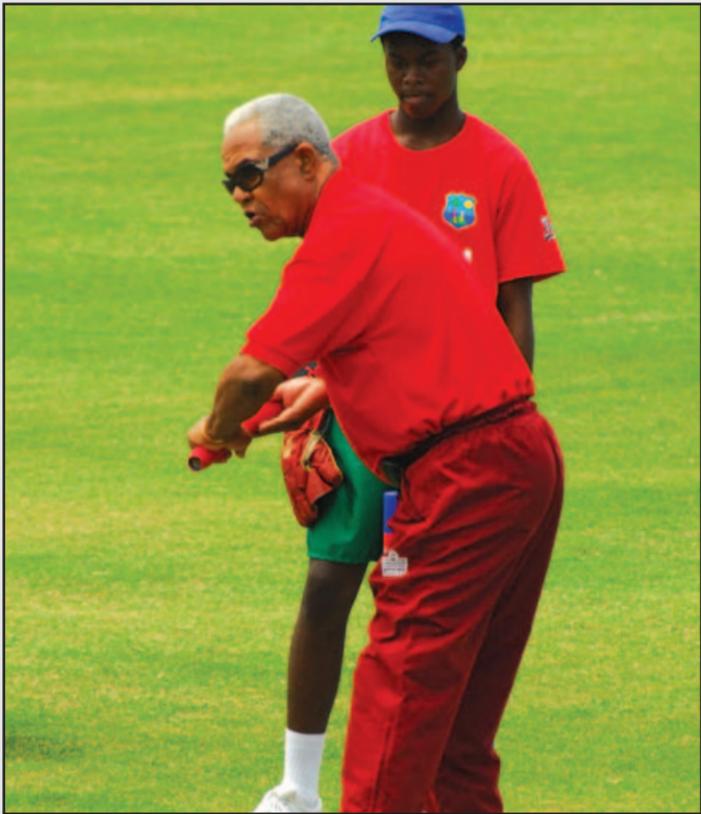


New York City Councilmember Leroy Comrie, fourth from left, and Jamaica's General to New York Basil K. Bryan, left, joined a visiting Little League baseball team from Portland, Jamaica at City Hall, Lower Manhattan, in song last month. Comrie, who was born in the United States of Jamaican parents and is married to a Jamaican, pledged his support to recovery and relief efforts underway in the Caribbean island following Hurricane Dean. He said his Council District office in South Jamaica, Queens, would serve as a drop-off/collection point for donations. The baseball team of 10 players and three coaches, from the West Portland/Buf Bay Little League program, visited the U.S. at the invitation of parishioners from the Northshore Baptist Church in Bayside, Queens. The West Portland Little League Baseball project, which was started in 2004, is the result of ongoing missionary work by the New York-based church in the Portland community since 1987.

S P O R T

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BACK TO BASICS



Former West Indies cricket great Sir Garfield Sobers teaches the basics of batting to a youngster last month during a cricket camp for youths in St. Vincent and the Grenadines sponsored by telecommunications company Digicel.

T&T remains on top in Caribbean soccer

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC – Trinidad and Tobago's Soca Warriors remained a clear number one in the Caribbean Football Union (CFU) rankings and Guyana snatched an all-time best position in FIFA's Coca-Cola world ratings for August.

The 2006 World Cup qualifiers secured a two-spot rise on FIFA's world list to 63rd, a hefty 25 spots ahead of their nearest CFU rivals in the world ratings.

Haiti improved four places to become the new second-ranked team with a 88th FIFA ranking, and improving Guyana, now 90th in the world, made a 10-place jump to be number three in the CFU.

Guyana's position is its best ever in FIFA's world ranking.

The Cubans – relegated from number two in the region – are now number four with a 91st FIFA label. Jamaica's Reggae Boyz, who enjoyed the most monthly positions at CFU's number one spot in the recent years, slid to number five in the region after a two-place drop on the world list to 95th, one spot below their lowest ever rating. The Jamaicans had plunged from 68th in June to 93rd in July as a result of huge losses to Iran (1-8), Vietnam (0-3) and Indonesia (1-2) during their recent Asian tour.

The biggest climbers in August are newly crowned Asian champions Iraq, surging

16 places to No.64 in the world. Of all the teams rated in FIFA's top 100, Iraq was the only side making a bigger leap than the Guyanese, who have enjoyed steady progress in the past year under Trinidadian coach Jamaal Shabbaz.

SAME ORDER

Apart from the reshuffling of the top five teams, the CFU's top 10 is the same as it was in July, with St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 104th on the world list, remaining sixth on the CFU log, which is completed by Barbados, 119th in the world, Suriname (123rd), and Bermuda (130th), with Antigua & Barbuda (131st) in 10th position.

T&T, eight-time Caribbean champions, is now up to sixth in the CONCACAF (Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football) ratings. Mexico, semi-finalist at last month's Copa America, kept its number one spot in CONCACAF although it slipped one place on FIFA's world list to 11th. The USA stayed second with a world rating of 17th.

Meanwhile, Brazil stayed top of the world in no change to the top five, with Argentina - whipped 3-0 by the Brazilians in the Copa America final - at number two. The Italians are at three, followed by France, and Germany.



Ex-champ Bell a no-show for boxing match

GORDON WILLIAMS

Former undisputed world cruiserweight champion O'Neil Bell caused a stir in the boxing world last month when the Jamaican-born fighter, according to his promoters, failed to honor an agreement to fight Louis Azille in the United States.

Leon Margules, head of Warriors Boxing, which promotes Bell's fights, said Bell agreed to fight Azille but did not respond to numerous efforts to contact him weeks before the scheduled Aug. 8 bout at the Hard Rock Casino in Florida.

"He disappeared," Margules told *Caribbean Today* last month. "He did not return my calls for three weeks before the fight."

As a result, Margules said he had to drop Bell from the fight card, which would have featured the Atlanta-based Jamaican in the main bout with Azille. The fight was to be shown on ESPN television's "Wednesday Night Fights".

"I pulled him off the card," Margules said. "I had to."

REASON UNCLEAR

Late last month the promoter said he was still not

clear why Bell did not show up for the fight as he had not spoken to him since Aug. 8, when he said Bell telephoned him claiming he wanted to "talk". Margules admitted that Bell had not signed a contract for the fight although "orally we had a deal."

When *Caribbean Today* spoke to Bell later in the month, the boxer declined to directly discuss the Azille fight and appeared unhappy with several aspects of his career, including a mid-March unanimous decision loss to Jean-Marc Mormeck in France which cost the Jamaican his World Boxing Association (WBA) and World Boxing Council (WBC) titles. Bell believes he was cheated by the decision, claiming rounds were cut short to help a tiring Mormeck.

"I can't be pleased," said "Supernova" Bell, who has a current ring record of 29 fights with 26 wins, 24 by knockout, coupled with two losses and a draw. He also once held the International Boxing Federation crown, which was stripped from him after he failed to defend it against American Steve Cunningham last year due to what Bell claimed was a medical reason.

In Jan. 2006 Bell had

knocked out Mormeck in New York to take the WBA and WBC belts from the Frenchman.

NO BIG DEALS

Bell, originally from Montego Bay, Jamaica, is considered by many experts to be a very good boxer with a powerful punch. But the cruiserweight division is not popular, especially with American fans. Therefore, he has not been able to land multi-million dollar contracts other boxers in other weight classes have secured in the U.S.

Bell was scheduled to earn roughly \$35,000 from the Azille bout, according to Margules. The bout was also to have been used as a "keep busy fight," the promoter said, as Bell is scheduled for a title bout later this year.

But the 32-year-old Bell has expressed reservations about the forces which he said influence boxing, and claimed he is now treading cautiously to avoid being ripped off.

"There are a lot of Satanists out there in the sport," he said. "I would not like to be infringed upon again."

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



Six Caribbean teams get byes in World Cup qualifying soccer

Trinidad and Tobago's Soca Warriors, and other former World Cup finalists Jamaica, Cuba, and Haiti, along with St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) and improving Guyana, have been gifted Caribbean Football Union second round positions in

qualifying for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

FIFA, in a statement, said the decision is based on its rankings from May.

From CONCACAF, the United States earned a bye with Mexico, Canada, Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama, and Guatemala.

A total of 22 nations will be slotted into home-and-home pairings during the World Cup qualifying draw on Nov. 25 in Durban, South Africa. The 11 winners and St. Vincent will be drawn against the top 12 seeds in the second round, which likely will be in June.



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Peter A. Webley, Publisher

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