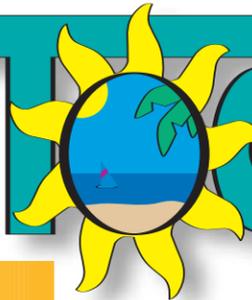


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Vol. 19 No. 4

THE MULTI AWARD-WINNING NEWS MAGAZINE



Caribbean and other nationals arriving at some major United States airports must now have all 10 fingers electronically printed as part of a new Homeland Security program to nab criminals and bolster airport security, page 2.

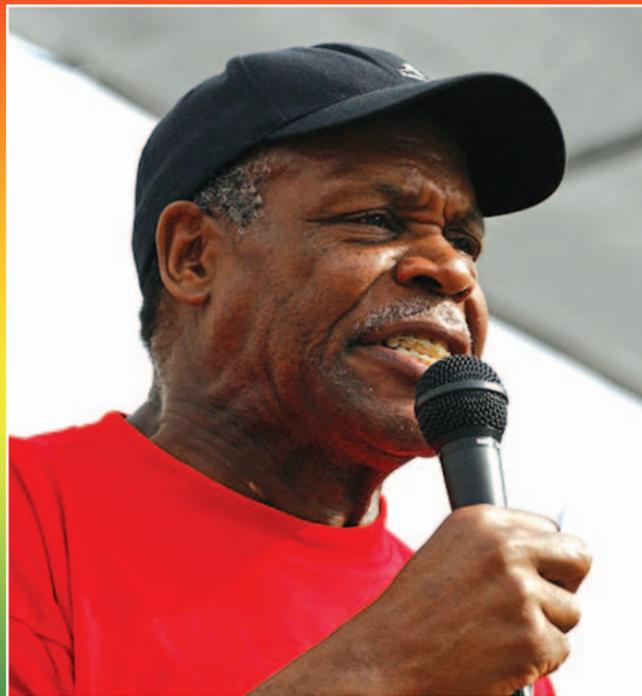


Caribbean leaders have hailed the contributions of outgoing Cuban President Fidel Ruiz Castro. The 81-year-old leader said that he would not return as commander-in-chief following a session of the National Assembly last month, page 7.



Shalrie Joseph and at least a dozen players with strong Caribbean roots are gearing up for another season in Major League Soccer, the game's highest professional level in the United States, which kicks off its 2008 season this later this month, page 19.

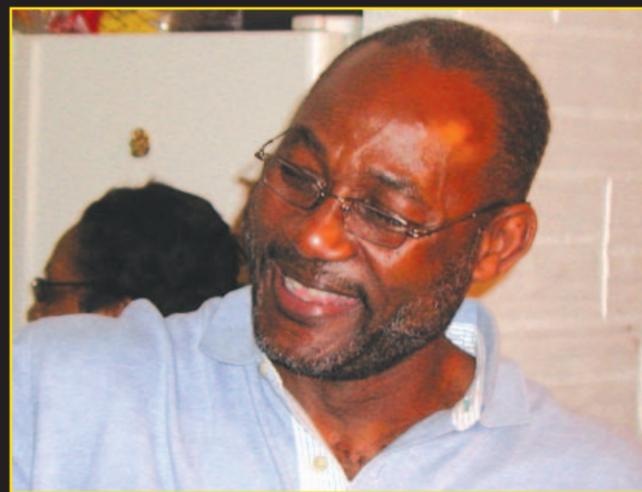
MARLEY MAGIC



American actor Danny Glover, left, was so impressed by the work of Caribbean-born music legend Bob Marley, he helped make "Africa Unite", a movie about the reggae icon. In this issue Glover tells Caribbean Today about Marley's influence, page 7.

'I was fearful for my life'

Fitzroy Salesman, a Jamaica-born suspended Miramar city commissioner, pleaded not guilty in a Florida court during arraignment on a charge he pulled a handgun on a fellow supermarket shopper, page 6.



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Caribbean nationals face tougher fingerprint rule at U.S. airports

MIAMI - Caribbean and other nationals arriving at some major United States airports must now have all 10 fingers electronically printed as part of a new Homeland Security program to nab criminals and bolster airport security.

Officials say the new measure is now being adopted at the Miami International and Orlando airports in Florida and a number of U.S. cities, including Atlanta, Boston, Massachusetts, Washington and Chicago.

They said that within a year, the same procedure will be required of Caribbean and other foreign visitors passing through the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood and Palm Beach International airports in Florida.

"We're going to do this nationwide," said Jennifer Connors, chief officer of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency, based in

Miami.

The procedure is mandatory for those aged 14 to 79, but is not required for U.S. citizens, she said.

SCANS

Effective last month, as foreign visitors go through

passport control at the identified airports, they must place both hands - separately - on electronic scanners similar to those banks use for identity verification. Officials said the scanners allow customs agents to verify that a visitor's identity matches the information on his or her passport. They also alert various federal agencies if a visi-



tor is wanted on any domestic or international criminal charges.

Previously, visitors were required to have prints taken of only their right and left index fingers, but security officials said that procedure had gaps allowing criminals to escape undetected, Connors said.

Even so, she said the limited fingerprinting process prompted federal agencies to nab about 6,000 suspects last year at Miami International Airport.

Frequently, there were people who committed a crime in the U.S., left the country and changed their identities. They were intercepted when they returned, Connors said.

"It happens every single day; we pick up people with outstanding warrants," she said.



U.S. legislator vows clampdown of Caribbean offshore tax havens

WASHINGTON - A United States lawmaker has vowed to further clamp down on Caribbean offshore tax shelters, claiming that they cost the U.S. Treasury over \$100 billion annually.

Michigan Democratic Senator Carl Levin said that an investigative panel he heads would stay focused on the matter, hoping that it will get more attention in the current U.S. presidential campaign.

"We're after offshore tax havens and their use in tax avoidance, where they serve no economic purpose except to avoid taxes," said Levin, who chairs the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on



Levin

Investigations.

Last year, Levin, Senator Norm Coleman and Democratic Presidential hopeful Barack Obama introduced a bill in the US Senate aimed at cracking down on tax evasion schemes in offshore shelters in the Cayman Islands and other Caribbean islands.

"There's a lot of money involved," Levin said.

"We've got people paying taxes in this country who are middle-income, working families and, at the same time, people avoiding paying taxes who are making millions of dollars a year.

"The public knows about it. They're unhappy with it," he said.

EFFECTS

Fearing the adverse effects on their respective economies, Caribbean community (CARICOM) leaders during the

Summit on the Caribbean last June, raised the issue with U.S. lawmakers on Capitol Hill. CARICOM leaders were assured that the proposed clamp down would come to naught.

"We were given the assurance that the bill that is currently written, the experts have all agreed that it is inadequate for what is required and that the positions in relation to the Caribbean, which are deleterious to the Caribbean interest, would not, in their judgment, see the light of day," St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, the then CARICOM chairman, told reporters in Washington.

Gonsalves viewed the development as "very positive" for the region.



Raul Castro is new president of Cuba

HAVANA, Cuba, CMC - Raul Castro is now the president of communist Cuba, replacing his brother Fidel who held power for nearly half-century.

The 614-member National Assembly elected Raul, 76, as the new president after a meeting in the capital Havana on Feb. 24.

Raul has been responsible for the day-to-day control of

the government since July 2006, when his brother underwent intestinal surgery.

Fidel, 81, last month announced his retirement after 49 years at the helm of



Castro

the communist Caribbean country. Fidel came to power in 1959 after overthrowing the Fulgencio Batista regime in a blood revolution.

• *Call for lifting of U.S. embargo against Cuba, see page 4.*
• *Caribbean leaders hail Fidel Castro's contributions, see page 7.*



Caribbean calls for elimination of violence against women

UNITED NATIONS - A senior Antigua and Barbuda government minister has called for the elimination of violence against women, saying it is inconsistent with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Antigua and Barbuda's Minister of Labour, Public Administration and Empowerment Jacqui Quinn-Leandro joined Haiti in outlining their positions at the 52nd session of the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women last month.

Speaking on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, Quinn-Leandro said human development and growth "that are sustainable" must involve the participation and contribution of all people.

"A few of the challenges to mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment include the feminization of poverty, lack of access to resources, few women on financial and economic boards and the inadequate financing of programs that affected the lives of women," she said.

On the work of the commission, she said that, by collectively reviewing challenges related to financing gender empowerment and by sharing best practices on the mechanisms and processes involved in that effort, the commission could make an "important contribution to the design of policies and programs aimed at bridging the gap between policy and practice."

IMPACT

She said studies have con-

Worry over large number of Vincentians seeking refugee status in Canada

TORONTO - A senior St. Vincent and the Grenadines diplomat says he is concerned at what appears to be an inordinate large number of nationals seeking refugee status in Canada.

Consul General Steve Phillips told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)** that false refugee claims by Vincentians were "possibly" the greatest threat to an otherwise "good" foreign relationship with Canada.

"Many of our people seeking to regularize their status in Canada are blindly led by unscrupulous immigration consultants and immigration lawyers into making such unfounded claims," said Phillips last month.

firmed the "positive impact of investment" on the lives of women on national productivity and development.

Quinn-Leandro said "gender-responsive budgeting" is a particularly important mechanism in the planning and evaluation of financing for gender equality and women's empowerment, stating that it has been identified as a "crucial tool" for achieving the MDGs.

"Such budgeting should not only focus on expenditures, but also provide systematic planning regarding government allocation of financial resources through the implementation of national programs.

"With all that, some developing countries, facing huge obstacles, such as debt burdens and trade imbalances, are unable to allocate sufficient resources to programs dedicated to women's empowerment," Quinn-Leandro added.

President of the U.N. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Leo Merores, said violence against women is part of "a systematic discrimination, a heinous violation of women's human rights and a major obstacle to development."

Merores said he intends to use the reformed council to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.



Quinn-Leandro

DOUBLED

According to the latest figures released by the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), refugee claims from the Commonwealth Caribbean have doubled since 2000.

"This is attributable largely to economic distress in these

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Two Haitians convicted on charges of holding teen as slave

MIAMI – A United States federal jury has convicted a Haitian mother and her daughter on charges of forcing a teenage Haitian girl to work as a slave.

The 12-member mixed jury deliberated for nearly six hours before bringing a guilty verdict against Maude Paulin, 52, a former Miami-Dade middle school teacher, and her mother, Evelyn Theodore, 74, of conspiring to enslave the girl, forcing her to work and harboring an illegal immigrant.

They face up to 10 years in prison.

Paulin's Haitian-born ex-husband, Saintfort Paulin, 60, who faces a year in jail, was found guilty of harboring an illegal immigrant, while another Haitian, Claire Telasco, 43, was acquitted of all charges.

The three remain free on bail until their May 20 sentencing.

MAID

During the five-day trial, Simone Celestin, now 22, testi-

fied that she was brought to the U.S. from Haiti when she was 14 to be a maid in the Paulins' home in southwest Miami. She said she was forced to sleep on the floor and work 15 hours a day cleaning the house instead of going to school.

Celestin also testified she worked without pay on the weekends for Telasco, a charge for which the jury did not find sufficient evidence to convict.

Attorneys for the four defendants, who are also U.S. citizens, had argued that

Celestin made up the slavery story to secure legal immigration status as a victim of human trafficking. They insisted the family rescued Celestin from a Haitian orphanage and tried to enroll her in school, only to be turned away because she was too far behind.

"I'm disappointed. I thought the government's case was weak," said, Leonard Fenn, one of the defense lawyers.

But U.S. attorney Alex Acosta said he hoped the ver-

dict would bring a "measure of justice and relief to the teenage victim enslaved by the defendants.

"No human being should be subjected to involuntary servitude, much less a child," he added.

Human rights groups estimate that 300,000 children in Haiti, mostly girls, work as domestic servants in circumstances similar or worse than those described by Celestin.





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U.S. legislator calls for investigation into death of Haitian nurse aboard American Airlines flight

NEW YORK - A Haitian-born legislator is calling for a "full and complete" investigation into the death of a Haitian nurse on an American Airlines flight from Haiti to New York late last month.

Councilman Dr. Mathieu Eugene, the first and only Haitian to hold elective office in New York City, told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)** that it is "absolutely necessary" for all concerned to "conduct a complete investigation to get to the bottom of the matter."

"This is necessary because we are hearing different stories," said Eugene, a medical practitioner.

American Airlines confirmed the death of the nurse,

Carine Desir, 44, but dismissed allegations by relatives that it was due to faulty medical equipment aboard the plane.

"American Airlines, after investigation, has determined that oxygen was administered on the aircraft, and it was working, and the defibrillator was applied as well," spokesman Charley Wilson said.

He said there were 12 oxygen tanks on the plane, and that the crew had checked them before the flight took off, adding that at least two were



Eugene

used on Desir.

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requires commercial flights to carry no fewer than two oxygen dispensers.

'COMPLICATIONS'

Desir, who lived in the Lefferts Gardens section of Brooklyn, collapsed an hour into the flight and died despite efforts by the flight attendants and medical personnel to save her.

The relatives said that the two oxygen tanks were empty. However, New York City medical examiner's office said Desir died of natural causes.



Grenadian murder suspect yet to be extradited

MIAMI - Weeks after New York police arrested a Grenadian man in connection with the murder of a Trinidadian college student in South Florida, the suspect, up to press time, remained in a New York jail because a request for his extradition was yet to be filed with the Florida governor's office.

Florida prosecutor Abbe Rifkin said the delay in bringing Kendrick Williams, 32, back to Miami to stand trial for the murder of Stepha Henry, 22, was "not unreasonable."

But, she added, efforts to gain custody of Williams have been stymied because "the

case against the suspect is sealed and the only judge who could unseal it was out of town for part of the last month."

But Sylvia Henry, mother of the deceased, said she wanted to have the extradition done "as soon as possible."

"But I know there are legal proceedings and we have to wait."

SEALED

Rifkin said prosecutors asked Miami-Dade Circuit



Henry

Judge Stanford Blake to seal the case against Williams so details of the investigation would be kept secret. She said only Blake could then unseal the case file, so that it could be copied and forwarded with an extradition request to the Governor's office in Tallahassee.

Rifkin said if a review by the governor's staff determines the case is legally sufficient, the request will be forwarded to New York Governor Eliot Spitzer for another review.

Williams, who is fighting extradition, was arrested Jan. 15 in Brooklyn.



Worry over large number of Vincentians seeking refugee status in Canada

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

islands resulting from the decline in tourist arrivals and the collapse in agricultural commodity prices since 2000," it said noting that claims from St. Vincent and the Grenadines had reached 235.

"Since then, it has ranked first as source country in the Caribbean every year," it said, adding that in 2003, a total of 404 claims, the largest number to date, had been made.

Comparatively, the IRB said refugee claims began to rise in St. Lucia in 2002, with 235 claims. The figure jumped to 292, making the country the second ranked in the sub-regional Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

The IRB said numbers from Grenada and Dominica were lower, "although the volume of claims from Grenada remained high, even after the imposition of a visa require-

ment in Dec. 2001.

"This suggests that they may use a visa-free passport to enter Canada initially; and then claim, using their Caribbean passports," it said.

'DISTINCTIVE'

The IRB said the movement of asylum claimants from OECS countries is "distinctive", pointing out that it comprises young, unaccompanied women between the ages of 18 and 35 years.

In addition, the IRB said while still very small, more children have been claiming as "principals" every year, especially from St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Lucia.

"This suggests that they are coming to establish a 'beach-head' after which the rest of their families will attempt to come to Canada," it said.



Court rules against alleged N.Y. bomb plotters

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC - A High Court judge has dismissed an application by three men seeking to prevent their extradition to the United States where they have been charged with conspiracy to blow up buildings and pipelines at the John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York.

However, defense lawyers for Trinidadian Kareem Ibrahim 62, and Guyanese nationals, Abdel Nur 57, and Abdul Kadir 55, said they would appeal the ruling by Justice Nolan Breaux handed down during a 45-minute presentation last month.

Last August, Chief Magistrate Sherman McNicolls ordered that the three men be extradited, but they were granted leave by Justice Charmaine Pemberton to challenge the extradition.

During an earlier court hearing, Justice Breaux ordered that Ibrahim be

"medically examined" and be evaluated by a psychologist employed by the government to determine if he is fit to plead and travel on an aircraft. Ibrahim is suffering from acute arthritis and claustrophobia, but the court was told that medical examinations performed on him showed "he is fit and ready to travel once he is given medication half an hour before travelling."

"This is to ensure that he does not suffer from claustrophobia," the judge said.

BOMB PLOT

The three men here have been charged along with another Guyanese, Russell DeFreitas, who is also an American citizen, with plotting to blow up the airport.

They are also facing charges of conspiring to destroy aircraft both U.S. and foreign as well as conducting illegal surveillance, photo-

is likely to stick to its current isolationist policy, reducing further the ability of the United States to effectively press for change in Cuba by empowering the Cuban people," Huddleston added.

ENGAGEMENT

Mavis Anderson, of the Latin America Working Group, which advocates lifting

"Fidel Castro's retirement and his peaceful replacement with new leadership in Cuba is the clearest possible demonstration that U.S. policy has failed"

Cuba sanctions, said the administration and the U.S. Congress should "begin an immediate process of engagement, dialogue and policy change."

"Opening up unrestricted travel to Cuba would be a good beginning," she said.

"It is America, not Cuba, that has been isolated by our policy."

Jake Colvin, the director of USA*Engage, a business group that lobbies for lifting sanctions, said the resignation brought "a new urgency for President (George W.) Bush to show that America is open to a different relationship with Cuba."



"The Bush administration

graphing, videotaping and collecting information with intent to setting the terminal building on fire.

The case against DeFreitas, who has been in U.S. custody since June last year, is yet to begin.

In delivering his ruling, Justice Breaux said it would not be "unjust and oppressive" for the three men to be sent to the U.S. to face the charges. He said also the court had received diplomatic assurances from the U.S. embassy that the men would be given a federal and not a military trial and that there is no risk the men would face proceedings before a military commission as had been argued by the defense lawyers.

The judge also dismissed the argument that the men would not receive a fair trial in the U.S. because of extensive media coverage.



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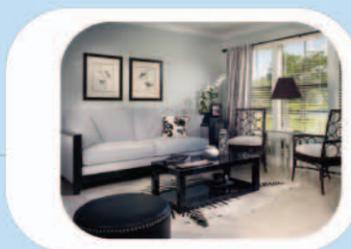
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Lauderhill lures international cricket tourney

GORDON WILLIAMS

LAUDERHILL, Florida – Cricket, the traditional sport often viewed as the only true thread binding the Caribbean, is making a big push in the United States to attract not just immigrants from countries that adore the game, but American-born fans and businesses as well.

And the promoters of the venture here are using an exciting - though less-than-traditional - form of the game to do so.

Cricket Council USA (CCU), a Florida-based organization led by Pakistani-born businessman Muhammad A. Qureshi, late last month officially launched the "MAQ T20" tournament, which is set to bowl off Memorial Day

weekend, May 23-25.

The May tournament will be the first of several planned by CCU over the next few years, which are expected to feature players from international cricket-playing nations such as the West Indies, Pakistan and India, as well as American teams. Other dates include Independence Day weekend, July 4-6; Indo-Pak Independence Day, Aug. 16; and Thanksgiving weekend, Nov. 27-30.

Teams will compete in the game's fast-paced 20/20 format, where each team bats a maximum 20 overs. Although a relatively new form of crick-



Qureshi

et, 20/20 has generated excitement worldwide, most recently at the successful Stanford 20/20 tournament staged in the Caribbean.

AIM

The hope of "MAQ T20", organizers claim, is that the shortened version of cricket will attract not only Caribbean immigrants to the new \$71 million Central Broward Regional Park here, but also Americans, especially youngsters.

"This is a big event, we have covered, for the future of cricket," Qureshi told **Caribbean Today** at the "MAQ T20" launch.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



Narco-trafficking rampant in Caribbean ~ U.S. report

NELSON KING

WASHINGTON – The United States Department of State has released a damning report on narco-trafficking in the Caribbean.

In its "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 2008", issued late last month, the department identified Jamaica as a "major drug transit country and the Caribbean's largest producer of marijuana and marijuana derivative products".

It added that the seven Eastern Caribbean countries

— Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines — are "vulnerable" to drug trafficking from South America to markets in the U.S. and Europe.

In addition, the department said Haiti is a "major transit country for cocaine and marijuana from South America and the Caribbean, respectively".

In Suriname, the report said the government's inability to control its borders, inadequate resources, limited law

enforcement training, lack of a law enforcement presence in the interior of the country, and lack of aircraft or patrol boats allow traffickers to move drug shipments via land, sea, river, and air "with little resistance".

The report said in 2007, cooperation between Jamaica and U.S. government law enforcement agencies remained strong, resulting in drug seizures, arrest of drug-traffickers, and disruption of drug organizations in Jamaica.



'Concubine' scores big in South Florida stage run

GORDON WILLIAMS

CORAL SPRINGS, Florida – Caribbean theater, straight from "yard", returned to South Florida late last month with the staging of Aston Cooke's latest production "Concubine".

The play serves up a mixed bag of entertainment, including straight comedy plus a serious reflection on personal relationships, even stirring debate over the "touchy" subject of common-law unions in Jamaica.

The colorful language and personalities typical of the region often ignites passion in Jamaican audiences in the United States hungry for a link to home. And the large crowd that showed up on Mar. 2 at South Florida's Coral Springs Center for the Arts was evidence that that has not changed.

While Concubine's plot – a love triangle that explodes with humor and raw emotion – may have been thinly dis-

guised, the energy of the five-member cast was not.

Dahlia Harris plays "Patsy", a former dancehall



"Shelly", left, offers advice to "Patsy" in the play "Concubine".

diva-turned-housewife (well, house mistress). She learns that her common-law "husband" of 15 years, "Winston Anderson" (Chris McFarlane), is finally ready to get married.

"It's about time," she tells her best friend "Shelly" (Terri Salmon).

But Winston is not marry-

ing Patsy as her background would not help him move up in Jamaican society. He wants to marry "Lisa" (Marsha Campbell) a manager at his job. Patsy believes Winston's choice is influenced by his mother who dislikes Patsy.

FIREBRAND

Yet while the emotionally-wrecked Patsy sinks rapidly into depression of a life as a "kept" woman, in steps Shelly. This loud, firebrand is a concerned rabble-rouser. She offers Patsy advice on getting her deserved due from the common-law union while threatening to damage anyone – Lisa and Winston – who hurts her friend. Also in the mix is "Desi" (Jerry Benzwick), Winston's best friend, an awkward voice of reason with a hearty appetite who gets caught in the middle of personal squabbles between the embattled characters.

The audience is enamored with Salmon's enthusiasm. Even though her acting as "Sexy Shelly" or "Sketsy

Suspended Jamaican commish pleads not guilty to gun charge

FLORIDA – A Jamaica-born suspended commissioner in a southern Florida city pleaded not guilty during arraignment late last month on a charge of pulling a handgun on a fellow supermarket shopper last November.

Fitzroy Salesman, who was a commissioner for Miramar, located between Miami and Fort Lauderdale, said he hopes a jury will acquit him and people will eventually forgive him once they learn why he pulled the gun.

"I was fearful for my life," Salesman, 51, told Broward Circuit Judge Martin Bidwill during an arraignment at which he pleaded not guilty to aggravated assault with a firearm.

SLUR

Outside the courtroom, Salesman said fellow shopper Lazavius Hudson, 18, used a racial slur and threatened to beat him up during a confrontation at a Winn-Dixie supermarket. He said he feared for his life because Miramar has a gang problem, and he pulled his .45 caliber Springfield semiautomatic handgun in self-defense.

"I just didn't want to become a statistic," said Salesman, a commissioner since 2001.

"No one knows how I felt that day when I was threat-

ened," he added.

A court date has been set for April 17 for the judge to choose a trial date.

Eric Schwartzreich, Salesman's attorney, said his client is innocent, but disclosed that he's been negotiating with the Broward state attorney to either drop or reduce the felony charge.

"The scary thing is that he (could face) three years in prison for defending himself," Schwartzreich said.

Florida Governor Charlie Crist suspended Salesman from office on Dec. 21.

REPLACEMENT

A special election to fill the remaining year on his term is scheduled for Mar. 11. Twelve candidates are vying for the seat.

The gun incident surprised supporters and community leaders because it was Salesman's second run-in with the law within two years. In June 2005, then Governor Jeb Bush, younger brother of United States President George Bush, suspended Salesman after he was charged with driving under the influence and eluding a police officer. Crist reinstated Salesman in Mar. 2007 after a jury acquitted him.



Shelly" often flies over the top, she possibly steals the show with a charged, physical performance.

SHINES

Harris is a hard sell as a former dancehall queen, but she shines in the emotional scenes, where her vulnerability is convincing and later, her wrath is even more so.

Campbell as the prissy, scheming man stealer, mistaken as "a lady" by Winston, is a bit overcooked in her role as Lisa. But the young actress does not lack enthusiasm. McFarlane is solid as Winston, who unfortunately (for men) carries the tag of a typical Jamaican "dawg" too well.

LESSONS

Concubine offers some lessons in the end as every one gets just reward. Patsy finds courage to stand on her own. Shelly ditches rumors that she is a "loose" woman. Winston withers to a miserable shell over his losses – emotional and financial – while Lisa seals

her well-laid plan after 15 days of marriage.

A tidy, entertaining package, Concubine moved quickly over the two hours and 40 minutes at Coral Springs. The audience loved it. They laughed and clapped throughout. Some – mostly women – even cursed. The loudest roars come as Patsy retaliates. When Winston limply asks her to take him back, the audience responds with a loud "No!"

Yet it is difficult to understand why the play wasn't retooled – even slightly – to ensure wider American appeal. That's a shame, really, as there is so much more to offer and so much more to gain.

Concubine, a promotion of Riddims Marketing Inc., staged one performance on Mar. 1 and has another lined up for Mar. 15 at the Coral Reef High School in south Miami-Dade County.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.

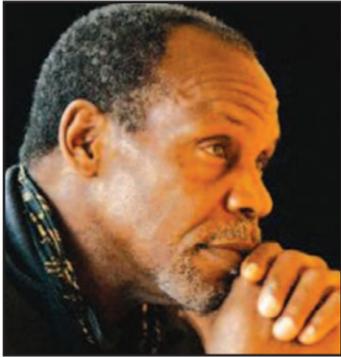


FEATURE

www.caribbeantoday.com

CaribChat

Marley magic makes perfect fit for Glover



Glover

Caribbean people know American actor Danny Glover from his popular roles in movies such as "The Color Purple" and "Lethal Weapon". Last month he visited Jamaica to promote a film focusing on reggae legend Bob Marley. On Feb. 5, during a stopover in Montego Bay, Glover spoke with *Caribbean Today's* Managing Editor Gordon Williams about Marley's influence. The following is an edited version of that conversation:

GORDON WILLIAMS: Mr. Glover, what brings you to Jamaica this trip?

DANNY GLOVER: I'm here to celebrate Bob Marley's birthday in Kingston. We have a film that we co-produced and co-financed with the Marley family called "Africa Unite", which is going to screen tomorrow in Kingston. I'm here for that celebration tomorrow, the 6th (of February).

G.W.: You said "we". Who is "we"?

D.G.: The co-producers of the film are my company Louverture Films, my co-producer Joslyn Barnes and the Marley family, including Rita Marley and all the Marley boys.

G.W.: Why would a project on Bob Marley interest you and your company?

D.G.: It's pretty obvious (he laughs). It's kind of a rhetorical question. This is one of the great icons in the world. More than 25 years after (Bob Marley's) passing...he is still revered.

He is one of the great voices of protest in the world. It was such an honor when I first saw Bob Marley on his first tour in the United States at a place called the Boarding House in San Francisco in the fall of 1975, that's (over 30) years ago and the impact that he had, certainly his music had on my life. The impact that he had on so many lives is just evident by the stature his voice and his songs are given.

There was a conference, a symposium convened in

Ethiopia in 2005 celebrating his 60th birthday, sponsored by the Bob and Rita Marley Foundation and UNICEF, of which I am a goodwill ambassador, as well as the African Union and the film ("Africa Unite") was an outgrowth of that. So when I say the co-producers I can't leave out the significant contribution that UNICEF, the United Nations Children Relief Fund, has on this production as well.

So it is something that I feel privileged to do. (He chuckles.) In 1975 when I saw him, more than 33 years ago, I could not anticipate the capacity to be involved in such a project, nor in a career that was just beginning in terms of the West's view of him, a career just beginning that anyone would realize he would reach the iconic stage that he's reached.

G.W.: Someone recently talked about Bob Marley's music and the length of time it took before it caught on in the African American society.

D.G.: Well, I remember seeing him in an audience for the first time where there were, probably, my wife and myself and maybe two or three other African Americans there in the audience...



Marley

G.W.: What has changed now, why his music is now being more universally accepted, especially in the African American community?

D.G.: I think the African American community, perhaps you can think about the kind of cultural schisms that exist between, you know, the Caribbean and African Americans. There are other musical forms so dominant within the African American music community. You're looking at rap now, rhythm and blues, and when Marley came along in 1975 we were coming out of a period when a lot of the music had been protest music.

A lot of music in the '60s was generated by groups,

white groups, that were specifically protest music. The music in the early '60s was certainly the music of Curtis Mayfield and the Impressions, and the music of others. Marvin Gaye "What's Going On?" My view is to say that what's going on in 1975 is this guy (Marley) comes up with a new musical form. Sometimes it's just the whole idea of accepting a musical form in itself, you know, a music form that is strictly not unique to rhythms that the African American community is familiar with.

Remember Bob Marley began singing West Indian versions of popular American songs...The fact is that he found his own voice and created this extraordinary form (protest reggae music) and mastered this form...I marvel at the fact that he took this speech of (late Ethiopian) Emperor (Haile) Selassie and extend it into a song ("War"). It's one of the great songs...Absolutely phenomenal in his charisma and the magnetism of the man, almost to the point where it eventually catapulted to the space that he's in now.

(Marley) is one of the few iconic figures that you could talk about. You could begin to hear a beat, wherever it is, and it's Bob Marley...He is probably one of the most recognizable musical figures in the world...I've heard Bob Marley music everywhere, coming out of a small villages in Kenya...

G.W.: Do you think he has transcended entertainment and music and has gone on to a different level in terms of his recognition?

D.G.: Well, I think he was committed to the African world. I think that is something else he would have realized in the music when he says "Africa Unite" or he says

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

Caribbean leaders hail Castro

Caribbean and hemispheric leaders have hailed the contributions of outgoing Cuban President Fidel Ruiz Castro.

The 81-year-old leader, who has not made a public appearance since undergoing an operation for an undisclosed intestinal ailment almost 19 months ago, said last month that he would not return as commander-in-chief following a session of the National Assembly on Feb. 24.

Despite giving up the presidency, Castro indicated in his message that he would try to remain an influence behind the scenes by continuing to write regular columns in the official newspapers.

'TOWERING FORCE'

St. Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves described Castro as "a towering figure politically in the 20th century, even into the 21st century." Gonsalves, who has on numerous occasions expressed his admiration for the ailing communist leader, said that in his opinion Cuba had developed tremendously under Castro's leadership. He told reporters that Castro, having spent 49 years in power has had "an extremely good innings."

His Grenadian counterpart, Dr. Keith Mitchell, said Castro's decision to step down did not surprise him and showed his love for country was greater than any other love.

"It is not surprising based on what I know of Fidel and his passion for Cuba and his passion for the Cuban people...I know he would put the Cuban people first," Mitchell said, describing it as a logical discussion.

The Trinidad and Tobago government also paid tribute to Castro saying it did not believe that his decision to step down would impact on the existing relations between



Castro

the two Caribbean countries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Port of Spain has enjoyed diplomatic relations with Havana since 1972 that covered a wide range of areas involving economic and social development. In addition, it said Cuba has provided valuable assistance to the people of T&T country via scholarships, manpower support in the area of medical services and technical assistance and the field of agriculture.

ASSISTANCE

In Jamaica, both the government and the Opposition have hailed Castro's assistance to the island. Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Dr. Kenneth Baugh said Castro has been one of the most influential personalities among world leaders and when the chapters of history are written it would be impossible to omit his name and contributions.

"To friend and foe, he has been a towering figure in stature and status. He has remained steadfast and consistent in his ideas and philosophy, despite overwhelming opposition," Dr. Baugh said.

"Whereas he is considered a controversial in respect of his political ideology and economic policies he has had enormous impact in the area of social services, on equality and working for the common food especially for oppressed peoples of the world."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)



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Guyana's government in fight to reclaim Buxton from violence

NIGEL WILLIAMS

GEORGETOWN, Guyana - Located approximately 11 miles off the capital of Guyana, lies a small Afro-Guyanese community called Buxton - a village with a rich history of hard work and dedication, but also notorious for providing shelter to a group of gunmen who call themselves freedom fighters for oppressed descendants of African slaves living here.

Buxton, for the past several years, has been held hostage by criminals who have reportedly used it as a base to attack members of the law

enforcement agencies and other communities where the residents are predominantly descendants of East Indians.

There have been numerous violent clashes between gunmen and lawmen in the community over the years, but in recent times the security forces seemed to have stepped back from the confrontations. This approach allowed the gunmen to build up their arsenal and with their ill-gotten wealth they have won the hearts and minds of several of the villagers.

Now, the Bharrat Jagdeo administration is on a drive to

win back the support of the community and wrest the village from the hands of organized criminals.

The recent massacre of 11 people in the small East Indian-dominated community of Lusignan has led the administration and security forces to focus on Buxton, where it is believed the gunmen who carried out the attack are ensconced. A massive operation has been launched to clear dense vegetation aback of the village to expose the criminals, but this new move by the security forces has only deepened the already strained

relations between the administration and villagers - many of whose farms will be destroyed in the exercise.

'LONG STRUGGLE'

"It will be a long struggle, the people here do not trust the police and the government so they would not get their cooperation," Deon Hamer, a 45-year-old resident of Buxton commented.

Hamer says Buxton represented the last revolutionary group of organized Afro-Guyanese, living in this South American nation where the ethnic majority descended from East Indians.

"Black (Afro-Guyanese) people do not control anything in this country...the Indians have the political and economic powers and that makes us slaves all over again," Hamer remarked.

Leaders of Buxton have complained that since the ruling people's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C), which draws majority of its support from East Indians, took office in 1992 there has been a steady decline in the development of the village, which they say has been starved of basic infrastructure.

"You cannot ignore people and be the government for one group. You have to be the government for all peoples," Robin Phillips, a teacher of Buxton said.

Phillips said that following the 2001 general elections, which was won by the PPP/C, a number of Buxtonians rallied around the main Opposition, People's National Congress Reform (PNC/R), which draws majority of its support from Afro-Guyanese.

"Their (the government) actions may have caused some form of discrimination and partisan leadership which led to the state this village is in right now," Phillips added.

PROTESTS

The 2001 elections were marred by violent street protests and Buxton again was in the forefront of fiery demonstrations along the East Coast. The next year an influential leader of the village, Shaka Blair, was shot dead in his home by members of a police squad. Police had said that they went to the man's home in search of arms and ammunition and he shot at them first. Blair's death did not go down well with the community and it ushered in that period of unrest and tensions between the authorities and villagers.

"When Shaka was killed that was the beginning, we Buxtonians were not happy about it and since then we

have been standing firm," Kevin Jones a middle-aged resident told CMC.

Blair's death had come mere months after the Feb. 23, 2002 jailbreak during which five dangerous prisoners made an escape from the country's main correctional facility at Camp Street, Georgetown. The escapees later found comfort and refuge in the village of Buxton, and within months they were supplied with arms and ammunition and went on a deadly rampage spanning two years. Over two dozens policemen were killed during this period and hundreds of civilians.

From that period to now, Buxton remained one of the most organized black commu-

- CMC



Marley magic makes perfect fit for Glover

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

"Buffalo Soldiers" or "No Woman No Cry". There's a voice there. You just can't deny this amazing voice, the response to a struggle and songs for justice, songs for protest...The symposium was organized in a way which it uses his music as themes on issues reflected in what's happening in Africa today...

So his music...has that kind of power that you don't often find in an artiste. It's rare that you find in an artiste. It's that good. And in his body of work, unfortunately for us, is a body of work that's only limited by the time he was with us, you know. I saw him in San Francisco in 1975 and he was gone by 1981...

G.W: When you decided to work on this project, was there anything about the man himself, that you learned, that was somewhat surprising to you,

different or that you could reflect back on while working on this project?

D.G.: Well, I don't know. I knew enough about Bob Marley and his music. I knew quite a bit of his background, that he had spent some time in Wilmington, Delaware. I don't know if there was anything new.

I think sometimes you have the opportunity to be able to have people re-imagine the vision. Empower people by someone else's voice, you know. It's weird to have someone who has such a body of work it's almost amusingly clinical in its diagnosis and its response to the suffering, the pain, the struggle of people of African descent and their power. I mean, "get up, stand up, stand up for your rights"... You know, for I think for us to get an opportunity to engage in such a project was really special, really important for us.

G.W: In the movie "I Am Legend" a lot of it surrounded the music of Bob Marley, several of his tracks. Did you see the movie?

D.G.: I haven't seen the movie.

G.W: In terms of the appeal and how far it has stretched, now it has gone into mainstream movies, the influence of Bob Marley...

D.G.: I think the influence of Bob Marley goes beyond mainstream movies. Maybe mainstream movies are linked to the table in terms of this. The influence of Bob Marley is so profound in so many different ways. I mean, what was so evident was that here's a man who was invited to play in the liberation celebration of Zimbabwe, you know. It's amazing. How amazing is that stuff?



Caribbean leaders hail Castro

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

Baugh said that the government and people of Cuba were friends of Jamaica and the wider Caribbean.

"We are committed to deepening bilateral and regional ties in economic cooperation and trade which we currently enjoy with Cuba," he said.

Prime Minister Bruce Golding also paid tribute to the Cuban leader during a sitting of Parliament. He said the announcement brings into focus the political revolution that has endured and made reference to the change in attitude of the ruling Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) to the Castro government.

"It has constantly

demanding the attention of the world...during the period of the great ideological divide we (Jamaica Labour Party) were fierce opponents of the political values as were espoused then and we expressed that opposition in very forceful terms. Jamaica and Cuba enjoys a relationship that is mutually respectful," he said.

Opposition Leader Portia Simpson Miller referred to Castro as a giant on the world's political stage.

"During the very difficult days when there were countries that were afraid to be associated with Cuban and Castro, the People's National Party government, Michael Manley and P.J. Patterson stood firm," Simpson Miller said.

Meantime, Secretary General of the Organisation of American States (OAS) José Miguel Insulza says Castro's decision not to seek another term was "no small matter given the Cuban leader's importance in his country and in the Latin American region for almost five decades." He said that Cuba is a member of the OAS even though its privileges have been suspended.

Insulza also expressed the hope that "the country would see changes that enable the sister nation's full re incorporation into our organization.

"It should fall to Cubans themselves, through free and peaceful dialogue and without external interference, to find the most appropriate path to the well being of the people."

- CMC



CORRECTION

The wrong cartoon was used to accompany Tony Robinson's column on page 9 of Caribbean Today's Feb. 2008 issue. We apologize for the error.

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V I E W P O I N T

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Looking to post-Fidel Cuba

CLARENCE PAGE

Fidel Castro is stepping down? As Dorothy Parker said upon hearing of the death of President Calvin Coolidge, how can you tell?

The Bearded One lost most of his relevancy for us "yanquis" long ago. He once loomed large in the lives of us baby boomers as we crouched under our desks in "duck-and-cover" drills, terrified of his nuclear-tipped Russian missiles. "Only 90 miles from our shores," our elders constantly reminded us.

To today's youths, Castro is so last century. Even in Miami and Havana the response to Castro's retirement is reported to be remarkably ho-hum. More business-as-usual than dancing-in-the-streets.

The Castro we used to know and care about has not been in charge for quite some time. His younger brother, Raul Castro, 76, has been acting president since Fidel, who is five years older, fell ill in July 2006.

The Soviet Union is no longer around to prop up his island's economy with \$2 billion a year. Even Castro's stature as Latin America's leading leftist is getting nudged aside by one of his biggest fans, President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela. Chavez wants to be Castro, but with oil, as he enlarges his influence across Cuba and the rest of Latin America.

RAUL'S ROLE

Although Raul has his own record for ruthlessness, he also has begun to sow the seeds of a post-Fidel Cuba. He has become a promising "pragmatic institutionalist", in the view of author Julia E. Sweig, director for Latin America Studies for the Council on Foreign Relations. For practical reasons, he has inched his country toward a more competitive economic system, like China, whose "communism" increasingly looks more like state-controlled capitalism.

Raul also has encouraged public meetings to air complaints and hinted at something else that Fidel dreads: the use of "incentives" to increase productivity. Perhaps America's leaders can say of Raul, as British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, "We can do business together."

Those who visit Havana, as I did a few years ago, find a tirelessly enterprising and entrepreneurial people who are eager to free their appetite for enterprise from state-sponsored constraints. Generations of Cubans born since Fidel's revolution already have begun to lay groundwork of a post-Fidel Cuba in a vigorous dollar-based entrepreneurial economy that parallels the government's anemic peso economy.

EXCUSE

Besides a great potential vacation spot, Cuba offers something that America's farmers, manufacturers and service providers need: customers. After a half-century, America's embargo against Cuba has outlived any usefulness it might have had. Instead, it provides the regime with a handy excuse for its own economic failures. That's why a right-left, labor-corporate coalition of congressmen and others has called for ending it.

The next president must decide whether he or she will continue to pander to the hard-line embargo supporters or open diplomatic and economic doors to a post-Fidel Cuba that approaches capitalism with no more fear than the tiny bit that Fidel manages to generate among Americans today.

Both senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama expressed a willingness in their Austin debate to fully engage Cuba diplomatically. Only Obama said he would meet with the next Cuban leader without preconditions, although he backed away from his support for lifting the trade embargo, which he advocated as a Senate candidate in 2003.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

To have and to hold

Last month quite a few ladies took umbrage to the fact that I focused on the female clock and what happens to women when the toc tics on.

Well, sorry to say, I can't really do anything about halting or even slowing the passage of time. What I can do though, is let people know what they can do, to not only have their partner, but hold them as well.

Ladies, you have to give off the right signals, just like how animals give off pheromones or musk, you have to let the man know that you want to attract him. It starts and ends with the clothes, for first he sees them, then he wants to tear them off.

The fact is, women are conditioned by society, almost all societies and cultures, not to verbalize their intentions to men. Men can easily say to women, "Boy, I'd love to be with you," or, "Hey, I'd really like to make love to you." But a woman dare not utter those words. Instead she has to drop subtle hints, bat the eyelids, give that knowing smile and display other subtle signals to tell the man she's available.

POWER

When girls reach a certain age, they become aware of their sexuality and also the power that they have over men. Still, they are bound by the social shackles that stipulate that they cannot just shout to a man what their desires are. That's where the have and hold signals come in. When she sees the guy that she really likes and decides that he's the one, then the gears kick in. First he starts to get more attention than she ever gives to any other boy. He gets more phone calls, he's sent little mes-



TONY ROBINSON



sages, she jumps at his every invitation, and when they go out, her eyes hang on to his every word.

She is primed, she is ready, and her mind, body and soul are saying, have me, hold me.

When a woman is amongst a group of men and they all are putting the moves on her, observe her actions closely. The woman will single out this one man and lock her radar on him. It will be so subtle that he won't see it at first, but other women in the group will spot it faster than any man. That's why

females can quickly and easily spot when another woman is out to get their men. The poor man, not blessed with that ability to detect those signals, never picked it up, and wouldn't have for a long time either.

CLOTHES CALL

Clothes are a very important indicator when a woman is signaling 'have me' flags to a man. When a woman goes out on a date with a man, only she knows how it's going to turn out

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

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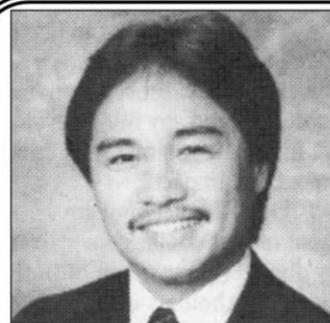


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CARIB Comments

• **“Part of what has held back this region for so long is that there are too many of us who carry, not a chip on our shoulder, but a whole light pole”** - Jamaica's Prime Minister Bruce Golding taking a shot at Caribbean people who oppose the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), a soon-to-be-signed trade pact between the region and Europe.

• **“Fidel Castro's resignation is another sign that change is underway in Cuba”** - Admiral James Stavridis, commander of the United States Southern Command, the Pentagon's headquarters for military operations in Latin America and the Caribbean.



• **“In every country so far, the cost of living has gone up. So although there has been change at the political level, there has**

been no change in the quality of life of the people” - Grenada's Economic Development and Planning Minister Anthony Boatman declaring “the situation has gotten worse” in Caribbean countries which changed administrations in recent months.

• **“We never expected such thing”** - Commissioner Henry Greene, head of Guyana's police force, admitting that the officers in Bartica were not as alert as they should have been during the slaying of 12 people

last month. Three officers at the outpost in the small mining village were killed and two others seriously injured.



• **“These barbarous acts which violate the dignity of life and common decency, and undermine confidence in the rule of law”** - Albert Ramdin, assistant secretary general of the Organization of American States, offered his views on the killings at Bartica.

• **“If you signal in any way or indicate in any way your appreciation and your respect for your leader, I don't see what's wrong with that”** - Grenada's Foreign Affairs Minister Elvin Nimrod responding to criticism after he knelt in front of Prime Minister Keith Mitchell last month.



Compiled from CMC and other sources.



To have and to hold

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

at the end of the evening. The poor guy can only wish and hope

If on that date the guy shows up to take her to dinner/dancing and she appears in thick jeans with 10,000 buttons, a wooly long sleeved sweater, also with 1,000 buttons, clasps and strings like straight jacket, construction boots with more eye holes and laces than fishnet and her hair tied back, then yu dun know seh that she ain't saying come have and hold me.

But if she emerges in a slinky sheer soft shiny sexy mini skirt with a split that goes up to her waist, a backless blouse that would make Jennifer Lopez blush, open toed shoes that would be a foot fetish's dream, perfume that would drive even a

bishop into a sexual frenzy, hair cascading to her waist, then you know that she's saying to the man, “have me, hold me, and I'll have and hold you, forever.”

MIXED SIGNALS

Now unfortunately, some women do not play fair, do not abide by the rules of engagement and possess weapons of mass deception, sending out mixed signals. They believe in tormenting poor men who have no idea what those signals are. The guy sees it as a green light, makes the wrong move and gets a slap in the face or a sexual harassment lawsuit. But I'm talking about women who really mean to have and hold men. They have it down to a fine art. Unfortunately most

Caribbean men, after a few close dances with a woman, swear blind that she wants to go to bed with them. But the ‘have me hold me’ dance is distinctly different.

SIGNALS

You've got to know the sig-

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

Republican frontrunner Sen. John McCain, who has accused Cubans of participating in the torture of some of his fellow prisoners in Hanoi during the Vietnam War, has said Raul is “worse” in many ways than Fidel. Yet since McCain also took the lead on improving relations with Vietnam, it

nals. If you can't read those signs then you are really female illiterate.

Ah women, filled with so called frailties, but blessed with more subtleties than a geisha.

The game is not new, but the rules are changing just a little bit, so you have to keep up

Looking to post-Fidel Cuba

would not be that big a leap for him to do the same with Cuba. We can only hope.

If the embargo has any value at all, it should be used to push for human rights on the island. For example, the Committee to Protect Journalists, of which I am a board member, ranks Cuba second only behind China in

or get swept away, totally oblivious to what fate will befall you, as you're had and held.

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Do adults need to remove tonsils?

DEAR MAYO CLINIC: My 41-year-old son has had tonsils. His tonsils swell and have white patches on them. He runs a temperature for several days. He's talked with several ear, nose and throat doctors but they don't want to take the tonsils out. I realize adults may take longer to heal than children, but is it more dangerous? Why are doctors so hesitant to remove tonsils in an adult?

ANSWER: When other treatments don't help, neither children nor adults should have to put up with repeated bouts of tonsillitis - inflammation of the tonsils caused by infection. From the information you provided, it sounds like your son would be a candidate to have his tonsils removed.

In children, we typically don't consider removing the tonsils unless a child tests positive for strep throat four times a year or more. In adults, removing tonsils is considered with fewer episodes of infection. The most common reasons to remove tonsils in adults include recurrent infection, malodorous tonsil stones and snoring. Nothing makes tonsil removal more danger-



Tonsils

ous or difficult for patients your son's age. But you are correct that he would need to plan ample time for recovery. Adults tend to perceive the pain far more acutely than children. I tell adult patients to expect 10 to 14 days of serious downtime, with much of that time on narcotic-strength pain medication.

For both children and adults, tonsillectomies are performed less often than in the past. Tonsils used to be blamed for many different conditions, including skin problems, arthritis and other health problems. Tonsil

removal was often the treatment. Today we know that tonsils are beneficial because they filter harmful bacteria and viruses that could cause serious health problems.

Most often, patients with tonsillitis don't need tonsil removal. When tonsillitis is caused by a viral infection, the first-line treatment is self-care - drinking warm liquids, resting, gargling with salt water and taking over-the-counter pain medication for fever.

Antibiotics are prescribed when tonsillitis is caused by a bacterial infection.

I suggest that your son talk with his primary care doctor about his condition and ask for a recommendation for an ear, nose and throat physician who could work with him on an effective treatment plan that might include tonsillectomy.

- Dr. Ray Gustafson, otorhinolaryngology, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota. Distributed by Tribune Media Services, Inc.



Grenada approves new policy to fight HIV/AIDS

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada, CMC - Government has approved a new HIV/AIDS policy as part of its commitment to halting and reversing the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2015.

Tabled during last month's sitting of the House of Representatives, the policy provides a clearer direction to a multi-sectored national response by outlining the role of every sector which contributes to the prevention, care, treatment and support of persons living with or affected by

HIV/AIDS.

Founded on the principles of inclusion, sustainability, accountability and respect for human rights, some of the objectives of the policy are: to improve the coordination of HIV/AIDS prevention and control activities at all levels; promote HIV/AIDS related research and surveillance activities; and safeguard the human rights of people living with and affected by the disease.



Caribbean gets bird flu warning

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC - The introduction of bird flu to the Caribbean could have a devastating impact on regional economies, an official from the Ministry of Agriculture here said last month.

Fredrick Ford, the permanent secretary in the ministry, was addressing participants from across the Caribbean and Latin America at a UNICEF sponsored workshop aimed at strengthening the capacity of persons working on the pre-

paredness and response to avian flu and other emergencies.

"Avian influenza poses a significant threat to food security and, in our region, we cannot afford to allow this disease to take shape in our poultry industry," Ford said.

"We must therefore be vigilant in preventing the spread of the disease in Barbados and the region as a whole."



Is niacin really effective in lowering cholesterol?

DR. HARVEY SIMON

Question: Is niacin really effective in lowering cholesterol? If so, what's the daily dosage, and what meds does it interact with?

Answer: Niacin is indeed effective. On average, it can lower LDL ("bad") cholesterol levels by 10 percent to 25 percent. The statins and other lipid-lowering drugs can do even better, but niacin outshines them all for lowering triglyceride levels (down 20 to 50 percent) and raising HDL ("good") cholesterol levels (by 15 percent to 35 percent). Niacin is the granddaddy

of cholesterol-lowering drugs. It was the first medication to lower cholesterol levels (1955), the first to reduce heart attacks (1984) and the first to lower long-term mortality rates (1986). But since 1987, when the first statin drug - lovastatin (Mevacor) - was marketed in the United States, niacin has fallen into disuse. The reason is that niacin is harder to take and may produce unpleasant side effects.

The many niacin preparations fall into two categories, crystalline and controlled release. Crystalline niacin is quickly absorbed and rapidly metabolized, so it's usually



Meat, poultry, and fish contribute about half of the niacin people eat. Mushrooms are also a rich source of niacin, as are whole grain and enriched breads and cereals.

taken two to three times a day, ideally at the end of a meal (but not with hot foods or beverages). Typical doses range from 250 milligrams twice a day to 500 milligrams three times a day. Many people experience unpleasant

itching, flushing and headaches, particularly as the dose is slowly increased. This side effect can be minimized by taking an 81-milligram aspirin tablet 30 to 60 minutes before taking niacin.

Controlled-release preparations are much less likely to produce flushing and itching; however, they are somewhat more likely to produce liver inflammation, raise blood sugar levels in diabetics, and trigger gout by raising uric acid levels. Other potential side effects of any niacin preparation include fatigue, blurred vision, nausea, peptic ulcers and erectile dysfunction.

Niacin is a natural sub-

stance - in fact, it's Vitamin B3. Like other vitamins, it's required to keep the metabolism working right. But the recommended daily allowance for B3 is only 18 milligrams a day - far less than the amount needed to improve cholesterol levels.

Dr. Harvey B. Simon is an associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and a member of the Health Sciences Technology Faculty at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



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FOOD

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Back off burger, here's delicious hot patty

You've seen them in the Caribbean stores. Even frozen at your favorite supermarket. A simple flour loaf with meat, poultry or vegetable inside.

Americans call them "turnovers", Caribbean people know them as patties.

Beef patty, chicken patty, veggie patty. As long as it is a hot patty, it is still one of the favorite all time snacks for Caribbean people rich, poor or anywhere in between, anywhere in the world.

So this month **Caribbean Today** will tell you how to make this inexpensive treat - beef patty, Jamaican style.

INGREDIENTS

For pastry

- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons turmeric
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup shortening

For the filling

- 2 tablespoons salt
- 1 onion, minced
- 2 scallions, trimmed and minced
- 1/2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 fresh chilies, seeded and minced
- 1/2 pound ground beef
- 4 tomatoes, peeled and chopped

- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon ground fenugreek
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cardamom
- salt
- freshly ground blackpepper
- 2 egg yolks

METHOD

Make the pastry: Sift the flour, turmeric and salt into a bowl. Cut in the shortening and rub in until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Add three tablespoons of ice water to form a firm dough. Cover the dough with plastic wrap and refrigerate for two hours or longer.

Prepare the filling: Heat the oil in a skillet, add onion and sauté over medium heat for five minutes, until soft and golden. Stir in the scallions, garlic and chilies and cook for three minutes.

Add beef and cook, stirring frequently, for 10 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes, turmeric, cumin, coriander, fenugreek, ginger, cinnamon and cardamom and season to



Patties

taste with salt and freshly ground pepper.

Pour in 1/4 cup water, reduce the heat to low and cook for 20 minutes, stirring frequently. Set aside to cool.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Roll out the pastry and cut into 12 rounds, approximately seven inches in diameter, using a saucer as a guide.

Put two tablespoons of the filling on one side of each pastry round then fold over to form a crescent. Crimp the edges with a fork to seal them. Arrange on an ungreased baking sheet and brush the top of each patty with a little beaten egg yolk.

Bake in the center of the oven for 25 to 30 minutes until golden brown.

Transfer to a large serving platter and serve the beef patties at once.



Practical, popular herbs for the home kitchen

Caribbean people like to flavor their food and there are plenty spices from the region to help them.

This month Caribbean Today offers the following listing of herbs, which also add to taste of food being prepared at home.

Basil – With dozens of variations, including sweet, cinnamon, lemon, spicy and chocolate, this classic herb broadens the culinary stage for experimentation. For best flavor, add at the end of the cooking cycle.

Rosemary – Technically an evergreen shrub, the rosemary plant becomes tenacious once established in the garden and is equally remarkable in food combinations. Although paired most often with fish, pork and lamb, rosemary's fresh flavor also complements cookies, jams and jellies.

Mint – Among the most popular and versatile of herbs, mint appears in everything from desserts and summer drinks to meats and vegetable dishes. Its flavors include peppermint, spearmint, pineapple mint, ginger mint and more.

Thyme – In Spain and Italy, sheep were purportedly grazed on thyme because of its ability

to gently flavor the meat. Today the widely used herb flavors marinades, meat, soups, stews and casseroles.

Dill – Typically used as a pickling herb for cucumbers or as an accent for fish dishes, dill is also a tasty addition to omelets and scrambled eggs. Mashed or roasted potatoes also emerge as



Mixed herbs

unlikely but delicious considerations.

Sage – The name comes from the Latin "salver", which means to cure. In colonial America, sage was perhaps the most important of all herbs, grown for its medicinal powers and used in the kitchen to flavor pork and other fatty meats.

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Air Jamaica increases seats from N.Y. to Barbados, Grenada

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC - Air Jamaica has announced it is increasing the seat capacity on flights to Barbados and Grenada from the John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York.

Paul Pennicook, the airline's vice president of marketing and sales, said the move would take effect on April 1. He said that the carrier would continue to serve the New York-Barbados route with daily non-stop flights, upgrading the existing A-320 Airbus aircraft to the larger A-321, which carries an additional 38



Pennicook

seats. The A-321 has a seat capacity of 188 compared to 150 on the A-320.

"Barbados will continue to have the most convenient schedule to the island from the northeast United States - we'll be first on the beach and last off the beach," he said late last month.

NO SHARING

Pennicook explained that the fully dedicated Barbados flights from New York and Jamaica will not be shared with any other Eastern Caribbean nation. He said further that the new schedule also opens up daily non-stop flights between Barbados and Kingston, which is an important and profitable intra-Caribbean business route for



Air Jamaica

Air Jamaica.

"These changes are in keeping with our mandate for a leaner, viable airline," the airline executive said.

When the changes take effect Air Jamaica would serve Grenada with four weekly non-stop flights from New York, before continuing

non-stop to Kingston.

"We are excited about bringing more seats into both Barbados and Grenada," said Pennicook, who assured that connections to and from Miami via Kingston, which is an important service for Grenada, would continue to be "smooth and seamless."

Pennicook reassured passengers that while the Jamaican national carrier restructures, it remains committed to serving the Eastern Caribbean.

"The new schedule into Barbados and Grenada presents an exciting marketing opportunity for the airline and the destinations to command a greater share of traditional tourist and diaspora business," he said.

Europe moves to waive visa rules for CARICOM countries

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC - The European Commission (E.C.) has taken the first step towards waiving short term visas for nationals from four Caribbean community (CARICOM) countries.

It said that the recommendations to authorize the E.C. to open negotiations with the governments of Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados and St. Kitts and Nevis were to be submitted to the European Council.

Mauritius and the Seychelles are also to benefit from the initiative.

"The commission intends to open the negotiations on

the visa waiver with the six countries as soon as the negotiating directives will be approved by the council, thus providing for the full implementation of the existing legal framework," said Vice-President Franco Frattini, commissioner responsible for justice, freedom and security.

An E.C. statement said the new regulation makes the implementation of the exemptions from the visa requirement for nationals of these countries, to be concluded between the E.C. and each of the countries in question.

"To this end, the Commission prepared the rec-

ommendations to be submitted to the council in order to authorize the commission to negotiate - on behalf of the European Community - such bilateral visa waiver agreements with each of the six countries concerned".

The statement said the finalization of these recommendations had been delayed due to the decision of some of the countries to introduce a special visa regime for the nationals of several member states on a temporary basis for the period of the Cricket World Cup 2007 that took place in the Caribbean.

HAMILTON, Bermuda, CMC - Air arrivals hit a seven-year high as Bermuda enjoyed a record tourism year in 2007 with more than 660,000 visitors coming to the island, Premier Ewart Brown has said.

Brown, who is also transport and tourism minister, told a news conference last month that he was confident the tourism sector would continue to grow with the arrival of new low-cost air flights and the possibility of achieving approved destination status in China.

"Simply put, 2007 was a very solid year for Bermuda tourism, as the numbers will show," Brown said. "In fact, I am thrilled to tell you that at year end, overall arrivals for 2007 set another record as the highest amount of total visitors to the island on record. Now that's something worthy of celebrating."

Brown said a total of 663,767 visitors came here last year, an increase of 3.4 percent from the 641,717 visitors who arrived here last year.

"Total air arrivals reached a seven-year high with 305,548 visitors arriving in 2007, up 2.2 percent from the 298,973 visitors in 2006," he added.

RISE

An airport exit survey showed that visitor expenditure had risen by around \$50 million, Brown said. Hotel occupancy was also up, although there were 245 fewer beds in 2007 due to hotel closures, which was why hotel occupancy tax was \$1 million lower in the 2007 financial year than in 2006.

Brown announced low-cost carrier Zoom Airlines would resume its twice-weekly service soon.

"The airline will offer one flight each week from Toronto,

ideally scheduled for Canadian visitors spending a long weekend in Bermuda and thereby challenging Air Canada's long-standing monopoly on that route," he said.

"The second flight each week will be linked through to Fort Lauderdale, offering Bermudians an ideal schedule for trips to Florida."

He said arrivals from London had grown by 20 percent since Zoom's arrival on the route last June, while British Airways, which has flown to the island for 70 years, and enjoyed a monopoly on the London-Bermuda



Brown

route, had not seen a change in its passenger numbers.

The premier said he was still trying to lure Chinese visitors to the island by making Bermuda an approved destination. Last October, Brown visited Beijing to attend the World Tourism Summit and met several key government representatives as well as Chinese media outlets.

Officials say Chinese nationals could only visit Bermuda after the island is placed on an approved destination list approved by their government.

They said that such designation could take up to three years, but Brown said he believed his visit put Bermuda in good stead.

"Our new goal is to obtain approved destination status by the end of this calendar year," he said.

Dominicans condemn 'terror island' article

ROSEAU, Dominica, CMC - An article posted on the website of the United States-based lobby group Council on Hemispheric Affairs, that describes Dominica as "the next terror island" has sparked widespread condemnation here, as well as the Dominican community overseas.

The article compares Dominica's close relations with Cuba and Venezuela with that of Grenada, which was invaded by the U.S. military more than 20 years ago.

Tourism Minister Ian Douglas dismissed the article, saying it was meant to distract the Dominican public from its development agenda.

"When we established diplomatic relations with China they had a problem with it, now those same people are back with their scare mongering tactics, that's what happens when a government try to bring about true and meaningful development," he said.

"Today, another Caribbean nation, Dominica, has been forging links with leftist Cuba and Venezuela. Authorities on that small Caribbean island had better watch out, or they may be presiding over this generation's 'Terror Island', but this time the name of the island is Dominica", the article stated.

CONFRONTATION

It also stated "In the event that John McCain is elected president, the stage could be set for confrontation with the Dominica leadership."

Dominican-born International Monetary Fund (IMF) economist, Thompson Fontaine said on Feb. 28 he was not taking lightly the content of the publication released on Feb. 26.

"When you have such an inflammatory article going out and to compare with Grenada in 1984 is preposterous and absurd," he said on state radio

from Washington.

Dr. Fontaine said that as a Dominican he was concerned about the damage the article could cause and questioned, "Why is this guy trying to set up the United States against Dominica?"

Another prominent Dominican based in Washington said the Dominican community was concerned about the article written by Nicholas Clause.

"It concerns us that our island home and the word terror is linked, this is a very frightening proposal," said Dr. Emmanuel Finn.

Dominica's ambassador to Costa Rica Dr. Damien Dublin has described the developments as irresponsible.

"I think it's a very irresponsible an inflammatory article the person who wrote it does not respect a country's right to self-determination," he said.

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SPRING SHIPPING

~ A Caribbean Today advertising feature

Getting to know the who's who of the transportation industry

This is a guide to the players in the transportation industry; offering a reference for the various parties that impact on your services.

There are four main forms of transit that are utilized - vessel, motor carrier, plane and railroad.

Some movements utilize more than one form and are called intermodal. An example would be a shipment that originates in Managua and is shipped by vessel out of Honduras to Miami and then by truck to Orlando.

The public can utilize the services of a common carrier, which can be governed by the Carriage of Goods by Sea Act, the Harter Act, the Bill of Lading Act, and the Shipping Act. Carriers involved in foreign commerce are under the control of the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC), with which they should file a tariff.

If a carrier seeks to give a better rate, it can only do so by way of a service contract, which must be filed with the FMC. These are typically given as volume discounts with a penalty for not shipping a certain volume.

BILL OF LADING

The bill of lading is the

main document that governs the relationship between the parties. Review the front and back of the bill of lading. In analyzing a case, insist on having a copy of both sides of the bill of lading.

On cases under the Carriage of Goods by Sea Act, you are dealing with a one-year

statute of limitation.

Some domestic ocean carriers have incorporated this through a clause paramount. There are limitations of liability that have been upheld with regard to ocean shipments such as the \$500 per package limitation, including applying this limita-



Cargo movement is big business with many players involved.

tion to a bus. A deviation by an ocean carrier can override a limitation of liability. If you are handling a claim, check to see if this limitation applies or not, especially if you are contemplating taking a claim against a carrier on a contingency fee basis.

Many ocean carriers operate through steamship agencies. They handle the booking, billing and supplies for steamship companies. They can also handle the stevedoring and at times temporary warehousing of the cargo. They should not be sued as carriers. Through a Himalaya Clause in a bill of lading, they can assert some of the same limitations of liability as the ocean carrier.

Ocean transportation brokers book cargo on behalf of ocean carriers. They are not required to post a bond nor are they required to be licensed. Motor carriers are generally governed by the Carmack Amendment. Look out for the statute of limitations as it is two years and one

day from the declination and you must file a claim within nine months. If you do not, you could be prevented from pursuing your claim in court. Keep some proof of delivery of the claim.

Some attorneys have gone so far as to hire a process server to serve a claim on a motor carrier. Motor carriers often operate through owner/operators who do the actual hauling. On intermodal shipments, some motor carriers do not issue bills of lading, but instead rely on the intermodal bill of lading issued by an ocean carrier. Trailer interchange agreements should be looked at carefully as to the motor carrier's responsibilities toward the ocean carrier. There are often indemnity provisions and insurance requirements which must be satisfied. Trucker bills of lading should be carefully reviewed in order to make sure that you are protected.

Railroads are also governed by the Carmack Amendment as well. Be aware of the same strict time limitations that apply to motor carriers.

DOMESTIC

Domestic carriers are regulated at least in part by the Surface Transportation Board (STB), which replaced the Interstate Commerce Commission. Sometimes the term ICC, Interstate Commerce Commission, is still used, but it is incorrect. The STB is within the Department of Transportation. It is not as large as its predecessor. Motor carriers must register with the Federal Carrier Safety Administration and are also subject to its regulations.

Intermodal shipments are generally governed by the

rules and limitations of the Carriage of Goods by Sea Act and to some extent by the Harter Act. On an intermodal bill of lading, there might be only one bill of lading issued by the ocean carrier and under some law will extend the limitations of liability for the ocean carrier to other parties in the transportation chain which could further protect the motor carrier.

Foreign aviation is governed by the Warsaw Convention and the Montreal Protocol. Two years for filing suit and notice requirements are included. There are limitations of liability for damages under the Warsaw Convention, \$9.07 per pound, except under extreme conditions such as deliberate acts or recklessness. The shipping contract in an air shipment is the air waybill. The front and the back of the air waybill should be examined in order to be sure of the terms and conditions.

There are other entities involved in the chain of transportation besides carriers. These include ocean transportation intermediaries, which are ocean freight forwarders and non-vessel operating common carriers. Ocean freight forwarders are like a travel agent for cargo. They book space, arrange the transportation and can collect a commission from the ocean carrier. They are governed by the FMC and are not considered carriers. They can however assert limitations of liability.

An ocean freight forwarder is not a carrier, although it can be sued for negligence such as a wrongful selection of a carrier. A freight forwarder must post a

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)



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Package limitation of liability under COGSA

The \$500 per package limitation under the Carriage of Goods by Sea Act (COGSA) is an area of the law that has been frequently litigated. Disputes in these types of container cases (which arise after the shipper's goods are damaged or goods are missing in some way during transit) typically involve the carrier on one side arguing that the container is the relevant package and the shipper on the other side arguing that the individual packaged goods within the container are the relevant packages. In the recent case of Marisa v.

M/V CMA CGM La Tour, Slip Copy, 2006 WL 2521269 (S.D.N.Y.), the bill of lading described the cargo as being one container, "said to contain 74 items household goods". The court held that in this situation, the container was not one package for purposes of limitation of liability under COGSA. Here the plaintiff shipper, who was an individual moving household goods from Britain to the United States, had individually wrapped and boxed the goods in smaller parcels which then were placed into the container. The description of the goods on the bill of

lading created an ambiguity which the court resolved in favor of the shipper.

The carrier should be aware that this type of dispute can arise and that the limitation of liability is not always applicable. Additionally, both the carrier and the shipper should ensure that the language on the bill of lading is not ambiguous so that both parties have an understanding of the liabilities and risks that they are assuming.

- D. Raab



SPRING SHIPPING

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~ A Caribbean Today advertising feature

Security concerns at ports, harbors require awareness to avoid delays

DANIEL RABB

A recent case illustrating that increased security concerns at ports and harbors require awareness to avoid delays is International Longshoremen's Association v. Miami-Dade County, 926 So.2d 433, 24 IER Cases 593, 31 Fla. L. Weekly D989 (Fl. App. 2006).

In this case, port workers union brought action against the county because the union members' security clearance cards were seized by the port in order to verify each card's security. Without the security cards, the union members could not access the port's cargo area where they worked.

The court went on to rule that neither the union nor the

individual members had a constitutionally protected interest in the security clearance and thus they were not entitled to a due process hearing before the seizure of their cards. Additionally, the court noted that the union members were not denied the right to engage in their chosen profession, but rather were merely temporarily restrained from performing their jobs.

OVERSIGHT INCREASE

With the continuance of perceived threats in the new world situation comes an increase in the amount of oversight.

Less than five years ago, the United States Congress passed the Maritime Transportation Security Act of



Security is a top issue at ports.

2002 (P.L. 107-295). Currently, Congress is still debating whether the safeguards in place now are enough.

Administration.

In order to navigate through the brave new world of maritime transportation

Many of the current precautions involve operations by the U.S. Coast Guard (as seen in the International Longshoremen's Association v. Miami-Dade County case above), The Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, and the Transportation Security

security, one must be familiar with a veritable plethora of acronyms: MTSA (Maritime Transportation Security Act), ISPS (International Port Security Program), TWIC (Transportation Worker Identification Credential), NMSAC (National Maritime Security Advisory Committee), and AWW (America's Waterway Watch).

For further information, you can check out the government's website dealing with maritime transportation security, entitled "Homeport", and which is available at <http://homeport.uscg.mil/>.

Alyssa Pell assisted with this article.

Getting to know the who's who of the transportation industry

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14)

bond with the FMC and be licensed. This would protect a shipper against wrongdoing such as stealing the money paid to ship the cargo. Many freight forwarders sell insurance to their clients through open cargo policies and issue insurance certificates. Some ocean carriers also provide insurance.

The non-vessel operating common carriers operate as common carriers, but do not actually operate a vessel. They issue bills of lading, charge freight, and can be sued as a common carrier. They can also assert limitations of liability like an ocean carrier as well as liens on cargo. A non-vessel operating common carrier must post a bond with the FMC and be licensed.

FREIGHT FORWARDERS

Freight forwarders are also involved in the transportation of cargo by air. Some of them issue airway bills and can be sued as carriers. They can assert limitations of liability.

There are freight forwarders and freight brokers on domestic shipments. The inland freight forwarder can be sued as a carrier. The inland transportation broker is generally just that, a transportation broker. It books freight with inland carriers including motor carriers, although depending on its representations there are sometimes efforts to turn a broker into a carrier. Transportation brokers and freight forwarders must register with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety

Administration.

Another important entity in the transportation industry is the customs broker. They clear cargo for various importers. They are not carriers. They handle the paperwork and usually have a power of attorney to clear cargo. Customs broker licenses can be issued on an individual or corporate basis.

The agency that governs the importation of cargo is the United States Customs and Border Patrol. It operates in conjunction with the Treasury Department and the Department of Homeland Security. Among its responsibilities is the collection of duties and to make sure that unlawful items are not brought into the U.S. Protests can be handled administratively with this agency, which does have the power to seize merchandise and assess penalties.

Warehousemen also play a critical role in the chain of transportation. Some are customs bonded warehouses, meaning the cargo has not yet entered the U.S. The Uniform Commercial Code has a whole section related to warehouses. They too can assert limitations of liability on the back of their warehouse receipts. They can assert liens against cargo for unpaid freight and the Uniform Commercial Code provides the methods for selling cargo on which a lien is asserted. Get a signed release when you deposit cargo with a warehouse.

An important term in relation to customs bonded warehouses is general order or

GO. This is the warehouse where the seized cargo goes before it is sold.

Another term of interest is logistics company. These can be freight forwarders, truckers, customs brokers and possibly all of the above.

Importers who bring goods into the country and exporters who send goods out of the country are also an important part of the cargo industry. Likewise shippers and consignees who typically correspond to buyers and sellers are a basic part of the transportation industry. You will see a spot on the bill of lading for shippers and consignees as well as notifying parties. Sometimes the notifying party is the actual consignee and/or purchaser.

Most of the various

administrative agencies governing transportation fall within the Department of Transportation. Check to see which agency governs your situation.

At the foreign end of commerce are port authorities regulated by the government. In many instances the carrier's duty is only to deliver to the port authority and/or customs. Cargo lost or damaged in a government-controlled port, where proper notice of the arrival is given to the cargo interest, is a defense for the carrier.

The carrier may have agents in other countries who assist in the handling of cargo. There are also customs brokers in other countries who are agents of the cargo interests.

Insurance companies play

a role as many claims are brought by insurance carriers as subrogation claims, while many parties that are sued are insured. A subrogated insurer should have a subrogation or loan receipt from its insured. Carriers must make sure that they are paying the right party when paying a claim so that you do not wind up paying two claims.

The above was edited for space by Caribbean Today from an article submitted by Daniel W. Raab, an attorney located in Miami, Florida who has practiced in the transportation field of law for over 25 years. His law clerk Alyssa Pell assisted with the article.

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Refinancing your mortgage for rate, payment reductions

JOSE H. CARABALLO

One of the biggest reasons homeowners refinance their mortgage is to obtain a lower interest rate and lower their monthly payments. By refinancing, the borrower pays off their existing mortgage and replaces it with a new one with better or more appropriate terms.

Refinancing typically occurs when mortgage interest rates drop or when the current mortgage no longer fits the borrower's situation - as is the case with many homeowners that are currently in adjustable rate mortgages with higher payments now than when they first started.

Also borrowers with recently improved credit scores (from paying off credit card debt, making mortgage payments on time, etc.) are often candidates for better interest rates as well. If you haven't checked your credit score in a while, it's a good time to call a mortgage consultant.

WHY?

The question most asked is, "But why should I go back into a 30-year loan?"

There are two schools of thought on this subject, and the mortgage consultant should work hand-in-hand with the borrower's financial planner to determine what works best for their mutual client.

First look at what benefits can come out of refinancing into a fixed rate from an adjustable rate. Security from rate adjustments, possibly lower payment, ability to sleep at night, etc. Another option is to take the route of the "same payment" refinance, and actually pay off the loan faster and save money on interest fees in the long-run. If refinancing results in a lower monthly payment, the borrower can still continue making the same payment they made in the original loan, and the extra money will be applied to the principal balance.

For example: Let's say you have 25 years remaining in your current loan, and you refinance back to a 30-year loan with a slightly lower interest rate, resulting in a

payment reduction of \$200 per month. (Note: This is just an example. The actual amount could vary.) You could then take that extra \$200 per month and apply it toward the principal on the new loan. At this rate, the loan will be paid off in 22 years and four months, which is two years and eight months less than the original loan.

On the other hand, if the borrower's financial planner is a proponent of best-selling author and investment guru Douglas Andrew's philosophies (see "Missed Fortune"), he or she may suggest investing the extra money in a side-fund that could earn a better rate of return and grow to the amount of the mortgage (and beyond) in even less time. This method provides excellent liquidity and safety, but having more access to this money may or may not be a good thing for some.

Regardless of the reason for the refinance, the mortgage consultant will need to know what the existing loan scenario entails, review the homeowner's long-term goals, and be able to explain how each loan option compares and contrasts with the various loan programs available.

Jose H. Caraballo is president-elect of the Mortgage Bankers Association of Greater Miami and a branch manager of the Source One Mortgage office in Coral Gables. He can be reached at 305-968-1257 or at caraballo12345@comcast.net



MIAMI - A wealth manager that supervises the assets for a growing number of offshore insurance companies has been appointed manager of the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF).

Garry Wilkins, CCRIF board member, said here last month that London & Capital was chosen following "an extensive selection process." He said the company "successfully demonstrated a full understanding of our investment needs, and came up with

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, CMC - Guyana's Finance Minister Dr. Ashnie Singh unveiled a G\$119.3 billion (\$556.5 million) budget while projecting 4.8 percent economic growth and a 6.8 percent rise in inflation blamed on "imported pressure."

The 4.8 percent growth, he said, is expected "to be broad-based and to reflect expansion in both traditional and new and emerging sectors."

"The budget reaffirms government's commitment to take appropriate actions in response to immediate challenges, both external and domestic, and it balances this with its commitment to continue to take tough decisions that will create a better Guyana for the longer term," Singh said in his speech.

He said the 2008 estimates promise progress in six broad areas, which include avoiding short-term actions that can undermine the potential for long-term growth and accelerate the ongoing infrastructural program.

Singh promised that "investments in the most important social services will be maintained (and) assistance to the most vulnerable in society and those most impacted by changes in the national and international economic situation will be increased."

He told the National Assembly that reforms will be accelerated on the justice and security sectors to manage the current and emerging challenges, (while) "institutional reforms aimed at further transforming the business environment to stimulate greater investment, job creation and sustained economic growth will be advanced."

CONTINUATION

The 2008 financial plan "is the continuation of the ongoing task of transforming the economy, developing the country, and improving the lives of Guyanese."

In the agricultural sector,



Singh

sugar production is projected at 290,000 tonnes, an increase of 8.8 percent, which reflects increased acreage under cultivation, increased productivity, and the start of operation of the new multi-billion dollar Skeldon factory, Singh said.

He said rice output is targeted at 321,000 tonnes, representing 7.6 percent growth from last year.

Forestry is expected to recover this year with a projected growth rate of three percent "based on anticipated increases in the production of both logs and higher value products," Singh said.

He said the fishing sector is budgeted to increase by three percent, "while livestock and other agriculture are both projected to grow at 2.5 percent." The mining and quarrying sectors are forecast to grow by 5.8 percent.

"The bauxite industry is expected to continue its robust performance with output increasing by 17.1 percent to 2,626,000 tonnes."

Gold declarations are, however, projected to decrease by 2.7 percent to 231,750 ounces reflecting some moderation to a more steady growth path," the finance minister said.

Singh said the 2008 fiscal plan is projecting an eight percent increase for the transport and communication sector, "reflecting continued strong activity in both the domestic transportation and the telecommunication sub-se-

tors."

IMPETUS

According to Minister Singh, "the hosting of CARIFESTA X in August is also expected to provide additional impetus to the levels of economic activity in several sectors during 2008."

The Skeldon Sugar Modernization plan; the resumption of offshore petroleum exploration following the U.N. Arbitral Tribunal Award; private sector investment in the alternative energy sector, specifically hydropower and biofuels; and the construction of the hydropower project at Amalia are anticipated to spur job creation, Singh said in his budget speech.

In the wake of an upsurge in crime, the government has set aside G\$13.7 billion (\$68.5 million) for the security sector.

Singh reiterated that two helicopters and other equipment and gear will be procured for the joint services, while \$13 million "will be expended to expand and equip Community Policing Groups (CPGs) in order to support crime fighting efforts."

He said G\$660 million (\$132 million) will be spent to develop an integrated crime and violence information system to monitor trends in crime and violence.

Accordingly, an additional \$1.5 million has been allocated for the construction, completion, and rehabilitation of more than 30 police stations countrywide, while \$485,000 is allocated for the construction of a juvenile holding center and for the upgrade of several prisons.

Singh also outlined plans for new and emerging sectors, with \$20.9 million to be spent to launch an Agricultural Export Diversification Program "which will result in the promotion and consolidation of agribusiness."



Caribbean insurance facility gets new manager

innovative solutions that made us confident in the company's ability to meet the needs of the CCRIF's anticipated liabilities going forward."

Wilkins said London & Capital, which manages assets in excess of \$3.4 billion, as at Sept. 30, 2007, will manage an initial mandate of \$35 million for the CCRIF, growing to over \$100 million in the next three years.

He said London & Capital "secured the mandate

by creating a bespoke investment portfolio."

LIQUIDITY

The CCRIF, the world's first regional disaster insurance facility, was established at the urging of Caribbean Community (CARICOM) heads of government, using funds pledged by the international donor community. It provides the 16-member governments with immediate liquidity if struck by a catastrophic earthquake or hurri-

cane.

William Dalziel, executive director of London & Capital, which is administered by Citibank in the United States, said the company has "a proven track record managing absolute return strategies, with a focus on capital preservation, risk management and low volatility."

"The selection process for the CCRIF mandate was rigorous," he said.



'Jazz in the Gardens' set for Miami, Mar. 15-16

Talented Haitian-born singer and musician Wyclef Jean will be among the headliners at the



Wyclef Jean

third annual "Jazz in the Gardens" festival to be staged

Mar. 15 and 16 at the Dolphin Stadium in Miami, Florida.

Other artistes confirmed for the two-day event include George Benson, Chaka Khan, the O'Jays, Stanley Clarke, George Duke and Nancy Wilson.

"Jazz in the Gardens has really become an internationally recognized event," Miami Gardens Mayor Shirley Gibson was quoted as saying in a press release issued recently by the organizers.

"It's exciting to know people from all over the world look forward to coming to Miami Gardens. It's incredible how music has the power to transcend language and culture, as it serves to unite



Chaka Khan

people. With this year's line-up of jazz greats we will continue to make Miami Gardens a proud community and a more visible destination."



Tobago to host two top shows ~ Whitney Houston, Shakira, Rod Stewart on the bill

A host of top American and Caribbean-based acts will headline two musical festivals in Tobago next month.

The two-day Pan Jazz "in de Yard" 2008 and the three-day Plymouth Jazz Festival will combine for five consecutive days of entertainment.

The second annual pan jazz "in de Yard" will be pre-



Houston

Rod Stewart will join other international and local artistes. Smokey Robinson will be on stage on day one, along with Peabo Bryson, James Ingram and Diana Ross.

The second day will showcase Latin star, Shakira, along with En Vogue and roots reg-



Stewart

sented April 23 and 24 at the Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago Redemption Sound Setters yard by Pantrinbago, a cultural organization dedicated to the promotion and development of steel pan, which was invented in Trinidad.

The line-up of performers includes Liam Teague, Robbie Greenidge, Anise Hadeed, Tony (Pan Jumbie) Williams, Clive Zander, the Kariwak Players, Ken (Professor) Philmore and Duvoone Stewart.

The fourth annual Plymouth Jazz Festival in Tobago will be held April 25-27 at the Fort James/Plymouth Recreational Field. International acts such as Whitney Houston, Shakira and



Shakira

gae band Steel Pulse. R&B diva, Houston and adult contemporary icon Stewart will close the festival on day three.

For ticket prices and more information on the festival, visit www.tobagojazzfest.com.



Soca star facing assault charge

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC - Soca entertainer Machel Montano is to appear in court in May and June to answer a charge of assault, Director of Public Prosecution Carla Brown-Antoine has announced.

Montano, 32, will appear in court on May 26 and 29 and again on June 2 along with entertainers Joel "Zan" Fezeck and songwriter/producer Kernel Roberts, the son of late Calypsonian Lord Kitchener.

The three were charged, along with another soca entertainer Rodney "Benjai" Le Blanc, with assaulting at least two patrons at a Port of Spain night club on April 26, 2007.

They appeared before a Port of Spain Magistrate last month when the new court dates were set.



Montano

When the matters resume in May it will be before Magistrate Akiel Khan. The prosecution is expected to call 10 witnesses.

Montano, who has maintained his innocence, is being represented by senior counsel Dana Seetahal.



CELEBRATING WOMEN

The celebration of women will be the focus of an exhibition of works by Haitian artist Marie Therese Dupoux which will be on display **Mar. 1-31** at the African American Research Library and Museum in Fort Lauderdale. The exhibition, titled "Vessels of Memory: The Art of Marie Therese Dupoux", will recognize "Women's History Month" and highlight the contributions and accomplishments of women in the arts. The Florida Africana Studies Consortium will present the exhibition under the patronage of Ralph Latortue, consul general of Haiti in Miami.



ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS

• Renowned reggae producer dies

Joe Gibbs, one of Jamaica's most prolific record producers, who propelled many reggae artistes to international fame, is dead.

Gibbs, who was born Joel A. Gibson in Montego Bay, came to fame in the 1970s when he worked closely with the "Crown Prince of Reggae" the late Dennis Brown as well as Beres Hammond and the drum and bass duo Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare. In the 1980s Gibbs had a big international hit with J.C. Lodge's "Someone Loves You Honey" and produced artistes such as Mighty Diamonds, Gregory Issacs, Dean Fraser and Barrington Levy.

• West Indian jazz

Jamaican-born jazz pianist Monty Alexander is among the main acts scheduled to perform at a tribute concert, billed "Lords of the West Indies", over two days, **Mar. 7 and 8**, at the Lincoln Center, Broadway

and 60th Street in Manhattan, New York.

The event will present mento, the Jamaican folk music and calypso, the Trinidadian popular music. Other musicians scheduled to perform include Pluto Shervington, Dean Fraser, Desi Jones, Hassan Shakur, Herlin Riley, Carlton James, David "Happy" Williams, Etienne Charles, Charles Dougherty, Clifton Anderson, Joseph Bennett and Albert Morgan.

For more information, call **212-258-9807**.

'Reggae Symphony' for Fort Lauderdale

John Holt and Freddie McGregor, two of reggae's leading voices, will highlight "Reggae Symphony" on **April 20** at the Broward Center for the Performance Arts in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

They will be backed by Lloyd Parkes and We The People band. For more information, call **800-**

811-1231 or visit www.broward-center.org.

• Concert to support athletes

Team Jamaica Bickle, the New York-based organization formed 14 years ago to assist athletes from the Caribbean nation participate at the Penn Relays, will host a reggae music concert on **April 20** at the Brooklyn College Performing Arts Center.

The concert, with its theme "Team Jamaica on the Road to Beijing" is slated to start at **7 p.m.** According to TJB founder Irwine Clare, a donation in honor of the late Olympian, Jamaica's Herb McKenley, will be made to aid athletes preparing for the Olympics in Beijing, China.

Corporate and civic entities willing to offer support can call **718-523-2861**.

Compiled from various sources.



www.caribbeantoday.com

F Y I

IMMIGRATION KORNER

QUESTION: I was sponsored by my mother in 1997 and included in the petition were my husband and my two sons. I received the biographic documents in Sept. 2002, one month after my sons' 21st birthday. They were not included in the biographic and it was only then that I understood that I could have informed the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) some 60 days earlier of their impending birthday. I am now awaiting for an interview with the consulate now and am wondering whether my sons can still accompany us to the United States?

ANSWER: John Stahl, formerly of the Emerald Isle Immigration Center, says that under the Child Status Protection Act of 2002, your sons may be still eligible to apply for a "green card" as your dependant even though they have now reached the age of 21. The Child Status Protection Act, passed on Aug. 6, 2002, applies to certain petitions filed and approved before 8/6/02 if the child aged out (turned 21) on or after 8/6/02. Provided that the CSPA applies in this case, the next step is to calculate your sons' age under the law.

Their ages may be determined by taking their age on the date that a visa first became available (either the date on which the priority date for the petition became current or the date that the petition was approved, whichever came later) and subtracting that age from the time it took to process the petition (the time from petition filing to petition

What U.S. age law allows when filing for children

approval). They will remain that age throughout the rest of the process. It seems that since they recently turned 21, by subtracting the processing time they would be eligible.

QUESTION: I had a multiple visa and on one of my visits I met a man and we got mar-



ried and have been married for three years. During that time he was supposed to have filed to adjust my status and for my work papers he did not and my documents have expired and I have no ability to work legally and support myself. He is currently seeking a divorce. How can I file to adjust without being deported? I left behind a successful business that is no longer there. I also brought my children up on a visitor's visa, which has since expired. Please help!

ANSWER: Essentially, you

can file for classification as an abused spouse, says attorney Dr. Dolly Hassan, of the Liberty Center for Immigrants in Queens, N.Y. But that is if you were abused by your husband. If there was no abuse, then unfortunately, there is very little you could do, added the attorney.

Hassan also warned that most other kinds of applications would necessitate you leaving the country for consular processing at which time the 10-bar to re-entering the U. S. would apply.

However, should the U.S. Congress approve the current U.S. Senate bill to legalize the many undocumented who

have been living in the country out of status for five years or more, then you and your kids will be able to benefit from that law. But bear in mind it's still a proposal and not law as yet.

Compiled by Felicia Persaud. Answers provided here are for information purposes only, and do not create an attorney-client relationship; nor are they a substitute for "legal advice" which can only be given by a competent attorney after reviewing all the facts of the case.



TEA PARTY
Jamaica's Prime Minister Bruce Golding, and his wife Lorna, are the scheduled guests of honor for the second annual Community Service Awards Ceremony and Tea Party presented by Jamaica's consul general in Miami from **3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Mar. 30** at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, 33300 S.W. 27th Ave. in Coconut Grove, Miami, Florida.



Golding smile

For more information, call the consul general at **305-374-8431 ext. 223 or 224**.

MISS FLORIDA CARIBBEAN

Females of Caribbean origin, ages nine to 25, single, residing in Florida for over six months and who have never been married or given birth to a child, are being invited to enter in the 2008 "Miss Florida Caribbean" pageant.

Selected delegates will undergo eight weeks training in a self-development workshop, which includes grooming, stage presentation, speech and physical conditioning. "Miss Florida Caribbean" 2008 will make appearances events such as fundraisers, carnivals, talk shows and festivals.

The pageant finals will be staged on Nov. 9 at the Hilton Fort Lauderdale Airport Hotel.

For more information, call **954-882-2729**.

JOURNALISTS MEET

The National Association of Caribbean American Journalists will hold its first national meeting **Mar. 28-30** in

South Florida.

For more information, e-mail nacaj@yahoo.com.

NEW JNA BOARD

A new eight-member board of directors of the Jamaican Nationals Association of Washington, D.C. was formally inducted into office recently.

The new executive body will be led by Dr. Jacqui Payne, president; Ian Harvey, vice president; Claudette Henry, executive secretary; Joyell Arscott, recording secretary; Denakay Brown, treasurer; Enid Russell, assistant treasurer; Franklyn Burke, parliamentarian; Rosie Parke, public relations officer; and Moreen Wallace immediate past-president.

CANCER WATCH

March has been designated National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. The theme is "Let's Make Colon Cancer Preventable! Beatable! Treatable! For All Communities".

The United States-based Prevent Cancer Foundation has organized The Super Colon tour, which will be scheduled to make 22 stops in the U.S. during March.

However, the foundation addresses colon cancer year round and there is a special section on its web site at: www.preventcancer.org/colorectal where people can order education materials on the importance of colon cancer screening to share and read answers from experts on topics as varied as who's at risk and who should be screened for colon cancer, the role of diet and weight and what "virtual" colonoscopy means.



CAN WE TALK?



Peter A. Webley,
Publisher

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S P O R T

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Caribbean players hunt places in U.S. Major League Soccer

GORDON WILLIAMS

It will be a decade for both Tyrone Marshall and Andy Williams, a year longer for Ezra Hendrickson. Established stars like Shalrie Joseph are in the prime of their careers, while teenager Anthony Wallace is just about ready to bust out.

Those four and at least a dozen others with strong Caribbean roots are gearing up for another season in Major League Soccer (MLS), the game's highest professional level in the United States, which kicks off its 2008 season this month.

While observers for years remained concerned about soccer's ability to take its place among established American pro sports such as baseball, football and basketball, the injection of former England captain David Beckham into the MLS last season gave the league a huge recognition boost, which means the lads from the region could find

themselves more exposed to the U.S. sporting spotlight. Several are well placed to take advantage, not just by helping their clubs succeed, but also trying to earn the attention of national coaches around the region with World Cup 2010



Joseph

qualifiers already underway.

Jamaican-born Marshall, at 33 a veteran of the Reggae Boyz set-up, should, for a second season, be a stalwart in defense for Toronto F.C. after representing the Los Angeles Galaxy and the now defunct

Miami Fusion in past MLS seasons.

Williams, a midfielder who was born in Canada, but has represented Jamaica, including at World Cup in 1998, is set to start his third year with Real Salt Lake (RSL) after playing with five other MLS teams. Entering his 10th year in the league, the man known as "Bomber" for his powerful shots, is still confident he has a lot to offer.

"Playing-wise I don't feel old," he said recently while attending a RSL training camp in Florida.

To prove his point, Williams has set several individual and team goals, the same desire he has kept over his career.

"Every year I try, first and foremost, to be in the starting 11," he explained. "If that doesn't happen I try to contribute in every game; lead the team in assists, make the play-off and win a championship."

VETERANS

Other veterans with a Caribbean connection include 36-year-old defender Hendrickson, from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, who is listed on Columbus Crew's roster after 11 seasons of MLS experience. Striker Jeff Cunningham, 31, a top goal scorer who was born in Jamaica, but who has played for the U.S. national team, is Marshall's teammate at Toronto F.C. He has played 10 years in the MLS.

Grenadian Shalrie Joseph and Jamaican Shavar Thomas have already ticked off five years in the MLS. Joseph, 29, is an outstanding midfielder for New England Revolution, a finalist last season. Thomas, a 27-year-old defender, is entering his second year at Chivas USA after an excellent

2007 season.

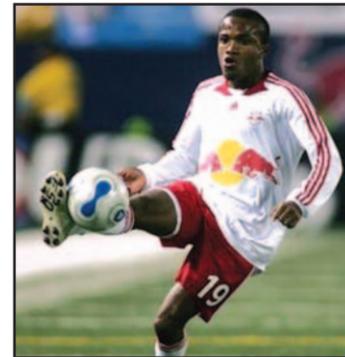
Trinidad and Tobago's Avery John, 32, and Gavin Ginton, 29, of the Turks and Caicos Islands have already earned four years MLS experience. John is listed as Joseph's teammate, while Ginton is the lone Caribbean representative so far on the roster of the San José Earthquakes.

YOUNG BUCKS

Meanwhile several younger players with ties to the region will be hoping to

Osei Telesford (Chicago Fire) are all listed with three years or less in the league.

Yet a few young players



Richards

will enter the new season with established reputations. Jamaican Dane Richards, 24, had an outstanding 2007 season with the New York Red Bull and narrowly missed being named rookie of the year. The speedy midfielder will be hoping to build on that in 2008.

New York-born, Florida resident Anthony Wallace, a 19-year-old whose parents are from Jamaica, starts his second season with F.C. Dallas after leaving college early to enter the 2007 MLS SuperDraft. He has represented the U.S. at youth level.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.

SPORT BRIEFS

Boyz, Warriors face off Mar. 26

The only two English-speaking Caribbean's countries to play in soccer's World Cup finals will face off in a friendly international match in Kingston on Mar. 26.

The Reggae Boyz of Jamaica will host Trinidad and Tobago's Soca Warriors as both teams continue preparations for their World Cup qualifiers beginning in a few months.

Harbour View tackles D.C. United

Jamaica's champion football team Harbour View will tackle United States club D.C. United this month in the CONCACAF Club Championships.

Harbour View will host the American side on Mar. 11, while the return leg is scheduled for Mar. 18 in Washington D.C.

T&T beats Jamaica for Stanford 20/20 title

Trinidad and Tobago are the new Stanford Twenty20 Cup cricket champions.

The two-island republic, lifted by clever left-arm chinaman bowling from Dave Mohammed, were crowned winners in the final last month after easily beating Jamaica.

U-15 int'l cricket in the Caribbean

Eight teams will contest a CLICO-sponsored international under-15 cricket tournament in the Caribbean in April, organizers announced last month.

The tournament, from April 19 to May 4, will be run by All Sports Promotions, and will have eight teams competing: West Indies, Pakistan, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ireland, Holland, Bangladesh and the

International Cricket Council (ICC) Americas team, comprised of players from Bermuda, Canada, Cayman Islands and The Bahamas.

Guyana's Harris moves up in boxing weight class

World-rated Guyanese boxer "Vicious" Vivian Harris has decided to move up in weight class, following his unsuccessful world title bid against Britain's Junior Witter.

Harris, a former world champion, was knocked out by the champion Witter during a World Boxing Council (WBC) light welterweight title fight last September. He will now fight at the 147-pound welterweight level.

Caribbean players return to Miami F.C.

Caribbean players Stephane Guillaume and Sean Fraser are scheduled to return for their third season with Miami F.C. in the 2008 United Soccer Leagues (USL) Division One.

Miami F.C. has announced that Haiti's Guillaume and the Jamaican Fraser "will continue to be under contract with the team and will return".

Haiti World Cup soccer star dies

Emmanuel Sanon, one of Haiti's most celebrated soccer players, died last month from pancreatic cancer, family members said. The 56-year old had been a resident in Florida for some time.

Compiled from CMC and other sources.



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U.S. warns citizens about security in Guyana

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, CMC- The United States has issued a warning to its citizens about the security situation in Guyana in light of the massacres that left 23 people, including five children, dead recently.

A U.S. State Department notice made reference to the killings at the small mining town of Bartica on Feb. 17 and the East Coast Demerara village of Lusignan on Jan. 26.

Guyana police have linked both incidents to a group headed by the country's most wanted man, Rondel "Fine Man"

Rawlins and have offered a G\$50 million (\$250,000) reward for his capture.

The US State Department said that security in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) country had deteriorated rapidly over the past two months and that "due to the seemingly random nature of these crimes, the disparate locations in which they occurred, and the fact that the perpetrators have not all yet been apprehended, additional attacks in other parts of the country cannot be ruled out.

"The U.S. Embassy urges

U.S. citizens traveling in Guyana to maintain a high level of vigilance, consider security issues when planning activities throughout Guyana, minimize movement when possible while avoiding large crowds, and not to travel at night".

Washington said that the local authorities were conducting investigations into the incidents and may institute further actions or precautions, including roadblocks or other measures.



Canada grants millions for road work in Haiti

WASHINGTON - The impoverished Caribbean nation of Haiti is to benefit from a CAD\$75 million grant from Canada for a road reconstruction program.

The program would be financed and implemented by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the bank said in a statement issued last month.

The IDB said Canada's Minister for International Cooperation Beverly J. Oda, and Michael M. Fortier, the minister for public works and government services, made the grant announcement in Montreal.

"All Canadians can be proud of our accomplishments in Haiti," said Oda, who announced additional grants totaling nearly

CAD\$50 million for other projects involving education, healthcare for mothers and disaster prevention.

"Canada is helping to provide Haitians the services they need immediately and creating the conditions for long-term



Oda

success and prosperity," she added.

The CAD\$75 million grant will expand a program to improve and maintain 146 kilometers of primary roads and 250 kilometers of rural roads in Haiti's southern peninsula, the statement said.

Canada's contribution will finance the reconstruction of a 92-kilometer road between the cities of Les Cayes and Jérémie.

The IDB said it would contribute \$100 million over a four-year period to the program.



American man facing murder charges in BVI

TORTOLA, British Virgin Islands, CMC - An American citizen has been extradited to the British Virgin Islands (BVI) on charges that he murdered his wife during a vacation here nearly 10 years ago.

The prosecution is alleging that David Swain, 52, of Rhode Island, was vacationing here on Mar. 12, 1999 with his 35-year-old wife Shelly Arden Tyre when she was killed dur-

ing a diving expedition.

The prosecution is expected to rely on scientific evidence to prove the case against Swain, who appeared in a Magistrate's Court last month to answer the charge of murder. He has since been remanded to the island's lone prison at Balsam Ghut and the preliminary inquiry is scheduled to begin on April 17.



Manning wants Caribbean law enforcement unit

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC - Prime Minister Patrick Manning is calling for a Caribbean law enforcement unit to tackle the growing problem of crime in the region, fueled by the drug trade.

Speaking at a University of the West Indies, Mona dinner in Jamaica last month, Manning said such a unit would have to be fully staffed and equipped and given the proper legal framework within which to operate.

He said the need for the regional security unit has been

already discussed in certain quarters because of the seriousness of the crime problem, which has seen several murders in Jamaica, Trinidad and Guyana, in particular in recent years.

Manning said T&T was focused on stemming the illegal drug trade through several initiatives, including "24-hour surveillance of our largely unprotected coastline, newer levels of interdiction capability - through patrol boats and attack helicopters."



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U.S. backs Caribbean efforts to adjust to global environment

NEW YORK - A United States diplomat says Washington fully supports efforts by the Caribbean countries to adjust themselves to the realities of the 21st century.

Speaking at the launch of Caribbean Heritage Week, Roland Bullen, deputy chief of mission at the United States Embassy in the Dominican Republic, said both the Caribbean and the U.S. share "a resonant commitment to democracy, the rule of law and the promotion of private sector-led, market-driven economies."

He said the Caribbean has, "by and large, maintained an enviable record of stability, electoral democracy and peaceful co-existence with their neighbors."

But Bullen, a former U.S. ambassador to Guyana, said while the Caribbean and the U.S. have had a "long and vitally beneficial relationship over many decades, the strategic importance of these countries to the US has declined in recent years.

"Drugs and the trade from

drugs threaten the integrity and political stability of these proud and vulnerable democracies, while economic shifts erode the fragile foundations of prosperity they have built up," he said.

'FRUSTRATIONS'

In light of the contemporary challenges, Bullen said the United States is "a convenient focus of regional frustrations" in the Caribbean. He said, in some parts of the Caribbean, "globalization is viewed as a U.S.-imposed problem and not as an inevitable, technologically driven development.

"Beyond the vocal criticism, there is deep-rooted suspicion of the United States," which, he said, has affected "an array of potentially beneficial proposals, such as open skies, telecommunication reform and



Bullen

bilateral investment treaties."

The U.S. diplomat said there was not sufficient evidence to link American demand for the increased drug trade as well as a rising crime situation as a result of the deportation of criminals back to the region.

"Frankly, I think it's an excuse for not being more proactive in solving the problem of crime," he said, noting that Washington had recently implemented a "more positive agenda for the region.

"If we look at the extent of our countries' common interest, it is almost impossible to conceive of anything but a close, mutually beneficial and friendly relationship.

"The U.S. recognizes that our Caribbean friends and close neighbors are faced with the prospect of unsettling changes by the forces of globalization.

"Today's challenges are not yesterday's. Recognition of the need for change and the local ownership of that process (is) fundamental," Bullen said.



Relief coming for Caribbean consumers

CASTRIES, St. Lucia, CMC - Relief may finally be underway for consumers across Caribbean community (CARICOM) states who have faced escalating costs of basic commodities sold on supermarket shelves across the region.

St. Lucia's Trade and Commerce Minister Guy Mayers said that an initiative to reduce the price of basic commodities will be brought to Caricom's Trade Ministers body, the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) early this month.

Mayers told reporters here that the Stephenson King cabinet had approved several items to be included in a food basket of price controlled goods.

"We have agreed to a list

of 44 items to be included in the national food basket, and this represents the first step in our efforts to obtain a reduction in the price of basic food items," the minister said.

LAW

He said that the next step is for the legislative process to take place.

"The attorney general's office now has to do the proprietary work so that we can bring those items under the price control regime," Mayers said.

The issue was scheduled for discussion at a special COTED meeting in The Bahamas on Mar. 5, followed by a Heads of Government meeting on Mar. 7.

Mayers said that arrangements for the reduction or

removal of tariffs on the recommended food items will be concluded at the meetings, paving the way for local cost reductions.

"Once the meetings have taken place in The Bahamas during the first week in March, we will then be ready to have this implemented," Mayers said.

Some of the items in the food basket include baby food, juices, toothpaste, chicken backs and wings, as well as other items used by the most vulnerable section of the community. Mayers noted that meetings were now being arranged with the private sector to address levels of the price mark-up that will be allowed under the price control regime.



Guyana, Cuba agree on work program for assistance

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, CMC - Cuba will provide assistance to Guyana in a number of areas including agriculture, education and sports during the year, according to an agreement signed between both countries.

A Government Information Agency (GINA) statement said that the agreement was reached during the 24th Session of the Guyana/Cuba Joint Commission on Economic and Technical Co-operation that ended here late last month.

It said the discussions were centered on co-opera-

tion in the health, agriculture, transport and marine affairs, culture and sports, education and trade.

GINA said that the two countries have "agreed on a biennial work program for the 2008/2009 period with focus on strengthening the existing co-operation programmes and developing areas of mutual interest."

John Isaacs, permanent secretary in the Ministry Foreign Trade and International Co-operation, who led Guyana's delegation, said he was happy with the achievements reached during

the discussions and that Guyana would benefit from assistance in several areas including agriculture and education and sports coaches.

Orlando Requijo Gual, Cuba's vice-minister in the Ministry of Foreign Investment and International Collaboration, said the two countries have enjoyed good relations for over 30 years as part of the south-south co-operation. Guyana and Cuba established diplomatic relations in 1972.



T&T, Barbados hold 'fruitful' talks on regional integration

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC - Prime Minister Patrick Manning has held "fruitful" discussions with his new Barbados counterpart David Thompson on a number of issues regarding the deepening of the regional integration process.

Thompson, who took over the office of prime minister in January, was given a 21-gun salute and a red carpet reception on his arrival here last month by private jet at the head of a five-member delegation.

The two leaders said they had agreed during their two hour-meeting on the need for a special caucus of Caribbean community

(CARICOM) leaders in light of the change of governments in at least six Caribbean countries.

Manning said that in response to the suggestions from Thompson, he had undertaken to canvass the idea of a "caucus of CARICOM heads as soon as possible in the context of so many new leaders being on the CARICOM scene and the need for us to discuss off the record and without technocrats present, so that there can be a meeting of minds."

While neither Manning nor Thompson, who is among the new batch of regional leaders coming to power over the past year gave any indication as to where the caucus would be held, Manning said that it would allow for them to "identify exactly where everyone is in relation to the integration movement.

"For our part (T&T) as you know is very committed to it (regional integration) and we have been seeking to advance a sub integration movement in the southern Caribbean and it is high on our agenda," Manning said.

"We are convinced territories the size of the Caribbean islands will do best to integrate and get together so that we will have more mass."

SUPPORT

Thompson, whose Democratic Labour Party (DLP) came to power following the Jan. 15 general elections, pledged his full support

for the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), for which he has lead responsibility within the quasi-CARICOM cabinet. Thompson said he wanted to "re-assure the entire CARICOM region that Barbados is as committed now as it ever was from the time the late Errol Barrow signed the first CARIFTA (Caribbean Free Trade Area) Treaty and then



The leaders, David Thompson left, of Barbados, and Patrick Manning of Trinidad and Tobago.

consequent on that participated in the first CARICOM summit...and to continuing the important role we have played in having lead responsibility for CSME.

"We will place our national resources and efforts strongly behind the program to see the CSME come to its full fruition," he said, adding that it was also important for political leaders to have "an opportunity to sit down off the record and to dialogue about the way forward for the regional integration movement to make sure we are all on the same platform.

"Many of us may have dialogued on specific issues down through the years, but I think now that changes have taken place and the region now has five new leaders so we need to sit down and reflect where we are going," he added.

The two leaders also discussed regional transportation issues, particularly the concerns raised by some regional states about the operation of LIAT, whose major shareholders are Barbados, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Antigua and Barbuda.

"We believe in the Caribbean that transport is critical and in relation to air transport we looked at LIAT and we are not unaware of some of the comments that are being made by some Caribbean governments," Manning said.



Ex-minister charged with fraud in Jamaica

KINGSTON, Jamaica – Jamaica police late last month charged former junior Energy Minister Kern Spencer and two other persons with fraud in connection with the controversial Cuban light bulb project.

Spencer, 33, who was held in custody until his court appearance, has been charged along with his former personal assistant Coleen Wright and businessman Rodney Chin.

Police laid the charges against the trio after Spencer was questioned by members of the Organized Crime Investigation Division for a third time last month. Earlier in the month Spencer requested a leave of absence from Parliament and also took leave from any leadership position within the main Opposition People's National Party (PNP).

The nine charges against Spencer followed weeks of investigations into allegations of misappropriation of funds under the project initiated during the last PNP administration of then Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller. The irregularities in the distribution of the light bulbs donated by the Cuban government came to

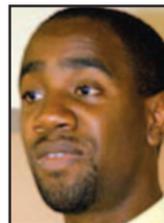
public attention last October when the Energy Minister Clive Mullings called for a probe into the project under which four million florescent light bulbs were to be distributed free of cost to consumers.

But reports indicated that more than J\$270 million (US\$3.79 million) had been spent on the project.

BREACHES

An investigation carried out by the auditor general found that the "basic rudiments of good public sector management were not observed" during the distribution of the bulbs. The report stated that there were several breaches to the government's procurement and distribution regulations and also identified the absence of any budgetary control.

The auditor general, in the report, said several of the contractors were handpicked and engaged directly by the former junior minister, including the mother of one of his children



Spencer

and the grandmother of another child. As a result of the findings, the auditor general called for a criminal investigation into the matter.

Copies of the 124-page report were sent to the police commissioner, Director of Public Prosecutions, the commissioner for the Prevention of Corruption, and the attorney general, but Spencer maintained his innocence.

But there have been mounting calls for Spencer's resignation, including one from Richard "Dickie" Crawford, a member of an appraisal committee that was established to assess the PNP's defeat in last September's general elections. Crawford warned that the PNP could suffer further fallout from the negative publicity surrounding Spencer and the investigation.

Spencer was first jailed, but released late last month on J\$10 million bail, the same amount as Chin. Wright is on J\$5 million bail. All three are scheduled to return to court on Mar. 26.

Compiled from CMC and other reports.



Barrow is Belize's first black P.M.

Dean Oliver Barrow, 56, the leader of the ruling United Democratic Party (UDP), is the first black prime minister of Belize.

Barrow has described his party's victory in the Feb. 7 general elections as a "tremendous Belizean awakening," adding "it doesn't come as a big surprise."

"To the people of this country who are giving us what appears to be a massive mandate, I must make the point that I am very conscious that while the UDP clearly has a share in this victory, it's nothing more than a share," he said shortly after the UDP defeated the People's United Party (PUP).

The UDP won 25 of the 31 seats contested in the elections.

Barrow, born Mar. 2, 1951, was sworn in as the

country's fourth prime minister on Feb. 8.

He has four children, the oldest of whom is rapper Jamal "Shyne" Barrow, who is serving a prison sentence in the United States.

SERVICE

An attorney by profession, he served as deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs from 1993 to 1998 and was then leader of the Opposition from 1998 to 2008.

Barrow, who began his legal career in 1973 working with his uncle Dean Lindo, is considered one of Belize's most successful attorneys, appearing in a num-



Barrow

ber of high profile cases.

In the 1989 general elections, Barrow defeated Thomas Greenwood, but his party lost the elections. Barrow continued as deputy UDP leader to Manuel Esquivel.

In the 1993 general elections, Barrow was again successful, defeating Juliet Soberanis, and retained his previous Cabinet posts with the addition of national security. His detractors called him "Minister of Everything".

In the 1998 elections that the UDP lost to the PUP, Barrow was one of only three successful UDP parliamentarians.

He replaced Esquivel as both UDP leader and leader of the Opposition.

- CMC



Court backs speaker over suspension of Opposition

ROSEAU, Dominica, CMC – A high court judge has ruled in favor of the Speaker of the Dominica Parliament Alix Boyd-Knights for suspending eight Opposition legislators last year.

Members of the main Opposition United Workers Party (UWP) had taken the speaker to court in January 2007 claiming that their rights

were being infringed and protested her decision to make amendments to questions on the Order Paper.

In his ruling Justice Davidson Baptiste said that Speaker Boyd-Knights had acted within her rights when she suspended the legislators.

"I feel vindicated more than anything else," an elated Boyd-Knights said, adding that

she was prepared to bury the hatchet and extend an olive branch to the Opposition.

But UWP Earl Williams said that he was dissatisfied with the ruling.

"I have a lot of respect for judge Baptiste but just to say at this time I respectfully disagree with his judgement," Williams, a lawyer, said.



St. Lucia observes 29 years of Independence from Britain

CASTRIES, St. Lucia, CMC – St. Lucians last month observed 29 years of political Independence from Britain with the traditional military parade and other activities, and the government indicating that the island had made tremendous socio economic strides.

"From the attainment of Independence we have developed into a proud and confident people, who have made great strides in our economic development and a social transformation that has broken down the barriers of class where social mobility is determined by one's educational qualifications, ability and talent," Prime Minister Stephenson King said in an address on Feb. 22 marking the occasion.

"We should be proud of the harmonious relations that exist between all races, religious denominations and economic classes that make up our country," he added.

King, who took over the leadership of the country in September last year following the death of then Prime Minister Sir John Compton, said the island had established a reputation for being a progressive and vibrant country which had earned the respect of the wider world at large. But he called on St. Lucians

to recognize that they were living in "a dynamic and changing world" and the "independence" they sought 29 years ago no longer carried the same currency.

OPTIMISM

However, despite the dire waning caused by the volatility in the oil market, the outlook was optimistic, King said, "for we have registered a reversal of the trends that have marked other countries in the region."

He spoke of the drop in crime, adding

it was also his government's determination to bring the murder rate down further to levels that existed in 1996.

Hundreds of persons gathered at the Mindoo Phillip Park, east of the capital for the military parade that was followed by the National Schools Rally. A number of local and foreign dignitaries attended the celebrations, including the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) Jose Miguel Insulza.



Ruling party denies urging police to spy on Opposition

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada, CMC - The governing New National Party (NNP) has rejected accusations that it ordered police to spy on a closed-door meeting of the main Opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC).

The Opposition party accused the NNP of masterminding the operation after party officials nabbed a policeman secretly recording an executive meeting late last month.

"The police have their responsibility to safeguard the peace tranquility of our country and therefore they have the right to use means at time that may not necessarily be to the liking of certain individuals or groups," the NNP's Public Relations Officer Terry Forrester said.

"The police must therefore act always in the best interest of the nation and its citizens. The NNP has nothing whatsoever to do with the action of the police. The

police are an independent organ of the state and they act independently," Forrester added.

The policeman claimed he was sent to carry out an assignment given to him by a senior member of the special branch of the Royal Grenada Police Force (RGPF). Police Commissioner Winston James has since announced that an investigation had been launched after the officer complained that he was beaten and his personal property confiscated.

NDC acknowledged that members of the executive exercised their right to carry out a "citizens' arrest" but denied that the officer was assaulted.

General elections are widely expected sometime this year.



P O L I T I C S

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Modest U.S. reaction in wake of Castro's resignation

MIAMI – Cuban Americans in South Florida reacted modestly to news that Fidel Castro has stepped down as Cuba's official leader.

Small groups of Cuban Americans in the Miami area staged modest celebrations last month, but they and many exiled leaders said they still yearned for democracy on the Spanish-speaking Caribbean island and a fundamental transformation of its economic system.

"We have to realize that until he is dead, there is not going to be that much of a change," said Miami Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, speaking from the city's Little Havana.

"Just because he has given up a title, doesn't mean he has given up power," he added.

Raul Matinez, another Cuban American in Little Havana, concurred.

"Just because he resigned doesn't mean things will change," he said. "Maybe when Fidel dies, his communist vision will die with him."

CHANGE SIGNS

Admiral James Stavridis,

commander of the U.S. Southern Command, the Pentagon's headquarters for military operations in Latin America and the Caribbean, said his staff was monitoring events in Cuba and its waters, but reported no unusual activity.

"Fidel Castro's resignation is another sign that change is underway in Cuba," Stavridis said.

"Ultimately, of course, the Cuban people will chart the course for their country, hopefully finding their way to full democracy with free and fair elections."

Barry Bena, a U.S. Coast Guard spokesman, said there was no increase in traffic between Cuba and South Florida in the Florida Straits.

"It's business as usual, no change in operations," he said.

However, last month a small group of Cuban Americans gathered in the heart of Little Havana, waving flags, honking car horns and chanting slogans.

"I want my Cuba free, I want to die in my country," shouted Miguel Beruvides, 75.

Rafael Rodriguez, an alarm company technician in Miami, expressed skepticism that any real change in Cuba was on the horizon.

"That's old news, everyone expected it," he said about Castro's resignation.

Meantime, the four major presidential candidates welcomed the news of Castro's resignation, but said it was far from the real change that Cuba needed. New York Democratic Senator Hillary Clinton said Cuba's new leaders "face a stark choice: continue with the failed policies of the past that have stifled democratic freedoms and stunted economic growth, or take a historic step to bring Cuba into the community of democratic nations."

"The people of Cuba want to seize this opportunity for real change, and so must we," she added.

Illinois Democratic Senator Barack Obama called Castro's resignation "sadly insufficient in bringing freedom to Cuba."

Arizona Senator John McCain, the Republicans' presidential frontrunner, called Castro's resignation an event "nearly a half century overdue."

And former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee called for "free and fair elections."



Obama



Diaz-Balart

Caribbean countries not better off with new gov'ts ~ Grenada minister

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada, CMC – A senior Grenada government minister says Caribbean countries that have changed administrations in recent months have not benefited from the change and "the situation has gotten worse" in some cases.

"In every country so far, the cost of living has gone up," said Economic Development and Planning Minister Anthony Boatwain. "So although there has been change at the political level, there has been no change in the quality of life of the people."

Boatwain, speaking last month at the endorsement a rally for Fitzroy Bedeau, the former police commissioner, who is the candidate of the ruling New National Party (NNP) for the St. John's constituency, dismissed the so-called "winds of change" blowing across the Caribbean resulting in the change of governments in at least six regional states.

"What has been happen-

ing, we have been having an unfortunate hostile wind blowing throughout the Caribbean," he said. "A hostile wind resulting in higher prices, a hostile wind resulting in even some undesirables getting into governments."

"I can tell you what we want in Grenada and the Caribbean is not a wind of change, but a change in the wind that has been blowing in the region...that is what we want. We want a gentler and friendlier wind, we want a change in the economic and global environment so at least we could bring better life to our people."

"Changing the political system alone cannot guarantee us an improvement in the quality of life of our people," he added.

Boatwain told supporters

that many persons were now regretting having changed their governments and urged Grenadians not to "do that same mistake in the not too distant future."

GLOBAL

Prime Minister Keith Mitchell has hinted that he would call the general elections in November, but political parties here say it is likely that the polls would be called at an earlier date.

Boatwain said that the forces "causing the problems with our economy have little or nothing to do with the political system" and blamed the global environment for the situation.

"There is very little we can do to change that environment," he said. "There is very little we can do to change the price of oil. There is very little we can do to change the price of basic food commodities."

Gonsalves vows to stay on as St. Vincent's P.M.

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent, CMC – Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves has reiterated his decision not to step down from office amid allegations that he raped a 36-year-old police woman.

"Allegations did not put me in office, real flesh and blood people, stuffed with dignity put me in office," Gonsalves said as his ruling Unity Labour Party (ULP) launched its own radio station late last month.

"This period has been a challenging one but leadership which cannot countenance challenges and meet them firmly, resolutely, and beat back these challenges is a leadership which does not deserve to be leading a great party like this one," Gonsalves said, reiterating his commitment to continue serving as prime minister.

DENIAL

Gonsalves, 61, has "categorically" denied the charges leveled against him by the police officer and Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) Colin Williams last month

dropped the charges on the grounds that they would not stand up in a court of law.

But lawyers for the police woman filed two private criminal complaints of indecent assault and unlawful sexual intercourse without consent against Gonsalves.

High Court judge, Justice Gertel Thom, will on Mar. 11 rule on whether or not the DPP decision to take over and discontinue the rape charges against the prime minister would be reviewed.

Gonsalves said that the new radio station, "Star FM", would be used to improve the socio-economic well being of citizens.

Former government Minister Sir Vincent Beache is chairman of the new radio entity that Housing Minister Senator Julian Francis, who is also the ULP general secretary, said would put "fear in the belly of the Opposition."

The ULP enjoys a 12 to three majority in Parliament. General elections are due in 2010.

New gov't of national unity takes office in Montserrat

BRADES, Montserrat, CMC – A new government of national unity took office in this British Overseas Territory on Feb. 22, less than 24 hours after Chief Minister Dr. Lowell Lewis asked Governor Peter Waterworth to revoke the appointments of two of his ministers.

Former Chief Minister Reuben Meade and Charles Kirnon, members of the Movement for Change and Prosperity (MCAP), were sworn in at a brief ceremony. They replaced Margaret Dyer-Howe and Idabelle Meade, members of the New People's Liberation Movement (NPLM).

Meade replaces Dyer-Howe as the minister of agriculture, lands, housing and the environment, while Kirnon assumes the communications and works portfolios. NPLM Leader John Osborne remains as education and health minister.

STRUGGLES

Lewis, the only member of his Montserrat Democratic Party (MDP) to hold a seat in Parliament, said the move became necessary because of leadership struggles within his Cabinet that came to a head during a recent meeting to discuss the allocation of resources for the upcoming

budget presentation.

The chief minister said because Osborne, a former chief minister, refused to be part of any plot to remove him as leader, he was open to keeping him in the Cabinet.

The new coalition government, with support of the four MCAP parliamentarians, has a six to three majority in the Legislative Council, the island's Parliament. The other MCAP legislators are party Leader Roslyn Cassell-Sealy and Easton Farrell.

"For the first time we have something that I wanted to do from the beginning, which is to have a government of national unity because my team now includes the three parties that contested the last general elections," said Lewis.

Cassell-Sealy said her party's decision was taken in the best interest of the volcano-affected island.

Meantime, the future of the NPLM hangs in the balance with indications that Osborne, who has dominated the party's leadership, would be bowing out of active politics at the end of the current five-year term. But he has agreed to continue serving as a minister until the end of March and has pledged to support the government as a backbencher.



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