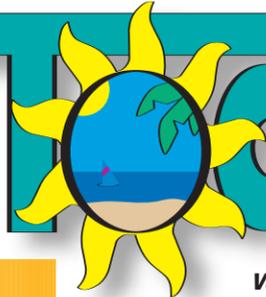


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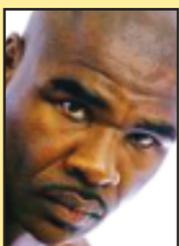
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Vol. 19 No. 6

THE MULTI AWARD-WINNING NEWS MAGAZINE



Bounty Killer and fellow Jamaican dancehall artiste Mavado were last month banned from entering Guyana because that Caribbean government is unhappy with their lyrics, which it claims glorify guns and bash gays, page 13.



Jamaican-born boxer Glen Johnson was sure he had retained his world light heavy-weight title against

American Chad Dawson. The crowd thought so too. The judges had other ideas, page 18.



'PENNS' FEVER

~ Caribbean nationals again flocked to Philadelphia in large numbers to cheer on athletes from the region and add their own special flavor and pride to the 114th Penn Relays in the 'City of Brotherly Love'...page 7.



Hurricane season is almost here. History teaches that lack of awareness and preparation are common threads among all major hurricane disasters. Find out what you can do to get ready, page 23.



REVENGE PLOT

~ United States federal prosecutors in Florida have charged that a Jamaican man arrested last month, while trying to board an Air Jamaica flight with pipe-bomb materials, planned to seek retribution against two men charged with killing his mother...page 3.

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Pregnant Haitian spared deportation from U.S.

MIAMI – In a rare decision, United States immigration authorities have temporarily spared the deportation of a pregnant Haitian woman in Miami on humanitarian grounds.

Fabienne Josil, 26, five months pregnant, was awaiting deportation when immigration officials unexpectedly told her April 25 she could leave detention to seek the medical care she needs in the U.S.

“I’m going home to get some rest and be happy with my family,” an ecstatic Josil told reporters shortly after her release. “That’s all I’m going to do.

“I’m going to have some-

thing to eat, maybe some good Haitian food,” she continued.

Barbara Gonzalez, a spokeswoman for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Miami, said Josil is not completely out of the woods; that she has received an order of supervision with reporting requirements.

“That doesn’t negate the fact that she has a final order of removal,” Gonzalez said. “At this point her safety and security is the priority,” she added.

Josil, who legally entered the U.S. in 2002, was under a

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Jamaican put on marshals’ most wanted list in U.S.

WASHINGTON - United States marshals have added a Jamaican man to their “Most Wanted” list, offering a \$25,000 reward for information leading to his capture.

A statement issued by the U.S. authorities said that David Clarke, 26, was last month placed on the list of 15 “Most Wanted Fugitives” for the “heinous” double murders of a South Florida couple on June 16, 2007.

According to the release, two other men involved in the shooting deaths were arrested just weeks after the incident and charged with first-degree murder, but Clarke is still on the run.

“Being added to the marshals’ 15 most wanted list is a wake-up call to all fugitives like Clarke to put them on

notice that it’s only a matter of time before we come knocking,” said U.S. Marshal Christina Pharo of the Southern District of Florida.

“Our reputation of being the best in fugitive apprehension can be backed up with results, and we are hoping to add Clarke’s apprehension to the numbers.”

Officials allege that the three men stuffed Chris Thompson and Cassandra Williams in a car trunk after shooting them and then abandoned the vehicle in Sunrise, Florida where authorities made the discovery.

The U.S. marshal release indicated that Clarke has relatives and associates in Jamaica and South Florida.



U.S. Congressional Black Caucus urges Bush to take ‘decisive action’ in Haiti crisis

WASHINGTON - The United States Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) is urging President George W. Bush to act “immediately and decisively” on the crisis in Haiti.

In a letter sent last month, the 43 members of the CBC expressed concern over what they described as the current “economic and political instability that has ensued in Haiti”.

The letter also urged Bush to provide immediate debt relief and extend Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for Haitian nationals currently in the U.S.

“Given Haiti’s current



Bush

economic and political instability, it is now more critical than ever for the United States to do everything within its power to assist our hemisphere’s poorest country”, the

letter stated.

“Haiti, already suffering from extreme poverty, environmental destruction, and political instability, must now also contend with sky-rocketing food costs and civil unrest”, the U.S. legislators wrote, noting that recently thousands of Haitians have “flooded the streets in desperation to protest rapidly increasing food prices.

“How desperate must the humanitarian crisis in Haiti become before the United States is willing to offer this deserving nation the compassion and generosity that it has

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

City Council honors Guyanese subway hero

NEW YORK – The New York City Council has honored a Guyanese-born mechanic who risked his life to save a fallen subway passenger.

Councilman Leroy Comrie, the son of Jamaican immigrants, presented the council proclamation to Queens resident Veeramuthu “Kali” Kalimuthu, a mechanic at Columbia University in Manhattan, during a ceremony last month at City Hall.

“Today, the council of the City of New York honors a devoted family man and sterling example of the daily unsung contributions of immi-

grants to our city and nation,” said Comrie, who represents the 27th District in Queens.

“Kali serves as an inspiration to our community not only because of his act of heroism but, more importantly, because of how he inspires each New Yorker to serve one another,” he added.

‘HEROISM’

Comrie said Kalimuthu demonstrated “extraordinary heroism” on Mar. 14 when a fellow New Yorker collapsed, unconscious, onto the north-bound subway tracks of the No. 1 line at the 116th station

in Harlem.

“In a truly selfless act, he jumped down and crossed the tracks to hoist the much-larger unconscious passenger onto his shoulders and lifted him up to platform,” he added.

Comrie said Kalimuthu is a “proud” Guyanese, who migrated to the U.S. in 1991, and has been a “proud resident” of the Jamaica section of Queens for 16 years.

He said Kalimuthu, who has been employed as a mechanic at Columbia University for 11 years, is also a “passionate cricket player.”



Jamaican ex-chief of staff for Vincentian N.Y. city councilman indicted in scandal

NEW YORK - United States federal prosecutors have indicted the Jamaican-born, former chief of staff for Vincentian Councilman Dr. Kendall Stewart on charges that he funneled taxpayer money into pet projects and favored community groups.

In unsealing the indictment, prosecutors last month accused Asquith Reid of using over \$145,000 from the charity, Donna Reid Memorial Education Fund, a recipient of New York City funds.

Authorities also indicted Joycynth Anderson, another Stewart aide, for assisting Reid in the scheme.

Stewart, who represents the 45th Councilmanic District in Brooklyn, which is overwhelmingly Caribbean, was not named in the indictment. He said in a statement that he did nothing wrong.

“While I believe in the presumption of innocent until proven guilty, I must say that



Stewart

I’m deeply disappointed over the allegations leveled at Mr. Reid and the embarrassment that his actions - right or wrong - have caused me, my hard-working staff and the people of my district,” Stewart said.

‘CONSPIRACY’

According to the indictment, Reid is charged with “conspiracy to commit mail fraud, money laundering conspiracy and two counts of witness tampering”.

Prosecutors also charged that he directed two grand jury witnesses to lie about working for the Donna Reid Fund and other related financial transactions. They said while the fund was expected to furnish educational assistance to schoolchildren it “primarily served as a conduit to provide cash and other personal benefits” to Reid.

The indictment also charged that at least \$31,000 received by the fund was wired to Reid’s friends and relatives in Jamaica. It further accused Anderson of cashing thousands of dollars in Donna Reid Fund checks for Reid.

After their arraignment, both Reid and Anderson were released on bond by a Brooklyn magistrate.

Prosecutors said Reid faces a maximum of 80 years in prison, while Anderson can be imprisoned for up to 40 years if convicted.



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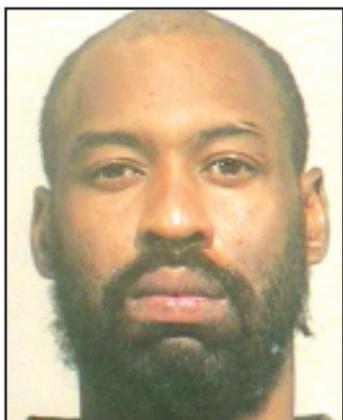
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Jamaican bomb suspect was planning revenge on mother's killers ~ FBI

ORLANDO, Florida - United States federal prosecutors in Florida have charged that a Jamaican man arrested last month while trying to board an Air Jamaica flight with pipe-bomb materials planned to seek retribution against two men charged with killing his mother.

The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) alleged that Kevin Brown, 32, was taking the components to



Brown

Jamaica to make pipe bombs "as revenge" against the men believed to have killed his mother, Sandra McLeod in 2005.

In a document filed in federal court prosecutors late last month said Brown, who has a history of violent and suicidal tendencies as well as

Brown, who has a history of violent and suicidal tendencies as well as tenuous ties to the Orlando area, made him too great a flight risk to be released from jail.

tenuous ties to the Orlando area, made him too great a flight risk to be released from jail.

Brown was arrested on April 1 at Orlando International Airport and is currently being held at the Seminole County Jail. He has asked to be released on bail until his trial - a request that United States Magistrate Karla Spaulding is scheduled to consider on May 7.

DESTRUCTIVE

Prosecutors charged that Brown, a U.S. Army veteran, was fired in December from his job as an equipment-parts receiver for a defense contractor in Iraq because he made "offensive sexual comments to a female co-worker" and "grabbed an ax, threw items in a destructive manner, and

kicked a door" in front of her.

They also said he was admitted to a Veterans Affairs hospital after trying to kill himself.

Prosecutors said Brown's behavior at Orlando

International Airport caught the attention of Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers trained in spotting suspicious body language, facial expressions and behavior.

The FBI said when he was detained his backpack searched, two galvanized pipes, end caps, two small containers of BB pellets, batteries, two containers of liquids, a laptop computer and

bomb-making literature were found.

Brown also bought two "boot knives" that could be concealed in his shoes, the prosecution alleged.



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U.S legislator wants more aid for Haiti

NEW YORK - The first ever Haitian to hold elective office in New York has called for increased aid for his homeland in the wake of riots over rising food prices.

New York City Councilman Dr. Mathieu Eugene, Democratic representative for the predominantly Caribbean, 40th Council District in Brooklyn, told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)** that he was putting together a task force to provide humanitarian assistance to Haiti.

"This, I believe, is a moral obligation for Haitians in the U.S. to do. We should band together to send humanitarian assistance to the Haitian people," he said.

"I'm calling on everyone to join me, Haitians, Friends of Haiti, elected representatives, to collect food, water and medicine for the needy people," Eugene said, adding that he had already approached a number of elected officials in the U.S. Congress, the New York State's Senate and Assembly, as well as the city council, for support in this initiative.

In addition, Eugene said he would be sending a letter to the United Nations, plead-

ing for further assistance.

ACTION

The U.N. said last month that it was taking further



Eugene

action to confront food insecurity in Haiti with plans to distribute 8,000 more tons in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. The U.N. said its World Food Program (WFP) would hand out the food, focusing on children, pregnant women and nursing mothers.

The World Bank also said it is providing a \$10 million grant to Haiti to help the René Prével administration respond to the crisis.



U.S. civil rights activist blasts immigration policy towards blacks

CHICAGO - United States' civil rights activist Reverend Jesse Jackson visited Haiti late last month to examine the humanitarian crisis emerging in the Caribbean country.

A statement from Jackson's Chicago-based organization the Rainbow PUSH Coalition said the former U.S. presidential candidate was accompanied by a delegation of ministers and concerned Haitians to meet with Haitian citizens, religious leaders, government officials and members of non-government groups.

"His goal is to bolster immediate humanitarian aid and devise long-term solutions to the problem of rising prices and curtailed supplies of staples, such as rice, that led to recent riots across Haiti", the statement said.

At the same time, Jackson lamented what he described as the "disparity" in how the U.S. government treats Cuban and Haitian

refugees. Jackson said while the U.S. readily welcomes Cuban refugees, it neglects Haitians.

"When Haitian children's parents die at sea they are sent back," he said. "We subsidize Cubans to come to the United States, but we ship Haitians out... We should change our policy and measure human rights by one yardstick."

'RACIST'

Jackson also charged that U.S. immigration policy is "racist," giving preferential treatment to Cuban refugees, but not Haitian refugees who have "darker skin color."

"The Cuban immigrants are called political refugees, and they are welcomed in the United States," he said. "The Haitian immigrants are called economic refugees, and they are sent back... There is a distinction without a difference."

Thousands of Haitians have been fleeing to the U.S. since 1991 to escape the violence and economic hardship after Haiti's leader Jean-Bertrand Aristide was overthrown. Last month, almost a dozen Haitian drowned off the coast of The Bahamas as they sought to escape the ris-

ing food crisis in the French-speaking Caribbean country.

FOLLOW-UP

Jackson's visit came as a high-powered Organization of American States (OAS) delegation wrapped up a visit to Haiti late last month. The delegation, which was headed by



Insulza

Secretary General José Miguel Insulza, presented proposals and offered ideas on the kind of assistance needed to tackle the food crisis the Caribbean nation faces.

An OAS statement said the delegation met with President René Prével and other political leaders, as well as community and business leaders, to offer the support as representatives of the Group of Friends of Haiti. Insulza said the group of diplomats was "keen on hearing suggestions as to the kind of assistance Haiti needs in order to tackle the underlying problems facing the society."



Pregnant Haitian spared deportation from U.S.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

deportation order because she had "aged out" of her residency status, her attorney Jeanne Hines said.

Hines said Josil learned about her detention and possible deportation on April 18 when immigration agents went to the Pompano Beach home of her fiancé, Frandy Deronvil, 36.

"She collapsed, her feet gave out," Hines said, disclosing that Josil was then taken by ambulance to North Broward Medical Centre in Miami

because of uterine bleeding.

Hines said after Josil was treated, she was released that same day to the custody of an immigration agent and taken to the Broward Transitional Centre in Pompano Beach. But Hines said Josil continued to experience uterine bleeding, and doctors said she risked miscarriage.

Josil had legally entered the U.S. in 2002 as her father's dependent when she was 20.



(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

bestowed upon other countries?"

DEBT SOLUTION

Last month, the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed an amendment to the Jubilee Act, calling for the "expedited cancellation" of Haiti's international debt. The lawmakers said although Haiti is expected to receive some debt relief later this year, it is still scheduled to make nearly \$50 million in debt payments in 2008. They said these funds could be better spent alleviating the current crisis.

"Congress has gone on record supporting debt relief for Haiti", the letter stated. "We now call on you, Mr. President, to use your influence to make sure that this struggling nation is no longer held captive to their past and is put on a sustained path to development".

In urging Bush to grant Haitian immigrants, currently residing in the U.S., TPS, the CBC said this would enable them to contribute to their

U.S. Congressional Black Caucus urges Bush to take 'decisive action' in Haiti crisis

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

nation's recovery and stability. Under Congressional rules, TPS may be granted when there is ongoing armed conflict, "posing a serious threat to personal safety". It is requested by a foreign state that "temporarily cannot handle the return of nationals due to environmental disaster" or when "extraordinary and temporary conditions in a foreign state exist which prevent aliens from returning".

"Undoubtedly, Haiti meets all of the requirements for TPS, and is just as deserving as other currently protected nations", the legislators wrote.

"The people of Haiti have been victimized by our country's double-standard immigration policies for far too long.

"As we wait for humanitarian relief to trickle into the hands of Haiti's starving population, the United States has the power to provide our struggling neighbor immediate, substantial relief by granting Haitians currently residing in the United States TPS", they wrote.

FRAGILE

In February, Haitian

President René Prével formally requested TPS for his compatriots living in the U.S. The CBC said while Haiti has made "considerable progress" in its efforts to recover from the physical and political damages of recent years, through its "commendable" rebuilding efforts and its recent democratic elections, its democracy "remains fragile."

"As Haitians continue to live under ever worsening conditions, it is only a matter of time before a humanitarian crisis becomes a political one threatening the stability of Haiti and our entire region.

"Haitians, both in Haiti and in our own country, have long suffered through natural destruction, persistent poverty, repressive regimes, and the inequitable policies of the United States.

"It is now our moral obligation to help Haitians sustain and rebuild their country by alleviating their nation's debt and granting Haitian immigrants already residing in the United States TPS", the legislators stated.



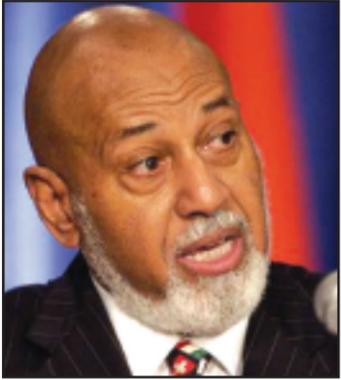
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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United Way of Broward County



Hastings

Cancel Haiti's debt, Congress tells treasury

WASHINGTON - The United States' House of Representatives has unanimously passed an amendment calling for the cancellation of Haiti's international debt.

The legislation, piloted by Florida Democratic Congressman Alcee Hastings, directs the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury to work with international financial institutions to provide debt cancella-

tion to low-income countries.

"With the passage of my amendment, Congress goes on record supporting the cancellation of Haiti's international debt to help alleviate poverty and increase stability throughout the country," Hastings said in a statement.

"This is an important initial step toward finally freeing Haiti from its onerous debt.

"I remain committed to

helping provide much needed resources and protection for Haitians in Haiti and within our own borders so that they may contribute to their country's recovery from years of political, economic, and environmental turmoil and put the nation on a sustained path to development."

'DOUBLE-STANDARD'
Hastings is also in the

vanguard in the fight to end "double-standard immigration practices as they pertain to Haitian migrants" and has authored the Haitian Protection Act, which would designate Haitian nationals in the United States as eligible for Temporary Protected Status (TPS).

Last month, he and 43

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

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IMMIGRATION KORNER

QUESTION: Is it true that the quota for H-1B visas is up?

ANSWER: Yes, says United States Citizenship and Immigration Services officials. A cap has been placed on H-1B visas for this year.

Officials said recently they have received enough



H-1B visa kit

H-1B petitions to meet the congressionally mandated cap for the general category and 20,000 under the "advanced

New quota rule for H-1B visa; student visas to cost more

degree" exemption limit for fiscal year 2009.

The agency added that before running the random selection process, they will complete initial data entry for all filings received during the filing period ending on April 7, 2008. It will reject and return filing fees for all cap-subject petitions not randomly selected.

The USCIS will conduct the selection process for "advanced degree" exemption petitions first. All "advanced degree" petitions not selected will be part of the random selection process for the 65,000 limit. More than 31,200 of those petitions were for the advanced degree exemption. Those petitions not selected



Myers

under the advanced degree exemption will join the random selection process for the regular 65,000 cap.

PAYING MORE

Caribbean and other foreign students seeking to study in the U.S. may soon have to shell out more.

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which oversees the Student and Exchange Visitor Program, said recently it may have to increase fees for nonimmigrant students to help cover the cost of improvements to the program.

Visa costs for nonimmigrant students could double to \$200 if the plan becomes a reality. Most exchange visitor fees could rise from \$100 to \$180, while the fee for school certification could rise from \$350 to \$1,700. Site visit charges could increase from \$230 to \$655 for each site visit.

The fee increase is being proposed to cover improvements to the SEVP, including adding ICE agents to follow up on alerts submitted by school administrators; a revamped SVEP database and a new recertification process, as mandated by the U.S. Congress, to maintain the integrity and reputations of participating schools.

"U.S. colleges and universities are the envy of the world and accordingly attract as many as a million individuals from overseas who wish to attend," said Julie L. Myers, assistant secretary of Homeland Security for ICE. "Validating the identity of foreign students, verifying their intentions for entering our country and knowing where they are while they are here is critically important to the security of our country. (The) proposed new rule ensures that America remains a welcoming place for foreign students to study, while enhancing our abilities to protect our national security."

After the events of Sept. 11, 2001, Congress required the Department of Homeland Security to implement a better way of keeping track of international students and exchange visitors. SEVP was the department's response to that mandate.

Compiled by Felicia Persaud at Felicia@caribpr.com. The answers provided here are for information purposes only, and do not create an attorney-client relationship; nor are they a substitute for "legal advice".

Caribbean to discuss poverty, climate change with Europe

WASHINGTON – Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries will meet with the European Union (E.U.) this month to discuss cooperation to fight poverty, the negative effects of climate change and other related issues.

The Organization of American States (OAS) announced that 15 regional leaders have so far been confirmed for the summit in Peru on May 16.

"Our aim is to strengthen strategic partnerships between the two regions based on mutual respect, common values and economic, political, cultural, historical and human ties," said Slovenia's Foreign

Minister Dimitrij Rupel, whose country holds the E.U. presidency.

He said the E.U.-LAC summit "is an opportunity to further build partnership between our two regions by focusing on the main issues - the fight against poverty, inequality and exclusion and sustainable development, the environment, climate change and energy."

Rupel told an OAS Permanent Council meeting, chaired by Barbados's Ambassador Michael King, that at least 20 of Europe's heads of state and government are expected at the meeting.

Cash Plus boss, brother granted bail in Jamaica

KINGSTON, Jamaica, CMC – A High Court judge here has approved bail for Carlos Hill, the embattled head of the alternative investment scheme Cash Plus, who is facing nine counts of fraud and conspiracy.

He, along with his brother Bertram, had been on remand at the Horizon Remand Centre for several weeks after they were arrested following the company's collapse.

Justice Bertram Morrison allowed the brothers bail after hearing submissions from their lawyers.

The head of the failed company was granted a J\$15 million (\$211,318) release while his brother was allowed

out on J\$10 million dollars (\$140,921) bail.

The judge also ordered Carlos Hill to report to the police's Fraud Squad daily and to remain in his home between the hours of 6 p.m. and 8 a.m. as part of his house arrest.

Late last month, the company's chief financial officer, Peter Wilson was released on JA\$5 million (\$70,000).

The company's head has been charged with nine counts of fraud and conspiracy, while his brother and Wilson are charged with conspiracy. They were scheduled to return to court on May 14.

U.N. provides food for Haiti

NEW YORK - The United Nations last month unveiled a plan to distribute more than 8,000 tons of food supplies in Haiti where rising prices have led to widespread protests.

The U.N. World Food Program (WFP) was expected to distribute the food in the north, west and central regions, focusing on children, pregnant women and nursing mothers.

The U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) was also expected to double its child feeding pro-

gram to combat malnutrition and spend about \$1.6 million on water and sanitation in the northwest and the Artibonite regions.

Meanwhile, the Brazilian contingent of the U.N. Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) last month started to distribute food to more than 3,000 families in the poorest quarters of the capital Port-au-Prince.

Cancel Haiti's debt, Congress tells treasury

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

members of the Congressional Black Caucus wrote to President George W. Bush seeking an explanation as to why Haitian nationals have not yet been granted TPS and that the Bush administration "continues to refuse to provide an adequate explanation.

"The situation in Haiti - a nation that has historically

been afflicted by violence and natural disasters - is increasingly desperate and volatile," he said.

"The United States government cannot turn a blind eye as food prices escalate out of control in the most impoverished nation in the Western Hemisphere," Hastings added.

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Caribbean fever grips Penn Relays again

GORDON WILLIAMS

PHILADELPHIA, Pennsylvania – Mere days after the Democratic Party rolled its crucial primary election race out of this United States city, a Caribbean caravan – featuring mostly Jamaicans – began pouring in, intent on creating intense competition of their own at

matic April 26 drew 49,831, the second largest final day crowd in the meet's history.

The region was well represented, and not just in numbers. Outside the stadium vendors selling food and other items typical of the colorful Caribbean lined the sidewalks. Curried goat, jerk chicken, roti, escoveitched fish, ackee and dumplings, were on many

massive, flowing symbols that covered several fans at once.

SUPPORT

Fans also decked themselves out in familiar colors of the Caribbean, including Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and The Bahamas. They sang and cheered loudly. The athletes responded too. Aleen Bailey, a member of Jamaica's victorious women's medley relay team which defeated the U.S., pranced excitedly about the track and waved proudly at the stands following the race. Other athletes showed their appreciation as well, even those who were not on the receiving end of the cheers.

"I've been doing the Penn Relays in high school, in college," said American runner LaShawn Merritt. "It's a great atmosphere."

Many non-competitors at the meet seemed to enjoy it as well. Popular comedian Bill Cosby, a regular at Penns, was again there last month. Aaron Ross, a defensive back with Super Bowl champions New York Giants and fiancé of Jamaican-born U.S. runner Sanya Richards, showed up as



Caribbean supporters show excitement and anticipation as the runners race to the finish line.

the 2008 Penn Relays.

They did not fail.

Whatever excitement Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton may have generated in the "City of Brotherly Love", in their quest to become either the first African American or female U.S. president, was embellished by a distinct Caribbean flavor at the 114th staging of the annual athletic carnival here from April 24-26.

"It's a very convenient thing for us, a very opportunistic occasion," said Jamaican-born, New York-based immigration activist Irwine Claire, who is also chief executive officer of Team Jamaica Bickle, an organization which has provided food and hospitality for Caribbean athletic teams competing at "Penns" for the past 14 years.

"...The fact is that that type of situation (the primary) taking place in Philadelphia, for Caribbean nationals here in Philadelphia this is a whale of a week."

CROWDS

This year's meet could hardly have been much better. Caribbean nationals from all over the U.S., and many traveling from the region, crowded into Franklin Field and its surrounding environs in near record numbers. According to organizers the meet "missed three attendance marks by less than 1,000 fans". The cli-



Members of Team Jamaica Bickle prepare meals for distribution to Caribbean athletes at the Penn Relays.

menus. Inside the stadium, the region's flavor dominated as well. At least two Golden Krust Bakery stalls beneath the Franklin Field stands were kept busy with long lines of patrons seeking out the taste of patties, bun and cheese, jerk chicken and pastries.

The fans also brought along their own food, some willing to share items like puddings and rice and peas and chicken with total strangers. But their greatest generosity was showered on the athletes from the region competing at the meet. Every event that featured a Caribbean athlete, especially Jamaican, drew roaring cheers from the stands, coupled with intense waving of flags ranging from handkerchief-sized to

well. So too did former U.S. Olympic great Carl Lewis. Several notable names from the Caribbean attended too, including Jamaica's former Public Defender Howard Hamilton.

Few were disappointed and their pride showed.

"They soon have to rename it the Caribbean relays," said one happy fan decked out in the black, green and gold of Jamaica.

Photographs and story by Gordon Williams, Caribbean Today's managing editor.

Main cover photograph by Anthony Foster.

Caribbean success on the track, turn to Sport, page 17.



Food for thought: Caribbean seeks to revitalize agriculture

PETER RICHARDS

Exactly one year after Caribbean leaders met in Trinidad with the regional and international donor community, stakeholders will gather in Guyana next month hoping to secure as much funding as possible to help the region deal with spiraling food prices and revitalize the important agricultural sector.

The June 6-7 Regional Agriculture Investment Forum grew out of the first-ever regional agriculture donor conference held in Port of Spain last June and organized jointly by the Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Guyana-based CARICOM Secretariat.

FAO Director General Jacques Diouf said then that at least \$200 million dollars would be needed from external sources, including donors and investors, to kick-start the initiative. But as he spoke at the launch of the forum recently, Guyana's President Bharrat Jagdeo, who has lead responsibility for agriculture within the 15-member CARICOM grouping, said the event should not be viewed as a "knee-jerk reaction" to rising food prices as there has been talk for years about boosting agriculture with little success.

"For a very long time across the region, little funding was put into the agricultural sector, and very few requests that went to the multilateral financial institutions were for agriculture," Jagdeo said.

TOURISM CHOICE

He added that many countries have preferred to focus on tourism, as it contributes more directly to their Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

"We pointed out that food security is vital to the region, that you can't eat tourism," he noted. "Tourism may contribute a lot to employment, but if this region does not have food security or a competitive agricultural sector, our

exporting agricultural sector will die because we can't compete with the rest of the world and our domestic production will be displaced by imports,



Jagdeo

as has already happened in many of the countries."

CARICOM Secretary General Edwin Carrington stressed that the region's \$3 billion food import bill is becoming increasingly untenable.

"We have a virtual crisis situation on our hands. All hands must now come on deck, governments, private sector and civil society in partnership," said Carrington.

Regional governments have already agreed on a novel idea of using Guyana's vast amount of lands to increase food production for Caribbean territories. At the end of their special summit on food security in December last year, the regional leaders issued a statement that expressed appreciation "for the generous offer by the

Government of Guyana to member states, of access to land for the pursuit of agricultural production, including agro-processing, and encourage member states to take advantage of this offer.

"In this regard, we note that Trinidad and Tobago is already pursuing this offer in the context of a CARICOM Food Security Facility," the



Carrington

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

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Brain drain can be gain for Caribbean ~ report

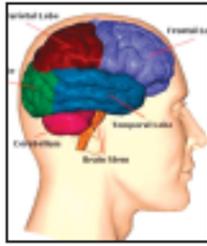
UNITED NATIONS – A United Nations University (UNU) study has suggested that the so-called brain drain facing Caribbean countries actually has the potential to drive growth in these economies.

Regional countries have complained about citizens taking their skills abroad.

“The idea that the mobility of bright, qualified people represents a permanent loss of scarce human capital for the

source country is becoming rapidly outdated,” said UNU Director Andrés Solimano in releasing the study last month.

“Talent mobility can bring benefits both to host and source countries...So this notion of one-way mobility,



that people leave their country take whatever abroad and are completely lost for the whole country, should be reassessed.

“It’s more realistic to think there’s a movement of people in both directions,” he added.

CAUTION

The study, produced by the UNU’s World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER),

cautioned that while these benefits will be seen in areas of high technology, the health sector will continue to suffer. It said that as doctors, nurses and medical specialists continue to leave African, Asian and Caribbean countries, the health services they leave behind become “depressed and inadequate”.

“Here the old worries about brain drain are in general fully warranted,” said Solimano, who is also regional

advisor at the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The UNU study recommended that countries that are losing talent should set up “more liberal and open regimes that create a positive climate for business and the well-educated, leading to an improvement in the economy and society at large”.



Food for thought: Caribbean seeks to revitalize agriculture

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

statement added.

NO ACTION

But Jagdeo has been lamenting the fact that the interest expressed by the Caribbean had not yet translated into concrete plans.

“We have heard Trinidad has expressed interest, but unfortunately we have been unable to move beyond expressions of interest. When we try to pin down specific projects, we have not had much success,” he said.

The Patrick Manning government has acknowledged the Guyana initiative, saying it is one of two main strategies being developed with other Caribbean states. Manning said the other strategy calls for the establishment of a fast ferry service “for the transportation to Trinidad and Tobago of mainly farm products from the countries of the southern Caribbean.”

In addition, Port of Spain has announced plans to utilize former sugar estates for large scale production of food for both the local and export markets and there are also plans by an ammonia producing company to establish a large greenhouse demonstration farm on 75 acres of land pro-

vided by the state.

“This will be a model farm utilizing the latest technology and which will inspire the replication of similar operations by farmers throughout the country,” said Manning.

But head of the 34-year old Food Crop Farmers Association Norris Deonarine does not hold out much hope. He said farmers have been treated as “squatters” by successive governments with some waiting “as much as 35 to 40 years for security of tenure.

“We can’t go along gambling, taking risks because the people who should be recognizing our farmers are not doing so. To them food security is the importation of food,” he said during a recent radio program.

NEW INITIATIVES

In the meantime, other Caribbean countries, have announced new initiatives to help their citizens cope with the rising cost of food.

Barbados has said that it was planning to open its door to foreign competition, while the Bruce Golding administration in Jamaica said it was providing \$13.8 million in loan packages to help farmers. In addition, the government is

finalizing a \$2.5-million grant from the China, while negotiations are taking place with the CDB on a \$8-million loan to finance technology-driven programs in the sector.

Last December, the regional leaders agreed to waive the Common External Tariff (CET) on a basket of food items.

“Member States will also intensify social interventions targeting the most vulnerable groups, including children, as a feasible short-term measure to mitigate the negative impact of high food prices,” the leaders added.

In late March, Dr. Warren Smith, the director of finance and planning at the Barbados-based Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), warned regional leaders that overhauling local agriculture was critical to solve mounting problems of food security.

“What is necessary in the Caribbean is what amounts to the need for a green revolution in agriculture,” he argued, referring to the new technologies to boost crop yields that were successfully introduced in many developing countries between the 1940s and 1960s.

In the past year, global fuel prices have doubled, in turn pushing up the cost of

key commodities like wheat, corn and barley. Food prices have also been squeezed by the expanding use of grains for bio fuels.

“Commodity prices provide the basis and impetus for us to take up that challenge seriously,” Smith told a one-day roundtable discussion on “Global Imbalances and Caribbean Development” organized by the CDB and the U.S.-based Institutional Investor Magazine.

According to a recently released report by the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), while agricultural productivity has grown in the last 50 years in Latin America and the Caribbean, it has not translated into better lives for most people at the bottom of the economic pyramid.

“Increased yield from agricultural production has not led to a significant decrease in poverty, which still affects 37 percent of the population. Importing food has created dependence and disrupted local production”, said the IAASTD’s report, which was based on three years of research and involved more than 400 scientists around the world.

At the roundtable discussion in Port of Spain, the head of the CDB, Compton



Bourne

Bourne, argued for the introduction of new technologies as well as improved transportation to bring basic goods all the way along the value chain.

“It is not sufficient to invest in agricultural commodities, you have to have a means to move that commodity from the farm to the hotels, etc,” Bourne said.

Other experts noted that while regional blocs like CARICOM have devoted a lot of time and resources to the question of migration, the

movement of agricultural products had been largely neglected.

- CMC



Caribbean Today

Street Address:
9020 SW 152nd Street, Miami, FL 33157
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 6010
Miami, FL 33116-6010.
Telephone: (305) 238-2868
(305) 253-6029 • Fax: (305) 252-7843
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PETER A WEBLEY
Publisher

GORDON WILLIAMS
Managing Editor

SABRINA HOPKINS
Graphic Artist

DOROTHY CHIN
Account Executive

SUNDAY SELLERS
Account Executive

JULISSA RAMOS
Accounting Manager

Caribbean Media Source
Media Representatives

TOM JONAS
353 St. Nicolas Street, Suite 200
Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2Y 2P1
Tel: (514) 931-0422 • Fax: (514) 931-0455
E-mail: tom@cmsworldmedia.com

Jamaica Bureau
MARIE GREGORY
(876) 925-5640

P.O. Box 127, Constant Spring
Kingston 8, Jamaica

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Boycott politicians, not the Olympics

“The Olympic Games belong to the athletes and not to the politicians,” Avery Brundage, a past president of the International Olympic Committee, once said.

We like to think so, don't we? Yet, the raucous rounds of “snatch the torch” that have disrupted this year's pre-Olympics festivities reveal a deeper truth: The Olympics are often politics by other means.

That's why an unusual right-left political coalition has called for United States President George W. Bush to join some other major world leaders in skipping the opening ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics. U.S. Democratic presidential contenders senators Hillary Clinton of New York and Barack Obama of Illinois called on Bush to avoid the ceremonies. Arizona Sen. John McCain, the presumed Republican nominee for president, joined in.

U.S. Rep. Thaddeus McCotter, a conservative Michigan Republican, has introduced a bill that would prevent the president and other U.S. government officials and employees from attending the Aug. 8 parade.

But Bush has tended to shrug off such notions as an unnecessary mix of politics with the purity of the Games.

“I'm going to the Olympics. I view the Olympics as a sporting event,” Bush said in February. “You got the Dalai Lama crowd, you've got global warming folks, you've got Darfur. And I just - I am not going to go and use the Olympics as an opportunity to express my opinions to the Chinese people in a public way.”

PRESSURE

He was referring to pressure from the same protesters against China's brutal human rights policies in Tibet and elsewhere. Their protests have led to scuffles with police and unsmiling Chinese security agents in several of the 21 cities through which China's pre-Olympic torch relay is running.

Whether you support torch-snatching as a pre-Olympic event or not, this international embarrassment could hardly be aimed at a



CLARENCE PAGE

more deserving target than China. The country's list of offenses against humanity is long: political prisoners, jailed journalists, religious persecution - you name it, they do it. On the world scene, they have offered aid, weapons and comfort to a variety of human rights abusers. As Sudan's leading oil customer, they have given passive support to that country's genocidal policies in Darfur.

And as their eager trading partner and debtor, we, the United States, have been among China's leading enablers.

History shows Olympics to be more than just a “sporting event”, as Bush calls it. Japan in 1964, South Korea in 1988 and the Soviet Union in 1980, among others, have used the Olympics to elevate their stature on the world stage. The most memorably notorious example is Nazi Germany in 1936. Those were the games that created the torch relay as an international pageant to help polish the image of Adolf Hitler's murderous regime.

Ominously, Susan Bachrach, curator of an exhibit on the 1936 Olympics that opens at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington on April 25, observed, “the Nazi torch ran through countries that Germany was about to conquer.”

Brundage argued vigorously against calls for the U.S. to boycott the Berlin Olympics. Hitler successfully concealed the deadliest side of his regime, including the racist and anti-Semitic Nuremberg laws and the rounding up of Jews and others for the first of his death camps.

JESSE'S MESSAGE

Yet, in the long run, what is most remembered from that Olympics are the four gold medals won by Jesse Owens, the black American track-and-field star who blew holes in Hitler's theories of Aryan supremacy.

It is with that positive memory in mind that I support the call for our president but not our country's athletes to boycott China's Olympics. We should give our athletes a chance to compete, as they have been training to do, and maybe present the sort of high-achieving model of achievement to the world that Jesse Owens did.

History shows the greatest value of the Olympic Games is in their ability to rise above ordinary political nationalism to a higher level of human

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

No man... so what?

Having explored the problems that women have as they age - put on weight, try their best to land a man at all costs - it's pretty clear that the one common factor that causes grief in their lives is man.

Yes, man.

So it's fair to say, that it may not be such a bad idea not to have a man at all. And it's true, as so many women nowadays choose to spend their days, and nights, without the company of men.

“Man in my life? I think not. It's been exactly five years, seven months, two weeks, three days and four hours since I have had any physical encounter with a man!” this lady told me.

What astonished me was how she could be so exact in her sexual memory, as I was always told that sex has no memory. I guess that only applies to men though, as women seem to put some special premium on the act, equating it with love.

“Oh, I will always remember my first time, it was so special, so magical, I will always love him.”

Ask most men and they can't even put a name to the face, much less the amount of times or the venue.

“Hi, pleased to meet you...and you are...?”

SINGLE FILE

Anyway, to be scientific, I made sure to ask other women the same question, and every one could tell me when last, how many times and with whom. I must add that every single one of them were without men for a very long time, but their memory clocks were still ticking, albeit bitterly. They were destined, damned, doomed to be single.

Now before you berate me, I'm merely responding to an article that I recently read titled “Doomed to be Single”, which was written by a woman too. Many women may agree



TONY ROBINSON

with that article, but there are also plenty out there who strongly disagree, citing that it's really a blessing that they are single with no prospect of landing a man anytime soon.

“Doomed...to be single...what rubbish, what makes men so important? Man is nothing but crosses and I am better off without them,” chortled one, while another chimed in, “With no man in my life, I can do what I want, when I want, go wherever I want, with no restrictions and with no man running and ruining my life.”

“Peace at last, peace at last, thank God almighty peace at last, since I have no man, my life is peace at last,” added the last lady.

What I found even more interesting, was the disparity in ages of the ladies who were chorusing these chants. The youngest was a snippet of a lass, merely 18 years old who recently celebrated her birthday. When I told her that she was at the age when many girls started to seriously think about landing a husband, she squarely looked me in the eyes and

said, “Never, never, never will I get married, all I want are two teddy bears and a parrot and I'll be happy.”

What has the world come to, when women as young as 18 have already made up their minds to go it alone? When I asked why, they replied that when they looked around and saw the abuse that men heaped on women, plus the rising, shocking, alarming divorce statistics, they'd rather not be a part of it. So in their minds, having no man is indeed no curse at all, as their lives will be bereft of misery. It's little wonder that so many women prefer to live with pets, rather than men, hence the rise in demand of those little rat-dogs and cats. Puss and dog mightn't have the same luck, but these women seem to have more luck with these animals.

STRESS FREE

One young lady was adamant that all men did was ruin women's lives, and living without one was a stress free existence. Another lass chimed in adding, “With the shortage of eligible men, it's even worse. I see so many guys working on these construction sites, built like Sampson, with muscles here, muscles there, bulges there, but nothing up here,” as she pointed to her head, “So

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)



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CARIB Comments

• **“The issue of casinos has been a lightning rod of controversy for a long time. We have tiptoed around the issue, not wanting to be embroiled in the controversy” – Prime Minister**

Bruce Golding giving the green light to casino gambling in Jamaica after years of debate over the issue.

• **“I can’t believe that at this point of my life, this age, they would still have the heart to rob me after**



I work so hard and won the fight so convincingly. I don’t know what else to do” – disappointed Jamaican Glen Johnson after his controversial loss to world champion Chad Dawson of the United States in a World Boxing Council title fight last month in Tampa.

• **“I don’t want people to come here and spray no bullets” -**

Roman Catholic priest Father Garfield Rochard defending his position not to allow a man entry into his Trinidad church for fear that his killers would have harmed innocent people.

• **“Critics who worry Bermuda tourism is not fishing where the fish are should have their concerns allayed today once and for all” – Bermuda’s Premier**

Ewart Brown last month announcing his country’s teaming up with United States baseball club New York Mets to promote tourism.



Compiled from CMC and other sources.



No man... so what?

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

what am I doing with a man like that...nuh crosses, and is it not a blessing living without a man like that?”

Plus, they added that the so called bright, educated eligible men were so in demand that they ended up with multiple women, making those women miserable in the long run. “Oh, the lies, the lies, the horrible lies they tell.” The consensus was, that given the choice of men around, it’s better to be without.

“But what about children?” I asked.

Well the reply shot back at me with the cacophony of cackling cockatiels, “Ha, children...no problem, I’ll just have a man impregnate me and I’ll go it alone,” they echoed with one voice, as in a chorus. They were serious too, eyeing me, “You seem to be of good stock, strong, intelligent, not bad looking, let me have

your baby and we needn’t be in contact afterwards.”

So that trend started years ago and is gaining in popularity. So much so, many articles are being written about this new reality, with the question even being asked if men will become obsolete in the future, an endangered species.

FED UP

Now, these women were not man haters or lesbians, but rather just fed up with the problems that emerge when men enter their lives, so usually after the last breakup, they opt to go it alone. Imagine, after years of failed relationships, bullied, battered, beaten, bounced, bruised, bewildered and broken, it must be a relief to exist without such stress.

“It’s like going through a hurricane season, then comes the calm. I’m too old to go through all that again,” said a lady to me.

This can be achieved because so many women nowadays are more educated and with it, more financially independent. Gone are the days when women had to suffer at the hands of men, just to get by in life. Of course, many are still trapped in this mode, and need men to complete their emotional and financial existence. But so many don’t, as they can buy and sell most men.

“Listen, I feel so good knowing that I can push my key in my own door, drive my own car, and don’t need any man to take me out or pay my fare,” this lady continued.

What is worse is that this absence of men can also be a financial windfall, as without men hanging around, the women can now have more strength of cash. Reason...no men around to mooch off them, borrow their car and drink out their gas, nyam out their groceries and borrow

money from them without repayment. Why do men always borrow money from women, and why do women always keep on lending them?

So as I looked around and saw all these attractive eligible, smart, intelligent women who, by choice and not design, opted to go it alone, with no man to weigh them down, I

shuddered and thought of the fate of men. Years ago it could be said that women alone were doomed to be single, but now they can just laugh and say, “Sure I’m single, and have no man, but so what? I’m stress free and loving it.”

seido1@hotmail.com



Boycott politicians, not the Olympics

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

relations: a humanitarian, egalitarian and meritorious ideal of fair play that transcends boundaries of nations, races or tribes.

In ancient times it is said that nations put down their arms and took a break from war in order to compete in the Olympics. In more recent times, the Olympics encourage us to look beyond our home countries to learn about

how much we have in common with the rest of the world - and how those commonalities can bridge our differences.

That’s why we should support the Olympics and our athletes. Let the politicians stay home.

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H E A L T H

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Caribbean's HIV/AIDS case goes before the U.N. in June

BASSETERRE, St. Kitts, CMC - St. Kitts and Nevis Prime Minister Dr. Denzil Douglas will take the Caribbean's case for more support for the HIV/AIDS fight to the United Nations next month.

Douglas, who is also chairman of the Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP), said the third High-Level United Nations General Assembly Special

Session will give him the opportunity to articulate the regional position on critical policy and measures that must be

adopted by governments and international partners in battling the exploding AIDS epidemic.

"In addition, I will have the opportunity to present the Caribbean mid-term scorecard on how far we have advanced along the path towards the target that we have set ourselves to achieve universal access to HIV and AIDS-related prevention, treatment, care and support services by 2010," he said at the opening ceremony of the 10th meeting of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism of PANCAP last month.

'TIME IS NOW'

Douglas, who will lead the Caribbean delegation at the June 10 and 11 assembly,



Douglas

said that 24 of the countries within PANCAP have completed their national assessment and progress reports and those will be consolidated for submission to the assembly.

"Of course, there are some persons in some quarters who insist that the Caribbean may have been brash in its commitment to the 2006 assembly to achieve universal access by 2010. Others are of the view that the Caribbean needed such an impetus to generate the type of intensity that is required to turn the tide of the epidemic in the region," said Prime Minister Douglas, who added that he fully embraced the latter view.

He said given the burden of the epidemic in the region, "the time for action is now."

"The region must not be allowed to forget that its HIV prevalence rate is one and a half times that of the global average, twice that of North America and Eastern Europe and more than five-fold that of Western and Central Europe," he reiterated.

The Caribbean remains the second most heavily HIV-infected region of the world, behind Sub-Saharan Africa. Douglas also explained that in a region as small as the Caribbean, there are more than 17,000 new HIV infections in 2007 and in excess of 11,000 deaths from AIDS.



Leg cramps, restless legs keeping you up at night?

DR. ROBERT H. SHMERLING

QUESTION: I used to take quinine sulfate for nighttime leg cramps. I stopped because I didn't think it was really helping. What other medications do you suggest I try?

ANSWER: Unfortunately, I'm not convinced that any medication, including quinine, is effective for nighttime (nocturnal) leg cramps.

Although nighttime leg cramps are common, the cause is unknown. Besides aging, they are associated with flat feet, a sedentary lifestyle, dehydration and diabetes.

Doctors tend to check electrolytes and minerals, including potassium, sodium, magnesium and calcium. However, a definite cause is rarely found.

Options for treatment include: stretching; regular exercise; drinking plenty of fluids, especially around the time

of exercise; applying heat (before or just after a cramp); and changing footwear, including using arch supports and good cushioning.

Although unproven, a number of medications are often tried: quinine; muscle relaxants (such as cyclobenzaprine); diphenhydramine (Benadryl and many others); verapamil and gabapentin.

The United States Food and Drug Administration took action in late 2006 to limit the use of prescription quinine so that it is only used as a treatment for malaria. That's because studies suggest it does little to improve night cramps and it has some seri-



ous potential side effects, including an unstable heart rhythm, low blood counts and allergic reactions. It can also cause trouble by interacting with other medicines.

Although nocturnal leg cramps are not dangerous, they are quite painful and they disrupt sleep, so see your doctor for an evaluation. Your doctor will look for a specific cause of your leg cramps and review treatment options with you.

Dr. Robert H. Shmerling is associate physician at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston, Massachusetts and associate professor at Harvard Medical School.

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Heartfelt care for Caribbean children

A mission of medical professionals and non-medical support members, attached to the United States-based Jamaican Children's Heart Fund (JCHF) team, recently provided cost-free open-heart surgery for children with congenital heart disease in Jamaica.

Twelve children were recommended for the JCHF team's attention, but only eight were operated on. The other four were deemed inoperable.

The surgeries were performed at the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI), with the majority of the children assigned from the Bustamante Hospital for Children.

Last month's visit to Jamaica marked the 12th year of the JCHF's missions. While in



Surgeons perform an operation during their recent trip to Jamaica.

Jamaica, the JCHF team supported its local charity Sophie's Place with its annual donation of clothing, food and toys. The JCHF also donated a Heart Lung Machine and medical supplies to the UHWI.



U.S. firm looks to St. Vincent to fill nursing needs

NEW YORK - A leading healthcare organization in the United States says it will turn to St. Vincent and the Grenadines to help address its nursing needs.

Top officials from the Bronx-based Beth Abraham Family of Health Services (BAFHS) told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) that in addition to meeting the organization's needs, it will be addressing the nursing surplus in St. Vincent.

A three-member contingent from BAFHS, headed by Vincentian-born Executive Vice President and Chief

Operating Officer Clari Gilbert, recently visited the Caribbean nation where they formalized a contract with the Ralph Gonsalves administration to recruit Vincentian nurses.

"Prior to going, I knew that Prime Minister Gonsalves had the initiative to train nurses for export because they really don't have enough resources to hire them after training," Gilbert told CMC, adding that she had also submitted a proposal to Health Minister Dr. Douglas Slater.

"We want to create a partnership with the Ministry of Health and Audrey Scott (the principal nursing officer)."

Gilbert, who also heads the Brooklyn-based St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Nurses Association of New

York, said 60 nurses were interviewed, but after screening that number fell to 35. She said the goal is to eventually recruit at least 15 nurses after further screening and the entire process, which includes the issuing of visas and the successful sitting of New York State Registered Nursing Licensing Examination, would take up to three years.

BAFHS Vice President for Human Resources, Peter Fragale, said the organization wanted to "take away the middlemen and deal directly with the government." Gilbert said that she has also been approached to recruit registered nurses from other Caribbean countries, including Grenada.



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Jamaica gives green light for casino gambling

KINGSTON, Jamaica, CMC – The Jamaica government has announced the introduction of casino gambling to the island, saying it was necessary for the further development of the

cated that casino gaming would be a very viable industry for Jamaica with great employment potential.

“The issue of casinos has been a lightning rod of contro-

duction of casino gaming and “in particular, we reviewed the recommendations of a study carried out in 2003.” He said the study had been commissioned following a private sector summit in Mar. 2003 to “revisit the introduction of casino gaming in Jamaica.”

CONDITIONS

“Based on this review, the government has taken the decision to permit the licensing of casinos,” Golding said noting that the applications for casino licenses would only be considered if certain conditions are met.

“These include a minimum investment of US\$1.5 billion and the construction of not less than 1,000 rooms by the investor; the casino component must be no more than 20 percent of the total investment project; that the operators of the casino to be subject to the approval of the government after appropriate due diligence including fit and proper tests and evaluation of track record.”

Golding said that a team had been established to make recommendations to government on the appropriate regulatory framework and tax regime to govern the opera-

tion of casinos. He said these recommendations would help draft legislation that would be

brought to Parliament for consideration and approval.



Bermuda makes pitch with U.S. baseball team to boost tourism

HAMILTON, Bermuda, CMC - Premier Ewart Brown has struck a new deal with American baseball team the New York Mets to market Bermuda as a tourist destination.

More people visit Bermuda from New York City than any other destination and it is hoped the partnership with the Mets will help increase numbers by greater exposure of the Bermuda brand.

It is expected that during the course of the baseball season attendance will top four million.

The deal includes a “Feel the Love Grand Slam Inning” announced to the hometown crowd and “Feel the Love” branding posted on the big scoreboard. If any Mets player hits a grand slam - a home run with all the bases loaded - during that inning, a fan in the stands will win a trip for two

to Bermuda, Brown said.

PRESENCE

In addition, there will be rotating television spots near the concession stands, on-course signage throughout the stadium and advertising spreads in the **Mets Yearbook and Mets Magazine**.

“On average SNY, the Mets TV broadcaster, brings in 350,000 to 450,000 viewers for each of its games,” Brown said. “During the upcoming season SportNet New York will air 30-second commercials during the game, during the post-game show, and during other SNY programming.

“Bermuda Tourism will also have a presence with the Mets online products like **MetsBlog.com** and **SNY.TV**. We will also be able to reach Mets season ticket holders via e-mail.”



New Jamaican government authorizes casino gambling in first budget presentation.

tourism industry.

Prime Minister Bruce Golding, presenting his administration's first budget since coming to power in September last year, said that a report by the accounting firm Price Waterhouse Coopers of Canada had indi-

versy for a long time. We have tiptoed around the issue, not wanting to be embroiled in the controversy,” Golding said as he delivered the budget last month.

He said the government had undertaken a review of the issues surrounding the intro-



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Jamaican entertainers banned from entering Guyana

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, CMC- The Guyana government has banned Jamaican reggae artistes Bounty Killer and Mavado from entering the

country. Home Affairs Minister Clement Rohee told a news conference that Bounty Killer, whose real name is Rodney

Price, is known for his lyrics glorifying guns and bashing gays while Mavado is a security risk.

Rohee told reporters that the decision to blacklist the two Jamaicans was taken last month by the Bharrat Jagdeo administration after careful consideration of their track records.



Mavado

Mavado, whose real name is David Brooks, was due to perform at a concert to celebrate the Linden Town recently. "My ministry has exercised a lot of patience with the organizers of shows... We had

set out conditions under which these shows are to be held, but these were not followed," Rohee said in reference to Bounty Killer's recent show here where he performed a number of his controversial songs.

"Bounty Killer has been blacklisted, he will not be allowed to enter the jurisdiction," Rohee said.

Regarding Mavado, the minister would only say that the artiste was a security risk and as such he too would not be allowed into the country.

Bounty Killer's last performance in Guyana last month ended in controversy with a faulty music system and sporadic gunfire.



Bounty Killer

Caribbean movie-makers split up ~ U.S.-based creators of 'Foreign' and 'Bashment' embark on separate projects

GORDON WILLIAMS

Philosophical differences have led to a split in the partnership between two Caribbean-born independent filmmakers based in the United States.

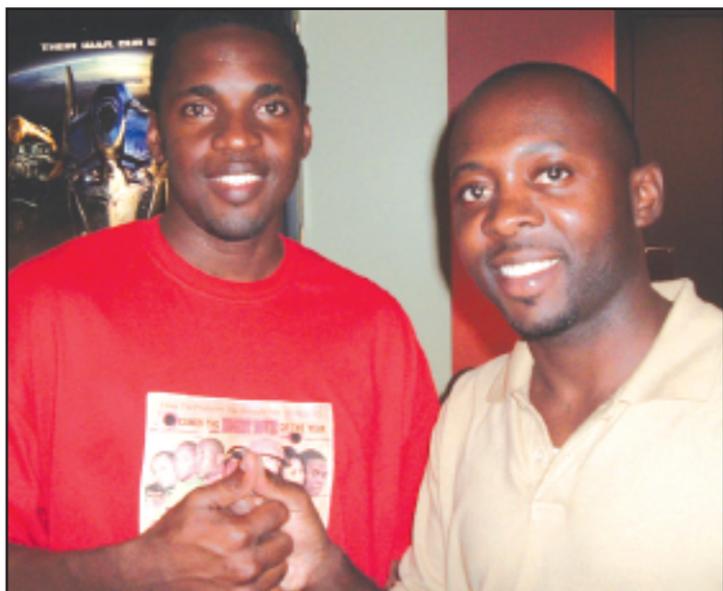
However, while both Steve "Tehut Nine" McAlpin and Mykal Fax have moved on to separate projects on their own, they both claim their friendship has not been totally dissolved and have not ruled out working together again in the

proper credit. "We just decided to go our separate ways due to a lot of events surrounding 'Bashment'," he added. "...I tried to work with it but it didn't work out."

McAlpin also admitted Fax was displeased that he was not getting enough acknowledgement for his role in creating the films.

"He wasn't very happy," he said last month.

However, McAlpin said he



Jamaican-born Mykal Fax, left, and Steve "Tehut Nine" McAlpin are no longer collaborating on movies.

future. McAlpin and Fax were the driving forces behind the critically acclaimed movies "Foreign" and "Bashment: A Fork In The Road", which both depict life of Caribbean people in the U.S. The films, which meshed general love and relationship stories with plots focusing on crime and violence, received limited general theater release in the U.S. and the Caribbean. Yet they have earned a fair public following through DVD distribution.

FRICITION

But McAlpin and Fax split up after the release of "Bashment" last year and both Jamaican-born men acknowledged that friction over credit for the movies is at the heart of the team's break-up.

"The reason for splitting up is credit difference," Fax told *Caribbean Today* last month. "...I wasn't getting

had no intention to undersell Fax's contribution and explained to his former creative partner that any perceived slight was not his doing. Both worked as producers, scriptwriters and actors in "Foreign" and "Bashment", although Fax played starring roles in both films, while McAlpin worked as director and was more hands-on in marketing the movies.

"I believe he has a lot of potential," McAlpin said of Fax. "He just needs to hone his craft. It's a process."

McAlpin first teamed up with Fax for the movie "Foreign", released in 2005. "Bashment" was released in May 2007 and shown in Jamaica in October last year.

REUNITE

The two Jamaicans

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)

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Trinidadian American rap diva Foxy Brown freed from prison

NEW YORK – Temperamental Trinidadian American rap diva Foxy Brown has been freed after serving an eight-month jail sentence for violating her probation.

Brown, 29, said she was heading to church after she was released from Rikers Island jail in Queens on April 18.

"The first place I want to go is church," she said.

"I've got to get on my knees."

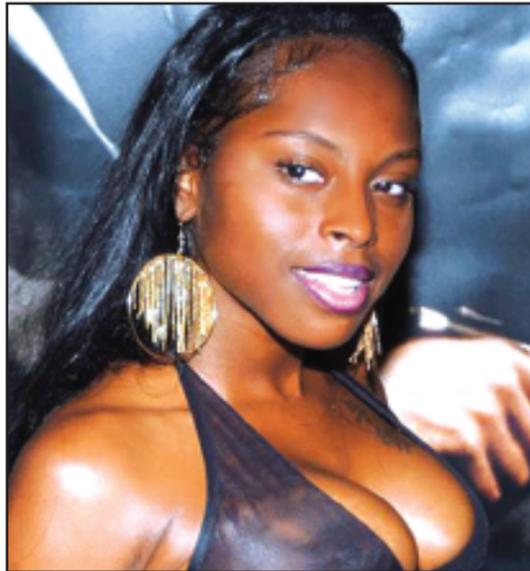
Brown, however, first went shopping in Harlem, and stopped for some soul food, then headed for her childhood home in Brooklyn.

"Feels good, feels good, feels good," she said on greeting her Trinidadian mother in Brooklyn.

"I love you, mommy," she told her mother, Judith Marchand.

"This is my house, my mother and whole family, my neighborhood, the room I wrote my first rap song in," Brown said, as a VH1 film crew captured the moment for an upcoming reality show.

"This is real emotional for me," she said.



Foxy Brown

"I did almost a year in prison, a year in prison, just because my name is Foxy Brown," Brown continued.

BACKERS

She said she realized who her real supporters are while serving time in jail.

"That's when I really got to see the people who truly love me for me," she said.

The rapper, born Inga Marchand, was rapturously received by family and fans

outside the Rikers Island jail where she was held for attacking two manicurists in 2004.

"I'm home, I'm home, I'm back," she screamed.

Brown was sentenced to three years' probation in Oct. 2006, but a judge sent her to jail, ruling that she was not taking her probation seriously. She had struck a

face with a cell phone and threw a pot of hair glue at a worker in a Queens store.

Brown said she will begin work on her first album since 2001, "Brooklyn's Don Diva", which is expected to be released on May 13.



Bob Marley's mother dies in Miami

Cedella Booker, mother of reggae legend Bob Marley, died at her Miami home last month. She was 81.

A special memorial service was held in her honor on April 15 in South Florida.

Mother Booker, as she was known, was an artiste in her own right, recording solo and collaboration albums. She performed in Jamaica, United States, Europe, Mexico and Africa. She authored a book, "Bob Marley, My Son".

Mother Booker also founded the Movement of Jah People Organization, which benefits underprivileged persons in the Caribbean and South Florida, and adopted the Nine Miles Basic School in

The carnival spirit of the Caribbean climaxes in the United States city of Atlanta, Georgia on May 24.

Several artistes from the Caribbean, including Iwer George, Peter Ram, Jamesy P, Burning Flames, Zoela, WCK, Rock City and Tizzy are scheduled to perform at the event, which will include a road march beginning at noon and a "Festival Village".

The theme of the 2008 event is "Unity through Diversity" and will mark the 20th year of carnival celebrations in the Southern city.

Several events have preceded the main day, including the pageant for the carnival princess and queen. A "Pan in the Park" event, to show off steel pan music, was scheduled. The "King and Queen of the Band" and best male and female in the individual competitions will be decided on May 22 at the Underground in downtown Atlanta.

But the main attraction will be downtown on May 24,



The Caribbean carnival spirit hits Atlanta this month.

including the colorful costume parade, which starts at noon at West Peachtree and ends at the Festival Village. Caribbean music, food and cultural presentations will also be featured.

For more information, visit www.atlantacarnival.org or call the Atlanta Caribbean Carnival Band Leaders Association at 404-587-5195.



Caribbean movie-makers split up

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

allowed that there is a chance that they will work together in the future, if they can work out their differences.

"Yes," said Fax, "as long as (McAlpin) is willing to compromise and the two of us meet halfway on whatever ideas we have."

"Mykal is a friend of mine," McAlpin said. "I still hold him dear as a friend."

However, the split has not stopped the creativity of the two Jamaicans. Fax recently completed a movie called "The

Roaming Lion", scheduled to premier in Brooklyn, New York on May 1. He wrote the script, directed and also has a leading role in the suspense thriller, which again carries a predominantly Jamaican theme and cast.

McAlpin last month wrapped up filming on a movie in Florida called "What Goes Around", which also features Caribbean cast members.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



Booker

St. Ann, Jamaica (where she and Bob Marley were both born and laid to rest) now called the Cedella Marley Booker Academy.

"My mother is a rare woman, loved by everyone she met, I know she is in the hands of Jah and will never be forgotten here on earth," her son Richard Booker commented in a press release issued last month.

Booker is survived by Richard Booker, daughter Claudette "Pearl" Levingston, daughters-in-law Rita

Marley and Sharien Fogle-Booker, nephew Jimmy Brown, 14 grandchildren and 49 great-grandchildren.



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Good things from the Earth for carrot and ginger soup

WOLFGANG PUCK

("Earth Day" was celebrated on April 22, 2008.)

Earth Day is an annual international event that, since 1970, has promoted awareness of our environment and the positive impact each of us can have on it if we try.

That's certainly true for those of us who love to cook and eat good food.

A big part of the quality of life that comes from such a commitment is in the flavor of our food. Take carrots, for example, at their peak of season right now. Freshly harvested carrots snap with juicy crispness when you bend them. The flavor is incredibly sweet and earthy. No woody, dry-looking, flexible carrots that have been sitting around on the shelf can compare; their natural sugars will have long ago started converting to starch, dulling their flavor.

Even at a big, impersonal supermarket, though, there are smart ways to look for good carrots. If they still have bright green, fresh-looking stems and leaves, you'll know they were harvested fairly recently. Look for small, round carrots; broad, tapered, cone-

shaped ones; long, slender carrots; and colors as varied as the familiar orange, bright yellow, red, purple, and pure white. Flavors will vary slightly, but as long as they're freshly harvested all of them will taste sweet and, well, carrot-y.

I like to use several different kinds of carrots in my recipe for carrot and ginger soup. If you can only find one kind of freshly harvested carrots, however, go ahead and use it for the entire recipe. Once the soup is pureed, you won't be able to tell much of a difference, anyway.

When you prepare the soup, take care not to add too much liquid. Fresh carrots will give up a lot of their own and, not yet having turned starchy, they won't thicken the soup too much. I add some cream to my soup to make it a little richer and more complex; but you can also leave it out, if you like, and enjoy the pure, intense taste of freshly harvested springtime carrots on their own.

CARROT AND GINGER SOUP

Makes about eight cups, six to eight servings.

Ingredients

- 1 pound orange carrots
- 1 pound yellow carrots (or orange carrots)

- 1 pound white carrots (or orange carrots)
- 1/4 cup peanut oil or vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon minced green onion
- Pinch red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 tablespoon honey, or to taste
- 8 cups organic store-bought vegetable broth, plus extra, if necessary
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 4 ounces unsalted butter
- Peanut oil or vegetable oil, for deep-frying
- 1/2 cup finely julienned fresh ginger

Method

Trim and peel the carrots and slice them thinly. In a stockpot, heat the quarter cup of oil over medium heat. Add the garlic, minced ginger, green onions, and pepper flakes and sauté, stirring frequently, just until glossy and fragrant but not yet browned, one to two minutes.

Add the carrots, salt, pepper, turmeric, and a table-



Carrots: The flavor is sweet and earthy.

spoon of honey. Sauté for two minutes, stirring constantly. Add the broth and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to maintain a gentle simmer and stir in the cream. Cook until the carrots are tender, about 40 minutes.

Add the butter and, with an immersion blender, puree the soup in the pot; or, if you don't have an immersion blender, transfer the soup to a blender and puree in batches with the butter, taking care not to overfill the blender and carefully following manufacturer's instructions to avoid splattering of the hot liquid.

Pour the soup through a fine-meshed strainer into a large, clean bowl. Rinse out and dry the pot and return the soup to it. If the soup seems too thick, stir in some more

broth to achieve the desired creamy but fluid consistency. Taste and adjust the seasoning, if necessary, with more salt, white pepper, and honey.

Cover the pot and keep the soup warm over very low heat.

In a heavy pot or skillet, pour in enough peanut oil or vegetable oil for a depth of about two inches. Over high heat, heat the oil to 300 degrees F. on a deep-frying thermometer.

Meanwhile, spread the ginger julienne on paper towels and pat with more paper towels to remove excess moisture. Carefully scatter the ginger julienne into the hot oil and fry until it is golden brown and crispy, about 30 seconds. Immediately remove the ginger with a wire skimmer or slotted spoon and transfer to a paper towel-lined plate to drain.

To serve, ladle the soup into heated bowls. Garnish with fried ginger strips and serve immediately.

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F Y I

HAITIAN HERITAGE MONTH

The public is being invited to celebrate part of "Haitian Cultural Heritage Month" on **May 10** in the South Florida city of Miramar.

The event, announced by Le P'Ticlub and the city, will be held from **7 p.m. to midnight** at the Miramar Civic Center Ballroom, 6920 S.W. 35th St. It is expected to offer a program of visual and performing arts entitled the "Night of the Artists", a tribute to Haitian

music legend Jose Tavernier. For more information, call **754-423-6465** or **786-287-6459**.

JAMAICA GALA

Two Jamaicans will be honored with the "2008 International Humanitarian Award" by the American Friends of Jamaica at the AFJ's fourth annual South Florida Gala and Auction on **May 10** at the Ritz-Carlton in Coconut Grove, Miami.

Father Richard Ho Lung, founder and director of the

Missionaries of the Poor, and Phillip Gore, chairman of Gore Development, will be recognized for their contributions to the Caribbean island.

For more information, call Keisha A. Phipps at **212-626-6883**.

ST. HUGH'S JAZZ

The St. Hugh's High School Alumnae Association, Florida and Atlanta chapters, will present a "Fidelitas Jazz White Affair" from **7 p.m. to 1**

a.m. May 10 at the West Broward Hall, 927 N.W. 178th Ave., Pembroke Pines, Florida.

For more information, visit www.shaafl.org or call **954-495-1794** or **678-852-1627**.

CARIBBEAN ESSAY CONTEST

The deadline to submit entries for the fourth annual Institute of Caribbean Studies' National "Caribbean American Heritage Month Youth Essay Contest" is **May 21**.

The contest, designed to commemorate the historic passage of a Congressional resolution declaring June as National Caribbean American Heritage Month, is open to 11th and 12th grade students who reside in Florida's Broward and Miami-Dade counties, who have at least one parent or guardian born in the Caribbean.

The theme of this year's contest is: "If you were running for president of the United States, what are the top three issues that you would put on your agenda?" Entries must be submitted as an individual effort and must be original unpublished work. Entries should not have been submitted in other competitions. Only one essay will be accepted from each author.

Cash prizes will be awarded to first, second and third place winners.

For more information about the contest, including additional entry requirements, call **954-802-4291** or e-mail: studentaffairs@tati-caribbean.com

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**.

CARIBBEAN FESTIVAL

The fifth annual "Jerk & Caribbean Culture Festival" will be held on **May 26** at the Meyer Amphitheatre, downtown West Palm Beach, Florida.

For more information, call **561-236-2537**.

WHEELCHAIRS

Wishes on Wheels is making available power wheelchairs to non-ambulatory senior citizens, ages 65 and over, and the permanently disabled of any age, if they qualify.

Usually there is no charge or out-of-pocket expense or the power wheelchair, including shipping and delivery to the home by a technician.

The main goal of Wishes on Wheels is to develop public awareness of the assistance and options that exist to allow senior citizens and the permanently disabled to remain independent in their homes without incurring extra expense.

For more information, call **1-800-823-5220** or visit www.threewishes2.com.

Jamaicans honored in Florida



Thirteen Jamaican nationals were honored recently by the Jamaica Consulate in Miami for their pioneering and preservation of Jamaican culture, promotion of the country's development and extraordinary achievement in 2007. The recipients were presented with plaques of commendation from Jamaica's Prime Minister Bruce Golding and Consul General Ricardo Allicock during the ceremony in Coconut Grove, Florida.

Photograph shows Golding, sixth from left, posing with the honorees, standing from left: Reverend Horace Ward, of Holy Family Episcopal Church in North Miami; Captain Barrington Irving, pilot; Dr. Winston Whyte, educator; Michael and Jackie Shaw, of Sunshine Theatre Company; Allicock; Don Daly, media specialist; Glenn Chin, NASA

mission manager; and Dr. Karl S. Wright, educator.

Seated, from left, are: Christine Thomas, daughter of Dr. Ivy Claudette Armstrong, poet, who received the award on her mother's behalf; Hazelle Rogers, city commissioner, Lauderdale Lakes; Beverly Ford, former honorary consul of Houston, Texas; Elloreece B. Burrell, community worker; and Joyce Wright, founder of the Jamaica Nurses Association of Florida. Lauderdale Lakes Mayor Samuel Brown was also named among the honorees, but was unable to attend. Guest speaker Golding praised the honorees for demonstrating creativity, talent, dedication and commitment, traits he described as examples of that "true Jamaican spirit."



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Principal teaches lesson of love



Dr. Winston Whyte, a Jamaican-born South Florida school principal, has been named the winner of Caribbean Today's "Love Lines For Your Valentine" competition.

Below is the text of Whyte's entry, dedicated to his wife Janet:

*Two glances on the way to school,
Two hearts singing a love song
Two souls finding their mates.
Eight years of friendship, twenty-nine
years of marriage,
Thirty-seven years of happiness,
Our hearts still sing that love song.
I love you for who you are, and what*

*you have become,
I love you for the way you make me feel.
You are the medicine that keeps me
alive, the sunlight in my day,
The wind that makes me soar, and
God's gift to me.
The beauty of our relationship is
recorded by the Universe.
A love that will outlast the planets.*

Photograph shows Whyte receiving his certificate from Caribbean Today's Ashley Lee-Davis.



SPORT

www.caribbeantoday.com

Caribbean track and field stars shine at Penn Relays

GORDON WILLIAMS

PHILADELPHIA, Pennsylvania – Jamaican athletes again led the Caribbean's charge at the prestigious Penn Relays here late last month.

While track and field athletes from across the region journeyed to Franklin Field in this United States city, teams representing Jamaica recorded the most wins at the three-day event.

In possibly the most stunning result, Jamaica's senior national 4x100 meters team, racing without injured world record holder Asafa Powell,

beat a talented duo of USA "Red" and "Blue" teams. Triple 2007 World Championships gold medalist Tyson Gay anchored the fourth place USA Red team. Trinidad and Tobago finished third in the event, while USA Blue was runner-up to Jamaica, which clocked 39.04 seconds with a team featuring Marvin Anderson, Michael Frater, Nesta Carter and Dwight Thomas.

In the women's national 4x100, Jamaica finished third to the USA Red and Blue teams, with The Bahamas fifth. Jamaica's men finished

third in the 4x400 relay behind USA Red and Blue teams, with The Bahamas in fourth. The women's 4x400 was won by the U.S., anchored by Jamaican-born Sanya Richards, with Jamaica in second.

MEDLEY WIN

But Jamaica was again on the winner's podium in the women's sprint medley relay. The team of Nadine Palmer, Aleen Bailey, Sonita Sutherland and Kenia Sinclair clocked three minutes, 37.61 seconds to beat an All-Stars team and U.S. Red.

Caribbean student athletes also carried the region's flags well, with Jamaican high schools scoring several Championship of America victories.

Edwin Allen High won the girls 4x100 crown in 44.79 seconds while Holmwood Technical's girls won the 4x800 in eight minutes, 41.92 seconds.

Jamaica's high school boys did not disappoint either, sweeping the 4x100 (Calabar, 40.74), 4x400 (St. Jago, three minutes, 15.66 seconds) and 4x800 (Manchester High, seven minutes, 43.22 seconds)

events. Jamaican schools, Camperdown and St. George's College, finished second and third, respectively, in the boy's 4x100. Calabar finished third in the 4x800.

Many Caribbean athletes also competed for universities from the region and the U.S. Away from the track, Caribbean athletes also had success in field and individual events. St. Elizabeth Technical's Peta-Gaye Reid, with a height of 1.76 meters, won the high jump for high school girls, to start Jamaica's

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 18)

Sport offers talented youths a way into U.S. colleges

MONTEGO BAY, Jamaica - The sporting genius of Jamaicans is admirable and should be developed into educational opportunities, according to former professional basketball player Zack Jones, who was in the Caribbean island recently conducting sporting clinics in the Montego Bay area.



Jones

The San Diego-based Jones, who played in the National Basketball Association

"The talent among the youth here is tremendous and we should encourage these young people to pursue athletic scholarships in the United States and beyond," said Jones, who visited Jamaica with former National Football League (NFL) player Darren Carrington to conduct sporting clinics along with former Jamaica national soccer stars Warren Barrett and Paul "Tegat" Davis.

"While they develop their academic skills in school they should also discipline themselves on the courts and the playing fields," suggested Jones, the director of sports activities for the California-

Jamaica dominates Caribbean cricket

Jamaica completed a major haul of regional cricket competitions this season by trouncing Trinidad and Tobago to win the Carib Beer Challenge Trophy in Kingston.

Led by a 10-wicket match haul by spinner Nikita Miller, the hosts dominated T&T to

win the scheduled five-day match inside of three days.

Scores: T&T 121 and 241; Jamaica 293 and 71 for one.

In addition to Miller, Jamaica also received quality contributions from batsmen Brendan Nash, who scored a century, and a half-century from captain Tamar Lambert,

both in the first innings.

T&T won the Stanford 20/20 tournament earlier in the year, but Jamaica's win in the Challenge Trophy added to its success in the one-day KFC Cup in October and the four-day Carib Beer Cup this year.



Former Jamaica national player Paul "Tegat" Davis, right, helps display soccer technique.

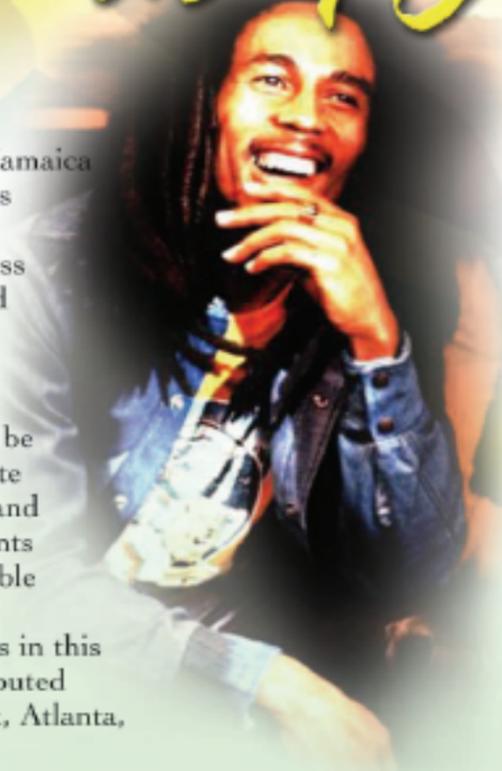
(NBA) for both the Cleveland Cavaliers and the New Jersey Nets, said that Jamaica has been blessed with tremendous sporting talent, citing the successful careers of basketball player Patrick Ewing, boxer Lennox Lewis, and world class sprinters Asafa Powell, Veronica Campbell-Brown and Merlene Ottey.

based Miles Ahead, a youth-focused Christian organization, led by former NFL player Pastor Miles McPherson.

"Sports is a great way to connect with young people and challenges them to make positive life decisions. It brings out passion in the youth. It also inspires them to

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 18)

Jamaica at 46



On August 4, 2008, the island of Jamaica marks the 46th Anniversary of its independence as a sovereign nation.

Caribbean Today invites the business community in Jamaica and the United States to celebrate this significant milestone.

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Controversial decision hurts Caribbean boxer's title hopes

GORDON WILLIAMS

TAMPA, Florida - Jamaican-born fighter Glen Johnson will seek a rematch following his controversial loss to American Chad Dawson last month in their World Boxing Council (WBC) light heavyweight championship bout at the St. Pete Times Forum here.

But it is left to be seen if the 39-year-old "Road Warrior" will be granted that opportunity as Dawson appears less than enthusiastic to step into the ring again with Johnson anytime soon.

Johnson, his handlers and the near-capacity crowd that showed up at the forum on April 12 for the title bout were highly upset at the unanimous decision awarded to Dawson. The announcement that all three judges scored it 116-112 for the American drew prolonged boos from fans at the venue, including several

Caribbean nationals, who also broke into chants of "bu.. sh..".

Henry Foster, the Jamaican's manager, called the decision "a travesty" and promised to appeal it with the Florida State Boxing Commission. He also demanded that the two fighters meet again.

"What we've got to do now is get the media behind us and get a rematch with this guy and get our justice," Foster said.

DISAPPOINTMENT

The Jamaican, who celebrated at the end of the fight by jumping onto the ring ropes and hoisting his arms to acknowledge the receptive crowd, did not hide his disappointment with the result. Johnson believed he controlled the fight and did the most damage.

"I don't understand how you hurt a man three times significantly in three different



Johnson, right, and Dawson exchange punches.

rounds - hurt him, have him wobbling, and he never hurts you anytime in the fight, plus you won other rounds. I did hurt him so badly and he still won the fight," he said in his dressing room after the bout.

But judges N. Hidalgo, J. Woodburn and P. Trematerra saw it differently. Their decision may have been swayed by the early part of the 12-round contest. While Johnson marched steadily across the ring patiently trying to land big shots to the head and body, the 25-year-old Dawson skipped away, flicking out a consistent jab mixed with occasional combinations. The judges, who scored each round identically, said the defending champion won seven of the first

nine rounds.

But Johnson rallied strongly towards the end, clearly dominating rounds 10 and 11 and almost floored Dawson with a series of thunderous shots. When pressed if Johnson would get another shot at his title, the American said he preferred to pursue other immediate career plans.

"I mean, yeah," said the undefeated Dawson while sitting in his dressing room after the fight nursing a puffy face. "But we gotta go. We have an agenda. We've got certain places where we want to be at in my career, you know, and taking steps backward is not what we wanna do...He'll get his rematch maybe later on

down in the future."

Gary Shaw, who promoted the fight, agreed.

"(Johnson is) not going to get an immediate rematch," Shaw said.

Johnson, a former International Boxing Federation (IBF) world champion whose record is now 47 wins, 12 losses and two draws, is uncertain what his next move will be.

"I really don't know at this point," he said. "Right now it's up to the people of boxing...It's everybody else who have the power to do things can do it. I'm just a boxer."

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



Jamaican Bell quits, loses against Adamek

KATOWICE, Poland, CMC - O'Neil Bell's comeback bid ended in major disappointment when he quit against Tomasz Adamek and lost the important International Boxing Federation (IBF) cruiserweight title eliminator on last month.

Adamek, in front of his home crowd, had been domi-

nating the contest at the Spodek Arena and emerged with an eighth-round technical knockout victory when the Jamaican opted out of the bout after round seven.

The win guarantees Adamek a shot at IBF champion Steve Cunningham of the United States.

Adamek, a former world light heavyweight champion, improved his ring record to 34 wins (23 knockouts) against one loss with the victory. Bell, a former undisputed world cruiserweight champion, dropped to 26 wins (24 knockouts) against three losses.



Caribbean track and field stars shine at Penn Relays

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17)

winning ways at the 114th staging of "Penns". Andrew Riley won the boys event, ahead of Kingston College's

Jonathon Reid and Machel Baker of St. Jago. All three cleared the same height of 2.06 meters. Andre Peart of Kingston College won the boys high 400 meters hurdles

in 52.25 seconds.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



Sport offers talented youths a way into U.S. colleges

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17)

be a part of something much greater than themselves," added Jones, a former Division I coach for Liberty University in Virginia.

Miles Ahead conducted medical and sports clinics, deaf education workshops, school assemblies and restoring local elementary schools in the Montego Bay area. The organization visited the island

as part of Jamaica Broilers Group's 50th anniversary celebrations and three major family-oriented festivals, under the Best Dressed 50 Fest banner.





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U.S. recession could hurt Caribbean ~ agency

NEW YORK - The economic slowdown in the United States is likely to have an impact on the Caribbean economic development, a leading U.S.-based credit agency has said.

Standard & Poor's Ratings Services said that it expected the economic slowdown to be led by a significant decline in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth and

that Caribbean countries would issue "marginally less new debt" this year than in 2007.

It projected that gross long-term borrowing, including official and commercial debt by 25 Latin American and Caribbean countries, was likely to reach about \$290 billion in 2008, down from an estimated \$322 billion the pre-

vious year.

Earlier this year, Standard & Poor's had said a U.S. slowdown would have the most direct impact on Barbados's key tourism industry.

But it said the island could suffer less than other Caribbean destinations due to lower reliance on the U.S. market.



Jamaican envoy urges U.S. leader to extend CBI

WASHINGTON - Jamaica's new envoy to the United States Anthony Johnson has added his voice to regional calls for the American president to renew the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI).

In presenting his credentials to the White House recently, the ambassador identified trade and investment as key components of this "partnership".

Johnson said enabling mechanisms, such as the CBI, which will expire in September, would "serve to increase Jamaica's economic competitiveness as the country continues to seize the opportunities that globalization presents.

"We have the fastest

growing trans-shipment port in the Latin American and Caribbean region, which is a natural hub for the on-time distribution of American goods throughout the hemisphere," he told U.S. President

George W. Bush.

"We know that you are aware of these competitive advantages, but wish to emphasize that there is a great need for affordable financing and for a sustainable trade regime that can continue to attract American firms and



Johnson

their know-how."

Johnson also told the U.S. president that Jamaica is in the process of adjusting its economy to better meet the heightened competition in the global marketplace.

Bush said his country has intensified its cooperation with Jamaica and the Caribbean community (CARICOM) through joint policy initiatives agreed to during last year's Conference on the Caribbean. He said that conference provided a framework within which the U.S. and Jamaica could deepen efforts to "achieve our shared goal of a stable, secure and more prosperous Caribbean."



IDB predicts good years ahead for the Caribbean

MIAMI - The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has expressed optimism that Latin America and the Caribbean countries will be able to weather the turbulence on the international financial markets, but also called on the governments to press ahead with pending reforms.

IDB

President Luis Alberto Moreno, speaking at the opening of the annual meeting of



Moreno

the IDB's Board of Governors here last month, said the Latin American and Caribbean region is "heading into the current storm greatly strengthened and armed with the experience of having successfully navigated much choppier waters than these."

He said at times when they were far more vulnerable to external shocks, these countries managed to pull through severe crises.

Moreno also explained that today the region is less

dependent on foreign capital inflows and has a more diversified export base, more solid institutions and around \$450 billion in international reserves.

"No one knows for sure what the current spell of turbulence will bring, but our region is better equipped now to manage it than at any time in its history," he said.

CAUTION

Moreno however cautioned that the exceptionally favorable external conditions that helped the economies of these countries grow an average of about 5.6 percent every year for the last five years may have masked some structural weak points.

Citing the latest IDB study on the region's macroeconomic performance, he noted that in most countries fiscal efforts have fallen short since revenues generated during the good times were largely spent rather than invested. He said governments should weigh the risks of a global slowdown and be prepared to act swiftly to stave off problems.



Planning to own U.S. real estate: A relevant discussion

**SHAWN P. WOLF
MICHAEL ROSENBERG**

There are complex rules that can impact the United States income, estate and gift taxation of U.S. real property held by a U.S. income tax nonresident alien (NRA) and/or a U.S. estate and gift tax non-resident domiciliary (NRAD) for investment (e.g. a non-income producing condominium (the "investment property").

An NRA/NRAD is often faced with the planning dilemma of trying to obtain the beneficial 15 percent long term-capital gains tax rate on the gain from a disposition of the U.S. real estate, while protecting against the possible application of the U.S. estate tax (with a rate as high as 45 percent of the value of the real estate) should the NRA/D pass away prior to any such sale.

Probably the "best known planning technique" for holding investment property is the use of a foreign corporation (FC). Using a properly structured and maintained FC to hold investment property will insulate the NRA/D from U.S. estate tax, but will not allow for the beneficial 15 percent long term-capital gains tax rate on the gain from a disposition

of the investment property.

Conversely, the NRA/D owning the investment property in his or her own individual name allows for the application of the beneficial 15 percent long term-capital gains tax rate on the gain from a disposition of the investment property, but exposes such NRA/D to U.S. income tax filings and the possibility of the U.S. estate tax being applicable (with the possible use of life insurance, if available and practical, to offset the U.S. estate tax cost).

CONTRAST

In contrast, the use of a partnership structure provides the NRA/D with the ability to utilize the 15 percent long term capital gains rate when the partnership sells the investment property and an argument exists that the U.S. estate tax can be avoided if properly structured (with the certainty of such an argument being far from clear).

Finally, the use of a properly drafted trust can allow for the beneficial 15 percent long term-capital gains tax rate to apply to the gain from a disposition of the investment property and the avoidance of the U.S. estate tax. However, such planning will generally require the NRA/D to relinquish dominion and control over the

investment property (including possibly having to pay rent to stay in such property).

In addition to the above, a relatively recent change in the so-called "Check-The-Box" regulations allows for another possible planning technique. "Check-The-Box" regulations allow a taxpayer, in certain situations relating to "eligible entities", to choose how such entity is to be treated for U.S. tax purposes.

For this purpose, let's use a British Virgin Islands or a Cayman Islands corporation as an example. In the case of a single member entity (e.g. a 100 percent owned British Virgin Islands or Cayman Islands corporation), such an election would be to make the entity a disregarded entity (i.e., to be treated for U.S. tax purposes as if the entity did not exist). Otherwise, the general "default" classification would generally classify such an entity as a corporation. These classification rules lead to the application of the discussion above for individual ownership or FC ownership.

RELEVANT

The recent change made to the "Check-The-Box" regulations acknowledges that a NRA/D that owns an interest in a non-U.S. entity may not need to classify such entity for

U.S. tax purposes until it becomes "relevant".

In overly simplistic terms, an entity is relevant whenever some U.S. tax implications arise (e.g., a filing requirement, such as providing a bank with a statement of foreign status or a U.S. income tax return, or any need to obtain a U.S. taxpayer identification number).

If an entity is not "relevant" within the meaning of these rules, then such entity can avoid classification until such time as it becomes relevant. If the purchase of the investment property is properly structured (and assuming that the state in which the purchase is made does not have any special requirements), then an argument might be made that the first day of relevance for the entity owning the investment property (barring an earlier "Check-the-Box" election) would be the earliest of: 1) the date of the sale of the investment property; or 2) the date of death of the NRA/D.

In the former a situation, a "Check-The-Box" election could then be made to clarify that "disregarded entity status" is desired, arguably allowing for the application of the beneficial 15 percent long term-capital gains tax rate assuming the investment property has then been held for more than 12 months.

In the latter situation, the default rules would result in FC status and arguably such status would avoid the application of the U.S. estate tax. As with the partnership planning discussed above, there are several "open issues" with the application of this potential planning technique and thus it is far from clear how the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) would, if given the chance, interpret this rule in many situations.

As a bottom line, the recent changes to the "Check-The-Box" regulations have added another possible planning alternative that, in the right situation, could provide an NRA/D with the desired beneficial 15 percent U.S. income tax rate while providing protection from the U.S. estate tax. However, because the IRS has not provided further guidance as to the application of this rule, the question to be asked about this planning is whether it is too good to be true.

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



Global imbalances impact on Caribbean development

PETER RICHARDS

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad – As a former finance minister and now head of Caribbean operations at a United States-based financial institution, Trinidadian Wendell Mottley, is perhaps well placed to speak with authority on the economic problems of the Caribbean, particularly in light of a possible recession in the U.S.

“We are not looking at a shallow piece pizza, but a deep dish pizza,” Mottley said at a recent round-table discussion examining the turbulent periods in the global financial markets in recent months, occasioned by the financial crunch in Washington and the domino effect it is having on the economies of the Caribbean.

“We are witnessing a time of deep transition in the U.S. economy,” said Mottley, who is now employed with Credit Suisse First Boston.

But on the other hand, Citigroup’s David Evans sees a glimmer of hope on the horizon. He argues that the situation in the global market represents an opportunity for smaller countries “to put their house in order while we go through the storm.”

His views have found support from Wayne Dass, of the regional rating agency CariCris, who added that the global situation also allows Caribbean states to secure regional rather than global ratings “that bring you against the entire world.”

Dass believes such ratings would allow for more regional companies coming into the capital market, since as Evans pointed out “what has worked for us is a deep capital market.” Dass wants the countries of the sub-regional Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) to

get rated “so they could understand the importance of ratings.”

‘STORM’

Caribbean and international financial experts were brought to Trinidad recently at the behest of the Barbados-based **Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)** and the U.S.-based International Investor Magazine to examine the “storm” and how best the region’s leading financial institution could position itself to assist its borrowing member countries to meet “the challenges and exploiting the opportunities generated by the dynamic global environment.”

In a statement issued ahead of the round-table discussion, the CDB acknowledged that the past nine months had been one of the most “turbulent periods in financial markets in years” and that the credit crunch, precipitated by the sub-prime mortgage debacle has resulted in widening spreads and increasing attention to risk management with implications for access to and the cost of financial resources for member states.

The CDB has also warned that “Caribbean economies are likely to suffer downturns at a time when they are trying to adjust to the challenges posed by the dynamic trading environment” and that prices for other commodities such as wheat, soybean and corn are also rising with implications for such issues as food security in the Caribbean.

“The financial crisis would only add to the difficulties faced by the borrowing member countries”, said the bank as the experts examined the situation under the theme “Global Imbalances and Caribbean Development”.

“In the economic world, the strong survive the weak

does not. If the region simply deals with these (issues) in the short term, five years from now we will be in the same boat,” CDB President Professor Compton Bourne told the forum.

Bourne said the region is already experiencing a downturn in tourism, job losses and the experts have acknowledged that the Caribbean would need to turn their attention to other markets than the traditional ones in order to minimize the fall out occasioned by the high global oil prices, the decline in the value of the U.S. dollar and the likelihood of a severe contraction in the U.S. economy.

“The surpluses of the world are coming out of the Far East, China, Russia and Japan,” said David Dulal-Whiteway, managing director of Republic Bank, one of Trinidad and Tobago’s leading financial institutions.

Dulal-Whiteway has also noted “we have not build linkages with those places,” even as financial adviser, Eric-Vincent Guichard, of the U.S.-based Gravitas Capital Advisors, observed that the flows from these countries could be attracted “in order to allow the region to hedge against the vagaries of the U.S. economy.

“The U.S. troubles have not been transferable to other regions like India,” he said, pointing out that this is due mainly to the tremendous growth in the middle class.

Evans said the capital market provides a “strong base” to ensure the flow of cash into the region and that the CDB could help facilitate its growth by helping to bring

about harmonized legislation within the islands.

Bourne said the financial institution is aware of the efforts by regional governments to establish uniform legislation as it relates to financial transactions.

WARNING

But even as the experts were urging the development of the capital market as one of the strategies to overcome the global imbalances, CDB’s Director of Finance and Planning Dr. Warren Smith warned of the risks associated with re-financing these “medium term” measures.

“The problem really is one of spread,” he said, noting that Jamaica for instance faced a significant spread on a U.S. dollar bond over the period June last year to March this year.

“The spread is a fairly substantial shift,” said Smith.

Mottley says that in comparison to Latin America, the Caribbean is further hampered by the fact that most of the region’s debt breakdown shows it has a 55 percent rating in the “B” category, with only a modest six percent in the “A” category.

The increase in oil prices on the global market has also had an effect on the Caribbean’s development, particularly in the agricultural sector with the experts agreeing “there is need to change our mode of production”.

Dulal-Whiteway noted, for example, that while regional states have acknowledged the importance of the agricultural sector, his financial institution can’t recall when last it received proposals for projects, hinting maybe that is because “our policy in agriculture is inimical to production.”

Bourne said there is no indication that the region will

become self-sufficient in food supply. He nonetheless argues for the introduction of appropriate technology as well as adequate transportation to bring the product all the way along the food chain.

“It is not sufficient to invest in agricultural commodities, you have to have a means to have that commodity from the farm to the hotels etc,” Bourne said with other experts noting “we speak a lot about the movement of people but not enough to deal with the movement of agricultural products”.

Smith warns that as food prices rise they will affect domestic inflation and government policies as well as domestic interest rates.

“If we are going to seriously address food security in the region we have to look very seriously at the agricultural sector,” which Smith argues has remained “backward” and incapable of addressing the needs of the local populations and tourism sector.

“What is necessary in the Caribbean is what amounts to the need for a green revolution in agriculture,” he argued, using the successful Asian model.

“Commodity prices provide the basis and impetus for us to take up that challenge seriously,” he said, with Mottley warning that the Caribbean can’t afford to be “laid back in its adjustments” as it relates to the commodity movements.

“The underlying reality is the structural shift and the Caribbean has very little time to respond,” he added.

- CMC



Mottley

Scientist warns region of worse times ahead as fuel costs jump

PROVIDENCIALES, Turks & Caicos Islands, CMC - A leading international scientist has predicted even worse times ahead for Caribbean economies that are already struggling to cope with escalating oil prices and rising costs of living.

Canadian environmentalist Dr. David Suzuki has warned that fuel prices could reach \$200 per barrel and that situation would have the potential of wrecking Caribbean economies.

“The supply of oil will drop and the price of oil will absolutely skyrocket. The twin crises of ecological degradation and falling oil supplies will have massive repercus-

sions for all countries, but none more so than those of the Caribbean and especially the tourism industry,” he cautioned at last month’s opening of the 10th annual Caribbean conference on sustainable tourism development.

CHALLENGES

Dr. Suzuki further cited the challenges facing the airline industry in the coming years.

“Air travel leaves the heaviest carbon footprint among all modes of transportation and skyrocketing fuel prices are already having explosive effects on the air industry so that the airlines are being hammered by two

things - too much carbon being generated by air travel and the cost of energy going up,” he said.

Dr. Suzuki blamed unchecked growth and unrealistic economic expectations, in part, for the threat which the earth now faces.

He added that humans are the first species capable of such destructive power that they are changing the biological, physical and chemical features of the planet on a geological scale.

“We are altering the chemistry of the atmosphere with 30 percent more carbon dioxide in the air now than 150 years ago. It is dissolving in oceans as carbonic acid,



acidifying water and threatening plankton,” he said.

CONSEQUENCES

Citing additional alarming statistics, Dr. Suzuki warned of the dire consequences of continued abuse of the environment.

“Over half of the planet’s forests are gone and in 30 years

we may have no large, intact forests left. An estimated 50,000 species become extinct every year and the oceans are being depleted. Every large commercial marine species has been reduced by 90 percent. If this continues there will be no commercially useful fish species by 2048,” the scientist said.

Despite the challenges, Dr. Suzuki offered hope for a brighter future.

“Are there solutions? Absolutely... We need to focus on our eco-footprint today,” said the scientist.



T&T urges change in citizens' eating habits

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC – The Trinidad and Tobago government has urged citizens to change their eating habits as one of the strategies to deal with rising global food prices.

Consumer Affairs Minister Peter Taylor, in a nationwide radio and television broadcast last month, said that the Patrick Manning government had embarked on a number of initiatives that over the next 18 months would seek to cushion the effect of the crisis. He said the initiatives would result in a considerable increase in the supply of local produce “and therefore more stable prices.”

The measures outlined by the minister include approved imports from Guyana, cultivation of crops by farmers, expansion of the fishing industry and the establishment of more farmers' markets this year. Taylor said that apart from a long-term strategy of significantly increasing the amount of land for agricultural production, the government's first mega farm project was expected to market its first produce by

November and that Cuban assistance for the farm would arrive in July.

He said among the short term initiatives would include seeking cheaper import sources from South and Central America, allowing food crops for importation from Guyana and a continu-



T&T wants locals to use flour from cassava instead of the imported brands to make food such as chips.

ous Caribbean community (CARICOM) review of the Common External Tariff (CET).

The minister said that the medium term initiatives would include exploring partnerships with farmers to cultivate items including cassava, sweet potato, pumpkin, sorrel, pepper; an assessment of a proposal on breeding stock for the sheep/goats sector; construction of new fishing facility at

Moruga, and putting in place the necessary infrastructure for farmers who have been provided lands at the former sugar company CARONI 1974 Limited.

He said the long term plans would include the establishment of 13 commercial farms of between 100 to 300 acres and a farm training facility that begins in August.

But Taylor said despite these initiatives it was also imperative for consumers to change their eating habits and urged them to also start planting home gardens.

“It is imperative...that we both accept and realize that if we are not to continuously remain completely vulnerable to the vagaries of the international market, we must quickly readjust our focus towards the consumption of more locally produced foodstuff, eat what we produce, and produce what we eat,” Taylor said.

“Are we prepared to modify our eating habits and taste preferences?” he asked, noting for example that consumers could shift from the use of wheat flour to the use of cassava flour that can be produced locally.



Jamaicans to pay 23 percent more for water

KINGSTON, Jamaica, CMC – Consumers in Jamaica will pay more for water, but not as much as the National Water Commission (NWC) had requested.

The NWC had asked the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) for a 44 percent rate hike, but it was only granted a 23 percent increase last month.

The NWC lost over J\$2 million (\$28,170) at the end of the 2007/2008 financial year, and had hoped to reduce that figure significantly by securing a higher water rate increase.

“It means we may be in a

continued loss making position for much longer; it means that in terms of projects we may not be able to do what we wanted to do; it means that some of the improvements that we wanted to carry out in the short term will take a longer time to implement,” said NWC's Corporate Communications Manager Charles Buchanan.

Water Minister Dr. Horace Chang said the NWC will have to find creative ways to meet the financing needs of its capital projects, including the development of lands which it

owns and the sale of bottled water.

This is not the first time the NWC has been denied its full tariff increase application. In 2004, the OUR granted the water company an 18 percent increase instead of the 42 percent hike it had sought.

The NWC provides potable water to just under 460,000 domestic and commercial customers across the island as well as a sewerage service to some 140,000 customers in specific areas of the country.



'Full review' of former St. Lucia administration

CASTRIES, St. Lucia, CMC – Governor General Dame Pearllette Louisy last month declared a new session of Parliament open, announcing plans to carry out a “full review” of matters “that suggest the possibility of financial maladministration” within the former St. Lucia Labour Party administration.

She also promised that the budget presentation would bring measures to address the problem of increasing food prices now affecting the population.

Dame Pearllette said in her Throne Speech that bear-

ing in mind its commitment to the principles of good governance and to embracing transparency and accountability, the government would set up a commission of inquiry would be set up to look into new evidence of possible financial maladministration.

“Information coming to light has made it impossible for my government to ignore the need for certain matters, that suggest the possibility of financial maladministration, to be ventilated in a forum that allows for full public scrutiny and transparency,” she said.

Government also

announced plans for the establishment of an Education Commission that will initiate a national dialogue on the way forward for education and embrace all elements of the discourse on education.

On the issue of human rights, she added that rules relating to police practices will be introduced in Parliament as they relate to stop and search, arrest, detention, investigation, identification, interviewing detainees and obtaining evidence.



Anguilla pushing for self-gov't status

KEITH GREAVES

THE VALLEY, Anguilla - Legislators in Anguilla are in agreement with Britain granting the island full internal self-government, but have stopped short of pushing for political Independence at this time.

That position was outlined at a public forum held at Ronald Webster Park late last month, which was called by the government of Chief Minister Osbourne Fleming to address a number of constitutional reforms for the island. It was also attended by members of the House of Assembly, constitutional legal scholar Dame Bernice Lake, retired Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Judge Don Mitchell and former magistrate Lolita Davis-Richardson.

Dame Bernice said there was need for a consultative approach to determine how the island was to be governed in the future.

“If there was ever a time for Anguilla to embark on an essential process of clarification of her aspiration for constitutional self-fulfillment that time is now,” she said, adding that the island was being administered under a system that does not afford it full internal self-government.

“We are in need of clarification because we are at the crossroad of our constitutional journey and we need to find a definition and set our compass.”

NO RESOLUTION

Dame Bernie, who is a member of a constitutional review team working on a position paper to engage in discussions with officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in London, said the local political directorate had been involved in talks regarding constitutional reform since 2001 but those have so far reached no resolution.

A British delegation was scheduled to visit to the island in October last year, but local officials requested a postponement of the meeting, indicating that they wanted to consult further with the people.

Former Chief Minister

Hubert Hughes, one of two members of the Opposition, said he wanted to see more people involved in the constitutional reform exercise. Hughes said Anguilla could choose to remain “colonially dependent or become independent.” He said that the “present constitution is not a democracy” and expressed the desire to see a clear separation of powers involving the executive, legislative and judicial branches of administration in order to give the people proper representation.

Noting that “colonialism is slavery,” the outspoken Hughes stressed that the appointment of the attorney general should be on the advice of the political leaders of the country. He said all the political factions are in agreement on full internal self-government rather than asking for Independence at this stage.

“We are determined to take full internal self-government,” Hughes concluded.

Finance Minister Victor Banks said Anguillians generally want the country to go that route. He noted that the government of Anguilla has received no financing from the British government for recurrent expenditure since 1983 and nothing from London for capital projects since 2005.

Davis-Richardson said there should not be simply constitutional reform, but modernization of the constitution. She described the current constitution as “raw colonization.”

In his contribution, Mitchell called for the abolition of the Orders-in-Council – specific directives from London which are implemented in the Overseas Territories without any input from the local Parliaments.

The special constitutional negotiating team is planning a series of meetings throughout the island before coming up with a new draft constitution.

Fleming told the gathering there was no guarantee the exercise could be completed before the next general elections, constitutionally due in 2010.



Fleming



Lake

Drug lords have him marked for death ~ St. Vincent's P.M.

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent - Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves has claimed that local drug lords have hired an overseas assassin to kill him as a direct reprisal for work being done by his government to combat drugs and money laundering.

Speaking in Parliament late last month, Gonsalves said that work being done by the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) and the police has angered those in the illegal drug trade.

"There is a settled feeling among the big drug pushers and money launderers; a settled feeling that the current prime minister is out to clip their wings," he said.

Gonsalves said that police intelligence suggested that seven hit men had come to St. Vincent and the Grenadines in recent times.

"One was assigned the responsibility to take out the prime minister," Gonsalves

charged.

"Persons may not take serious what I have said now, but if you notice the enhanced security around me it is because of



Gonsalves

the intelligence that is in the possession of the security forces of this country," he added.

The Vincentian leader has, however, vowed to continue to work assiduously to combat the scourge of the drug trade and accompanying evils such as money laundering.



T&T's P.M. fires trade minister

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC - Prime Minister Patrick Manning has fired Trade and Industry Minister Dr. Keith Rowley and replaced him with the veteran politician Dr. Lenny Saith.

A brief statement issued from the Office of the Prime Minister last month gave no reasons for dismissing Rowley, a senior Cabinet official, who had once challenged Manning for the leadership of the ruling People's National



Rowley

Movement (PNM) a few years ago.

According to the statement, Manning had advised President George Maxwell Richards to "revoke the appointment of Dr. Keith Rowley as Minister of Trade and Industry" with immediate effect. The statement said that Saith, who has acted as prime minister on numerous occasions, would fit into Rowley's position without much disruption.

"This new arrangement will ensure that the government's programs continue without interruption since Dr. Saith has been chairing a number of Cabinet

Committees and with his vast experience, continuity is assured", the statement said.

Rowley entered Parliament in 1989 as an Opposition senator and served as agriculture minister from 1991-1995. He also served as



Manning

housing minister and minister of planning and development before assuming the post of minister of trade and industry in the Manning Cabinet.



Guyana not ready for local government polls

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, CMC - Guyana's ruling party said it was dissatisfied with the pace of the house-to-house registration being conducted across the country and expressed pessimism about the Guyana Elections Commission's (GECOM) readiness to hold local government elections later this year.

The People's Progressive Party (PPP) has therefore urged GECOM to take the necessary steps to ensure the elections can go ahead as

planned.

Speaking to reporters at a press conference late last month General Secretary Donald Ramotar said that while the PPP was pleased that the commission had already registered over half of the eligible voters, it was dissatisfied with several other aspects of the process. He said that based on the time being taken to edit and encode information collected from the field it was clear that the designated six-month time frame

could not be met.

"Clearly at this rate GECOM will not be ready to hold local government elections this year or even next year. GECOM may be ready in time for the General Elections in 2011," Ramotar said.

He added that the PPP found the situation "totally unacceptable", particularly since a large amount of resources was pumped into the commission.



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HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

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Surviving a storm surge

“The greatest potential for loss of life related to a hurricane is from the storm surge”
– National Hurricane Center

Storm surge is simply water that is pushed toward the shore by the force of the winds swirling around the storm.

This advancing surge combines with the normal tides to create the hurricane storm tide, which can increase the mean water level 15 feet or more. In addition, wind driven waves are superimposed on the storm tide. This rise in water level can cause severe flooding in coastal areas, particularly when the storm tide coincides with the normal high tides. Because much of the United States' densely populated Atlantic and Gulf Coast coastlines lie less than 10 feet above mean sea level, the danger from storm tides is tremendous.

SAFETY ACTIONS

- Minimize the distance you must travel to reach a safe location; the further you drive the higher the likelihood of encountering traffic congestion and other problems on the roadways.
- Select the nearest possible evacuation destination, preferably within your local area, and map out your route. Do not get on the road without a planned route, or a place to go.
- Choose the home of the closest friend or relative outside a designated evacuation

zone and discuss your plan with them before hurricane season.

- You may also choose a hotel/motel outside of the vulnerable area.
- If neither of these options is available, consider the closest possible public shelter, preferably within your local area.
- Use the evacuation routes designated by authorities and, if possible, become familiar



Plan your evacuation route.

with your route by driving it before an evacuation order is issued.

- Contact your local emergency management office to register or get information regarding anyone in your household whom may require special assistance in order to evacuate.
- Prepare a separate pet plan, most public shelters do not accept pets.
- Prepare your home prior to leaving by boarding up doors and windows, securing or

moving indoors all yard objects, and turning off all utilities.

- Before leaving, fill your car with gas and withdraw extra money from the ATM.
- Take all prescription medicines and special medical items, such as glasses and diapers.
- If your family evacuation plan includes an RV, boat or trailer, leave early. Do not

wait until the evacuation order or exodus is well underway to start your trip.

- If you live in an evacuation zone and are ordered to evacuate by state or local officials, do so as quickly as possible. Do not wait or delay your departure, to do so will only

increase your chances of being stuck in traffic, or even worse, not being able to get out at all.

- Expect traffic congestion and delays during evacuations. Expect and plan for significantly longer travel times than normal to reach your family's intended destination.
- Stay tuned to a local radio or television station and listen carefully for any advisories or specific instructions from local officials. Monitor your NOAA Weather Radio.



Steps to prevent loss of life, property

Preventing the loss of life and minimizing the damage to property from hurricanes are responsibilities that should be shared by all.

The most important thing that you can do is to be informed and prepared. Disaster prevention includes both being prepared as well as reducing damages (mitigation).

Disaster prevention should include:

- Developing a family plan;
- Creating a disaster supply kit;
- Having a place to go;
- Securing your home; and
- Having a pet plan.

EVACUATION

One of the most important decisions you will have to make is “Should I evacuate?”

If you are asked to evacuate, you should do so without delay. But unless you live in a coastal or low-lying area, an



Take time out to create a useful emergency supply kit.

area that floods frequently, or in manufactured housing, it is unlikely that emergency managers will ask you to evacuate. That means that it is important for you and your family to have a plan that makes you as safe as possible in your home.

Disaster prevention includes modifying your home to strengthen it against storms so that you can be as safe as

possible. It also includes having the supplies on hand to weather the storm. The suggestions provided here are only guides. You should use common sense in your disaster prevention.

- Develop a family plan - Your family's plan should be based on your vulnerability to the hurricane hazards. Keep a written plan and share your plan with other friends or family.
- Create a disaster supply kit - There are certain items you need to have regardless of where you ride out a hurricane. The disaster supply kit is a useful tool when you evacuate as well as making you as safe as possible in your home.
- Secure your home - There are things that you can do to make your home more secure and able to withstand stronger storms.



Preparation is key to avoiding disaster

History teaches that a lack of hurricane awareness and preparation are common threads among all major hurricane disasters.

By knowing your vulnerability and what actions you should take, you can reduce the effects of a hurricane disaster. “Hurricane Preparedness Week” during 2008 will be held May 25-31.

Hurricane hazards come in many forms: storm surge, high winds, tornadoes and flooding. This means it is important for your family to have a plan that includes all of these hazards.

Look carefully at the

safety actions associated with each type of hurricane hazard and prepare your family disaster plan accordingly. But remember this is only a guide. The first and most important thing anyone should do when facing a hurricane threat is to use common sense.

You should be able to answer the following questions before a hurricane threatens:

- What are the hurricane hazards?
- What does it mean to you?
- What actions should you take to be prepared?



What is a hurricane?

The ingredients for a hurricane include a pre-existing weather disturbance, warm tropical oceans, moisture, and relatively light winds aloft.

If the right conditions persist long enough, they can combine to produce the violent winds, incredible waves, torrential rains, and floods we associate with this phenomenon.

Each year, an average of 11 tropical storms develop over the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, and Gulf of Mexico. Many of these remain over the ocean and never impact the United States coastline. About six of these storms become hurricanes each year.

In an average three-year period, roughly five hurricanes strike the U.S. coastline, killing approximately 50 to 100 people anywhere from Texas to Maine. Of these, two are typically “major” or “intense” hurricanes (a Category 3 or higher storm on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale).

What is a hurricane?

A hurricane is a type of tropical cyclone, which is a generic term for a low pressure system that generally forms in the tropics. The cyclone is accompanied by thunderstorms and, in the Northern Hemisphere, a counter-clockwise circulation of winds near the earth's surface. Tropical cyclones are classified as follows:

• Sustained winds

A one-minute average wind measured at about 33 feet (10 meters) above the surface.
• 1 knot = One nautical mile per hour or 1.15 statute miles per hour. Abbreviated as “kt”.

Tropical depression

An organized system of

clouds and thunderstorms with a defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds* of 38 mph (33 kt) or less.

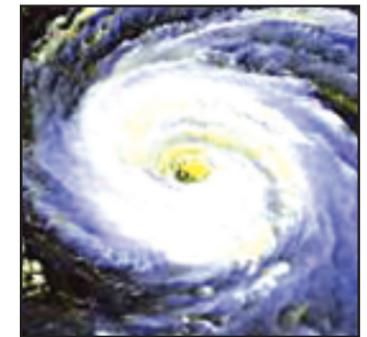
Tropical storm

An organized system of strong thunderstorms with a defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds of 39-73 miles per hour (mph) (34-63 kt).

Hurricane

An intense tropical weather system of strong thunderstorms with a well-defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds of 74 mph (64 kt) or higher

Hurricanes are categorized according to the strength of their winds using the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale. A



Hurricane Fran 1996

Category 1 storm has the lowest wind speeds, while a Category 5 hurricane has the strongest.

These are relative terms, because lower category storms can sometimes inflict greater damage than higher category storms, depending on where they strike and the particular hazards they bring. In fact, tropical storms can also produce significant damage and loss of life, mainly due to flooding.



Information on this page obtained from the National Hurricane Center.

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