



Caribbean Today

DECEMBER 2008

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Vol. 20 No. 1

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MIAMI, FL
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THE MULTI AWARD-WINNING NEWS MAGAZINE



Dr. S.T. Kwame Boafo, UNESCO's director and representative for the Caribbean, has only been in the region a

couple years, but he already knows the Caribbean has a rich culture to offer the world, page 11.



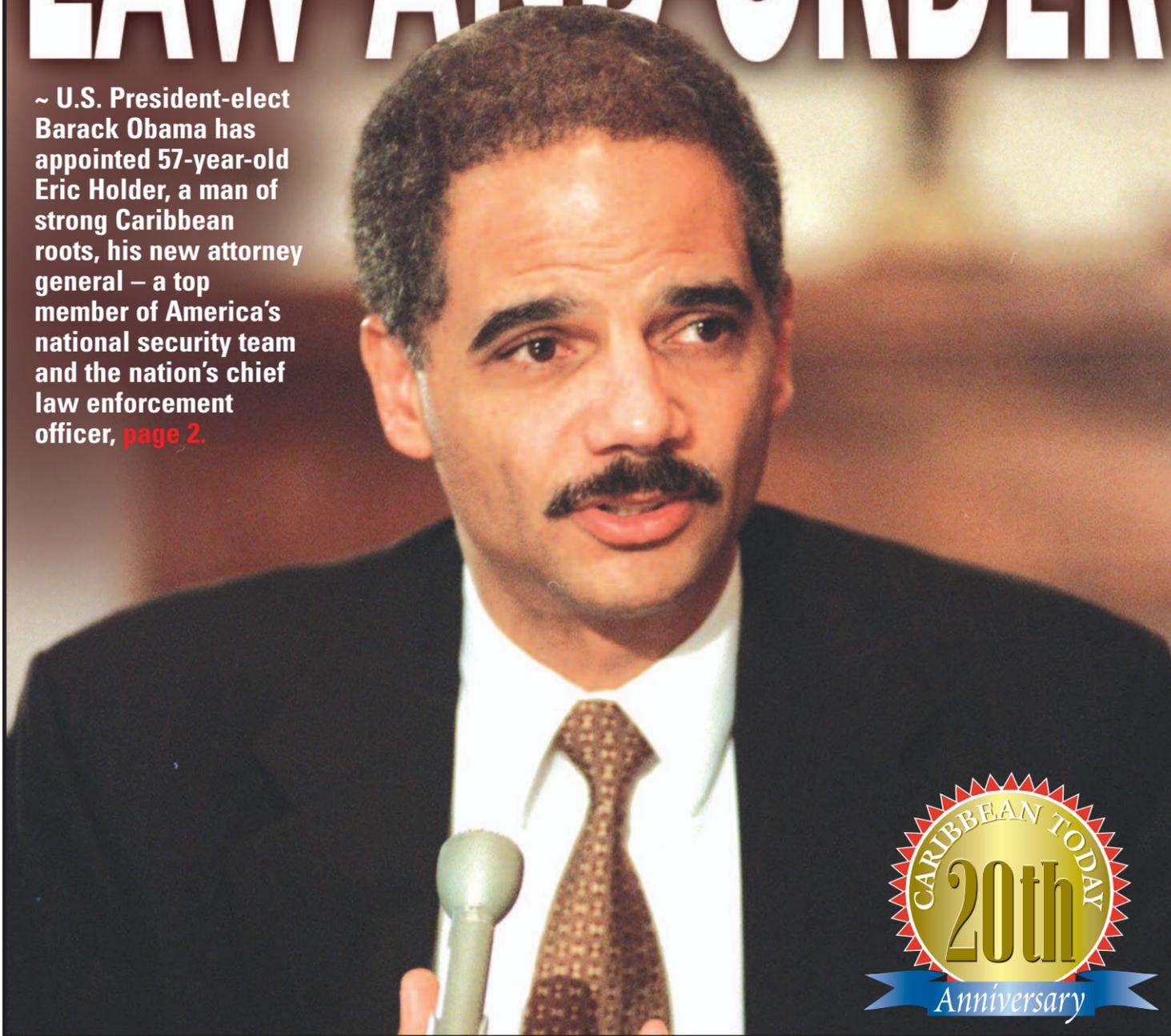
Bob Marley, left, and Toots Hibbert, two of the biggest names in Caribbean entertainment history, have been named to noted American magazine Rolling Stone's list of "Top 100 Singers Of All Time", page 13.



Trinidad and Tobago will be the Caribbean's lone representative when the final round of CONCACAF World Cup 2010 soccer qualifiers kicks off next year, as Tyrone Marshall and Jamaica's Reggae Boyz are out, page 16.

LAW AND ORDER

~ U.S. President-elect Barack Obama has appointed 57-year-old Eric Holder, a man of strong Caribbean roots, his new attorney general – a top member of America's national security team and the nation's chief law enforcement officer, page 2.



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Caribbean American is new U.S. attorney general

Caribbean roots have taken firm hold at the highest level of United States national security.

On Dec. 1 President-elect Barack Obama appointed 57-year-old Eric Holder U.S. attorney general, the nation's new top law enforcement officer.

Holder, whose father and grandparents are from Barbados, must be confirmed by the U.S. Senate at a later date. If he is, then he will become the first black to serve as attorney general.

Holder is not new to U.S. government service, having been a senior official in the Justice Department in the administration of former President Bill Clinton. As a top adviser to Obama, Holder was long considered a front-runner for the job of attorney general because of what has been regarded as his extensive record as a prosecutor and a judge and a well-honed reputation inside Washington.

According to Obama, Holder "has the talent and commitment to succeed as attorney general from the first day on the job," crediting him with a "combination of toughness and independence."

Holder, in accepting the president-elect's appointment to the national security team, pledged to keep Americans

safe, but also underlined the big challenge ahead to repel threats within the U.S. and from overseas.

"We can and we must ensure that the American people remain secure," he said, pointing to "much that needs to be done in this new century."

Obama's advisers reportedly appeared to have overcome concerns that Holder's



Holder

involvement in a presidential pardon scandal, as Clinton left office in 2001, might cloud his nomination for the job.

Word that Holder, a Columbia Law School alumnus, was likely to be nominated as attorney general leaked out last month as Obama began settling on members of his team and signaling his policy priorities following his presidential election victory on

Nov. 4. Obama will be sworn in as president on Jan. 20.

Last month members of the Obama Transition Team said the decision was "all but certain" in vetting Holder.

CHALLENGE

Political and legal observers in Washington said Holder's biggest challenge would be restoring the credibility of the Justice Department that was badly battered by political scandal during the George W. Bush administration. The dismissal of eight U.S. attorneys in 2007 and other controversies opened up the Justice Department to accusations that it had routinely let politics trump legal considerations.

Holder first met Obama at a small dinner party in 2004 welcoming him to Washington. The two lawyers are sons of immigrant fathers. Obama's father was from Kenya.

Holder served as an adviser to Obama's campaign on legal issues and was the other member of the two-member vice-presidential selection team that led to the choice of Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. as Obama's running mate.

Prior to his appointment as attorney general, Holder

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

U.S. warns deported Caribbean immigrants

MIAMI – United States immigration authorities have warned deported Caribbean and other immigrants that they could be jailed for up to five years if they return to the U.S. illegally.

"People who return after having been deported from the country need to know that they are committing a federal crime, and they can be arrested, detained and put in jail," Nicole Navas, a spokeswoman for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Miami, told reporters recently.

The warning came in the wake of the conviction of two Mexican citizens in Palm Beach County, Florida, who pleaded guilty to entering the U.S. illegally after being previously deported.

ICE officials said Caribbean and other immi-

grants who re-enter the U.S. illegally must be prepared to deal with the consequences.

"Entering the U.S. after having been deported is a serious crime," said Anthony V. Mangione, head of the ICE Office of Investigations in Miami.

"We will continue working with our partners at a local and state level to identify and prosecute people who have been previously deported and have returned illegally."

U.S. Immigration officials say more than 300,000 people have been deported this year alone.

Caribbean community (CARICOM) leaders have frequently blamed increased deportation of convicted felons in the U.S. for the region's spiraling crime wave.

China seeking deeper Caribbean relationship

NEW YORK – Already enjoying the diplomatic ties with several countries in the region, the Chinese government has announced that it is seeking to develop a "comprehensive and cooperative partnership" with the Caribbean and Latin America, featuring equality, mutual benefit and common development.

According to China's first policy paper on Latin America and the Caribbean, made available in New York recently, Beijing is aiming at enhancing solidarity and cooperation with other developing countries as the "cornerstone of its independent foreign policy of peace".

China said it viewed its relations with Latin America and the Caribbean from a "strategic plane", stating that those countries represent "an important part of the developing world and a major force in the international arena".

It added that its goals for Latin America and the Caribbean are to "promote mutual respect and mutual trust and expand common ground".

PRINCIPLES

Based on its five principles of peaceful coexistence, "China and Latin America and the Caribbean will treat each other as equals and respect each other", the paper outlined. They will also "strengthen dialogue and communication; enhance political mutual trust; expand strategic common ground; and continue to show understanding and support on issues involving each other's core

interests and major concerns.

"The two sides will leverage their respective strengths, tap the potential of cooperation, and seek to become each other's partner in economic cooperation and trade for mutual benefit and common development", the policy paper stated.

In addition, it said they would "draw on each other's strengths to boost common progress and intensify exchanges; carry out more cultural and people-to-people exchanges; learn from each other and jointly promote development and progress of human civilization".

'ONE-CHINA'

The paper stressed that the One-China principle - which portrays the position that Taiwan is part of China - is the political basis for the establishment and development of relations between China and Latin American and Caribbean countries and regional organizations.

It said the overwhelming majority of countries in the region are "committed to the One-China policy and the position of supporting China's reunification and not having official ties or contacts with Taiwan.

"The Chinese government appreciates such a stance," the paper added.

The only Caribbean community (CARICOM) countries that have diplomatic relations with Taiwan, instead of China, are Belize, Haiti, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Congressman wants Temporary Protected Status for Haitians

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A United States legislator has written President-elect Barack Obama urging him to make granting Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Haitians a priority in his new administration.

Southern Florida Democratic Congressman Alcee Hastings, who represents



Hastings

Miramar, a city just outside Miami, Florida, said in his letter late last month that "the people of Haiti cannot afford to wait a single day longer for this much needed assistance.

"While I continue to hope that our current President (George W. Bush) will finally acknowledge and address the dire plight of the Haitian people, it is important that the next administration be made aware of the importance of TPS," said Hastings, who has been in the vanguard of pushing for TPS for Haitians.

He said, since Obama was elected on a platform of

renewing America's global leadership, by extending TPS to Haiti, as has been done for other nations in similar situations, Obama would "once again prove that the strength of America is not simply the might of its military but also its capacity for compassion."

LEAD ROLE

Hastings has taken the lead among Congressional Democrats in the fight to "end double-standard immigration practices, as they pertain to Haitian migrants."

The congressman is the author of H.R. 522, the Haitian Protection Act, which would designate Haitian nationals in the U.S. eligible for TPS.

Hastings has been calling for the extension of TPS to Haitian nationals for years, and has been continuously engaged in correspondence with the Bush Administration on the matter. In October, Hastings led a bipartisan group of 31 members of the U.S. Congress urging Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff to grant Haitian migrants currently

residing in the U.S. TPS.

"It is unconscionable to think that, at a time when Haiti's physical and economic infrastructure has been obliterated, and cities remain buried under feet of water and mud, this administration is still considering deporting Haitians," he said.

"Haiti is certainly no stranger to crisis and despair, but, at the present time, deported Haitians simply have no communities to which to return," he added.

Hastings noted that, in October, the Department of Homeland Security extended TPS, for the 11th year, for Honduras and Nicaragua and, for the eighth year for El Salvador.

"These nations were rightfully granted the opportunity to return to a sense of normalcy," he said.

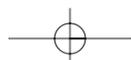
"Yet, time and again, Haiti is overlooked," Hastings said, adding "How dire must the situation in Haiti become before the U.S. government is willing to take adequate action?"



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2008 hurricane season hit Caribbean harder than U.S. ~ weather experts

MIAMI - As the 2008 Atlantic hurricane season drew to its official end on Nov. 30, weather experts said the season was harder on the Caribbean than on the United States.

"This will probably go down as a non-memorable year for Florida and a catastrophic year for Haiti and Cuba," said U.S. National Hurricane Center Director Bill Read, stating that despite a few close calls and a drenching from Tropical Storm Fay, Florida escaped the season mostly unscathed.

With Haiti getting the greatest brunt of the onslaught, four consecutive storms ravaged the impoverished, French-speaking Caribbean country in August and September: Fay and hurricanes Gustav, Hanna and Ike. Officials said the driving rains and resulting mudslides flooded towns and crumbled infrastructure, killing more than 800 people and causing billions of dollars of damage that experts say will take years to repair.

Fay, Gustav and Ike also ravaged Cuba, which then endured a late-season hit from Hurricane Paloma last month.

Cuba's civil defense system had issued mandatory evacuations to vulnerable areas, but damages to roads, homes and buildings are present in several of the island's provinces.

"It's sad that the two poorest countries in the hemisphere - Haiti and Cuba - are the ones that got the most catastrophic damage," said Professor Andy Gomez, a senior fellow at the University of Miami's Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies.

"The impact in both countries is going to be longstanding," he added.

"The truth is, these are two countries that have become used to these kinds of disasters and having few resources available to recover."

ACTIVE YEAR

U.S. government forecasters were on target when they predicted in May that it would be an active hurricane season. Scientists projected that the season would likely bring 12 to 16 named storms that would grow into six to nine hurricanes, two to five of which would be Category Three or stronger. The actual numbers were 16 named storms, eight hurricanes, five of them major.

"The seasonal outlooks were quite accurate," said Gerry Bell, the lead seasonal



hurricane forecaster for the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center in Maryland.

"We've been in an active tropical era since 1995, and we saw that the conditions associated with that were still in place this year."

BUSY '09

Bell said the combination of the active era and a gradual warming of the Atlantic Ocean meant forecasters were "fairly confident" about this year's seasonal outlook.

He predicted next year's hurricane outlook will likely be another busy season.

"There is no indication this active era has ended," Bell said.

"Historically, these climate patterns last anywhere from 25 to 40 years."



Facts on Eric H. Holder

Eric H. Holder, Jr. was born on Jan. 21, 1951 in the The Bronx, New York, United States to parents with roots in Barbados.

Holder's father, Eric Himpton Holder, Sr. (1905-1970), was born in St. Joseph, Barbados, and arrived in the U.S. at age 11. His mother, Miriam, was born in New Jersey, while his maternal grandparents were immigrants from St. Philip, Barbados.

Holder grew up in Queens, N.Y. and attended public school until age 10. He went on to attend Stuyvesant High School in Manhattan, New York and attended Columbia University, also in the state, where



Holder

he played freshman basketball and earned a bachelor of arts degree in American history in 1973.

Holder got his law degree from Columbia Law School, graduating in 1976. He worked for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and the U.S. Attorney's office.

Holder is married to Sharon Malone, an obstetrician. The couple has three children.

CAREER

After graduating from law school, Holder joined the U.S. Justice Department's new Public Integrity Section, from 1976 to 1988. In 1988, then-President Ronald Reagan appointed Holder to serve on the bench as a judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Holder stepped down from the bench in 1993 to accept an appointment for U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia from President Bill Clinton. He was the first African American U.S. attorney

in that office.

In 1997, Clinton nominated Holder to be the next deputy attorney general under Janet Reno. Holder was the first African American to serve in that position. He briefly served as acting attorney general under President George W. Bush, until the Senate confirmed Bush's nominee John Ashcroft.

CONTROVERSY

In his final days with the Clinton administration, Holder was involved with President Clinton's last-minute pardon of fugitive and Democratic contributor Marc Rich. Between Nov. 2000 and Jan. 2001 Jack Quinn, Rich's lawyer and former White House Counsel from 1995-96, had been contacting Holder, testing the waters for the political viability of a presidential pardon. After presenting his case to Holder in a November phone call and a last minute Jan. 17 letter, Quinn arranged a phone call between the White House and Holder, asking the deputy attorney general to share his opinion on the Rich pardon. Ultimately, Holder gave a "neutral, leaning towards favorable" opinion of the pardon to Clinton.

During his February testimonies before the House Government Reform Committee and Senate Judiciary Committee, Holder argued his phone call was not intended as a formal Justice Department blessing of the pardon. He also did not believe his opinion would be interpreted as a go-ahead for the pardon.

An investigation by the House concluded, in a 2003 report, that Holder had played a role in facilitating the Rich pardon.

Source: Wikipedia



Caribbean American is new U.S. attorney general

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

was in private practice as a partner at the Washington law firm of Covington & Burling.

He had served as a federal prosecutor, a trial court judge, and U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia before becoming the top-ranking aide to Attorney General Janet Reno in 1997.

Holder was regarded as a strong ally for federal prosecutors and helped shape Clinton's program to put 100,000 police officers on the street.

CONTROVERSY

Holder's last days at the Justice Department in 2001, however, were marred by his peripheral involvement in Clinton's pardon of the fugitive financier Marc Rich. Republicans strongly criticized Holder for failing to oppose the pardon and allowing the

White House to bypass the normal pardon review process at the Justice Department.

Holder told the Clinton White House at the time that he was "neutral, leaning toward favorable" on the idea of pardoning Rich, whose former wife, Denise Rich, had contributed heavily to Clinton's presidential library.

Obama also announced other members of his national security team, including Senator Hillary Clinton as secretary of state. Robert Gates, the U.S. defense secretary under Bush, who will continue in that post. Janet Napolitano has been named homeland security secretary, Susan Rice as United Nations ambassador, and Marine General Jim Jones as national security adviser.

Compiled from various news sources, including CMC.



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St. Lucia rethinking immunity pact with U.S.

CASTRIES, St. Lucia, CMC - St. Lucia appears to be having second thoughts about a bilateral immunity agreement, which would prohibit the island from handing over any American citizen to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for trial.

Earlier, the Castries government had given an undertaking that St. Lucia would sign on to the "Article 98 Agreement" which prevents Americans, including military personnel and contractors, from being handed over to the ICC for prosecution. Article 98 also allows for the surrender criminals to the U.S. for trial.

But in a statement last month, Prime Minister Stephenson King said despite recent attempts by the U.S.

government to get St. Lucia to sign the agreement, his government was not yet convinced of the need to do so.

"We have indicated to them that while we would like to sign the agreement we need to ensure it does not contravene other international protocols, and in our negotiations we have raised a number of concerns and have insisted that Article 98 conforms with international agreement we will not be party to the signing," King said.

SECOND LOOK

The ICC was set up under international law to try crimes of a transnational nature such as war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. So

far, St. Lucia and a number of other Caribbean community (CARICOM) member states have signed, but are yet to ratify the ICC treaty.

A second look at the situation comes as a new administration prepares to take office in the U.S., with one local government official suggesting that Barack Obama-led government may take a softer approach to the issue than the outgoing George W. Bush administration.

In 2002, Washington cut its support to a number of Caribbean countries after they joined the ICC. The order prohibiting aid was subsequently lifted against the states, which had also refused to sign the bilateral immunity accord.



Caribbean joins call for end to sexual exploitation of children

KAYMAR JORDAN

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil - The Caribbean has joined in making an impassioned global appeal on behalf of "hundreds of thousands" of the world's children, who are said to be victims of sexual exploitation.

"We really need to put an end to sexual exploitation of children and adolescents," urged Lorraine Bannis-Roberts, Dominica's minister of community development, culture and gender affairs and information.

While echoing the strong sentiments expressed here late last month by host President Lula da Silva and other keynote speakers at the opening of the Third World Congress Against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, Bannis-Roberts noted that problem was not as prevalent in the Caribbean as it was in other regions of the world. However, she explained that the region was not immune to practices of sexual abuse of children and therefore needed to take the

appropriate preventative steps.

"As they say prevention is better than cure, so while the problem is not prevalent in the Caribbean, we do have on and off incidents of abuse and we want to avoid sexual exploitation of children," she told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)**.

VULNERABLE

Earlier, Ann Veneman, the executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), addressed the gathering of over 3,000 delegates drawn from 170 countries around the world. She said while it was still hard to determine the full extent of the global problem, it was clear who the main targets of sexual exploitation were. The UNICEF official said that children living on the margins of society were especially vulnerable to sexual abuse, including those who are poor; those who work as domestic servants or live on the street;



- Photograph obtained from Vasai Info website.

and those caught in conflict and natural disasters.

She highlighted cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo where girls were victims of rape and violence at the hands of soldiers. In Kurdistan, she said there was also strong evidence of prostitution, involving underage girls who were also victims of human trafficking; and in Afghanistan, cases where young boys were forced into sexual servitude by older men.

"This is a gross violation of their rights. It is moral and ethical outrage. It is an assault on the world's conscience," Veneman argued.

The UNICEF official also

noted the results of a national study in Romania that showed nine percent of girls, ages 13 to 14, were sexually violated in the family. She said that in countries such as Yemen, girls as young as nine were forced by their families to marry men who are often more than three times their age.

"Child marriage continues to be justified as a positive social norm with social and financial benefit, yet young brides are more vulnerable to domestic violence. They are more likely to be taken out of school. They are at higher risk of contracting HIV and AIDS and may have children before they are physically ready," she said, while pointing to international data which shows that girls who give birth before the age of 15 were five times more likely to die in child birth than women who were in their 20s.

With growing evidence that child pornography is on the rise, the UNICEF official called for more to be done to address sexual exploitation in all its forms.

In his address, the Brazilian president warned that financial resources were not all, neither were legislative changes by governments, even though he said it was important for countries to take a tough stand on the sexual exploitation issue. He said there was a need to stamp out such animal-like behavior and encourage more humane practices in society, while arguing that the problem transcended class and involved abuse of media, including the Internet.

The opening also heard from two of the 300 children delegates who attended the four-day meeting at the Rio Centre here. They appealed to governments for support of victims of such abuse and for the rights of children to be upheld. They also condemned the early marriage of children to older men, while appealing to various groups - including the mass media - to support the concerns of children.

See related story on page 7.



PRINCE MEETS THE P.M.



- Photograph by Derrick Scott/JIS

La Celia A. Prince, left, ambassador of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and her country's permanent representative to the Organization of American States, engages in a discussion with Jamaica's Prime Minister Bruce Golding during his recent visit to the United States capital Washington D.C. Golding met with members of the Caribbean diplomatic corps at a breakfast meeting hosted by Jamaica's Ambassador to the U.S. Anthony Johnson at the Ritz Carlton Pentagon.

King takes on a queen

St. Lucia's Prime Minister Stephenson King was scheduled to tie the knot with Rosella Nestor, his long time girlfriend and bank executive, late last month in Miami, Florida.

The wedding, according to King's personal assistant Egbert Andrew, was expected to be a private and quiet event. Andrew said that relatives and close friends had been invited.

"The PM did not want the publicity of it at all," Andrew

told CMC.

Since King took office last year, Nestor has been at the prime minister's side for most official functions, with occasional protocol issues arising especially when it came to seating arrangements for official events.

The couple is said to have been together for nearly two decades. King and Nestor were expected to have a short honeymoon before returning home.



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FEATURE

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Facing up to the reality of sexual exploitation in the Caribbean

KAYMAR JORDAN

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil - On the surface, it may appear as though the Caribbean does not have a problem.

Images of smiling, happy-go-lucky children and adolescents, living in a tropical paradise along with their families and seeming not to have a care in the world belie the actual reality of daily sexual exploitation across the region.

But a top regional official of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) says there is no hiding behind the fact that a "huge" problem exists in the Caribbean, which, when paired with the statistics from Latin America, reflects an even more worrying picture of the reality which faces many children.

"The fact that in the Caribbean and Latin America we have 42 percent of the world's homicides already makes us a region that is abnormally violent," points out Nils Kastberg, the UNICEF regional director.

On top of that, he said 80,000 children, below age 18, die each year in the region on account of violence. And when it comes to the issue of sexual abuse, 228 boys and girls - predominantly girls - fall victim every hour within the home.

What's more, the abuse is often times by someone they know.

"That speaks to an extremely violent society and

part of the problem is that we don't talk about it," Kastberg says.

With the global economic climate as it is at the moment, officials are also fearful that the abuse situation will get worse before it gets better.

"Usually in this type of situation when there is very radical change in the economic situation of the country, people tend to migrate and when you migrate and you don't have a safety net around, you are so much more vulnerable," said Maricruz Tabbia of ECPAT International.?

"Not only that, but since sexual exploitation of children sometimes is the means for surviving, and if more people need to survive, it is going to be much, much worse," she added.

ACTION

The current downturn has already spurred many governments into action.

While the response been largely financial in form of major bail out packages and other emergency cushions, the UNICEF's representative in Brazil says she is heartened by the response of the Lula administration, which has warned that countries cannot afford to lose sight of the social mandate in the face of the emerging economic situation.

"That is an extremely important message for governments in the world and I am very glad that Brazil took a

firm position on this," Marie-Pierre Poirier said.

For the Caribbean, which is dependent on tourism, concern has also been raised about the impact of the industry on children. Esther Byer-Suckoo, the Barbados family minister, is particularly worried about pedophiles entering the island



Byer-Suckoo

to prey on its children. So rather than the traditional welcoming mat that is usually laid out for tourists, she is prepared to stop sexual offenders with a message at the door.

"I don't know what wording we will use, but I think we have to say 'Pedophiles Not Welcome'," she told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)**.

Byer-Suckoo is clear that economically her island cannot do without tourism. Equally clear to her is the fact that it cannot sustain the abuse of its children.

"Yes tourism is our business but we have to look at sustainable tourism. In much the same way that we want our tourism product to be green, we want that our tourism product not only protects our envi-

ronment but that it also does not harm our children, our people," she said.

HOME THREAT

But many offenders don't have to be let in. Many can be found right at home.

A 2006 study by the U.N. Secretary General on Violence Against Children showed that 150 million girls were victims of forced sexual intercourse and other forms of sexual violence and exploitation.

The study also showed that most of the perpetrators of the sexual aggression were male family members - brothers and uncles - followed by step-fathers, fathers and female family members.

"...They are the biggest part of the problem because it is predominantly men who commit the violence against women.

"It is predominantly men who buy sex, who use the household money to pay for that type of thing," said Kastberg.

He argues it is time to break the silence that surrounds the issue. He also believes the mindset of men needs to change from one that abuses women to one that treasures them.

"I think it (sexual exploitation) needs to be talked about in the churches, in the clubs, in the companies, in the schools, but also in the homes," he says.

TARGETS

While it was still hard to determine the full extent of the global problem, it is clear who

the main targets of sexual exploitation are. Children living on the margins of society are especially vulnerable to sexual abuse, including those who are poor; those who work as domestic servants or live on the street; and those caught in conflict and natural disasters. This is the reality for many of Haiti's children, who are caught up in a seemingly unending spiral of abuse.

"You have to think that even though we have all these laws and the governments have the commitment and it is their responsibility to fulfill the rights of every single child, at the end of the day the decisions in the family are taken around the table where the food is, where the water is, where I can get a shelter or not," said Maria Jose Meza, a regional spokeswoman for WorldVision.

The leading non-governmental organization focused on child advocacy currently has an office in Haiti and has been seeking to combat the problem of abuse there. But its work remains very difficult.

"At the end of the day, poverty is and it has been proven, one of the major causes of sexual exploitation of children," Meza said.

The situation is just as alarming in other countries and regions of the world, even though the patterns of abuse may differ.

Kastberg also explained that it is just as much a problem in developed countries as

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

British agent leads Jamaica's Reggae Boyz to soccer careers

GORDON WILLIAMS

The bald man in designer glasses mingled easily with the top brass of Jamaica's soccer, media and insiders after the Reggae Boyz' two lopsided World Cup qualifying wins over The Bahamas in June. He was there again when Jamaica shocked Mexico and Honduras in mid-October.

Even with a distinctive accent and pale complexion in tow, Phil Graham is hardly noticeable at the post-game gathering. Graham is not a national coach, former player, club representative or member of the Jamaica Football Federation (JFF), the local game's governing body. He is not even Jamaican.

The Brit, by his own count, has visited the island "50 times in the last 10 years" on soccer business. While names and faces of some like former technical director René Simoes and JFF President Captain Horace Burrell are

automatically identifiable by those who follow the movers and shakers of the country's most popular game, especially after that duo guided the Boyz to the 1998 World Cup finals in France, Graham has largely stayed in the background. Yet make no mistake, he is among the country's powerful soccer elite.

Beginning with the signing of local club Harbour View's then teenaged star Ricardo Gardner by English club Bolton Wanderers, following the "Road To France" campaign, Graham has steadily scooped up the cream of Jamaica's talent. He is the agent most likely to get the best players under contract and - if you believe him - give them the best chance of getting into professional clubs overseas.

"Somebody, ie. me, is acting on the Jamaican behalf," Graham made clear after

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

Covering the Caribbean beat

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British agent leads Jamaica's Reggae Boyz to professional soccer careers overseas

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

Jamaica thrashed The Bahamas 6-0 in the second leg to advance to CONCACAF's semi-final qualifying stage on a 13-0 aggregate.

"Nobody was talking about Jamaicans (before 1998). No one knew anything about the Jamaican players. Now I represent them and when (overseas clubs) want to talk about Jamaican footballers they come to me automatically because they know of my connections."

Since Gardner, those ties have become much stronger. Including rising star Rodolph Austin, Graham has placed about a dozen Jamaican players in Europe. Ricardo Fuller, Claude Davis, Donovan Ricketts, Luton Shelton and Damion Stewart help fill out his current roster of some 15 clients from the Caribbean island. Several promising Jamaica-based youngsters are on his list as well.

QUERIES

But occasional sideline whispers have queried why one man guides the fortunes of so many players from a single pool. Some argue that Graham's players could get special treatment with the national program to ensure they meet requirements for overseas contracts. Newly appointed coach John Barnes dismissed that notion.

"I have to deal with picking the best eleven players," Barnes said recently. "I'm not getting into any discussions - I don't even know the word to use is - as to who may need to play to get work permit to go anywhere."

Other coaches, administrators, players and agents contacted for this story could not pinpoint any irregularities.

"He (Graham) seems to be the man on the ground (in Jamaica)," a British agent said. "If 15 players want to be with him, then 15 players want to be with him. It's not usual or unusual."

"What I know is that he is the most successful person in getting (Jamaican) players to England and Europe," said Burchell Gibson, general sec-

retary in the last JFF administration.

Graham, without a trace of smugness, offers a frank assessment of his ascent into the confidence of local players.

"You know, I think it's a matter of trust," he explained. "You know, it shows. I mean I'm still Ricardo Gardner's agent after over 10 years after taking him to Bolton (currently in the English Premier League), Ricardo Fuller (Stoke City, EPL) for eight years. Claude Davis (Derby County, English Championship) for five years.



Graham, left, and Burrell have huge influence on Jamaica's soccer.

They all know I'm honest and do a good job for them and look after them."

The players appear willing to back Graham's claims.

"He's always looking after his players," said Gardner.

"...Since I've been with him, he did almost everything for me. He helped me to settle in England. He just made me comfortable and feel like I'm at home over there."

SET APART

That foundation, Graham argues, separates him from many other operators in the often cutthroat world of professional athlete representation, where, for a fee or percentage of salary, an agent can decide if a player launches into the bright lights of stardom or slinks off into obscurity.

"A lot of other people would simply come in and want to do a deal and just disappear," Graham said. "But I'm not in it for the short term. I made a commitment to Jamaica in 1998 and my com-

mitment was I would have the whole national team playing overseas within 10 years. And, by and large, I've actually achieved that."

The numbers back his point. Even as Jamaica's soccer fortunes took a dark twist, where the nation's rankings by the game's governing body FIFA plummeted, Graham continued to find overseas clubs for players, particularly in England. Bad national teams did not add up to total loss of faith in local talent. Graham just wished things had continued along the same path after the "Road to France" success.

"Jamaica did exceptionally well in climbing to 45th in the world," he explained in mid-June. Now the Boyz are 83rd.

"So, you know, that is obviously a decline," Graham added. "I think what didn't help was a change in federation. You know, I think it was a case of 'if it's not broke, don't fix it'. Everything was going along nicely. But that four or five year period certainly didn't help. There was a lot of confusion."

That "four or five year period," he said, included the time the Burrell administration was replaced by a Crenston Boxhill-led JFF. Yet despite the ratings fall, the Reggae Boyz still produced enough talent, according to Graham, even in the lean years after the nation missed qualification for World Cups 2002 under Burrell and 2006 with Boxhill at the helm.

"Most Jamaicans are quick, strong and technically very good," he said of the continuing demand. "What they lack is coaching. So they (overseas clubs) know they have the attributes and, as long as the attitude is right, then... People see a product they can develop."

Graham's job has been to showcase that "product", to build a bridge that allows the talent to cross beyond local shores, where the players - and, of course, their agent - can be rewarded. Someone, Graham said, must lead the clubs to what is out there.

"No, people don't come (to Jamaica)," explained the head of Phillip Graham Sports Management Ltd. in England.

"...If there is anybody, they come to me. People know of my connections and they will ask me... I mean, I know virtually all the national team players."

Graham said he has watched most of Jamaica's games over the past 10 years. He has also witnessed the ups and downs of JFF administrations, which he said has directly impacted the nation's soccer image.

"You had people in the federation who were very, very experienced at worldwide contacts," Graham said of the first Burrell administration, which ran the JFF for about a decade before being voted out in 2003 and eventually returning last November. "They'd been working together, you know, for 10 years and they had tremendous worldwide contact."

It was not quite the same, he added, during Boxhill's tour of duty. Yet Graham refused to dump total blame on the past administration. It was, perhaps, out of its league.

"The people that came in (after Burrell) didn't have those contacts," he explained. "They found it very, very difficult. So subsequently it wasn't easy to arrange games. It wasn't easy to organize things, clearly, because they hadn't got the experience to do it."

"...The people, Mr. Boxhill and Burchell Gibson were very good people, and I worked very closely with them. But they found it tough. It's a tough, tough job that they had."

Graham's job has been frustrating too and not everything touched by the bald Midas has turned to gold. Despite negotiating a lucrative deal with EPL club Stoke City for Austin, for example, the player was denied a work permit due to Jamaica's poor rankings. He is now contracted elsewhere in Europe. Other Graham clients are feeling the same pinch. In mid-October the agent admitted the situation is unlikely to change much when the January player transfer window opens.

But while representatives of the former JFF administration agreed that the job was difficult, they pointed to the number of Jamaicans who signed

overseas contracts between Burrell administrations. They also offered other reasons for Jamaica's lack of success, including the Boyz' failure to qualify for World Cup 2002, which resulted in dwindling support for the national program for the 2006 campaign. Limited knowledge of the world game's backroom skulduggery was blamed as well.

"The lack of experience there may be to understand the deepness of the politics in football," conceded Gibson.

Some would argue that similar "politics" is responsible for Jamaica's recent elimination from the World Cup 2010 campaign. Poor results led to Barnes replacing Simoes. And, despite the team's October successes against Mexico and Honduras, and last month against Canada, Jamaica failed to make the CONCACAF final round.

Yet Graham remains confident opportunities will always open up for Jamaican players. And, he said, he will be waiting for them - pen and contract in hand.

Gordon Williams is a Jamaican journalist based in the United States.



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Vol. 19, Number 12 • NOV. 2008

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Facing up to the reality of sexual exploitation in the Caribbean

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

it is in developing ones, with 25 percent of the world's trafficking takes place in and around Europe.

But such exploitation does not always meet the glare of the international community as it does in places like conflict-torn Democratic Republic of Congo where girls are victims of rape and violence at the hands of soldiers or in Kurdistan underage girls are the unsuspecting vic-

tims of both prostitution and human trafficking. In Afghanistan, the problem is one of boys being forced into sexual servitude by older men. But equally worrying is the situation in Yemen, where girls as young as nine are forced by their families to marry men who are often more than three times their age.

"We have to stop the hypocrisy that prevents sexual exploitation from being properly dealt with and fought against," warns Brazil's

President Lula da Silva.

But officials have got their work cut out for them as they strive to honor the goal of eradication as set out in the U.N. Convention On the Rights of the Child and the accompanying protocols. More than a decade after the First World Congress was held in Stockholm, Sweden in 1996, followed by the second such gathering in Yokohama, Japan in Dec. 2001, the positive news is that many seem up to be

challenge.

Meza best summed up the mood at the end of last month's Third World Congress Against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents in Rio De Janeiro, which brought together the officials with children who are the victims to take stock of the issue.

- CMC



Obama's pop culture drama

Washington and Wall Street are not the only power centers that are wondering what kind of change President-elect Barack Obama is going to bring.

Hollywood moguls are sitting on the edge of their seats in suspense like a teen-aged boy at a sequel to "American Pie".

The entertainment industry is trying to figure out what impact Obama is going to have on popular culture, particularly the big-budget movies that moviegoers around the planet will want to see in a year or two.

Good luck with that, guys. Presidents do leave big cultural footprints, usually in unpredictable ways. John F. Kennedy brought a glamorous "Camelot" era to stodgy Washington. Lyndon B. Johnson inspired youthful rebellion, mostly against Johnson. The Depression-era story of "Bonnie and Clyde" surprised many in 1967 by capturing a more devoted youth audience than the hippie-theme movies did. So did the straight-laced but nihilistic "The Graduate".

Richard Nixon's era of Watergate and the "southern strategy" similarly is remembered for the moral relativism of "The Godfather" and the loveable bigot Archie Bunker of "All in the Family".

The Ronald Reagan '80s gave us the military hits "Top Gun" and "Rambo" and revived 1950s-style family comedy with "The Cosby Show". And, let us not forget Oliver Stone's 1987 "Wall Street", with its cynical-yet-timely catch phrase, "Greed is good."

IMPACT

What impact could Obama have? Your guess is as good as mine, but since I've got the column, here's my advice to the movie folks:

Don't try a movie about his life. At least, not yet. We've already seen it played out on T.V. and YouTube. Hollywood's fantasy factory is no match for the real-life thriller that "No Drama" Obama's quest already has given us.

Look past his politics to the themes that make his story appealing. "A stranger comes to town" is one of the oldest plot hooks in the world. The more Obama's opponents asked, "Who is Barack Obama?" the more they sounded like the befuddled Butch Cassidy and the

Sundance Kid asking, "Who are those guys?" as a posse relentlessly stayed on their tails. The more they asked, the more we viewers wanted to know.

Think of David vs. Goliath. Yes, you can! Audiences love to root for David.

'COOL POINTS'

Tomorrow's inspiring, family-friendly themes are yesterday's corny themes repackaged. Some of us remember how John F. Kennedy devastated the men's hat industry by refusing to wear one. Obama's button-down style could inspire a dapper Cosby-style traditionalism, only hipper.

He scored enough cool points to be named one of Ebony's "25 Coolest Brothers of All Time". Yet he did not mind spending a little of that coolness capital during an interview on MTV, of all places, when he announced: "Brothers should pull up their pants. A lot of people may not want to see your underwear. I'm one of them."

Thank you, Mr. President-elect. We parents across America salute you.

Remember, Americans share more than a flag in common. We share a desire for opportunities and achievement. That's why the campaign ad works in which Obama describes his grandfather taking him on his shoulders - "and waving a little American flag" - to see some of the astronauts. "Americans," said grandpa, "We can do anything when we put our minds to it." Sure, the spot could have sounded irredeemably corny. But in the context of Obama's life and the obvious obstacles he was overcoming, irony evaporated.

Which brings up a dilemma that comedians have faced: For the first time since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Obama's victory has revived talk of the alleged death of irony. He's revived so many old-fashioned, tear-jerking good feelings about this country's value to the world that it's hard for comedians to make fun of him without sounding downright unpatriotic. That won't last. Political honeymoons never do. But until that honeymoon passes, Hollywood would do well to savor this moment. For now, Obama has tapped a spirit of national pride, unity and respect for racial and cultural diversity that a lot of us Americans wish could last forever.

Put that on a screen. I'd buy a ticket to see it.

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Xmas 'xpectation

It's not everyone who gives you a gift does so with charity, but sometimes more out of obligation, grudgingly you could say. And it's not everyone who smiles as they receive a gift, really means it.

Well, it's here again, the season of giving, the season of receiving, the season of returning gifts that were not liked. No wonder they call it the silly season.

Somehow people in the western world have this very strange custom of bestowing lavish gifts on each other at Christmas, even though they were tight and "crumooing" for the entire year. This occurs so often in the office environment, where people who you can't stand, co-workers who you despise, are suddenly elevated to the status of being your friend, your pixie, and you are expected to buy a wonderful gift for him or her.

Forget about the rest of the year when your torso ached from the countless backstabbing that you got. Forget about the corporate crabs in a barrel mentality, where your rivals did everything to put you down and attempted to elevate themselves. Forget about the time when the office informer told the boss everything that you did, including the time you made a pass at her. Nothing was sacred. Now it's Christmas, and they expect gifts, for as sure as night follows day, as sure as for every action there is an opposite reaction, which is not necessarily equal, they expect something from you.

The very same way that you feel behooved to give, compelled it seems by some unseen greater power, is the same way that people feel obliged to expect gifts of magnitude. Don't bother to try and tell people about, "It's not the gift that counts, it's the thought," or you will be derided, vilified and ridiculed. At this time, people expect gifts of extravagance.

Even now I remember giving someone a gift one Christmas, many years ago,



and right there in public, before her family and friends, she expressed her displeasure at my offering. Other people have told me similar stories, with the recipients responding to their charity and generosity thusly, "Is what dis yu give me pon big big Christmas, wha dis can do, is mean yu mean or what?"



TONY ROBINSON

'WIDOW'S MITE'

Remember the story of the widow's mite? Of course not, most people don't even know what a mite is. It used to be a coin, of lesser value than a farthing, and it was all she had, yet she gave it as her gift. That was then. Now she would have been cursed and run out of Dodge city and perhaps pelted with stones too.

"Imagine, she want to give big man monkey money."

In contrast, many rich people give so much, but with so little meaning, just to have their names on the list of big givers.

It seems that the more you give, is the more people expect you to give, and woe betide you if you set a lofty precedent. If you spent the last few years giving elaborate gifts, you will have to maintain that

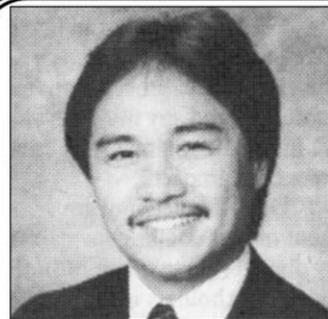
standard, for the precedent has been established, and once set, it cannot be revised. If you gave your lady an expensive gift the last two years, you are obligated and bound by law, her law, to give her a gift of at least equal value or more than the gift of the previous years. In fact, don't even think of the equal value part, but make sure that it's more expensive. Then there is the gift of food, as suddenly so many people seem to think that all you can eat, really means all you can eat for the rest of your life. It's as if the season opens up the appetite, or is it that they think that it's the last supper, so they had better eat all they can before the world ends?

I don't envy people who throw parties nowadays, for if they haven't got the biblical knack of feeding the multitude, then dog nym dem supper. Did I say dog? Poor doggie always gets the blame, so make that people, people nym dem supper and not even leave one scrap for the canine.

GENDER SPECIFIC

Now I'm not being unkind, but in many areas, gift giving seems to be gender specific at this time of year. Men don't really expect much from women, but the women sure have high expectations. There is some unwritten law that says

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Buggery laws force Caribbean full circle with HIV/AIDS 'plague'

DESMOND BROWN

MONTEGO BAY, Jamaica – Two and a half decades after it was branded “the gay plague”, AIDS is again taking a toll on certain vulnerable groups within the Caribbean community (CARICOM), one of them being men who have sex with men.

Globally, homosexual and bi-sexual males are 19 times as likely to contract HIV than the rest of the population and data released at the 8th Annual General Meeting of the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP) in October show that in this part of the world, the HIV prevalence among that group is very high.

When AIDS first appeared in the 1980s, the mystery virus was labeled as being a homosexual disease. Stirred on by the rapid deaths of many of their friends, gay leaders took action by mounting prevention campaigns at the community level. Their efforts paid off, as HIV infections among gay and bisexual men fell dramatically for a decade.

But officials say the data showing HIV prevalence among men who have sex with men prove that the early lessons of the AIDS epidemic have been forgotten in the Caribbean and the time has come for the region to take what could be the boldest step yet in fighting the disease – repealing of buggery laws.

FOLLOW SUIT

Cuba, the Caribbean country with the lowest HIV prevalence among gay men, does not have a buggery law, while The Bahamas repealed the Buggery Act in the early 1990s. With precedent already set in the Caribbean, a leading Jamaican health official says it is time for the rest of the region follow suit.

“Any lawyer worth their salt will tell you that the Buggery Act is just a very poor piece of legislation and needs



Golding: Jamaica will not bow.

to be repealed; and someone has to take the initiative on this,” Dr. Peter Figueroa, head of epidemiology and AIDS in the Ministry of Health in Jamaica, told nearly 200 delegates at the PANCAP meeting.

The health official cautioned social advocates, who mainly want gay acceptance and religious groups that oppose legalizing homosexuality, that his motive was based primarily on a public health perspective.

MORALITY

But in a region where Christianity is the dominant religion, the majority public opinion is that the practice of men having sex with men is abominable. Christians usually point to the biblical story where God destroyed an entire city, Sodom and Gomorrah, because of the gay lifestyles of the inhabitants.

“The problem is that because most of our people are Christians and they see it as immoral, it is difficult for them to understand the public health argument that shows how having outdated legislation and a

Buggery Act actually contributes to the epidemic,” Figueroa said.

The Jamaican health official will also have great difficulty selling his argument in his home country for another reason. Jamaica has been described as the most homophobic country in the Caribbean and the pressure group Jamaicans for Lesbians, All-Sexuals and Gays (J-FLAG) says the island has a long-running tradition of rampant homophobia and anti-gay violence. Figueroa agrees there would be strenuous resistance to his call, but he is not too perturbed.

“I don’t see it as a problem, I really don’t,” he said.

With new voices joining the growing chorus for the Caribbean to repeal the Act, politicians would be the next major hurdle. They have long maintained that they would not commit political suicide by taking actions not popular with their constituents.

Jamaica’s Prime Minister Bruce Golding, for example, has made his position clear on the issue.



Douglas

Appearing on a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) program on May 20, he said while each Jamaican should have the right to privacy and equality before the law, the government would not bow to international pressure for the recognition of gay rights.

SOFTER STANCE

But an increasing number of politicians from the region, including at least one prime minister, have been softening their stance on the issue.

“What we are seeking to do at this level in the Caribbean is to raise the level of debate and information-sharing with regard

to these practices and how there is a need to seriously discuss decriminalization and how this can impact positively on our fight to reduce stigma and discrimination within the Caribbean region and generally I would say within the AIDS global fight,” St. Kitts and Nevis Prime Minister Dr. Denzil Douglas said at the International AIDS Conference in Mexico City earlier this year.

At least two more regional politicians present at the PANCAP meeting weighed in on the discussion.

“I think we need to take this to another level, I think the level of prime ministers, so that the caucus of heads of CARICOM can address this issue of buggery,” Dominica’s Health Minister John Fabien told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC).

“The whole question of men who have sex with men...we can’t get away from this, we can’t bow our heads in the sand and say it does not happen.”

Dr. David Estwick, his Barbadian counterpart, said that regional politicians should not be afraid to address the issue, even though it might be seen as a tough one.

“What are we going to do about reaching men who have sex with men when we have laws against their sexual activity in most Caribbean countries?” the Barbados health minister asked delegates at the PANCAP meeting. “How are we to adequately address sex workers in the region if sex work is illegal?”

IMPACT

Meanwhile, responding to suggestions that Caribbean politicians would not commit political suicide by decriminalizing buggery and prostitution, Estwick said many of his regional colleagues were not truly aware of the fundamental

socio-economic impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. But Barbadian lawyer Juliette Bynoe-Sutherland is not convinced that any politician would go the route of repealing the Buggery Act in the absence of consensus from groups in civil society and the constituents who elected them.

Dr. Figueroa said the removal of the Buggery Act would also help in removing the stigma that is associated with men having sex with men and send a signal to them that as people they were not being excluded from the wider society.

“This is important because when people see themselves as excluded or discriminated against and stigmatized, it promotes risky behavior,” he said.

“...What is more, we must not forget that



Figueroa

when we stigmatize men who have sex with men, it drives not only the epidemic underground, but it also means that men who have sex with men disguise their sexuality, take on a girlfriend and have sex with women who are unaware that they are really people who have sex with men, and therefore this acts as a bridge in terms of HIV transmission from the gay community where rates of HIV are very high, into the general population and continues to feed the epidemic,” Figueroa added.

Caribbean countries are among 85 which have laws criminalizing sex between men. It is punishable by death in seven countries (none of which are in the Caribbean) and by imprisonment in 76 others.

- CMC



(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

that it’s the man who’s supposed to lavish and be extravagant, and the woman who’s supposed to relish this lavishness.

More men buy women expensive jewelry, perfume and stuff, than the other way around. If some men get a pack of briefs, or a shirt, then they can consider themselves lucky. But for the women, it’s the king’s ransom. After all, diamonds are a girl’s best friend and a ring at this time of year will be matched only by the sparkle, if not glint in her eyes.

This historical fact only

heightens the gift expectation factor in women, who genetically are programmed to expect more from men, even when the men give all they have and have no more. This applies to emotions, time, sensitivity and love too. Wasn’t it Prince who sang, “You are just like my mother, she was never satisfied”? If you think me wrong, don’t give your lady a gift this Christmas, or give her some cheap ass, flusxy, no-brand-name-gift and see what you get for the next few months, cold stares, cold shoulder, cold bed.

“The coldest time of my life, was that Christmas when I gave her a cheap gift.”

Men really do spend at this time. But men know why they pander and cater to this Xmas ‘Xpection, for as the old saying goes, nutten fi nutten and something fi something.

But, alas, the times have changed, and the economy isn’t what it used to be, as the financial fallout has affected almost everyone, and money isn’t as plentiful as it once was. All who were expecting a new car, or giant plasma T.V. with surround sound had better lower their expectations, for the times they are a changing. So many name brand stores have closed down, even chains that stood for decades, have now pulled

down their shutters. Perhaps we can think of more meaningful gifts, remember, it’s the thought that counts...yeah right.

“Is that all you could think of buying me, a book?”

Some people don’t care about any economic crunch and they still have high expectations. This crunch is worldwide too, and even once giant economies are feeling the pinch, making former givers into beggars.

But even the original beggars have increased their stock in trade as they have become bullish at this time of year. They not only expect, but demand more, for expectation is in the air, and it’s Christmas,

so they all want to breath that rich mixture.

So don’t bother to talk about giving love, or time, or that it’s the thought that counts. As they say, that can’t pay rent or buy groceries, plus the merchants depend on this expectation for their very existence, so give generously.

If you’re a man and can’t feed this expectation, then you had better take flight or go underground, for it’s a monster that has to be fed, and it can be cold too.

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CaribChat

Caribbean has a rich culture to offer the world ~ UNESCO director

Last month, Dr. S.T. Kwame Boafo, UNESCO's director and representative for the Caribbean, attended the "Islands of the World Fashion Week" in Nassau, Bahamas. While there he discussed the importance of Caribbean culture to the region and the world with Caribbean Today's Managing Editor Gordon Williams. The following is an edited version of that interview:

GORDON WILLIAMS: What is the message that you bring to an event of this nature?

KWAME BOAFO: UNESCO is the lead U.N. (United Nations) agency in terms of culture. We support the development of culture around the world, but specifically in the Caribbean. The message is that culture plays an important role in the economic development of the world; economic development of countries in the Caribbean, particularly cultural industries...

G.W.: How far along is the Caribbean in accomplishing what you ask here, taking advantage of the economic opportunities based on using its culture?

K.B.: Well I think that the Caribbean is pretty well advanced. Maybe not as advanced in economic terms as, for example, the U.S. (United States), but it is pretty well advanced compared to other developing parts of the world. You know that music is big here – the reggae, the calypso and other forms of music that you have here. I think that if one were really to talk about the export of cultural industries that is really most advanced here and better marketed all over the world, from the Caribbean, it's really music. But in addition to music, there are other things. You have cultural artifacts. You have the designs of, I see tee-shirts, and other things. You have those who produce sculptures etc...This is really all part of the cultural industries.

G.W.: You are from Africa...How heavily has the African influence been on the Caribbean and how far has the Caribbean gone in fashioning its own unique product using the African experience as its background?

K.B.: I think there has been considerable amount of progress from the two years that I've been here, from what I've seen...But I think there is still a long way to go. One of the major problems that I see

is really that we don't have that kind of personal contact between fashion designers in Africa and fashion designers in the Caribbean. I think if we were able to promote that kind of contact, I think that will help. Secondly, from what I saw yesterday (the first day of IFWW) I think considerable effort has been made really to come out with designs that reflect the cultures, that reflect the traditions of the Caribbean. Much of it can be traced back to Africa.

G.W.: Is the African continent also looking to the Caribbean...reaching out to the Caribbean to blend its culture?

K.B.: I'm from Ghana. Here again I think efforts are being made. When I move around in the Caribbean - and our office located in Kingston, Jamaica covers 16 countries in the Caribbean, so I move around pretty much - and what I see are efforts to reach out from Africa to the Caribbean, in terms of the cultural industries...Secondly, I think that we do have quite a number of fashion shows in Africa. Ghana has. South Africa has major ones in Africa and so have other African countries and I hope that, again, there can be some kind of a contact so that there can be cross-breeding of experiences.

G.W.: How much is the world aware of what the Caribbean is offering in terms of its culture?

K.B.: Again, unfortunately, if you talk about outside of the Caribbean I'm not very sure whether, apart from music, the other cultural things that are reflected in the Caribbean are really that well known. Talk about merging of cultures, the Afro-Caribbean and then influences, let's say from elsewhere, particularly from North America, and in this instance the U.S., it is inevitable because the U.S. is a major exporter of culture, so to speak. And the Caribbean (countries) are so close to the U.S. that it is inevitable that you can have that kind of influence. But I do hope that regardless of that, I think what is most important is culture throughout is not static. Certain traditions may be static, but cultures are moving, and they should be subjected to influences from outside. But what is most important is to differentiate between influences that may be negative and influences that may have positive effects...

G.W.: What is it that the world



- Photograph by Vaughn Scriven

Boafo

wants to know about the Caribbean and what the region has to offer in terms of culture?

K.B.: The Caribbean fashions, definitely. First and foremost is the music - the pan music, the calypso music. I lived in Paris for 14 years and there are some Caribbeans there, but whenever you see something that is being organized that is from the Caribbean, be it Guadeloupe or Martinique, or the English-speaking Caribbean, you see the interest of people, you see the desire of people. And as you know, the carnivals that you have is really, if I can say, apart from music, of course linked to music, is where the major export of the Caribbean. You have carnivals in the U.S. You have carnivals in Britain etc., etc. If you see the number of people, for example, through the carnival in Britain you can see that people are really desirous. They want to know. They want to see and they appreciate the kind of cultures that you have.

G.W.: What is UNESCO doing on the ground in the Caribbean to help promote that culture abroad?

K.B.: Promoting the culture abroad is not really the role of UNESCO...We are helping with the governments in the Caribbean to come out with the needed policies, the needed strategies that will lead to the development and export, if you will, of the cultural industries. That is our role...

G.W.: What is the key element that the governments of the Caribbean need to focus on to get this culture out to the world and develop it at home?

K.B.: You see the CARICOM Secretariat, we are working with them, because we have learnt something that over a long period of time has been discussed a lot by the ministers responsible for responsible for culture, that consistent, systematic and long term effort will have to be made to develop, to sustain and export the cultural industries. And UNESCO is working very, very closely with them. They have set up a working group and we serve as the advisory group to ensure that. I think what is most important is for the governments here, and perhaps elsewhere, to recognize the central role of culture in development. That is crucial. Once you recognize that, then you ask yourself what can I do really to ensure that culture is served and becomes so developed, culture then becomes a source of economic development? And what you need is the policies to guide that. And that is what we are helping the governments in the Caribbean to do.

G.W.: If you had to use a percentage, just how far has the Caribbean gone...towards understanding what the region itself has to offer to the rest of the world in terms of culture?

K.B.: In terms of percentages I think you probably have gone

beyond 50 percent. That's for sure. But I think what is more important, for you to go towards or as close to 100 percent as possible, is to focus on the young people. The young people, not only in the Caribbean, but everywhere, seem to be much more prone to be influenced by cultures from outside than from the local cultures. So it is absolutely important for some efforts to be made so that the young people understand, appreciate and take pride in their local culture. It is absolutely important. If that can be done, then one can be sure that within the next five to 10 years or 15 years, then you move closer to the 100 percent we're talking about.

G.W.: Is there a danger of young people being inundated with different cultures coming from overseas...that the Caribbean could sacrifice its own culture and in essence lose that culture?

K.B.: Lose that culture, I don't think you will. I don't think any society will say 'I've lost my culture'. But the danger is that the outside cultures that are coming in will probably predominate the minds, the behavior, the lifestyles of the young persons that are coming up. So what it is that you need to do is really to put a lot of effort in inculcation of skills, inculcation of knowledge and inculcation in the matter of pride among the young people in their cultures. You need to put a lot more effort in local programming, if you will. You watch television, and let's say about 80 percent, sometimes 90 percent or even 95 percent of what you are exposed to is a reflection of cultures from outside. Of course you stand a risk of being influenced by that...



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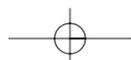
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For twenty years of dedicated news coverage of the Caribbean community, we thank you and congratulate you.



Bob Marley, Toots Hibbert among mag's 'Top 100 Singers Of All Time'

Two of the biggest names in Caribbean music history have been named to noted American magazine **Rolling Stone's** list of "Top 100 Singers Of All Time", which was released last month.

Late reggae king Bob Marley and Toots Hibbert, who many credit with giving reggae its early lift-off, were slotted at 19 and 71, respectively, among selections made by a variety of experts from the music industry, including performers, songwriters, journalists and administrators.

The Jamaicans scored well on a list dominated by the names of singers from the United States. Marley finished behind some of the greatest, including the top three of Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles and Elvis Presley. He finished ahead of some big names as well, including Smokey Robinson, Michael Jackson and Whitney Houston.

Hibbert scored ahead of Dolly Parton, Mariah Carey, Patti LaBelle, B.B. King and

Mary J. Blige.

According to the magazine, the choices had little to do with the singers' ability to fit any classic mold for holding a tune.

"The beauty of a singer's



Marley's "voice is one of the most important inspirations of our time."

voice touches us in a place that's as personal as the place from which that voice has issued", the article written by Jonathan Lethem and Robert Hilburn, states while introducing the list and describing what

makes a great singer. "...It's as if they've fooled us into loving them".

'BEAUTIFUL VOICE'

In reviewing Marley's qualities, musician Dave Matthews called the "Tuff Gong" "one of the greatest voices of our time...He didn't sing correctly; he wasn't trained, but he had a beautiful voice." Matthews compared Marley to American Marvin Gaye. But he also made the observation that the Jamaican had contributed much more with his songs.

"It's hard to separate his voice from what he was singing about", Matthews wrote for **Rolling Stone**. "Bob Marley sang with a great deal of power – enough to shake the foundations of his own government. A measure of a great singer is getting a message across, saying things that otherwise won't be heard. And in a world that has ways of shutting down people that talk about peace and love, Bob Marley could get

that message across.

"It's rare", he added, "that something so serious and so beautiful as his music can rise as clearly to the top as he did. His voice is one of the most important inspirations of our time..."



Hibbert is "one of the most powerful and original soul singers ever."

Marley's "key tracks" were listed as "No Woman, No Cry", "Redemption Song" and

"I Shot the Sheriff". Marley was born on Feb. 6, 1945. He died from cancer on May 11, 1981. The magazine lists artistes Bono, Lauryn Hill and Buju Banton among those he influenced.

Reggae pioneer Hibbert, who singer Bonnie Raitt was quoted as calling "one of the most powerful and original soul singers ever", started out in the 1960s with his band "The Maytals". His songs, according to the magazine, "set a template for a couple of generations of ska revivals and garnered the Jamaican singer well-earned comparisons to Otis Redding". Among Hibbert's noted songs were "Sweet and Dandy", "Pressure Drop", "Monkey Man" and "54-46 Was My Number". The music of Joe Strummer and Robert Palmer was reportedly influenced by Hibbert.



A feast for the soul at 'new' Jamaica jazz and blues fest

Jamaica's Rose Hall development in Montego Bay is gearing up to offer a feast for the soul when the "new" Jamaica Jazz & Blues Festival unfolds at the resort area Jan. 22-24.

The festival is expected to showcase famous performers such as O'Jays, Atlantic Starr, Lionel Richie, Lou Gramm of Foreigner fame, and Maxi Priest.

The O'Jays are known for hits like "Lonely Drifter", "Backstabbers", "Put Your Hands Together", "For the Love of Money", "Give the People What They Want", "Let Me Make Love To You" and "Darlin' Darlin' Baby (Sweet Tender Love)". Atlantic Starr enjoyed success with "Always" and "Secret Lovers?" Lou Gramm lent his voice to Foreigner on cuts like "I Want to Know What Love Is" and "Waitin' For A Girl Like You".

Multi-Grammy winner Lionel Richie is set to return to Jamaica with old and new songs, including a sneak peak

into this 2009 album "Just Go". The album's lead single "Good Morning" was released to Urban AC radio last month. Yet Richie is still

embraced for classics like "Stuck On You", "Endless Love" and "Three Times A Lady".

Maxi Priest has had several big hits himself,

including "Just A Little Bit Longer" and "Close To You".

Other performers slated for the festival include Randy Crawford and Joe Sample, Chicago, Estelle, Robin Thicke, Alto Reed's Blues Entourage, Los Van Van, Tony Hendriks and 13-year-old Canadian Nikki Yanofsky.

The 2009 festival is being presented by the Jamaica Tourist Board, which is the new title sponsor.

Above information obtained from CARIBPR Wire, New York.



Caribbean poetry night in Hollywood, Florida

Ricardo Pau-Llosa and Geoffrey Philp, two writers with strong Caribbean roots, will read from their own work and that of other regional literary artists during a Caribbean poetry night this month in

South Florida.

The event is scheduled for 8 p.m. Dec. 13 at the Morella Art Gallery in Hollywood. It is being promoted as a celebration of the wondrous images and rhythms which

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)

Creative islands shine at Bahamas fashion week

GORDON WILLIAMS

NASSAU, Bahamas – American designer Kenneth Cole won the biggest award, but Caribbean creations grabbed their fair share of adulation during the first "Islands of the World Fashion Week" held here last month.

Cole, whose line of clothing, shoes, fragrances and other accessories have earned some \$1.5 billion worldwide, secured the IFWW's special "Humanitarian Designer Award" for his work campaigning for causes relating to AIDS, abortion, gun control and cloning.

But Caribbean flavor, creativity and style stood out as well during the four-day event. St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Tamiko Browne, of Tami B Designs, earned two awards. She won the "Culture and Fashion" honor, which recognizes the designer best able to incorporate a uniquely cultural element in garment design.

Browne also earned the award for "NexGen Designer", which rewards a designer who has not previously produced a line of clothing, has been designing for less than three years, and does not currently work for a major fashion house.

The fourth major honor went to Esther Joseph – Queen Esther of Kuumba Designs out of St. Lucia – who won the "Sustainable Eco-Fashion" award recognizing the designer who has incorpo-



Jamaican-born designer Desreen Waller takes the runway with her daughter Jade, a budding model, following her show.

rated environmental and/or social issues into his or her designs.

In addition, IFWW also handed out five "Seals of Excellence" to designers Claudia Pegus and Heather Jones, of Trinidad and Tobago; Nadine Lurey of Indonesia; and Beverly Taylor and Jeff St. John of The Bahamas. The "seals" were awarded by the panel of judges based on the designers' creativity, expression and quality of workmanship/production.

WIDE APPEAL

The extravaganza, the

first time the event had been staged in The Bahamas, was dominated by more than 30 designers from islands in the Caribbean and elsewhere, including Fiji and Indonesia. A few hitches, including delayed starts to some events and no-show designers, marred the week's activities. But the production improved as it went on, and the runway often sparkled with creative fashions leaving little doubt about the talent on show, especially in the Caribbean region.

"We have some fantastic designers," said IFWW's organizer Owen Bethel before the event.

The designers agreed.

"I think this stuff is good," said Jamaican-born, London-trained designer Desreen Waller, who received enthusiastic crowd response for her show and allowed her six-year-old daughter Jade to model her line on the runway.

IFWW, which was endorsed by UNESCO, the United Nations' agency for promotion of culture, is being planned as an annual event.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



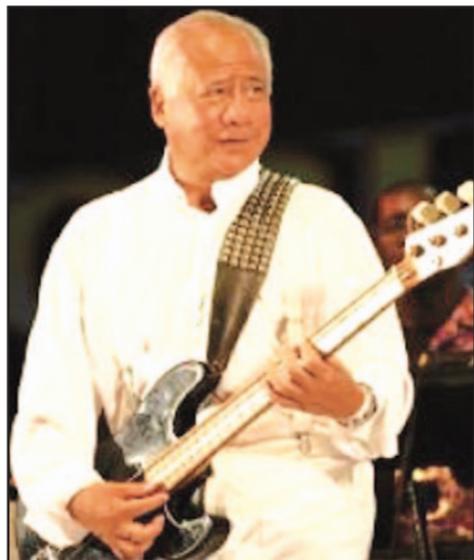
The mighty 'Dragon' of Caribbean carnival dies

For over 40 years, the man known to many as "The Dragon" from his early days at St. George's College in Kingston ignited Jamaica, the wider Caribbean and the world with pulsating soca rhythms.

Byron Lee, along with the Dragonaires, started to perform at carnivals around the Caribbean in the mid-1970s and became known for hits such as "Tiney Winey", "Dancehall Soca" and "Soca Tattie".

In the early days of his career, he created a world class studio that attracted the likes of the Rolling Stones, Roberta Flack and Bob Marley and the Wailers.

Lee has also been hailed by his peers as one who truly understood the music business, having bought former Prime Minister Edward Seaga's West Indies Records Limited and used it as the foundation for the groundbreaking "Dynamic Sounds". He also founded Lee Enterprises and was the producer of Byron Lee's Spectacular Show tour, which featured many Jamaican acts



Lee

touring the Caribbean.

WIDE APPEAL

Lee's passion for soca music resulted in the inauguration of the Jamaica Carnival in 1990, fulfilling his vision to unite "uptown" and "downtown" residents of Kingston.

In the early days of 'ska' - the precursor to the popular reggae music - Lee was also credited with taking 'ska' from the ghettos and giving it

appeal among Jamaica's middle and upper classes.

Although he was diagnosed with stage three cancer in 2006, the "Dragon" continued to make his presence felt through the work of his band. As his condition worsened, Lee sought cancer treatment in the United States.

On Oct. 25, he requested that he be flown back to Jamaica via air ambulance and placed in the care of local physicians. The following day he was

conferred with the Order of Jamaica (OJ) - the country's fourth highest national honor.

On Nov. 4, Lee lost his battle with cancer at age 73.

Lee is survived by wife Sheila, sons Byron Jr., Edward John, daughters Deanna, Judith, Julianne and Danielle, as well as seven grandchildren.

- CMC



Cops detain deejay Beenie Man

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua - Popular Jamaican entertainer Beenie Man was last month released from custody here after being detained by police and immigration officials prior to boarding a flight for Jamaica.

Beenie Man, whose real name is Moses Davis, was questioned by the authorities for working without a work permit and using insulting language at an Antigua Labour Party (ALP) rally on Nov. 22. Opposition Parliamentarian Asot Michael was also questioned by authorities. Michael was instrumental in making arrangements for Beenie Man's performance.

No charges were laid against either man and both

were released, pending further inquiries.

ALP Chairman and Deputy Political Leader Gaston Browne told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) that the dancehall star is an honorary member of the party and performed for free. He admitted that the ALP had originally paid the Jamaican artiste an undisclosed sum to perform at the event, but the money was returned after they failed to secure a work permit for him. Labor Minister Jacqui Quinn-Leandro said her office had not received any application for a permit.



MDC lecturer wins Jamaican award

Geoffrey Philp, chairman of Miami Dade College's (MDC) college preparatory department in Florida, recently won the "Outstanding Writer" award from the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC) during its National Creative Writing Awards Ceremony and Exhibition Opening in the Caribbean island.

Author of "Grandpa Sydney's Anancy Stories", Philp also won a gold medal for his poem, "Isaac's Sacrifice", and a silver medal for his short story, "Bobby Bijani and the Rolling Calf" in the national competition.

"It is a stupendous distinction for Mr. Philp to receive such honor and recognition for his works," said Dr. José A. Vicente, MDC's north campus president.

The recent ceremony in Jamaica marked the official

opening of an islandwide exhibition tour to the 13 parish libraries and features the

medal winning pieces in the categories of poetry, short stories, plays, novels, and essays.

"The Jamaica Cultural Development Commission has been an

integral part of Jamaica's literary development and I am honored to receive these awards," said Philp in a press release.

In addition to his prize-winning works, Philp is the author of "Benjamin, My Son" and "Uncle Obadiah and the Alien" and the children's book, "Grandpa Sydney's Anancy Stories"



Caribbean poetry night in Hollywood, Florida

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

emanate from the Caribbean.

"Ricardo and I have wanted to read together for a very long time and after his reading at the Miami Book Fair International, he and I just sat down and worked out the details," said Philp in a press released issued recently.

"I've always admired Ricardo's work and this will be an opportunity for us to share with others not only our own work, but the work of poets whose work has influenced us."

"The Caribbean is the mother of the New World," added Pau-Llosa. "It is a paradoxical region - fragile and intense, a lush paradise that also gave birth to the first agro-industries on the planet, a setting that melds cultures and creeds but where ancient

rites and beliefs thrive to this day. Its poetry captures all of this."

Pau-Llosa is a Cuban American poet, pioneer art critic of Latin American art in the United States and Europe, and author of short fiction. His books include "Parable Hunter" (2008), "The Mastery Impulse" (2003), "Vereda Tropical" (1999), and "Cuba" (1993).

Philp is the Jamaican American author of "Benjamin, my son", "Uncle Obadiah and the Alien", numerous poetry collections, and a children's book, "Grandpa Sydney's Anancy Stories". He teaches English at Miami Dade College.

The readings will be in English. Admission is free and open to the public.



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New rules travelers should know for 2009

CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT

It's not too soon to start thinking about traveling next year.

In 2009, a series of new rules and regulations kick in that could affect your vacation. Ignore them, and you might find yourself delayed or denied access to your destination.

No, really.

Last year, when new trav-

processed within two weeks.

Airlines must quote a total price for tickets

The European Parliament this year approved a new "transparency" rule mandating that airfares have to include all taxes, fees and charges added to the basic ticket price and known at the time of publication. It is expected to take effect either in late 2008 or early 2009, according to the European

visa.)

It's still unclear how this will affect Americans traveling to one of the countries who participate in the Visa Waiver Program. Last summer, E.U. ministers expressed misgivings about parts of the program, and it is possible that traveling to one of those countries may involve answering more questions and a different (and possibly confusing) application process.



Caribbean countries like Jamaica have been active in encouraging American citizens to apply for passports.

el document requirements went into effect, the United States government was quickly overwhelmed by passport applications. Don't get caught by delays. Here are four new rules you need to know for 2009:

Passports will be mandatory for all border crossings

On June 1, the U.S. government will implement the full requirements of the land and sea phase of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) (http://travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc_2223.html). That means American citizens entering the U.S. at sea or land ports of entry must either have a passport, passport card or WHTI-compliant document. It's a major - and long-anticipated - change from the current rules, under which you can cross the border with either a passport, passport card or a government-issued photo identification, such as a driver's license, along with proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate.

U.S. passport applications made at the end of the fourth quarter or the start of the first quarter - in other words, in December, January and February - typically get

Union. At least theoretically, that should mean no more unpleasant surprises when you buy a ticket for travel within Europe or to Europe. Under the rule, airfare or air rate, taxes, airport charges and other charges, surcharges or fees, such as those related to security or fuel, have to be included in the price of the ticket.

And any optional price supplements must be communicated in "a clear, transparent and unambiguous way at the start of any booking process" and allow passengers to opt-in for them, according to the E.U.

Visas go paperless

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's new Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) will become mandatory on Jan. 12, 2009. It's a fully-automated, electronic system for screening passengers before they begin travel to the U.S. under the Visa Waiver Program. (The Visa Waiver Program allows nationals of 27 countries to travel to the U.S. for tourism or business for stays of 90 days or less without a

Passengers get a bill of rights - maybe

Last year, in response to increasing consumer frustration over flight delays, the State of New York enacted the New York State Passenger Bill of Rights. It provided fresh air, waste removal and adequate food and water for passengers on flights delayed by more than three hours. Although the law was struck down by a federal appeals court this spring, that decision has been appealed, and it may become law in 2009 or later. Considering that 2008 is an election year - which typically means that few significant laws are passed - next year is shaping up to be an eventful one for travelers. If nothing else, new passport, visa and airline ticket rules, plus the prospect of a passenger bill of rights, will make it an interesting one.

Edited from an article written by Christopher Elliott, the ombudsman for National Geographic Traveler magazine.

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St. Kitts and Nevis nationals get visa-free travel to Europe

BASSETERRE, St. Kitts, CMC - Nationals of this twin island federation, traveling on valid St. Kitts and Nevis passports, will soon no longer need visas to enter several European countries.

This is a result of the country's signing of a short-term visa waiver agreement last month in Brussels. The agreement covers travel within countries that participate in the European Union's Schengen free movement zone. While the arrangement applies to most European countries, it excludes the United Kingdom and Ireland.

High Commissioner to the United Kingdom Dr. James E. Williams said that the short-

term waiver allows persons concerned to stay for a maximum period of three months within a six month period following the date of first entry into the territory of each of the member states. The diplomat also explained that "while it covers France and the Netherlands, it does not cover their dependent territories," adding that "this will be covered by a separate agreement."

The agreement is being handled in phases, but St. Kitts and Nevis was fortunate to be included in the first phase with Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Mauritius and the Seychelles.



AA to cut flights to Grenada

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada, CMC - American Airlines is to cut back on its scheduled service to Grenada just weeks after the reintroduction of the service to the island following a 10-year break, tourism officials have revealed.

Chairman of Grenada's Airlift Committee Michael McIntyre confirmed that the carrier, which resumed daily flights to St. George's last month, will reduce its service to three times a week from February.

Tourism officials are concerned that a downturn in the global economy could force a second pull-out by the airline. "We have some concerns because of the economic situation in the world and we have

been talking to American and the possibility of reducing some of the services because this whole thing is based on revenue guarantees," McIntyre said.

Grenada secured a commitment from American Airlines in April, after a number of local and foreign investors including Four Seasons, Camper and Nicholson, and St. George's University provided a guarantee of \$1.5 million to the airline. Since the airline resumed daily flights to Grenada in November there has been concerns in the reduction in the number of passengers. Grenada's economy depends heavily on tourism.



Tourists give thumbs-down to casinos in Bermuda

HAMILTON, Bermuda, CMC - A majority of visitors interviewed in a Department of Tourism study have given the thumbs-down to casinos being established in Bermuda.

Sixty-five percent of people questioned in the exit survey said that if there was a casino in Bermuda they would not go there to gamble.

An Air Arrivals Flash Report, released along with tourism statistics last month, stated: "Two-thirds of visitors indicate that if a casino was available in Bermuda, they would definitely not (41 percent) or probably not (24 percent) visit the site to gamble. "More than half consider a casino would make Bermuda less appealing to them as a vacation destination".

The release of the figures came a month after Premier

and Tourism Minister Ewart Brown announced a \$300,000 feasibility study into relaxing Bermuda's gambling laws - seen by some as a potential silver bullet to save tourism.

"All science on this subject is welcome, including statistical analysis," Brown said in response to the Flash Report. "That is exactly why we jointly commissioned a feasibility study."

Shadow Tourism Minister Michael Dunkley said: "The finding indicates that gambling may not be the panacea many believe it to be.

"...It is our view that the real problem behind the pro-gambling lobby is the lack of nightlife for our visitors."

The survey involved 721 visitors from July to September.



T&T advances, Jamaica out of soccer's World Cup

GORDON WILLIAMS

KINGSTON, Jamaica - Trinidad and Tobago will be the Caribbean's lone representative when the final round of CONCACAF World Cup soccer qualifiers kicks off next year with spots at the game's biggest event in South Africa 2010 at stake.

The Soca Warriors, with goals from Kenwyne Jones, Dwight Yorke and Keon Daniel, advanced to the final six-team grouping by beating Cuba 3-0 last month at home to finish second in Group 1 on 11 points, four behind winner the United States.

T&T's longtime Caribbean rivals Jamaica also scored a 3-0 win here against Canada in Group 2 last month, with goals from Luton Shelton, Marlon King and Omar Cummings. However, that was not enough to push the Reggae Boyz into the final round.

That group was won by Honduras with 12 points.

Mexico finished second on 10, edging Jamaica, which also earned 10, on goal difference. Jamaica finished even with six goals scored and six conceded. Mexico had a plus three goal difference from nine scored and six conceded.

The top two teams from each of the three groups advanced.

The Reggae Boyz will now miss their third consecutive World Cup after their histori-

cal qualification for the 1998 event in France. T&T, meanwhile, will continue its bid to return to the big stage after making an appearance in 2006



Marshall

in Germany.

Three other Caribbean nations were eliminated from qualifying places when last month's final group games were played. Cuba, Haiti, Suriname all failed to advance. The remainder of CONCACAF's six final round places will be taken by Costa Rica and El Salvador.

BITTERSWEET

For Jamaica, elimination was bittersweet. Playing in front of a capacity home "Office" stadium in Kingston, the Boyz needed to beat Canada by a score of at least seven clear goals or win and have Mexico defeat Honduras.

Neither happened and, despite a roaring comeback over the group's final three games which Jamaica won, the

Boyz fell short after losing eight of a possible nine points in the first three group games. Some pointed those losses to the former coach Rene Simoes, who, they claimed, resisted selecting the country's best players in the earlier group games.

"When you look back it was disappointing," said defender Tyrone Marshall after the Canada game here, "especially when we finally put our best team on the pitch. We didn't do that in the first few games."

Marshall's view was supported by midfielder Andy Williams, who played in the 1998 World Cup.

"Coach Simoes was trying to instill some younger guys," said the man known as "Bomber", who, along with Marshall, Cummings and Dane Richards were among Jamaica squad members for the Canada game who play in North America's Major League Soccer.

"I don't think it was the right time to bring them in, especially with those three away games, big time games."

The top three teams from the final round of CONCACAF qualifiers will advance to the World Cup finals. The fourth place team will be involved in a playoff with a country from another region to possibly earn a spot in South Africa.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



U.S. cricketers lift Americas Trophy

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida - Carl Wright hit a maiden century as hosts United States walked away with the ICC Americas Division 1 crown on Nov. 30.

Wright hit 112 from 105 balls, as the U.S. clinched the title, following an 87-run victory over the Cayman Islands in their final match at Piccolo Park.

Wright shared a commanding opening stand of 194 with Sushil Nadkarni, the most valuable player, who made 84 from 103 balls, to propel the U.S. to

289 for six in 49 overs. Kevon Bazil finished with four wickets for 75 runs from 10 overs.

Rain interruptions curtailed Cayman Islands' response, and the match was eventually called to a halt with that team struggling on 65 for four in the 24th over.

At the Central Broward Stadium, the eagerly awaited clash between dethroned champions Bermuda and title contenders Canada was eventually abandoned late in the day with no result possible. Showers and

lashing winds forced the no-result, after Canada reached 190 for six in its 42 overs, and Bermuda's chase was cut short with the score on 53 for one.

At the Central Broward Regional Park, Argentina condemned Suriname to finish bottom of the table and without a point, when it completed a six-wicket victory. Chasing 191 for victory from 50 overs, the Argentines reached their target with 25 balls to spare.



Impressive Richards laments New York's MLS defeat

CARSON, California - Jamaican Dane Richards is lamenting New York's U.S. Major League Soccer (MLS) defeat after his impressive showing failed to prevent the Red Bulls from losing the title to the Columbus Crew in last month's final.

Richards superbly set up an equalizing goal for his team early in the second half but Columbus surged to a 3-1 win at The Home Depot Center here to cop the MLS Cup for the first time.

"Right now, I'm sad," Richards told reporters shortly after the game.

"I wish I was holding the cup," added the little 24-year-

Bolt is IAAF's top athlete of 2008

Jamaica's Usain Bolt, the world's fastest man and three-time Olympic gold medal winner, has been named top male athlete of the year by the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF).

Bolt received the award last month at the IAAF's Athletes-of-the-Year awards ceremony in Monaco.

Russian pole vaulter Yelena Isinbayeva won the top female athlete honor.

The 22-year-old Bolt thrilled the world when he captured gold in the 100, 200 and 4x100 meters relay at this year's Olympic Games in Beijing, China. He clocked 9.39 seconds to win the 100 meters and 19.30 to take the 200 meters - both were world record times. Jamaica's time of 37.10 seconds in the quarter-mile relay, on which Bolt ran the third leg, was also a world record.

"I have a motto that anything is possible," Bolt said. "But this really is such an honor."



Bolt

"Just to be included with every great name in the sport is wonderful. I'll try to do it year after year."

Bolt's two individual world records at the Olympic were also nominated for the "Male Performance-of-the-Year", but surprisingly, Cuba's Dayron Robles topped him for this award. Robles broke the world record in the men's 110 meters hurdles in June when he clocked 12.87 seconds to win the in Ostrava. It was a world record improvement by one hundredths-of-a-second.

CMC reports contributed to this story.



Jamaican in line for WBC title fight

MIAMI - Jamaica's former world champion Glen Johnson is now in pole position for a major title fight after the World Boxing Council (WBC) confirmed him as the mandatory challenger for the light heavy-weight title.

The WBC confirmed recently at its 46th annual convention in Chengdu, China, that the 39-year-old Johnson is now in line for their WBC 175-pound belt. He has been confirmed as the mandatory challenger to the winner of the upcoming bout between champion Adrian Diaconu, of Romania, and the Italian challenger Silvio Branco.

No date has yet been decided on Diaconu's defense against Branco.

Johnson's manager Henry Foster told CMC Sport that

the Diaconu/Branco bout goes to purse bid on Dec. 15 and they are monitoring that process, eager to face whoever wins the fight when it happens.

"We will keep busy and wait for the Diaconu Branco bout," Foster said.

Canada-based Diaconu, who represented Romania at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, is undefeated in 25 bouts and Branco has a ring record of 55 wins (34 knockouts) against eight losses and two draws.

Johnson, 39, a former International Boxing Federation (IBF) champion and 2004 "World Fighter of the Year", had declared recently that he wants another world title opportunity before he retires. He has a ring record of 48 wins (33 knockouts) against 12 losses and two draws.





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old, dejected after New York's performance slumped from a dazzling first half to a painful loss.

It was his second major disappointment in five days, after Jamaica's Reggae Boyz failed to qualify for the last phase of CONCACAF World Cup qualifying in spite of a 3-0 win over Canada at the National Stadium in Kingston last month when he made a second-half appearance. Richards had been voted



Richards

MLS Cup "Playoffs Player of the Week" earlier in the month after he scored a goal, recorded an assist and set up the penalty kick that propelled the Red Bulls to an upset 3-0 win over two-time defending champions Houston Dynamo. The attacking midfielder reflected on a good season for the Red Bulls and hoped they will do well next year.

"Whenever you reach the furthest you can in the playoffs, it's always good, (but) right now we are really upset. This just raised the bar for next year, and next year we are going to go all the way," he said.



H E A L T H

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U.S. humanitarian agency gets \$4.8M to fight HIV/AIDS in Haiti

MIAMI – Cross International, a Florida-based humanitarian organization, has been awarded a \$4.8 million grant for a new program seeking to stem the spread of HIV/AIDS in Haiti.

Cross International received the funds through the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), an initiative started by the George W. Bush administration in 2003 to combat the global HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The grant was announced as countries around the globe observed World AIDS Day

on Dec. 1.

Haiti is one of PEPFAR's 15 focus countries, which collectively represent approximately 50 percent of HIV infections worldwide.

Under PEPFAR, Haiti received more than \$28 million in 2004, nearly \$51.8 million in 2005, approximately \$55.6 million in 2006, and \$84.7 million in 2007 to support comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care programs.

Haiti is the Caribbean country most affected by HIV/AIDS.



Hypnosis is not magic, but can be therapeutic

DR. MICHAEL CRAIG MILLER

QUESTION: I've smoked for 20 years and want to quit. A friend recommended a hypnotist but it scares me. Does hypnosis work? How can I find out if this hypnotist is qualified and reliable?

ANSWER: Hypnosis is one of the oldest forms of psychotherapy in the Western world. It may also be the most misunderstood, given its association with entertainers and charlatans. But, in fact, it is a specialized form of meditation and a relaxation technique.

Hypnosis involves focusing attention inward and using your imagination and positive mental images to alter your perceptions. It's similar to what happens when you day-



Hypnosis may help harness brainpower to solve problems.

dream or meditate, and are unaware of what's going on around you. It may seem as if you're in a trance, but hypnosis is actually a heightened state of concentration. The aim is to focus the mind on a specific image, sensation or

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 18)

PANCAP award to recognize work done in HIV/AIDS fight

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC - The Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP) plans to recognize outstanding work in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic with yearly awards, starting at its next annual general meeting scheduled for Grenada.

Senior Project Officer with PANCAP Volderine Hackett, in announcing the launch of the awards recently, said the unit is convinced that there are a number of signal activities and best practices worth highlighting.

"The first PANCAP award would form a special feature of the ninth AGM in 2009 and its primary objective is to recog-

nize outstanding work that makes a positive difference to HIV and AIDS prevention, care, treatment and support in the Caribbean," Hackett said.

Hackett said that the PANCAP awards will be based on specific criteria for nominations of candidates. A jury of three professionals, supported by a review panel, would make the necessary decisions for the conferral of up to four awards annually. Awardees will receive cash, sponsorship to the next international AIDS conference and a trophy.

PANCAP, a network which includes Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.



Lifestyle changes most promising way to reduce prostate cancer risk

DR. HOWARD LEWINE

QUESTION: I'm thinking about taking a special supplement for prostate health. It contains many ingredients, mostly vitamins and minerals, such as complex B, Vitamin C, Vitamin E, selenium and zinc. I checked the doses and they don't seem to be excessively high. I think it's safe but it's expensive. Can these types of supplements prevent prostate cancer?

ANSWER: Good timing on your question. The National Cancer Institute just stopped a study called the SELECT trial. The study was looking at whether Vitamin E or seleni-



Losing weight can bring prostate cancer risk way down.

um supplements would help to prevent prostate cancer. The study started in 2001. A recent review showed that men taking Vitamin E pills, selenium pills, or both were

not less likely to get prostate cancer.

This was another downer for Vitamin E. Vitamin E has anti-oxidant properties and Vitamin E supplements had gained popularity as likely cancer fighters. But most recent studies show that people who take Vitamin E supplement don't have lower cancer risk.

Along with Vitamin E, selenium supplements have been promoted to improve prostate health for many years. Selenium by itself or combined with Vitamin E did not decrease prostate cancer risk.

Zinc is another prostate

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 18)

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Hypnosis is not magic, but can be therapeutic

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17) goal while ignoring distractions. This tends to make you

more open to suggestions that can help with treatment. Clinicians have proposed many uses, but it is most help-

ful for treating pain and anxiety. The studies evaluating the effectiveness of hypnosis for smoking cessation show a mixed picture.

Some studies suggest that hypnosis might help you stop smoking by reducing cravings, bolstering willpower or increasing motivation to take care of your health. Hypnosis can be used to soothe yourself while you have a craving. It also can help you replace your preoccupation with smoking with thoughts like, "I feel good about taking care of my body."

But a comprehensive review found that most of the current evidence is based on case reports or poorly designed studies. It concluded that hypnosis is no better than other interventions - or even no treatment at all - for increasing six-month quit

rates.

SEARCH

I support your desire to find out more about the person who's doing the hypnosis. Many states do not regulate hypnotherapy. To make sure a therapist is qualified, ask if he or she is licensed (not just certified) to practice. Or check for membership in the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis or the Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis, two nationally recognized organizations for licensed professionals in this field.

Remember that the technique of hypnosis, which is intended to induce a meditative, focused state of mind, is easy to learn. You don't need any specialized training to invoke a soothing voice or to suggest focusing on some

repetitive stimulus or a relaxing image.

But a hypnotherapist does need specialized mental health training to understand emotional and behavioral problems, to evaluate them and plan a treatment. Most therapists who practice hypnosis employ it as one tool among many that they are trained to use.

Hypnosis, after all, is not magic. Rather, it's a specialized technique that may help you harness your brainpower to solve problems. And smoking cessation may be one of them.

Dr. Michael Craig Miller is editor-in-chief of the Harvard Mental Health Letter and an assistant professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.



Lifestyle changes most promising way to reduce prostate cancer risk

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17)

supplement that hasn't stood the test of time.

POSITIVES

On a more positive note, men can make some lifestyle choices that may lower their risk of getting prostate cancer. Also these choices improve the prognosis if you have prostate cancer now or develop it in the future.

First in line is body weight. Men who are obese have a higher risk of getting prostate cancer, especially the more aggressive type. Losing weight can bring that risk way down. Compared with obese men who held their weight steady, men who lost weight enjoyed a 42 percent lower risk of being diagnosed with high-grade prostate cancer.

You didn't mention lycopene as one of the ingredients; but I suspect that there's

plenty of that in your prostate supplement as well. Lycopene is an antioxidant and another one of the substances promoted as a prostate cancer fighter. Like Vitamin E and selenium, lycopene supplements haven't worked either.

Instead of lycopene supplements, eat foods rich in lycopene, such as tomatoes. Cooked tomatoes may be better than raw ones. Men who eat more cooked tomatoes appear to have a decreased risk of prostate cancer.

Other foods and nutrients that may decrease the risk of prostate cancer include fish (especially fatty fish); green leafy vegetables; other vegetables and fruits with deep, rich

colors (more carotenoids in those foods) and Vitamin D.

Just the opposite is true for some foods: Men who eat a lot of fatty foods, especially red meat, and consume large amounts of dairy products have a higher incidence of prostate cancer. The same is true for excessive use of calcium supplements.

Dr. Howard LeWine is a clinical instructor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and practicing internist with Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts.



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LOCAL

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IMMIGRATION KORNER

Question: My sister recently married her fiancé in Tijuana, Mexico. He got deported, I believe, in 2002 for domestic problems with his ex-wife or girlfriend. My sister is a United States citizen and recently learned that she has breast cancer and would like to know what she can do to be able to obtain a visa to bring him over to California to spend time with her during this crucial time in her life. She just lost her son in Dec. 2007. She is devastated and wants to be able to spend time with her hubby. Please help.

Answer: Unfortunately a criminal record lasts a lifetime and once an immigrant is deported, they are barred from re-entry, U.S. immigration officials say. Federal criminal law makes it a felony for an immigrant to re-enter (or be found in) the country without approval of the U.S. government. This usually means a waiver from the U.S.

Stiff penalties for deportees who re-enter U.S. without permission

attorney general.

If the immigrant re-enters or is found in the U.S. without government approval, after a criminal felony conviction for a non-aggravated felony, or after three or more misdemeanor convictions for drug-related crimes or crimes against persons, he or she is subject punishment by a fine; or imprisonment for not more than 10 years; or both fine and imprisonment.

For immigrants reentering or found in the U.S. without government approval, after a criminal conviction for an aggravated felony, the statutory maximum term of imprisonment is 20 years. Other criminal penalty increases may be imposed for aliens who have been removed after certain kinds of incarceration, and aliens deemed to be associated with terrorism.

PLEASE NOTE: The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services may soon increase the maximum

amount of time a Trade-NAFTA professional worker from Canada or Mexico can remain in the U.S. before seeking readmission or obtaining an extension of stay. The proposal will extend the maximum period of admission for TN workers from one year to three years, the same term that USCIS currently may grant to H-1B specialty occupation workers, the agency said this week.

The proposed rule will further allow eligible TN non-immigrants to be granted an extension of stay in increments of up to three years, as opposed to the current maximum of one year.

Canadian and Mexican citizens seeking temporary entry to the U.S. as professionals may come into the country as TN non-immigrants under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). TN status is available to Canadian and Mexican citizens with a minimum of a bachelor's

degree, or appropriate professional credentials, who work in professions listed in Appendix 1603.D.1 to Annex 1603 of the NAFTA and under DHS regulations at 8 CFR 214.6(c). Eligible TN professions include, but are not limited to, accountants, engineers, attorneys, pharmacists, scientists, and teachers.

- Felicia Persaud

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", which can only be given by a competent attorney after reviewing all the facts of the case.

It's final, Obama wins

The final result in the United States presidential election held on Nov. 4 showed Democrat Barack Obama winning 365 electoral votes to Republican John McCain's 173.

The numbers published in **Caribbean Today's** November 2008 issue were those available at press time, with some ballots still to be counted. They were, at that time, enough to declare Obama the winner.

Obama will be officially sworn in as the 44th president of the U.S. on Jan. 20, 2009.

FYI

CHURCH FUNDRAISER

Jamaica's Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett is the scheduled guest speaker for the eighth annual anniversary banquet and fundraiser for the Fellowship New Testament Church of God, Inc. in Florida, United States.

The banquet, being staged under the theme "The Role of the Church in a Changing Society", is set for **Dec. 12** at the Plantation Hotel and Conference Center in Sunrise.

For ticket information, call Fred McLeod at **954-650-1319**.

COMMUNITY WINNERS

The Bank of America Charitable Foundation has named two Miami area non-profits, Take Stock in Children of Miami-Dade County and Sant La Haitian Neighborhood Center, as recipients of the Neighborhood Excellence Initiative (NEI) Neighborhood Builder awards.

Five community leaders and five local high school students were also recognized for making a difference in the Miami community. Neighborhood Builder winners receive \$200,000 in unrestricted grants.

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FOOD

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Dance into the holidays with island-style chicken feasts

Most Caribbean people are gearing up to take time off to celebrate the holiday season.

That means plenty of visitors, laughs, hugs and, most of all, food.

Caribbean Today will be celebrating its 20th anniversary as well. As a treat, we are offering a few recipes for island-style meals, courtesy of **Publix's Apron's Simple Meals**, that will surely bring back memories of home and help entertain family and friends. Enjoy!

Island style chicken with tropical salsa

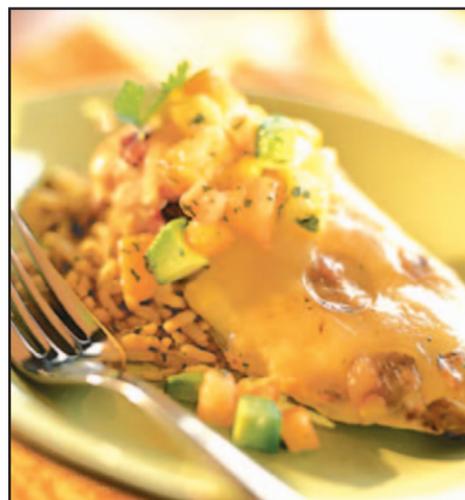
Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds boneless chicken cutlets
- 2 teaspoons garlic salt
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 cup fresh pre-diced red onions
- 4 (.67-ounce) slices Swiss cheese

Steps

Preheat large sauté pan on medium-high two to three minutes. Sprinkle both sides of chicken with garlic salt. Wash hands.

Place butter in pan; swirl to coat. Add chicken, using



Island Chicken

tongs, and cook four minutes. Turn chicken over, add onions, and cook four to five more minutes or until internal temperature reaches 170°F. Use a meat thermometer to accurately ensure doneness. Top chicken with cheese slices. Cover and cook one more minute until cheese melts. Serve with tropical salsa.

Tropical salsa

Ingredients

- 6–8 sprigs fresh cilantro
- 1 lime
- 1/3 cup jalapeño pepper jelly

- 1 papaya
- 1 mango
- 1 cup fresh pineapple chunks
- 1 avocado

Steps

Rinse all unpeeled fruit and cilantro. Chop cilantro leaves finely, then measure (two tablespoons); place in large bowl. Squeeze juice of lime (one and a half tablespoons) into bowl; stir in pepper jelly until well blended.

Cut fruit into bite-size pieces, in order listed; add to bowl. • Papaya: Cut in half lengthwise; remove seeds and peel. Cut up one fourth of papaya (two cups). Reserve remainder for another use.

• Mango: Cut mango away from pit. Remove peel; cut fruit (one cup). • Pineapple: Cut, as needed. • Avocado: Cut into quarters; remove peel and cut fruit (one and one eighth cups).

Gently stir to coat ingredients; chill until ready to serve.

Makes eight servings.

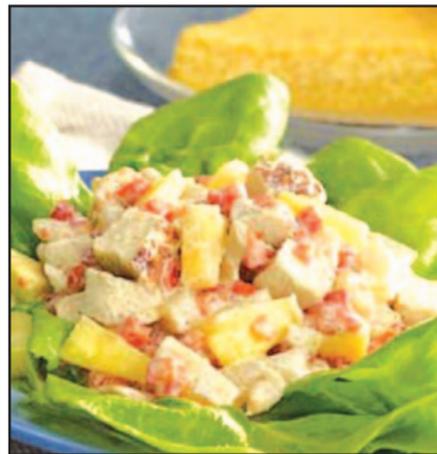
Shortcuts and tips

Don't want to cook chicken tonight? This flavorful salsa would make a perfect topping for sliced rotisserie chicken, crab cakes, grilled fish or pork chops.

Caribbean chicken salad with plantain pie

Ingredients

- 1 lemon (for juice, rinsed)
- 1 (10-ounce) package



Chicken salad

- roasted, diced chicken
- 1 (8-ounce) can pineapple tidbits in juice (drained)
- 1/3 cup light mayonnaise

- 1/4 cup diced pimientos (drained)
- 1/2 teaspoon curry powder
- 12–16 Bibb lettuce leaves (rinsed)

Steps

Squeeze juice of lemon into medium bowl. Stir in remaining ingredients (except lettuce) until well blended. Chill salad (or may be served at room temperature). Arrange lettuce leaves on serving plates; mound chicken salad in center and serve.

Plantain pie

Ingredients

- 1 prepared nine-inch pie crust
- 2 very well-ripened plantains (rinsed)
- 1 (24-ounce) jar mango slices in light syrup (drained)
- 2 eggs (or 1/2 cup egg substitute)
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon kosher salt

Steps

Preheat oven to 450°F. Arrange pie crust in nine-inch pie plate; pinch or fold edges of dough to finish.



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BUSINESS

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Remittances to Caribbean slowing ~ World Bank

WASHINGTON - Remittance flows to the Caribbean and other developing countries have begun to slow down, marking a reversal of several years of strong growth, the World Bank has announced.

The Washington-based financial institution said the reduction is reflected in figures for the third quarter of 2008. The bank said the slowdown was expected to deepen further in 2009, in response to the global financial crisis.

But it said the exact magnitude of "the growth moderation, or outright decline in some cases", was hard to predict, "given the uncertainties about global growth, commodity prices, and exchange rates".

The World Bank said officially recorded remittance flows to the Caribbean and other developing countries are estimated to reach \$283 billion this year, up 6.7 percent from \$265 billion last year.

DECLINE

However, factoring inflation, it said remittances are expected to fall from two percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2007 to 1.8 percent in 2008.

It stated that in 2009, remittances are expected to fall by 0.9 percent, or, in the worst case, no more than six percent.

The bank reported that regional pattern of remittance flows appears to be shifting,

noting that flows from the United States to Latin America and the Caribbean and those from Western Europe to Europe and Central Asia are slowing.

The bank said remittance flows to the Caribbean and Latin America topped \$57 billion in 2006 and \$61 billion in 2007. It said the figure was expected to remain the same in 2008 as in 2007.

The World Bank pointed to several factors that appear to be responsible for the slowdown in remittances to the Caribbean and Latin America, including the slumping U.S. economy and tighter enforcement of immigration laws in the U.S.

Fixing common money mistakes early, often

KATHY KRISTOF

Everybody makes mistakes. But when it comes to money, even little errors can prove devastating.

What are the most common financial mistakes and how can they be fixed?

Dollar dribbling - At the end of the month, consumers' pockets are empty and they're confused. "Where did all the money go?" David Jones, president of the Association of Independent Consumer Credit Counseling Agencies in the United States, knows the answer: It went to dozens of little, regular expenditures.

"It adds up really quickly," Jones said.

Bruce McClary, communications director for Clearpoint Financial Solutions in the U.S., calls these expenses "dribblers" because of the slow leaks they create in a monthly budget. Plugging these leaks is easy once you find them, McClary adds. The solution: Keep a notebook with you and write down every expense, from the \$1 candy bar to the \$3 latte. At the end of the month, add them up and decide whether the expenses are worth budgeting for or whether they ought to be eliminated.

Forgetful budgeting - Some big bills land just a few times a year and wreak havoc with the finances of the forgetful, McClary says. Pull out copies of all those irregular bills and divide their costs to come up with a monthly amount that needs to be saved. Also estimate the amount you'll need for holidays and birthday gifts, so you can be saving for these irregular but expected expenses on a regular basis.

Cutting the cushion -



Without proper management, money problems can keep piling up.

Everyone needs an emergency fund, Jones says, particularly in a dicey economy. Even if all you can save is \$5 a month - or the change collected from your pocket and the couch cushions - bank it, McClary advises. Small amounts add up.

Making the minimums

Credit card minimum payments can leave you in debt - at double-digit rates - for the rest of your life, Jones notes. The best idea is to use credit cards just for convenience, paying them off each month. If you can't do that, at least pay more than the minimum.

Saving the kids - Parents in financial trouble often try to keep their woes from their children, thinking that they're saving the kids from worry. That's a bad approach, Jones says. He's found that when asked to help, teenagers can be extremely useful, finding dozens of ways to pitch in and cut costs for their families. Being involved in the family money discussions also teaches them about finances and may make them savvier consumers later in life, he says. Ignoring the fine print - There are dozens of little traps in the fine print of financial agree-

ments such as credit card contracts and mortgage loan documents. When you enter into a financial transaction, read the fine print and keep a copy of the document you signed, McClary advises. If you don't agree with the terms, don't sign the deal. If you do sign, make sure you don't violate the terms of the agreement.

Traps to watch: over-limit and overdraft fees; prepayment penalties; and penalty interest rates, which kick in if you have a late payment or two.

Missing signs of trouble - If you're able to pay only the minimum payments on credit cards for two months in a row; if your credit card debts exceed 15 percent of your take-home pay; if you're making payments late or regularly juggling bills because your paycheck isn't stretching far enough, then you need help, experts say.

Create a budget. If you find that you can't do it alone, seek help from a nonprofit credit-counseling service. But be careful when choosing counselors.

The Federal Trade Commission in the U.S. offers a guide on finding credit counselors that includes questions to ask and warning signs to watch for. The link: <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/credit/cre26.shtm>

Edited from a column written by Kathy Kristof. (c) 2008 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

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► **Many municipal bonds** are tax-exempt

Personal Finance

The numbers

Outstanding U.S. municipal bond debt



© 2008 MCT
Source: Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association
Graphic: Pat Carr

T&T private sector agency wants permanent U.S. trade agreement

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC - The American Chamber of Trinidad and Tobago (AMCHAM) said that while it welcomed the extension of the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Agreement (CBTPA), there was need for a more permanent agreement with the United States to facilitate planning and the creation of a platform for the development of sustained fair trade.

Addressing a forum examining U.S. trade policy and implications for Trinidad and Tobago last month, AMCHAM Director Hugh Howard said his organization was believed that the basis of the trading relationship with Washington needed to be expanded and improved.

The CBTPA came into

force on Oct. 1, 2000 and continues in effect until Sept. 30, 2012. At least 19 countries benefit from the CBTPA including all the member countries of the Caribbean community (CARICOM).

LOCKED IN

Howard told the forum, organized by AMCHAM and the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association (TTMA), that the current trading landscape "dictates that we must lock in trading agreements given that we were recently removed as a beneficiary country for the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)."

Economic growth breeds discontent ~ IDB

WASHINGTON - People in Trinidad and Tobago who have experienced fast economic growth in recent years are less satisfied with their lives than people in nations with slower growth rates such as Guyana and Jamaica, according to a new study by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

The study is the latest edition of the Development in the Americas series and the IDB noted that satisfaction in Trinidad and Tobago, Chile, Peru and Ecuador - countries with the fastest growth in the region in recent years - is lower than in nations such as Guyana, El Salvador, Paraguay and Guatemala,

whose economies showed little or no growth.

The study, which the IDB described as "an unprecedented look into people's perceptions in the region", used data from the Gallup World Poll and information commissioned by the IDB to complement the survey.

Citizens of Latin American and the Caribbean were asked how they perceived key aspects of their lives including the quality of education, healthcare, housing and employment, providing some surprising and on occasion counter-intuitive responses.

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Caribbean warned to brace for fallout from financial crisis

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC – The region's leading banker is urging Caribbean countries to adopt carefully worked-out precautionary policies, as they brace for more fallout from the current global financial crisis.

Addressing a regional seminar here recently, President of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) Compton Bourne also outlined several measures, including budget cutbacks, which he said regional governments needed to consider in light of the economic downturn.

"Governments need to identify the components of their expenditure budgets susceptible to reduction with least disruptive effects on their capital investments programs and on the scope and depth of their social safety nets," the CDB president said.

"It may also be necessary, where existing debt situations permit, for governments to engage in debt finance cau-

tiously tailored to the requirements of capital investment programs which sustain or promote economic growth and development."



Bourne

ADJUSTMENTS

Bourne warned countries that they must resist the lure of short-term financial accommodation from international financial institutions. He also admonished business enterprises and individuals that they too would need to make certain adjustments.

"For business enterprises...debt management may be generally necessary to control interest costs. Some squeeze on profit margins may also have to be accepted in an effort to maintain sales at a level sufficient to cover operating costs," he said.

"Households also have to engage in precautionary behavior, adjusting their expenditures to a higher level of income uncertainty and restructuring their asset liability portfolios, particularly through stricter control on consumer debt."

Pointing to the implications for tourism, Bourne said that the global financial and economic crisis could have serious adverse effects on the performance of the region's bread and butter sector. He also noted that job losses by Caribbean migrants in the United States were expected to cause substantial reduction in remittances, which are major sources of income.



Guyana's president backs wiretapping law

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, CMC – President Bharrat Jagdeo has approved of the introduction of wiretapping legislation here, as a means of combating crime in the country.

The Interception of Telecommunication Bill 2008 "allows for the interception of communications, the acquisition and disclosure of data relating to communications and the acquisition of means by which protected communication may be accessed and placed in an intelligible form and for connected purposes", a statement issued by the

Office of the President said.

"The law will effectively prohibit the interception of communication unless a warrant is issued by a judge, based on an application.

"Additionally, intercepted communication obtained on a warrant will also be made admissible in any criminal proceedings", it added. The president has also approved the Criminal Law Procedure (Amendment) Bill 2008 and the Criminal Procedure (Plea Bargaining and Plea Agreement) Bill 2008, as recommended at a special



Jagdeo

Caribbean community (CARICOM) Heads of Government Conference on crime and security in Trinidad and Tobago last April. The plea bargaining legislation seeks to formalize plea agreements and will allow the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to arrange plea agreements for the speedy disposal of cases.

The Criminal Law Procedure (Amendment) Bill 2008 will vest in Magistrates the power to commit accused persons to trial in the High Court if a prima facie case is made out, based on written instead of oral evidence.

The enactment of these new security laws is seen as vital to reducing the upsurge in crime experienced in Guyana in recent years. The changes also bring Guyana's security legislation in line with what obtains in other regional jurisdictions.



Jamaica retains the death penalty

KINGSTON, Jamaica, CMC – Lawmakers here voted last month in favor of Jamaica retaining the death penalty as the ultimate punishment for certain offenses.

Parliamentarians took part in the conscience vote, with 35 members voting in favor and 15 voting against it. The remaining members were absent.

While the death penalty remains on Jamaica's law books, there has not been an execution here for the past two decades. The last hanging took place on Feb. 18, 1988.

However, in the wake of the country's worsening crime problem, there have been increasing calls from various sections of the society including the Church for the resumption of hanging.

Leader of the Opposition People's National Party (PNP) Portia Simpson Miller was among the absentees as the parliamentarians declared their hand in the conscience vote on a two-tiered resolution moved by Prime Minister Bruce Golding a fortnight ago.



T&T leads Caribbean in gender equality

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC – A new report shows that Trinidad and Tobago has made "remarkable" strides in the area of gender equality, moving 27 spots up from its ranking last year to 19 in a survey of 130 countries.

"Trinidad and Tobago makes a remarkable climb up the rankings to hold the highest position in the region and to become the only country from the region to hold a place among the global top 20", stated the World Economic Forum (WEF) in the Global Gender Gap Report released last month.

"This is partly due to an improvement in the economic participation and opportunity sub-index, but can be mainly attributed to an increase in the number of women in Parliament".

Cuba, a new entrant last year, fell three places to 25; while Barbados entered the ranks for the first time this year, taking position number 26 - the fourth highest spot in the region.

Jamaica has also been listed at 44 on the measure of gender equality, while Suriname at 79 and Belize at 86 occupy the lowest positions in the region.

Economists use the term "gender gap" to explain differences in the outcomes that men and women achieve in the labor market.

These differences are seen in the percentages of men and women in the labor force, the types of occupations they choose and their relative incomes or hourly wages.



Montserrat tightens work permit policy

BRADES, Montserrat, CMC – The government of this British Overseas Territory has announced that it will be adopting a more forceful approach to enforcing its immigration laws, particularly regarding persons seeking employment here.

Labour Commissioner Claude Hogan said that effective Dec. 1, the government would adhere to the provisions set out in the Immigration Act (Revised) 2002, which requires job seekers to first have an invitation for employment before migrating to the island.

"It's more like a reversion to the whole implementation

of legislation, where non-nationals/persons who do not have residency in Montserrat will need to have an invitation from an employer on Montserrat before coming to Montserrat to apply or to take up employment," he said.

Hogan explained that the government was not adopting a policy against non-nationals, but merely taking a more proactive approach in anticipation of less jobs being available due to a slowdown in the local employment market, which, in part, was expected because of the ongoing global financial crisis.



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Global economic crisis forces T&T into cutbacks

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC - Prime Minister Patrick Manning has announced a cutback on the construction of new schools, hospitals, housing units and the postponement of the start of construction of a Carnival Centre, as the Trinidad and Tobago government implements measures to deal with a projected shortfall in revenue caused by the global economic crisis. In an address to the nation on Nov. 30, the second within a one-week period, Manning nonetheless said that the cutbacks would not affect the programs of the Ministry of Education and that the government would "continue the pursuit of the best health care system for the people of this country."

The week before his announcement, Manning said that the revenue shortfall, due to a fall in prices on the international market for local products, had been estimated at TT\$6 billion (\$1 billion), but in his address on Nov. 30 revised the figure downward to TT\$5.3 billion (\$883 million).

He said as a result, Cabinet had agreed that "serious cuts were required, and consequently we will reduce recurrent expenditure by TT\$3.6 billion (\$600 million), a cut of 6.5 percent; and we will cut our capital expenditure by TT\$1.4 billion (\$233 million) a reduction of 16.1

percent."

GRAVITY

Manning said that the gravity of the situation was underscored by the fact that despite those huge reductions in expenditure, "the loss of revenue is so serious that we are now still projecting a deficit of TT\$741 million (\$123.5 million)."

But he told citizens that with fluctuating prices, "we anticipate that this situation could be reversed with an increase of a mere 25 U.S. cents per MMBTU (Million British Thermal Units - standard measurement of energy) in the price of natural gas."

Manning said that there would be a slowdown in construction of new schools and some major infrastructural projects - like the new hospitals planned for Couva and Port of Spain - will have to be deferred. In addition, despite the "urgent need for affordable housing in Trinidad and Tobago" his government, regrettably, will start no new housing units at this time.

"However all housing units under construction will be completed as well as

preparatory works for projects already on the drawing board. We will also expedite the distribution of those houses already completed," he added.

Manning said that the start of construction of the Carnival Centre will be postponed and there will be a slowdown in the illumination of public places by Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Company (T&TEC), as well as a reduction in infrastructural improvements in communities by special purpose state enterprises.

ASSURANCE

But the prime minister gave the assurance that there would be no cuts in salaries and wages; pension to old age people' disability grants as well as "no cuts in any social assistance program of any kind.

"We will maintain expenditure in these areas; there will be no cuts in the programs dealing with the fight against crime. The budgetary allocations have remained untouched," he said, adding that the cut back would not also affect training programs for young people. "My dear friends, we are convinced that we have achieved the reduction in our expenditure in the best possible way. There were other options available.

"You would notice that we did

not dip into our savings; we did not approach international lending agencies for financing with concomitant conditionalities; and we did not remove

the subsidy on gasoline which amounts to in excess of two billion dollars every year."



Grenada swears in new GG

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada, CMC - Carlyle Arnold Glean was sworn in as Grenada's fifth governor general late last month.

Glean, a former education minister who served during the previous National Democratic Congress (NDC) administration in the 1990s, replaces Sir Daniel Williams who demitted office last month after serving in the position for 13 years.

"I feel deeply the gravity of the role bestowed upon me and I pledged as the fifth governor general of our beautiful country to perform my duty with dignity and integrity," Glean told a special sitting of Parliament.

The new Governor

General, who received a 21-gun salute and inspected a guard of honor outside the Parliament building, paid tribute to faith based organizations and social groups and promised to assist their efforts.

"It is my intention to meet with the groups which include youth woman and other civic organizations to lend support to their efforts," he said.

A teacher by profession, Glean retired from active politics in 1995 after NDC of former Prime Minister George Brizan lost the elections to Keith Mitchell's New National Party, which controlled the government for 13 years.



Manning

Gonsalves wins defamation suit

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent - A local radio station and radio personality have been ordered to pay Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves a total of \$160,000 in damages and cost for defaming his character.

Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court Master Cheryl Mathurin handed down the judgment last month, six years after Gonsalves sued radio host Elwardo Lynch and BDS Limited, the parent company of Nice Radio.

The matter stemmed from statements Lynch, the host of a talk show sponsored by the Opposition New Democratic Party (NDP), made concerning Gonsalves's 2002 visit to Rome to meet the late Pope John Paul II. Lynch had claimed that the prime minister, who was accompanied by his wife, mother and daughter, had used government funds to pay for the trip. However Gonsalves flatly denied those charges.

"I have had to wait six years, six long years to be vindicated," the Vincentian leader said after the judgment was handed down.

The court ruled that Lynch and BDS Limited will each pay Gonsalves damages in the sum of \$59,540 and have both been ordered to each pay \$12,280 for the prime minister's costs in the High Court. Additionally, the two parties will bear Gonsalves's Appeal Court costs, amounting to \$8,286, plus interest of three percent



Gonsalves won his day in court.

on the total sum dating back the service of the writ to May 25, 2005.

The prime minister told journalists that he was always confident of victory and said he hoped that this case proved to be a lesson to those who abuse freedom of speech. He had promised that any money awarded to him would go to charity. Following the judgment, he said he would select which charities he

would give the money to, after consultation with people in his constituency and his friends.

DISAPPOINTMENT

In delivering her judgment, the master expressed disappointment with the conduct of the defendants' lawyers.

"I must express difficulty and disappointment in accepting that counsel for the defendants, in the face of that olive branch that would ensue to their clients' benefit, could not have constructed and obviously did not construct a suitable apology at that time or at all," Mathurin outlined.

She added that that a proper apology or the offer of such an apology could have resulted in a significant mitigation of the damages.

Gonsalves also said that if Lynch and BDS had apologized and paid something to a charity of his choice, it would have amounted to much less than the eventual judgment.



HOLIDAY SERVICES

December 21	SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS	6pm
December 24	CHRISTMAS EVE	10:30pm
December 25	CHRISTMAS DAY	10am
December 27	HOLY INOCENTS	7pm
December 31	NEW YEAR'S EVE	11pm
January 1	NEW YEAR'S DAY	10am

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