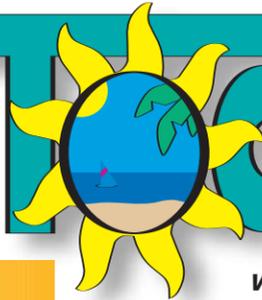


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Vol. 20 No. 2

THE MULTI AWARD-WINNING NEWS MAGAZINE



Dr. Carolyn Gomes, a Jamaican activist, is among seven global advocates to receive the United Nations General Assembly's top human rights prize, page 2.



This month the United States will embrace its first African American president. But decades ago, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., whose birthday is celebrated as a national U.S. holiday, lost his life in a civil rights struggle to make it possible, page 12.

OUTRAGE



United States Congressman Alcee Hastings, left, and immigration attorney Cheryl Little are among those unhappy that U.S. immigration officials have resumed deportation of Haitians, despite the devastation in that Caribbean country caused by recent hurricanes, page 4.



He played in a movie about England's monarch. Now 91-year-old Bermudan-born actor Earl Cameron gets ready to meet real-life Queen Elizabeth II, who is honoring him for services to drama in a career spanning seven decades, page 17.

NATURAL MYSTIC

~ Take in a lung-full of the purest air from a majestic panoramic perspective. Skim 100-foot high treetops with your toes. Marvel at the beauty of Mother Nature from the heavens. Culture and nature take center stage at Jamaica's newest tourist attractions, page 15.



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U.S. immigration raid nets 110 Caribbean nationals in Florida

MIAMI - United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials said their agents arrested more than 100 Caribbean nationals in a major immigration sweep in South Florida.

Officials said 110 persons classified as immigration fugitives and immigration violators, were detained late last month after a five-day enforcement operation in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties, as well as in Orlando and Tampa.

According to ICE, among those arrested and will be deported are nationals from Haiti, The Bahamas, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.

They said 81 immigration

fugitives who went into hiding after earlier being ordered to leave the country and 29 others who were guilty of violating immigration laws were arrested.

The operation netted 47 arrests in Miami-Dade, 30 in Broward, 15 in Palm Beach, 11 in Tampa and seven in Orlando.

"ICE will continue to arrest and deport aliens who have ignored an immigration judge's order to leave the country," said Michael Rozos, field office director for the ICE Office of Detention and Removal Operations in Florida.

"While we are a welcoming country, we expect those

wanting to immigrate here to do so in a safe, legal and orderly manner."

Of the 110 arrested, 93 remained in ICE custody up to press time, and 17 were processed for removal and released. In the case of those released, ICE officials said they released migrants who were verified to be sole caregivers or as having medical concerns.

CRIMINAL RECORD

Of the arrested, officials said 24 had criminal records that included aggravated assault, battery, drug possession, trespassing, disorderly conduct, resisting an officer

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Investors cry fraud over U.S. money scheme run by Haitian-born pastor

MIAMI - United States federal and state authorities from Florida are investigating a Haitian-born, self-styled investment guru, who allegedly duped hundreds of his compatriots in South Florida to pour their savings into his ventures.

Haitian investors in Florida claim they fell victim to a scheme concocted by self-proclaimed evangelical minister George Theodule, who reportedly promised to double their money in three months.

The alleged victims said

late last month that they had filed a lawsuit in U.S. federal court, claiming that Theodule bilked hundreds of investors out of millions of dollars, while promising to double their money through stock and options trading.

"Theodule said he was going to create 10,000 millionaires among the Haitian people and empower them," said Jared Levy, a West Palm Beach lawyer representing at least 50 investors represented in the suit.

"The sad thing is, they

believed him," he added.

In response to the claim, Theodule, 48, said tersely: "This is just too delicate to talk about."

NETWORK

According to the lawsuit, Theodule allegedly attracted investors, primarily Haitian Americans, through investment clubs that he encouraged others to start in a network that grew rapidly over the past year.

The lawsuit said leaders (CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Jamaican wins a U.N. award

UNITED NATIONS - A Jamaican activist is among seven global advocates to receive the United Nations General Assembly's top human rights prize.

Carolyn Gomes, executive director and co-founder of Jamaicans for Justice, has received the award at a General Assembly ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The prize, which is given every five years, was first awarded on Dec. 10, 1968, on the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the UDHR.

Gomes joins a distinguished roster of previous laureates that includes apartheid fighter and former South African President Nelson Mandela; United States civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; former U.S. first Lady Eleanor Roosevelt; former U.S. President Jimmy Carter; and Amnesty International.

"As we mark the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we acknowledge the tireless work and invaluable contribu-

tion of these individuals and organizations that have fought to see the rights and freedoms embodied in this historic document become a reality for people in all corners of the world," UN General Assembly President Miguel D'Escoto said.

"These awardees constitute symbols of persistence, valour and tenacity in their resistance to public and private authorities that violate human rights. They constitute a moral force to put an end to systematic human rights violations."

Other winners of this year's award are: former U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour; United States ex-Attorney-General Ramsey Clark; and Denis Mukwege, co-founder of the General Referral Hospital of Panzi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The list also includes Human Rights Watch, represented by its executive director Kenneth Roth; slain Pakistani leader Benazir Bhutto; and Dorothy Stang, a nu

Decline in Caribbean poverty ~ U.N.

UNITED NATIONS, CMC - The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) says poverty declined slightly in the region in 2008, despite the global economic crisis.

In its annual report, released last month, ECLAC said the percentage of the population living in poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean during 2008 dropped to 33.2 percent, or 182 million people, from 34.1 percent, or 184 million people, for the previous year.

However, ECLAC said extreme poverty or indigence rose mildly, from 12.6 percent in 2007, or 68 million people, to an estimated 12.9 percent, or 71 million people, this year.

The report said efforts to reduce poverty and indigence in 2008 were "less effective than in the 2002-2007 period", when the number of people living in poverty or indigence dropped by 9.9 percent, or 37 million people, and 6.8 percent, or 29 million, respectively.

"Estimated figures for poverty and indigence reflect the impact of rising inflation since early 2007, and particu-

larly escalating food prices, although food and fuel prices in the region have ceased climbing in recent months", ECLAC stated.

DOWNTURN

It anticipates the global economic downturn to impact the region "through a weaker demand for commodity exports, declining investment in productive sectors, lower migrant remittances, and international financial market constraints for emerging countries.

"Employment is expected to stagnate during 2009, while average real wages are to remain unchanged or diminish slightly.

"Economic forecasts suggest that average household incomes will deteriorate, particularly among independent and informal workers whose jobs are most sensitive to movements in economic cycles", it added.

In this context, ECLAC said poverty and indigence would most likely increase moderately, continuing the negative trend begun in 2008.

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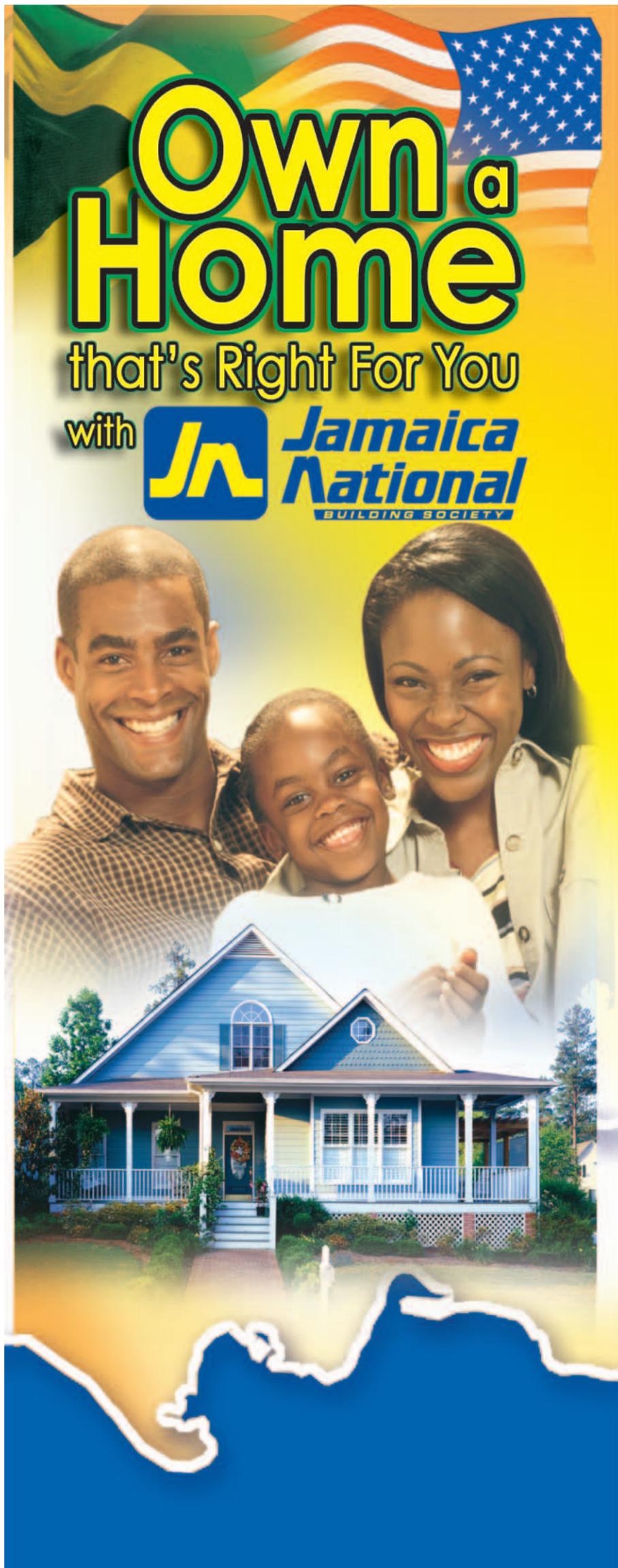
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U.S. resumes deportations to Haiti

MIAMI – Despite increasing appeals for a halt to the deportation of Haitians, United States immigration officials have resumed sending back Haitians to their homeland.

“We determined that it was appropriate to resume based on the circumstances in Haiti,” Nicole Navas, a spokeswoman with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), said last month, ending a three-month reprieve in the wake of a series of storms that devastated the French-speaking Caribbean country.

“The individuals being returned have final orders of removal and the necessary travel documents,” added Navas without further elaboration.

The announcement came while Haiti is still reeling from the storms and hurricanes that left over 800 people dead, tens of thousands homeless, and caused over \$1 billion in damages. U.S. immigrant authorities halted deportations to Haiti in September in the wake of storm ravages.

FRUSTRATION

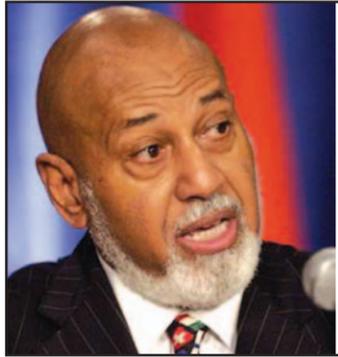
But immigration advocates here expressed outrage and frustration with the resumption of deportation.

“It’s an outrageously inhumane act,” said Cheryl Little, executive director of Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center in Miami.

“We are attempting to do whatever we can to convince

(U.S.) government officials to change their minds on this.”

Ralph Latortue, the Haitian consul general in Miami, said he found out about the resumption of deportations to his native land when he received an e-mail from the Department of Homeland



Hastings

Security requesting travel documents for 43 non-criminal Haitians.

“We still have thousands of cubic meters of mud being removed from Gonaives,” Latortue told reporters last month, referring to the Haitian seaport hit hard by a series of recent storms.

“There are still people in shelters, and, of course, people know children are suffering from malnutrition in Haiti.

“These are all circumstances that put the country in a difficult position struggling to recover.”

TPS CALL

The latest immigration move came as a host of U.S.

legislators called on Washington to grant Haitians Temporary Protected Status (TPS). In late November, Southern Florida Democratic Congressman Alcee L. Hastings wrote President-elect Barack Obama urging him to make granting TPS to Haitians a priority in his new administration. Hastings, who represents the city of Miramar, outside Miami, said in his letter 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,” stated 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”.

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.



IDB pledges to help Caribbean cope with global economic crisis

WASHINGTON – The Inter American Development Bank (IDB) says helping Caribbean and Latin American countries to weather the global economic storm will be a key priority for the international financial institution in 2009.

The commitment came in a year-end release issued by the IDB in which it boasted of a record \$12.2 billion in loan approvals, credit guarantees and grants for the Latin America and Caribbean region in 2008.

“This is 27 percent higher than the \$9.6 billion approved in 2007, reaffirming the IDB’s role as the leading source of long-term funding for Latin America and the Caribbean”, the statement noted.

The IDB also approved operations totaling \$900 million in 2008 from its new fast-disbursing emergency liquidity fund. The \$6 billion facility, created in October, provides funding for countries facing transitory difficulties in accessing international credit markets due to the financial turmoil.

“The funding will go for domestic banks so they can

lend to local firms to support their investments and operations”, it stated.

“Conditional cash transfer programs for the poor, a growing alternative that the bank supports, has also been an important measure to defend recent achievements in the fight against poverty during these trying times”, the IDB added.

‘GLORIOUS’

The release also noted that the past six years have been among the most glorious for regional economies, with growth fed by soaring commodity prices and generally more cautious fiscal policies.

However, as the effects of the financial crisis in the United States and Europe deepen, the IDB is forecasting that growth in the region will likely slow to between two per cent and 2.5 percent in 2009 from 4.5 percent a year earlier.

The IDB also expects capital flows into the region to fall below the required \$250 billion, pushing millions back into poverty.



U.S. immigration raid...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

with violence, sexual battery, Social Security fraud, burglary, carrying a concealed firearm, larceny, grand theft and lewd and lascivious assault on a child.

ICE officials highlighted the case of a 46-year-old Haitian national, who was also arrested on Dec. 16 in Broward County, who according to them entered the U.S. on Jan. 5, 1981 and, in May 1986, was

convicted for possession of cocaine and sentenced to 18 months probation. He was ordered deported on Jan. 25, 2005.

“We will conduct these targeted fugitive operations to ensure that removal orders are carried out and locate these immigration violators who potentially pose a threat to public safety,” Rozos said.



Investors cry fraud...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

of the clubs agreed to recruit investors, mainly through their churches in southern Florida, and then turn the money over to Theodule’s Creative Capital Consortium.

“People came from all over - Miami, Broward, Palm Beach (counties) - all thinking he was going to better their lives,” Levy said.

Nerline Horace-Manasse, 30, one of the Haitian investors in Palm Beach County, said she invested \$20,000 in the alleged scheme last February and another \$5,000 later, after Theodule reportedly said her money had doubled.

“He used his Haitian background to reach Haitians,” Horace-Manasse said.

“He read the Bible, prayed with people, cried with

them,” she added. “He made us believe he was going to help us.”

NO SCRUTINY

David Rothstein, a Miami lawyer, who represents dozens of Haitian investors, said many failed to scrutinize Theodule before buying into his alleged scheme.

“He got people to hand over money without a good look behind the business curtain,” he said.

“It appears to be a remarkably unsophisticated fraud,” Rothstein added, pointing out that “it’s not clear where investors’ money was invested.”

U.S. federal and Florida authorities said Theodule is not a registered stock broker or financial advisor.



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EXPLORE

MIAMI-DADE
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Ex-Jamaica P.M. Seaga hospitalized in Florida with respiratory problems

Former Jamaica Prime Minister Edward Seaga was admitted to a hospital in the United States on New Year's Day.

Seaga, 78, who was prime minister under a Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) adminis-

tration from 1980 to 1989, was reportedly rushed to a South Florida institution complaining of respiratory problems.

Details of his medical condition had not been released up to press time.

However, sources in Jamaica said Seaga, a distinguished fellow at the University of the West Indies, Mona campus, was under medical observation for at least a few days. Reports indicated that he was subsequently released from the hospital and was believed to have returned to his home in Jamaica.

Often a controversial figure on Jamaica's political scene, Seaga led the JLP through a tough period in which it suffered four consecutive general election defeats between 1989 and 2005 at the hands of the People's National Party (PNP).

He stepped down as leader of the JLP in 2005 to

take up the academic post at UWI and was replaced by Bruce Golding as leader of the JLP, which came to power in the Sept. 2007 general elections.

Compiled from several reports, including CMC.



Haitian refugees nabbed in Florida

Police in the United States detained 14 Haitian refugees who landed in a fishing boat early this month at an inlet in the southern state of Florida.

The Haitians came in on the 26-foot Ocean Runner fishing boat that headed straight from the Boynton Beach inlet to Boat Club Park, near Miami, the police said.

"The call came in from a good Samaritan notifying that a boat was coming in and had a large group of Haitians laying down," said Sergeant Phillip Hawkins, of the Boynton Beach police.

"When the driver landed, he jumped off and fled."

Noel A. Manheimer, a supervisor with the Marine Interdiction Agent in South Florida, said police detained the 14 Haitians, who were taken to the Border Patrol Station in nearby Riviera Beach. Manheimer said the immigrants most likely came through The Bahamas since "some were carrying paperwork from Bahamian customs.

"That's usually the case with small boats," he said.

SEARCH

South Florida Marine Officer Gregg Koch said he was monitoring a public access VHF channel when someone reported seeing a boat with possible immigrants in the area. He said police quickly set up a perimeter, and he spotted the empty boat in an alcove near the boat ramp. Koch said officers found the 14 Haitians hiding throughout the park and ramps. He said

officers and police dogs, with assistance from the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office helicopter, spent the next hour searching for the boat's captain but were unsuccessful.

Meantime, the city of Miami Gardens has unanimously passed a resolution urging the George W. Bush administration to provide Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Haitian immigrants in the U.S.

"It defies logic that the U.S. government has not provided TPS to Haitian nationals residing in the U.S. in the same way that they have provided that status to other foreigners", the city council noted.

According to U.S. law, TPS may be granted when there is ongoing armed conflict posing a serious threat to personal safety; it is requested by a foreign state that temporarily cannot handle the return of nationals due to environmental disaster; or when "extraordinary and temporary conditions in a foreign state exist, which prevent aliens from returning".

Immigration advocates in Florida have been appealing to the Bush administration to afford impoverished, hurricane-ravaged Haiti the same status that was accorded immigrants from Nicaragua and Honduras after Hurricane Mitch in 1998; and El Salvador immigrants after it suffered the effects of two earthquakes within one month in 2001.



Florida plane crash kills two Jamaicans

Two Jamaicans, one a trainee pilot, were killed following a mid-air collision last month in South Florida.

Stuart Brown, a 25-year-old flight student attending the Pelican Flight Training Center in the United States, was the pilot of a single-engine Cessna 172R which collided with a twin-engine Piper 44 on Dec. 6. Both planes plunged into

the Florida Everglades in Broward County.

Brown, along with passenger Edson Jefferson, also a Jamaican, were killed.

Up to press time the cause of the collision was not known.

According to reports, Brown attended flight school in Jamaica up to late 2005 before moving to the U.S. to continue his training.



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Son of American actors dies in The Bahamas ~ 16-y-o suffers seizure, falls during family vacation, according to lawyer

NASSAU, Bahamas, CMC - The 16-year-old son of American actors John Travolta and his actress wife Kelly Preston died in The Bahamas early this month, their lawyer has confirmed.

Michael Ossi said that Jett Travolta died after suffering a seizure while vacationing with his family.

"At this point, we know that John Travolta and Kelly Preston's only son, Jett, had a seizure," Ossi said.

"All attempts to revive him were unsuccessful," he added.

Ossi said Jett Travolta hit his head after the seizure, but the exact cause of death is unknown. An autopsy was scheduled for Jan. 5.

'WORST DAY'

The lawyer said the body will be transferred to Ocala,

Florida for burial, adding that Jett's death "was completely out of the blue."

"This is the worst day of John's life," Ossi added, revealing that the Travoltas also have an eight-year-old daughter Ella.

Bahamian police reportedly said a caretaker at the West End resort, where the Travoltas were vacationing, found the teenager unconscious in the bathroom. Police said Jett Travolta was taken by ambulance to Rand Memorial Hospital in Freeport and was pronounced dead on arrival.

Obie Wilchcomb, former minister of tourism for The Bahamas, told reporters Jett's death was mourned by the staff and residents of West End, where the Travoltas were beloved members of the community. He said the Travoltas were in The Bahamas for a

gathering of 60 family and friends.

Reports indicate that Jett Travolta had a developmental disability that his parents linked to Kawasaki disease, an inflammatory disorder of the artery walls that most commonly occurs in young children and can lead to heart disease.

Preston told U.S. television viewers in 2003 that, when Jett was two, he became ill with flu symptoms, including fever, rashes and swollen lymph nodes, before a doctor diagnosed him with Kawasaki disease.

John Travolta gained fame in the 1970s when he starred in the television series, "Welcome Back, Kotter", and the movies, "Saturday Night Fever" and "Grease". His career catapulted in 1994 with his second "Best Actor" Oscar nomination, for his role as a hit man in "Pulp Fiction".

Preston has numerous T.V. and movie credits, including a supporting role in 1996's "Jerry Maguire".



Travolta



Preston

U.S. seizes cocaine in Caribbean

CHARLOTTE AMARLIE, USVI, CMC - United States authorities are claiming that their fight against the drugs trade is heading in the right direction, after seizing 100 kilograms of cocaine at the Port of St. John on a ship traveling from Guyana - the second in the U.S. Virgin Islands recently.

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) officers in the USVI said they acted on a tip from the Canada Border Services Agency. Special Agent Waldo Santiago, a spokesman for the DEA, said officers from the U.S. territory in the Caribbean were waiting when the unidentified ship from Guyana stopped in St. Croix late last month.

The officers said they were particularly interested in examining some boxed grocery items after it was discovered during the St. John bust that cocaine was being hidden inside cardboard boxes.

"They contained some spice seasoning, and they were concealed similar to the cargo that was seized by the Canadian authorities," Santiago said.

He said that DEA agents

discovered the drugs destined for Canada inside the lining of the corrugated boxes.

SAME METHOD

They said the drug was hidden exactly the same way authorities in St. John found 276 kilograms in another shipment.

"The dog alerted us that there was something there. Then, our x-ray technology actually narrowed down to where it was," said Santiago, who credited the discovery to Canadian authorities.

"It's very elaborate the way this organization took their time and concealed this cocaine individually."

Up to press time there were no arrests in the most recent seizure, but Santiago said his agency expects authorities in Guyana to cooperate with the investigation.

The latest seizure brings the amount of cocaine seized as a result of the investigation to 376 kilograms, with an estimated street value of \$54.5 million.

U.S. gun smuggling probe targets owner of Belize firm

LOS ANGELES - A United States federal investigation into an alleged gun smuggling operation is focusing its interest on the owner of a Belizean security firm.

According to law enforcement authorities here and internal Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) documents, veteran LAPD officer Johnny Baltazar, who operates a company by the name of Elite Security in Belize, allegedly purchased 10 guns and over 1,500 rounds of ammunition and smuggled them into the Caribbean community (CARICOM) member state.

The LAPD has accused Baltazar, 49, with "exporting firearms without a license, failing to declare firearms he exported and failing to notify his LAPD superiors that he was under federal investigation".

According to the claims, Baltazar bought eight .40 glock handguns from the LAPD

Academy Store, and shipped them along with two other weapons and 1,530 rounds of ammunition to Belize.

The LAPD said Baltazar - who serves on the board of directors of the Oscar Joel Bryant Foundation, an association of African American employees of the Los Angeles Police Department - has been suspended with pay, pending a disciplinary hearing that could result in his firing.

The court documents said U.S. federal authorities are expected to present their findings soon to a grand jury. The documents state that Baltazar bought the handguns from the academy store in Feb. 2007. They said in July 2007 he placed them in a safe, along with a pair of 9-millimeter handguns and the ammunition, and arranged to ship them to Belize.

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VIEWPOINT

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The United States is in trouble; immigrants are part of solution

Among the more promising candidates being touted for appointment to President-elect Obama's Cabinet is Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano, who some believe is on the short list for secretary of Homeland Security. She would be a good choice, not only for her wisdom as a border state leader but also because she seems to get that an educated workforce is the key to economic strength.



MARY SANCHEZ

The one time I heard Napolitano speak in person, she pounded home her view that America needs to seize a "Sputnik moment." That is, we need to grasp how far behind the rest of the world our students are falling in educational achievement in technology, the sciences and math. I agree. We are at the beginning of a painful national reality check, and the time to act is now.

Under the Obama administration, the secretary of Homeland Security will be well positioned to encourage the necessary shifts in attitude, so that policy begins to match some of our nation's most cherished beliefs about ourselves. Such as that we are "a nation of immigrants" and the "land of opportunity".

Let's leave aside for the moment the passionate feelings about immigrants who are among us illegally and consider some facts outlined in a new report by the Migration Policy Institute. For instance: "About one in three immigrants is a person with either a U.S. or foreign college degree". So much for the image of huddled undereducated masses slipping across borders.

EMBARRASSING

One in six members of America's 130 million-person labor force came to our shores an immigrant. In 2007, 15 percent of all college graduates in the U.S. labor force were immigrants. Of the 6.5 million college-educated foreign born, one-third arrived in the last 10 years. About 18 percent of college-educated immigrants were of Latino descent.

And here is the statistic that ought to embarrass U.S. citizens by birth: College-educated immigrants are more likely than native-born graduates to achieve postgraduate degrees. And they are far more likely to be educated in

high-tech, science or engineering - all areas vital to sustaining the nation in the future.

If Napolitano takes the helm at Homeland Security, the agency that handles immigration, she will have the power to make the most of what these immigrants can offer. Time will be on her side. Obama will have plenty of other seas to calm before any real overhaul of immigration law can occur. It's unlikely to happen in his first year in office.

But that just might give Napolitano the time to pursue the difficult work of changing public perception about what immigrants offer. They ought to be viewed not as competitors but as stimulators to the economy. Bill Gates understands that fact. Along with other chief executive officers, he hounded Congress last year to increase the numbers of highly educated immigrants allowed entry into the U.S. In 2007, the 65,000 visas allowed for this group of immigrants were spoken for within the first four months of the fiscal year.

CATALYSTS

The denied immigrants could have become catalysts and coworkers of native-born people.

Consider this other fact from the report: More than 1.3 million college-educated immigrants were underutilized in the U.S. labor market in 2005-2006.

Meaning, many of those who are here are not being used to the best of their abilities. And you can bet that means the trickle-down job creation that comes from the highly educated and motivated classes did not occur. And that hurts U.S.-born people as well, including those sons and daughters who have long forgotten or never knew that their teeming immigrant forefathers did not speak perfect English.

Every economic downturn in U.S. history has produced a backlash against the most recent immigrant arrivals. But maybe this time it can be different. America needs more than ever to retool itself for future economic growth. Immigrants are a source of innovation and inspiration that can help us rebound - just as they always have been.

This article was first posted on Dec. 18, 2008. Janet Napolitano has been named President-elect Barack Obama's designate for secretary of Homeland Security.

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Powerful, abusive women

The abuse of power has infected man from the dawn of time, and as they always say, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Anyone who dominates another, relentlessly and without mercy, abuses their power. And the victims live with their secret shame.

Usually it's women who seem to be always abused by men, at least that's what we are made to believe. But what's even more secret and more shameful, are the many men who live under the rule of domineering women.

Yes, believe it or not, they exist, and they suffer in silence, even as they bury their sorrow in a glass of rum. It's bad enough when a man dominates a woman - I am totally against it - but when a woman dominates a man, it goes against all natural laws and all that is holy.

Think about it, "Man beats wife". Bad as it may sound, it's not really news. After all, it happens all the time. But, "Woman beats husband" is reason to pour ridicule, scorn and derision on



the poor hapless, helpless, harried, harangued husband who would rather die of shame before he called police on her. Imagine him at the police station, and the cops' response.



TONY ROBINSON

"Say what, yu wife beat yu up again? Hahahahahahaha, come, we will escort yu home, so hide behind us."

DISTRESS

And so they live in shame, afraid more of the derision from society, than of the constant, perennial, pummeling from their pugilistic partners.

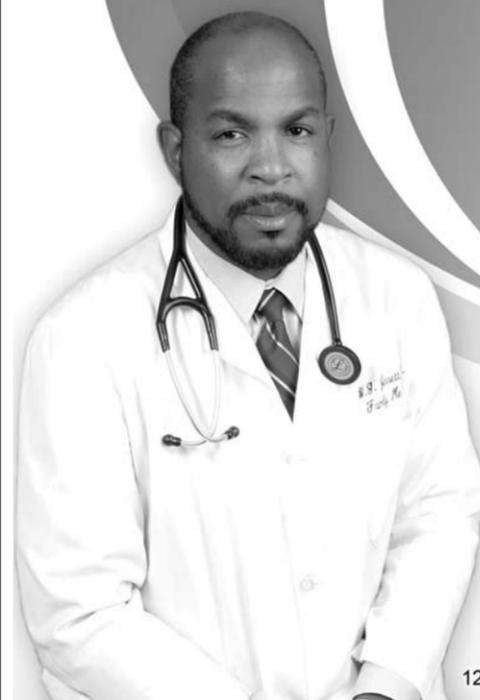
(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)



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VIEWPOINT

CARIB Comments

• **"We've declared assets. Now is the time for us to declare our sexuality"** - ruling Democratic Labour Party member Patrick Todd last month demanding that Barbados's parliamentarians take a lead role in the fight against HIV and AIDS by publicly declaring their sexual orientation.

• **"At any rate, why are we discussing a successor? There is no vacancy"** - Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Patrick

Manning sounding confident in his recovery last month before departing for Cuba to undergo surgery to remove a cancerous tumor.

• **"We ask you Lord to let them take the bribes and vote them out"** - Father Charles Willock last month urging Opposition Antigua Labour Party (ALP) supporters to accept bribes offered to them in the lead-up to the general elections. The Anglican Church moved to distance itself from the priest's statement.



• **"We are far from those moments in which it was possible to isolate Cuba"** - Cuban Leader Raul Castro praising Caribbean countries for standing behind his communist nation when others would not.

• **"We are a part of the global community, and if the roof of the global economy falls in, we too could get wet when the rain comes pouring in"** - Prime Minister Denzil Douglas saying recently that although the St. Kitts and Nevis economy remains



resilient, the country must remain watchful of the global financial situation.

• **"There are lots of treasures in the Caribbean and we have to do a better job of really presenting it"** - St. Kitts and Nevis Tourism Minister Rickey Skerritt warning that increasing competition from new and emerging markets should serve as a wake-up call for the Caribbean.

• **"They must get a signal that the governments are serious, the people are serious...and that we mean business. We must demand respect from them immediately**

and if they do not give it, we must take it" - Nevis Premier Joseph Parry last month calling for a zero tolerance approach to gang violence in the twin island federation of St. Kitts and Nevis.

• **"It is very unfortunate that something like this has happened again"** - Bishop Herro Blair, head of the Peace Management Initiative in Jamaica, last month describing the situation in two volatile communities where residents have been forced to flee their homes in fear.

Compiled from CMC and other sources.



(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

Battered man, abused husband, Manto, Boy, wimp, wuss, p...y whipped. So many words are used to describe the horrors that many men have to live through, and they are real. When I showed my friend the definition of female spousal abuse, he said all that was missing was a photograph of his wife beside it.

"My God man, I can't make a move, I can't do a thing, the woman is like a prison warden in my life."

That, plus the look of obvious distress on the man's

face made me realize that that I was standing face to face with a living breathing victim of an abusive woman. Clearly, women are not socialized to dominate and abuse men. It goes against their nature, as they are genetically programmed to nurture, mother and cater to men. It's the natural order. So when you have a woman who displays this beast-like attitude to her man, it is cause for concern. After all, when woman bites dog, it's big news, not the other way around.

I am here to tell you that

there are countless men living in fear of their women, men who look big and strong on the outside, have high powered jobs, but cannot and dare not make a move or a decision without asking their wives' approval.

We see the comic strips, Maggie and Jiggs, and we chuckle, where the husband has to sneak in the house late at night and she calls him 'insect' and clobbers him with a rolling pin. He is deathly afraid of her, and so are many men, afraid of their women in real life. It is no laughing mat-

ter for some, and they will say, "What is joke to you is death to bullfrog."

'GOLDEN RULE'

There are women who completely and totally dominate their men and every aspect of their lives. Come payday, the man has to hand over the pay check and wait diligently on his subsistence. It falls under the guise that, "She controls the finances and knows how to make a dollar stretch." But in reality, it's the golden rule in effect, which means that she who has the gold, makes the rules. She then decides how much he gets to spend, while she has dominion over his life and can spend on whatever she wants, without his knowledge.

She who controls the purse strings does not wear the apron strings, and money is independence. She decides how the house is run, what is bought, what they eat, when they go out, where they go and how long they stay. Just look for the signs. If and when they do go out, she is the one who says, "Okay, it's time to leave now." No buts about it, he has to go.

If perchance he deigns to go out by himself, his noose extends via the modern technology of the cell phone, which he better have on all the time. How often we have seen these men, out having a good time, when, 'riiiiiinnng', his cell phone goes off, and after answering it, speaking softly of course, he sheepishly looks up and says, "Well, I have to go now, see you guys whenever."

It's no emergency, no serious problem, just the domineering wife beckoning her subject to find his ass home before it's too late. If those women had their way, they would implant a tracking device like they have on vehicles and prisoners, on their men instead.

REFLEX

You'd be amazed at how many men are put on the

clock by these domineering women, and it's so subtle and innocuous, that the victims hardly even see it. But after a while, the men become trained, conditioned like Pavlov's dogs to a conditioned reflex, and respond without knowing why they do what they do. So by 10 p.m., the reflex is to look at his watch and declare, "Oh my, look at the time, I have to go now."

He is the victim of a powerful abusive woman but doesn't even know it. He cannot know it, he cannot admit to it, as society will not allow it. So he lives in denial, saying instead that he's tired, and wants to go home.

But why do men allow this? One theory is that they were victims of powerful abusive mothers, and are therefore conditioned to live under rule of thumb, swapping one despot, one tyrant for another when they get married. These men cannot exist without having a Harridan lording it over their lives. So even though they may live lives of quiet desperation, or even complain bitterly, or try to drown their sorrows, the fact is, they are part and parcel of the whole, and are willing contributors to the mistress servant scenario.

The powerful abusive woman rules supreme. She dictates if and when they have sex, and who goes on top, how many kids they will have, and the ultimate insult, what he should watch on T.V.

"Enough sports, let's watch something more uplifting like Home & Gardening T.V."

They may not breathe fire, have horns on their heads, or look like dragons, but these damsels do distress their men. Some may shout at them, others even physically abuse them, but for most we'll never know, for the powerful abusive woman is as silent, deep and dangerous as the depths of Hades.

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H E A L T H

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Eating healthier, cheaper in tougher times by cooking from scratch

JANE GLENN HAAS

Here's something to chew on: It's easier for older people to save substantially on their grocery bills if they will switch from boxed - or prepared foods - to cooking from scratch.

Janet Little, nutritionist for Henry's Farmers Market, says families of four can eat on \$75 a week and older folks on just about half that if the cooks do a little planning ahead.

With the Food Marketing Institute estimating families in the United States spending a minimum of \$115 a week on groceries, shaving \$40 a week from the bill saves about \$2,000 a year, she says.

Even better: By choosing to purchase raw ingredients to prepare meals at home, consumers can better ensure that they are getting their recommended daily allowance of nutrients, instead of the harder to determine dietary contents of pre-packaged and processed foods.

Question: You say the secret is planning ahead?

Answer: Planning ahead is going to save you money. When we don't have a plan, we spend more money at the grocery and we buy things we may not use and so the food

By choosing to purchase raw ingredients to prepare meals at home, consumers can better ensure that they are getting their recommended daily allowance of nutrients, instead of the harder to determine dietary contents of pre-packaged and processed foods.

rots. When you plan a meal you can stretch the food for three days.

Q: How do you do that?

A: Buy a whole chicken - or two - depending on the size of the family. Roast the chicken and serve it with broccoli and brown rice. The next day, make chicken enchiladas or a casserole. Then there's soup and salad. One item stretched into three different meals.

Q: Got recipes?

A: Of course. Go to www.henrysmarkets.com for lots of recipes.

Q: You also tout other what we would call "old fashioned" solutions.

A: Yes, like oats. You can buy them in bulk at Henry's for 79

cents a pound. They help lower cholesterol and one pound will probably last you a whole week.

Q: Other suggestions?

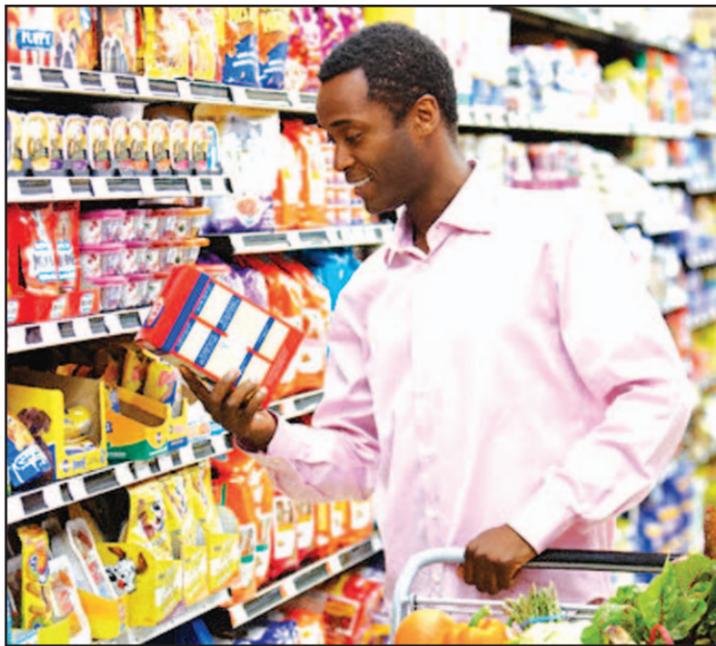
A: It's crazy to buy the 100-calorie snack packs. Buy something similar in bulk and it's a fraction of the cost. Or save money by going meatless once in a while. One of the

recipes.

- Consider meatless meals.
- Choose local and in-season foods which are typically priced lower.

Q: Some things you can't save on, however.

A: Right. You might as well buy milk by the gallon. It's cheaper. You can buy by the half, but your price goes up.



Effective planning of your grocery shopping can save lots of money.

biggest food expenses is meat.

Q: But we need protein.

A: Rely on eggs. They are a great source of protein. I always have a dozen at my house. Hard-boiled eggs are great snack items. There is some cholesterol, but also the yolk contains lecithin and lutene, so it's kind of a wash.

Q: Well, I don't have the time to cook every day, as I once did.

A: Then make a dish and freeze half of it. Eat the frozen half a couple of weeks later and it won't make you think of leftovers.

Q: We have gotten ourselves hooked on convenience foods, haven't we?

A: Here are some tips for trimming the fat from your grocery spending.

- Plan out meals. Only buy the ingredients for meals in your weekly plan.
- Pay attention. Stock up on staples when they go on sale.
- Reduce driving. Don't go to multiple stores to save a few dollars.
- Buy from bulk bins. Buy just what you need.
- Minimize prepared and processed foods and avoid waste. Eat perishables first.
- Freeze your meals in portion sizes.
- Look for budget-conscious

By the way, doctor: What is the healthiest amount of sleep?



DR. ANTHONY KOMAROFF

hours a night, the greater the risk of death.

Question: I heard about a study that found people who sleep six and a half to seven hours a night will live longer than those sleeping eight to nine. What is the right amount of sleep?

Answer: You're asking an important question, but it's hard to answer, and here's why:

Consider the perfect study to answer the question. First, you would recruit a large number of people — say, about 100,000. Then you'd randomly assign some of them to sleep five hours a night, others six, others eight, and so on. You'd also have to figure out some way to make sure people stick with their assigned sleep amounts. Then you'd carefully monitor the health of the study participants — for decades.

You can see how impractical such a perfect study would be. So what we have instead are observational studies that, after following people for many years, find statistical associations between habits and health outcomes. A number of these studies have asked the participants about their sleeping habits. Not all of the results agree, but most suggest that the farther away you get from the "sweet spot" of six to eight

MISSING PROOF

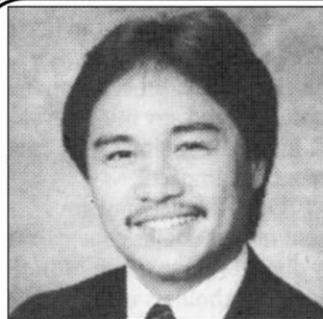
But observational studies can't prove causality, so they can't show, for example, that changing from five hours of sleep a night to six or seven for the next 20 years will help you live longer. An excellent study from the University of Pennsylvania in the United States found that people who sleep less than eight hours a night have lower cognitive performance than people who sleep eight hours or more. If that's true, maybe you should sleep eight and a half hours nightly if your goal is to be clearheaded, but six to seven if your goal is longevity!

What do I do? As a rule, I sleep seven hours weeknights and eight hours on weekends, because those are the amounts I need to feel best. All of the studies I've talked about give "on average" answers. However, we're all different, and some people need more sleep than others. I think you can figure out what your personal sleep requirements are by listening to the wisdom of your body.

Dr. Anthony L. Komaroff is editor in chief, Harvard Health Letter. © 2008 Copyright Harvard Health Publications.

Jane Glenn Haas writes for The Orange County (California) Register. E-mail her at jghaas@cox.net © 2008, The Orange County Register (Santa Ana, California).

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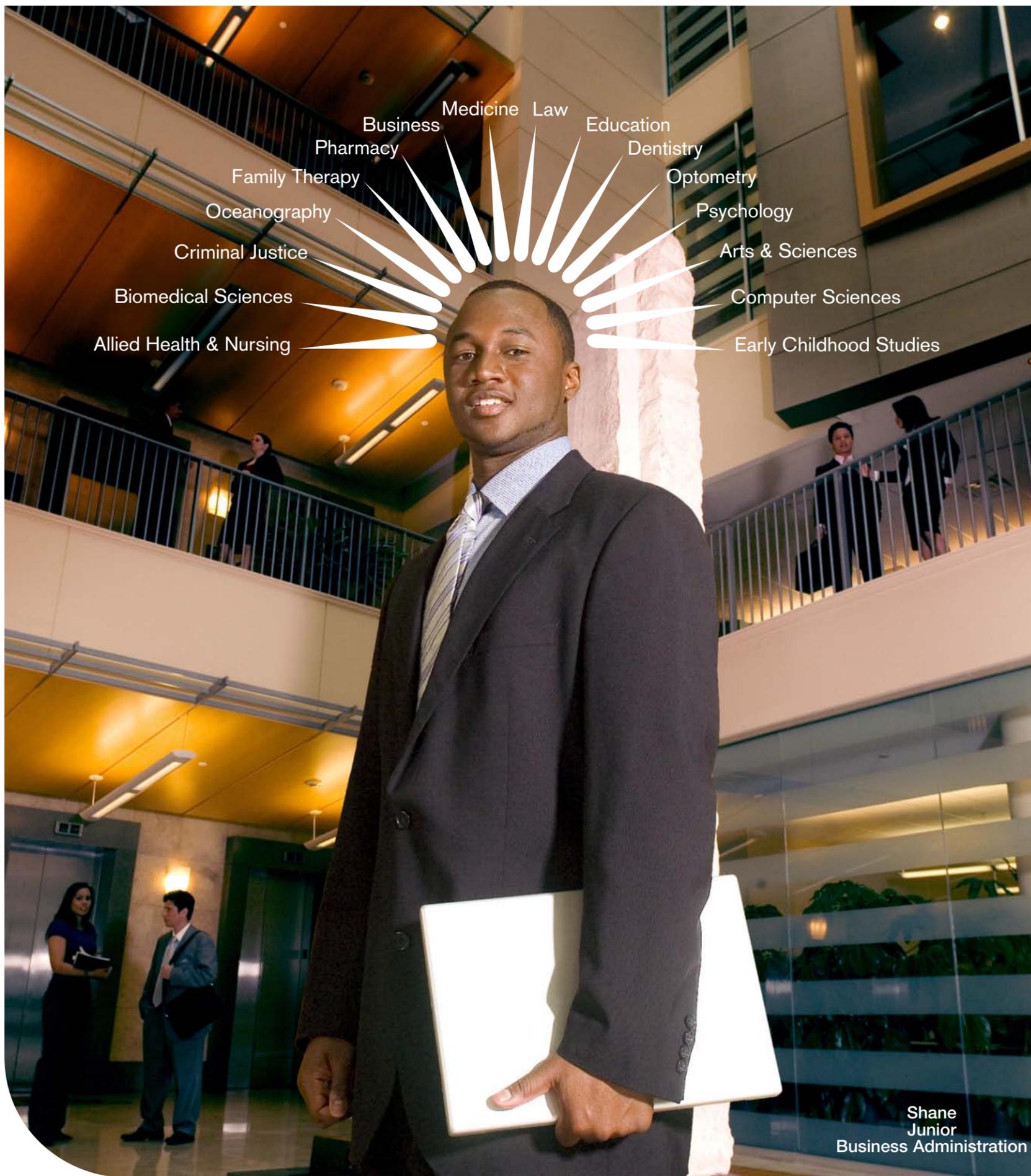
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B U S I N E S S

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U.S. businesses want Obama to lift embargo against Cuba

WASHINGTON - A group of leading United States business organizations has urged President-elect Barack Obama to initiate the process of scrapping the 46-year-old economic embargo against Cuba.

"We support the complete removal of all trade and travel restrictions on Cuba", the group, which includes the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said in an open letter to Obama last month.

"We recognize that change may not come all at once, but it must start somewhere, and it must begin soon".

The organizations told Obama, who will be sworn in as U.S. president on Jan. 20, that it was "simply wrong" that American citizens are free to travel to North Korea or Iran but not to the Caribbean island.

Obama had promised, during the presidential cam-

paign, that he would scrap the regulations sharply limiting the ability of Cuban Americans to visit their homeland or to send money and goods to family members in the Spanish-speaking country.

Obama's election victory has also fuelled calls to normalize relations with Cuba.

Jake Colvin, vice president of the U.S. National Foreign Trade Council, said the letter to the U.S. president-elect, who will officially



Obama

assume office on Jan. 20, was signed by a number of business groups, including the American Farm Bureau Federation, Business Roundtable, National Retail Federation and Grocery Manufacturers Association. The letter cites a 2001 government report that Cuba embar-

go was costing U.S. exporters up to \$1.2 billion annually in lost sales. A poll released last month showed that 55 percent of Miami's Cuban Americans said the U.S. should end the economic embargo, while 65 percent said Washington should re-establish diplomatic ties with the island.

The Caribbean community (CARICOM) recently supported a United Nations' General Assembly resolution - in its 17th year running - calling for end of the economic embargo against Cuba. CARICOM said the "punitive embargo" is of particular concern since it shares a "history, culture and brotherhood with the people of Cuba".

St. Lucia hosts Caribbean Marketplace 2009

Hundreds of tourism business interests are scheduled to attend "Caribbean Marketplace 2009" this month in Gros Islet, St. Lucia.

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), together with the St. Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association and the St. Lucia Tourist Board, will host the event, Jan. 18-20, for the first time in the Eastern Caribbean.

Caribbean Marketplace provides a forum for business meetings that match buyers and suppliers through a computerized program of appointments, making it easier to conduct business meetings. More than 1,000 supplier delegates representing 381 suppli-

er companies from 32 countries, in addition to the 369 buyer delegates from 148 companies representing 22 countries, attended last year's event. In 2008, CHTA reportedly pre-scheduled 16,172 appointments before the start of last year's marketplace.

Supplier participation at Caribbean Marketplace 2009 requires the purchase of a booth.

In addition to CHTA and St. Lucia, sponsors of Caribbean Marketplace 2009 include: American Express, Caribbean Travel & Life, Foster's Group, Interval International, Pegasus Solutions, Starwood Caribbean Collection and Virgin Holidays.

For more information, call

CHTA at 305-443-3040, e-mail: events@caribbeanhotelassociation.com or visit <http://www.caribbeanhoteland-tourism.com/Marketplace.php>.



Air Jamaica intensifies U.S. search for partner

NEW YORK - Air Jamaica is scouring the United States market in the hope of finding a new "strategic" partner that can help the cash-strapped carrier turn around its economic fortunes.

"Whether the partner is another airline, a hotel company or even a financial company, the goals must be in sync: Maintain the brand and its value in the marketplace, and put the airline in a solid financial position," said Bruce Nobles, the new president and chief executive officer of the airline.

He stressed that while Air Jamaica was seeking a partner that can put capital into the airline which has racked up billions of dollars in debt, "it must be a strategic partnership."

During his recent visit to the U.S., Nobles was discussed the current status and future plans for the airline with consumers, members of the travel industry and the media. He said the airline's name and brand would remain unchanged under the divestment program, which is scheduled to take place in



March.

IMPORTANCE

Nobles also said Air Jamaica was committed to serving the needs of the Jamaican community. He described Air Jamaica as a "large and important component" of Jamaica's gross domestic product (GDP), providing 2,000 jobs and bringing 50 percent of the visitors to the island.

Nobles said the airline does not have any immediate plans to start flying to new destinations and was currently evaluating which of its current destinations "make sense and which do not from an economic and passenger demand standpoint."

Last year, Air Jamaica lost \$170 million, and this year it is projected to lose another \$200 million.



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MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BIRTHDAY

~ A Caribbean Today special feature

Florida church to host King 'Live the Dream' celebration

Educator Delores Mixon Smiley will deliver the keynote address at the 12th annual "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration" sponsored by the Plantation Interfaith/Multicultural Committee in South Florida.

This year's event, which carries the theme "Live the Dream - Yes We Can!", will be held at 3 p.m. Jan. 18 at Plantation United Methodist Church, 1001 N.W. 70th Ave. in Plantation.

Dr. King's birthday will be celebrated in the United States with a national holiday on Jan. 19.

Smiley is dean in the Office of Community Education and Diversity Affairs at Nova Southeastern University's Fischler Graduate School of Education and Human Services.

Smiley has written a master of science degree program in instructional design and diversity education, which was launched in 2008. She is currently writing diversity training programs, which will be offered internally and externally online and onsite.

As a result of a gubernatorial appointment, Dr. Smiley sits on the board of directors for the Florida Fund for Minority Teachers. She also

served for five years as president of the Albion, Michigan branch of the NAACP. For the year 2007-2008, she was named "Executive of the Year" at Nova Southeastern University (NSU).

Dr. Smiley has been included in the "Who's Who in Black South Florida".

The MLK celebration will also feature special guest, retired Lieutenant Colonel Eldridge Williams, a World War II veteran.

The annual event is held to honor Dr. King's vision and dream. His legacy will be remembered through words, music, song, and dance, with performances by local schools, churches, and houses of worship. A special feature of the program is the elementary schools' student essay competition themed, "Live the Dream," sponsored and judged by Friends of the Helen B. Hoffman Library.

A reception will follow the ceremony in the Fellowship Hall.

The community celebration is free and the public is invited. For more information, call Dr. Ruby Lobban at 954-749-7864 or Plantation United Methodist Church at 954-584-7500.



MLK memorial fund gets \$1M boost

WASHINGTON, D.C. - One of the top health insurance companies in the United States has made a \$1 million donation to the Washington, D.C. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation, Inc.

Harry E. Johnson, president and chief executive officer of the foundation and former U.S. Secretary of State General Colin Powell, a member of the foundation's Executive Leadership Cabinet, participated in last month's ceremony, which included presentation of a check by UnitedHealth Group's Executive Vice President Anthony Welters.

According to Gen. Powell, UnitedHealth's donation adds to the momentum surrounding the foundation's fundraising effort.

"Sustaining the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. for our children through the creation of this memorial is a



King

cause we are honored to support," said Welters. "The values of equality and social change that Dr. King championed inspire UnitedHealth Group's commitment each day to advancing social responsibility and diversity in ways that foster a healthy society and a healthy company."

TARGET

The check presentation took place at the National

Building Museum, which houses the foundation, which has raised \$102 million out of the needed \$120 million.

UnitedHealth Group joins several other major donors to the foundation. The foundation has submitted its design and financial documents to the National Park Service and is awaiting a construction permit. The memorial is scheduled to be completed approximately 20 months following the beginning of construction.

The foundation is behind building a memorial in Washington D.C. honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It will be built on the National Mall, adjacent to the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial and in a direct line between the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials.

Edited from Black PR Wire



The activist who showed 'universal, unconditional love'

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is a United States holiday marking the date of birth (Jan. 15, 1929) of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It is observed on the third Monday in January each year.

In 2009, King Day will be celebrated on Jan. 19 and will take on an added significance as it will precede the day when Barack Obama, the first black American president, is inaugurated at noon Jan. 20 on the steps of the west front of the U.S. Capitol building in Washington D.C.

Dr. King was 39 when he was assassinated on April 4, 1968 at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. Yet that did not slow the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S.

The late Coretta Scott King, the widow of the civil rights leader, was an activist in her own right. In 1970, she established the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Center in Atlanta, Georgia. This "living memorial" consists of his boyhood home and the Ebenezer Baptist Church, where Dr. King is buried.

Scott King stated on the

website of the King Center: "On this Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, we commemorate the universal, unconditional love, forgiveness and nonviolence that empowered his revolutionary spirit. The King Holiday commemorates America's pre-eminent advocate of nonviolence - the man who taught by his example that nonviolent action is the most powerful, revolutionary force for social change available to oppressed people in their struggles for liberation."



Declaring a national day to honor MLK

How Dr. Martin Luther King Day happened

United States President Ronald Reagan signed a bill into law in the Rose Garden 15 years after Dr. King's death, making the third Monday of January a national holiday to celebrate the birth and life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

But it was a rough journey. Martin Luther King Day was first observed in 1986. Not all U.S. states observed the holiday and others gave it a different name. King Day was only officially observed in

all 50 states for the first time in 2006.

Opposition to honoring Dr. King

America had only honored two individuals with national holidays - George Washington and Christopher Columbus, and many felt there were more worthy people. A senator from Georgia even denounced Dr. King as a communist



King

Others feared the King holiday was meant as a way to make up to African Americans for slavery. Senator Bob Dole pointed out to those critics "I suggest they hurry back to their pocket calculators and estimate the cost of 300 years of slavery, followed by a century or more of economic, political and social exclusion and discrimination." Sen. Jesse Helms led the opposition to the bill and questioned whether Dr. King was important enough to receive such an honor.



Words, 'dream' inspire hope worldwide

As a preacher and civil rights activist, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. has been a continuing inspiration to people all over the world. Here are few of his famous quotes:

• "The chain reaction of evil - hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars - must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of

annihilation." - 1963.

• "If a man hasn't discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live" - 1963.



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Celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. 1.19.09

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'Supernova' Bell makes comeback as heavyweight

GORDON WILLIAMS

Jamaican-born boxer O'Neil Bell will attempt to revive his ring career by moving up in weight class for a bout in South Florida this month.

Bell, a former undisputed world cruiserweight champion, will step up to heavyweight to fight American Willie Palms in an eight round contest at the Seminole Hard Rock Casino in Hollywood on Jan. 14.

The fight card is being billed as "Hard Knocks at the Hard Rock" by promoters Seminole Warriors Boxing.

Bell's career has truly been one of hard knocks. He left his birthplace of Montego Bay, Jamaica as a young child to live with his parents in the United States. A talented all-round athlete, he later

dropped out of college to pursue a boxing career.

Although he boasts an impressive current professional ring record of 26 wins three losses and a draw, with 24 knockouts, the former "Give 'em Hell" Bell turned "Supernova" has struggled recently, losing his last two fights as a cruiserweight.

STRUGGLE

In Mar. 2007 he was beaten by Jean Marc Mormeck in France, losing his hold on the World Boxing Association and World Boxing Council cruiserweight titles he had taken from Mormeck by knocking out the Frenchman just over a year earlier in New York. In April last year he suffered a technical knockout loss to Poland's Tomasz Adamek in an eliminator bout for the International Boxing

Federation title.

The big punching ex-champion, who currently resides the Atlanta-area of Georgia, recently told **Caribbean Today** that he decided to move up in class to attract more lucrative fights in the more competitive and higher profile heavyweight division. He was also reportedly known to struggle with making the 190-pound weight requirement for a cruiserweight. He claims he will have no such problems as a heavyweight.

"I'll be ready," Bell told **Caribbean Today** last month of his preparation for his upcoming bout.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



Jamaica crowned Caribbean soccer kings

Jamaica shrugged off the disappointment of being booted from the next World Cup by winning the 2008 Digicel Caribbean Championship.

Goals by Luton Shelton, both from the penalty spot, earned the Reggae Boyz their fourth regional title, defeating Grenada 2-0 in the final last month at the National Stadium in Kingston.

Both penalties were awarded following fouls on Eric Vernan, who was named most valuable player of the tournament. The win also earned Jamaica a prize of \$120,000.

It was the second Digicel Championship win for Jamaica in three years and added to regional titles the Boyz won in 1991, 1998 and 2005. The result also gave Jamaica's coach John Barnes a winning start to his campaign.

"I am delighted for myself, I am delighted for the team and the country," said the former England international and Liverpool legend.

COMPETITIVE

Barnes, 45, said the quali-



Caribbean Football Union President Austin "Jack" Warner hands the Digicel Caribbean Championship trophy to Jamaica's captain Tyrone Marshall. At left is Captain Horace Burrell, president of the Jamaica Football Federation.

ty of play in the final by the Jamaicans was not their best of the tournament. However, he was pleased the result landed them championship honors.

"Overall it's been a hard tournament," he said. "Grenada came out and did very well. Yes, we got a bit sloppy during the game but overall I am very happy right now."

Grenada collected \$70,000 for the runner-up prize and captain Anthony Modeste was gracious in defeat.

"Congratulations to the Reggae Boyz, they are deserv-

ing champions," he said.

"If we couldn't have the trophy there is no one else we would want to have it," added Modeste, who plays in Jamaica with Portmore FC.

Earlier, in the third place play-off Guadeloupe beat Cuba 5-4 on penalties. All of the top four teams have qualified for the CONCACAF Gold Cup in the United States this summer.

Recently Jamaica failed to make to the final round of CONCACAF World Cup 2010 qualifiers.



Caribbean hoops star shines in U.S. women's pro league

GLENFORD PRESCOTT

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent, CMC – St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) "Basketball Diva" Sophia Young went home for a Christmas vacation with her family after another standout campaign in the United States' Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) season.

The talented Young helped her team San Antonio Silver Stars to the final of the WNBA, where they lost 3-0 to the Detroit Shock. She told **CMC Sports** that losing the final was disappointing and she could not pinpoint a reason for surrendering so easily to the Shock.

"As an athlete you always would like to win and when you don't it is very disappointing... losing the final and so easily was one of those moments that hurt," Young said last month.

"When you look at where our team came from and reaching the final and not winning the title which was right there and needed just for us to grab it...it really was tough...anyway coming so close gives me more reason for having a good season in 2009."

HEROICS

Young's heroics were responsible for taking the Silver Stars into the final after hitting a 14-foot turnaround shot at the buzzer to lift the Silver Stars to a 67-66 win over the Los Angeles Sparks, which forced a deciding Game 3 in the Western Conference Finals.

Asked if that was the possible highlight of her career so far, Young said it was a memorable moment but she was quick to point out that the game should have been decided long before that point.

"We had the game won more or less having been up by 14 points but just allowed too many silly things to happen," she said.

The Silver Stars are expected to begin their 2009 season on June 6 at Phoenix before opening the home slate June 13 against New York.

According to reports, San Antonio will play before a national television audience twice during the regular season with a June 23 home match against Phoenix and an Aug. 29 home game against Detroit, both on ESPN2.

San Antonio will play 34 regular-season games – 17 at home and 17 away - matching up against each Western Conference opponent four times and each Eastern Conference team twice.

Fans will have to wait until August to see a rematch of the 2008 WNBA Finals with the Silver Stars at Detroit on Aug.



Young is shooting for nothing less than a championship.

23 and home against the Shock on Aug. 29.

OUTSTANDING

Young ended the 2008 season with an average of 17.7 points per game, augmented by 5.9 rebounds.

The San Antonio Silver Stars drafted Young fourth overall in the 2006 WNBA Draft. A two-time WNBA All-Star, Young earned first team all-WNBA and all-defensive team honors following the 2008 season after helping San Antonio to their best record in franchise history and a Western Conference title.

The 6-foot-1-inch Young has now completed three WNBA seasons after being a collegiate standout for Baylor University.

She was voted to the WNBA All-Star game in 2007 and in her rookie year 2006, when she led Silver Stars in both scoring and rebounding.

Young was given one of the biggest honors in November when she had her jersey retired by Baylor University. Young played for the Baylor Lady Bears in NCAA, and became a legend at the school when she won the Most Outstanding Player award at the 2005 NCAA tournament, taking them to their first title in the process.

Young is the school's all-time leading scorer with 2,480 points. She said this was her proudest and most memorable moment.

"It is always good to be recognized for your contribution but to have your jersey retired is just so amazing...as a player you always want to leave a legacy and leave something for people to remember you by," she said.

Prior to the start of the start of the 2009 season, the 25-year-old Young, who celebrated her birthday on Dec. 15 will return to Greek team Galatasaray for a second season in Europe.

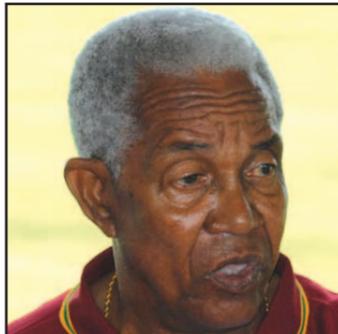


13 West Indians for Cricket Hall of Fame

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has named 13 West Indies players for induction into its Cricket Hall of Fame, which it launched as part of the ICC's centenary year celebrations.

The West Indies inductees as they appear on the ICC's list in alphabetical order are: spinner Lance Gibbs, batsmen Gordon Greenidge and

George Headley, fastbowler Michael Holding, batsmen Rohan Kanhai and Clive Lloyd, fastbowler Malcolm Marshall, batsman Vivian Richards, fastbowler Andy Roberts, all-rounder Garfield Sobers, batsmen Clyde Walcott, Everton Weekes and Frank Worrell.



Sobers

Culture, nature highlight Jamaica's newest tourist attractions

DAWN A. DAVIS

Take in a lung-full of the purest air from a majestic panoramic perspective. Skim 100-foot high treetops with your toes. Marvel at the beauty of Mother Nature from the heavens.

This is the breathtaking experience that beckons adventurous nature lovers to Mystic Mountain, Jamaica's newest attraction nestled among the lush mountains of Ocho Rios.

Opened last July, Mystic Mountain, is sprawled over 100 acres of rain forest with unique tours taking the adventure seeker hundreds of feet above sea level in sky lifts, 'flying' through the woodlands on bobsled rides, and whizzing across the forest canopy on tranopy lines stretching from one end to the other.

The facility also boasts a pavilion designed to look like a 1900s Jamaican railway station, enhanced with a storyboard display of Jamaican culture including the "gold" success of Usain Bolt and other Jamaican athletes at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. With a lookout tower to take in the magnificent surroundings, a restaurant/bar, retail shop, and a small museum highlighting Jamaican culture, the building sits unobtrusively among the tall trees that surround it.

A recent Jamaica Tourist

Not all gloom for Caribbean tourism ~ CTO

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC – Top officials of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) have assured that it was not all gloom and doom for the region's bread and butter tourism sector, even as it grapples with the effects a global economic downturn.

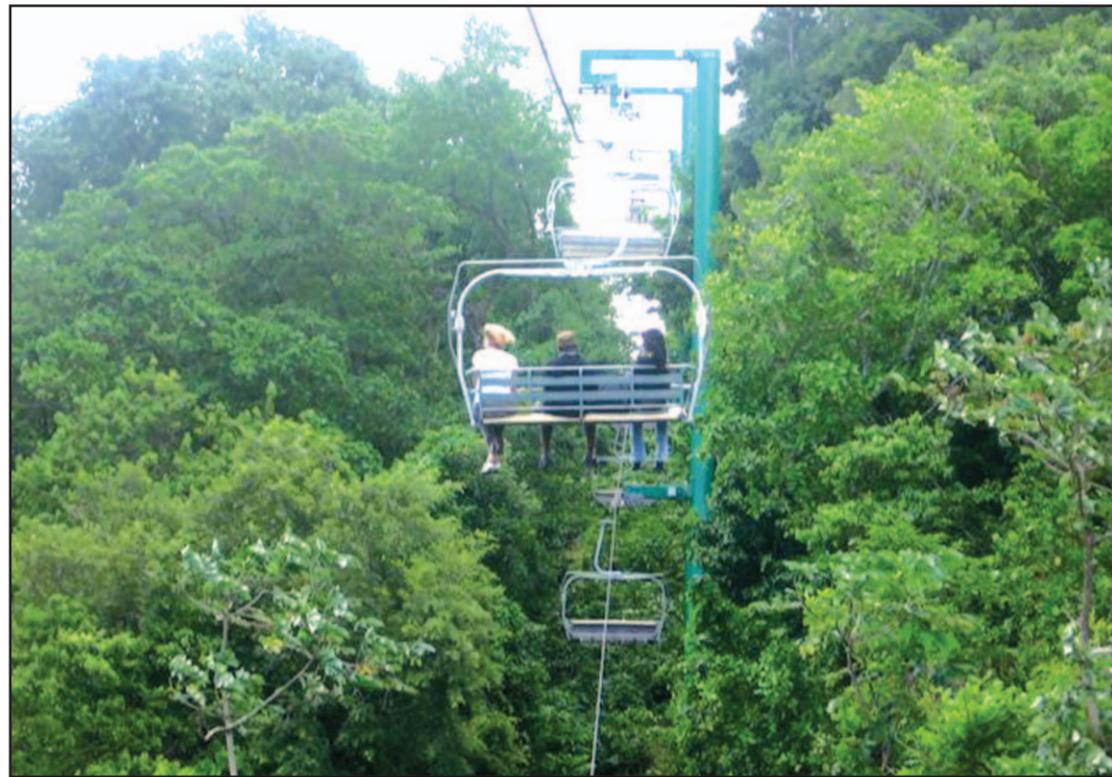
"It's the season of good cheer, notwithstanding the current global economic situation," said CTO Chairman Harold Lovell last month.

Also addressing reporters at a news conference at the CTO's headquarters in Barbados, interim CTO Secretary General Hugh Riley was just as optimistic about the prospects for the tourism sector.

"The forecast is not as sunny and bright as we would want it to be," Riley said, "but I cannot tell you that there are storm clouds either. There are clouds (but) they are not without silver lining."



Riley



Skimming' Mystic Mountain offers a breathtaking view.

Board-sponsored tour of this and other eco-friendly attractions gave observers the ride of their lives and revealed Jamaica's embrace of environmentally responsible tourism.

"We're showing the natural beauty of the island in a new, innovative, exciting way," declared Barbara Lulich, Mystic Mountain's marketing manager. "We operate from a very serious environmental platform."

The 15-minute sky lift ride slowly takes visitors across the property over to the pavilion, giving them a chance to see Ocho Rios and its surroundings from a rare perspective. Chirping birds atop the tallest trees and the sparkling aqua sea below create a meditative mood to strip away the stresses of today's world.

Interestingly, to avoid cutting roads into the forrest and

destroying trees, the sky lift installation, including the chairs and concrete for the stop off points, was done entirely by aerial helicopter said Lulich, adding, "if what we're trying to showcase for our visitors is the beauty of the forrest, you can't go in and chop it down."

Another exciting ride forces visitors to hold on to their hats. A thousand meters of track, twisting and turning around the forest, marks the popular Jamaica Bobsled ride, taking explorers on a roundtrip from the "railroad

station". Amazingly, the stainless steel track was hand-carried and installed to protect the forest.

'GREEN' AIM

Adventure seekers can also "fly" across the property literally strapped to steel cables. Helmeted and buckled on, the five-pronged flight, at what felt like "lightning" speed, left a blur of green. And green it will remain, as the property owners generate their own electricity with the use of fuel that stores the current in batteries for nighttime use. Lulich said the facility will soon move to wind technology, generating power from windmills. She also showed off the property's waterless composting toilet that utilizes organic material to turn the waste into fertilizer for the healthy forest.

Eager to pass on environmentally-friendly concepts, the owners have contributed a million Jamaican dollars to the Environmental Trust to educate Grade 6 students on climate change and the environment. Another million Jamaican dollars went to the Jamaican Bobsled Federation to complete their training facility at G.C. Foster College in St. Catherine.

CHUKKA

Want to get your feet wet, or better yet, get down and dirty? Then Green Globe Certified Chukka Caribbean

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 16)

Tourism is a multi-billion dollar industry for the Caribbean and the leading money earner for several small island economies. Lovell, who is also the tourism minister for Antigua and Barbuda, said that the region really had no choice but to meet the challenges as they arise and to ensure that the livelihoods of the thousands throughout the region who depend on tourism can be protected.

Already, the global economic situation has been blamed for a number of layoffs in the sector, with one of the region's largest hotel chains, Sandals Resorts, sending home over 600 workers in Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Jamaica and St. Lucia; while The Bahamas-based Atlantis hotel has laid off 800 employees.

Lovell also said that the unprecedented world economic crisis has presented the

region with a tremendous opportunity to bring a sense of urgency to the much talked about "One Caribbean" marketing campaign, which has the aim of shoring up regional tourism markets. Caribbean leaders have mandated tourism officials to raise millions of dollars to promote the region as a single destination.



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Jamaica to introduce CARICOM passport

KINGSTON, Jamaica, CMC - Jamaica is preparing to launch the Caribbean community (CARICOM) passport this month.

Jennifer McDonald, the chief executive officer of the Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA), said the document will bear the

CARICOM logo and the words "Caribbean Community" on the cover. The CARICOM passport will also bear the country's coat of arms with the word "Jamaica" as the issuing state beneath.

CARICOM heads of government have approved of the issuing of the regional travel document, which has already been introduced in several member states, including Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, St. Vincent and Guyana.

McDonald said the introduction of the CARICOM passport this month will not interfere with the validity of current passports.



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St. Lucia cancels rum and food festival

CASTRIES, St. Lucia, CMC - St. Lucia's tourism calendar suffered its first casualty of the current global economic crisis, with officials saying further cuts could be made to events planned for 2009.

Tourism Minister Allen Chastanet said last month that the Ministry of Tourism and the St. Lucia Tourist Board have been undertaking a review of its program of events and decided that the country was not able to host its "Rum and Food Festival" this month.

Organizer of the festival Neysha Soodeen, told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) that it was disappointing that the Jan. 15-18 event was being cancelled due to the

economic downturn and its impact on the tourism industry.

"While we are disappointed that the event cannot now take place before the Caribbean Marketplace in January, having had almost all the planning in place, we do understand the need to allocate scarce financial and technical resources to other more vital marketing components of the island's tourism sector at this time," Soodeen said.

The event was due to take place at the same location that will be used by the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA) for its annual Caribbean Market Place show on Jan. 18-20.



Culture, nature highlight Jamaica's newest tourist attractions

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15)

Adventures is for you. The fun-packed nature adventure tours include horseback riding, canopy tours, river tubing, adventure and dogsled rides (with rescued dogs), and dune buggy tours through the scenic fishing village of Sandy Bay. Founded in 1983 by Danny Melville in Ocho Rios, the so-called "attraction capital of the Caribbean", the business grew, and in 2000 the Melville family partnered with John Byles to create what is today one of the most popular adventure destinations in the Caribbean. The company now has operations in The Bahamas, Belize, and Turks and Caicos.

By far, the most popular ride, at least among the team of observers, was the dune buggy that traversed a muddy, dusty trail through the Sandy Bay hills to 1,200 feet above sea level.

Stop off points gave riders a stunning view of the far-off mountains and valleys that shape the landscape.

Knowledgeable guides pointed out herbal plants, fruit trees, an old dam, and old plantation ruins that still mark the unspoiled countryside.

"Every employee at Chukka Caribbean Adventures has made a contribution to the success of our company being able to reduce its environmental impact and to continue to meet the rigorous standards set by Green Globe," said Mark Hylton, the company's general manager. "The natural attractions of Jamaica and our other Caribbean destinations are an integral part of the tours that we sell. We have to be responsible caretakers to ensure these irreplaceable assets remain intact for future generations."

Some of the future generation are employed by Chukka, most of whom live within 20 kilometers from the property.

WILDTHING

If you are a sea lover, a soothing yet stimulating catamaran cruise is the way to go. Wildthing Catamaran's sunset cruise shows the other side of Jamaica, sailing along Negril beach and the ragged cliffs along the way to the famous Rick's Cafe in search of the perfect sunset.

With drinks and pounding reggae music, seafarers counted starfish dotting the bottom of the crystal clear sea. But, the ultimate experience was the brilliant orange sunset with a backdrop of young divers plunging into the sea from the "mile-high" cliff at

the cafe's edge.

OUTAMENI

Some seek adventure, some seek thrills, others want to relive the historic past. Outameni Experience, in Coopers Pen, just between Montego Bay and Ocho Rios, brings Jamaican culture and heritage alive with an interactive tour through a Taino, (Jamaica's first inhabitants) village, a slave ship and living quarters, Spanish and British plantation, a rural Chinese shop, Indian village, and today's civilized Jamaica.

On a directed tour with Nanny, a spiritual guide, a group experienced what it was like when the Spaniards happened upon Jamaica and the subsequent extinction of the Tainos. A moving portrayal of a slave being whipped and shackled quieted spectators, followed by a mulatto plantation manager who reminded observers of a class system that still exists today.

Outameni is well named, for it showcased the many nationalities that make up the island nation of Jamaica. The "Chinie" shops that dot many country areas and the Indian village reminded observers of the indentured laborers that were brought to Jamaica after slavery was abolished. The experience brings it all together with a slice of city life featuring a dreadlocked dancer and his skimpily clad partner at a "wicked" dancehall party. One love!

Story and photograph by Dawn A. Davis, a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.



Haitians celebrate Independence with Miami music festival Jan. 17

It will be staged more than two weeks after the official date of Haiti's Independence, but an annual United States celebration to mark the event should be well worth the wait.

The 2009 Haitian Independence Festival is set for **Jan. 17** at Bayfront Park, downtown Miami, Florida.

Presented by Voila, in conjunction with Kaliko Productions, the Caribbean-flavored festival is scheduled to feature a line-up of popular entertainment figures, including CaRiMi, T-Vice, Nu-Look, Krezi Mizik, Zenglen, Hangout, Suave, Gabel, Djakout Mizik and the group Kassay.

Festival promotion includes a **Jan. 16** press conference, followed by an official party to be attended by some of the show's artistes. On Jan. 18 there is a party at Marabou Café in Pembroke Pines. Bouyon Night is scheduled for **Jan. 19**.

Haiti officially celebrates



Nu-Look

its Independence on **Jan. 1**.

Other Haitian entertainment events scheduled for South Florida in 2009 include:

- **Mar. 14** – Haitian Gospel Festival, Senator Gwen Margolis Amphitheater, North Miami Beach.
- **May 16** – the 11th Annual Haitian Compas Festival, Bicentennial Park, downtown Miami.
- **Nov. 7** – RASIN festival, Bayfront Park.



Rookie wins Montserrat's 2008 soca monarch crown

BRADES, Montserrat, CMC – It was a field that included a three-time champion, multiple road march winners and an international recording artiste, but it was a first-time participant who emerged victorious in the 2008 Montserrat Soca Monarch last month.

Rondell Meade outclassed 11 other competitors with his popular tune “My Festival” to win the crown in his first attempt, ahead of former road march champion Flying Dove and dancehall/hip-hop crossover artiste Kulcha Don.

Flying Dove was judged to be the first runner-up for his rendition of “Rootar Stylee”, while the United States-based Kulcha Don, who performed “Wickedest

Whine”, finished as the second runner-up.

FAVORITE

Meade was among the pre-show favorites and did not disappoint the audience as he had them singing along and waving as he proclaimed “I love my festival, I love it!”

In the end, there appeared to be no doubt in the minds of most of the spectators, who had already proclaimed him to be the new soca king even before the judges' scorecards were tabulated.

Meade was also among the 10 finalists in the calypso monarch competition last month.



T&T 'village' adds spice to ING Miami Marathon

The spirit and culture of Trinidad and Tobago, including steel pan music and cuisine from the twin-island republic, will be showcased this month in downtown Miami, Florida.

Visionz Entertainment, Marketing & Promotions Inc will host the second annual “Trinbago Village” on Brickell Avenue during the ING Miami Marathon scheduled for **Jan. 29**.

The entertainment pro-

gram, which will include live music, will run from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Last year's event featured appearances by Gerard Greene, T&T's consul general; Neki Mohan, from Channel 10 News; Arthur Joseph, “Deal or No Deal” winner; and Papa Keith, radio personality from 99Jamz). There was also a special musical performance by Miami Pan Symphony.



91-y-o Bermudan actor gets ready to meet real-life Queen Elizabeth II

A 91-year-old Bermudan-born actor been named in the Queen's New Year Honors List.

Earl Cameron has been given a CBE for services to drama after a career spanning 70 years, including a role in the movie about Britain's royal highness.

Cameron, who now lives in Warwickshire, England, is set for a real-life meeting with Queen Elizabeth II - just two years after his role opposite Helen Mirren in the Oscar-winning film “The Queen”.

Cameron, widely regarded as the first black actor to break the color barrier in the United Kingdom film industry, told reporters late last month that he was looking forward to visiting Buckingham Palace to receive his award from the Queen.

“I played an artist who painted Helen Mirren's portrait in ‘The Queen’, so I have already had a trial run,” he said.

“It never occurred to me I would come up for any kind of award like this.”

HUMBLE START

Cameron was born in Bermuda in 1917, and grew up on Angle Street, Hamilton just yards away from the current site of the Liberty Theatre. He joined the Merchant Navy as a young man and sailed mostly between New York and South America before the outbreak of World War II diverted his ship to the U.K.

Unable to get back to Bermuda without a passport, he took menial jobs to pay the bills.

Two years later, while working in the kitchen of a restaurant, he saw a play in the West End, “Chu Chin Chow”, a musical comedy based on the story of “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves”. A few weeks later, a small part in the play opened up – and Cameron, who had friends in the production, gladly took the role.



Cameron

The play ran until 1946, becoming the longest-running musical in the West End during its time.

BIG BREAK

Cameron's big break came in “Pool of London”, a 1951 film about a diamond robbery that, unusually for its time, featured a black actor in a leading role. That first role, as a Jamaican sailor, sparked the beginning of a movie, theater and television career that has lasted almost seven decades.

Cameron's popularity on the big and small screen has seen him star with actors including Sean Connery in the James Bond movie “Thunderball”, in which he played the Caribbean assistant Pinder.

He also starred alongside Richard Attenborough and his friend Sidney Poitier in the 1973 film “A Warm December”, a love story set in the English countryside.

- CMC



Black History Month

February is Black History Month, and this year it may quite possibly be the most special ever. Join Caribbean Today as we celebrate the fantastic strides that we have made and continue to make, as we salute the giants of black history. This is your chance to salute and wish our new president all the very best.

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Caribbean grapples with the politics of dual citizenship

PETER RICHARDS

When Jamaica's chief justice disqualified Daryl Vaz from sitting in Parliament last April, it brought into focus the complications surrounding dual citizenship, not only in that country, but throughout the entire English-speaking Caribbean.

Vaz, a member of the ruling Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), was disqualified on the basis that he "voluntarily" renewed his United States passport and used it to travel overseas on numerous occasions.

He has appealed the ruling, as lawyers representing the defeated People's National Party's candidate in the 2007 general election Abe Dabdoub are urging the Court of Appeal to affirm the decision and declare their client the duly elected legislator.

A judgment is expected soon, but Prime Minister Bruce Golding has already indicated that he would call fresh general elections if the ruling goes against Vaz, thereby reducing his slim majority in the 60-member legislature to 31.

Caribbean countries will no doubt be following the outcome of the Jamaica case closely, since many of their constitutions include a provision disqualifying dual citizens from politics.

"The issue of dual citizens and their eligibility for higher office in the Caribbean has been on the agenda most forcefully in the last two years. This issue has surfaced not only in Jamaica, but also in Trinidad and Tobago, St. Kitts and Nevis, Guyana and Grenada," said the Jamaica-based Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CaPRI), which has just released a study on the matter.

"The study was conceived in response to the possible instances of breaching this proscription all over the

Caribbean," said Kim Marie Spence, one of the authors. She noted that in the various Caribbean islands where the matter has surfaced, it has "became a political and personal issue. However, CaPRI noted that, with dual citizenships increasing and the Caribbean territories making a great effort to involve their respective diasporas in the development of their homelands, it is an important point of the body politic to discuss," Spence said.

LOYALTY CONFLICTS

The study, titled "Dual Citizenship and Political Representation in Jamaica", was compiled using a 10-year survey of legislation in Jamaica, along with a sampling of the discussion in the Jamaican media. CaPRI said it found that potential conflicts of loyalty arose less than one percent of the time, and these conflicts often applied to the minister responsible for the specific policy area under legislation. The study also found that the majority of acts were fairly mundane, dealing with the very-localized sphere of constituency work.

"It is the conclusion of CaPRI that it is time to move beyond personal dynamics and realize that this is a national issue.

Jamaica is at a global crossroads and it is necessary for us to explore fully the ramifications of dual citizenship," Spence said, adding that CaPRI wants a national debate on the clauses, rather than just a facile statement that the law is the law.

She added that the political space for discussions on revising or keeping the relevant clauses is often limited, "especially when majorities are razor-thin, then it is treated as a political power issue, rather than strictly a constitu-

tional issue."

Given the different circumstances under which persons become dual citizens - birth, marriage or naturalization among others - and the high rate of returning residents, the issue needs a decision. Section 40 (2) of the Jamaican Constitution specifies that "No person shall be qualified to be appointed as a Senator or elected as a member of the House of Representatives who (a) is by virtue of his own act, under any acknowledgment of allegiance, obedience or adherence to a foreign Power or State". Similar clauses are

defeated candidates had brought election petitions asking the court to declare their nominations null and void because they held dual citizenship at the time. However, fresh general elections later that year meant that the court proceedings had become purely academic and the matter has never really been resolved.

COMPLICATIONS

But the issue re-surfaced in the Nov. 5 general elections of 2007, when attorney Anan Ramlogan warned voters that "their votes may be wasted" if they supported two

and thus has no 'escape clause' - would not have the option of doing," the group noted. However, the study also found that widening the pool of eligible representatives to include the diaspora enhances the overall quality of the political process.

"We found that this had stronger backing, due to the fact that the majority of our tertiary-educated population - 85 percent - emigrates. Trade theory indicates that open economies are more likely to operate at optimal efficiency, leading to aggregate welfare gains. It is fair to assume a similar within the political system, through the effect of widening the pool of suppliers," it said.

Spence believes that an examination of both hypotheses was very useful, with the study focusing on the possible trade-off between capacity and commitment.

"For example, not all foreigners have capacity. Not all citizens are committed to the country. Widening the eligibility to Parliament could enhance the quality of the political process. Many Caribbean nationals emigrate to become better-educated," she said. "We do not want to give the impression that all members of the diaspora would add value just because of living abroad -- individual merit is still important."

CaPRI said that while an international survey has demonstrated that the global trend appears to be towards more rather than less openness, when it comes to matters of citizenship, many countries, such as Japan, Germany, Iceland, Austria, Peru, Burma and Indonesia, all bar dual citizenship. Its message for Jamaica and by extension the Caribbean: "It is up to Jamaica and Jamaicans to decide which works best for us".

- CMC



Jamaica's case involving Dabdoub, left, and Vaz brought focus to the complications of dual citizenship.

also found in the constitutions of Trinidad and Tobago, St. Vincent, Guyana, St. Kitts and Nevis, The Bahamas, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada and St. Lucia.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the issue of dual citizenship surfaced during the last two general elections. Following the 2001 general elections, Justice Ivor Archie ruled that the constitutional rights of two junior ministers were not breached by the attempts to unseat them from the House of Representatives after two

Opposition candidates, because they had performed a "voluntary" act by applying for British and U.S. passports, respectively. In the study, CaPRI said it found little empirical support for the hypothesis that an individual who has "pledged allegiance to a foreign power" may offer less than full commitment to either country.

"The risk is that, at the margins, the individual in question might make trade-offs that an individual who holds only one citizenship -

Caribbean tourism will be hardest hit by economic slowdown ~ ECLAC

UNITED NATIONS - The United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has warned that Central America and the Caribbean will be most affected by stagnation in tourism caused by the global financial crisis.

According to ECLAC's "Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean 2008", about 75 percent of tourists to

the English-speaking Caribbean come from developed economies that are experiencing a recession.

The United Nations' World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) estimates that, in 2008, regional tourism grew between two percent and three percent, compared to 6.6 percent last year. UNWTO projects that tourism to the region will expand even less in 2009, estimating that it will be "somewhere between zero

percent and two percent".

'DECCELERATION'

ECLAC said Caribbean tourism began experiencing a "strong deceleration" between June and Aug. 2008, due to "increasing deterioration of real income and consumer expectations, the volatility of exchange rates, and restraints on consumer loans due to the financial crisis". It said tourism is one of the economic activities in the region that

has flourished most in recent years, noting that its importance has increased "as a generator of value-added and income".

According to ECLAC, tourism expenditures in the English-speaking Caribbean - with the exception of Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago - are equivalent to 15 percent to 41 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). In the first eight months of 2008, ECLAC said tourist arrivals in

the Caribbean grew by only three percent.

It said between June and August, demand for tourism services in the Caribbean came to a "standstill, due to the lower number of visitors to The Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda and Puerto Rico - four destinations visited mainly by United States and European travelers".



R E G I O N

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Three more members of 'Grenada 17' released

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada, CMC – Three prisoners, who were among the infamous "Grenada 17" jailed for the 1983 murders of former Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and several of his Cabinet colleagues, have been released from jail here.

The decision was made last month by the local Mercy Committee, which has advised Governor General Carlyle Glean to remit the balance of the sentences of Hudson Austin, Colville McBarnette and John Ventour. Based on this advice, the governor general issued the necessary documents, clearing the way for their immediate release.

A release issued by the Office of the Prime Minister stated that prison reports had shown that "all three men have given leadership to the prison population during their incarceration at Richmond Hill".

The Tillman Thomas

administration also said that the decision to free the men was based on the recommendations by Supreme Court Justice Francis Bell in his re-sentencing judgment last year.

"The previous (Keith Mitchell) administration did not pay heed to Justice Bell's recommendations and it was imperative that this administration give effect to the learned judge's counsel", the release noted.

RE-SENTENCED

In the re-sentencing judgment, Justice Bell handed down 40-year jail terms to each of the men. He, however, recommended that Austin, who has been credited for his role in rebuilding the prison after the passage of Hurricane Ivan, be considered for special remission based on his conduct and service to the prison.

The judge also recommended "a Prison Board review within six months or as



Bishop

recommended by the medical officer assigned" in the case of Ventour, who suffers from prostate cancer.

Justice Bell also recommended "a board review of the sentence of Colville McBarnette within 12 months or as recommended by the medical officer assigned to the prison in light of his health issues."

In Dec. 2006, Andy Mitchell, Vincent Joseph and Cosmos Richardson were released, after spending 23 years in jail for firing the shots that killed Bishop. Prior to that, Phyllis Coard, the lone female member of the group and the wife of the former deputy prime minister and apparent mastermind of the coup Bernard Coard, was set free in 2000 on medical grounds.

Last year, another three members of the Grenada 17 - Lester Redhead, Christopher Stroude and Cecil Prime - walked out of the Richmond Hill prison at the order of Justice Belle. That leaves seven members of the group in jail.

St. Lucia offers three-month amnesty for illegal migrants

CASTRIES, St. Lucia, CMC – The St. Lucia government has announced a three-month amnesty, beginning Jan. 1, 2009, for Caribbean community (CARICOM) nationals living in the country illegally, to have their status regularized.

Home Affairs Minister Guy Meyers said that the grace period would apply only to people who have lived here for three years or more on a continuous basis; do not have a criminal record either in St. Lucia or their native land; and are not deportees.



Meyers

However, he said that even then, the guaranteeing of permanent residence or citizenship would not be automatic.

"The only persons who have a legal right as a citizen of St. Lucia are persons who are born in St. Lucia," Meyers said.

"We will deal with the necessary processing and engage in background checks to ensure that you are who you claim to be and have been contributing to the development of the country.

"Once we are satisfied with that, then we will extend citizenship to the individual."

Meyers said that St. Lucia intends to seek similar treat-

ment for its nationals who are living illegally in other CARICOM countries.

CRACKDOWN

The national security minister said that once the amnesty expires at the end of March, local authorities would undertake a massive crackdown on illegal immigrants.

The previous St. Lucia Labour Party government had approved a six-month amnesty that expired on May 31 last year, but the present administration said that a considerable number of eligible persons were unable to take part for a variety of reasons.

There are an estimated 10,000 people living illegally in

St. Lucia, with nationals of Guyana comprising the biggest single group.

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