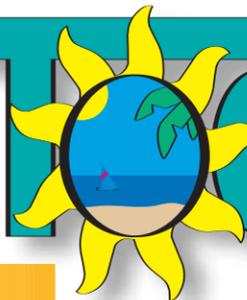


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Vol. 20 No. 3

THE MULTI AWARD-WINNING NEWS MAGAZINE



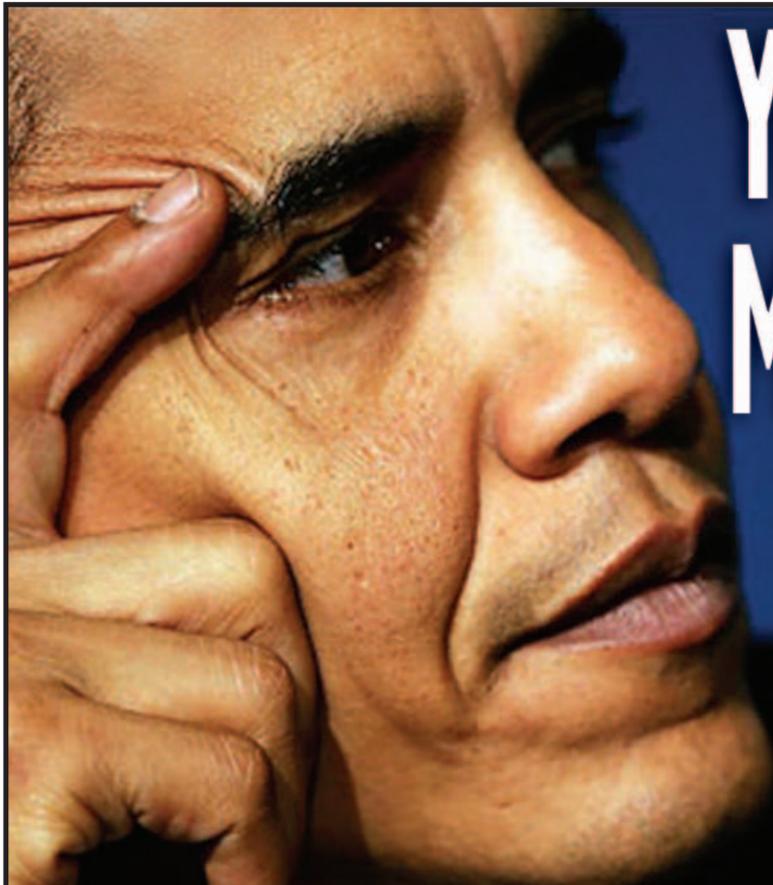
This may not be the year you celebrate Valentine's Day in an elegant restaurant. Or, maybe you're skipping your intimate lobster dinner to trim your budget. Thank goodness chocolate, the ambrosial route to romance, is still affordable, page 11.



With intense global economic storm clouds now threatening on the horizon, Jamaica's financially troubled national carrier has unveiled a new business plan that calls not only for the ditching of jobs and aircraft, but also some unprofitable routes in the U.S., page 14.



Tanya Ragbeer, left, has transformed the tragic loss of her daughter Tatiana into opportunities for others via TATI, Inc., a non-profit organization with a mission to unite, educate, and mentor Caribbean American youth to become productive citizens and leaders, page 15.



YOUR MOVE, MR. PRESIDENT

~ Caribbean people in the United States, the region and the world were overjoyed when Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th American president. Now they are waiting - and hoping - for the new commander-in-chief to connect with them, pages 4 and 5.

EVERYTHING IS GOOD

Jamaica's Florida-based World and Olympic sprint champion Veronica Campbell-Brown, happily married and training hard, has her focus set on taking the double - 100 and 200 meters - at this year's IAAF World Championships in Athletics, page 17



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INSIDE

News2	Health9	Tourism/Travel14	Business19
Black History Month6	Food11	Feature15	
Viewpoint7	Arts/Entertainment12	Sport16	



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Bahamas senator detained in Travolta extortion plot resigns

NASSAU, The Bahamas, CMC - A Bahamian lawmaker accused of being involved in a plot to extort money from American actor John Travolta, after his teenage son died, has resigned.

Senator Pleasant Bridgewater, who was among three people detained as police here investigated the alleged scheme, was charged late last month with abetment to extort and conspiracy to extort. She was released on \$40,000 bail.

However, Bridgewater vowed to prove her innocence of the "untrue and unfair charges" that resulted from actions she took in her capacity as a lawyer.

Up to press time police had also declined to explain what the alleged scheme involved.

Another politician, former Tourism Minister Obie Wilchcombe, and ambulance driver Tarino Lightbourne, were also taken into custody by the authorities. Wilchcombe, who said he was a close friend of Travolta, was released pending further investigations. The ambulance driver remained in police custody up to press time,

although he had not been charged. A police source said he could possibly face a charge of attempted extortion.

EXTORTION

Jett Travolta, 16, died on Jan. 2 after a seizure he had while his family was vacationing on Grand Bahama. Lightbourne was the one who rushed the younger Travolta to hospital and has since spoken publicly - including an appearance on United States television - about his efforts to revive him.

Travolta's lawyers recently disclosed that the family fell victim to persons seeking to extort from them, but declined to divulge the suspects' demands or what threats were made if they did not get what they asked for.

Jett was the only son of Travolta, 54, and his wife, actress Kelly Preston, 46. His body was cremated in The Bahamas and his ashes taken to Florida, where a memorial service was held.



Bridgewater



Wilchcombe

Caribbean American residents form fastest growing group in South Florida health care

MIAMI - A union representing health workers in South Florida says Caribbean nationals are the fastest growing group of that sector.

"It has been an interesting demographic transformation," said Monica Russo, president of the Florida State Council of the Service Employees International Union.

"The newer folks are from Haiti and Jamaica and all across the West Indies," she added.

Russo said the majority of Caribbean nationals in South Florida seek careers as home health aides, medical assistants, nurses, surgical technicians, among others. The union boss said, in Lauderhill and Lauderdale Lakes, two Broward cities with a high concentration of Caribbean immigrants, technical schools

offering specialties in health care are multiplying.

GROWTH

Some schools say the community grew around them, but newer schools say they were drawn to the area by the concentration of potential students.

"We build our schools through referrals," said Bernadette Edwards, senior admissions representative at the American Institute School of Health Careers in Lauderdale Lakes.

"We're not just selling a program, we're selling a dream," she added, revealing that over 60 percent of her students are of Caribbean ancestry.

The scene is similar at MedVance Institute, another health school in Lauderdale Lakes, where more than 50

percent of the students are from the Caribbean. Jamaican Michael Hayle, 48, a father of four, said he is studying to be a surgical technician at MedVance Institute. He said he worked for years in Georgia as a janitor in a health care facility, and that he had a hard time finding a similar job when he relocated to South Florida last year. He said he then decided to try something new.

"My only regret is that I didn't start sooner," he said.

Pauline Bremmer, another Jamaican native, said she has just finished a 15-month surgical technician program, along with her 18-year-old son Jerome. Both graduated from MedVance with perfect averages.



Trinidadian accused in N.Y. 'green card' scam

NEW YORK, CMC - A Trinidadian-born resident of Queens, New York faces multiple charges for an alleged scheme in which he is accused of promising to get official United States "green cards" and other documents for dozens of Trinidadian immigrants but instead stole nearly \$100,000.

Nazim Hosein, 36, was arrested last month when he arrived on a flight from Port of Spain and was later arraigned on multiple charges including grand larceny, criminal possession of stolen property and scheme to defraud.

Prosecutors claim Hosein duped dozens of members of the Trinidad and Tobago community in New York by promising to speed up their application process. They allege that he claimed to know a federal employee who could assist them to get their documents for fees ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000.

Hosein pleaded guilty. His lawyers declined to comment on the matter.

DEAD DREAMS

Prosecutors said he told the alleged victims to meet

him at on Oct. 10, 2008 to receive their documents, but that they waited more than five hours not knowing that Hosein was in Trinidad.

"The victims in this case are all hardworking immigrants who bought into the defendant's alleged assurances to hasten their American Dream and trustingly turned over large sums of money to him. Instead of a brighter future, they found their dreams quashed by the defendant's alleged unscrupulous actions and their money gone," District Attorney Richard A. Brown said.

Hosein, who was released on \$100,000 bail, could face seven years in prison if convicted.



Barbadian pleads guilty to smuggling 'date rape' drugs into the United States

BUFFALO, New York - A Barbadian national has pleaded guilty of smuggling "date rape" drugs into the United States.

Warren Maynard, 51, pleaded guilty in a U.S. federal court here of smuggling the illegal drugs in containers marked "religious water".

He had been charged with a felony for international narcotics smuggling and appeared before U.S. District Judge William M. Skretny.

Prosecutors said Maynard, who had been living in Brooklyn, New York, was arrested Oct. 16 at the Lewiston-Queenston Bridge in upstate New York by U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents. Acting U.S. Attorney Kathleen M. Mehlretter said Maynard had secreted ketamine - an illegal "date rape" drug - in 43 bottles of what was labeled religious water.



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- Revel in the sights and sounds of Carnival during this month's JAM at MAM celebration at the Miami Art Museum
- Enjoy "All That Jazz @ the Miami-Dade Public Library," featuring activities and concerts your whole family can enjoy

Find more Black History Month events and activities by visiting miamidade.gov or calling 3-1-1.



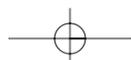
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OBAMA'S INAUGURATION

~ A Caribbean Today special feature

Caribbean Americans have high hopes for Obama

NELSON KING

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Caribbean community in the United States has high hopes for a Barack Obama presidency, with one Jamaican-born political scientist hailing his official swearing in ceremony on Jan. 20 here as representative of “a new dawn for America, the Caribbean and the world.”

“Under Obama, we hope to see expansion of trade, and, hopefully, expansion of investment in the Caribbean,” said Dr. Basil Wilson, provost and professor emeritus at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in lower Manhattan, New York.

“The Caribbean should be able to see significant changes in U.S. relations with Cuba,” he told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)**, shortly after watching live television coverage of Obama's inauguration as the 44th president of the United States.

Obama took the oath of office as the first black president of the U.S. in a simple yet elegant ceremony, witnessed by two million people and watched on television by millions around the world, including the Caribbean.

“I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sac-

rifices borne by our ancestors,” said Obama, the 47-year-old son of a black father from Kenya and a white mother from Kansas.

ASSURANCE

He assured the world that he will address - head on - dire economic and other challenges it faces. The new U.S. president also pledged to work with all nations in the world,



Barack Obama is sworn in as the 44th president of the U.S. with his wife Michelle by his side.

including the Caribbean.

In response to Obama, Wilson, considered one of the foremost Caribbean political scientists in the U.S., said he was hopeful that particular attention would be paid to the plight of the people of Haiti.

“We hope Haiti will get a ‘Marshall Plan’, as well, to bring it into the 21st century,” said Wilson, stating that Haiti suffered “dreadfully” under

the previous George W. Bush administration.

Kawal Toteram, a Guyanese lawyer in Queens, New York, told **CMC** Obama brings much-needed hope to all nations around the world.

“It's a hair-raising experience to see the inauguration of the first black president of the United States,” he said.

“It's a great moment for all people of the world, especially people of color and all immigrants.”

'NEW DIRECTION'

Steve Alexander, a former Grenada New York consul general, said the Caribbean “yearned” for the day for new leadership in Washington.

“I think I'll see a new direction for the Caribbean,” he told **CMC**.

Holding back tears, Derek Ventour, a Grenadian-born entertainment promoter in Brooklyn, New York, said: “I didn't know that I would see a black man as president (of the U.S.) in my generation. “But I must say, this is a new dawn, a new beginning not only for this great country but for the world over,” he added.



West Indians feel 'pure joy' at U.S. president's inauguration

NEW YORK - Several prominent members of the West Indian community in the United States have joined others in expressing elation over the inauguration of Barack Obama as U.S. president.

Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke described the “pure joy” that she and others were experiencing because of the historic occasion.

“I feel a lot of excitement, a strong sense of pride and a spirit of determination,” Clarke told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)** the day after Obama was officially sworn in as the 44th president.

“This is a unique moment, where people from all walks of life are feeling a great sense of hope and an urgent need for change,” added Clarke, the daughter of Jamaican immigrants, who represents the 11th Congressional District in Brooklyn, the largest district of Caribbean immigrants in the country and whose mother, Jamaican-born Una Clarke, is a former New York city councilwoman.

“...As a Caribbean American, whose parents immigrated to this nation and became a part of the civil rights movement, it's both thrilling and humbling to see the look of dignity on their faces, knowing that their hard work has paid off.”

'GREAT DAY'

St. Vincent and the Grenadines' New York Consul General Cosmus Cozier said Jan. 20 was “a great day not just for black people, but for the world over.”

“The only thing that worries me is so much (needs) to be done,” he said.

“But the example he (Obama) sets goes well for the future,” he added. “Government can't do everything.”

Cozier said Obama will put a lot of programs in place to help nationals and the world, adding that he hopes the new U.S. president rescinds the draconian immi-

gration laws.

“It'll be a better place for us,” he said. “I'm looking forward to having a lot of changes in immigration.”

Jamaican-born New York Assemblyman Nick Perry, representative for the predominantly Caribbean, 58th Assembly District in Brooklyn, described Obama's inauguration as “a sense of mission accomplished.” He said this was in keeping with “everyone's fight for equality, for an America, as Martin Luther King, Jr. said, that lives up to its creed – where all people are treated equally, where black Americans, Asian Americans, are not judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”



Clarke



Perry

Caribbean Today

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Mom and Pop Small Business Grant Program
For Miami-Dade County, District 9

Grant funds available to
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Applications available for pick up at the following locations:

- District North Office: South Dade Government Center, 10710 SW 211 Street, Suite 206, Miami, FL 33189
- District South Office: 1634 NW 6 Avenue, Florida City, FL 33034
- Applications will also be available for download at www.miamidadegov.com/district09

An mandatory informational workshop is scheduled for Thursday, February 19, 2009 from 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. at the South Dade Government Center 10710 SW 211 Street, Room 203, Miami 33189

Return 1 original and 1 copy completed application between February 19 - 26, 2009, by 5:00 p.m. For more information, contact Ms. Finney 305-756-0605.

All businesses must be located in District 9 and meet the following criteria:

- Must have been in business for at least 2 year (include proof).
- Cannot have more than seven (7) employees (2 part time will count as 1 fulltime).
- Must not be a part of a national chain.
- Can not have more than two (2) businesses in district.
- Must have a current Miami-Dade County Occupational License or paid receipt and Municipality License at the time of application. Business name on application must match one on license (include copy).
- A physical address is required. No P.O Box as mailing address allowed.
- Must participate in business workshop training.
- Home-based businesses can apply.
- Applications will not be accepted after deadline.
- Must not have delinquent loan with Miami-Dade County, a County Department or County funded agency
- Businesses funded in the past can not apply.
- Non-profit agencies cannot apply.
- Application must be typed or printed only.
- Applicants must sign and submit all requested documents.
- Must submit outside picture of business location building, home, or work vehicle).
- Submit 1 original and 1 copy completed application.

All application packages will be subject to selection committee review and approval.

~ A Caribbean Today special feature

CARICOM ready to work with Obama

Secretary General of the Caribbean community (CARICOM) Edwin Carrington says the region is looking forward to "very friendly and productive relations" with the new Barack Obama administration.

Speaking as Americans and the rest of the world joined in celebration of Obama's inauguration as the 44th president of the United States last month, the CARICOM official noted that the new administration could present some advantages to the regional grouping.

"A number of elements of Barack Obama's election platform, as well as the information given by his incoming secretary of state in her confirmation hearing last (month), point to the rebuilding or the

strengthening of U.S. diplomatic links throughout the hemisphere including the Caribbean; points to the strengthening of security cooperation; it points a greater sensitivity to the threat of climate change and global warming and a readiness to address those issues," he said.

The CARICOM secretary general said the inclusion of persons of Caribbean descent, such as Attorney General Eric Holder, should work to the region's advantage and result in the region having a more sympathetic ear with the U.S. government. He added that should Obama's economic plan prove to be successful, member states would also reap the rewards.



Caribbean academic issues 'wish list'

Atop regional academic has issued his own list of priorities for the new United States administration, which calls specifically on President Barack Obama to tackle economic and security concerns in the Caribbean.

Professor Norman Girvan of the University of the West Indies also believes the current situation in Gaza is enough to warrant immediate attention by the president, but he also believes there can be no side stepping the issues currently facing the impoverished Caribbean nation of Haiti or neighboring Cuba, which continues to reel from the effects of a decades-old U.S. embargo.

In the case of Haiti, Girvan has called on the new

Obama government to undertake "full and unconditional" cancellation of the country's bilateral debt to the U.S. He has also urged the new U.S. government to use its influence with other bilateral and multilateral donors, including the World Bank, to have them do the same.

Girvan has also called on the Obama administration to "initiate an international partnership for Haitian reconstruction and development" and to restore "Temporary Protected Persons status" to undocumented Haitians in the U.S., which provides them with the opportunity to make a case against forcible repatriation.



What they said about Obama's inauguration:

• "From Paris to Port-of Spain, and from Tokyo to Tunis, people are drawn to this phenomenon because of what it says about the power of the human spirit...the ability of human beings to chart their own destiny...the possibility of mankind to overcome tremendous, stupendous, even frightening odds" – Prime Minister Denzil Douglas, St. Kitts and Nevis.

• "In Barack Obama, there is something unique. He represents change, but not just as a slogan, he represents change that could come about, the possibility of change in the

whole world" - Guyana's President Bharrat Jagdeo.

• "I think it is a good thing for (the Caribbean). It places us in a position where I think we are in a stronger bargaining position" - Grenada's Prime Minister Tillman Thomas.

• "It was a very moving event, the very drama of the occasion" – Ralph Gonsalves, prime minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Stories on pages 4 and 5 compiled from CMC.



I couldn't hold back the tears ~ Bermuda's premier

HAMILTON, Bermuda, CMC – Bermuda's Premier Ewart Brown said he could not hold back the tears listening to Barack Obama's speech during his inauguration as the first African American president of the United States.

Four decades ago, Brown

was an outspoken student and civil rights activist in Washington, D.C., and when he returned to the capital on Jan. 20, he admitted he was overcome with emotion.

"I was filled up and, in fact, could not hold back my tears, especially when he

referred to his father who 60 years ago would not have been able to eat in a restaurant in Washington, D.C.," Brown said of Obama's speech.



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Train don't chain your best friend

Beginning April 2009, it will be illegal to keep your dog tethered when you aren't present.

This means it will be unlawful to tie a dog to any object or structure -- including a house, tree, fence, post, garage or shed -- by any means, such as chain, rope, cord, leash or running line. However, this doesn't mean you can't use a leash to walk a dog.

That fact is that dogs left tethered and unattended are deprived of social interaction, and since they can't run if they feel threatened, they are 2.8 times more likely to bite. So the anti-tethering law has been enacted to improve the safety of residents as well as the well-being of pets.



Once the law is in effect, illegally tethering your dog can result in fines of \$100 or more.

Please remember, **train don't chain.**

For more information go to miamidade.gov/animals or call 3-1-1.

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

~ A Caribbean Today special feature

Miami libraries display special art exhibitions

The Miami-Dade Public Library System (MDPLS) will celebrate "Black History Month" with three special art exhibitions in the South Florida city.

The exhibitions will featuring works from Haitian-born artist Asser Saint-Val, children's book illustrator Adjoa J. Burrowes, and artist and historian Wendy Allen.

The public is invited, at no cost, to view the exhibitions at the following branches:

- **North Dade Regional, 2455 N.W. 183 St.**

Asser Saint-Val: "The Melanin Project" - **Through Mar. 23.**

Melanin is the biological pigment that gives human skin and hair its color. Saint-Val, interested in the way science and biology have been used to justify false perceptions about people of color, made a study of "the phenomenon of melanin" and the role it plays in people of all races. His findings became a



A piece from Asser Saint-Val's "The Melanin Project".

series of paintings, of imaginary embodiments, of this phenomenon - part figurative, part something you would see under a microscope.

For more information, call **305-625-6424.**

- **Main Library Auditorium, 101 W. Flagler St.**

"Color All Around" - Illustrations by Adjoa J. Burrowes - **Through Mar. 31.**

Features 42 original cut-paper collages from picture books illustrated by Burrowes. She combines her expertise as

a graphic designer with use of collage and mixed media. Her illustrations feature cut-paper figures, organic shapes and angular forms.

For more information, call **305-375-2665.**

- **Main Library, 1st floor exhibition space, 101 W. Flagler St.**

"The People's President: Portraits of Lincoln by Wendy Allen" - **Feb. 7 through April 6.**

Created exclusively with one subject in mind: a man who was one of America's most beloved presidents. In observance of the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth, the MDPLS has collaborated with Allen to create a site-specific, salon-style installation of her obsessive oeuvre of Lincoln portraits.

For more information, call **305-375-2665.**

Additional details of the three exhibitions may be obtained by visiting www.mdpls.org.



African Americans, the world inspired by MLK

Black History Month is a celebration of the accomplishments of African Americans. Not many have accomplished more than the late civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. His words, some published here, continue to inspire people all over the world:

- "Man is man because he is free to operate within the framework

- of his destiny" - 1959.

- "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that" - 1963.

- "Nonviolent action, the negro saw, was the way to supplement, not replace, the progress of change" - 1964.

- "The curse of poverty has no

- justification in our age" - 1967.

- "A good many observers have remarked that if equality could come at once the negro would not be ready for it. I submit that the white American is even more unprepared" - 1967.

- "To be a negro in America is to hope against hope" - 1967.



Historical Museum of Southern Florida

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NSU offers variety of events in February

Art exhibitions, dance performances, films and educational workshops will be among the highlights of Nova Southeastern University's (NSU) Black History Month activities.

The South Florida institution's celebration this month is open to the public.

Below is a partial listing of events. Unless otherwise noted, all events will be held on NSU's main campus, 3301 College Ave. in Davie.

- **Feb. 9, 16 - "Food for the Soul" Series**

Lunch-speakers series featuring Tiffany Jordan, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., Knight Auditorium. Call Carla Withrow, **954-262-5149.**

- **Feb. 12 - Strengths of Black Families Film Festival**

Viewing and discussion of "Pursuit of Happiness", 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., Knight Auditorium. Contact Dr. Debra Nixon at **954-262-3008** or nixond@nova.edu for more information.

- **Feb. 15 - Discover Your Roots, Discover Your World... African American Genealogy Resources.**

Learn about African American genealogical resources plus new free databases. Open to the public and free, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Alvin Sherman Library on NSU's main campus. Call **954-262-4613.**

- **Feb. 16 - Jeopardy Night, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

Student teams will compete in the Black History Jeopardy Night game. Contact Julie Hamrick at Hamrick@nova.edu.

- **Feb. 18 - African World Artists Collective Opening Reception and Exhibit**

Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences will host this event, which includes a tour of the art exhibit, performances and refreshments. Call Tennille Shuster at 954-262-7611.

- **Feb. 19**

- "Body & Movement" pre-

NAACP marks 100th anniversary

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People will mark its 100th anniversary on Feb. 12. The NAACP, which has 1,700 units in the United States, has scheduled several events this month to celebrate the milestone:

- **6 p.m. Feb. 12** - 100th birthday celebration, Old Dillard Museum, 1009 N.W. Fourth St., Fort Lauderdale, Florida.
- **8 p.m. Feb. 12** - 40th annual

sent by Corpo e Movimento Capoeira Academy, noon to 1 p.m. in the University Center Flight Deck. Contact Kenny McCallum at **954-262-1289** or odoo@nsu.nova.edu.

- **Master Class and discussion with Marc Bamuthi Joseph, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.**

This dance workshop and discussion will take place in the Division of Visual and Performing Arts Division Orchestra Room in the University Center. For reservations, call Chetachi Egwu at **954-262-8073.**

- **Feb. 20 - Strength of the Black Family Film Festival**

Festival continues with "The Great Debaters", 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., Knight Auditorium. Contact Dr. Nixon.

- **Feb. 21 - Black Law Student Association presents NSU Law Day**

The free event gives high school and undergraduates a taste of what it's like to attend law school. From 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., in the Shepard Broad Law Center. Contact Beth Hall, **954-262-6121** or hallb@nsu.law.nova.edu.

- **Feb. 24 - Dessert and Dialogue: Hip Hop and the Black Experience in America**

From 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the University Center Flight Deck. Contact Cherise James at jcherise@nova.edu.

- **Feb. 27 - Strength of the Black Family Film Festival**

Festival concludes with "Meet the Browns", 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., Knight Auditorium. Contact Dr. Nixon, **954-262-3008** or nixond@nova.edu.

A blog site is available to encourage ongoing discussion around the various NSU Black History Month events. The address is <http://blogs.library.nova.edu/blackhistory>.



NAACP Image Awards airs live, nationwide on the FOX television network.

- **Feb. 21** - Executive Committee and general membership meeting - "Visual Art Skills and Philosophies" at the Old Dillard Museum.

- **7 p.m. Feb. 26** - NAACP "Adult" Branch Meeting, 1409 Sistrunk Blvd. Fort Lauderdale.

For more information, call **754-366-3735.**



Obama's hopes face reality

WASHINGTON - Irony is hard to define but you know when you don't see it.

Irony is the gap between ideals and reality, the gap between expectations and what happens.

It was ironic of Thomas Jefferson to defend as "inalienable" the rights of all men to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness while he owned slaves.

It was ironic of Abraham Lincoln to author an Emancipation Proclamation that only freed the slaves in the states that had broken away from the Union.

It was ironic of African Americans to fight a war against Nazism abroad and return to racial segregation at home.

But as my wife and I watched Pete Seeger and Bruce Springsteen on television, singing "This land is your land, this land is my land..." at the Lincoln Memorial program before the inauguration of Barack Obama - and we began to sing along - there was no irony in that moment. The inauguration of a biracial president with African roots and a global autobiography causes even the most cynical among us to feel proud to be part of a country that made this possible.

JOY

You would have to have a heart made of stone to be unmoved by Laurie Madsen, a woman I met on a Metro train, who jokingly called herself "one of the few liberals in Utah." Old enough to witness the tragedies of the 1960s on television, "I marched with Martin Luther King Jr. in my house," she said, choking back tears. "Now I feel blessed to march to Obama."

I felt her joy. Watching King deliver his "I Have a Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial made me want to be a journalist. I wanted to witness history while it was happening. Like others of my generation, I did not dare to expect to live long enough to see King's dream become as much of a reality as it has. Irony recedes as Obama's victory raises the expectations that we Americans have of ourselves and our country's capacity for racial fairness.

Yet, disabuse yourself of any notion that irony has died, despite such suggestions from public intellectuals as diverse

as author Joan Didion and "The Daily Show" host Jon Stewart. Political honeymoons soon end. A gap between expectations and reality inevitably opens. Critics and comedy writers quickly regain their footing.

REALITY

Are expectations of Obama too high, journalists ask? It's easy to see how the world might get that impression. Obama iconography was abundant long before he took his oath of office.

You could see it in the ring of Obama-branded commerce around the Washington Mall - a bizarre bazaar of Obama caps, T-shirts, playing cards, bobble-head dolls and other paraphernalia of Obama-love.

Top of the kitsch pile is the "Barack Obama condom". "Use with good judgement" (sic) its foil wrapper advises. Irony lives. At least, the company didn't try to use the real Obama campaign slogan, "Yes, we can!"

Like the "John McCain condom" offered by the same company, it has no official link to the man whose name and photo it features on its foil wrapper. And neither does the blissfully irrational exuberance that many well-wishers around the planet have expressed about Obama's victory.

Reverend Eugene Robinson, the first openly gay bishop in the Episcopal Church, offered this reality check in his opening prayer at pre-inaugural ceremonies: "Bless us with patience and the knowledge that none of what ails us will be fixed anytime soon," he prayed, "and the understanding that our new president is a human being, not a messiah."

Obama supporters with whom I have talked seem to know that, despite die-hard critics who mock his "Savior" appeal to liberals. Once the inaugural party lights have faded, everyone should know that President Obama becomes just another chief executive who must sink or swim on his ability to handle the job.

He seemed to say as much in the subtle appeal for help that he included in his inaugural address, even as he tried to keep hopes aloft. "What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility," he said, "a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation, and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

Hellish encounters of the dating kind

I've heard some stories about hell that I just had to share.

True, they say that hell is what you make it, and indeed some people make the lives of others a living hell, even as they attempt to derive heavenly pleasures. But even though they say that first impressions are the most lasting, many first impressions leave an indelible mark that we would prefer not to be lasting at all. It's an impression that is a hellish one.

Hellish encounters I call them, and he or she who feels it, knows it. In fact this first one is from a friend of mine who seems to have more bad luck with women of all races, sizes, religions and creeds, than anyone I know. His sad story begins where he bemoans the fact that we live in a self serving society that puts such a



huge emphasis on material gain and vanity, that people lose themselves in the struggle to keep up. Nevertheless, he considered himself lucky to have attracted beautiful women of all races, as you know what our makeup is like in the diaspora.

Unfortunately, this racial potpourri made no difference to his hellish experiences as demons come in different forms. One young lady, on the very first date, made him drive out over half a tank of gas before she decided on where

she wanted to eat. Now we all know what the price of gas is nowadays, irrespective of whatever country you live in, so to drive around town searching for a suitable restaurant is not only no fun, but impacts seriously on the pocket.

Apart from being angry, miserable and hungry, he was even more distressed to watch his gas gauge move from full to empty as they endlessly drove around town. The lady simply could not decide on fast food,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)



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CARIB Comments

• "Time is not on our side" –

Caribbean community Secretary General Edwin Carrington underlines the urgency for the region to take "bold and decisive" action to weather the current economic crisis.



• "He will do a few things he can't avoid, like rolling back restrictions" – United States-based Cuban affairs expert Peter Hakim last month predicting that the new Barack Obama administration will go further towards a new relationship with the Caribbean island than promised during the presidential campaign.

• "There are too many young men in the region's prisons."

Young people are not to be in prison" – Deputy Premier and Minister of Social Transformation Hensley Daniel announcing plans by his ministry to designate 2009 as the year of the family in Nevis.

• "This crisis could possibly slow down the pace of the CARICOM integration process" – Suriname's Finance Minister Humphrey Hildenburg, last month expressing his concern over the far-reaching effects the world's economic crisis could have on the Caribbean.

• "It's like I have a duty to perform, to represent myself, my country, my friends and my family. And those are the things I focus on, getting the job done" – Jamaica's World and Olympic gold medal winner Veronica Campbell-Brown explains her motivation to be a champion.



• "There is a little dinghy that we have that we call our police launch, which cannot serve the purpose of protecting our shores" – Government backbencher Eastern Taylor-Farrell joins voices in Montserrat looking to Britain for help in coping with asylum seekers and other refugees.

• "We accepted this enormous responsibility with pride and conviction" – Antigua and Barbuda expresses its pleasure at serving as chair of the United Nations' Group of 77.

• "This crisis provides an opportunity for us to raise standards and to achieve cost-effective delivery of goods and services to the public" – Barbados's Prime Minister David Thompson last month trying to rally his country in the face of tough economic times.

Compiled from CMC and other sources.



Obama's hopes face reality

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task."

With that he raises a new

question: It is not only whether he will live up to our expectations that matters, but also whether we will live up to his.

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Retailers Win Big

Florida Lottery Partnerships Net \$2.68 Billion For State Retailers



The Florida Lottery was introduced in 1988 to raise non-tax revenue for public education. Since then, Lottery games have contributed more than \$19 billion to the state's Educational Enhancement Trust Fund. No less significant, however, is the multibillion-dollar impact the Lottery has had on small and minority-owned businesses throughout the state.

Business owners looking for new and exciting products, and seeking ways to bring more customers into their stores and add a new revenue source, should consider becoming a Florida Lottery retailer. Based on a study conducted by Ernst and Young, selling Lottery products boosts customer traffic by 11%. This study also found that frequent Lottery customers spend two-and-one-half times what non-Lottery customers spend.

The economic impact begins with the network of more than 13,000 retail outlets that sell Lottery products, generating billions of dollars in revenue from commissions, redemption and incentive bonuses, and enhanced merchandise sales. Retailers receive a 5% commission on ticket sales, plus a 1% cashing bonus on the redemption of winning tickets. As a direct result of offering Lottery products, Florida retailers earn additional profits when Lottery customers make other non-Lottery purchases in their stores.

From inception of the Lottery through fiscal year 2006-2007, more than \$47.9 billion in Lottery tickets has been sold. This activity has netted retailers across the state in excess of \$2.68 billion in commissions and redemption bonuses.

Reaching Out to Minority Entrepreneurs

Minority business development is a very important part of the small-business equation. After all, small business represents the lifeblood of the Florida economy, accounting for the lion's share of jobs and payroll. And it is to small business that the Florida Lottery has pledged its support on a statewide basis.

In the spirit of diversifying its small-business partners, the Lottery is committed to increasing the number of minority-owned retailers statewide. From February 2006 to February 2008, overall the agency's number of minority retailers increased by 3%.

By developing retailer incentives and providing support for special promotions, the Florida Lottery works with retailers throughout the state to make them as successful as possible. Ultimately, this success helps create jobs and an increased demand for merchandise. During FY 2006-2007, Florida Lottery retailers received \$234.3 million in commissions and bonuses. In the retail sector alone, the Florida Lottery sparks a commercial chain reaction that benefits all Floridians.

Being a Florida Lottery retailer is now more profitable than ever.

Becoming a Florida Lottery retailer will add a new dimension to your business and help raise funds for education in Florida. Here are a few advantages of becoming a Florida Lottery retailer:

- ✓ Increase store traffic
- ✓ Earn commission on every ticket sold
- ✓ Earn extra cash through retailer incentives
- ✓ Receive support from expert sales, advertising and marketing Lottery staff
- ✓ Bonus commissions for selling top prizes in FLORIDA LOTTO™, MEGA MONEY® and FANTASY 5®

Education is Our Beneficiary; All Floridians are Our Shareholders

Operated according to the same for-profit business model as a private corporation, the Florida Lottery contributes more than \$1 billion annually to education statewide, making it one of the most successful public-sector programs of its kind in the country.

However, unlike a private corporation where the dividends go to shareholders, the Lottery's more than \$19 billion in "dividends" has gone to the residents of Florida through contributions to the state's Educational Enhancement Trust Fund. When you look at the big picture, the Lottery is a win-win situation for Florida. Education, Florida residents, businesses and players are all beneficiaries of the Lottery's success.

Lottery Retailer?

Contact the Florida Lottery Business Development Office at 850.487.7733 or visit our website at flalottery.com and click on the Retailers button.

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Hellish encounters of the dating kind

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

fine dining, fish or fowl, and was clearly a hellish encounter.

LADIES TURN

Ladies have hellish encounters too, although they usually take on a sexual tone. The man wants to move too fast, grope too early, see her naked too soon; hell for a woman.

Still, there are a few other types of hellish encounters as this lady told me. This man expressed an interest in her and asked her out for what he promised to be a wonderful evening. Naturally, after giving it some thought, she accepted and went on a spending spree, spending not only time, but money to prepare for this wonderful evening, new dress, new shoes, expensive perfume, the works. Well, the evening started going downhill from when the guy showed up on foot after his friend dropped him off, and promptly asked her if she could drive her car, as his was, "In the shop for servicing and wouldn't be out for a day or two."

If she was smart, she would have followed her mind and cancelled the date on the spot, but what the heck, maybe his story was true, she thought. If she was wise, she should have pitched him out of her car when he asked to use her cell phone, as his was "Having a problem with the SIM card on his," and couldn't make calls. If she was astute, she should have felt the flames of hell beating down on her, when instead of directing her to the trendy restaurants for dinner, as he had promised, he instructed her to drive to some seedy joint on the back roads, where curiously all the waiters and girls on the corner knew him by his first name.

During the meal, on plastic plates of course, he then proceeded to boast about his previous involvement with women, adding that, "Since it's so late, why don't we just check into the hotel next door and save the bother of driving back to town? I'll book a room for about three hours." That was her cue, as the young lady, by now mortified, ran to her car and never saw the creep again. Truly a hellish encounter.

BAD LUCK

But back to the story of my poor unfortunate friend who was so perennially unlucky with women. Some people just seem to attract that sort of experience, over and over again.

He was the quintessential nice guy, and many women just seemed to zoom in to exploit this. On the very first date, this girl promptly told him that she had four kids. Now for many

guys, that would have been the cue to get the hell out of Dodge City, but not Mr. Nice Guy, who was full of sympathy and empathy. So the very next day he found himself picking her up from work, then the kids from three different schools, plus the youngest one from her mother, then on to another town where she lived.

I always say, don't start anything that you can't finish, but the poor man started the daily equation of distance plus gas plus time which equals major frustration plus economic meltdown. To top it off, he had to feed the entire tribe at KFC every day, so you can just imagine what the bills came to. After two weeks he simply could not take any more and told her that his job had reassigned him to work in the country parts.

This other young lady had the unfortunate experience that every woman dreads. During what she thought was a lovely evening, her date kept looking at a photograph in his wallet and sobbing as he did. She thought perhaps that it was some dearly departed relative. But when she asked, he informed her that it was a photo of his wife whom he simply adores.

Surely a jaw dropping hellish experience.

MAIN ATTRACTION

But back to the tale of my hapless friend who tried his luck with yet another lass. Doing his best to impress, he brought his date a dozen red roses as he picked her up. So impressed was she, that she immediately called her mom to inform her how wonderful the guy was. Off they went to the movies, and it was during this drive that she told the guy how her ex-husband of 10 years had given her a hard time and then left her.

But it was during the movie that all hell broke loose. During the scene where the female star got tied up, the girl went berserk and started screaming about how men treat women and how all men are wicked and bad. She became the main attraction.

Washed with shame, shock and awe, my friend took her home, politely called her the next day, but mercifully never heard from her again.

I know that people are seeking companionship and will even resort to dating services, but buyer beware. Look for the signs. My advice is, if the evening starts to take on hellish proportions, get the hell out of there as fast as you can, because you will burn forever as hell does not get cooler.

seido1@hotmail.com



H E A L T H

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Sculptures promote ovarian cancer awareness

MIAMI, Florida - Sculptures by artist John Magnan, conveying a visual vocabulary for ovarian cancer awareness and honoring the women and their families affected by the disease, are currently on show here at the University of Miami's gallery.

The exhibition, titled "body image/body essence", opened last month. It is being presented by the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition (NOCC) and is scheduled to run through Mar. 21.

According to a release issued by the NOCC, the nationally touring body of work done by the Massachusetts sculptor is making its 17th city stop in Miami. The 16 sculptures offer a visual journey, depicting a universal story of hope, courage and love.

The sculptures, the release stated, were created in response to Magnan's wife's diagnosis and treatment and her seven-year battle with ovarian cancer. The works speak to the struggles of people living with cancer.

CONFLICT

"body image/body essence", the release explained, explores the conflict between "who I am" and "what I look like" faced by women with ovarian cancer after its invasive surgery and follow-up treatments. The art also addresses aspects of changed

self-image, both serious and lighthearted. Issues such as scar-



Magnan's "Echo" shows a stance of power and determination, displaying the strength of women living with ovarian cancer.

ring, fatigue and fertility are displayed in some of the pieces and also playful explorations of "chemo brain" or hair that refuses to grow back.

The University of Miami's College of Arts & Sciences Gallery is located at 1210 Stanford Drive, Coral Gables, Florida.

Admission is free, but donations will be accepted for the ovarian cancer awareness and education. Viewing hours are **noon to 4 p.m. Tuesdays**

through Saturdays; and noon to 7 p.m. on Thursdays.

For more information, call **847-884-0000**.

Marijuana withdrawal can be tough

DR. MICHAEL CRAIG MILLER

QUESTION: My 27-year-old son is trying to quit smoking pot. He's gone three days now without smoking, but now he's experiencing stomach cramps, nausea, and headaches. He has no appetite, is often angry, is unable to make decisions, and has insomnia. Are these symptoms normal? How long will they last?

ANSWER: Quitting marijuana is surely difficult, so your son has my sympathies, and I can understand your pride.

Marijuana withdrawal symptoms are not particularly well known, because not everyone gets them. But it's not rare to have symptoms of withdrawal from pot. As many as two-thirds of marijuana smokers trying to quit will experience them in some form. Although not as dangerous as, for example, alcohol withdrawal, the discomfort of marijuana withdrawal can indeed undermine the determination to quit.

In the last decade, several studies have defined the syndrome of marijuana withdrawal. Your son's symptoms fit the



picture - anxiety, feeling shaky or restless, irritability, anger, aggression, low appetite, weight loss, stomach pain, and sleep problems.

The time frame you describe makes sense, too. Symptoms usually start in the first three days after quitting, peak during the first week, and are fading by the end of two weeks. Effects can last longer, although by week three the symptoms are usually minimal.

CRAVING

Craving is the one symptom that can persist for a very long time, as can the way a person responds to cues, such as marijuana imagery and paraphernalia, or the people and places he associates with marijuana.

I wouldn't assume that every symptom is a withdrawal symptom. Stay alert to the possibility that your son is experi-

encing the return of symptoms that made marijuana appealing to him in the first place. That is, sometimes people are more vulnerable to marijuana dependence because they are using it to treat some underlying mental disorder. For example, irritability, indecisiveness, and insomnia can all occur as part of anxiety or depression.

If your son has questions about quitting marijuana or an underlying illness, it can be very helpful for him to discuss them with a professional. Certainly it's a good idea for him to seek help if his symptoms persist beyond three weeks. His primary care doctor may have some advice or could make a referral to an appropriate person to do the evaluation.

Dr. Michael Craig Miller is an assistant professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and an associate physician at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, Massachusetts.

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Acupuncture becoming more mainstream medicine

DR. RONALD REIMER

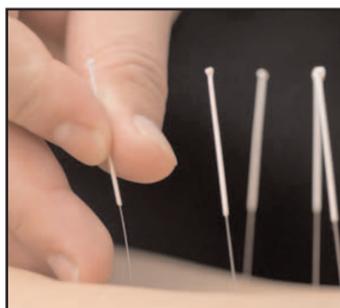
Dear Mayo Clinic: What do you think of acupuncture as a treatment for various ailments? How does it work?

Answer: Acupuncture, which has been used and studied throughout the world for more than 4,000 years, can be utilized to rebalance the flow of energy (Qi) in the body and effectively treat many conditions. At Mayo Clinic, acupuncture has been used successfully for pain management, postoperative nausea, anxiety relief, drug addiction, insomnia and headaches, to name a few.

Acupuncture is administered by inserting up to a dozen or more tiny needles into very precise locations (points) determined by symptoms. The needle insertion points are based on a series of points along meridians or channels that interconnect throughout the body, each with a different function. There are 12 principle meridians within the body, containing almost 400 acupuncture

points.

Patients rarely have any discomfort with needle insertion. Needles remain in place for 15 to 45 minutes. During a treatment, the acupuncturist may gently stimulate the needles manually, apply heat with a ceramic lamp at a safe distance, or attach low-frequency



electrical stimulation. The goal is to improve energy flow in the body, thus relieving pain and other symptoms, allowing people to sleep better and improve their quality of life.

For some conditions, one treatment provides rapid relief. Other situations, such as chronic pain management, may require a series of treat-

ments. In some cases, symptom relief is not always immediate and may require a period of two to three days for the positive effects to be noted. This is in part related to delayed secretion of endorphins.

MAINSTREAM

While some patients and providers remain skeptical of its therapeutic value, acupuncture is becoming more mainstream in Western medicine as a stand-alone treatment or as one element of a comprehen-

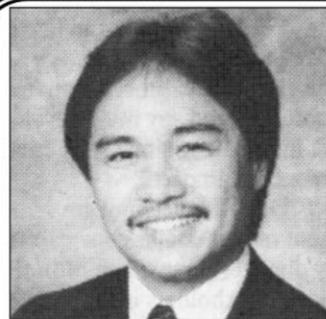
sive treatment plan. As a practicing neurosurgeon, I can cite several examples of acupuncture's beneficial effects.

Not everyone will experience similar results, nor might everyone even be a candidate for acupuncture. Acupuncture has an excellent safety profile, with negligible risk of infection or bleeding. It can safely be performed on patients who are on blood thinners, unlike many other pain management modalities. Patients should seek treatment by physicians

who've received extensive training in the art and science of acupuncture.

Dr. Ronald Reimer, is in neurosurgery at Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, Florida.

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Two's company: Spice up your romance with hot chocolate

BEV BENNETT

This may not be the year you celebrate Valentine's Day in an elegant restaurant. Or, maybe you're skipping your intimate lobster dinner at home to trim your budget.

Thank goodness chocolate, the ambrosial route to romance, is still affordable.

Unlike some ingredients that are expensive, chocolate has a luxurious allure, while being within reach, according to Beth Kimmerle.

"You can get exotic flavors in a (chocolate) bar and you don't have to spend a lot of money," says Kimmerle, a candy and chocolate historian in New York City.

In fact, if you can't promise your sweetheart the world for Valentine's Day, you can do the next best thing and provide a taste of chocolates from different cocoa-growing regions.

"You can have a fun night tasting bars from all over the

world," says Kimmerle, author of "Chocolate: The Sweet History" (Collectors Press, 2005).

EXPLORING

You can also take your chocolate explorations further. Kimmerle suggests preparing an unusual dessert of chocolate pudding with a fried bacon strip as an accompaniment. Dip the bacon in the chocolate for a taste that's simultaneously salty and sweet.

For another easy and fun dessert, melt semisweet chocolate in the top of a double boiler over simmering water and drizzle it over sliced bananas alternating with salted pecan halves and crumbled macaroons in a tall glass.

Don't overlook hot chocolate as a source for seduction.

"The aroma of a chocolate drink wafting through the air is very sexy and romantic," Kimmerle says.

RECIPES

The following two nontradi-

tional hot chocolate recipes are luscious enough to warm up your celebration:

Spiced hot chocolate

- Ingredients**
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa
 - 1 tablespoon sugar
 - 1/16 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
 - 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
 - 1/4 cup half-and-half
 - 1 cup milk
 - 2 ounces semisweet chocolate, broken into small chunks
 - 2 small red or green jalapeno or serrano chilies for garnish

Method



Combine cocoa, sugar, red pepper flakes and cinnamon in a small, heavy-bottomed pot. Gradually add half-and-half, stirring constantly.

Press out any lumps from cocoa. Stir in milk. Bring to a simmer over low heat. Stir in chocolate chunks.

Simmer over very low heat, stirring frequently, until

chocolate melts and hot chocolate is sipping temperature.

Pour into two heatproof glasses or mugs. For chili garnish, make a slash in the tip of each chili. Balance the chili on the glass.

Note: If desired, strain out chili flakes before serving. Makes two servings. Each serving has: 280 calories; 15 grams total fat; 6.5 grams protein; 31.5 grams carbohydrates and 150 milligrams sodium.

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Caribbean treat: Shrimp with coconut milk over rice

Seafood is always a Caribbean delight. This month **Caribbean Today**, with help from **Publix's Apron's Simple Meals** recipes, is offering a special treat of shrimp with coconut milk over rice, plus some green bean salad to welcome the New Year. Enjoy!

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup frozen sofrito
- 1 1/4 cups water
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 8-10 sprigs fresh cilantro (rinsed)
- 1 lemon (for zest, rinsed)
- 1 cup instant rice
- 1 pound large peeled/deveined shrimp (thawed, if needed)
- 1/4 cup white wine
- 1/2 cup light coconut milk

Method

Thaw sofrito under cool running water. Combine water and oil in medium saucepan; bring to a boil on high.

Chop cilantro leaves finely (two tablespoons); set aside. Peel several strips of lemon with zester (or vegetable peeler); chop finely for zest (a tablespoon).

Stir lemon zest and rice into boiling water. Remove from heat, cover, and let stand five minutes or more.

Preheat large sauté pan on medium-high two to three

minutes. Place a quarter cup sofrito in pan (chill remaining sofrito for another use); stir in shrimp and cook three to four minutes, stirring often, or just until shrimp begin to turn pink.

Stir in wine, coconut milk, and cilantro. Cook two minutes, stirring often, or until thoroughly heated. Fluff rice with fork; serve shrimp over rice.

Green bean salad

- Ingredients**
- 1 (7.5-ounce) box frozen green beans with almonds
 - 8-10 sprigs fresh cilantro (rinsed)
 - 1/4 cup pre-diced red onions
 - 1 lime (for juice, rinsed)
 - 2 tablespoons light olive oil vinaigrette
 - 1/4 teaspoon salt

Method

Thaw green beans under cold running water (about two minutes); set almond topping aside.

Chop cilantro leaves finely (two tablespoons). Drain beans thoroughly; place in medium bowl. Stir in cilantro and onions. Squeeze juice of lime over salad (two tablespoons); add dressing and salt.

Toss until well blended. Chill until ready to serve. Sprinkle almond topping over salad and serve.



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Popular gospel singer 'Moses' dies following dispute in Jamaica

KINGSTON, Jamaica, CMC - Police here have launched an investigation into the death of popular gospel artiste and evangelist Kasim Grant, who was also known as "Moses".

Grant's body was found in a ravine along the Gordon Town road, just on the outskirts of the Corporate Area, one morning late last month.

Police said they had launched a search for Grant following a shooting incident in the same area that left one man wounded. The gospel singer was accused of firing shots at two people during a dispute before fleeing the scene.

At press time, police said it was not known if Grant jumped or accidentally fell to his death.

The evangelist had previously been shot and seriously



Moses

injured during a gang feud following which he proclaimed Christianity.

His music is well known in Christian circles in Jamaica and across the Caribbean.



'Jazz in the Gardens' invites mixed flavor

MIAMI - Old school, new school, crooners, rappers and instrumentalists will all be part of the mixed flavor line-up slated for this year's "Jazz in the Gardens" next month.

Radio show voice Tom Joyner will host the fourth annual event Mar. 28-29 at the Dolphin Stadium here.

A fusion of soul and cool jazz can be expected from Maze Featuring Frankie



Kenny G

American rhythm and blues, soul and neo soul singer, song-

writer, and record producer Anthony Hamilton is also in the line-up. His platinum-selling second studio album "Comin' from Where I'm From", featuring the singles "Comin' from Where I'm

From" and "Charlene" was a revelation when it was released in 2003.



Common

hip hop from Common. The rapper's release "Be" was nominated for Best Rap Album in 2005. He won Best R&B Song in 2003 for "Love of My Life (An Ode To Hip Hop)" when he teamed up with singer Erykah Badu, who



Erykah Badu

is also in the show's line-up this year.

Saxophonist Kenny G., R&B legend Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds, plus Will Downing, Roy Ayers, Angelique Kidjo and Jonathan Butler help bolster the "Jazz in the Gardens" appeal.

The show is scheduled to run from 4 p.m. to midnight each day.

Visit www.jazzinthegardens.com for more information.



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Florida's Haitian artists create 'Here, There and Beyond' exhibit

The talents of contemporary Haitian artists in Florida will be showcased in a month-long exhibit at Miami-Dade College's West Art Gallery in South Florida.

"Here, There and Beyond: The Work of 16 Haitian Artists of Florida" will open on Feb. 6 and run through Mar. 6.

"This work is a 'kombit' (collective effort) that aims to define the tendencies of this new breed of Haitian artists evolving in the diaspora," artist and author Fred Thomas said in a recent press release.

"It will provide them the means to access the mainstream art world. While Haiti

is well known for its rich artistic traditions, its artists are lagging behind as far as recognition and financial remuneration are concerned."

Other participating artists include Alphonse "Alpi" Piard, Dominik Ambroise, Alexandra Barbot, Turgo Bastien, Claudine Charles, Yvan Danthier, Michele Frederic, Sophia LaCroix, Francesca LaLanne, Gizou Lamothe, Louis Louissaint, Guy Scillien, Robert Sylvain, and the exhibit's curators Christian "Kristo" Nicolas and Regine Mercier.

"The imprint of the motherland on these artists is ever present with bright colors and

bold moves of contrast," said Nicolas in the same release.

"At the same time, the subjects are brushed with a variety that can only be found in the living surroundings of their creators. The result of this artistically unique cultural blending can no longer remain in the shadows. It must step into the light and be revealed to the world."

The gallery is located on MDC's west campus, 3800 N.W. 115th Ave. in Doral.

For more information, contact Odessa Simmons at 305-237-7186 or galleries@mdc.edu.



Calypsonian Mighty Duke laid to rest in T&T

In a fashion reminiscent of his glory days on the calypso stage, veteran calypsonian Mighty Duke was last month laid to rest in his native Trinidad and Tobago.

The singer, whose real name was Kelvin Pope, died after a battle with myelofibrosis - a serious bone marrow disorder that disrupts the body's normal production of blood cells.

Regarded as one of the calypso art form's greatest icons, he created history in Trinidad and Tobago calypso by winning the National Calypso Monarch title four consecutive times, from 1968 to 1971.

The legendary calypsonian, whose work spanned a period of over 50 years, has also been credited for his measured lines, beautiful melodies and well-chosen

lyrics that have served to establish him as one of the all time greats in calypso.

The Jan. 22 funeral service at Coronation Park in Point Fortin, south Trinidad was billed as a celebration of his life



Mighty Duke

and saw the crème de la crème of the artform take to the stage to perform renditions of Pope's

popular songs. Those included calypso hits such as "What is Calypso", "Freaking Streaking", "All Night" and "Black is Beautiful" that were among the highlights of his masterful career.

In delivering the homily, Dean Knolly Clarke described Pope as an advocate for the art form and a person who cared about the dignity of humanity. He also called Pope a modern prophet, as he made reference to his well known anti-apartheid song "How Many More Must Die".

After the service, a procession was held through the streets of Point Fortin to the Point Fortin Cemetery, where Mighty Duke was laid to rest.

- CMC



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***My Nappy Roots: A Journey Through Black Hair-itage* Film and Panel Discussion**

Saturday, February 7, 2:00–4:00 p.m.

Attend the Florida film premiere and discussion of *My Nappy Roots: A Journey Through Black Hair-itage*, the award winning documentary on black hair featuring Kim Fields, Malcolm-Jamal Warner, and Vivica A. Fox. Connect with the film's director, Regina Kimbell; fans; and a panel of experts for a community discussion on the historical, professional, and personal accounts of the black hair journey.

Carl DeSantis Building, Knight Auditorium, NSU Main Campus
Call Kimberli Kidd at (954) 262-5477.

Discover Your Roots, Discover Your World: African American Genealogy Resources

February 15, 1:00–6:00 p.m.

Does your family have African American roots? Come learn about African American genealogical resources and explore exciting, new, free databases like *FamilySearch.org* and *SlaveVoyages.org*.

Alvin Sherman Library, Research, and Information Technology Center
Call (954) 262-4613.

Back to Africa

Tuesday, February 17, noon–1:30 p.m.

Stephen Campbell, professor, and eight doctoral students in clinical psychology participated in a two-week humanitarian trip to Swaziland in 2007. This presentation will address the stigma of mental illness and HIV/AIDS among blacks in the United States and South Africa.

Carl DeSantis Building, Room 1124
Contact Sarah Valley-Gray at valleygr@nova.edu.



For a complete listing of events, visit www.nova.edu/blackhistory.

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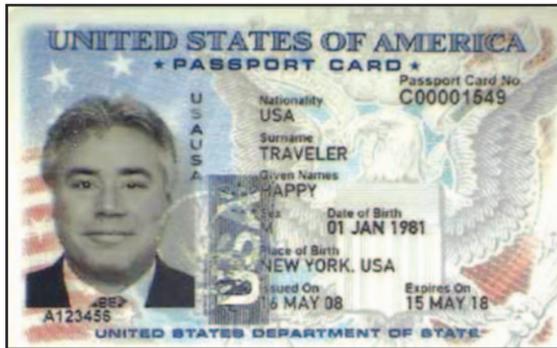
The United States Passport Card allows U.S. citizens a convenient and cheaper alternative to a passport book when traveling to some overseas destination, including the Caribbean. Below are some of the most frequently asked questions about the passport card:

Question: What is the Passport Card?

Answer: The passport card is a wallet-size card that can only be used for land and sea travel between the United States and Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda. The card will provide a less expensive, smaller, and more convenient alternative to the passport book for those who travel frequently to these destinations by land or by sea.

Q: Why can't I use the Passport Card to fly to Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean or Bermuda?

Answer: The passport card is designed for the specific needs of the northern and southern border resident communities and is not a globally interoperable travel document as is the traditional passport book. While the passport card has limited use, the passport book



will remain the premier internationally accepted travel document.

Q: Where do I apply for a Passport Card?

A: First time applicants can apply at any one of thousands of Passport Application Acceptance Facilities across the U.S. Applicants can locate a facility nearest to them by checking the website <http://travel.state.gov>.

Q: Can I apply for the Passport Card and passport book at the same time using the same application?

A: Yes.

Q: What documents will I need in order to apply for a Passport Card?

A: The passport card is a fully valid passport that attests to the U.S. citizenship and iden-

tity of the bearer. As such, the passport card is adjudicated to the exact standards as the passport book.

Applicants must provide documents which attest to their U.S. citizenship and identity such as birth and naturalization certificates.

First time adult and minor applicants under age 16 will need to submit a completed Form DS-11 "Application for a U.S. Passport", two photos, evidence of citizenship, the application fee for the passport card and the execution fee. These applicants must apply in person at a Passport Application Acceptance Facility.

Adult applicants with fully valid passports can apply for the passport card by mail by submitting Form DS-82 "Application for a U.S. Passport By Mail", two photos, fully valid passport issued within the last 15 years, and the passport card application fee.

Check website

<http://travel.state.gov> for complete details on applying for the passport card.

Q: How much will the Passport Card cost?

A: For first time applicants, the passport card will cost \$45 for adults and \$35 for children

under the age of 16, which includes the execution fee of \$25. Adults with fully valid passports issued within the last 15 years can apply for the card by mail using Form DS-82, at a cost of \$20.



TOPS IN TOURISM



The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) has named David Callaghan, center, vice president of resort sales and service for Interval International, as its "2009 Allied Member of the Year". Alec Sanguinetti, left, director general and chief executive officer of CHTA, along with the association's President Enrique de Marchena Kaluche, were present at a recent awards function to congratulate Callaghan. Meanwhile, Albert Gurley, head houseman at Grenada's Spice Island Beach Resort, was named CHTA's "Caribbean Hotel Employee of the Year". Phyllis Johnson-Smith, manager of housekeeping at Sheraton Cable Beach Resort in The Bahamas, was chosen "Caribbean Hotel Supervisor of the Year".



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FEATURE

www.caribbeantoday.com

Silver lining: TATI creates opportunities for Caribbean students

DAWN A. DAVIS

Jan. 24, 2009 was an evening of celebration; remembering the life of Tatiana Renee McIntosh - affectionately known as "Tati".

But Mar. 18, 2007 will forever be etched in the mind of Tanya Ragbeer, Tati's mother. Ragbeer's life was changed forever when she learned about her daughter's fatal accident on her drive back to school at the University of Florida. She was 19.

"She was on her way back to Gainesville after spring break," Ragbeer recounts. "I was in touch with her on the ride, and I said to her 'I don't want to talk to you too much while you are on your cell phone, but I will check in with you again within an hour'. It was in that hour that it happened."

It has not been easy for Ragbeer and her family, but they have healed somewhat. Tati's sisters, Katrina Ragbeer, 10, and Natassja Ragbeer, 12, "have adjusted well; they talk about it freely, they honor her," notes Ragbeer.

FITTING TRIBUTE

But, out of the tears and mourning, an organization was born, to carry on the legacy of giving and compassion that marked Tatiana's life. Last month the second annual "TATI Dream Fete" fundraiser brought together friends and supporters of TATI, Inc. (Transforming America Through Interaction), a non-profit organization created to honor Tatiana's selfless spirit and enthusiasm for life. With a mission to unite, educate, and mentor Caribbean American youth to become productive citizens and leaders, TATI, Inc. works to merge cultures and bridge social, cultural and generational gaps, says Ragbeer, the organization's founder and president.

"TATI, Inc. strives to positively impact the lives of our children in the Caribbean American community," says Ragbeer about the non-profit's Caribbean American focus.

"Not that all other children are not important, but that these are our children, we understand them, understand their needs, their insecurities,

and if we don't make it a priority to groom them for the future, who will? We are not an exclusive organization, but as they say, the best place to start anything is in your own back yard."

It is in that spirit that Fort Lauderdale's New River Inn came alive with Caribbean



Ragbeer, left, has turned the tragic loss of her daughter Tatiana into opportunities for Caribbean students.

music, laughter, and scholarship as guests listened to the sweet pan sounds of the Lauderdale Steel Ensemble under a cool, star-lit sky. A special musical performance by reggae icon Freddie McGregor was a fitting tribute to Tatiana, who was also a talented singer, musician and dancer. She was also bright, focused, and an "A" student.

"She was so lively and bubbly. I could feel her spirit dancing", Tati's mother says. "That child was so talented, I looked at her in awe. She was academically strong and committed. She danced, played the piano, she was a model, an artist and she also sang. She did it all. I guess that is all part and parcel of somebody who is just passing through."

SCHOLARSHIPS

As a catalyst for youth, the organization provides scholarships and positive mentors for high school and college students. Launched in Jan. 2008, TATI, Inc. has awarded three scholarships, the most recent presented to Miami's Coral Reef Senior High School student Ryan Murray for his essay on the three issues that would be top priority if he were running for president of the United States.

TATI, inc. partnered with the Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and the Institute of Caribbean Studies

to create the scholarship known as the "Caribbean American Heritage Month Youth Essay Competition". This endowment, with its community focus, encourages 11th and 12th grade high school students with a Caribbean background to become positive contributors in their community. First place awardees receive \$500.

The Tatiana McIntosh Memorial Scholarship awards \$500 to college students experiencing financial difficulties, while the University of Florida Tatiana McIntosh Memorial Scholarship provides a \$2,000 grant to meritorious students in a first or second year bachelor's degree program at the Gainesville institution.

An award of \$500 is also given to an adult through the Unsung Heroes Mentorship Award program. This individual is lauded for working tirelessly and providing "extraordinary community service" for youth in need, as did Tatiana through her involvement in the Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce's youth activities. She was once lauded with the University of Florida's Presidential Scholarship for her "outstanding volunteerism".

Those attributes live on in TATI, Inc., with its sponsorship and involvement in local and Jamaican schools. For example, in June 2008 the organization provided school supplies for the Richmond Park Primary School in Clarendon. In addition, the non-profit group also donated formal gowns to Kingston high school students for their graduation.

Since its launch, TATI, Inc. has served many in the Caribbean American, African American and Jamaican communities. According to Ragbeer, the organization is

ready to go even further. Its future plans include hosting a leadership academy and building through community forums.

"Our number one goal remains to get our youth involved and to make them aware of how much their contribution to their communities matter in building a better tomorrow," she said. "When you look at people like (U.S.

President) Barack Obama and (golfer) Tiger Woods, they didn't get there by being average, they had to be above the norm. We want to create successful, bright, well-rounded citizens like them."

Dawn A. Davis is a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.



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For more info, contact Commissioner Sorenson's District Office at 305-378-6677 or Ms. Lawanza Finney at 305-756-0605 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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SPORT

Caribbean launches bid for places in soccer's Under-20 World Cup

Top Caribbean soccer nations Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago will face tough North American opponents the United States and Canada, respectively, in opening round games of the

CONCACAF Under-20 Championship next month.

The young Reggae Boyz and Soca Warriors are two of three possible Caribbean teams which will play in the Mar. 6-15 tournament in

Trinidad. Four places in the Under-20 World Cup in Egypt later this year are up for grabs.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) must beat Honduras in a two-leg playoff to become the third nation from the region in the final CONCACAF round.

The eight teams from the Caribbean, Central American and North America have been divided into two groups for the CONCACAF round.

Jamaica has been placed in Group A with the U.S., El

Salvador and Honduras or SVG. T&T is in Group B with Canada, Mexico and Costa Rica. The top two teams from each will advance to the semi-final round and book a place in the Under-20 World Cup from Sept. 23 to Oct. 16.

The CONCACAF U-20 Championship schedule in Trinidad is as follows:

Mar. 6 - Honduras/SVG v. El Salvador; Jamaica v. U.S.

Mar. 7 - Mexico v. Costa Rica; T&T v. Canada

Mar. 8 - El Salvador v.

Jamaica; U.S. v. Honduras/SVG

Mar. 9 - Canada v. Mexico; T&T v. Costa Rica

Mar. 10 - Jamaica v. Honduras/SVG; U.S. v. El Salvador

Mar. 11 - Costa Rica v. Canada; T&T v. Mexico

Mar. 13 - semi-final one and semi-final two

Mar. 15 - third-place match and final



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St. Croix's Joseph suffers TKO, loses bid for IBA boxing title

GORDON WILLIAMS

HOLLYWOOD, Florida – Caribbean boxer Christian Lloyd Joseph was subjected to a relentless assault before being stopped early in his bid for the International Boxing Association (IBA) light middleweight title here last month.

From the onset of the 12 rounder, the feature bout of the "Hard Knocks at the Hard Rock" nine-fight card promoted by Seminole Warriors Boxing, Joseph was subjected to a steady barrage of blows from American Sechew Powell before the referee ended the fight in the third round.

And while he did not appear to be seriously hurt by Powell, openly protesting the referee's call, Joseph's strategy of covering up in defense and offering only sporadic counterpunches, was not pleasing to watch in the hugely one-sided bout.

The loss dropped the record for the native of St.

Croix, Virgin Islands to 12 wins, eight losses and two draws. Powell improved to 25 wins and two defeats.

NO BELL

The fight card was witnessed by some well-known names in boxing, including Jamaican-born former undisputed world heavyweight king Lennox Lewis.

Jamaican-born Glen Johnson, a former world light heavyweight champion, was also present, working both as a television commentator and fight trainer. American Timothy Taggart, his charge in a four round super middleweight bout, lost a unanimous decision.

The most notable absentee on the night was Jamaican-born O'Neil Bell, a former undisputed world cruiserweight champion. Bell



Johnson

had been slated to make his debut as a heavyweight at "Hard Knocks". According to the promoters, Bell, who is based in the United States, agreed to the fight. However, they said a contract sent to the fighter last year was never signed and returned to them. Bell's camp, they said, later informed them he would not enter the ring.

"He decided not to fight," said Chico Rivas, a matchmaker for Warriors Boxing.

Leon Margules, Warriors Boxing's chief executive, said Bell never gave a reason for his decision to pull out of the bout.

"I don't know why," Margules said the day before the Jan. 14 fight card. "We agreed to the purse, opponent. His trainer called two weeks ago to say he's not fighting... It's disappointing, very disappointing."

Johnson, who is scheduled to fight American Daniel Judah on Feb. 27 in a tune-up bout for a title challenge later

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 17)

T&T aiming for success with Caribbean Games

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC – Trinidad and Tobago's Olympic Committee (TTOC) President Larry Romany says his country is determined to make the inaugural Caribbean Games this summer a success.

The Caribbean Games, being staged by the Caribbean Association of National Olympic Committees (CANOC), is set for July 13-19 and is an Olympic-styled project.

Romany said the organizing committee has new challenges in the face of the current global economic crisis, but the TTOC remains confident that the collective support of the Caribbean NOCs, governments, athletes and public will prove the decisive factor.

"In the 1960s, the West Indian Federation came apart. In 2009 history will not repeat itself. The Caribbean will prove to the world that we have matured as a people and gone past insularity and self-serving agendas," Romany said.

"The Caribbean Games will be a symbol of that maturity and shared responsibility."

Romany added that the TTOC considers it a "privilege and honor" to be entrusted as host NOC with the first ever Caribbean Games. The inaugural Caribbean Games will involve five sporting disciplines, track and field, boxing, tennis, netball and volleyball.



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SPORT

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'Everything is good' for VCB in bid for World Championships sprint double

GORDON WILLIAMS

WINTER GARDENS, Florida – Jamaica's two-time Olympic champion Veronica Campbell-Brown is on track to make a strong bid for the sprint double at this summer's IAAF World Championships in Athletics in Berlin, Germany.

Campbell-Brown, a native of the parish of Trelawny who currently lives and trains in Florida, United States, said her preparations for the 2009 season are going well.

"Everything is good," she told *Caribbean Today* last month here.

Campbell-Brown is the reigning world champion in the 100 meters, a race she won in an extremely close finish in Osaka, Japan in 2007. That title guarantees her a place in the field for the event in Berlin this August. However, despite being two-time Olympic champion in the 200 meters, she will have to finish in the top three of the event at the Jamaica trials in June to qualify for a spot on the team for that race.

Campbell-Brown said, barring injury, the progress of

her preparations so far indicates she will be ready for the task.

"I'm feeling pretty good," said the 26-year-old who lost only two races in 2008 – one in each sprint – and successfully defended her 200 meters title at the Olympic Games in Beijing, China.

"Training has been going well. We're just trying to make sure we do everything that we possibly can to eliminate any mistake that have occurred in the past and to just look forward to the 2009 season."

PROBLEM START

Amongst the problems to be corrected is her notoriously sluggish start. According to her coach, American Lance Brauman, that technical area is receiving special attention.

"We've put some extra time into that," Brauman told *Caribbean Today*.

"The world knows that I'm not one of the greatest starters," Campbell-Brown explained. "The beginning of my races are always where I make a mistake or (I am) not as good to set up the entire race. So, with that said, we're working on my start."

That tardiness out of the blocks was a key reason she did not finish in the top three at Jamaica's 2008 Olympic trials in Kingston and failed to make the team in that event.



Campbell-Brown, right, celebrates her 200 meters win at the 2008 Olympics. She's eyeing the sprint double at this year's World Championships.

"I think, when I look back at the race at the trials, if I'd had a better start I would be in a better position," Campbell-Brown said.

DETERMINED

However, that disappointment has already been shelved away. Brauman believes that, at this point, Campbell-Brown

is already ahead in her preparations from last year and her determination to succeed is still as strong as ever.

"You know, you're talking about Veronica Campbell-Brown," Brauman said. "I mean, she's a champion. She always will be. She's always been. She's hungry. She wants to defend her title. She wants to win the double."

"We're doing everything we can to prepare her to do so," he added. "She always takes her training seriously. She has ever since I had her (as coach) in 2002 and none of that has changed. She's very focused and determined and ready for big year."

Campbell-Brown admitted that the success of Jamaica's athletes at last year's Olympics, plus Jamaica's overwhelming response to the country's performance at the Games, has added inspiration. That has been compounded by the realization that the performance appeared to help quell other problems facing the Caribbean nation.

"They are great fans of track and field," she said of

Jamaicans. "They're always rooting for us, they're supporting us and I was very pleased to know that during the two weeks when we were competing in Beijing everything in Jamaica was smooth, quiet. There weren't as many crimes and I was very happy with that."

"Because for us to bring the country together through track and field, which we are so good at, is very good."

Jamaica, led by sprinter Usain Bolt's triple world records and gold medal performances, finished third on the Olympic Games medal table with 11. The country earned six gold, three silver and two bronze. Only the U.S. and Russia finished above Jamaica.

Campbell-Brown is hoping to lead her country to a repeat showing at the World Championships in August, and possibly make it better.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



Record indoor track win for Guyana's Pompey

NEW YORK CITY, New York – Guyana's Aliann Pompey ran a national record and world leading 51.85 seconds to win the women's 400 meters at the 14th New Balance (Indoor) Games late last month here.

Pompey, a 30-year-old three-time Olympian, registered a lopsided win and was all alone at the finish as she lowered her own Guyana record of 52.17 at the New York's Armory's Track & Field Centre.

"I felt like I could (run a

personal best)," she said. "I haven't run indoor in five years (and) I was wondering if I could do that," added Pompey, who won Commonwealth Games gold in 2002.

Pompey enjoyed a 30-meter lead 150 meters into the race and showed little sign of fatigue the entire way as she came home in front of Sophia Smellie (54.94) and Nicole Dumpson (55.01).



St. Croix's Joseph suffers TKO, loses bid for IBA boxing title

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16)

this year, also expressed disappointment at the failure of his fellow Jamaican to take last month's fight.

"I was looking forward to see him fight," said the man known as the "Road Warrior", "and it's disappointing for him not to be fighting here."

Johnson also praised Bell, who was born in Montego Bay and migrated to the U.S. as a child, for his boxing ability and the determination that helped him become an undisputed world champion in the

sport.

"He's such a great talent," Johnson said. "If a man can come from where we come from in Jamaica and be a world champion he must be a great talent."

Caribbean Today's efforts to contact Bell were unsuccessful as he did not return calls made to his cellular telephone.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



Spring Health

The April issue of *Caribbean Today* will feature a comprehensive examination of how the healthcare industry serves the Caribbean community.

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Arthur, Thompson disagree as CSME debate rages on in Barbados

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados - Owen Arthur is not exactly a happy man.

In fact, by his own admission, the former Barbados prime minister, who has been credited with stout leadership of the Caribbean community (CARICOM) Single Market and Economy (CSME) project over the past decade, is quite bothered by what he has been hearing of late and has been left to conclude that all is not well with regional integration.

"CARICOM is at large," he recently told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)** while promising to say more in a later interview.

But from the perspective of his successor in office, David Thompson, Arthur is not totally blameless for the current state of affairs in CARICOM. The new Barbados prime minister is equally critical of other former leaders, who he says are constantly bashing CARICOM "as if had they been here in my position or the other prime ministers that they would have carried the region to the next step."

Thompson further points out that the two issues on which CARICOM is moving the slowest - monetary policy and free movement - "are two of the most difficult issues for the region that they (former leaders) left unresolved."

DEFENSE

In his own defense, the Barbados leader also says he was not privileged to receive any briefing from his predecessor when he took office on Jan. 15, 2008 and further suggests that neither were his colleagues, who recently were handed leadership reins in other countries of the region.

"Other prime ministers came into office in very challenging situations and have had to face the idea of shouldering their national responsibilities and getting up to speed in relation to CARICOM matters...this is not as easy a task as it appears," Thompson admitted.

During a recent televised news conference called to assess his first year in office, the Barbados leader also responded to his critics, as well as others who are of the view that the regional integration process, in particular the march towards the CSME, has slowed under his watch. He said while such a perception exists, the real issue has been that the region has seen a changing of the guard.

"...The electorate is responsible for that. The electorate elected five new prime ministers who do not buy their stature in the regional movement at the supermarket. You earn it and learn it," he said.

The CSME, which makes provision for the free movement of people, goods, services and capital within the 15-member CARICOM grouping, is due for full implementation by 2015.

IMMIGRATION GAUGE

On the substantive issue of immigration, which many, including critics of the year old administration, are now using to gauge the government's commitment to taking forward the regional integration process, Thompson's deputy, Freundel Stuart, has been more explicit.

Stuart, who is also attorney general, argues that that while Barbados understands its obligations under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, and will discharge those responsibilities efficiently, its interests must be clearly understood.

"I'm just going to quote a young lady from St Philip who raised this issue with me and who said: 'Mr. Stuart, it's all right for the people to talk, but I have never gone to the airport yet and seen anybody coming through the arrival hall with house and land, they come with bags'.

"And of course you can extend that, they do not bring

along schools and hospitals either," Stuart said.

The deputy prime minister says although Barbados is committed to promoting the long-held dream of integrating the people of the region, it could not simply close its eyes to the fact that the environment has changed, as has its capacity to absorb large numbers of immigrants.

"This is not people who are coming to stay for two

own people to dispense justice, to interpret your law, (to ensure) that justice can be done to your citizens, can you tell me that you are ready for a Caribbean Single Market and Economy?" he asked. "You can't be ready. If you still believe that your former colonial masters have values higher than the people you want to lead, you cannot be serious about any Caribbean Single Market and Economy."



Arthur, left, Thompson

weeks and go back, but whose residence here can and does place enormous strain on our social services," he said.

"We have to be careful about the transplantation of racial tension from one part of the Caribbean to another."

While the spotlight has recently been turned on Barbados's position within CARICOM, Stuart suggests to critics that they need to focus their attention elsewhere. He questions if member states are not willing to commit to the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), how could they be ready for a CARICOM Single Market and Economy?

"If you are still at a stage where you do not trust your

STUMBLING BLOCK

But in an editorial here last month, the island's leading daily, **The Nation**, pointed out that one of the critical stumbling blocks in any integration process is always the surrender of sovereignty. The paper also warns that for if any such process is to succeed, then member states will have to cede some power to a higher central authority.

It, however, agrees with Stuart that it is high time that other CARICOM governments join with Barbados and Guyana in upholding their obligations to the CCJ.

"Frankly put, the CCJ allows us to remove our justice system from foreign control and bring it home to our own judges. Considering that even some of the Privy Council judges feel that it is better for us to have our own final court, then it is nothing short of scandalous that only

Barbados and Guyana recognize the final appellate jurisdiction of the court.

"There comes a time when all the posturing must stop. The Single Market and Economy may not be the easiest mechanism to put in place, but if regional countries are seriously committed to the integration process, then they must move speedily to sign up to the CCJ. Whatever may be the technical hurdles to the implementation of the Single Market, such objections do not apply to the CCJ", the paper states.

In his weekly column, noted Caribbean journalist Rickey Singh also took issue with recent comments made by members of the Barbados Cabinet.

"I never realized that CSME had become such a major burden for Barbados," said Singh, noting that "intra-regional migration has long been a CARICOM reality.

"As Errol Barrow, the visionary CARICOM architect, stressed in his 1986 address in Georgetown: 'If we (as leaders) have sometimes failed to comprehend the essence of the regional integration movement, the truth is that thousands of ordinary Caribbean people do, in fact, live that reality every day'", the column stated.

In delivering the Errol Barrow memorial lecture here last month, Sir Shridath Ramphal - one of the stalwarts of the regional integration process - also cautioned that "today we devalue the goals of the CSME at our peril." Quoting from 2007 CARICOM Secretariat figures, he noted that the CARICOM market accounted for 58.4 percent of Barbados's total exports of goods, while pointing out that "Errol (Barrow) was committed to deeper Caribbean integration because he firmly believed in the validity and importance of its economic dimension."



Montserrat calls on Britain to assist with growing asylum requests

BRADES, Montserrat, CMC - Montserrat is looking to Britain for help in coping with asylum seekers and other refugees after a boatload of illegal Haitian and Sri Lankan migrants arrived here last July.

Elected members of Parliament made the call during debate in Legislative Council on the Immigration (Amendment) Act, which addresses how asylum seekers

and other refugees are processed upon arrival on the island. The measure was eventually passed but not before lawmakers made an appeal to the United Kingdom government to provide new financial assistance to the British-administered territory to help it cope with the recent demand.

Prior to the amendment, Montserrat had no legal provi-

sions to deal with persons seeking asylum on the island. The change brings Montserrat in line with an international convention signed by the British government for the treatment of such persons. But with the passage of the legislation, government backbencher Eastern Taylor-Farrell also believes the U.K. government should take a closer look at the security

needs of the island.

He lamented that the Royal Montserrat Police Force (RMPPF) was inadequately equipped to patrol Montserrat's coastline.

"In light of the incident where persons are brought in on ships from wherever and dropped off on our shores, if the police had a proper coast guard to patrol our shores, we would deter such persons

from taking such action," Taylor-Farrell, referring to the arrival last year of the group of 40 migrants.

"It is in this light that I would suggest that this honorable House ask the British government for funds so that the Royal Montserrat Police Force can purchase a decent vessel to patrol our waters," the government M.P. said.



B U S I N E S S

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American's 'Ponzi' scheme costs BVI hedge fund over \$350 million

NEW YORK - A British Virgin Islands-based hedge fund has lost over \$350 million as a result of an alleged massive securities fraud scheme led by American businessman Bernard Madoff, its main shareholder has claimed.

Jacques Rauber, the majority shareholder of Auriga International Advisers, confirmed reports last month that the company's fund was wholly invested in Fairfield Sentry - a United States-based fund, which had placed all its \$7.3 billion in assets with Madoff.

Madoff, 70, a former chairman of the NASDAQ stock market in New York, was arrested in December and charged with running a multi-billion dollar hedge fund swindle scheme. He has been charged with a single count of securities fraud and faces up to 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$5 million, if found guilty.

'REGRET'

Rauber said that Auriga investors paid management fees to their own fund, and also, indirectly, to Fairfield Sentry, for the privilege of having all of their assets in Madoff's alleged scheme.

"I deeply regret that the investors of Auriga International, to which I too belong, fell victim to this incredible case of fraud," the Zurich-based Rauber said, disclosing that another fund, Auriga Alternative Strategies, was affected "to a much lesser extent."

Madoff, who is under house arrest, is alleged to have operated the scheme through his hedge fund business, which was separate from his better-known market-making business Bernard L. Madoff Investment Securities (BMIS).

'GIANT PONZI'

According to a criminal complaint filed by the U.S. Attorney's office in New York and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), Madoff said his business was "a giant Ponzi scheme" - a reference to Charles Ponzi, one of the greatest swindlers in U.S. history.

Madoff told investigators that it was entirely his fault, and that he "paid investors with money that wasn't there," according to the complaint.

- CMC



Miami launches free tax preparation campaign

MIAMI, Florida - Mayor Manny Diaz has launched the City of Miami's 2009 Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and free tax preparation campaign.

During last month's launch, information on over 20 city-sponsored locations that will be offering free tax preparation services as part of this year's EITC campaign was made available.

Eligible residents who file their tax returns at these sites can learn if they qualify to receive a federal income tax refund of up to \$4,824 via the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and up to an additional \$1,000 per child via the Child Tax Credit (CTC).

There was also more information about the City's new Benefit Bank locations offering access to Federal and State benefits, such as Food Stamps, cash assistance and Medicaid.

EITC tax credits can result in sizable refunds for low-income working families. Each year, thousands of eligible households in Miami fail to claim this entitlement, leaving millions of dollars worth of EITC benefits unclaimed.

Partners in the 2009 EITC campaign include the Internal Revenue Service (IRS),



- Photograph by Jorge R. Perez/City of Miami

Mayor Manny Diaz announces the kick-off the 2009 City of Miami's Earned Income Tax Credit Campaign.

Eastern Financial Credit Union, the Benefit Bank, and the City's Economic Initiatives and Neighborhood Enhancement Team (NET) department. The "Your Money Bus Tour" is sponsored by the City of Miami,

ACCESS Miami, TD AMERITRADE Institutional, NAPFA Consumer Education Foundation, and Kiplinger's Personal Finance magazine.



Global recession impacts Jamaican firms

KINGSTON, Jamaica, CMC - A local charity organization and a fast food outlet in Jamaica are the latest to fall prey to the deepening global recession.

Faced with a decline in donations, "Food for the Poor, Jamaica" late last month sent home 14 members of its staff, including Executive Director Bradley Finzi Smith, in a redundancy exercise.

The decision was made at a recent retreat held with the organization's overseas administrators.

"Following a review of its operations, administrative

costs are being significantly reduced in order to ensure that the aid we provide to the poor is not at all diminished," said FFP Jamaica Chairman Father Burchell McPherson.

McPherson said the affected workers will be duly compensated. The organization has also offered counseling as well as character and job references to the workers. The redundancies have come in the wake of December's announcement that Food for the Poor, Jamaica's parent company that it was listed as the number one international aid

agency in the United States.

SHUTDOWN

Meantime, the international fast food chain Wendy's has announced the closure of one of its Jamaica stores. The store, located in the business district of New Kingston was scheduled to close on Jan. 30.

"With what is happening in the global market and with the slide of the dollar, we actually decided that the store had been suffering since the end of last year..." said Manager of Restaurant Operations Sophia Pusey.



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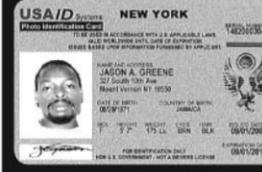
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