

THE MULTI AWARD-WINNING NEWS MAGAZINE



U.S. Census 2010 has ignited mixed emotions in Caribbean community. Some, especially the undocumented, are worried about revealing information about themselves. Others claim to understand the valuable benefits of the process, page 5.



Reggae music icon Jimmy Cliff is to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The 62-year-old Jamaican-born James Chambers, will join pop groups ABBA and Genesis among the 2010 inductees on Mar. 15 in New York, page 17.



United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has launched the largest-ever humanitarian appeal in the wake of a natural disaster – to raise \$1.5 billion - to assist earthquake victims in Haiti, page 22.

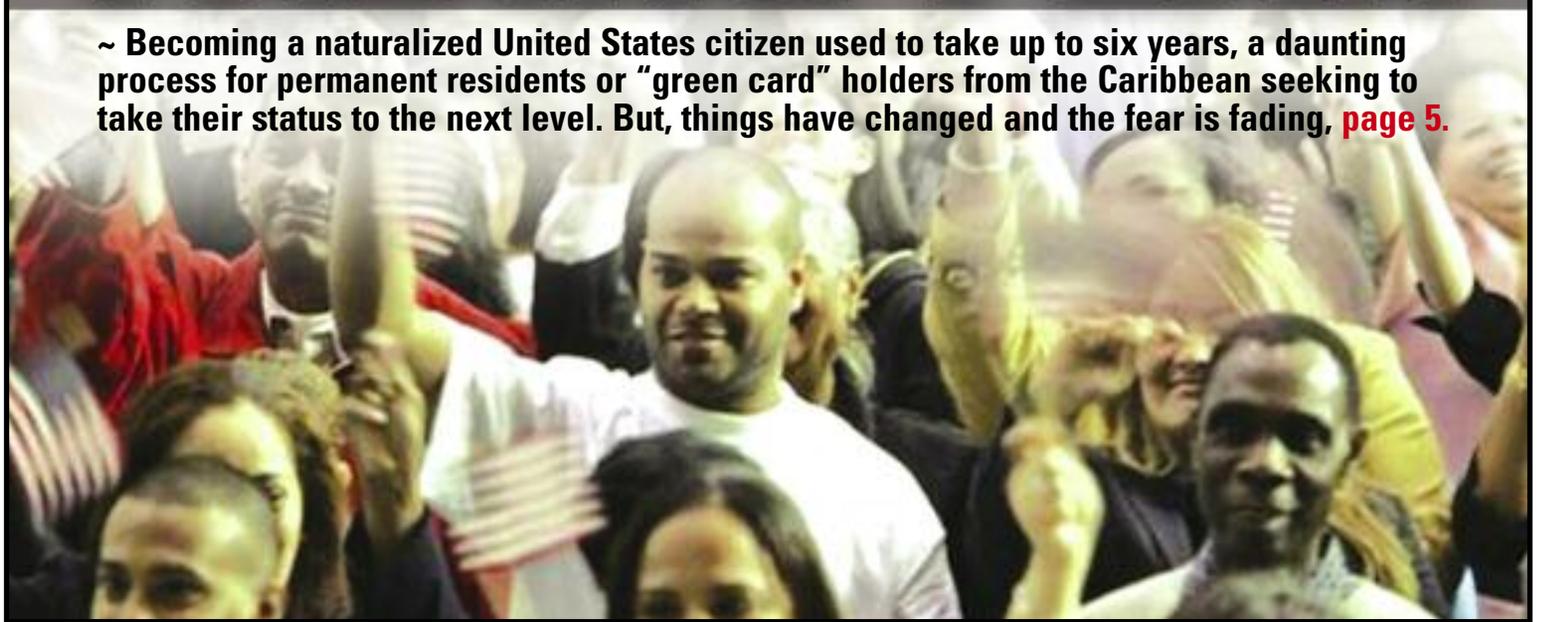
DEFIANCE

~ Jamaica's Prime Minister Bruce Golding has refused to grant an extradition request from the United States on the grounds that evidence for the case against accused Christopher "Dudus" Coke was gathered in violation of the Caribbean country's laws, page 2.



FADING FEAR

~ Becoming a naturalized United States citizen used to take up to six years, a daunting process for permanent residents or "green card" holders from the Caribbean seeking to take their status to the next level. But, things have changed and the fear is fading, page 5.



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Jamaica defies U.S. order to extradite criminal suspect

Jamaica's Prime Minister Bruce Golding says he is prepared to pay a heavy political price at the hands of the electorate rather than allow the United States government to violate his country's constitution.

Golding has defended the stance taken by his administration of refusing to sign the extradition request made by the U.S. for Christopher "Dudus" Coke from the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) stronghold of Tivoli Gardens, which is a part of the prime minister's West Kingston constituency.

Washington said that Cooke, 40, is wanted on drug and firearms trafficking charges. If convicted he faces a life term in prison.

However, in commenting on the vexed issue during a recent sitting of Parliament, Golding said he refused to extradite Coke on the face of the evidence provided so far, stating that legal rights of Jamaicans should not be determined by the U.S.

"I am not defending the wrongdoing of any person, but

I will say this, if I have to pay a political price for this I will uphold a position that constitutional rights do not begin a Liguanea (the location of the



Golding

U.S. embassy in Jamaica)," he said.

ATTENTION

The matter is gaining increasing international attention since the recent release of a U.S. narcotic report, which blasted the Jamaica government for what it calls the unprecedented delay in granting the extradition request. But according to the prime minister, Attorney General and Justice Minister Dorothy

Lightbourne decided against signing the request because the evidence outlined in the extradition request was illegally obtained.

He said the government has refrained from making any detailed public statement in relation to the "Dudus" issue because of confidentiality and that position was reaffirmed in the several meetings between Jamaica and the U.S.

However, Golding said that in view of the statements contained in the Narcotics Control Strategy Report, he felt obliged to speak. According to the prime minister, the U.S. was seeking to extradite Coke on the basis of evidence that was illegally obtained under the Interception of Communications Act. He explained that the U.S. report accused the government of unfounded allegations, questioning U.S. compliance with the neutral Legal Assistance Treaty and the Jamaican law.

Information obtained from CMC. For more on the U.S. narcotic report, see page 8.



Caribbean advocate in U.S. Congress facing ethics probe, steps down from powerful post

NEW YORK – An ardent United States Congressional advocate for the Caribbean has said he will temporarily step down from his powerful post as chairman of Ways and Means Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Harlem Democratic Congressman Charles B. Rangel, the dean of the New York Congressional delegation, has been caught in a web of ethics inquiries.

"I have...sent a letter to Speaker (Nancy) Pelosi asking her to grant me a leave of absence until such time as the Ethics Committee completes its work," the congressman told a brief press conference in which he fielded no questions.

He said to answer questions in any detail would raise issues that "would distract me from what I have to do in terms of completion of the president's health bill, as well as making sure our committee gets a good jobs bill."

Republicans had been pressing for a vote to remove him from his chairmanship. Rangel said he acted to avert forcing his colleagues to defend him during an election year.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)



Rangel

NAACP honors Wyclef Jean for humanitarian work in Haiti relief

LOS ANGELES, California - The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), a leading United States civil rights organization, has honored Grammy award-winning Haitian artiste Wyclef Jean for his humanitarian work in his native land.

Jean, 37, a songwriter, musician, producer and humanitarian, received the group's prestigious Vanguard Award on Feb. 26 at the 41st NAACP Image Awards at the historic Shrine Auditorium.

The NAACP said the Vanguard Award is presented

to a person "whose groundbreaking work increases understanding and awareness of racial and social issues.

"The NAACP is proud to honor Wyclef Jean with this year's Vanguard Award for his continued activism and dedication. His passion for social justice and helping those in need should be applauded", it stated, noting that Jean was on a plane to Haiti shortly after the devastating earthquake hit his homeland on Jan. 12.

"And it was his dedication to the people of Haiti that helped spur all of us to donate what we could and keep the people of Haiti in our hearts and prayers", it added.

Caribbean Today keeps its "Eye on Haiti" following the devastating earthquake, page 22.



Wyclef Jean

Dominica names new U.N. ambassador

Former Foreign Affairs Minister Vince Henderson has been appointed Dominica's ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations.

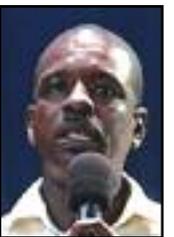
Henderson assumes his new position Mar. 1. He replaces Crispin Gregoire, who held that post since 2000. Up to press time no reasons had been given for the replacement.

Henderson did not contest the 2009 general elections and bowed out of active politics after nine years.

"The ambassador designate has also served as head of

Dominica's delegation to regional and international conferences and has held appointments on the boards and committees of various multilateral institutions", a government statement explained.

Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit holds the post of foreign affairs minister.



Henderson

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Mass migration leads to chronic nursing shortage in the Caribbean ~ World Bank

WASHINGTON, D.C - The Caribbean region is suffering from a chronic shortage of nurses as many are migrating to the United States, Canada and Britain.

That's according to a recent World Bank report. The report said between 2002 and 2006 more than 1,800 Caribbean nurses left the region to work abroad.

They migrate for higher paying jobs leaving a nursing brain drain in the region. The report cites data that show

21,500 nurses trained in English-speaking Caribbean nations are working in Canada, Britain and the U.S. - three times as many as are working in their home countries.

World Bank estimated there are currently 7,800 nurses working in English-speaking Caribbean countries like Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St.

Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago, or 1.25 nurses per 1,000 people.

In addition, demand for nurses exceeds their supply throughout the region: 3,300 or 30 percent of all positions in the sector were vacant at the time of the study.

HINDERING QUALITY

The bank said the shortage of nurses in English-speaking Caribbean nations is limiting the quality of healthcare and could be hindering devel-

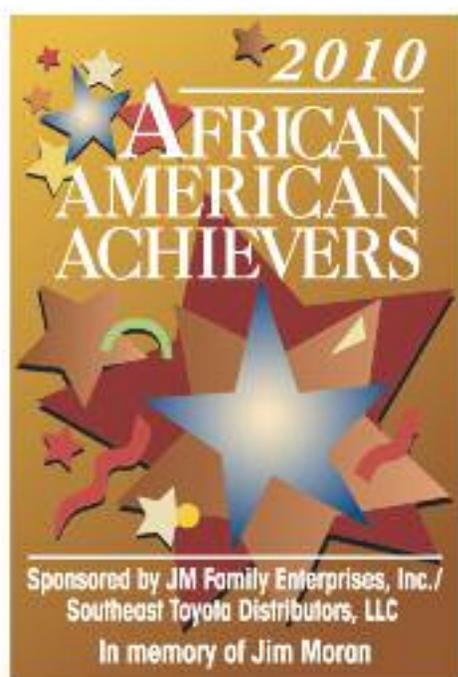
opment in the region.

Christoph Kurowski, lead author of the report titled "The Nurse Labor and Education Markets in the English-Speaking CARICOM - Issues and Options for Reform", said regional governments should consider how they leverage the émigrés to strengthen local health systems.

In the coming years, demand for nurses in the English-speaking Caribbean will increase due to the health

needs of the aging population. Under current education and labor market conditions, however, supply will slightly decrease. The World Bank expects that unmet demand for nurses will more than triple during the next 15 years - from 3,300 nurses in 2006 to 10,700 nurses in 2025.

- *CaribWorldNews*



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Ex-N.Y. commissioner, once tipped to reform Guyana's police, gets four-year prison sentence

NEW YORK, New York - Bernard Kerik, a former New York City police commissioner who was once tipped to spearhead the reformation of the Guyana Police Force, was last month sentenced to four years in prison.

Kerik, 54, had pleaded guilty to eight felonies in November and agreed to pay \$187,931 in restitution for, among other things, tax fraud and lying to the White House during his nomination to head the United States Department of Homeland Security under then President George W. Bush.

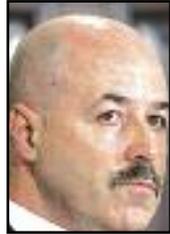
Federal Judge Stephen Robinson, in handing down the sentence, ruled that Kerik must surrender voluntarily to

prison authorities on May 17.

In Aug. 2006, Guyana's President Bharrat Jagdeo said Kerik would be "an integral part of the planned restructuring of the Guyana Police Force."

The Guyana Government Information News Agency (GINA) had said Kerik "would be contracted to assist in the US\$20 million reformation plan that government is footing through a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank".

Last month's prison sentence, which was above the 27



Kerik

months to 33 months agreed to by lawyers on both sides, ends a dramatic downfall for the former police commissioner who helped lead New York City's response to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States.

In the November plea deal, Kerik admitted that a contractor paid about \$255,000 for renovations to his New York apartment and failed to report that figure as income on his tax returns. In addition, he acknowledged that he lied about the matter when he was vetted by the Bush administration for the top Homeland Security Department post.



Haitian judge releases eight of 10 Americans in illegal abduction case

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, CMC - A Haitian judge ordered the release of eight of the 10 Americans arrested here on child abduction charges.

But, up to press time last month, Judge Bernard Saint-Vil had declared that the two other members of the group, including its leader, would remain jailed for additional questioning.

The American missionaries were held after being suspected of attempting to illegally smuggle 33 Haitian children out of the country without the proper documentation following the devastating Jan. 12 earthquake that killed 230,000 people and left more than a million others homeless. They said they were plan-

ning to house the children in an orphanage in the Dominican Republic.

Saint-Vil told lawyers for the Americans that he freed the members of the group, five of whom were from a Baptist congregation in the U.S. state of Idaho, after parents of some of the children testified that they had voluntarily handed over their children to them. In his ruling, the judge said he released the eight Americans on the condition that they return to Haiti to answer further questions in the case, if necessary.

The eight Americans left on a US Air Force plane for Miami, where they arrived on Feb. 18.



U.S. Appeals Court refuses bail for Stanford

NEW ORLEANS, Louisiana - A United States court has again refused to release disgraced Texas financier Sir Allen Stanford from jail until his trial gets underway next January.

The U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals here ruled that there are "no new circumstances" that warrants Stanford's early release from a Texas, jail.

Stanford is accused by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) of defrauding tens of thousands of investors in a "massive" \$7 billion Ponzi scheme, involving his Antigua-based Stanford

International Bank. He has been in jail since last June, when U.S. authorities filed criminal charges against him. In that same month, a U.S. district court judge in Dallas, ruled that Sir Allen was a flight risk and must remain behind bars until his trial.

REJECTION

In his latest appeal last month, defense lawyers had argued that Stanford's physical and mental health were deteriorating and that his family and friends would provide security in ensuring that he does not leave the country.

But the appeals court rejected the argument.

"We're disappointed," said defense attorney Kent Schaffer. "But, based on the way this case has gone, we are not surprised."

Stanford, three of this top associates, and Antiguan regulator Leroy King, are expected to go on trial in January. King is fighting extradition charges in Antigua, while Stanford has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing in the criminal and civil charges.



U.S. lawsuit targets Caribbean bank as 'partner in crime' for Ponzi scheme

DALLAS, Texas - One year after the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) accused disgraced Texas billionaire Sir Allen Stanford of running a "massive" Ponzi scheme through his offshore bank in Antigua, a group of investors is suing the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB), alleging that it was Sir Allen's "partner in crime".

The so-called Stanford Victims Coalition marked the anniversary by last month launching a campaign to boycott Antigua and Barbuda, particularly its lucrative tourism industry.

The class action suit, filed in U.S. federal court by New York attorney Peter Morgenstern, on behalf of as many as 28,000 investors, seeks at least \$100 million in damages from the ECCB and its five-member banks.

'ILLEGAL'

The lawsuit claims that

...Antigua calls lawsuit 'unbelievable'

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua, CMC - A senior official of the Antigua and Barbuda government has described as "unbelievable" a class action lawsuit filed in the United States by a group of disgruntled investors against the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) and the government of this twin-island nation.

The so-called Stanford Victims Coalition, which filed the action in a New York court last month, claims its 28,000 members fell prey to disgraced Texan financier Sir Allen

after authorities shut down Stanford International Bank (SIB) in Antigua and Barbuda last year for allegedly issuing \$7 billion in fake certificates of deposit, the ECCB seized the Bank of Antigua. Morgenstern said the seizure was illegal, and that the institution, which is still "enormously valuable", should have become the property of Stanford's alleged victims. Instead, the lawyer claimed that the bank's assets were distributed

among the ECCB member banks, namely the Antigua Commercial Bank, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla National Bank, Eastern Caribbean Financial Holdings Company, National Commercial Bank (SVG), and National Bank of Dominica.



Stanford, who has been charged by financial regulators in the U.S. for running an alleged "massive" Ponzi scheme through his Antigua-based Stanford International Bank.

But Attorney General Justin Simon said he was not impressed by the claims.

"I am really, really very upset because it clearly indicates that this kind of action comes from the uninformed and is itself unbelievable," Simon said.



Stanford

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Fading fear: Easier road to American citizenship for Caribbean immigrants

DAWN A. DAWN

Becoming a naturalized United States citizen used to take up to six years, a daunting process for permanent residents or “green card” holders from the Caribbean seeking to take their status to the next level.

But, things have changed. The fear is fading.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has made it much easier for immigrants to take the oath.

“It takes less than four months on average to get U.S. citizenship once you apply,” says Ana Santiago, regional media manager for South Florida and the Caribbean.

“Potential citizens should not have any fear. Once they know what the requirements are and follow the correct steps, the process is painless.”

To demystify the process, the USCIS has been hosting information sessions around the country. In South Florida, sessions were held last month at regional offices in Miami, Hialeah, Kendall and Oakland Park. Santiago says meetings

have also been held in off-shore U.S. territories such as Puerto Rico, St. Croix, and St. Thomas.

Yet with all the available help and information some in the Caribbean community are

“It’s not so much fear. To be totally honest, it was laziness. At the time I didn’t see any real benefit besides getting through the airport faster. It was a lot of ignorance on my part...It just wasn’t a real priority”

- Dexter A. Pierre, a green card holder for 42 years.

“I tell my clients...if you have criminal convictions that are serious, do not apply”

- Joan O. Pinnock, a New York-based immigration lawyer.

still reluctant to become U.S. citizens.

“It’s not so much fear,” says Dexter A. Pierre, a green card holder for 42 years. “To be totally honest, it was laziness. At the time I didn’t see any real benefit besides getting through the airport faster. It was a lot of ignorance on

my part...It just wasn’t a real priority.”

Born in the twin-island republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Pierre became a permanent resident at age two before arriving in the U.S. when he was a year older.

“I still have the original one with my baby picture on it,” he tells *Caribbean Today* with a laugh, “and that’s when the card was actually really green.”

DANGERS

Joan O. Pinnock, a New York-based immigration lawyer and advocate, paints a different picture. She explains that the main fears are issues pertaining to criminal convictions. About 80 percent of her clients are Jamaicans, some with serious criminal issues.

“I tell my clients...if you have criminal convictions that are serious, do not apply,” says Pinnock. “I have sat in citizenship interviews and see them take people away in handcuffs. If you have a conviction that is a very serious offense like an aggravated felony, possession of drugs with intent to distribute, or a distribution of marijuana or cocaine, any one of those seri-

ous offenses, you are not eligible to naturalize.

“I tell them don’t even bother to apply, and don’t leave the country, because if



The time from application to swearing in as a U.S. citizen has become much shorter.

eligible,” she adds. “Their offenses are considered crimes of moral turpitude, but I still caution them. I ask them to get a dispossession letter so I can look at their conviction record before I subject them to any citizenship application, because it’s dangerous for them. I try to protect them as much as possible.”

Pinnock explains that another concern is the fear of losing citizenship from their country of birth once U.S. citizenship is obtained. The attorney allays those fears by counseling clients about the advantages of U.S. citizenship and advises them to also maintain a current Caribbean passport as well.

BENEFITS

Santiago lists some of the benefits as the right to vote; the right to serve on a jury; the right to apply for federal jobs; priority when petitioning to bring family members to the U.S.; and the right to run

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

Who to trust?: U.S. Census 2010 ignites mixed emotions in Caribbean community

DAWN A. DAVIS

As the United States Census Bureau begins to mail out forms this month, the hope is that response rates will significantly increase from the 2000 census that resulted in a 72 percent national participation rate, while Florida came in at 69 percent according to the bureau’s website.

With an aggressive marketing and advertising campaign, the bureau is hoping to reach the traditionally hard-to-count, among them the Caribbean community. Yet there is lingering concern that marketing and advertising may not be enough.

One of the issues the bureau must tackle is the distrust many Caribbean people in the U.S. have for government agencies which seek personal and demographic data. Not surprisingly, the largest among them are the undocumented.

“How safe is it?” asked Michael*, an undocumented immigrant, when approached about the issue by *Caribbean*



Persaud

Today recently.

“The only way I will take part is if I know the person questioning me; that will give me the confidence. If people are comfortable and get the assurance that their information will really not be shared, then they will cooperate.”

Michael, 53, from St. Lucia, came to the U.S. in 1994 on a visitor’s visa and never returned to the island. Asked if he knows enough about the census and the reason it is being conducted, Michael snapped, “I don’t think they are doing a good job at all; there is not enough information about what is about to take place. And, that’s another reason why one can be fearful, because you are ignorant about exactly what is going on.”

Permanent resident or “green card” holder Barbara Savage agreed.

“I am not sure that enough information is being given on the upcoming census,” she said. “I have only heard it on the radio. I have not seen it in the print media or on television. More print information, such as flyers, could be given out in communities.”

Savage has been a permanent resident for three years and plans to participate in the

2010 census despite the lack of information. She has done her own research and claims to know the benefits.

“This will give the total population broken down by race, ethnicity, incomes, etc.,” she explained. “The government will be better able to prepare budgets based on the population of each city and ultimately the state. Budgets will be proportionate to the number of persons in these communities, which will help in infra-structural projects, education, creation of jobs, and improvements in schools. This will also capture migration of people across the country.”

TRUSTED VOICES

The U.S. Census Bureau has put in place a team to focus specifically on the Caribbean community. And, according to Katia St. Fleur, the unit’s partnership team leader, it’s making inroads.

“We use faith-based organizations, non-profit organizations, political, and community leaders,” said St. Fleur, who is of Haitian descent.



Some still are wary about filling out the census form.

“We want to use trusted voices in the community to get the message out that it is 100 percent safe to fill out the census questionnaire; that your community depends on it.

“We can say things to anyone ‘til we’re blue in the face. But, if their pastor is saying it to them, then it’s a little bit more believable. If an NGO executive director sitting behind a desk says to them ‘don’t forget to be counted, no one will share your information’, they are going to trust that voice, this is somewhere they go to get assistance. We really want people to know that this is about getting counted. We don’t use it for any other reason besides allocating resources.”

National voices also continue to push for recognition of the growing and powerful

Caribbean community. Felicia Persaud, a Guyanese-born journalist based in New York and chairperson of CaribID 2010, a movement to keep Caribbean Americans updated on the census, is most vocal. She has led the campaign for the inclusion of a Caribbean American or West Indian category on the census form, noting the severe undercount of this population in 2000. Although this signifier has not made it on this year’s form, Persaud and other Caribbean leaders are urging the community to participate in the census to make their race and ethnicity clear by writing in country of birth in the space provided on Question 9.

ACCURATE

By doling out a piece of the advertising pie to ethnic media, The U.S. Census Bureau expects to reach many of those left out of the count 10 years ago. The 2000 Census counted 1,852,874 individuals who identified themselves as West Indian (excluding Hispanic origin groups) out of a total U.S. population of 281,421,906 - less than one percent. With a total population estimate of 307,006,550 as of July 1, 2009, Caribbean

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 13)

Fading fear: Easier road to American citizenship for Caribbean immigrants

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

for elected office. Pierre too acknowledges the benefits.

"The fact that I cannot vote is one of the biggest motivators to become a U.S. citizen," he says, adding "the other thing is I am the last person in my family who has not done it, and I have seven siblings."

Married since last year October to Anniekay, a naturalized U.S. citizen, Pierre says his wife has been encouraging him, so he promises it will happen before the end of the year. When he does become a U.S. citizen, Pierre plans to hold fast to his Caribbean culture, choosing dual citizenship if it is an option.

"Even though I don't have a great deal of knowledge of the culture and lifestyle of my birth country, I still pay homage to Trinidad," he says.

ADVOCATE

Another worry says Pinnock, is fear of failing the mandatory civics test. As an immigrant advocate, Pinnock

goes beyond the traditional definition of attorney - she schools, counsels and teaches.

"My Jamaican clients are my family," she explains. "...There is a comfort level. We speak the same language. I understand what they say, they understand what I say. I look out for them. Obviously I treat all my clients equally. But, it's a different kind of bond with people who are from my country. So, I don't send them up as lamb for the slaughter. If I feel that they are going to be in trouble by doing something, I tell them strongly do not put yourself in that situation, because I want to protect them."

The attorney confirms that the process is much shorter than it used to be. It takes a maximum of six months rather than the three to six years of the past, she says, adding that in some states, like New Jersey and Georgia, if applicants pass the test, they can be sworn in that same day. However, this is not the case in the majority of states.

Highlighting basic eligibility, Pinnock explains that

applicants for citizenship must be at least age 18 years and have been a permanent resident for at least five years. If married to a U.S. citizen, the time period is shortened to three years after becoming a permanent resident. However, the couple will be required to prove that they are in a legitimate marriage by showing photographs, joint tax returns, joint bank statements and, if children are born to the marriage, copies of birth certificates for those children.

Another important requirement says Pinnock is that the applicant must be a person of good moral character, which means being free of any serious convictions.

For details on becoming a naturalized citizen visit: <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>.

For a list of benefits and responsibilities of citizenship: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/article/chapter2.pdf>.

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



World Bank approves \$200M for Jamaica

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The World Bank has approved a \$200 million loan for Jamaica to support its comprehensive reform program in addressing fiscal and debt sustainability.

The Washington-based financial institution said the initiative is a coordinated effort by multilateral development banks and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to help the Bruce Golding administration sustain its long-term development agenda.

The bank said the "First Programmatic Fiscal Sustainability Development Policy Loan" will support a series of measures to enhance fiscal and debt sustainability, increase the efficiency of public financial management and budgeting processes, and increase tax revenues through improved tax administration.

"The Fiscal Responsibility Framework, the comprehensive debt exchange, the public bodies' rationalization plan, and the tax administration reforms are far-reaching and, if fully implemented, will gen-

erate large benefits for the Jamaican people," said Yvonne M. Tisikata, World Bank director for the Caribbean.

The World Bank said the loan aims to increase fiscal consolidation in the public sector; improve predictability, transparency and accountability in fiscal management; increase control on public spending and debt generation; reduce debt service burden; and improve debt management.

"Together, with support from the other international development partners, we are implementing a comprehensive reform program to put the country back on a sustainable path and achieve significant growth over the medium-term," said the island's Finance Minister Audley Shaw.



Shaw



Bahamian charged with human smuggling

MIAMI, Florida - United States authorities have charged a Bahamian man with human smuggling after an abortive trip to Miami that left one person dead.

The U.S. Attorney's office here said it filed the criminal complaint against Davon Rolle, 19, late last month.

The office said it has also charged four other Caribbean nationals with illegal re-entry to the U.S. It identified them as David Coore, 27, of Jamaica; Delroy Coombs, 45, of Jamaica; Mathura Bridgelal, 50, of Trinidad and Tobago; and Tyrel Levarity, 23, of The Bahamas.

The U.S. Attorney's office said a sixth suspect, a 24-year-old man from The Bahamas, was charged with violating immigration law and is being held by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE). His name was not disclosed, as well as that of a seventh man who was released.

Authorities said a police helicopter spotted the 28-foot Intrepid boat in the waters off Miami on the night of Feb. 23 and followed it. They said as police tried to stop it, the occupants jumped into the water and tried to swim ashore.



Guyanese man wanted by FBI

NEW YORK - The United States Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) said late last month that it is looking for a Guyana-born man in connection with an alleged \$7 million mortgage fraud scheme.

FBI officials said Ishwardat "Danny" Raghunath, 46, who lived in Queens, disappeared before he could be arrested for being the alleged mastermind of the scheme. He is accused of ripping off lenders and left several homes in foreclosure.

According to an indictment in the Brooklyn Federal Court, Raghunath "recruited

straw buyers with good credit ratings to purchase homes in Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx.

"In exchange for a US\$5,000 fee for using their names, the buyers were promised that they would not have to make payments on these investment opportunities", the indictment stated.

It noted further that Raghunath "submitted bogus mortgage applications to lenders, inflating the sales price of the properties, then deposited the loan money in a bank account he controlled".



Spring Health

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

With a proven track record spanning 20 years of service to readers in the United States and the Caribbean Basin, Caribbean Today reaches an audience of over 112,000 highly qualified readers. They have median household income of \$63,000 and enjoy a higher disposable income. 19% have a college degree, 32% have some college. In today's economy, our readers are highly esteemed. 59.6% own their own homes. 76% are between 25-54 years of age (readership study conducted by Circulation Verification Council).

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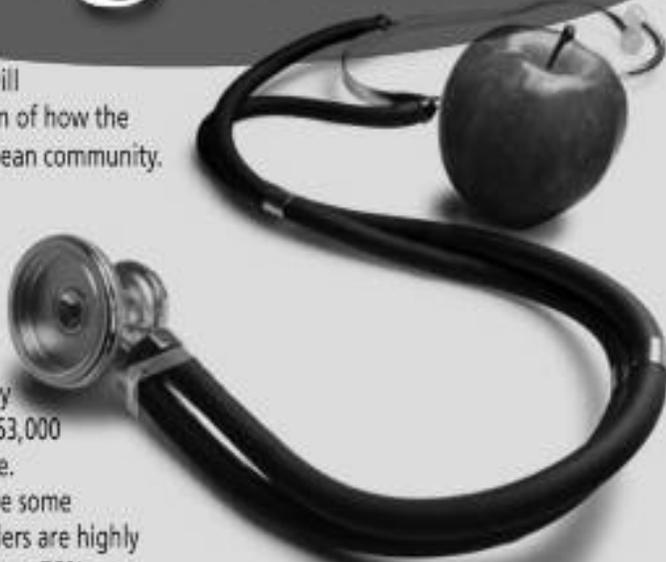
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Caribbean American congresswoman feels vindicated by U.S. ethics ruling

NEW YORK – Caribbean American Democratic Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke says she has been vindicated by a review of the United States House of Representatives' Ethics



Clarke

Committee on a trip to the Caribbean in 2007.

"I am pleased that the House Ethics Committee concluded that I committed no wrongdoing and followed the proper procedures surrounding a trip that I took to the Carib News Foundation

Conference in 2007 (in Antigua)," Clarke told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)**.

"It is unfortunate that these allegations have taken attention away from the substance of the annual conference, which provides a platform for CARICOM (Caribbean community) nations to maintain an open dialogue with the United States," added the representative for the 11th Congressional District in Brooklyn, New York, the largest district of Caribbean immigrants in the U.S.

The Ethics Committee last month admonished New York Democratic Congressman Charles B. Rangel, a strong advocate for the Caribbean, for violating Congressional gift rules by accepting corporate-sponsored trips to the Caribbean in 2007 and 2008.

The committee said Rangel was among a half dozen members of the Congressional Black Caucus who accepted trips to attend business seminars in Antigua

and Barbuda in Nov. 2007 and St. Maarten in Nov. 2008.

However, the committee said that Clarke "did not knowingly violate any provi-

sion of the Code of Official Conduct or any law, rule, regulation or other standard of conduct applicable to her conduct in the performance of her

duties or the discharge of your responsibilities with respect to her travel..."



Caribbean advocate in U.S. Congress facing ethics probe, steps down from powerful post

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

The Ethics Committee late last month admonished Rangel for violating Congressional gift rules by accepting corporate-sponsored trips to the Caribbean in 2007 and 2008. The committee said Rangel was among a half dozen members of the Congressional Black Caucus who accepted trips to attend business seminars in Antigua and Barbuda in Nov. 2007 and St. Maarten in Nov. 2008.

The Ethics Committee said the trips were organized by the New York-based Carib News Foundation, a charity affiliated with the weekly Carib News newspaper. But, according to an ethics complaint filed by the National

Legal and Policy Center, a Washington-based conservative advocacy group, the conventions were underwritten by corporations like Pfizer, Verizon and AT&T, and that the sponsorship was "widely noted" at the events.

ACCOUNTABLE

While the committee's findings, released on Feb. 25 admonished Rangel, it said it had no evidence that he knew of the sponsorships. It, however, held him accountable because two members of his staff knew about them.

"Representative Rangel was responsible for the knowledge and actions of his staff and the performance of their official duties", the report

stated.

The ethics panel is still investigating more serious accusations regarding Rangel's fund-raising, his alleged failure to pay federal taxes on rental income from a villa he owns in the Dominican Republic and his reported use of four rent-stabilized apartments provided by a Manhattan, New York, real estate developer. The Ethics Committee said none of the other members of Congress on the trips were admonished because they did not know of the sponsorships. They were, however, all ordered to repay the cost of the trips, totaling about US\$11,800.



U.S. demands more from Caribbean in illegal drugs trade fight

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The United States has called on several Caribbean community (CARICOM) governments to beef up their legislation regarding the illegal drugs trade as well as track down major narcotics traffickers and to dismantle their organizations.

In the 2009 Department of State's International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Washington reported on the efforts by CARICOM countries to deal with the trade drug trade in that year.

It stated that drug interdictions in Trinidad and Tobago remained difficult, in part due to the lack of effective legislation in combating crime and narcotics trafficking. The report noted that with criminal gang activity a major concern for T&T government, the criminal enterprise legislation would also allow each member of a criminal organization to be charged for illegal acts committed by any one member of the organization, if it can be shown that one member committed the criminal act in furtherance of, or in support of the criminal organization.

INITIATIVES

The report noted that other initiatives that would strengthen the counter-drug/crime capabilities of law enforcement agencies include the establishment of a drug court to deal with drug offences; strengthening border protection by automating inspection methods to include

container scanning; providing additional training for officers to deal with counterfeit merchandise and copyright items and counterfeit money.

It also called for the establishment of an internal affairs unit to combat internal fraud and bribery; initiating more border patrols on the western side of the island; and, participating in the SOUTHCOM initiative called Carib Venture, which is a multinational mission in the Southern Caribbean focused on stemming the flow of drugs in the region.

Washington claimed that it



U.S. wants the region to clamp down on illegal drugs, money.

was encouraging the government of Suriname to continue to pursue major narcotics traffickers and to dismantle their organizations, and to build on and strengthen its regional and international cooperation to date.

But Washington said that in order to achieve greater results, Suriname needs to continue capacity-building measures of its counter narcotics-focused units, to monitor and protect its porous borders and vast interior with a radar

detection system and adequate air support.

GANG THREAT

In Jamaica, the report noted that gang-led violent crime and corruption will continue to pose a significant threat to social stability in that country. It noted that the Jamaica government is exploring legislation to criminalize participation in organized crime gangs.

Washington said that in order for the Bruce Golding government to successfully investigate, prosecute and convict corrupt officials at all levels of government service, it needs to ensure that the Anti-Corruption Special Prosecutor, the JCF Anti-Corruption Branch and the FID are independent, fully resourced and backed by political will.

Washington said that it welcomes The Bahamian government's strong commitment to joint counter narcotics efforts and to extradite drug traffickers to the U.S. It urged the Hubert Ingraham government to further enhance its drug control efforts by integrating creole speakers into the various law enforcement agencies dealing with drugs and by working with Haitian National Police officers to be stationed in Great Inagua to develop information on Haitian drug traffickers transiting The Bahamas.

Haiti, which was hit by a devastating earthquake on Jan. 12, resulting in the death of more than 230,000 people, has

been told that it must continue the reform and expansion of the unit dealing with drug interdiction and step up the reform of its judicial



Ingraham

system as prerequisites for effective counter narcotics operations throughout the country.

Washington said it would provide significant support in the coming year under the Merida Initiative - a partnership between the governments of the U.S., Mexico, Central America, Haiti and the Dominican Republic - to confront the violent national and transnational gangs and organized criminal organizations that plague the entire region. It noted that the Merida Initiative will fund a variety of programs that will strengthen the institutional capabilities of participating governments by supporting efforts to investigate, sanction and prevent corruption within law enforcement agencies among other initiatives.

For the Eastern Caribbean, which includes the nine-member Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and Barbados, the report called on law enforcement authorities to strengthen "efforts to counter drug trafficking and related crimes such as money laundering, arms trafficking and corruption".



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Black frustrations with a black American president

Politics has strange consequences. Few are stranger than those of racial politics. The jobs bill pending in Congress offers an excellent example.

Imagine, for example, the reverends Jesse Jackson or Al Sharpton during previous economic downturns. By now, a pending employment bill might well have stirred marches and demands by black leaders for special aid to communities hard hit by the recession.



CLARENCE PAGE

But not this time. As much as Barack Obama's presidency has stirred anger on the right, it has brought a new patience to activists on the left. Black leaders still want the nation's first black president to pay attention to black issues, but they don't want to be perceived as getting in his way.

Few outside of black-oriented media noted the three black men who trudged into the White House through blizzard-like wind and snow to meet with President Obama in mid-February. Sharpton, Marc Morial, president the National Urban League, and Benjamin Jealous, president of the NAACP, met with Obama for an about hour to talk about black unemployment throughout the country.

"We're not looking for race-based programs," Sharpton said afterwards. "But, like the president, we want to make sure that everyone is included."

That's fine with Obama, who ever since his early campaign days has emphasized a color-blind approach. Help

everyone equitably, he has insisted, and African Americans will be helped, too. Yet, fashioning color-blind solutions to unemployment is a tough task when the problem has a distinctly color-coded composition.

RELIEF

For example, Team Obama breathed a guarded sigh of relief as overall unemployment rate eased slightly from 10 percent to 9.7 percent in January, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. But Ohio State University's Kirwan Institute, which studies the recession's impact on African Americans, found that black unemployment actually had gone up three-tenths of a percent, to 16.5 percent.

The 43-member Congressional Black Caucus briefly withheld their votes from a financial services bill in December to express their frustration at lack of attention to joblessness, mortgage foreclosures and other ills in their hardest-hit communities. But when the House passed its \$154 billion jobs bill in December, they left out the caucus's request to direct 10 percent of the funding to low-income communities.

John Powell, Kirwan Institute's executive director, expressed hopes this measure and others targeted to the neediest communities would be restored to the final bill, despite "pushback" by those who say they want a more "universal" approach. "We should have universal goals," he argued, "but targeted strategies."

AVOIDING RACE

Yet, among black America's prominent public intellectuals, only Georgetown's Michael Eric

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

Enter the 'cougar': Female predators on the prowl

There used to be a school of thought that it was only men who went after women.

But there is a flip side to all this, and it's not only men who are predators nowadays, but the females are also holding their own. They are just as hungry and dangerous as their male counterparts.

Enter the cougar. That's the name given to a woman who goes after young men. But why, why would a mature, middle aged, near senior citizen, pre-menopausal older woman go after a mere snippet of a boy, a mere cub? Because all cougars tame their cubs, and these young boys are there to be tamed.

So is it a control issue? Are these women looking for pets to own, seeking emotional slaves who they can trap, shackle and bind to their bedposts with the promise of financial and material reward? That does happen; for to be a predator, you have to be a woman of means, have a healthy bank account, live well and can provide for the prey when you get him.

All female predators aren't necessarily born that way. Many get that way because of numerous skirmishes in their lives. Some were used, abused and then left by cruel men. So, fuelled by despair, spurred on by anger, inspired by rage, and hell bent on not being hurt again by any man near her age, she goes for someone whom she can control. And he has to be young, for their mantra is: "Both of our ages must not add up to 100."

LONELINESS

Some female predators were spurred on merely because of loneliness. Alone after her husband left, the corporate executive is now in need of other company than the one that she works for. She's on the dark side of 50, and the reality is, no man her age wants her, as they're all out chasing young girls anyway. So her only option is to go after a



much younger lad.

So she snares one, and her life changes dramatically. Suddenly she has regained her youth, starts to feel sensations that she long thought were dead and gone, begins to tingle where nerves had gone to sleep, feels alive again. After all, if she wanted a dud, she'd simply be with an old man, right?



TONY ROBINSON

DOWN SIDE

But all is not perfect in the lair of the predator. Some young conquests are bright intelligent chaps and are not bereft of emotions and feelings. Some may want a little more than material stuff and wish to be treated as an equal, not as a social experiment, as some predators refer to them.

But even as liberated as some female predators are, there is still some element of trepidation and shame, as social

mores dictate certain behavior. The female predator can't be escorted to her company's ball by prey, who is young enough to be her son. What will her co-workers think?

And the argument about men doing the same thing for years doesn't wash either.

Many female predators treat their charges like social pariahs, and take them nowhere, preferring the confines of the house, maybe a late movie or dinner at some obscure out-of-the-way restaurant, and occasionally may allow him to drive her car...at night.

Yes, female predators exist and their numbers are growing. Just read the advice columns.

Perhaps these women just became tired of sacrificing their lives for men. And like all old predators who got too weak to hunt in the wild, they turn to the easy pickings of weak vulnerable prey. The hunting ground is fertile and the female predator is on the loose.

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Investing in Miami-Dade County

Take a look around. What's happening is unprecedented in Miami-Dade County's history. Together with public and private partners, we're investing in infrastructure at a pace that hasn't been seen in decades.

A new, modern airport is evolving at Miami International. Plans are underway to construct a tunnel under Biscayne Bay to alleviate traffic congestion

Downtown downtown and improve access to the Port of Miami. To preserve water quality and conserve usage, our water and sewer system is undergoing extensive upgrades. Metrorail is undergoing its first major expansion in two decades.

Neighborhoods throughout Miami-Dade are benefitting from the Building Better Communities Bond Program. Now at the five-year mark, this

ambitious program has supported projects ranging from new recreational facilities and library upgrades to improved drainage and beach restoration.

Improving infrastructure is one of the most important roles of local government. These projects support thousands of jobs and position us to emerge from the current economic downturn better and stronger. To boost employment in the

local building professions and trades, my office is working with the County Commission and the Office of Capital Improvements to accelerate our building projects. Over the past 18 months, more than \$500 million in capital contracts have been expedited contributing significantly to the local economy,

As mayor, my priority is to promote activities that advance economic recovery and make

investments that preserve the quality of life of our residents. We're doing some amazing things in the face of adversity. I am so proud of what Miami-Dade is accomplishing and there's nowhere else I would rather call home.

Carlos Alvarez,
mayor, Miami-Dade



Black frustrations with a black American president

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

Dyson has had enough bold audacity to declare, "Obama runs from race like a black man runs from a cop." If anything, Obama actually runs from race like a black politician who is looking to avoid a potential white conservative backlash.

Another consequence of Washington's changed racial landscape is a higher profile and new level of accountability for black organizations like the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). An embarrassing follow-the-money New York Times investigation of its finances has raised serious questions about how well the caucus and its various charities are serving their constituents. Yet caucus leaders have been less forthcoming than a Tiger Woods news conference.

Taking advantage of political finance laws that its members help to write, the CBC's network of nonprofit groups and charities has become a fundraising powerhouse. Yet the Times found it spends more of that cash on lavish galas, golf outings and conventions than it spends on scholarships and other badly needed public services.

Worse, a huge share of their donations come from companies that produce the sort of products that the lawmakers write laws to regulate, including tobacco, liquor, "early pay-check" loans, "rent-to-own" furniture stores and other products that have a controversial impact on poor black neighborhoods. In a statement, Representative Barbara Lee, a California Democrat who chairs the caucus, called the Times story unfair but did not ask for

a correction. More than a week after the Valentines' Day report, attempts by journalists to get further answers have not been successful.

If anything the caucus and its foundation have been exposed for engaging in ethical conflicts, real or apparent, that no one seemed to care about in the years when black congressman and the occasional black senator were the only visible black power in town. Times have changed. With a black president in the White House, the caucus gains real clout. When questions are raised about their ethics and priorities, they need to give some real answers.

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• "The Caribbean is a little relaxed in terms of enforcement, perhaps too relaxed for our own good" - Oswald Hannis, educator and counsellor with the AIDS Secretariat, last month calling for Antigua to follow the lead of the United States and demand medical screening for migrants.

• "We think that France has acted out of turn and it has acted prematurely" - St Kitts and Nevis Prime Minister Dr. Denzil Douglas last month blasting the French



government for including the twin-island federation on a list of jurisdictions that it considers to be "uncooperative tax havens".

• "There has been no stealing, there has been no thievery, there has been no expropriation" - Antigua and Barbuda's Attorney General Justin Simon saying that he was not impressed by the claims of a group of disgruntled United States investors who filed a class action lawsuit last month against the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) and the government of the twin-island nation claiming its 28,000 members fell prey to disgraced Texan financier Sir Allen Stanford.

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Florida expo to support minority businesses set for Mar.11-12

MIAMI, Florida - "Innovation: The Gateway to Opportunities" will be the theme of a two-day business expo hosted by The Southern Florida Minority Supplier Development Council (SFMSDC) this month.

The 25th annual event is scheduled for Mar. 11-12, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day, at the Broward County Convention Center, 1950 Eisenhower Blvd. in Fort Lauderdale.

The event aims to bring local minority-owned businesses and major corporations and government agencies together in a series of workshops, networking events to create business opportunities and discuss industry trends.

"The event is designed to ensure minority businesses, at all stages of development, are positioned for greater success," said Beatrice

Louissaint, president of the SFMSDC, in a recent press release, "and to provide corporations and government agencies with information about supplier diversity."

The expo also offers an opportunity for minority entrepreneurs to present their goods and services to purchasing agents from government agencies and Fortune 500 companies.

The workshops will focus on achieving company growth, doing business in the health-care and pharmaceutical industries, doing business with local, state and federal government, purchasing trends and best practices in supplier diversity.

For more information, visit www.sfmsdc.org, call the SFMSDC at 305-762-6151 or e-mail beatrice@sfmsdc.org.



Miami opens free tax preparation sites

The City of Miami is again joining forces with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and its partners to assist residents with their 2009 income tax preparation.

Over 20 city-sponsored locations are offering free tax preparation services and multi-benefit eligibility screening for other resources such as Food Stamps (SNAP), Medicaid, Cash Assistance and FAFSA (Free Applications for Federal Student Aid) using the Benefit Bank as part of this year's campaign, with services provided through April 15.

Residents wishing to file

tax returns at these sites can learn if they qualify to receive a federal income tax refund of up to \$5,657 via the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and up to an additional \$1,000 per child via the Child Tax Credit (CTC).

In addition to free tax preparation, all Miami sites are able to provide electronic filing for both taxes and other benefits to provide a quicker turn around.

Residents interested in scheduling a tax preparation appointment at one of the city-sponsored sites, or city-affiliated sites, may call 311.



When should you foreclose your home?

ILLYCE GLINK

If your home in the United States is worth less than what you owe, would you walk away from the home and allow it to go into foreclosure?

How much less? What if your home is worth 75 percent of the loan amount? What if it is worth half of what you owe?

What if your home is worth only 25 percent of the loan amount? Would you walk away at that point?

According to new research by First American CoreLogic, homeowners



Homeowners are more willing to walk away from properties with declining value.

whose homes are worth less than 75 percent of the mort-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)

New U.S. credit card law puts brakes on abusive practices

A new credit card law in the United States, designed to provide consumers with some relief from abusive industry practices, such as arbitrary rate increases and double-cycle billing, went into effect last month.

The Credit Card Accountability, Responsibility and Disclosure Act, also known as the CARD Act, improves transparency, requiring credit card companies to make more disclosures of their terms to consumers. It also establishes other sweeping changes to prevent exorbitant fees.

The Miami-Dade Consumer Services Department has outlined some of the new rules in its edition of "ConsumerWise" and advises cardholders to be sure to read all credit card notifications received in the mail.

COMMON RIP-OFFS

Big rate hikes are not gone for good - To receive some of the benefits under the new law, such as interest rate relief, consumers must be current on their bills. Credit card companies may also raise

interest rates as long as they provide 45 days advance notice.

New fees - Anticipating a loss in revenue due to the new restrictions, some credit card companies may rely on imposing new fees. While there are no restrictions on the types of fees issuers can implement, consumers can avoid unpleas-



U.S. implements new law to protect consumers from abuse by credit card companies.

ant surprises by paying attention to the "Terms and Conditions" section of their statement.

Limited access to credit - Issuers may impose stricter rules on consumers when they apply for credit. They may demand details about income

or proof of other savings to ensure they are able to collect on a debt.

Fewer rewards - To save money, some companies are tightening the purse strings on their rewards programs, making it more difficult for consumers to cash in on their accumulated points. If you're late on a payment, for example, you may have to pay a fee to recoup your rewards points.

CONSUMER SMARTS

Prior notice of rate increases required - Prohibits increase in APR without 45 days notice. Prohibits applying rate increases retroactively to existing balances. Requires clear notice of right to cancel credit card when APR is raised.

Freeze on interest rate terms and fees on canceled cards - Prevents APR from being raised, or repayment terms being cancelled, if a cardholder cancels a card. Limits on fees and interest charges

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)

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*visit website for complete details

MDC's volunteer income tax assistance program offers free help to low income, elderly applicants

MIAMI, Florida – Low-income, elderly, and non-English speaking residents will again be offered help with filing their 2009 taxes through Miami Dade College's (MDC) free Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA).

The VITA program is administered and staffed by faculty and MDC business students. All MDC VITA sites have the ability to file electronically. Federal income tax returns must be in the mail and post-marked no later than April 15.

SITES

Below is a list of this year's IRS/MDC VITA tax service locations in Miami, Florida, their schedules and contact

information:

- Carrie P. Meek Entrepreneurial Education Center (EEC), 6300 N.W. 7th Ave., Miami 33150

Room 1201-1. From **4 p.m. to 7 p.m.**; Tuesdays - **Mar. 16 and 23**. Call **305-237-1199**.

Customers must be signed in by 6 p.m.

- MDC Hialeah Campus, 1776 W. 49th St., Hialeah 33012. Lobby of the main classroom building **4 p.m. to 7 p.m.**;

Tuesdays - through **April 6**. Call **305-237-1519**. Languages

spoken: English and Spanish. A maximum of 25 clients per

evenings will be allowed. Customers must be signed in

prior to 6:30 p.m.

- MDC Homestead

Campus, 500 College Terr., Homestead 33030. Room B-122 from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. Mondays - through **April 12**. Call **305-237-5143**.

Languages spoken: English and Spanish. Service is available by appointment only.

- MDC InterAmerican Campus, 627 S.W. 27th Ave., Miami 33135. Room 3207 from **1 p.m. to 5 p.m.** Wednesdays - through **April 7**. Call **305-237-6484**.

Customers will only be accepted until **4:30 p.m.**

- MDC Kendall Campus, 11011 S.W. 104th St., Miami 33176. Room 6343 (Business office in Room 6319) from **2 p.m. to 4 p.m.** Through April 8. Call **305-237-2375/2283**.

Mondays and Wednesdays are by appointment only. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, it is first come, first served and customers will only be accepted until **3:45 p.m.** A maximum of 10 customers will be served each day.

- MDC North Campus, 11380 N.W. 27th Ave., Miami 33167. Building 2, second floor, Room 2201, Computer Courtyard from **4 p.m. to 7 p.m.**, Tuesdays - through April 6. Closed Mar.16 and 23. Call **305-237-1199**. Languages spoken:

English and Spanish. Customers must be signed in by **6 p.m.**

- MDC Wolfson Campus, 300 N.E. Second Ave., downtown Miami 33132. Building 7, Room 7109, ETCOTA Center

from **9 a.m. to noon** Saturdays - **Mar. 6, Mar. 13, Mar. 20 and April 10**. Closed April 3 for Easter break. Call **305-237-3151**. Languages spoken: English and Spanish. The center will be accepting customers until **11:30 a.m.** and will serve a maximum of 30 customers each Saturday, whichever comes first.

- MDC West Campus, 3800 N.W. 115th Ave., Doral 33178. Second Floor from **9 a.m. to noon Mar. 27**. Call **305-237-8918**. Languages spoken: English and Spanish. The center will be accepting customers until **11:30 a.m.** and will serve a maximum of 30 customers, whichever comes first.



New U.S. credit card law puts brakes on abusive practices

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

- **Prohibits double cycle billing:** Prohibits credit card issuers imposing interest charges on any portion of a balance that is paid by the due date.

- **Over-the-limit fee restrictions:** Cardholders must be given the option of having a fixed credit limit that cannot be exceeded, and card companies cannot charge over limit fees on cardholders with fixed limits. Over limit charges can only be applied once during a billing cycle.

- **Prohibits charging interest on fees:** Prohibits the charging of interest on credit card transaction fees, such as late fees and over limit fees. Consumer right to reject card

before notice is provided of open account - Gives cardholders who get pre-approved the right to reject the card up until they activate it without having their credit adversely affected.

Application of card payments - Requires payments to be applied first to the credit card balance with the highest rate of interest to minimize finance charges. Prohibits late fees if the card issuer delayed crediting the payment. Prohibits card companies from charging late fees when a cardholder presents proof of mailing payment within seven days of the due date.

Length of billing period - Requires credit card statements to be mailed 21 days before the bill is due (current

requirement is 14 days). Prohibition on universal default and unilateral changes to cardholder agreements - Prevents credit card issuers from increasing interest rates on cardholders in good standing for reasons unrelated to the cardholder's behavior with respect to that card.

Enhanced disclosures

- **Payoff timing disclosures:** Requires credit card issuers to provide individual consumer account information and to disclose the period of time it will take the cardholder to pay off the card balance if only minimum monthly payments are made and the total amount of interest the cardholder will incur if only minimum monthly payments are

made.

- **Late payment deadlines and penalties:** Requires full disclosure in billing statements of required payment due dates and applicable late payment penalties. Requires that cardholders be given a reasonable period to make payment. Requires that payment at local branches be credited same-day.

Renewal disclosures:

Requires card issuers to provide account disclosures to consumers upon card renewal when the terms of the card have changed.

Protection of young consumers -

Consumers under age 21 who can't prove an independent means of income or provide the signature of a co-signer aged 21 or older

won't get approved for credit cards.

Additional restrictions on credit card practices are scheduled to take effect in August.

For details on the new CARD Act, visit the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing & Urban Affairs website or ConsumerAction.org.

For more consumer tips, or to check the complaint history of a company, file a complaint or ask consumer-related questions, visit the Miami-Dade Consumer Services Department website at www.miamidade.gov/csd or call **305-375-3677**.



When should you foreclose your home?

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

gage amount are most apt to simply walk away and let the

home fall into foreclosure - even if they have the means to pay. The results of the study

seem to show that homeowners face a mental hurdle that melts away as the equity in

their home disappears.

So if the home you bought for \$400,000 is now worth less than \$300,000, you'll think seriously about a strategic default, even if you have the means to pay.

MOVING ON

At what point is it worth simply throwing up your hands and preserving your wealth for your next move?

The first hurdle is to determine whether you live in a U.S. state that allows lenders to pursue you for a deficiency judgment. A deficiency judgment means a lender can go after your other assets if the company forecloses on the property and resells it for less than you owe on the mortgage.

But many states do not allow deficiency judgments. In those states, the lender agrees to accept title to the property if you can't pay, and does not try to attach liens to other assets. If you live in a state that doesn't allow deficiency judgments, it paves the way for you to simply mail the

keys back to the lender - if you're able to let go of the emotional attachment you have to the property.

CUTTING TIES

Lenders expect that if you haven't lost your job or experienced some other sort of financial hardship, you will continue to pay your mortgage even if your house is worth half of the mortgage amount. But homeowners who choose a different path, and who think about their finances strategically, may decide they are far better off handing back the keys to the lender, taking an immediate hit to their credit history and score, and moving forward with their financial lives.

If even a million homeowners make the decision to strategically default, it could change the mortgage industry as we know it.

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JAZZING IT UP

On Feb. 29 the Citibank Richmond Heights branch hosted a dinner reception in honor of Black History Month. Depositors were treated to readings, poetry and song.



Left to right Ken James, radio host Hot-105, Executive Vice President Citibank Joann- Palacino-Chong, Branch Manager Citibank Richmond Heights Michael Murph, Exec VP Citibank, Marta Carrazana, Patrick Merit, exec director Richmond Heights CDC, and Pastor Anthony Reed Martin, Memorial AME Church Richmond Heights.

Shuffling the pack: Caribbean enters new era of geo-politics

PETER RICHARDS

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad - As he prepares to host the inter-sessional summit of Caribbean community (CARICOM) leaders this month, Dominica's Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit is no doubt aware of the concerns raised in the region over the decision of some Caribbean countries to join the newly-formed Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CLACS).

Skerrit has already sought to allay fears that the new grouping will supplant existing hemispheric organizations, including the Organization of American States (OAS).

"As it is now, there is no one body comprising all of us, save and except the OAS...but Cuba is out of the OAS. We don't see ourselves supplanting the existing arrangements which we now have, I don't see us setting them aside, I don't see us ending them," he told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)**.

While details of the new arrangement are still

to be finalized, CARICOM and Latin American leaders, who met in Cancun, Mexico last month, have already agreed to meet in Venezuela next year. One thing is certain though, the United States and Canada have not been asked to be party to the new arrangements.

CHALLENGES

Skerrit has justified their exclusion by indicating that the new organization is intended to bring a closer relationship between the Latin American countries and their CARICOM neighbors, while insist-



Skerrit

ing that he was not giving anyone the impression that the Caribbean countries were aligning themselves with Latin America to seek to do away with the OAS.

"That is certainly not the case," he said. "We have particular challenges. I don't want to get caught up in this notion that we want to set aside the U.S. and Canada. There are peculiar and particular challenges and issues which confront the Caribbean and Latin American countries and which do not affect the United States and Canada and the question is can we not find solutions among ourselves, are we not able enough to address the issues."

Grenada's Foreign Minister Peter David told reporters after the Cancun meeting that "all of us in CARICOM" were quite supportive of the move to bring the Caribbean, Latin and Central America closer together.

"I have not heard a single person indicate it is intended to replace or somehow diminish the role of the OAS," he said, adding "certainly among CARICOM countries that spoke in Cancun...none of them indicated at anytime that the intent was to do just that."

RE-ENGAGEMENT

Dr. Mark Kirton, senior lecturer at the Institute of International Relations at the University of the West Indies (UWI), is also questioning why Mexico, which has, in recent times had a relatively low profile in CARICOM, should now seek to re-engage the small Caribbean states. He argues that Mexico now finds it necessary to strategically reposition itself in this environment of hemispheric political and economic reconfigurations to counter the thrust by Brazil and Venezuela to assert their influence in the Caribbean in

recent times.

"It must also be remembered that since the 1970s, Mexico moved to fashion a relationship with CARICOM which sought to promote closer cooperation and provide the scope for increased cultural, commercial and economic linkages. The relationship has however oscillated between an era of intense activity and a period of 'benign' neglect," said Kirton.

"It is therefore interesting to observe that more than three decades later, Mexico is in the vanguard of a move to



David

create a community of Latin American and Caribbean states, without the United States and Canada."

In the early 1970s, Mexico's foreign policy included strong interest with the Caribbean that led to several initiatives, including its joint sponsorship, with Venezuela, of the Sistema Economico, Latinoamericano (SELA), which was significant in that it included CARICOM states and Cuba but excluded the U.S. When the convention establishing the Trinidad-based Association of Caribbean States (ACS) was signed on July 24, 1994 in Colombia, it brought together all the 25 countries in the Spanish, English and Dutch Caribbean with the intent to promote consultation, cooperation and

concerted action among all members.

"The ACS has provided the institutional framework for the development of geo-strategic relations and it is therefore worthy of note that the 2010 Summit Declaration indicates an agreement to constructively strengthen the ACS and to collaborate in the fulfillment of its mandate", Kirton wrote in his newspaper column.

NEW REALM

Now, as regional leaders get ready to gather in Dominica for their inter-sessional summit from Mar. 11-13, questions are being asked as to whether or not Caribbean countries have been drawn into a new realm of geo-politics.

Former Caribbean diplomat Sir Ronald Sanders noted, for example, the Caribbean governments' position on a joint "Declaration on (the) Falklands Islands Issue", which "confirmed their support of Argentina's legitimate rights in the sovereignty dispute with the United Kingdom over the Falkland Islands Issue".

"The support of Latin American countries for Argentina in this matter is quite understandable," noted Sanders. "They have links of language, culture, history and proximity that go back centuries. But the support of CARICOM countries for Argentina's 'legitimate rights' is puzzling.

"Unless there is something they have not made public, this position by Caribbean governments appears on the surface to run counter to their own national interests," he added, noting that the region's position could well undermine future trade and other relations with London.

CARICOM's trade with Britain far exceeds trade with Argentina; investment in CARICOM countries from Britain is much greater than

any investment from Argentina and Sanders noted that official development assistance from Britain to CARICOM countries directly and indirectly (through the European Union and the Commonwealth for instance) is much larger than any assistance from Argentina.

In addition, he argues that the number of tourists from Britain to CARICOM countries is considerably greater than from Argentina; and far more CARICOM nationals live, work and study in Britain than in Argentina.

SUPPORTIVE

But David insists that CARICOM's position is supportive of the mechanism put in place at the United Nations to deal with the issue and "all that is being said by CARICOM...is that we should that process must be given a chance to work.

"We are fully supportive of the U.N. process with respect to that," he added.

However, respected Caribbean journalist Rickey Singh, in his newspaper column last month, said that there needs to be a definitive statement "the sooner the better" from CARICOM governments "offering the rationale for and benefits of" joining this new entity. He notes that a number of regional leaders were themselves absent from the Cancun meeting and that Skerrit, a close ally of Venezuela's Leader Hugo Chavez, "felt the need to go quickly on the defensive" with regards to the intention of the new body.

- CMC



Sanders

Who to trust?: U.S. Census 2010 ignites mixed emotions in Caribbean community

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

numbers should also increase. But an accurate count will depend on participation, particularly among the undocumented. Hence the government's partnership with Caribbean media and marketing agencies who speak the same language as the difficult to reach.

The U.S. Census Bureau's website lists 11 Caribbean-focused newspapers across the country that have been awarded Paid Media Advertisement Buy: **Caribbean Star** in Atlanta, **The West Indian American** in Hartford, **Carib Press** out of Los Angeles, and

in the states with the largest Caribbean concentration: **Caribbean National Weekly**, **Caribbean Sun**, **Caribbean Today**, **South Florida Times in Florida**; and **Caribbean Life**, **N.Y. Carib News**, **Weekly Gleaner**, **Weekly Star in New York**.

According to the website, the U.S. will be more racially and ethnically diverse by mid-century. Minorities, now roughly one-third of the population, are expected to become the majority in 2042, with the nation projected to be 54 percent minority in 2050. It continues: By 2050, the minority population -

everyone except for non-Hispanic, single-race whites - is projected to be 235.7 million out of a total U.S. population of 439 million.

The Caribbean population is not specifically detailed in these statistics. That is why Caribbean count advocates are adamant about getting Caribbean Americans recognized as an important and powerful ethnic group. Maxine Tulloch, president of the Caribbean-American Journalists and Media Association (CAJMA), said the organization is working to ensure that Caribbean media get the advertising dollars to

get the message to the hard-to-reach community.

"It's important for the Caribbean community to be counted because when we are under-counted, we are under-funded and there are no funds available in the city to provide services such as road works, a healthy school lunch program, job creation, and the like," said Tulloch.

"It's also important that the government know that the Caribbean community are here in large amounts so that they can support our businesses, support what we do as a cultural group."

The numbers are crucial,

especially for states like Florida and New York where many Caribbean immigrants reside, including those living under the radar.

"At first there was a lot of fear," said Michael. "Sometimes I would hear a siren and I would start to wonder if somebody was coming after me. I am no longer as fearful, but, it's an uncomfortable life...Inwardly I might be fearful, but every day I go about with boldness and confidence."

*Dawn A. Davis is a freelance writer for Caribbean Today. * Name changed upon request.*



U.S. CENSUS 2010

www.caribbeantoday.com

A Caribbean Today special feature

Avoiding scams during census time

MIAMI, Florida –Miami-Dade Consumer Services Department is cautioning residents to learn how to spot potential scams during the 2010 Census.

By knowing exactly what to expect from the Census Bureau, according to the department, residents can avoid becoming a victim of a crime.

Every United States household will receive a 10-question form in the mail within the next few months. It requires that the resident fill in the form to account for everyone living at his or her address as of April 1, 2010 and includes a prepaid envelope to mail the completed form as soon as possible.

Any request for census information from the Census Bureau will be clearly marked as coming from the U.S. Census Bureau and notes the "Official Business" of the U.S. Residents will receive a letter from the Census Bureau director notifying them that in a few days, their household will receive a form in the mail, a phone call from the Census Bureau or a visit from a Census Bureau representative. The Census Bureau will never

ask for any information to be submitted online.

GUIDELINES

A census worker will only visit a home to follow-up if he or she does not receive the form, as they are required by law.

If someone knocks on your door and identifies himself or herself as a census worker:

- Ask to see their official government badge marked with just that person's name.
- Ask for photo identification from another source to confirm their identity.

Some census workers might carry a "U.S. Census Bureau" bag.

If you still are not certain about their identity, call the Regional Census Center toll-free number at **1-800-923-8282** to confirm they are employed by the Census Bureau. The Census Bureau will never, under any circumstances, ask to enter your home.

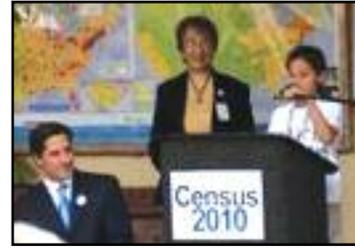
The census happens once every 10 years. Private information, such as names, addresses, social security numbers or telephone numbers, is

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)

Miami launches 2010 U.S. Census at The English Center

MIAMI, Florida – A kick-off ceremony for the 2010 United States Census was held last month at The English Center here, emphasizing the census's importance to the parents, students and community leaders.

"We have selected today's location because of the historical significance this educational center represents for our community at large," said Miami-Dade County Census 2010 Complete Count Committee Co-Chair Perla Tabares Hantman of the



A student reads at a ceremony to kick off Census 2010 in Miami.

school that was founded in 1962.

"The English Center is also a very appropriate starting point for this year's census

drive, because this institution represents thousands of people who have come to America's shores in search of a dream."

"The school district is taking a very active part in the 2010 Census, for a number of very good reasons," explained Miami-Dade County's Superintendent of Schools Alberto M. Carvalho.

"The census determines how federal funds will be distributed and the best way for

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)

MIAMI BY NUMBERS

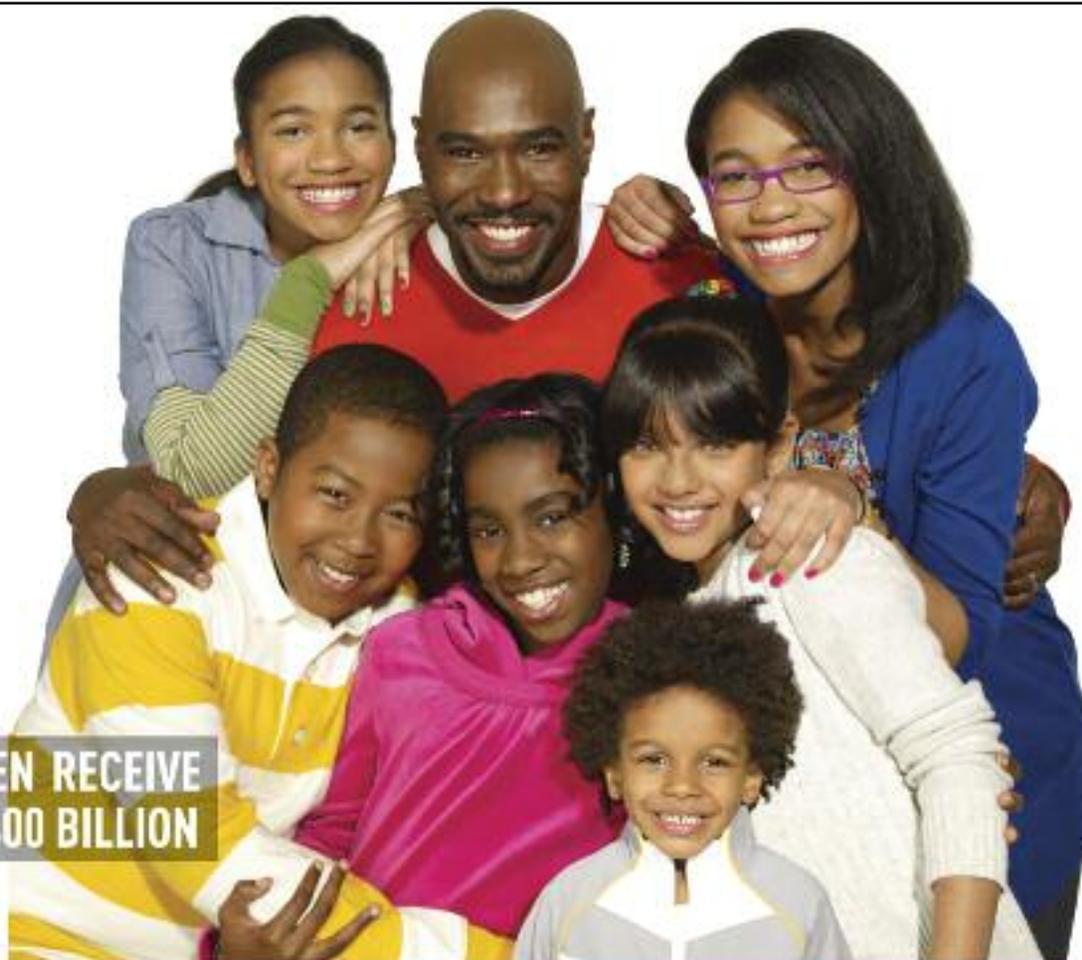


- Photograph by Eric J. Esteban

Miami's Mayor Carlos Alvarez promotes the 2010 United States Census during last month's Miami-Dade County Health Department Employees Meeting at the Dade-County Auditorium. On April 1, the U.S. population will be counted. The census affects political representation and directs the allocation of billions of dollars in government funding. It is estimated that every person counted is equal to \$1,200 in federal funding.

To learn more, go to www.miamidade.gov/census2010.

HELP OUR CHILDREN RECEIVE THEIR SHARE OF \$400 BILLION



Now is your chance to ensure that your community gets its fair share of over \$400 billion per year in federal funds. By taking just 10 minutes to answer 10 simple questions, you can help provide better roads, schools and healthcare for your community. Help create positive change for yourself, your children and your nation. Responses are confidential and will not be shared with immigration or third parties.

2010CENSUS.GOV

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2010**

IT'S IN OUR HANDS

Red by U.S. Census Bureau



A Caribbean Today special feature

Ethnic media being overlooked ~ NAM

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The United States Census Bureau is missing opportunities to provide reporting instructions to diverse communities in the U.S. by failing to fully utilize the ethnic media that can reach more than 60 million adults in those communities, according to recent testimony from New America Media (NAM) in Congress.

Sandy Close, NAM's executive director, called the 2010 Census advertising program an "unprecedented investment" in ethnic and community media, having identified 3,000 media outlets across the country. But she cautioned that many key media outlets were left out, including 47 percent of those that attended roundtable sessions organized by NAM and the Census Bureau last year to learn how they could help with the count.

FRUSTRATED

She noted that several prominent African American papers had been excluded. "Many are frustrated – they don't know why they fell through the cracks...All very urgently want a role," said Close, testifying before the Oversight and Government Reform's Subcommittee on

Information Policy, Census and National Archives.

NAM said it represents more than 2,500 ethnic media outlets across the country. The roundtable discussions organized last year included more than 600 ethnic media representatives in 12 U.S. cities.

"Their hunger to participate in the 2010 campaign is intense," Close testified. "...They get the census: they get their community's stake in a complete count, and they get their own."

In citing the importance of an accurate census count not only on federal dollars, but private ones as well, she noted the experience of Juan Carlos Ramos of the *El Tiempo* Hispanic newspaper in New Orleans. He said the 2000 census undercounted Hispanics in New Orleans and as a result Coca Cola dropped New Orleans, and his paper, from its national advertising campaign.

"From our first briefing in March of '09 until our last one in early December, ethnic media attendees also expressed a uniform anxiety over the lack of transparency in the decision making process of the census ad buy," Close said.



Miami launches 2010 U.S. Census at The English Center

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14)

us to ensure that we get our fair share is by urging everyone in our community to fill out their census form."

HEAD COUNT

Rivas Logan, who is on the board of directors of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO), emphasized that the census is a head count of every person in the United States and includes, people of all ages, religious groups, and ethnicities, both citizens and non-citizens.

The 2010 Census will help communities receive more than \$400 billion in federal funds each year for schools, job training centers, senior centers, public works projects

and emergency services. Additional data collected by the census helps determine the number of seats Florida has in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Assistant Regional Census Manager Marilyn Stephens, from the Atlanta, Georgia region, assured the audience that all the information collected by the U.S. Census Bureau is private and confidential and cannot be shared with anyone including other federal agencies and law enforcement agencies.

The ceremony also included performances by students from Arch Creek Elementary and Southwood Middle School Center for the Arts.



Avoiding scams during census time

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14)

never published. The information is used to produce statistics. Answers cannot be used against the person interviewed by any government agency or court.

To see what questions will

be on the forms, visit the Census Bureau website. Answers to common questions about how information is collected and used are also provided there.






Census 2010 workers wear an official identification badge.



Census 2010 workers carry U.S. Census Bureau bags, making them easier to identify.

For more information about the 2010 Census visit www.2010census.gov.



How to Identify Census 2010 Workers

By being counted in the 2010 Census you are standing up for what your community's needs are. That's why census takers are so important. A census taker is a person from your community who is hired by the Census Bureau to make sure that your neighborhood gets represented as accurately as possible. The census taker's primary responsibility is to collect census information from residences that have not sent back their 2010 Census form.

The Census Bureau provides the census taker with a binder containing all of the addresses that didn't send back a filled out census form. The census taker then visits all of those addresses and records the answers to the questions on the form. If no one answers at a particular residence, a census taker will visit that home up to three times, each time leaving a door hanger featuring a phone number; residents can call the number on the hanger to schedule the visit.

The census taker will ONLY ask the questions that appear on the census form. They will NEVER ask for your Social Security Number or personal banking information (such as account numbers or passwords).

Your privacy and confidentiality is our priority!

The census taker who collects your information is sworn for life to protect your data under Federal Law Title 13. Those who violate the oath face criminal penalties. Under federal law, the penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment for up to 5 years, or both.



2010 CENSUS. IT'S IN OUR HANDS

BE COUNTED IN THE 2010 CENSUS!




IT'S IN OUR HANDS

Beginning in March, households will receive a census form by mail or in person from a census worker. Census data will be used to allocate millions of dollars in federal funding, including disaster and emergency services, transportation, senior centers and more.

- ▲ 10 questions
- ▲ 10 minutes
- ▲ 10 years of fair funding and fair representation

ALL information is confidential and by law cannot be shared with immigration officials or any government agencies. It is time to better understand our changing and diverse community and shape our future. Be counted in 2010.

Call 3-1-1 or click www.miamidade.gov/census2010



Hundreds turn out for Rex Nettleford farewell in Miami

MIAMI, Florida - Hundreds of Jamaicans turned out last month to bid farewell to Rex Nettleford, the late vice chan-



Thompson

cellor emeritus of the University of the West Indies (UWI), during a thanksgiving service at the Holy Family Episcopal Church here.

Nettleford died in Washington, D.C. on Feb. 2 at age 77. An official funeral service was held in Jamaica on Feb. 16.

The service in Miami included several tributes reflecting periods of Nettleford's contribution to the development of Jamaica's cultural landscape. Former government minister Dudley Thompson said the country has lost an irreplaceable man. Marlon Hill, United States advisory representative for Jamaica Diaspora Southern, spoke of Nettleford in the late professor's capacity as chairman of the Jamaican Diaspora Foundation.

"He understood, admired and appreciated the global reach and impact of our people," said Hill.

Margaret Barrett, president of the UWI Alumni Association, South Florida chapter, focused on Nettleford's dedication to the university's development, even after his retirement.

Sydney Roberts, director of Jamaica Awareness, Inc., a cultural non-profit organiza-

tion based in South Florida, discussed time shared with Nettleford, including scheduling cultural events such as performances by the National Dance Theatre Company (NDTC), which Nettleford founded.

Eddy Edwards, South Florida radio personality and director of the local radio program "Caribbean Riddims", said the late professor's intel-

lect and contribution to the enrichment of the Caribbean diaspora would be sorely missed.

Musical tributes were rendered by the Jamaican Folk Revue, accompanied by the Tallawah Mento Band, as well as the South Florida Caribbean Chorale directed by Steve Higgins.

Dub poet Malachi Smith read "Kumina King" that he

composed for Nettleford following his death.

Also participating in the service were former U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica Sue Cobb; Jamaican-born Florida State Representative Hazelle Rogers; Jamaica's Consul General Sandra Grant Griffiths and representatives of the Caribbean Consular Corp stationed in South Florida.



FYI

OBAMA TIPS HAITIAN AMERICAN

United States President Barack Obama last month signed the confirmation of Haitian American Patrick Corvington as chief executive officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service. The U.S. Senate had previously confirmed Corvington's nomination by unanimous consent.

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that engages more than five million



Corvington

Americans in service through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs.

For more information, visit NationalService.gov.

RE-ASSIGNED

Trinidad and Tobago's Deputy Consul General in Miami Kirk Francois has been re-assigned to the Embassy of T&T in Venezuela effective this month.

While based in Miami, Francois represented T&T's interests in the diaspora of the states including Florida,

OAS MEETS HAITIANS

The Organization of American States (OAS) will host a meeting of the Haitian diaspora in preparation for an international donor conference.

Ambassador Albert Ramdin, the OAS's assistant secretary general, said that the **Mar. 21-23** meeting at the OAS headquarters in Washington D.C. would promote dialogue on rebuilding Haiti in preparation for the **Mar. 31** conference to be hosted by the United Nations in New York.

COLLECTION DRIVE

The Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC) is seeking donations to support damaged libraries and archives in earthquake damaged Haiti.

dLOC, an international collaboration of educational, research, governmental and non-governmental institutions that provides access to electronic collections about the Caribbean, wants donations and technical assistance for the recovery and protection of Haiti's libraries and their historical, governmental and cultural resources.

dLOC's operations are run out of Florida International University. For more information, call dLOC at **305-348-3008**.

Georgia, Texas, Alabama, Louisiana and Tennessee. He will move to Venezuela with his wife and son.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The Jamaica Ex-Police Association of South Florida, Inc. is accepting applications for its annual United States and Jamaican scholarships. Applications for the U.S. scholarship should be submitted to the scholarship committee by **Mar. 31**. The South Florida Scholarship will be awarded at the association's annual ball on **April 17**. The Jamaica scholarship will be awarded on June 1 in Jamaica. Both scholarships - one-time cash incentives - are awarded to assist students in South Florida and Jamaica.

For more information contact Malachi Smith at **305-302-5365** or malismith@aol.com.

NETWORKING SENIORS

To help senior citizens get familiar with social networking websites the Miami-Dade Public Library System's Sunny Isles Beach Branch, 18070 Collins Ave., in partnership with WPBT Channel 2, is offering social networking classes.

For more information, call **305-682-0726** or visit www.mdpls.org.



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Jimmy Cliff to be inducted into R&R Hall of Fame

Reggae music icon Jimmy Cliff is to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame this month.

Cliff, born James Chambers, will join pop groups ABBA and Genesis among the 2010 inductees at the Mar. 15 ceremony at the famed Waldorf-Astoria in New York.

The 62-year-old will be inducted by Haitian hip hop singer and producer Wyclef Jean, who rose to prominence as a member of the Fugees.

Cliff, who starred in the pioneering Jamaican movie "The Harder They Come" and whose most memorable hits include "Many Rivers to Cross" and "You Can Get It If You Really Want", said he will



Cliff

accept the honor on behalf of his "wonderful fans."

VETERAN

The veteran performer has more than 25 albums under his belt and is preparing to release a new album,

"Existence", which he said will have songs to deal with today's realities of conflict among nations, global warming and the environment, the good and bad in human relationships, greed, poverty and love.

"The CD is almost finished except for some final production touches and I am the sole singer," Cliff explained.

"There is one song that I co-wrote with Joe Higgs, one of the unsung heroes of our music industry, who taught Bob Marley to harmonize on guitar."

He has also announced plans to start shooting a movie for which he wrote the screenplay.



Bible toting contestant is Dominica's carnival queen

ROSEAU, Dominica, CMC – A contestant who said she kept her bible close by during the competition was crowned Dominica's Carnival Queen last month.

"Thanks to God for everything, I've worked hard and I've kept true with God and I would like everyone to do the same and have a blessed 2010," said Marcia Baptiste from the second town of Portsmouth, north of here.

Baptiste, who said "before every round I prayed and key my bible close by,"

said she plans to join the local diabetic association after making diabetes the theme of her talent performance.

The 20-year-old also won Miss Photogenic, Best Performing Talent and Best Evening Wear at the show held at the Pottersville Savannah on the outskirts of the capital.

Placing second was Sana Augustine, while third place went to Kristelle Fagan.



Legendary Guyanese entertainer Cy Grant dies in London at age 90

LONDON, England - Guyanese actor, singer and writer Cy Grant, who became the first black person to regularly have a role on British television, has died at the age of 90, the **British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)** reported last month.

It quoted Grant's daughter, Diana, saying that he died in London, but gave no cause of death.

Grant, who served in the Royal Air Force during World War II and qualified as a bar-

rist before turning to acting, became best known for his role on the BBC's daily topical program "The Tonight Show".

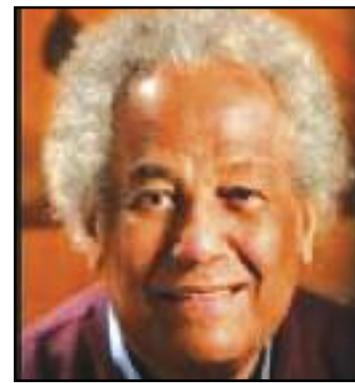
"It made him a household name but he left after two and a half years to avoid being typecast," the BBC noted, adding that he went on to star in the award-winning television drama Home of the Brave in 1957 and played the lead in Othello at the Phoenix Theatre in Leicester in 1965 at a time when white actors were

routinely "blacked up" for the part.

THEATER

Grant returned to the Bar briefly in 1972, but left after six months, and two years later helped create the Drum Arts Centre in London - which was considered to be hugely important in the development of black theater. He went on to set up multi-cultural festivals across England in the 1980s.

Alongside his acting and



Grant

activism work, he recorded

five albums, having performed Caribbean folk songs and calypso across the world. Two of his best known singles are "King Cricket" and "The Constantine Calypso", in celebration of Garfield Sobers and Learie Constantine, two of the West Indies' most famous cricketers.

He also recorded many shows for radio and wrote several books including a collection of poems.



Antigua calypso king's trial Mar. 17

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua, CMC – The trial of Antigua and Barbuda's reigning king of calypso Leston "Young Destroyer" Jacobs, on gun-related charges, will continue on Mar. 17.

Jacobs, 27, as well as Ceylon Howe, 20 and Charlesworth Ambrose, 23, pleaded not guilty to eight gun-related charges when the trial started before Chief Magistrate Ivan Walters last month.

Jacobs was arrested in Nov. 2009 after two firearms and more than 100 rounds of ammunition were found at his home in Potters on the outskirts of the capital. Conrad Jacobs, 72, the owner of one of the guns reportedly stolen by the three accused, took the witness stand last month and will continue giving evidence when the matter resumes on Mar. 17.

Jacobs, who was remanded into custody, is a former Caribbean Festival of Arts (CARIFESTA) calypso monarch and was the recipient of a national award – the Order of Princely Heritage – three years ago.





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Barbadian artist to lead exhibit at academic conference in May

Barbadian artist Annalee Davis, who has exhibited work throughout the

Davis, who holds bachelor and master of fine arts degrees from schools in the United

States, will have a stewardship role over the exhibition and also participate in panel dis-



Davis's "Hatchlings - A Requiem" displays the 15-member CARICOM countries as insular national states, lying on a bed of the shredded Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas.

Caribbean and elsewhere for more than 20 years, will curate the first ever art exhibition for the Caribbean Studies Association Annual Conference, which takes place in her home country May 24-28.

The theme for the conference, which is expected to feature up to 600 scholars, activists, artists and writers from the diaspora, is "Understanding the Everyday Occurrence of Violence in the Cultural Life of the Caribbean: Where Do We Go from Here?"



Davis

cussions. Her presentation "Project 45 and Maps: of People and Lands" will examine anxieties surrounding intra-Caribbean migration as well as how overdevelopment has lessened the quality of life for local Barbadians.

Davis believes in using her work to contribute to "an understanding of the shifting terrain in our minds and on our lands, through video, wall-based work, and installations."



JW and Blaze take T&T's 'Road March'

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC - Radio personalities Jason Williams and Ancil Isaac created history when they overwhelmingly won the "Road March" crown with their runaway hit "Palance" during the carnival activities that ended here last month.

President of the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Calypso Organisation (TUCO) Eric Taylor said Williams and Isaac, who used the stage name "JW and Blaze", had created history after their tune played a record 417 times, the first time that any song had broken the 400 barrier.

In second place was Faye Ann Lyons, whose "True Lies" was played 40 times. Machel Montano's tune "No Behaviour" came a distant third, playing 11 times.

JW and Blaze also won the "International Soca Monarch" competition.

The National Carnival Commission (NCC) also announced that Brian McFarlane had completed a beaver-trick when his band Resurrection-The Mass was adjudged "Band of the Year" for the fourth year in a row.



ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS

• South Florida dancehall awards Mar. 14

The Second Annual South Florida Caribbean Dancehall Awards, which was established to acknowledge and honor the accomplishments and contributions of artists and supporters of reggae and dancehall, will be staged on Mar. 14 at the South Florida Conference/Convention, 6101 N.W. 31 St. in Margate.

Scheduled performers include Macka Diamond, Mr. Peppa, Gramps from Morgan Heritage, Stacious, Bruck Up, Red Rat, Timberlee, Mr. Lexx, Ms. Thing, Powerman, Jiggy King, Rising Stars, Wayne Anthony, Zeke Don, T-Swagg, Honorable, Sotto Bless, Kemar, Sizwe'C, and Baby Vinegar.

For more information, visit www.sfdancehallawards.com

• 'Jamaica Farewell' returns to Florida

Writer/actress Debra Ehrhardt's one-woman show "Jamaica, Farewell" returns to Florida stages this month with two scheduled performances.

The play will make a stop at the Miramar Cultural Center in Miramar on Mar. 27 and on Mar. 28 at the University Area Community Development Center in Tampa.

"Jamaica, Farewell", based on Ehrhardt's story of seeking a better life in the United States, is set against the political upheaval in Jamaica in the 1970s.

For more information, call 754-484-2383.

• Miami's 'Jazz in the Gardens' set for Mar. 20 & 21

Some of North America's biggest names in music are scheduled to perform at this year's "Jazz in the Gardens".

The event two-day event will be held on Mar. 20 and 21 at Dolphin Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida. Among the scheduled performers at the festival are Mary J. Blige, Boyz II Men, Melanie Fiona, Bryan-Michael Fox.

For more information, visit JazzintheGardens.com.

• Jailed Buju Banton nominated for music awards

Reggae singer Buju Banton may be

jailed, but he has been nominated for several music awards.

The singer has been nominated for three 2010 International Reggae & World Music Awards, including "Recording Artist Of The Year", "Best Album" for Rasta Got Soul and "Best Crossover Song" for Can't Be My Lover, his recent hit collaboration with R&B star John Legend.

Banton's one-off single Time And A Place (John John) last month rose to number one on both the New York Top 30 Reggae Chart and South Florida Top 25 Reggae Chart. Rasta Got Soul was number two on both the New York Top 20 Albums Chart and the South Florida Top 15 Albums Chart.

• Honors pour in for Wyclef Jean

Former Fugees star and philanthropist Wyclef Jean is raking in the honors.

Late last month the NAACP honored him with its Vanguard Award at the Image Awards, while Harvard University honored him for his contribution to music and his philanthropic efforts. Jean was also honored at the Massachusetts institution's Cultural Rhythms.

Jean has been helping to raise funds for aid to his homeland Haiti after the devastating earthquake there in January.

• Bahamian filmmaker for Miami film fest

Bahamian filmmaker Kareem Mortimer will present his narrative feature "Children of God" at the 27th Annual Miami International Film Festival Mar. 13-14 at Regal South Beach Cinemas and the Tower Theatre in Little Havana, Florida.

"Children of God" was shot last summer in The Bahamas. Mortimer, who wrote, directed and produced the film, said "it is a subtle and haunting look at race, sexuality and religion in The Bahamas, which makes it a very timely and important film."

Compiled from various sources, including CMC and CaribWorldNews.



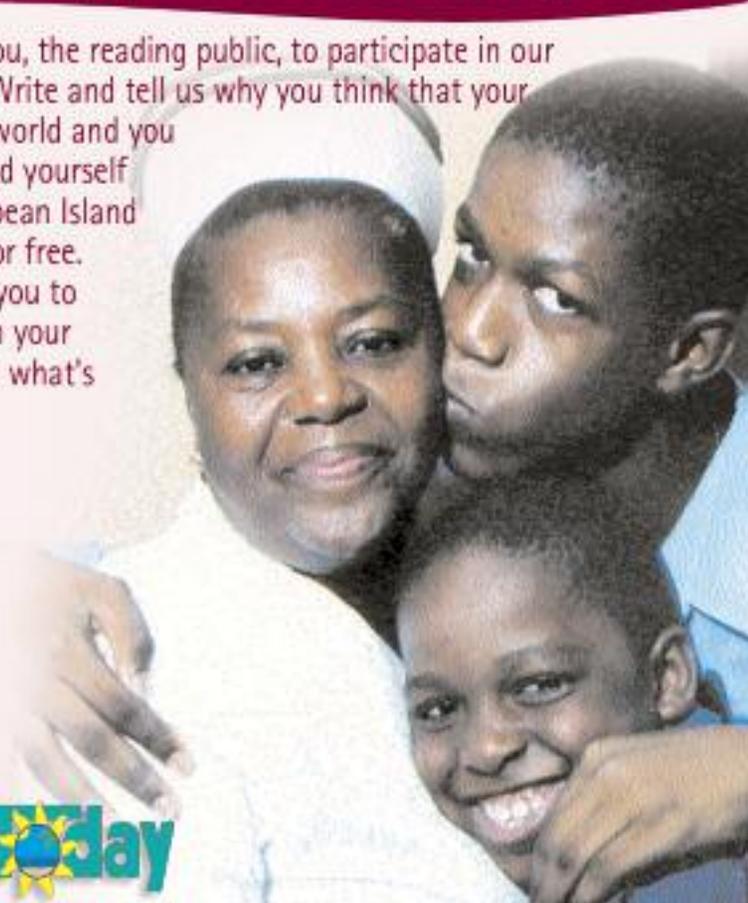
Dear mamma,

How I love you. You have been there since birth for me, with your nurturing, loving, caring self. You have made me into who I am today, and I want to tell you how grateful I am to you, because there is no other like you for me.

Caribbean Today invites you, the reading public, to participate in our "Dear Mamma" contest. Write and tell us why you think that your mother is the best in the world and you could find your mother and yourself jetting away to any Caribbean Island that Air Jamaica flies to for free. This is a great chance for you to show the world how much your mother means to you, and what's even better you could WIN!! WIN!! WIN!!

Mail your entrances to Caribbean Today 9020 SW 152nd. Street, Miami, FL 33157 or e-mail your entrances to caribtoday@earthlink.net or fax to 305-252-7843.

Caribbean Today



Panel discussion on breast cancer set for Mar. 20

BROWARD COUNTY, Florida - Breast cancer programs of interest to both men and women will be the focus of a meeting on Mar. 20 at The African American Research Library and Cultural Center here.

A Susan G. Komen for the Cure Breast Cancer Panel Discussion will be held from 2 to 5 p.m.

Among the speakers will be Pia Delvaille, who will focus on the Breast Cancer Navigation Program at Broward Health.

South Florida photographer Susan Buzzi will present her personal journey of how she was able to include more

than 100 women and men, plus health professionals, in the "Stories to Share" photo exhibit at Broward's main library.

TOUCH

Trivel C. McKire, program manager for the Breast & Cervical Cancer Initiative for the Broward County Health Department, will discuss breast cancer screenings. The audience will be able to touch breast lumps that are designed to feel "normal" and "abnormal". The presentation will include resources for treatment programs.

Kevin Gray, executive director, Woman2Woman

Breast Cancer Foundation, will speak about "The Big BC and Me", focusing on the effects of breast cancer in the community and family from a male's perspective.

Doreen Mwenya-Grant, founder of the Zambian Breast Cancer Foundation is a four-year breast cancer survivor. She hopes to inspire, educate and help others to thrive through their cancer journeys.

Sonia Franklin, of Sisters Network Tampa Bay, Inc. Sisters Network® Inc, (SNI), will discuss the only national African American breast cancer survivorship organization in the United States. Sisters Network has 43 affiliate chap-

ters in 22 cities.

For more information,

call 954-357-7443.



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Self treating blood clots in surface veins

DEAR MAYO CLINIC: My 23-year-old daughter developed superficial blood clots in her lower legs. What should we watch for? Are there ways to treat this condition permanently?

ANSWER: Blood clots in surface veins are relatively common. This condition is known as superficial thrombophlebitis. Clots in surface veins are more of a nuisance, whereas clots in deep veins can be serious and even life-threatening.

several weeks. Elevating the affected limb, using a warm washcloth to apply heat to the area several times a day, and taking a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve) can help reduce the discomfort. Compression stockings may also be helpful.

HIGHER RISK

Although structural abnormalities of the veins, such as

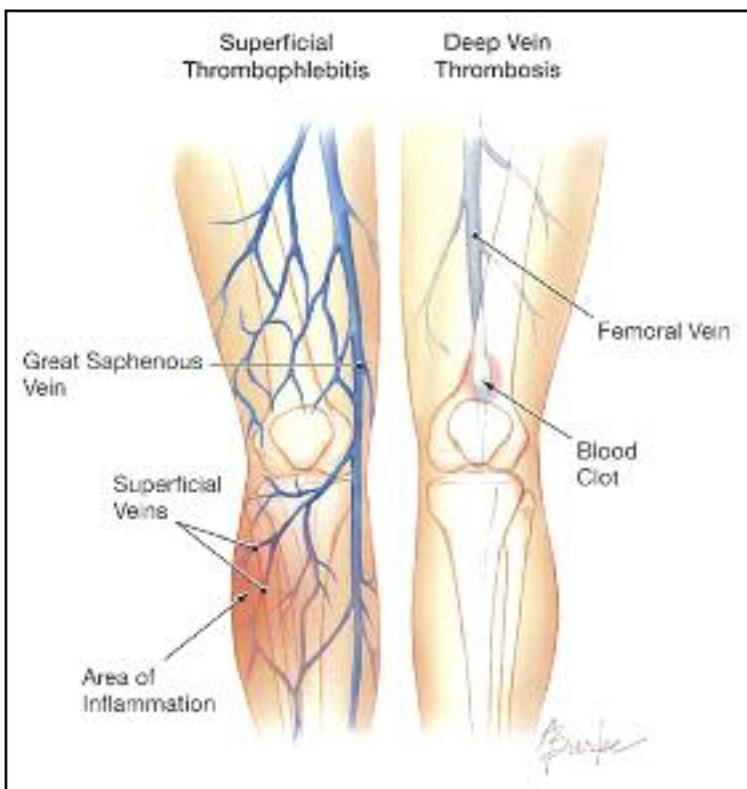
ple to clotting. Trauma to the veins is another frequent cause of superficial thrombophlebitis.

Superficial thrombophlebitis also can be caused by an inherited blood-clotting disorder or, rarely, by a form of cancer, such as pancreatic cancer.

Recurrent episodes of superficial thrombophlebitis in a vein that is structurally abnormal can be treated with minor surgery to remove the abnormal segment of the vein. Removing the vein won't affect circulation in the leg because deeper veins can handle the increased blood volume.

Another treatment option is injecting the vein with a medication that causes the inside of the vein to become irritated and then scar shut, preventing formation of more clots.

Edited from an article by Dr. Ian McPhail, Cardiovascular Diseases, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota. Tribune Media Services Inc.



A person who has had superficial thrombophlebitis is at increased risk of developing it again. Superficial thrombophlebitis frequently occurs in leg veins that are dilated or leaky (varicose veins). Blood may pool and clot in these abnormal veins, leading to pain, redness, swelling and tenderness in the affected area.

The clots usually resolve on their own, typically within

varicose veins, are a common cause of superficial thrombophlebitis, other factors can predispose a person to blood clotting in surface veins. Pregnant women and those who have just given birth are at higher risk of clotting.

In a young woman, the first possibility that comes to mind, apart from pregnancy, is oral contraceptive use because hormones can predispose peo-

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A Caribbean Today special feature

Investigation begins as Miami cargo ship sinks off St. Lucia's coast with over 100 containers

CASTRIES, St. Lucia, CMC – The St. Lucia Air and Seaports Authority (SLAS-

PA) confirmed it has started an investigation to determine how the cargo ship, the MV

Angeline of the Miami-based Bernuth Line, sank in waters on the west coast of the island

last month.

SLASPA said that the vessel, which was bound for Barbados, was carrying over 100 containers of general cargo when it got into difficulty.

“The ship listed to the starboard side, capsized and then sank,” said Shone Gibbs, sales and marketing manager for DaCosta Mannings Shipping.

“Unfortunately, all cargo was lost, and remains irretrievable. Insurance is in place

for something like this.”

SLASPA said the vessel remains partially sub-merged two nautical miles from Vieux Fort, south of here, and there were no injuries to the captain and crew. But SLASPA warned members of the public against interfering with the ship's cargo, adding that it was also concerned for the safety of ocean going vessels since it is difficult to spot the floating objects especially at night.

CLEARING THE WAY



- Photograph courtesy of USTRANSCOM

A TITAN Salvage team from Pompano Beach, Florida is working in Haiti to remove navigational hazards, including the collapsed Washington gantry crane in Port-au-Prince, for the United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) in an effort to increase the cargo throughput in the heavily damaged port. TITAN's team is using Resolve Marine Services' 142-foot crane barge RMG300 to help clear debris and other navigational hazards. TITAN has also hired Associated Marine Salvage's 150-foot crane barge MB1215 to support the marine construction needed to position two, 400-foot by 100-foot Crowley deck barges in the port. The barges will be used as floating piers for discharging cargo.

New joint ship management venture

ATHENS, Greece - Tsakos Shipping & Trading SA (TST) and Schoeller Holdings Ltd. (SHL) the owner of Columbia Shipmanagement Ltd. have formed a new joint venture ship management company.

The entity, to be named Tsakos Columbia Shipmanagement SA (TCM), is scheduled to begin operations during the second quarter of 2010.

The purpose of the new company is to expand its services to third party owners and continue the technical management of the existing TST managed fleet. TCM will

operate independently under its own document of compliance. There will be no changes to the existing quality, safety and environmental management systems applied by TST or to the pool of shore and seagoing personnel employed by TST.

TCM will be based in Athens in new office space within the Tsakos Group premises.

The new joint venture is the result of the working relationship between the two companies that started more than 10 years ago and has developed in recent years.

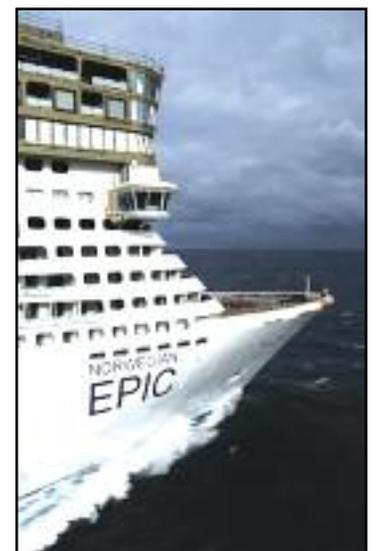
NCL's largest freestyle cruise comes to Port of Miami

MIAMI, Florida – This summer, Norwegian Cruise Line's (NCL) new F3 ship the Norwegian Epic, NCL's largest and most innovative freestyle cruise ship, will begin service at the Port of Miami.

Following a series of inaugural events in Europe and the United States, the 4,200 passenger Norwegian Epic will homeport in Miami and offer alternating seven-day western and eastern Caribbean voyages through April 2011.

Epic represents the next generation of NCL's freestyle cruising – a ship that incorporates a range of new features and amenities. To date, the company has revealed four nightlife venues. NCL plans to unveil additional details about the ship soon.

“We are proud of the commitment NCL has made to the Port of Miami,” Port Director Bill Johnson said in a



recent press release. “This new addition to our 2010 cruise line-up will be one of the largest and most well appointed cruise ships in the world. It's a fantastic addition to our already impressive line-up.”

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A Caribbean Today special feature

Cruise ship business keeps Bermuda's tourism industry afloat ~ premier

HAMILTON, Bermuda, CMC - A slump in air arrivals was offset by buoyant cruise ship business as Bermuda's overall visitor figures rose by 4,000 last year, Premier Dr. Ewart Brown has said.

Air arrivals were down by nearly 11 percent from 2008 to 235,860, while cruise passengers, who spend far less while ashore, totaled more than 318,000.

The total number of tourists who came to Bermuda in 2009 was 559,042, up from 555,162 in 2008.

Business travelers repre-

sented 18 percent of tourists last year while 16 percent of visitors came to see family and friends. Four percent came for a convention, down 24 percent compared to 2008.

The 235,860 air arrivals represented the lowest number since 1998, when the total was around 400,000.

NEW TREND

The days of air visitors outstripping cruise passengers have long gone. International business has put tourism in the shade and is now the main plank of the island's economy.

Brown, who is also tourism and transport minister, said of the 2009 air figures: "This is clearly disappointing. It is the lowest number of visitors to

Bermuda in a very long time.

"It does, however, reflect a recovery from the depths of the first half of the year and showed a respectable recovery by year end."

Visitor spending was also



Brown

down for the year. Total figures were not available, but in 2009 the range per tourist was from \$979 to \$1,175 compared to \$1,053 to \$1,224 for 2008.

"The global economy is still a real concern.

Notwithstanding some signs of recovery, it has not turned around yet. This is by far the most serious recession since 1929. We all have been touched by it in one way or another," Brown said.

"We all know that tourism in Bermuda continues to face challenges to maintain its fair share of an increasingly com-

petitive market."

The premier said the cruise ship industry was expected to generate \$70 million for the economy this year.



Packing tips

Choose the right box

Use a box that is strong enough to protect the contents and large enough to leave space for adequate cushioning.

Protect and pack

Don't skimp on cushioning material. Use shredded or crumpled newspaper, bubble wrap, or Styrofoam™ peanuts, or even plain air-popped popcorn. Pack items tightly to avoid shifting, and make sure the cushioning material covers all sides of the object. If you're shipping several items together, wrap each one separately.

Seal carefully

Always use tape that is designed for shipping, such as pressure-sensitive tape, nylon-reinforced kraft paper tape, or glass-reinforced pressure-sensitive tape.

- USPS



Port of Miami welcomes Costa Cruises in Jan. 2011



MIAMI, Florida - The Port of Miami has announced the return of Costa Cruises to the city, beginning early next year.

The 2,114-passenger Costa Atlantica will sail seven nights, alternating eastern and western Caribbean cruises from Miami starting Jan. 2011 through Mar. 2011. It has 1,057 cabins and carries 895 crew.

Accommodations include 12 passenger decks named after movies directed by the famous Italian director Federico Fellini. Carrara marble, Murano glass accents, inlaid mosaic tile and a Venetian atmosphere are among the elements of the Atlantica cruise ship.

"We are happy to welcome Costa Cruises to the

Port of Miami," Bill Johnson, port director, said in a recent press release. "The Port of Miami is home to the world's most distinguished cruise lines. Costa represents our eighth homeport brand."

The Port of Miami is the second largest economic engine in the South Florida community, generating an estimated 176,000 jobs and a total economic impact of \$17 billion in 2007.

The port is home to the

world's most distinguished cruise lines, handling more than 4.1 million cruise passengers annually. Ports of call easily reached from Miami extend from The Bahamas to the eastern and western Caribbean, Mexico, Key West and South America.

More information can be obtained at the Port of Miami's website: www.miamidade.gov/portofmiami.

Cruise Ship Specs:

Tonnage:

85,619

Passenger capacity:

2,114

Number of Crew:

895

Total cabins:

1,057



Barbados aims to import natural gas

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC - The Barbados government says it is aiming to begin negotiations by the end of this month to import natural gas via pipeline from Trinidad and Tobago in an effort to reduce the country's fuel import bill.

It said the decision is in keeping with the government's efforts to transform the economy from fossil fuels to one driven by natural gas.

"The importation of natural gas by pipeline is expected to significantly reduce Barbados's annual fuel import bill and generate substantial savings throughout the econo-

my," said Minister of Economic Affairs, Trade, Industry and Commerce Dr. David Estwick.

"It will provide significant economic and social benefits...while impacting positively on the island's balance of payments."

Dr. Estwick will lead the negotiation team's effort to hammer-out a number of accords and a clearly defined formula for a tariff reduction to Barbados, when countries such as Guadeloupe, St. Lucia and Dominica utilize the pipeline.



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A Caribbean Today special feature

U.S. re-affirms commitment

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The United States has renewed its commitment to Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquake which demolished the Caribbean nation's capital in January.

White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs said that Washington continues to "stand with our Haitian friends as they recover and rebuild."

"Our thoughts and prayers also remain with Haitian-Americans around our country who have lost so many family and friends," he added last month.

The Jan. 12 earthquake killed more than 230,000 people and left another million to live on the streets amidst the rumble of buildings that crumbled during the tremor.

DIRE SITUATION

But Gibbs added that the

situation remains "dire," noting that, even before the earthquake, Haiti was the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

"Today, the need for food, shelter, medical supplies and basic security is enormous, and the coming rainy season will pose new challenges," Gibbs said.

He said the infrastructure that was destroyed in minutes will take years to rebuild.

"Guided by the roadmap for cooperation and coordination developed by the government of Haiti, the United States will support our Haitian partners as they transition from emergency assistance to recovery and long-term reconstruction," Gibbs assured.



France offers \$235M assistance package

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, CMC - French President Nicolas Sarkozy has announced a \$235 million assistance package to help this Caribbean community (CARICOM) country rebuild in the aftermath of a catastrophic earthquake in January.

Sarkozy, the first French president to visit Haiti in more than a century, made the disclosure at a press conference with his Haitian counterpart René Prével last month.

"I have come to tell the Haitian people and their leaders that France, which was the first on the ground after the catastrophe, will remain firmly at their side to help them pick themselves up again and open a new happy page in their history," he told reporters shortly after his arrival for a brief visit

that includes a helicopter tour of the devastated areas. France's head of state said his country already agreed to cancel \$40.9 million of debt owed by Haiti.

Additionally, Paris will provide 1,000 tents and 16,000 tarpaulins to help shelter those displaced by the devastating earthquake that killed more than 230,000 people and left more than one million homeless. The aid package will also include preparing a study to construct the Presidential Palace, sections of which were reduced to rubble as a result of the Jan. 12 quake.

Some people handed out fliers in the streets protesting Sarkozy's visit and blaming France for enslaving Haiti.



U.N. seeks largest humanitarian aid for earthquake damaged Haiti

UNITED NATIONS - In the largest-ever humanitarian appeal launched in the wake of a natural disaster, the United Nations and its aid partners have called for nearly \$1.5 billion to assist three million Haitians.

The U.N. said last month that about 1.2 million people in the Caribbean community (CARICOM) country need emergency shelter and urgent sanitation and hygiene help in the wake of last month's massive earthquake. It also said at least two million people need food aid in the aftermath of the 7.0 magnitude earthquake, which struck Haiti on Jan. 12 claiming 230,000 lives.

The \$1.44 billion appeal was launched by U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who was joined by John Holmes, under-secretary general for humanitarian

affairs and emergency relief coordinator; Bill Clinton, former United States president and U.N. Envoy for Haiti; and Ambassador Leo Mérorès of Haiti.

The amount being sought for Haiti surpasses the \$1.41 billion sought by the U.N. and its partners in 2005 following the Indian Ocean tsunami. The revised appeal will fold in the \$577 million flash appeal issued just days after the earthquake, which was originally intended to cover a six-month period, the U.N. said.

EXPANSION

It is being expanded to meet needs for one year as the hurricane and rainy seasons approach, and its size reflects the scale of the catastrophe, taking into consideration the need for stepped-up early recovery efforts. The original

appeal is more than 100 percent funded, leaving unmet requirements for the revised appeal at \$768 million.

The U.N. said it aims to support, among other sectors, agriculture, education, emergency shelter, telecommunications, health and nutrition. One third of the funds are earmarked for food aid.

The funds will also be used for the cash-for-work initiative, a U.N. scheme for Haitians to rebuild their country, which currently employs 75,000 people daily and hopes to bring many more on board.

"By paying Haitians to work, we are putting money in the people's hands" to feed families, jump-start the economy and help create a security and social safety net, the U.N. secretary-general said.



TENT CITY



Many of Port-au-Prince's homeless have set up tent communities in the aftermath of the earthquake.

- U.N. photograph/Marco Dormino

Haitian migrants repatriated to homeland by U.S.

MIAMI, Florida - The United States Coast Guard said it had repatriated a boatload of Haitian migrants after they were rescued from a sinking 50-foot freighter about 45 miles north of the French-speaking Caribbean country's Isle de Tortue last month.

The Coast Guard said 88 Haitians were returned to Cap-Haïtien, Haiti on Feb. 16, three days after the "grossly-over-weighted" freighter was spotted. They said those aboard were mostly men, but included 21 women, three boys and one girl. The children's ages were not disclosed.

The Coast Guard said the

migrants were taken aboard a cutter and given food, water and medical attention.

Earlier last month, the Coast Guard said it had repatriated 78 Haitians after Bahamian authorities found the group in an overloaded 30-foot freighter 13 miles west of Great Exuma Island in The Bahamas island chain.

U.S. Coast Guard officials said they have seen no immediate signs that Haitians are attempting to illegally leave the country in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake that left millions homeless.





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Jamaican skier earns creditable top 10 finish at Winter Olympics

Jamaican skier Errol Kerr earned a creditable top 10 finish in the ski-cross nation event at last month's Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver, Canada.

The 23-year-old Kerr, the youngest competitor in the event, managed to advance to the second round and ended up in ninth place with a time of 1:13.71. The winner was Michael Schmid of Switzerland in 1:12.53. Second went Christopher Del Bosco of Canada (1:12.89) and third to France's Xavier Kuhn

(1:12.89).

"It was a great feeling to represent Jamaica," Kerr told **Jamaica's Gleaner** newspaper. "To wake up...and go into the competition, that's something that I have been dreaming of since I was a little boy.

"However, I am absolutely disappointed. I went into this with my sights set on the podium. I was never interested in just coming here to compete. The only thing I wanted to do was win."

Kerr, who was born in New York to an American



Kerr

mother and Jamaican father, and currently lives in the U.S., finished ahead of competitors from established skiing countries such as the United States and the Czech Republic.

"So to come away with ninth place there is still a lot for us to be happy about," he told the newspaper.



West Indies star to coach cricket in the U.S.



Chanderpaul

LAUDERHILL, Florida – West Indies batsman Shivnarine Chanderpaul has been appointed head coach of American College Cricket.

Lloyd Jodah, president of the ACC, announced last month that Chanderpaul has agreed to

allow his name to be associated with the championship trophy for the winning team in the American College Cricket Spring Break Championship here.

Organizers said Chanderpaul has endorsed the championship and said he looks forward to giving technical assistance when his playing schedule permits.

"Right now, I'm happily playing cricket all over the world, but when my schedule permits, I'd like to do some coaching of college cricketers in the United States," Chanderpaul was quoted as saying last month.

Chanderpaul has become the first active Test cricket star to become so involved in the game in the U.S. Officials are also hoping to have the star

batsman present the Chanderpaul Trophy to the national champions on Mar. 21.

The American College Cricket Spring Break Championship is aimed to help college cricketers get more support from their schools and assist in getting

official recognition in more universities. The five-day championship will feature more than 300 cricket student athletes representing some 20 universities. The U.S. Under 19 World Cup team and the University of the West Indies are scheduled to compete as

special guests.

Matches will be played at the Central Broward Regional Park (CBRP) and Brian Piccolo Park.

The semi finals and final will be played at the CBRP stadium.



Bolt, Fraser nominated for world sports awards

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates, CMC – Usain Bolt and compatriot Shelly-Ann Fraser have made the shortlist of nominees for the prestigious World Sportsman and World Sportswoman-of-the-Year awards, respectively.

The two Jamaican track stars are among a glittering collection of the world's top sports personalities to have been nominated for the 2010 World Sports Awards, following a ballot by the world's sports media.

Bolt won the coveted World Sportsman-of-the-Year award last year, while Fraser is being nominated for the World Sportswoman-of-the-Year title for the second straight year.

Bolt followed his wonderful Olympic year with an equally spectacular 2009. At the IAAF World Championships in Athletics in Germany, Bolt won the 100 meters, 200 meters, and 4x100 meters relay gold medals.

His challengers this time around are four-time winner and men's tennis world number

one Roger Federer of Switzerland, top Barcelona and Argentina soccer player Lionel Messi, the current World Footballer-of-the-Year, long distance runner Kenenisa Bekele of Ethiopia, Tour de France winner Alberto Contador of Spain, and Italy's seven-time senior MotoGP champion Valentino Rossi of Italy.

Fraser added the World Championship 100 meters gold medal to the Olympic gold medal she won in Beijing the previous year. She faces a difficult challenge to topple two-time World Sportswoman-of-the-Year winner and women's tennis world number one Serena Williams of the United States; swimmers Federica Pellegrini of Italy and Britta Steffen of Germany; Jamaica-born World 400 meters champion Sanya Richards of the United States, and American ski racer Lindsey Vonn.

The winners will be announced on Mar. 10.



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A Caribbean Today special feature

Japan: Where ancient charm meets modern marvels and excitement

PETER A. WEBLEY

When most people in the West think about Japan, images of large industry, manufacturing and shipping come to mind - Sony, Sanyo, Mitsubishi, Toyota, Honda and other well-known names that have created "Brand Japan". Japan is the world's second largest economy, and the third largest in spending power. It boasts many modern metropolitan areas with vast technical marvels.

Now Japan wants the world to know the other side of its culture and history. Embarking on an ambitious project to promote the country as a tourist destination, the Japan Tourist Board (JTB), along with the country's Ministry of Tourism, invited American journalists to explore the cuisine, history, culture and industry that is Japan. Caribbean Today was part of the journey to get a close look at what is new in this grand country.

Japan is an archipelago of 6,852 islands. The four largest are Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu and Shikoku, accounting for 97 percent of Japan's land area. Most of the islands are made up of volcanic mountainous terrain. Japan's Mount Fuji, which is 3,776 meters high, is not only the country's best-known symbol - and tallest mountain - but it is actually a volcano.

The land area of Japan is roughly the size of California, but only 20 percent of the land is usable for a population of about 128 million people. The de facto capital city of Tokyo, and the greater Tokyo area, which includes several surrounding prefectures, is the largest metropolitan area in the world, with over 30 million

residents.

I was the first to arrive at the 490-room hotel Radisson Narita, a 25-minute drive from the airport. It is a magnet for both leisure and business travelers.

An early morning departure took us to Ishi Bashi strawberry farm in the Chiba Prefecture area, which ranks second in Japan for its agricultural production. Producing between 15,000 and 16,000

to extend the museum. We were then shown an authentic Japanese rock garden, which takes years to perfect. It is a true wonder.

Next it was lunch at "The Fish", a restaurant built with glass walls all around to allow a view of the sea below. The meal was absolutely sumptuous.

The group then headed along the coast through several small villages. Approaching the Kisarazu area, we were treated to a rare and dying part of the Japanese culture,



Rock, paper, scissors', geisha-style.



Carvings of two ferocious lions, protectors of the temple path.

strawberries plants with the berries sold locally, this hydroponics farm is a wonder. The fruits are the sweetest.

Our next stop was Nokogiriyama Mountain. A trolley took us up, about 680 meters. At the top, there is a view of the spectacular coastline and the adjacent mountain ridges. On the opposite side mountain, there's a Japanese temple called Nihon Dera. In the gathering area, between two hills, there's a massive stone carving of Buddha in the side of the mountain. Our guide said it's the greatest image of Buddha made of stone.

Then it was on to the Kanaya Museum, which houses rare paintings, some over 200 years old. Owner and Administrative Director Hiroshi Suzuki explained plans

the geisha. The authorities have plans to encourage the younger generation to take part in geisha training, which we witnessed, and were treated to tea and desert, a Geisha Dance Show, and participated in a game of "rock, paper, scissors" - geisha-style.

Later we visited a traditional Ryokan and experi-



Kotokuin Temple, (Great Buddha) a symbol of Kamakura and the second largest in Japan.

enced the spa facilities at Ryuguijo Spa Hotel Mikaduki, where guests can have massages plus private or group baths while overlooking the ocean, or in the privacy of their own area. The hotel has guest rooms designed in Japanese-style and guests can have a traditional Japanese bath overlooking gorgeous

scenery.

CITY VIEW

The group then headed towards the Kanagawa Prefecture via the Tokyo Bay Aqua Line. The Wan Aqua-Line is a toll road crossing the middle of Tokyo Bay along the coast of large cities, including Tokyo, Yokohama, Kawasaki, Chiba, Kisarazu. The project is regarded as a phenomenal feat of engineering. It was built in Dec. 1997. The main structure in the middle of the harbor is a favorite spot for young lovers.

Yokohama, which was



Sensoji or Assakura Kannon Temple in Tokyo.

devastated by the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, rises out of the landscape. Sitting along the coastline in the center of Japan, Yokohama is one of the 15 Japanese government designated cities. We settled in at the historic Hotel New Grand

lovely little town in the Kanagawa Prefecture. On the way Mount Fuji finally came into view, but because of weather conditions we were only able to see it briefly. At Kamakura we visited a traditional kimono shop, where wonderful designs on pure silk are custom-made for wedding parties and people with discriminating tastes. While there, we were introduced to our first real Japanese tea ceremony, which was both educational and fascinating.

Lunch was at the Komyoji temple (Shojin-Ryori). It was a full vegetarian meal.

The Gate to Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine is awe inspiring, with cherry blossom trees on both sides of the path leading towards the temple. Just before entering, each journalist was paired with a guide who would later escort us through the town, helping us to purchase whatever we wanted. This is something new that the Japanese are experimenting with, but similar to

what is done in many Caribbean countries. It's a great way to see the area with an intimate, authentic touch.

We headed to Kotokuin Temple, home of the Great Buddha in Kamakura. Standing 13.35 meters high and weighing approximately 93 tons, the statue is awesome. It was the first large Buddha made entirely with the bronze contributions of ordinary people and is the symbol of Kamakura. It is also the second largest in Japan. You can enter the statue walk around the inside.

A bus took us further inland to the town of Nagatoro, located in the Chichibu District of Saitama Prefecture. We arrived at a traditional Ryokan (Choseikan), where visitors must remove their shoes before entering the sleeping quarters, and move around thereafter with slippers. The hotel has 22 rooms and guests sleep on the ground on futon beds. It has wonderful spa facilities.

We experienced the Arakawa River Boat trip with ice still on the water. The boats, which were propelled by a bamboo pole, reminded me of rafting Jamaica's rivers.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 26)

A Caribbean Today special feature

Air Jamaica makes multiple changes to North American flight schedule

Air Jamaica last month announced a significant realignment of its network, including the suspension of service on several routes in the United States.

The airline said the moves were driven by the departure of three aircraft from its fleet.



Air Jamaica has realigned several routes.

By April, Air Jamaica will operate six aircraft, a A319, four A320s and a A321.

“This fleet reduction has become necessary as we seek

to meet our financial obligations,” stated Bruce Nobles, Air Jamaica’s president and chief executive officer, in a press release last month.

“However Air Jamaica continues to be the best choice for convenient schedule and excellent service as we have

on the following routes: New York (JFK) - Grenada and Jamaica – Orlando.

Effective April 12, Air Jamaica will suspend service on the following routes: Jamaica – Chicago, Jamaica – Curacao and Jamaica – Nassau.

TWO STAGES

The revised schedule will take effect in two stages: On Mar. 9 and April 12. The new schedule also changes some frequencies and departure timings. Key changes include:

- New York will have three daily flights effective Mar. 14, including two early morning departures, one to Kingston and one to Montego Bay

- Chicago will be reduced to three weekly flights between Mar. 9 and April 11.

- Nassau will be reduced to two weekly flights after Mar. 14.

- Baltimore will operate daily service effective April 12, departing Baltimore in the afternoon and departing Montego Bay in the morning.

- Philadelphia and Toronto will also operate daily service effective April 12.

- Fort Lauderdale will operate four daily flights effective April 12 – three to Kingston and one to Montego Bay.

By April 12, Air Jamaica will operate 161 weekly flights between Jamaica and five cities, with daily service to Baltimore, Philadelphia and

Toronto, three daily flights to New York (JFK) and four daily flights to Fort Lauderdale.



AirTran launches flights to MoBay from three major cities in the U.S.

AirTran Airways last month launched non-stop flights from three United States cities to Montego Bay, Jamaica.

The airline sent inaugural flights from Orlando, Florida; Atlanta, Georgia and Baltimore, Maryland on the same day, Feb. 11.

gers on the inaugural flights were treated to the reggae rhythms at the gate. Upon arrival in Montego Bay (MBJ), the flights were welcomed with a ceremonial water arch and, as passengers entered the terminal, they were greeted with a mento

band performance, welcome beads and a special reception.

“Soaking up the world-renowned Jamaican culture has never been easier,” said Roger Morenc, AirTran’s director of revenue management.

The non-stop flight from Orlando is scheduled to operate four times per week, departing MCO at 11:08 a.m. and arriving at MBJ at 1:07 p.m. The return flight is scheduled to depart MBJ at 1:57 p.m. and arrive at MCO at 4:01 p.m.

The daily non-stop flight departs ATL at 12:25 p.m. and arrives at MBJ at 3:10 p.m. The northbound flight departs MBJ at 1:09 p.m. and arrives at ATL at 4:06 p.m.

The daily non-stop flight departs BWI at 8:55 a.m. and arrives at MBJ at 12:19 p.m. The return flight departs MBJ 4 p.m. and arrives at BWI at 7:28 p.m.



Jamaica’s Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett, right, accepts a model of an AirTran Airways aircraft presented by Roger Morenc, director of revenue management for the airline.

The official take-off of the service was marked with a gate-side Jamaican-style celebration at Orlando International Airport (MCO), Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport (ATL) and Baltimore’s airport (BWI) prior to the inaugural flight.

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A Caribbean Today special feature**Japan: Where ancient charm meets modern marvels and excitement**

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24)

Rapids mixed in with areas of slow currents made the ride exciting. The precipitous cliffs, called Chichibu-Sekiheki, make the area remarkable.

The next stop was a sake factory where the process of making the drink was explained and we taste tested several blends.

Making soba (a form of noodles) followed at a nearby factory. We sifted flour, made dough and cut the dough into thin strips. We then ate the soba we produced.

Kawagoe Town in Saitama Prefecture was next. About 30 minutes from central Tokyo by train, the town is rich in history and culture. It dates back to the Edo period of Japan – real and authentic. Most of the buildings are well over 250 years old. There are knife shops, featuring master knife makers with genuine samurai swords, plus restaurants where they teach people to make sushi.

In the town center there's an old bell tower, built in 624. A 'newer' bell tower was built in 1893 after a fire destroyed the original structure.

TOKYO TOUR

Then it was on to Tokyo,

Abandoned Half Moon in Antigua to be transformed into luxury resort

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua, CMC - The Antigua and Barbuda government has signed a deal to transform the abandoned Half Moon Bay property into a five-star resort with a professional level golf course.

Under the public-private partnership with Half Moon Bay Developers LLC, a joint venture company, a high-end luxury hotel and residential development will be part of the first phase of development.

Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer, in announcing the

the massive city of 12 million. Night is lit up by the Tokyo Tower, which is the city's landmark and remains one of Japan's main tourist attractions. Opened in 1958, the tower is 333 meters tall and weighs some 4,000 tons. With 176 floodlights, it is illuminated with white lights in summer and orange in winter. From the special observatory on the



An item on the menu at the Fish Restaurant, close to the Kanaya Museum.

top of the tower, Mount Tsukuba and Mount Fuji can be seen. Mount Fuji is the center of a wide-ranging natural recreation zone.

At the waterfront we boarded a boat for a dinner cruise around Tokyo Bay, pos-

sibly one of Japan's best-kept secrets. With a mixture of great food, fine spirits, karaoke, dancing, and a beautiful host with a glowing Tokyo skyline in the background, the night turned out to be one of the highlights of our visit.

We checked into Hotel Nikko, Tokyo, located bayside on the large man-made dining

and shopping island of Odaiba. The hotel's backdrop includes the Rainbow Bridge, Tokyo Tower and city skyline.

The next day we set out to explore Odaiba. It was initially built to defend Tokyo and the surrounding areas from attack. Since the 1990s the area has evolved as a major commercial, residential and leisure area.

The Port of Tokyo, once known as the Port of Edo, became a gateway for international trade in 1941. Since then, it has been the vital waterway facilitating production and consumption for 40 million people in the Tokyo metropolitan area.

We headed for the Rainbow Bridge, a suspension bridge that connects Odaiba to the wharf at Shibaura. It is over 500 meters long and ferries three lines of public transportation - the Rinkou Douro or Portside Avenue, Metropolitan Expressway (on the upper deck), and the Yurikamome New Transit (on the lower deck).

We continued to Sensoji or Assakura Kannon, a Buddhist temple dedicated to the Buddhist deity of mercy and compassion. At a nearby shopping street named Nakamise, visitors can purchase food and gifts. This is one of the most popular sights in Tokyo.

At the Ryogoku area of Tokyo, we viewed products at a Paulownia furniture store, followed by a visit to Lion Dou, a clothing shop that caters exclusively to the sumo wrestlers. Later we lunched at Ryogoku (sumo wrestler's pot). The servings were huge, enough to feed

four grown adults.

We then visited a Japanese lantern-making

look like a beer glass with an adjacent big golden object.

On our final day in Japan, we toured the Tsukiji



Walking tour on the Rainbow Bridge.

shop, where owner/proprietor Osamu Onda Satomi explained how each lantern was made, and instructed group members how to make their own. Great fun.

'WOW'

The incredible Tokyo Sky Tree construction sight is Japan's newest attempt to "wow" the world. On completion, the tower will be the tallest man-made structure in Japan, set to rise 2,080 feet, dwarfing the Tokyo Tower. The new tower will be used to

Market to witness the world-famous fish auctions. What a surprise. If it moves in the sea and is known to man, it is sold for consumption. The market sells some 20 million tons of fish daily and employs over 15,000.

The sight of fresh seafood, plus the busy atmosphere of scooters, trucks, sellers and buyers, make Tsukiji Market one of Tokyo's major tourist attractions.

Everywhere that I went in Japan, I was made to feel welcome. The country, with her



Maya San and Peter San standing in front of the Sky Tower, the new symbol of Japan.

transmit digital signals throughout Japan.

We then headed for the Asahi Beer Tower and Asahi Super Dry Hall with its characteristic Flamme d'Or. It was completed in 1989 and hosts the headquarters of Asahi Breweries. Several restaurants are in the complex. This landmark building is designed to

old and her new, awaits you.

Story and photographs by Peter A. Webley, publisher of Caribbean Today.

Edwin Ali also contributed to this story.

**JETTING OFF TO MOBAY**

Christopher Wright, left, Jamaica Tourist Board's business development manager for Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, was present to greet the JetBlue flight team at the Orlando International Airport last month before the start of service from that gateway to Montego Bay, Jamaica.



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