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We cover your world

THE MULTI AWARD-WINNING NEWS MAGAZINE



Some of the sizzle may be off this summer's Caribbean entertainment scene in the United States as several of the region's biggest names, such as Beenie Man, left, and Bounty Killer may not be allowed to enter the country, page 13.

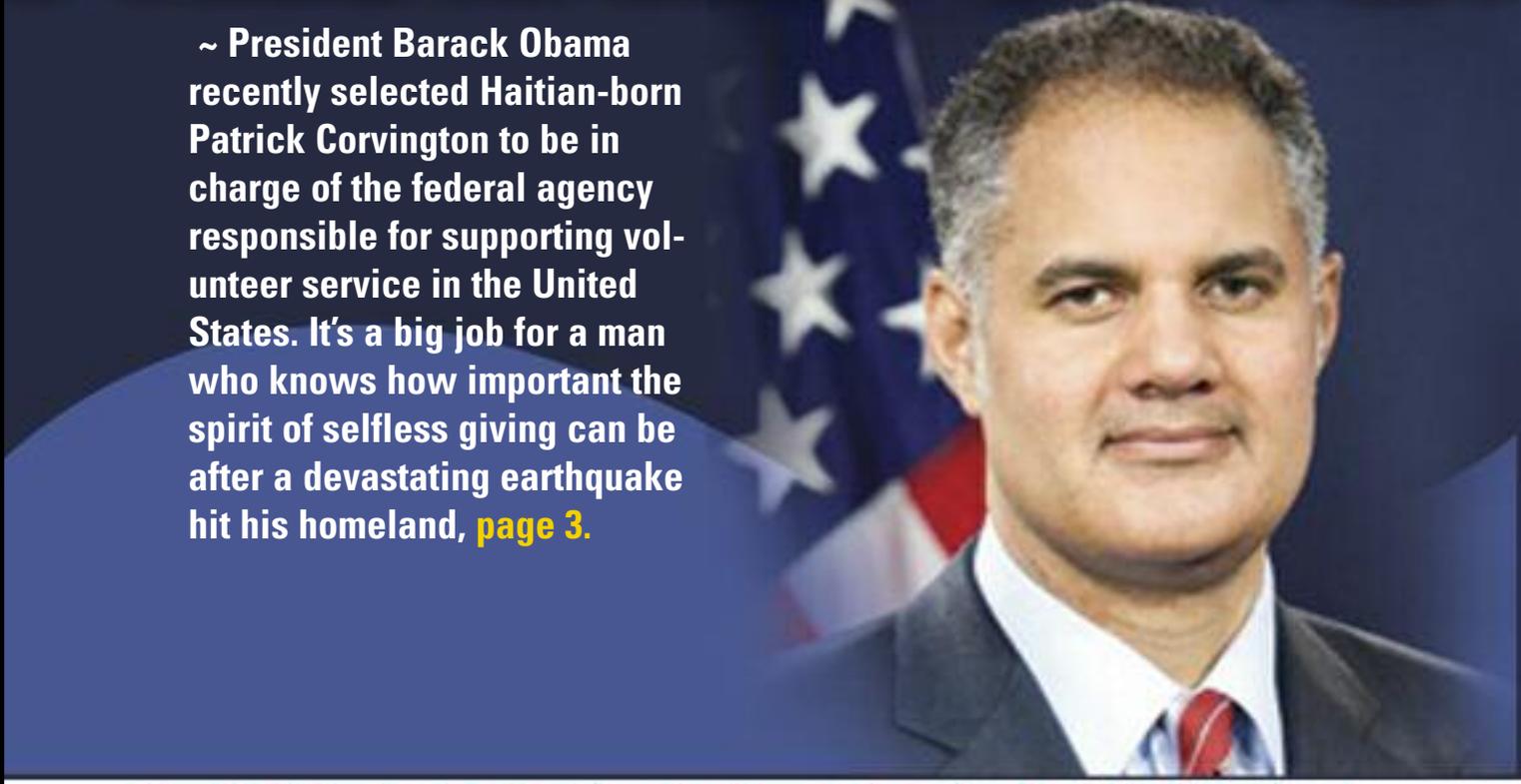


Caribbean people are used to the delicious taste of berries. The health halo that crowns the original "superfruit" hasn't slipped a bit over the years. But berries are really good for you too, page 15.



The National Football League in the United States was looking for a few good men in its draft last month. Baltimore Ravens found a big one too, 6' 7", 360-pound Barbadian Ramon Harewood. The club selected the offensive tackle from Morehouse College with its final pick, page 19.

PRESIDENT'S PICK



~ President Barack Obama recently selected Haitian-born Patrick Corvington to be in charge of the federal agency responsible for supporting volunteer service in the United States. It's a big job for a man who knows how important the spirit of selfless giving can be after a devastating earthquake hit his homeland, page 3.

THE GREAT DEBATE



~ Homophobia has long been a contentious issue in the Caribbean community. Tensions still exist between the heterosexual majority and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender) people. The subject, especially the way dancehall music has been used to address it, was the focus of a recent discussion in South Florida led by Maurice Tomlinson, left, and Dr. Camille Nelson, page 7.



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U.S. State Department 'hopeful' to reach agreement with Jamaica gov't in 'Dudus' Coke extradition case

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. State Department says it remains "hopeful" it will be able to reach an agreement with the Jamaican government over an extradition order for one of its nationals.

"We are hopeful that we will be able to reach a resolution with the government of Jamaica with respect to the extradition request, in keeping with our solid record of law enforcement cooperation," State Department spokesman Charles Luoma-Overstreet was quoted as telling the **Washington Post** newspaper in mid-April.

Luoma-Overstreet's comments came as the U.S. government continues to push its case to bring Christopher "Dudus" Coke to New York for trial against claims by the Jamaican government that a court must decide if evidence gathered against Coke violated

the laws of Jamaica on illegal wire tapping.

NO BUDGE

So far, the U.S. State Department is not budging from its request and many Jamaicans overseas believe that a spate of recent visa cancellations, especially of five top Jamaican dancehall artistes who had performed only days earlier at Coke's birthday bash, are in direct retaliation to the Jamaican government's stall tactics.

Coke, 41, has been dubbed as one of the world's most dangerous narcotics traffickers by the U.S. Drug



Coke

Enforcement Administration. He is suspected of playing a major role in supplying marijuana, cocaine and weapons to the East Coast of the United States, according to U.S. officials and court documents.

U.S. federal prosecutors say Coke operates from a west Kingston community called Tivoli Gardens, which is a stronghold of the ruling Jamaica Labor Party and is represented by Prime Minister Bruce Golding, who claims laws were possibly broken by the U.S. investigators.

"In one important respect...it was found to be in violation of the law," Golding said.

- Edited from *CaribWorldNews*.

Ex-Antigua financial commission boss ordered extradited

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua, CMC - Chief Magistrate Ivan Walters late last month ordered the extradition of Leroy King, the former head of the Financial Services Regulatory Commission (FSRC), to the United States on charges that he helped disgraced Texan financier Allen Stanford conceal a \$7 billion dollar fraud scheme.

King has been under house arrest since June when he was indicted by a U.S. federal grand jury for allegedly accepting bribes from Stanford to mislead U.S. secu-

rities regulators. He is accused of 10 counts of conspiracy to commit mail fraud, seven counts of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, conspiracy to launder illegal proceeds and conspiracy to obstruct the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

The SEC's complaint alleges that King facilitated the Ponzi scheme by ensuring that the FSRC conducted sham audits and examinations of Stanford International Bank Limited's (SIBL) books and records; that in exchange

for bribes paid to him over several years, King made sure that the FSRC did not examine SIBL's investment portfolio; provided the investor with access to the FSRC's confidential regulatory files on him; and allowed Stanford to essentially dictate the FSRC's responses to the SEC on those information requests.

Stanford, who is being held without bail in the U.S. pending a Jan. 2011 trial, has denied all allegations of wrongdoing.

Jamaicans lead way as remittances rebound

WASHINGTON, D.C. - A growth in remittances to Jamaica could indicate an upward trend of important revenue streams to the region as the impact of the global economic crisis eases, a United Nations agency reported last month.

According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), migrant workers from a majority of Caribbean and Central American countries were able to send home more money to their families in the first months of 2010 than at the same time last year. The specialized agency dedicated to eradicating poverty and hunger in rural areas of developing countries viewed the situation a positive development for Jamaica in particular.

"There's now been four consecutive months of growth in remittances to Jamaica," said Josefina Stubbs, IFAD's director of Latin America and the Caribbean Division.

"We believe it indicates that Jamaica will likely be the first country in the region to begin a recovery from the decline in remittances over the past year."

HIKE

Remittances are vital to

the Jamaican economy, representing approximately 15 percent of GDP last year - the equivalent of \$660 per person living in Jamaica, the U.N. noted.

"This makes it particularly significant that Jamaicans living abroad sent home 7.4 percent more money to their families this February than at the same time last year. In particular, remittances from the United States, which account for 62 percent of remittances to the country, rose strongly", it added.

The U.N. also reported strong increases in remittances to El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Remittances are essential to many economies in the region. Caribbean and Central American countries received almost \$16 billion in remittances during 2009, representing between 11 percent and 16 percent of GDP (gross domestic product) for many nations.

"After a year of extreme hardship because of the ongoing economic challenges resulting from the financial crisis, migrant workers are beginning to send more money home," said Associate IFAD Vice-President Kevin Cleaver.



Trinidadian woman gets five years probation for starving son to death

BALTIMORE, Maryland - A judge here has imposed a five-year probation sentence on a Trinidadian woman who starved her one year-old son to death allegedly at the urging of a religious cult leader.

Baltimore Circuit Judge Timothy J. Doory imposed the sentence on Ria Ramkissoon, 23, who last year pleaded guilty to abuse resulting in the death of Javon Thompson.

Ramkissoon, who has been in jail since her Aug. 2008 arrest, will not serve any further jail time.

The judge last month suspended the balance of her 20-year sentence, ordering her to report to a residential treatment facility for young women.

FOOD DENIED

She admitted in court to denying food and water to the child when he did not say

"Amen" before a meal. Prosecutors said Javon wasted away over the course of a week before his heart stopped beating.

They said at the time of Javon's death, Ramkissoon was living here with a small religious cult, led by a woman who calls herself "Queen Antoinette".

Ramkissoon was raised a Hindu, but converted to Christianity when she was a teenager, prosecutors said, adding that "Queen Antoinette" allegedly told Ramkissoon that Javon had a "spirit of rebellion" inside him and that denying him food would cure him.

"Queen Antoinette", her daughter Trevia Williams and another follower, Marcus A. Cobbs, have been convicted of second-degree murder and child abuse resulting in death.

Have You Paid Your Property Taxes?

One of your most valuable assets is your home, and the Miami-Dade County Tax Collector's Office wants to help you understand the consequences of not paying your property taxes.

- If you are a real property owner, it is your responsibility to ensure that your property taxes are paid.
- Property taxes became delinquent on April 1st.
- If your taxes remain unpaid on June 1st, your taxes will be sold at auction as a Tax Certificate.
- A Tax Certificate represents a lien that is sold to the investor that will accept the lowest rate of interest for your taxes. The interest will be included in the amount that you owe.
- If your taxes remain unpaid for two years after a Tax Certificate has been issued your property could be sold at a future date.

To avoid additional charges and interest, and the risk of losing your property, your payment must be in our office by May 31, 2010. Mailed payments must be in the form of a cashier's check or money order. Postmarks will not be honored for delinquent taxes.

You may pay in person at:
Miami-Dade Tax Collector Office
 140 West Flagler Street - Room 101
 Miami, FL 33130

Please note the office will be closed on Monday, May 31, 2010, Memorial Day in observance of the legal holiday. E-Checking is available at www.miamidade.gov until 11:59 p.m EDT (Eastern Daylight Time).
 For additional information, please call 305-270-4916.

CaribChat

'We have to expand opportunities to serve' ~ Patrick Corvington

Haitian-born **Patrick Corvington** was sworn in as chief executive officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service in February. Unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate, Corvington will lead this federal agency mandated to support voluntary service through programs such as AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and Senior Corps. The agency is also the largest source of grants which support community service and other volunteer efforts.

Corvington has an extensive background in the non-profit sector and an understanding of the challenges many communities face, particularly immigrant communities. Last month he spoke to **Caribbean Today's** freelance writer **Dawn A. Davis** about his new role.

Question: As chief executive officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service what is your priority focus?

Answer: I came to this job with four main pillars or ideas as CEO. First is this notion that service is a solution and that we have to demonstrate how the role of service and volunteering can play in solving some of the toughest problems in our community. It's not just about feeling good, but it's about doing good and making a difference and demonstrating the impact that service can have.

The second is, we have to expand opportunities to serve...Many folks from the community I came from, and probably the community that you represent, have not been attached to service; not to say they haven't been engaged. My mother has been taking care of folks in her community regularly. I have, my sisters have, but they haven't been part of the national service structure. So, connecting folks to that I think would be important.

The third one is we have to build the capacity of individuals, organizations, and communities to take on their toughest challenges. The notion that we help people



U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, left, swears in Patrick Corvington.

build the skills to make a difference in their communities, I think that's pretty critical.

Finally, we have to embrace innovation. We have to find new solutions to new problems, new solutions to old problems, and sometimes old solutions to new problems.

People are solving problems every day in their communities and we need to make sure that we find what works, invest in what works, and then scale and replicate what works.

The second pillar...is very personal to me because I

came here as an immigrant in 1982, became a citizen in 1993, and the fact that I am in this job now, given my background...that is the American story...So, service for me has been a pathway to the American story and I want to create opportunities for a lot of kids like me to have that pathway and to find themselves in the American tapestry.

Q: How much has Caribbean immigrants to the U.S. been involved in volunteerism in this country, especially after the recent disaster in Haiti?

A: In Caribbean communities throughout this country, and the Haitian/Dominican community is what I am most familiar with, people are engaged in service every day. People are taking care of family members, taking care of cousins, raising nieces and nephews, helping the old lady up the street.

They are engaged all the time in service. I think that service isn't always recognized as national service. I think the

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

a culture so rich you can taste it



Called Tap-Taps, these elaborately painted, one-of-a-kind transportation vehicles are a common and welcome sight throughout the island nation of Haiti. Like moving pieces of art, they beautifully symbolize this Caribbean country's colorful and unique culture.



Happy Flag & University Day, Haiti. 5 • 18 • 10

Our artful Tap-Tap is made from favorite island foods: Pine, Strawberries, Scotch Bonnet Peppers, Sweet Potatoes, Okra, Sugar Cane, Grapefruit, Mango, Raspberry, Kiwi, Grapes, Pimento, Corn, Hibiscus, Vanilla, Orange, Lima Beans, Avocado, Pineapple, Coconut, Watermelon, Star Fruit, Cabbage, Plantain, Green Beans, Banana, Fajita Hot and Hungarian Peppers, Bok Choy, Red Peppers and Chiu-Chiu.

Publix.

Several Haitian Americans join contest to fill Meek's vacated seat in U.S. Congress; community's excitement heats up

The decision by Representative Kendrick Meek to vacate his seat to run for a spot in the United States Senate has left the door open for Haitian Americans to succeed him in Florida's 17th congressional district.

Several will be vying for Democrat Meek's vacated seat while he engages in a battle with main challengers Marco Rubio, a Republican, and Republican-turned-Independent Charlie Crist, the governor of Florida.

According to a recent

report published in the **Miami Herald** newspaper, the "Haitian Americans, all big names with deep roots in the community, are candidates in a crowded field". The newspaper noted that the population of the district is about one-third

Haitian, which will give the candidates a huge advantage.

According to the Herald, the candidates, all who have paid the \$10,440 qualifying fee, include Dr. Rudolph Moise, 55, a family physician, lawyer and Haitian movie star; Marleine Bastien, 50, executive director of the Haitian Women of Miami and a long-time community activist; state Rep. Yolly Roberson, 54, a lawyer and nurse and her ex-husband Phillip Brutus, 52, a lawyer and former state legislator.

"There are great reasons to be excited," Sabrina Salomon a Miami attorney and district voter, told the Herald. "Just about everywhere you go, people are talking about this race. Part of that conversation is also about how it would be ideal to have one person to strengthen our chances."

The race could result in



Meek

the first member of the U.S. Congress born in Haiti, the newspaper noted.

This month Caribbean Today keeps an "Eye On Haiti". The French-speaking Caribbean name will celebrate "Flag Day" on May 18, even as it struggles to recover from a massive earthquake which hit the capital Port-Au-Prince on Jan. 12. See page 12.



T&T elects new government on May 24; Opposition parties unite against PNM

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC – The people of Trinidad and Tobago go to the polls on May 24 to elect a new government, less than three years after they gave the incumbent People's National Movement (PNM) a 26-15 victory in the 2007 general elections.

A brief statement from the Office of Prime Minister Patrick Manning on April 16 noted that he had advised President George Maxwell Richards "to issue a writ of election" for May 24.

The ruling party, which is expected to contest all 41 seats in the elections, will face a unified Opposition for control of the Parliament. The main Opposition United National Congress (UNC) and the Congress of the People (COP) party ensured that there is no repeat of the 2007 general elections when the PNM won some of the constituencies as a result of the split in the Opposition votes.

The UNC also reached an agreement with Tobago Organization of the People (TOP) for contesting the two seats in Tobago where both incumbents have decided against seeking re-election.

FRESH MANDATE

Last month, information



Manning

Minister Neil Parsanlal dismissed suggestions that the early poll is an acknowledgment by the government that it has failed, telling reporters that the Manning administration was seeking a fresh mandate.

"What we are doing here by calling the election is simply exercising good governance," he said at a weekly Cabinet news conference. Manning defended his decision to dissolve Parliament, mere hours before debate on an Opposition inspired motion of no confidence against him was due to begin.



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Fewer Caribbean immigrants become naturalized American citizens in 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C.

- Fewer Caribbean nationals became naturalized citizens of the United States last year compared to 2008, a **CaribWorldNews** analysis of latest U.S. Department of Homeland statistics reveal.

Overall, some 84,917 nationals from the Caribbean took the oath of citizenship of the U.S. in 2009 compared to 131,935 in 2008.

The trend reflected part of the overall downward spiral in naturalizations, with the number of persons naturalizing declining to 743,715 in 2009 from 1,046,539 in 2008. The only group showing an increase from 2008 to 2009 was immigrants from African countries.

However, in the past three years, the Caribbean region has registered a whopping 285,429 new voters in the U.S. based on the number of new naturalizations.

Former T&T resident, hero of 'shoe bomber' incident, turns U.S. citizen

A former Trinidad and Tobago resident, who helped restrain a would-be Jamaican-born "shoe bomber" on an airline almost a decade ago, has been sworn in as a citizen of the United States.

Kwame James, now 32, became a naturalized U.S. citizen last month following a ceremony in Atlanta, Georgia. James had assisted other passengers subdue Richard Reid as he attempted to set off a bomb during a flight from Paris, France to Miami, Florida in Dec. 2001.

According to reports from the incident, James was sleeping several rows in front of Reid when the terrorist attempted to set off explosives hidden in his shoes. The former U.S. high school and college basketball player was alerted by a flight attendant and went to assist other passengers and flight crew who were struggling to subdue Reid. James helped to tie up Reid and also assisted with holding him until the plane landed in Boston, Massachusetts.

"I didn't understand the magnitude of what happened at first," he reportedly told the **Associated Press**.

DREAM

James, who is now married with two children and lives in Atlanta, was reportedly on the flight from France, where he was playing professional basketball, to the U.S.

From the Caribbean region last year, Cubans topped the list of naturalization from the region with 24,891 in 2009, down from 39,871 in 2008. They were followed by the Dominican Republic with 20,778 and Jamaica with 15,098.

In 2009, 13,290 Haitians became new U.S. citizens compared to 21,229 in 2008. Guyana followed far behind with 6,840 while from Trinidad and Tobago there were 5,726 opting to become U.S. citizens.

SMALLER

Other Caribbean nations claimed smaller portions of new U.S. citizens. Anguilla recorded 29 last year, while there were 37 from Aruba and 456 from Antigua and Barbuda.

Some 569 natives of The Bahamas became U.S. citizens last year while 878 from Barbados took the oath. Belize migrants becoming U.S. citizens last year totaled



Fewer Caribbean immigrants took the oath of citizenship.

854, while there were 80 from Bermuda and 43 from fellow British dependent territory, the BVI.

Another 22 nationals of the Cayman Islands became new U.S. citizens last year while some 672 from Dominica took the oath.

Some 583 Grenadians became naturalized U.S. citizens in 2009 while just 34 from Guadeloupe, 22 from Martinique and eight from

French Guiana took the oath.

From Montserrat, there were 59 while 40 from the Netherland Antilles became citizens of the United States. British dependent territory, Turks and Caicos registered 21 while there were 198 from Suriname. Another 583 St. Lucians became citizens of the U.S. in 2009 while there were 513 from St. Vincent and the Grenadines and 389 from St. Kitts and Nevis.

MORE APPLICANTS

However, the number of applications for naturalization, which declined from 2007 to 2008, edged upward to 570,000 in 2009 while the number of naturalization applications pending a decision decreased to 230,000 by the end of 2009.

Meanwhile, in 2009, women accounted for 53 percent of all persons naturalizing while more than one-half (54 percent) of new citizens were ages 25 to 44 years. The medi-

an age of all persons naturalizing was 40 years. Persons 65 years and over accounted for nearly 8 percent of naturalizations in 2009 while two-thirds (67 percent) of persons naturalizing in 2009 were married and 20 percent were single.

California was home to the largest percentage of persons naturalizing with 24 percent, followed by New York with 12 percent and Florida with 11 percent. Fifty-four percent of all new citizens in 2009 lived in 10 metropolitan areas.

The leading metropolitan areas of residence were New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, N.Y.-N.J.-PA with 15 percent, Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA with 11 percent, and Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, Florida with 7.3 percent.

CaribWorldNews



Jamaica's P.M. points accusing finger at U.S.

KINGSTON, Jamaica, CMC - Prime Minister Bruce Golding has said the importation of illegal guns from the United States is contributing significantly to the country's worsening crime situation.

"The security forces recover, on average, 600 guns each year. We suspect that a greater number enter the island each year, creating an ever increasing arsenal of illegal weapons snuffing out lives with callous brutality," Golding told Parliament as he made his contribution to the debate on the 2010 national budget last month.

He told legislators that the majority of the illegal weapons were made in the U.S. Last year, more than 1,600 persons were murdered



Golding

in Jamaica.

"A resolution before the United Nations for an international convention to restrict the illegal trafficking in small arms is still the subject of negotiations. In the meanwhile, we intend to renew our efforts to strengthen bilateral

cooperation with the U.S. with a view to addressing the flow of illegal guns from the U.S. to Jamaica with the same vigor that we seek to apply to the flow of illegal drugs from Jamaica to the U.S.," Golding said.

The prime minister said that his administration would be bringing to Parliament anti-gang legislation to enable law enforcement agencies to move more effectively against criminal gangs.

"Today's criminal networks did not exist when the existing law enforcement powers were created," Golding said. "The spanner we have was never made to fit the nut we have to crack."



U.S. pledges \$45M to help Caribbean fight crime in 2010

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC - The Barack Obama administration last month said it is willing to put its money where its mouth is by providing \$45 million this year to help its Caribbean neighbors fight crime.

The funds are to be provided as part of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) announced by President Obama at the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad last year.

United States Secretary of Defense Robert Gates stressed Washington's commitment to the trans-national anti-crime plan during a meeting with the

prime ministers of Barbados, Dominica and Grenada and other Eastern Caribbean national security officials held here.

"The United States understands the enormous challenges that you face in combating illicit trafficking and violent crime in the Eastern Caribbean - challenges that touch our shores as well," Gates told journalists at the end of the one-day meeting in mid-April.



Gates

"The CBSI represents a comprehensive approach, providing not just improved security capabilities to cope with the threats but also development assistance in hopes of addressing the root causes of regional problems," the senior U.S. official said, adding that how the funds are allocated will be disbursed with "extensive input" from the initiative's Caribbean beneficiaries.

He said the Barbados-based Regional Security System (RSS) is central to the CBSI's success, given its reach across the Eastern Caribbean.



to meet his then-girlfriend. The couple was scheduled to go to his family's home in Trinidad for the holidays.

James, who had entered the U.S. as a tourist, agreed to testify against Reid. But the terrorist pleaded guilty before his trial in Oct. 2002 and James almost lost the opportunity to become a U.S. citizen. He later married his girlfriend Jill and received permanent resident status. He then applied for citizenship. Now he is happy his wish has been realized.

"I became a citizen of one of the best countries in the world and I am very happy," he told the **Associated Press**. "All the things that people come here for, that's what I'm here for, the opportunity. You can come from nothing and become something here, just through hard work."

A year ago James moved to Atlanta to work at his friend's IT staffing firm. Now he is eager to participate in his country's future.

"I can't wait to vote in the next election," James told the **Associated Press**.

Information obtained from an Associated Press report.



James

THE GREAT DEBATE: Homosexuality still a contentious topic for Caribbean people

DAWN A. DAVIS

Homophobia has long been a contentious subject in the Caribbean. Tensions still exist between the heterosexual majority and the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender) community.

Some feel homosexuals are breaking the law, because in many Caribbean countries buggery laws created in England in 1533 are still on the books.

But dialogue has brought the issues out into the open, forcing many to face the LGBT population, especially in Jamaica where opinions are strong.

"I'm interested in the way in which dancehall has been used to construct a notion of Caribbean, particularly Jamaican sexuality, that is exclusively hetero-normative, preferring heterosexuality and hyper-masculinity, similar to the way in which hip-hop and rap concretize the notion of black man as hyper-sexual and heterosexual," said Dr. Camille Nelson.

Nelson, a visiting profes-

sor of law at Hofstra University in the United States, was part of a panel at last month's symposium based on the theme "Homophobia in the Caribbean", which was hosted by the Inter-American



Tomlinson

Center for Human Rights at Nova Southeastern University in Florida.

Nelson asked what it means to be a black man, in particular a black man from Jamaica, noting that she is concerned with the way in which the music is excluding "others" from the definition of nationality. She added that dancehall then becomes the cultural regulator of identity

along the lines of religion, as some artistes use biblical verses in their lyrics to justify their stance against homosexuality.

"The ways in which we construct our identity, through law, through music, through religion, depends on binaries that are rigid: man woman, gay straight, black white," said Nelson.

"There is no middle ground; if you are Jamaican you are straight. That means very little room for a hyphenated gay Jamaican existence, or a bisexual Jamaican existence."

Citing lyrics by dancehall artiste Beenie Man ("I am dreaming of a new Jamaica, come to execute all the gays"), Nelson explained: "When Beenie Man sings this, he flatly exposes a heterosexual construction of a post-colonial, independent Jamaican nation. What do I want Jamaica to look like, what do I want Jamaica to be? He says, I want it to be heterosexual, and not just heterosexual, but to eliminate homosexuality and homosexuals."

Nelson cited some of the work being done by Dr.

Carolyn Cooper, head of the Department of Literary and Cultural Studies and former chair of the Reggae Studies Department at the University of the West Indies, Mona. However, she voiced disagree-



Nelson

ment with Cooper's statement that she sees as espousing homophobia as part of a national project: "It is the music of young, working class black people and I think it makes it an easy target. Homophobia is one part of dancehall, but we shouldn't reduce it to its homophobic lyrics. It's a heterosexual music, it celebrates heterosexuality by denouncing homo-

sexuality..."

J-FLAG

Maurice Tomlinson, legal counsel for Jamaica Forum for Lesbians All-Sexuals and Gays (J-FLAG), noted that "persons who are most able to withstand these risks have not been the ones that have been targeted. In general it's the black, working class, poor individuals who have been attacked."

Tomlinson added that four gay men are in the process of leaving Jamaica for fear of their lives because of their participation in the recent "Walk for Tolerance" march through the streets of Kingston that heightened the awareness of gay and lesbian rights.

"We are interested in a liberated Jamaica," he said. "We still are struggling with persecution...As the legal counsel for J-FLAG, I am focusing on advocacy strategies. We want to continue the dialogue on a different level. We want to ensure that the persons who can make change are aware of the real issues."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

Arizona plan forces lawmakers into action on U.S. immigration reform

WASHINGTON, D.C. – After a controversial Arizona immigration plan became law in that U.S. state last month, Senate Democrats put the spotlight squarely back on the hot button issue by unveiling what they called the "framework" of a comprehensive immigration reform bill.

United States Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and some 43 other Democrats on April 29 unveiled a plan that they say will allow some 12 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. to be able to obtain a work permit and travel documents and eventually, a path to citizenship in the U.S.

The 26-page draft plan of the Real Enforcement with Practical Answers for Immigration Reform (REPAIR) proposal also calls for tough controls on the hiring of unauthorized immigrants that will make use of a new biometric Social Security card as part of an electronic verification system.

Under this proposal the millions of undocumented persons living in this country will be required to come forward, register their status and be screened and fingerprinted.

They can then apply for an interim legal status, which will grant them the ability to work in the U.S. and travel abroad.

Eight years after the law is enacted, when backlogs are cleared in employment and family visa categories, they will be eligible to apply to adjust status to lawful permanent resident. They will be required to pay fines, taxes and civil penalties, learn English, and fulfill other requirements. And it recommends "concrete benchmarks" to secure the border before granting illegal immigrants the opportunity to gain legal status.

Those benchmarks include increasing the number of border patrol officers and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials, increasing the number of personnel available to inspect for drugs and contraband and improving technology used to assist ICE agents.

ACTION CALL

As furor and threats of boycotts of Arizona companies grow in wake of the state's law to crackdown on illegal immigration by essen-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

Take 10 minutes to help secure their future.



Please mom and dad don't rob us of our future, help us to go even further than you did. Get counted, for us.

If you have not sent off your Census form as yet, please answer the door & work with your Census taker when they come around the neighborhood. The forms are easy, safe and they take 10 minutes to complete.

DO THE RIGHT THING, DO IT FOR THEM, GET COUNTED!



United States
Census 2010

THE GREAT DEBATE: Homosexuality still a contentious topic for Caribbean people

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

Tomlinson explained that although Jamaica's gay and lesbian communities have built a "better" relationship with the police, they are not adequately protected from unprovoked violence.

"We have also lobbied Parliament, not very successfully to date, but we are not giving up," he said.

CHARTER OF RIGHTS

Tomlinson explained that the LGBT community is working to ensure the passage of the Charter of Rights and Freedom, which is up for review in Jamaica's

Parliament. The legal position is to include language on sexual orientation, sex and HIV status as grounds for non-discrimination.

Tomlinson, who is also a consultant for AIDS Free World, an international advocacy program that underscores the urgent need for response to HIV/AIDS, is concerned about HIV/AIDS in the LGBT community. He noted that the prevalence rate in Jamaica among MSM (men who have sex with men) is 32 percent, in sex workers it is nine percent, and 1.3 percent among the general population.

"It is clear, the law is driv-

ing people underground and away from prevention, treatment, and care," Tomlinson said.

"We have so much that is right about Jamaica...It's a country of hope...But, there is one thing that is so very wrong. We feel it is an aberration (homophobia) that must be removed for the true Jamaica to be liberated and to come forward."

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



'We have to expand opportunities to serve' ~ Patrick Corvington

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

folks who are doing it, because it's so cultural for us, don't think of it as volunteering. My mother for example, could spend her whole week taking care of other people's kids because they are working hard, or one is in the hospital, making food for a neighbor, just helping out her community in a whole bunch of ways. If you asked her do you volunteer, she would say no, I don't have time to volunteer.

So, in Caribbean communities throughout this country people are heavily engaged in making a difference in their communities. They don't see it that way and others don't see it that way, so I think it's part of the things we have to fix. The reason it's important is for the young people in our community to get engaged in things like AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve, and NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps); it's an opportunity, it's a path...With AmeriCorps, there is the education award. A kid growing up in a community somewhere who gets engaged in service in a formal way, can get a year of college paid. This is why it's important to connect folks to the national service infrastructure. So, I think that people are volunteering and are engaged in their communities very heavily, but it somehow doesn't make into the national service picture.

Q: Were you personally affected by the disaster in Haiti and do you still have family there?

A: Much of my family is still in Haiti...One of my cousins, a Corvington, was killed in the

earthquake. Some of my other cousins - some houses were destroyed, some damaged. They are doing what they can to survive now and doing the best they can.

Q: Are you able to reach out to or work with non-profits in Haiti, and if so, in what way?

A: I am not personally able to do that right now. The Corporation for National and Community Service is focused domestically. What's important to remember is after the earthquake people were really gearing up to help in Haiti. Many of our volunteers through our National Civilian Community Corps were involved in organizing volunteers to load planes, to gather the materials and all the things that were being sent over. It is to me the quintessential American spirit around wanting to fix the problem and wanting to be engaged. And we saw that after the earthquake, with people trying to find a way to become involved.

We helped facilitate some of that, and we hope that we can keep helping communities...in New York, Miami, Boston, Providence, places like that where kids are coming from Haiti or where people are trying to find ways to help out.

Q: Any plans to extend the Corporation's efforts to the wider Caribbean?

A: By statute we are domestically focused. But what I think we can do is... to get into a whole bunch of communities here. The Caribbean is here in many ways, so if we can be in those communities and provide opportunities, that would

be a great success.

Q: In today's climate of economic uncertainty, how do you inspire citizens to volunteer?

A: We haven't had to. People have been getting engaged in one way or another. Volunteering numbers are up. People are finding ways to get engaged for a variety of reasons. I think the first reason is people look around them, they feel pain, they see people around them feel pain and they want to help. Others who are unemployed are trying to find ways to find meaning, and so they are getting engaged and volunteering. Others see volunteering as a way to develop a new set of skills. Whatever the reasons might be...what we have found is, we haven't had to push too hard.

Q: How can you stimulate entrepreneurship through volunteerism in communities with high unemployment rates?

A: I think the folks who are closest to problems and challenges are sometimes the best suited to address them. When people are facing a challenge, they create a solution, and that's a certain kind of entrepreneurship; people are inventing solutions to the challenges they face. Whether it is creating a particular project or process getting their communities organized to take something on. At *serve.gov*, which is a website for volunteering, people have the opportunity to enter their zip codes to find opportunities. Or, they can post a project. *Serve.gov* is one of the ways we try to get people con-

Arizona plan forces lawmakers into action on U.S. immigration reform

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

tially turning police officers into immigration agents, Democrats said the issue must be addressed now.

Senator Reid, who is facing a tough election in Nevada, said the "framework" of the plan is based on months of negotiations that involved New York Senator Charles Schumer and New Jersey Senator Bob Menendez.

However, Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, who was also in those talks with Schumer, is not among those signing off on the plan, saying instead the proposal needs more work before it can become a bill.

The American Immigration

Lawyers Association (AILA) late last month said it is encouraged by the proposal.

"We hope this proposal which contains ideas from both political parties also inspires bipartisan partnership in Congress to continue to work towards a comprehensive immigration bill. This proposal requires undocumented immigrants to register with the government and get right with the law. It includes tough enforcement at the border and in our workplaces and creates a visa system that protects labor rights and meets the economic needs of our future," said Bernie Wolfsdorf, president of AILA.

"It's time for both Republicans and Democrats to join together and show they have the will to fix our broken immigration system once and for all. It's time to put smart policy ahead of partisan politics."

- Edited from *CaribWorldNews*



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U.S. immigration reform now

In recent weeks, since the passage of the controversial health care reform law in the United States, I have listened to many arguments for and against immigration reform.

Most critics or pessimists of immigration reform now insist that U.S. President Barack Obama and the Democrats can ill afford another showdown with the Republicans over another hot button issue. Should the Democrats use the momentum and majority they have and push through immigration reform, then, critics say, the party could pay for it dearly in the November poll. Really?

My argument has been and remains that should the Democrats and President Obama do nothing for immigration reform this year, then they will pay dearly at the polls in November anyway. The party and Obama hoodwinked immigrant voters in 2007 by promising urgent attention to immigration reform that would not just focus on border security but help put millions living in the U.S., undocumented yet paying taxes, on the path to earned legalization. Not citizenship or amnesty like the mainstream media, especially Fox News is quick to erroneously report, but earned legalization.

PERMISSION

What does that mean? Simply that these migrants would be given a work permit and a means to travel in and out of the country once they prove they've been living in the U.S., have not committed crimes, have paid their taxes and can pay a fine for entering the country without a visa or

overstaying their visas.

Yet President Obama and his party have yet to make this a serious priority. We all know the economy is in terrible shape, but Democrats have found the time to bail out the crooks of Wall Street and pass a much-needed, though somewhat flawed health care bill since taking back the White House, the Congress and the Senate.

They've even found time to talk about off-shore drilling as immigration reform continues to be pushed further and further on the back burner.

Sure there have been many placating comments and promises, but we still await a Senate bill on this issue more than three months after the Dec. 2009 House bill from Congressman Luis Gutierrez.

FACTS

Immigrant voters must push the Obama administration and lawmakers to deliver on their promise not with emotion, but with facts. The fact is that the coffers of the U.S. stands to benefit from millions in fines, back taxes and immigration fees should the millions of undocumented immigrants be granted a chance to legalize their status.

This is the short-term economic boon to the U.S. that few talk about. In these tough economic times, this is the message immigrant advocates must sell.

Of course, the long-term gain is easily documented in many studies, including in New York State alone, where

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)



FELICIA PERSAUD

Bad business policy

A woman will overlook all the faults of a man if he had a big bank account some claim.

Well, that holds true even to this day, and there is an advertisement that appeared in a newspaper that really piqued my interest, both from a man/woman perspective, and from a fiscal point of view. A lady advertised herself as being available, but with conditions applying of course, using her beauty as a bargaining chip to snare a wealthy man. It's titled "What am I doing Wrong?" and declares the following: "I'm tired of beating around the bush. I'm a spectacularly beautiful twenty five-year-old girl, articulate and classy, and I'm looking to get married to a guy who makes at least half a million U.S. a year, which is really middle class in New York. Where do you single rich guys hang out, what are you looking for in a mate, and why are some women not as pretty as I am, living lavish lifestyles on the Upper East Side? Jobs I should look for? Lawyer, investment banker, doctor, and I am looking for marriage only".

Well, she made her case and presented her portfolio, suffering perhaps from delusions of grandeur. But it's the response that was a gem. It went: "Dear seeker, I read your posting with great interest, and I qualify as a guy who fits your bill, that is, I make more than five hundred thousand a year, but here's how I see it. Your offer, from the perspective of a guy like me is plain and simple a crappy business deal. What you suggest is a simple trade, you bring your looks and I bring my money. But here's the rub, your looks will fade, and my money will likely continue into perpetuity...In fact, it is very likely that my income will increase, but it is an absolute certainty that you won't be getting any more beautiful. So in economic terms, you are a depreciating

asset and I am an earning asset. Let me explain, you're 25 now and will likely stay pretty hot for the next five years, but less so each year. Then the fade begins in earnest. So in Wall Street terms, we would call you a trading position, not a buy and hold. It doesn't make good business sense to 'buy you' which is what you're asking, so I'd rather lease. I'm not being cruel, but it's just not good business sense. If my money were to go away, so would you, so when you're beauty fades, I need an out. So a deal that makes sense, is dating, not marriage. I was taught early in my career about efficient markets, so I wonder why a girl as 'articulate, classy and spectacularly beautiful as you say you are, has been unable to find your sugar daddy. I find it hard to believe that if you are as gorgeous as you say you are, that the five hundred thousand man hasn't found you, if only for a tryout. I hope this is helpful, and if you want to enter some sort of lease agreement, let me know".

VEXING

Now this is where the financial experts should come



TONY ROBINSON

in, and educate young people on the efficacy and economic viability of entering into a business deal such as this. But this issue is a vexing one, how women try to use their looks and snare men, and also how men use their money to catch women.

At times, I wonder, who is the predator and who is the prey? But as the man said, her looks will fade and his money will appreciate. Every mother should let her daughter know that beauty alone is not the only thing that they should bring to the party, and every father should tell his son that to get a woman, using only money, is a terrible economic decision.

Of course I'm not talking about those situations where true love exists, but who can seriously tell me that a woman of 25 truly loves a man of 65, unless he's loaded?

Nothing is wrong with leasing, but this marriage thing can spell financial disaster, property sharing, family discord and much rancor - all in all, an emotional/financial meltdown that no bailout can help. Men of wealth always assess the cost benefit analysis, the returns on their invest-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

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VIEWPOINT

CARIB Comments

• **“The war that I called for is a war which really speaks to our being able to deal with situations that are currently threatening to undermine the peace and tranquility of the state and in fact if one looks at the whole context in which the statement was made, I was referring more biblical premise here where we will be waging a holy war against those who are attempting to create serious destabilization in the country”** - Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer last



month declaring a “holy war” against the Opposition forces in his country as the fallout continues from the Mar. 12 High Court ruling that his election and those of two of his Cabinet ministers were invalid due to polling irregularities.

• **“We are still in the midst of the storm”** - Central Bank Governor Dr. Delisle Worrell last month claiming the Barbados economy continues to experience tough times, although he has seen encouraging signs in the United States that point to recovery by the end of this year.

• **“When Antigua is ready to make things right and release the assets that were purchased with Stanford victims’ investments, the SVC will stop its efforts to expose Antigua for its corrupt**

actions...When the crime stops, so will we” - Angela Shaw, executive director of Stanford Victims Coalition (SVC), an advocacy group representing 28,000 investors, primarily from the United States, who claim they suffered “collateral damage” as a result of the alleged fraud perpetrated by indicted Texas billionaire Allen Stanford.

• **“Our position is: clearly they don’t have any basis for what they’re saying and the fact of the matter is if they claim that they are victims, Antigua and Barbuda is also a victim in this matter because clearly we have suffered immensely as a result of what has happened”** - Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer last month defending his government's public silence on the campaign launched

against the country by the so-called Stanford Victims Coalition (SVC).

• **“That’s absolutely not true”** - Prime Minister Bruce Golding denies reports that the United States is holding up the accreditation of a new Jamaican ambassador to Washington because of the decision not to extradite a Jamaican wanted in the U.S. on drug related charges. Businesswoman Audrey Marks has since been named ambassador.

• **“Without us, the human race cannot continue; without us, the world will fall apart. Women, after all, hold up half the sky”** - Kamla Persad Bissessar, Trinidad and Tobago's Opposition leader, laments the fact that many people do not fully understand the role of women and their contribution

to society while commemorating International Women's Day last month.

• **“We know we had to take a tough, hard decision. Believe me it is a nerve wracking and emotionally draining exercise, even politically it is difficult, but there are times as it is said when ‘a man’s got to do what a man has to do’”** - Jamaica's Tourism Minister Ed Bartlett describing his government's painstaking decision to wind down the costly operations of Air Jamaica, the national airline.



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Caribbean Today

Bad business policy

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

ment, the growth potential, against the portfolio of the other person entering the trade agreement. Maybe that's why many beautiful women end up marrying wealthy men, but eventually get dumped anyway. As one told me, “He simply traded me in for a newer model.”

It's a harsh cruel world, both the romantic and the financial. Banks that stood 100 years suddenly are falling. Men can't tell if women really love them for who they are or only for their wealth, and everyone is asking, “what's in it for me?” She with her spectacular beauty, as the girl in the letter wrote, only wants a man who earns a great wad of cash per year, and he with his money, wants something to show for it, a great house, fabulous cars, lavish clothes and a beautiful woman on his arm.

HONESTY

At least I admire her honesty, for there are many pretty women out there who aren't as forthright as her. They come with talk of love, with money never entering the picture, and

the wealthy man gets duped into believing that her passion is for him and not his pension.

The truth is, she has all to gain and he has all to lose, if he's not smart. With her great looks she can only marry one rich man, but with all his wealth, he can acquire many beautiful women. Money matures, and that's good for an investor, but as a woman matures, that's bad for her.

That lady who wrote that letter is not alone, as there are so many women who attempt to get through life on their looks alone. So many have said that they'd rather be pretty than smart, and many have also told me what economic bracket of men they want to marry. “He has to be financially stable, and can keep me in the manner to which I want to become accustomed.”

So the only difference between them and that lady who wrote, is the figure that she expressed - half million U.S. per year or more.

I applaud those women, pretty or not, who bring other assets to the table. These women have ambition, pride, high self-esteem and can offer as much as they want in

return. It's so wonderful to hear the term, ‘she has not only beauty but brains.’ When a man marries a beautiful woman and he's asked, “So what does she do?” will his answer be, “Oh, she's so beautiful...that's all she needs.”

So the lady who wrote that letter, and others like her had better wise up. Beautiful women are a dime a dozen, as ugly people aren't being made anymore. So if you want to be an appreciating asset and not just a depreciating piece of ass, you'd better bring more than just your good looks.

They could do a T.V. program on the topic. The working title could be “The financial viability of a using your wealth to marry a beautiful woman: what are the risks?”

The guests could be former beauty queens, investment bankers, past and present ministers of finance, chief executive officers of leading financial institutions and executive directors of our leading model agencies. As far as I see it though, it's simply bad business policy.

seido1@hotmail.com



U.S. immigration reform now

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

according to the Fiscal Policy Institute, immigrants account for 20 percent of economic output and 20 percent of the population in the state. This means that contrary to popular opinion, immigrants are carrying more than their weight and are not a burden on the U.S. by any means - whether documented or not.

POSITIVE

Adding a new legal population to this mix, will only show an economic positive, especially

when the many young skilled immigrants, who will qualify to go to college under a legalization of the Dream Act, are added to this mix.

As for those naysayers who argue that the borders are porous, I say who's stopping the U.S. from closing its borders - immigrants? Please. Take a visit to most border states and note the actual state of what is called protection of our borders.

No one is stopping the U.S. from patrolling its borders but its own government -

the same one who poured billions into Iraq but somehow cannot find resources to control its borders. Immigrants cannot continue to be scapegoated. The Obama administration must deliver on immigration reform now or surely face the consequences in the November elections.

Felicia Persaud is founder of CaribWorldNews.com, CaribPRWire and Hard Beat Communications.



Robust recovery for Caribbean economy

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says the Caribbean and Latin America have “weathered the global downturn comparatively well” and are now recovering at a “robust pace”.

In a semi-annual report on the world economy released last month, the Washington-based financial institution said the region is expected to grow by an average of four percent this year as well as next year, with a few exceptions such as Venezuela, whose economy is expected to contract in 2010.

The “World Economic Outlook,” distributed at the IMF’s spring meeting here, reported that the region’s recovery is due, among other factors, to “accommodative

policies” that are “helping underpin domestic demand.

“Having weathered the global downturn comparatively well, the Latin America and Caribbean region is posting a strong recovery”, the report noted.

Overall, the report said risks to economic growth are on the upside, including the possibility of higher-than-forecast capital flows to the region.

On the downside, however, the IMF said “weak external demand for tourism from North America and Europe is impeding growth in a number of economies in the region”, adding that lower remittances are affecting many economies across the Caribbean.



N.Y. mayor gets testy over queries linked to his Caribbean investments

NEW YORK, N.Y. - New York City’s billionaire Mayor Mike Bloomberg got testy last month when confronted by reporters over the Bloomberg Family Foundation investments.

Reporters clashed with Bloomberg at his post-United States President Barack Obama question and answer session in Times Square over a report in the **New York Observer** of the offshore tax shelters where his managers have invested hundreds of millions of dollars.

Chief among them are the British dependent territories of the Cayman Islands and Bermuda. Bloomberg’s investment team at Quadrangle Group in 2008 reportedly pumped \$210 million into a Cayman Islands fund. The mayor stuck to his claim

that he had no idea where the Bloomberg Family Foundation investments are, but when questioned further by the Associated Press’s Sara Kugler, who pointed out that he personally signed the 105-page tax return in 2008 that showed a listing of the investments, he snapped: “I don’t have anything to say about my investments, miss.

“I did not sign those tax forms,” he added.

But Kugler insisted: “It has your signature on it.”

To which Bloomberg responded: “If there are tax forms that I signed, I signed. But I don’t have any control over where my investments go...”

Edited from CaribWorldNews



New Swiss law makes it easier to return Haiti’s stolen money

GENEVA, Switzerland, CMC - Haiti is expected to benefit from new legislation making it difficult for dictators to stash cash in Swiss Bank accounts.

Legislators were expected to vote on the new measures that would allow Switzerland to give aid groups in Haiti at least \$4.6 million claimed from Swiss bank accounts by former dictator Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier, the Swiss government said late last month.

Foreign Minister Micheline Calmey-Rey said it is hoped that with the new legislation “cases such as...Duvalier will not happen again.”

In January, Switzerland’s top court decided that \$4.6 million must be returned to the Duvalier’s family because the statute of limitations on any crimes committed by them would have expired in 2001. The Swiss government rushed through an emergency decree saying the funds were of criminal origin and should go to aid agencies working in the Haiti that was devastated by a powerful earthquake on Jan. 12, killing an estimated 300,000 people and leaving many more homeless.



Air Jamaica announces transition to Caribbean Airlines

Commencing May 1, a transition plan will be implemented under which Air Jamaica will continue its current operations under a contractual arrangement with Caribbean Airlines.

This was announced during a media briefing held late last month at Air Jamaica’s Kingston office. Air Jamaica’s Chairman Dennis Lalor, who made the announcement, also explained that the transaction had been effected in a manner that was designed to help ensure a seamless transition for customers or shippers.

Meanwhile, the Jamaica government will own 16 percent of the Trinidad-based Caribbean Airlines as part of the merger.

Among other things, the transition means that there will be no disruption of service, as all tickets previously

issued to the passengers will be honored.

TERMS

On April 27, Jamaica’s Cabinet announced it had



approved the terms of an agreement for the divestment of the operations of Air Jamaica to Caribbean Airlines, effective April 30.

During the briefing, the Air Jamaica divestment team provided details of the transaction, including the following:

- Effective May 1, 2010, Caribbean Airlines will assume full financial responsibility for Air Jamaica.
- The government of Jamaica will transfer Air Jamaica’s

routes to Caribbean Airlines for a 16 percent ownership in Caribbean Airlines.

However, the Jamaica will remain the owner of all of Air Jamaica’s other assets, including its real estate assets and its industrial assets.

- After a period of six to 12 months, Caribbean Airlines will fully implement its plan to provide sustainable airlift to/from Jamaica.
- Those plans call for the initial operations to continue serving routes from New York (JFK) to Montego Bay; JFK to Kingston; Baltimore to Montego Bay; Philadelphia to Montego Bay; Toronto to Kingston; Fort Lauderdale to Montego Bay; and Fort Lauderdale to Kingston.

Any changes to that schedule will be announced by Caribbean Airlines.

All Air Jamaica employee positions were made redundant on April 30. Approximately 1,000 workers were expected to be re-hired by Caribbean Airlines during the transition period.



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- A CARIBBEAN TODAY SPECIAL FEATURE

Parliament approves new commission to oversee reconstruction

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, CMC – The Haitian Senate has approved measures allowing for the creation of a commission to oversee billions of dollars in the reconstruction of the earthquake-battered Caribbean community (CARICOM) country.



Clinton

The Ministry of Communications said last month that the commission will be co-chaired by former United States President Bill Clinton.

The commission will also include Haitian legislators, other officials and union and business representatives, along with foreign delegates from the U.S., Canada, Brazil,

France, Venezuela, the European Union, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, the United Nations and CARICOM.

Its establishment is in keeping with the measures widely sought by international donors seeking to control an estimated \$5.3 billion in pledges for 2010-11 made during the Mar. 31 United Nations conference on Haiti. Communications Minister Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassegue said 13 senators voted in support of the legislative package. One senator voted against the package and two abstained. Eleven legislators were absent.

POWER

The package, which has already been approved by the Lower House, went to President René Préal for his

signature.

The vote, which also extends the state of emergency for 18 months, allows for Clinton and Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive to oversee the billions of dollars in aid through the Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission. Préal will have veto power over the commission's decisions.

Meanwhile a survey of more than 1,700 Haitians, released last month by the international aid group Oxfam, said less than seven percent wanted the government to manage reconstruction on its own, though nearly 25 percent thought it could work together with local authorities and community organizations. Nearly 40 percent wanted control to fall to a foreign government.



Top U.N. official warns of severe challenges for Haiti

NEW YORK, New York - A senior United Nations official has warned that Haiti faces a challenging year as it seeks to recover and rebuild from January's tragic earthquake that devastated the country and killed an estimated 300,000 people.

But Edmond Mulet, the secretary general's special representative and head of the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), told a U.N. Security Council meeting that with the right international support the country can embark on a new era of stability and growth.

"I believe the next 12 to 18 months are a period of great challenge and risk in Haiti, but one which we can help the Government to weather," he said, adding that "what Haiti needs now is a supporting arm of a compan-

ion on which it can lean as it gets back on its feet. That is the role which we, the international community, can play."

A number of countries and organizations are assisting the French-speaking Caribbean community (CARICOM) country in the wake of the quake. Mulet said

"I believe the next 12 to 18 months are a period of great challenge and risk in Haiti"

Haiti's path to stability following the tragedy depends, above all, on adherence to the political and electoral timetable to enable a constitutional hand-over of power in Feb. 2011. He said that falling behind in this regard would "seriously undermine the stability we have been working

towards in Haiti for many years."

Mulet said that over the next few months, Haiti will also face new security pressures, including that from criminals who escaped following the earthquake, as well as economic risks with millions living in vulnerable conditions and the risk of new natural disasters.

"However, I believe there is good reason to think that Haiti and its international partners can manage and mitigate those risks," said Mulet. "If we do so, I hope that within two years, we could again be in the position we had reached in 2009 – a Haiti that is relatively stable and growing economically."



Toronto fundraiser helps earthquake survivors

TORONTO, Canada – Entertainers from the Caribbean recently teamed up with Canadian companies and others to help survivors of the recent earthquake in Haiti.

More than CAD\$350,000 was secured from a fundraising campaign, held in concert with the Caribbean Media Exchange (CMEx), and anchored by an evening of entertainment at the Lula Lounge here last month.

"(It) was a heartwarming reminder of how generous Torontonians of vastly differing backgrounds can be," said Maria Noa Habchi, organizer of the fundraising drive.

Among the contributors were three Canadian corporations. Habchi issued a special note of thanks to Canadian philanthropist Walter Arbib who orchestrated more than \$350,000 worth of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies for Haiti, including a shipment of medicines for Haiti from SkyLink Aviation, Shalom Life Canadian Jewish On Line News, the United Jewish Appeal on behalf of Israel, and the airport security company AviSecure.

Nancy Rivard, president of Airline Ambassadors International, and major recipient of the fundraising

campaign, said she was "humbled by the generosity of Torontonians," adding the support, "comes at an important time as the rains start bringing with it an increased danger of infection and disease."

Airline Ambassadors, made up of volunteers drawn from the staff of 12 airlines, has reportedly flown some hundreds of doctors and nurses, as well as close to three million pounds worth of medical and other assistance to the clinics and orphanages it supports, into Haiti.



Haitians celebrate Flag Day on May 18

One of the primary symbols of Haitian freedom is the Haitian flag created in Arcahaie, a town located outside of Port-Au-Prince, on May 18, 1803.

Since then, May 18 has been observed as the Haitian Flag Day as it has become a symbol of pride, unity, and individual liberty.

In Haiti, Flag Day is a major national holiday celebrated with great fanfare in all cities in the country; also in other countries with a large number of Haitians. In the United States, Haitians give homage to the blue and red flag by carrying it around with them.

The Haitian flag is tightly linked to a history of struggle and freedom. On Aug. 21, 1791 the Haitian Revolution began its struggle against French occupation. From 1791 to about 1793, the revolt became more widespread and gave rise to a number of large groups still fighting independently. Each main leader would use any piece of cloth as a flag. Slowly the slave movement found some synergy and came to follow the leadership one main person: Toussaint Louverture. He had led the war with the French tricolor: blue, white and red flag.

After Toussaint's capture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines took up the torch in 1802 with the same color flag, but with a

slight difference: the general had simply removed the French rooster and the initials RF République de France, which at that time were found on the white band of the flag of the French Republic.

At that time, an original Haitian flag was not yet created. The fact that the rebel army was carrying a French flag was presented by the press of the time under the title of "Proclamation". The headquarters of the French army in Saint Domingue pretended that this tricolor flag, carried as



National flag of Haiti.

a rallying sign by the indigenous army, was proof that the insurgents were not fighting for the Independence of Saint Domingue, but only to keep their liberty, just like the French of the homeland, a liberty they believed First Consul Napoleon Bonaparte wanted to take from them.

- Edited from *Haitian Treasures*



Fewer Haitians get U.S. asylum in 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The number of Haitian asylum beneficiaries in the United States continues to dwindle with each passing year, a CaribWorldNews analysis of the latest Department of Homeland Security information indicates.

Last year, 592 Haitians were given the affirmed status of asylees in the U.S., an almost 50 percent drop from 2007 when 1,055 Haitians were approved for immigration relief.

Those granted asylum status by an immigration judge or the Board of Immigration Appeals also decreased, from 510 in 2008 to 406 last year.

By contrast, more Cubans were granted refugee status in the U.S. in 2009 than in the two years prior. Some 4,800 Cubans were allowed to become residents of the U.S. last year, a slight increase from 4,177 in 2008. But the 2009 numbers reflected an almost doubling of the approved refugees from Cuba when compared to 2007.

No Haitians have been granted refugee status in the

past three years.

However, the Haitian trend reflected an overall downward spiral on asylum applications approved by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The total number of persons granted asylum in the U.S. decreased slightly from 22,838 in 2008 to 22,119 in 2009. The leading countries of nationality for persons granted asylum in 2009 were China with 28 percent, Ethiopia with five percent and Haiti with 4.5 percent. Of the 11,933 persons granted asylum affirmatively in 2009, more than 80 percent were between the ages of 18 and 54.

A total of 74,602 persons were admitted to the U.S. as refugees during 2009. The leading countries of nationality for refugees were Iraq, Burma, and Bhutan. Fifty percent of refugees admitted to the U.S. last year were under age 25, with 34 percent under 18.

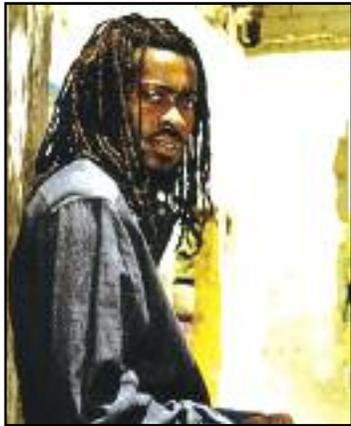
- *CaribWorldNews*



Visa troubles take dancehall stars away from U.S. summer entertainment

DAWN A. DAVIS

Some of the sizzle may be off this summer's Caribbean entertainment scene in the United States as several of the region's biggest names may not be allowed to enter the



Beenie Man

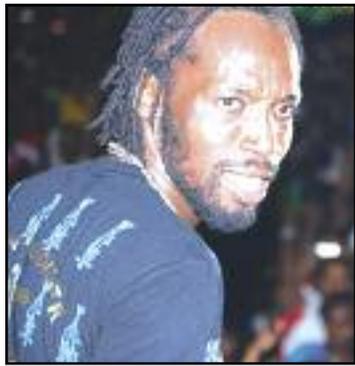
country.

Top musical acts such as Beenie Man, Bounty Killer and Mavado from Jamaica have been stripped of their

U.S. visas and are unlikely to take the stage.

In addition, Jamaican Buju Banton is still behind bars in Florida facing drug charges.

Many popular summer events across the U.S. will now be forced to make do without the stars, some of whom had already been booked. Shows like "Best of the Best", the annual Memorial weekend music fes-



Mavado

tival featuring reggae, dancehall and soca which usually



Bounty Killer

marks the start of the concert season and which had originally booked Beenie Man, Bounty Killer and Mavado, will be without the dancehall stars on May 30 at Bicentennial Park in Miami. It is still unclear why the performers' visas were withdrawn as the U.S. Embassy has not given specific reasons for its

actions.

The turn of events, including the notable absences of the region's top names, has added to the challenges being faced by entertainment promoters, management agents and the artistes.

"When anyone's visa is cancelled, it is an unfortunate

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)

Caribana: Biggest festival draw in Toronto

TORONTO, Canada - The economic impact of Caribana, the annual Caribbean carnival here, has been put at just over \$400 million, according to a new report.

The first comprehensive study of its kind on the festival, done by Ryerson University, reported that Caribana also exceeds the economic impact of other Toronto festivals, including Pride Week.

Scotiabank Caribana commissioned the 2009 Economic Impact Study, which was conducted by Fearon and Carlyle Farrell, a professor at Ryerson University's Ted Rogers School of Management. The study found that the annual celebration, now in its 42nd year, creates the equivalent of

6,800 jobs, 83 percent in the Toronto area, while Torontonians spent an average of \$327 at the festival and visitors from outside Canada spent an average of \$901.

The study also found that Caribana generated \$198 million in tax revenues in 2009.

The more than \$400 million in spending is spread among restaurants and bars, noted the report. The study's authors said Caribana revelers spent more than \$109 million at restaurants and bars, \$101 million on accommodation, \$64 million on recreation and entertainment, \$62 million on clothing and \$33 million on transportation.

- CaribWorldNews



CARNIVAL CRICKET



Jamaican entertainer Mr. Vegas, left, was all smiles and ready to go on the eve of the ICC World Twenty/20 cricket tournament. Mr. Vegas and several other artistes, including Shaggy, were at the forefront of "Bringing It" entertainment-style to the tournament, which got underway at the Guyana National Stadium on April 30. Also pictured is ICC WT20 WI 2010 Tournament Director Robert Bryan.

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ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS

• **Buju Banton's trial set for June**

The United States trial of Jamaican entertainer Buju Banton has been pushed back to **June 21**.

Banton, whose real name is Mark Myrie, was originally scheduled to be in court last month to face a drug charge. He has been in a Florida jail since Dec. 2009.

• **Rihanna's summer tour kicks off July**

The North American summer tour for Barbados-born Grammy-winning star Rihanna is set to kick off **July 2**.

The 25-stop tour, titled "Last Girl On Earth", will begin at Seattle's White River Amphitheatre in the United States and will take in cities in the U.S. and Canada.

• **Celebrity soccer festival**

Several well known Caribbean entertainers, including Kimani Marley, Anthony B and Baby Cham and Wayne Wonder, have been listed among the participants in a South Florida soccer festival to support non-profit organizations, Yele Haiti and the National AIDS Committee of Jamaica.

The festival, presented by One Caribbean International, is scheduled for **May 31** at the Broward Central Regional Park, State Road 441 and Sunrise Boulevard.

• **Macka Diamond's Florida book launch**

Jamaican dancehall artiste Macka Diamond is scheduled to introduce her new book "The Real Gangster's Wife" on **June 5** at the Broward College in Florida. The launch is expected to include readings from the book and dramatizations.

• **Antigua's Calypso king on bail**

Antigua and Barbuda's reigning king of calypso Leston "Young Destroyer" Jacobs has been released on bail after spending five months behind bars on gun-related charges.

Jacobs, 27, was released on EC\$30,000 (\$11,472) bail and, as part of the conditions for his release, will have no travel privileges and must report to the police three times a week.



Jamaica's 'Calabash' literary fest set for May 28-30

“Calabash”, Jamaica’s annual international literary festival, will be held May 28-30 at Jake’s, Treasure Beach on the island’s south coast.

This year’s event, which is free and open to the public, is scheduled to bring together a mix of new and established writers from around the world. In honor of its 10th anniversary, festival organizers have collaborated to produce “So Much Things to Say”, an anthology of the works of poets who have performed at the festival.

“For visitors looking to be romanced by powerful prose, the Calabash literary festival is the event that will appease their literary craving,” said John Lynch, Jamaica’s director of tourism. “Hosting some of the world’s greatest literary talent exposes the depth of Jamaica’s culture, which transcends the cuisine and music. At the core of our culture are the people who stimulate thought-provoking discussions and encourage the love of self



Channer

and country, and the Calabash Literary Festival provides an avenue for expression.”

The selection of authors and performers for Calabash 2010 includes Nigerian Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka, United States poet Billy Collins, Russell Banks, Sharon Olds, Geoff Dyer, Nami Mun and Colson Whitehead. The opening night will feature a screening of the late Jamaican director Trevor Rhone’s 1976 comedy classic Smile Orange,

the story of a roguish waiter at a beachside hotel.

Reggae singers Freddie McGregor and Etana are scheduled to perform. The festival culminates with an acoustic exploration of the lyrics of Bob Marley’s final studio album “Uprising”, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.

“So Much Things to Say” is a collection of works by 100 poets who have appeared at the festival since its inception.

The anthology was edited by Jamaican novelist Colin Channer, one of the creators of “Calabash”, and poet and playwright Dr. Kwame Dawes, another founder. It is published by Akashic Books in New York.

For more information about “Calabash”, visit www.calabashfestival.org.



Visa troubles take dancehall stars away from U.S. summer entertainment

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

situation for both them and their families, financially and otherwise,” said Florida-based promoter Charles Higgins of Global Vybz Entertainment, the company behind last October’s “Reggae Bash” that featured Buju Banton and Beenie Man at Miami’s James

L. Knight Center, downtown Miami.

“The industry already suffers from some negativity. Right now I don’t want anything else to affect it. We need the artistes to be available so that they can come out and support the business overall. I hope it is something that can

be resolved easily,” Higgins added.

Higgins said the high profile artistes for “Best of the Best” were booked because of the demand for them and, regardless of circumstances, fans should still come out to support the concert because it is good for the industry.

ONE VOICE

Carlette DeLeon, publicist for Jamaica-based Headline Entertainment, a full service entertainment consultancy and booking agents for some of the Caribbean entertainment’s top names, stressed that the industry must speak with one voice to address the difficulties.

“Anything that affects one affects us all...Collectively as an indus-

try, what we need to do is be aware of any resistance to our artistes performing in certain territories and collectively address those issues,” DeLeon told **Caribbean Today**.

She remained confident, though, that the music industry can use the challenges as tools to help boost the image of Jamaican music and culture.

“As much as it may seem dire, we can try and use it in a positive light,” DeLeon said. “In addition to joining as an industry and addressing the issue, there are other options; tourism is one. Where our artistes can’t export to other countries, we then need to import audiences to our shores for them to experience reggae music in the home of reggae music. They can participate in our festivals here, and we have many fantastic festivals in Jamaica and the wider region as well. We can introduce a whole new set of people to our culture, which is more than just our music.”

BREACH

From a legal standpoint, entertainment lawyer Lloyd Stanbury explained that there are a number of reasons why visas can be cancelled, including the state having reason to believe the person in question may be in breach of laws of that country or associating with persons who are in breach of the laws.

“We don’t know what the reasons are in these cases,” Stanbury told **Caribbean Today**, adding, “in terms of recourse, the only thing someone can do if you have an application that has been denied or revoked, is reapply and hope for the best.”

Stanbury, who practices entertainment law in Jamaica and consults in arts and entertainment management worldwide, also disclosed that persons reapplying for a visa have the right to ask for the reason for revocation at the time of the interview.

Asked about other courses of action, he explained: “You can’t take action against a country because they deny you a visa. It’s a privilege you get when you are given a visa to enter someone’s country. If they have guidelines that they go by to determine whether someone should be issued one or not, and they conclude that you don’t fall within the guidelines, then they can say they are not issuing one, or revoke if you already have a visa.”

But, in spite of the difficulties some artistes are facing, Stanbury noted that U.S. shows such as “Best of the Best” are going on as normal as promoters find alternative acts to take the place of the big names.

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



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Berry nice: Tasty 'superfruit' good for your health too

SHARON PALMER

The health halo that crowns berries - the original "superfruit" - hasn't slipped a bit over the years.

Ever since it was discovered that berries have very high total antioxidant capacity, the public has had a veritable love fest with berries, making them its favorite fruit.

Of all fruits, consumer research finds strawberries the favorite among adults and kids. Over the past decade, multiple research findings have supported the health benefits of berries, showing that they have a profound impact on chronic diseases, such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and age-related mental decline.

In botanical terms, a berry is a fleshy fruit in which the entire plant ovary wall ripens into a soft fruit surrounding seeds. Thus the definition of berries extends to include fruits like tomatoes, grapes

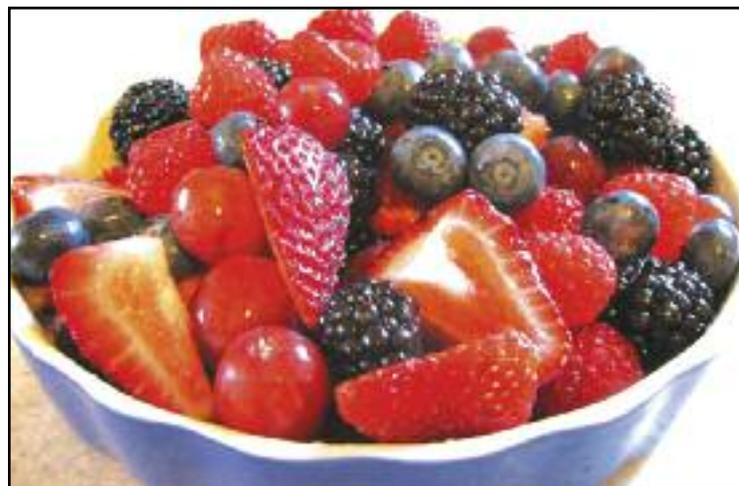
and avocados. But in common terms, "berries" refers to the small fruits with multiple seeds we're familiar with today.

While exotic berries such as acai have gleaned a lot of public attention, the largest body of berry research focuses on the traditional berries available in North America - blackberries, black raspberries, blueberries, cranberries, red raspberries and strawberries.

IMPORTANT ROLE

Berries intrigue scientists because they have an important role in ecology. Navindra Seeram, Ph.D., assistant professor, Bioactive Botanical Research Laboratory at the University of Rhode Island, explains that berries are unique because they have an interesting history with animals and humans.

As in humans, bird vision is trichromatic (three primary colors are distinguished), which allows birds to spot colorful berries on a green bush.



A sumptuous bowl of berries.

Some birds trade their bug diets for berries right before the enormous physical demands of migration, and bears tend to load up on berries prior to hibernation. Native American customs are rife with an appreciation for berries. They were used in important dishes such as pemican (buffalo, fat and wild berries) and some tribes called berries "moqui", which meant

Berries are low in calories, sodium and fat, and high in fiber, potassium and Vitamin C. This profile makes them a perfect food for supporting heart health, normal blood pressure and weight loss. But that's not all, according to Seeram.

"It goes beyond their fiber, vitamin and mineral content," Seeram notes. "Berries are really packed with antioxidants. Plants put their best compounds on their outer layers and in seeds. A plant can't get up and put sunscreen on to protect itself from environmental damage. You eat it all with berries; they're loaded with skins and seeds and you don't even realize it."

- ENVIRONMENTAL NUTRITION. PREMIUM HEALTH NEWS SERVICE. Tribune Media Services Inc.



Making scrambled eggs a rich, luscious dish

WOLFGANG PUCK

Home cooks consider most egg dishes relatively quick and easy to make. That's especially true of scrambled eggs.

The recipe here offers a combination perfect for a springtime brunch.

Scrambled eggs with tomatoes and fines herbes

Ingredients

- 3 firm, ripe Roma (plum) tomatoes
- 12 large cage-free eggs
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh fines herbes (a mixture of equal parts flat-leaf parsley, chervil, chives, and tarragon)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons heavy cream
- 2 to 3 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh chives

Method

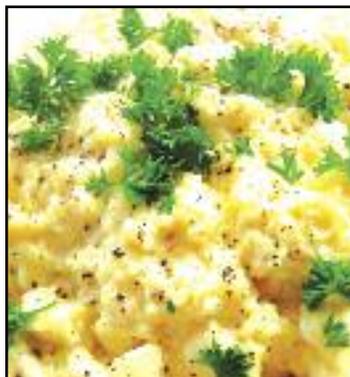
Bring a small saucepan of water to a boil. Meanwhile, fill a medium-sized mixing bowl with ice cubes and water. Cut out the cores of the tomatoes and, at their opposite ends, score a shallow X in the skin of each tomato.

Carefully immerse the tomatoes into the boiling water. Boil just until their skins begin to wrinkle, about

30 seconds. Lift out the tomatoes and immediately immerse them in the ice water.

Peel off tomato skins, starting at the X. Cut the tomatoes in halves and scoop out and discard their seed sacs. Cut the tomatoes into small neat pieces, dice and set aside.

Break the eggs into a large mixing bowl, setting aside two of the yolks in a separate bowl. Add the fines



Scrambled eggs

herbs, salt and pepper to the large bowl of eggs. Whisk until the eggs are well beaten and slightly frothy.

Add the cream and mustard to the small bowl with the two egg yolks. With a fork, beat until smoothly combined.

In a heavy nonstick skillet over medium-low heat, melt the butter. As soon as it has melted completely, add the egg-and-herb mixture. Cooking, stirring and scraping constantly with a wooden spoon, until the eggs are

slightly thickened and creamy.

Add the yolk-cream mixture and the tomatoes to the skillet. Remove the skillet from the heat and continue to stir and scrape constantly. The heat of the pan will continue to cook the eggs, which will be perfectly scrambled. Sprinkle with the chopped chives and serve immediately on warmed serving plates. Serves four.

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CARIBBEAN FORUM

Elevating the visibility of Caribbean arts and culture in Orange County, Florida will be the focus of a forum scheduled for **May 13** at Marks Street Center, 99 E. Marks St., Orlando, Florida.

Refreshments will be available at **6:30 p.m.** The forum, which is being hosted by the Orange County Arts and Cultural Affairs in collaboration with the Caribbean American Cultural Association, Inc. N.A., is scheduled to run from **7 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

To make a reservation, which is required by **May 6**, call **407-671-7495**.

MIAMI JOB FAIRS

Miami-Dade Community Action Agency will host two "Job and Community Resource Fairs" in May to celebrate National Community Action Agency month.

The fairs, scheduled **10 a.m. to 2 p.m. May 6 and May 13** will assist persons who are seeking employment and provide them with community resource information.

The first fair will be held in the lobby of the Stephen P. Clarke Government Center, 111 N.W. First St. The second fair is scheduled for Homestead Job Corps, 12350 S.W. 285 St.

More than 40 employers and resource providers are scheduled to participate, including Miami-Dade County Human Resources, Miami-Dade County Police Department, Loews Hotel, Jungle Island, AARP, ResCare Home Care, Miami Behavioral Abilities of Florida, Inter Active Response, and the United States Armed Forces.

For more information, visit www.miamidade.gov/caa

or call **786-469-4600**.

COURT HELP

The Miami-Dade Consumer Services Department will hold a free clinic that teaches how to take a case to Small Claims Court at **6:30 p.m. May 11** at the C. Lawton McCall Community Center, 9617 Park Dr. in Miami Shores, Florida.

The Small Claims Court process is used by individuals to address disputes involving \$5,000 or less, without the costly assistance of an attorney. Reservations are not required.

For more information, call **305-795-2207**.

PROCUREMENT CONFAB

A conference of ethics and accountability in public procurement will be held from **8 a.m. to 4 p.m. May 14** at Florida Atlantic University (FAU), Davie campus.

The conference, sponsored by the Miami Dade County Commission and FAU's Public Procurement Research Center, will focus on topics such as procurement best practices,

'green' procurement, how to effectively deal with ethical issues, alternative procurement processes and the value of local preferences.

The event will be held in the Liberal Arts Building, main lobby, 2912 College Ave., Davie, Florida.

For registration information, call the John Scott Daily Florida Institute of Government at FAU at **561-297-3749** or e-mail sdean@fau.edu.

For non-registration questions, contact

Dr. Clifford P. McCue **954-762-5185** or cmccue@fau.edu; or Robert

Meyers, **305-350-0613** or RMEYERS@miamidade.gov.

SUMMER CAMPS

Registration is now open for the City of Miami Parks' 2010 summer camp.

Some 27 parks in Miami, Florida will be holding camps this year. Space is limited at each park.

All camps handle registration on a first come, first served basis. Applications are available at all camp locations or online at www.miamigov.com/parks. Summer camp, to be held from June 14 through **August 13th**, includes swimming instructions, field trips, summer sports, talent shows and end-of-summer picnic.

For more information, call **305-416-1300**.

LUNCH 'N' LEARN

The Miami-Dade Consumer Services Department and the Dade County Bar Association County (DCBA) Court Committee will present a free public seminar on landlord/tenant law from **11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. May 28** at the North Dade Justice Center, 15555 Biscayne Blvd. in Aventura Sabadell United Bank, formerly known as Mellon United National Bank.

The seminar is designed to educate landlords and tenants, procedures involved in an eviction process, and their rights under the law. Handout materials will be provided.

Presenters include Carolina Lombardi, senior attorney for Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc.; attorney Michael Birnholz; and consumer advocate Leonard Elias.

For reservation information, call **305-375-3677**.



Getting a 'green card' via a U.S. job

Many people become "green card" holders or permanent residents of the United States through a job or offer of employment.

The main ways to immigrate based on a job offer or employment are listed below:

Green card through investment - Green cards may be available to investors/entrepreneurs who are making an investment in an enterprise that creates new U.S. jobs.

Green card through self petition - Some immigrant categories allow you to file for yourself ("self-petition"). This option is available for either "Aliens of Extraordinary Ability" or certain individuals granted a National Interest Waiver.

Green card through special categories of jobs - There are a number of specialized jobs that may allow you to get a green card based on a past or current job. All of these require a Form I-360, Petition for Amerasian, Widow(er), or Special Immigrant, and are described in Section 101(a)(27) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA):

- Afghan/Iraqi translator
- Broadcaster
- International organization employee
- Iraqi who assisted the U.S. government
- NATO-6 nonimmigrant
- Panama Canal employee
- Physician national interest waiver
- Religious worker

In some cases, you may be able to file the immigrant petition (either a Form I-140 or I-360, depending on your category) at the same time that you file Form I-485, known as "concurrent filing".

If you are not eligible to adjust your status inside the U.S. to a permanent resident, the immigrant petition will be sent to the U.S. consulate abroad to complete the visa process. In order to apply for a green card, there must be a visa immediately available to you.

For details on coming to the U.S. for temporary or permanent employment, visit www.uscis.gov.

Information obtained from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.



Jamaican diaspora celebrates in May

The following is a listing of upcoming activities highlighted by the Jamaican Diaspora Southern United States and scheduled for locations in South Florida:

• **May 8, 9 p.m.** - The 16th Annual Awards Banquet and Dinner Dance presented by The Jamaican Association of Miami-Dade Educators, Signature Gardens, 12725 S.W. 122 Ave., Miami. For more information, call **305-989-3564**.

• **May 21, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** - Jamaica USA Chamber of Commerce's "Trade Jamaica/Invest Jamaica" Forum and annual recognition and installation luncheon, featuring the Jamaican Milestone Awards, Sheraton Hotel, Griffin Road/I-95 in Dania. For more information, call **877-528-7222** or **305-576-7888**.

• **May 22, 6 p.m.** - The Sixth Annual Peacock Ball presented by The American Friends of Jamaica Inc., Biltmore Hotel, 1200 Anastasia Avenue, Coral Gables. Black-tie gala honoring

Jamaica National Building Society with the International Achievement Award for exemplary contributions to Jamaica in education, economic development and philanthropy. Visit <http://www.theaffj.org>.

• **May 23** - 16th Annual Unifest presented by The Greater Caribbean American Cultural Coalition, Vincent Torres Park, 4331 N.W. 36th St., Lauderdale Lakes. For more information, call **954-730-8885**.

• **May 29, 7:30 p.m. to 2:30 a.m.** - Montego Bay High School Alumnae of South Florida celebrates its 75th year of academic excellence, St. Mary Armenian Banquet Hall, 4050 N.W. 100 Ave., Hollywood. A "Family Fun Day" will be held the following day at the John U. Lloyd Beach State Park, 6503 N. Ocean Dr., Pelican Pavilion, Dania. For more information, call **754-423-3169**, **954-330-4500** or **305-299-3561**.





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OAS to send team to monitor Suriname elections

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Organization of American States (OAS) has signed an agreement with the Suriname government allowing for observers to monitor the general elections to be held in that Caribbean community (CARICOM) country on May 25.

OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza, who signed the agreement with the Suriname's Permanent Representative to the Organization Ambassador Jacques R.C. Kross, said the parties have been working together for a long time in the area of electoral missions "and we feel very proud to have been invited to observe this democratic process.

"We are sure that, once again, we will count on all of the support and help of the

national authorities," he added.

Amb. Kross said that Suriname has a tradition of "free and fair elections" and praised the hemispheric body for its support.

VISIT

As a result of the agreement, Irene Klinger, director of the Department of International Affairs of the OAS, will make a preliminary visit to Suriname on April 29 where she will sign the Agreement on Electoral Access with the Minister of Internal Relations and the Independent Electoral Committee of Suriname.

Electoral officials have confirmed that some 20 political parties have registered, during the week-long registra-

tion exercise, to contest the 51 seats in the National Assembly.

Five organizations will contest the polls independently, while the remaining parties formed several pre-electoral coalitions including the incumbent New Front Combination (NFC) of President Ronald Venetiaan. His main political rival and former military strongman Desi Bouterse established the Mega Combination existing of his National Democratic Party (NDP), New Suriname, Palu and KTPI.

Bouterse is currently being prosecuted by a military court for the December 1982 extra-judicial killings of 15 of his political opponents.



Jamaica officially appoints Ellington police commish

KINGSTON, Jamaica, CMC – The Police Service Commission has appointed Owen Ellington commissioner of police, effective April 5. Ellington, 47, has been acting police chief since Nov. 2009, following the resignation of Rear Admiral Hardley Lewin.



Ellington

He enlisted in the Jamaica Constabulary Force on Aug. 1, 1980 and was appointed assistant commissioner on April 5, 2006. He was also

appointed to act as deputy commissioner on Aug. 11 and later as acting commissioner.

Ellington is the holder of the bachelor of science degree in human resource management from the University of Technology and a master of science degree in national security and strategic studies from the University of the West Indies.

He also earned professional certificates from universities abroad, including the Certificate in National Security and Strategy from the University of Beijing and the Postgraduate Certificate in Transnational Security, Stability and Democracy from the National Defense University

Centre for Hemispheric Defense Studies in Washington D.C.

Ellington, who is married to Shirley, has five children and enjoys reading and traveling.



Caribbean drug treatment courts show positive results ~ OAS study

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Drug treatment courts contribute significantly to the rehabilitation of drug-addicted offenders in the Caribbean, as well as a reduction in the costs of incarceration, according to recent study done on behalf of the Organization of American States (OAS).

The study by the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the OAS and a research team from American University here was conducted in 12 countries including Bermuda, Jamaica and Suriname.

The OAS said that the report is a first-ever publication of the experiences and results of this type of court, and has as an objective to promote cooperation, exchange of information and best practices among the member states of the OAS and other countries.

The CICAD study titled, "Establishing Drug Treatment Courts: Strategies, Experiences and Preliminary Outcomes", is based on a survey of drug treatment courts in the 12 countries, including Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, United Kingdom, Ireland, Mexico, Norway and the United States.

"The objective of drug treatment courts is to offer offenders who are addicted to drugs a structured program of treatment and rehabilitation as an alternative to incarceration", the OAS reported, adding that among the study's most relevant results are that drug treatment courts have helped reduce local crime and that there has been a "significant reduction in recidivism among drug dependent offenders involved in drug treatment court programs".



U.S. pledges to help Caribbean cut dependency on foreign oil

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The United States says it will assist the Caribbean lessen its dependency on foreign oil and that it is "shameful" the region, despite its proximity to countries with vast crude oil reserves, has some of the highest electricity rates in the world.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, addressing an Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA) Ministerial Meeting here last month, unveiled six new initiatives to help the region.

"First, we will work to advance sustainable energy in the Caribbean," said Clinton.

She said Washington would provide a grant to the Organization of American States (OAS) to "lend technical and legal expertise to any Caribbean country seeking to help get clean energy projects off the ground."

Last month, the OAS, Caribbean community (CARICOM) energy ministers, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and officials from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands launched "a dialogue" to explore the possibility of installing undersea electric cables in the region "to give the Caribbean access to new power supplies". Clinton said another "exciting possibility" would link Puerto Rico with the U.S. Virgin Islands, and that a third would "link the islands of St. Kitts and Nevis.



Clinton

✱

On August 6, 2010, the island of Jamaica marks the 48th Anniversary of its independence as a sovereign nation.

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

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TPS still open to Haitians in U.S.

FELICIA PERSAUD

In about three months, the deadline will close for those undocumented Haitians in the United States applying for Temporary Protected Status (TPS).

This means that by July 20, 2010, if qualified Haitian nationals living across the U.S. do not apply to take advantage of the immigration program that was one of the bright spots of the Jan. 12 earthquake, they will lose this benefit for good.

So how can Haitians take advantage of this and who qualifies? Under the current rule announced by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Haitian nationals who have continuously resided in the U.S. since Jan. 12, 2010, and have no green card or work permit, may apply for TPS within the 180-day registration period to secure employment authorization documents and travel documents that will grant them permission to depart from and return to the U.S.

STATUS

The status will be avail-

able to qualified registrants until July 22, 2011 and is subject to an extension by the U.S. government. The forms to register for TPS are Form I-821, Application for Temporary Protected Status and Form I-765, or the Application for Employment Authorization and Form I-131 for permission to travel. You must file all the forms together, even if you do not want a work authorization or intend to travel.

There is a \$50 application fee and if you are between age 14 and 65 you must also pay the \$340 Form I-765 application fee, the \$305 I-131 fee and an \$80 biometric fee.

However, the fee is waived for those younger than 14 or older than 65. If you cannot afford the required fees, you may file a fee waiver request for one or more of the fees, including the biometrics fee.

For more information on TPS, visit www.uscis.gov.

Felicia Persaud is founder of CaribWorldNews.com, CaribPRWire and Hard Beat Communications.



New 'twist' in U.S. law may help mom

PAUL D. BARNES

“Mother’s Day”, May 9, may be the perfect time to give back and look out for your mother.

If she’s having a hard time paying for her prescription drugs, tell her about the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan and the extra help available through Social Security.

If she is covered by Medicare and has limited income and resources, she may be eligible for extra help to pay her monthly premiums, annual deductibles and prescription co-payments. The extra help is worth an average of \$3,900 per year.

In 2010, the law has changed. A new “twist” in the law makes it easier than ever to qualify for the extra help. To qualify, mom must be receiving Medicare and:

Have income limited to \$16,245 for an individual or \$21,855 for a married couple living together. Even if her annual income is higher, she still may be able to get some help with monthly premiums, annual deductibles, and prescription co-payments. Some examples in which income may be higher include if she or her husband:

- Support other family members who live with them;
- Have earnings from work; or
- Live in Alaska or Hawaii;

and • Have resources limited to \$12,510 for an individual or \$25,010 for a married couple living together. Resources include, bank accounts, stocks and bonds. House or car are not counted as resources.

Thanks to this “twist” in the law, we no longer count any life insurance policy she has as a resource, and we no longer count as income any financial assistance she receives regularly from someone else to pay her household expenses like food, mortgage or rent, utilities or property taxes. Check www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp.

While you’re there, you can fill out an online application for your mom. To apply by phone or have an application mailed to you, call Social Security at **1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778)** and ask for the “Application for Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs” (SSA-1020). Or visit the nearest Social Security office.

To learn more about the Medicare prescription drug plans and special enrollment periods, visit www.medicare.gov or call **1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY 1-877-486-2048)**.

Paul D. Barnes is the Social Security regional commissioner in Atlanta, Georgia.



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Baltimore Ravens draft Barbadian to play in NFL

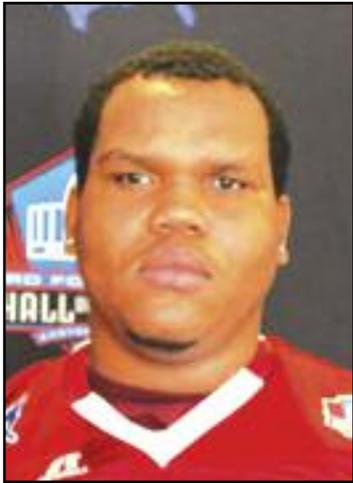
A 6' 7", 360 pounds Barbadian national was the final pick of the Baltimore Ravens in the 2010 National Football League (NFL) draft last month.

Morehouse College offensive tackle Ramon Harewood, was chosen in the sixth round, the 194th selection overall.

The Ravens believe his raw skills and massive size can be harnessed to make him an effective NFL player.

"He's a giant. He's massive, he can knock down his side of the line of scrimmage. He's raw, he needs a lot of developmental work, technique," explained Joe Hartz, director of college scouting.

Harewood never played



Harewood

football before coming to the United States and stepping onto the practice field four years ago at Morehouse, which is located in the state of

Georgia. In his home parish of St. Michael, he played volleyball, cricket, rugby and soccer, but knew nothing of American football. He attended Queens College high school in Barbados.

A future Morehouse assistant coach saw Harewood at a college fair and finally convinced him to play at Morehouse after his first semester at the University of West Indies, where he was studying engineering. He received an academic scholarship, and has lived up to it, garnering a 3.0-plus grade point average in applied physics and engineering. Harewood earned second-team All-SIAC honors as a sophomore and was a first-team pick last fall.

- Edited from CaribWorldNews



Jamaican set to 'test NBA waters'

A Jamaican national is among the players who have entered the National Basketball Association (NBA) draft this year.

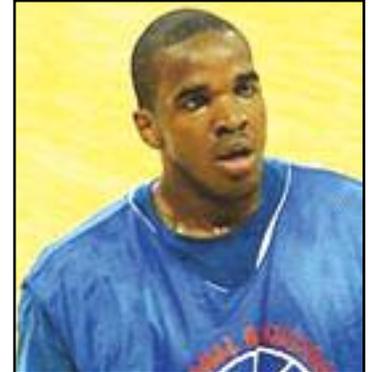
Samardo Samuels, a sophomore and forward at the University of Louisville, will enter the draft "to test the waters," his college coach Rick Pitino was quoted as saying.

"He will not hire an agent and I will orchestrate his NBA visits from my office. I have reviewed the status where Samardo stands at this time and all aspects of the process with his family. I respect his family's wishes to test the waters and support them 100 percent," added Pitino.

The 6-foot-9 Samuels helped the Louisville Cardinals to an NCAA tournament bid and was one of two players to start in all 33 of the team's games. He led the

Cardinals in scoring, averaging 15.3 points, as well as seven rebounds a game.

Samuels is a former MacDonald's All-American



Samuels

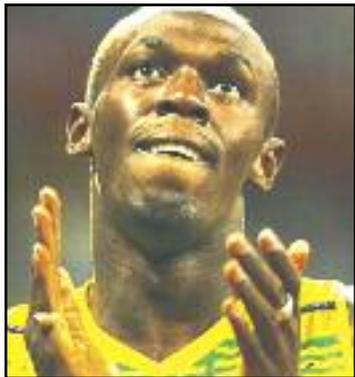
number high school player and a Nike top five with the likes of Brandon Jennings, Tyreke Evans, Joe Holiday and Greg Munroe.

- CaribWorldNews



Bolt to run in New York grand prix

NEW YORK – Jamaica's sprint sensation Usain Bolt will compete in the 100 meters at the Adidas Grand Prix at



Icahn Stadium on Randall's Island here in June.

Organizers said the Adidas Grand Prix, formerly known as the Reebok Grand Prix, will be the fifth stop on the inaugural IAAF Diamond League circuit.

The Adidas Grand Prix said Bolt, the reigning

Olympic champion and world record holder in the 100 and 200 meters, was "one of the most popular and sought after sports personalities in the world."

Bolt has been named Athlete of the Year by the IAAF, athletics' world governing body, and has also claimed the Laureus World Sportsman-of-the-Year for the last two years running.

Organizers said newly crowned world indoor champions Bernard Lagat of the United States and Jessica Ennis of Great Britain, as well as American record-holder Hyleas Fountain will "ride the wave of their recent successes" when they compete at the Adidas Grand Prix.

The Adidas Grand Prix, in its sixth year, is considered the U.S.' premier outdoor track and field invitational meet.



SPORT BRIEFS

• West Indies makes winning start in 20/20 W.C.

Under-rated Darren Sammy produced an explosive performance as West Indies launched its World Twenty20 Championship cricket campaign in style on April 30 by crushing hapless Ireland by 70 runs at the Guyana National Stadium.

The 26-year-old top-scored with 30 from 17 balls to prop up the West Indies innings and propel the Caribbean team to 138 for nine from the allotted 20 overs, after the home side won the toss and opted to bat.

Sammy then claimed three wickets for eight runs from 3.4 overs and also snared four excel-

lent catches as Ireland slumped to 68 all out from 16.4 overs and handing the hosts an emphatic victory before a sell-out crowd.

• Trini loses boxing title

Ria Ramnarine last month failed in her bid to become the latest female world boxing champion from Trinidad and Tobago. The pint-sized Ramnarine suffered a setback when she lost her World Boxing Association minimum-weight title fight to Etsuko Tada of Japan.

Compiled from CMC and other sources.



'TRUE BLUE' MASTERS



Members of the Jamaica College team celebrate with the Ziadie Masters Cup following their 3-0 victory over St. George's College last month at Silver Shores Park in Miramar, Florida. The St. George's College and Jamaica College over-40 teams played to a 2-2 draw in the Ziadie Cup Senior Match. The Ziadie Cup games were part of a "True Blue" weekend of festivities involving alumni associations of four Jamaican high schools – Jamaica College, St. George's College, St. Andrew's and the Convent of Mercy or "Alpha". The soccer skills of the Jamaican alumni ladies were also on display in the Grace Kennedy Remittance Services/Western Union All Girls Schools Alumni Penalty Kick-off. The Camperdown High School Past Students' Association Florida Chapter emerged the winner in the final round, defeating the St. Hugh's Alumnae Association of South Florida.

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Seniors beware: Stroke is more dangerous for people over 65

For families with aging loved ones, few serious

health risks present the same level of concern as an unex-

pected stroke.

In the United States someone suffers a stroke every 40 seconds and more than 75 percent of these incidents occur in people over age 65.

Month”.

Here are some facts about stroke and seniors:

- Strokes are the sudden damage or loss of a section of brain cells caused by

U.S., according to Alliance for Aging Research.

- Almost 800,000 Americans suffer a stroke every year, and more than 185,000 of these are recurrent attacks,



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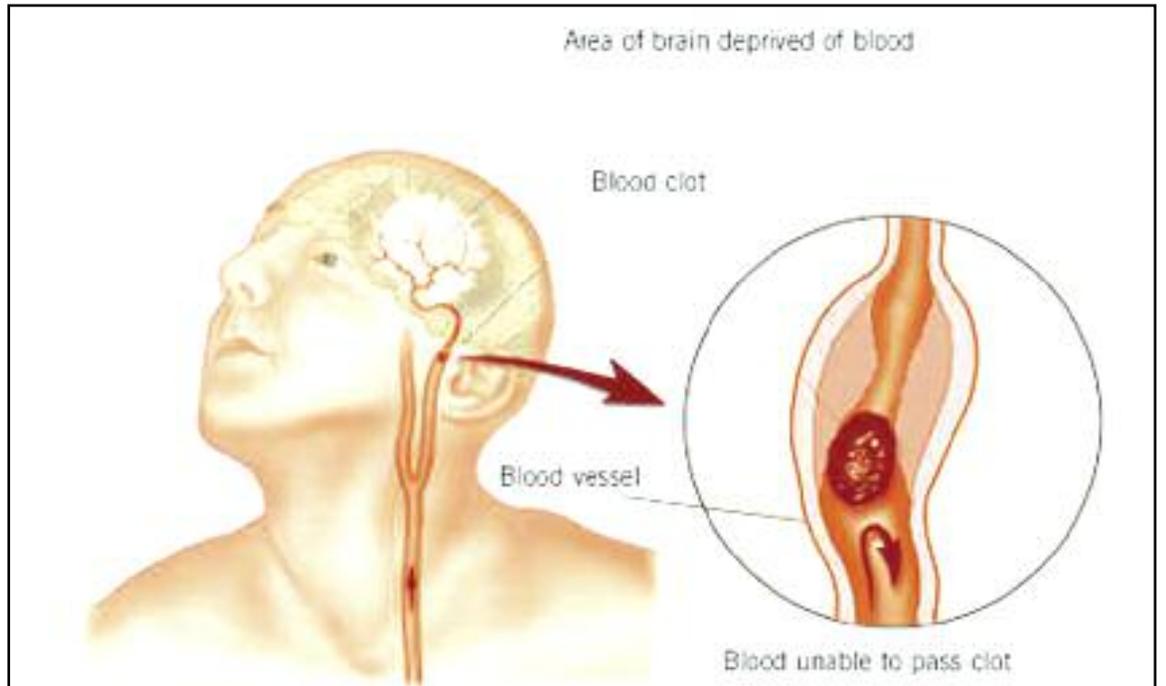


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Fewer than 20 percent of all strokes are fatal. However, most stroke survivors suffer some lingering health effects that affect long-term quality of life.

May is “American Stroke

restricted flow of oxygen to the brain, usually due to hardened arteries or blood clots.

- Stroke is the leading cause of disability and third leading cause of death across the

according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Chances of having a stroke doubles each decade after turning 55 (Alliance (CONTINUED ON PAGE 21)

U.S. provides \$100M to help Caribbean fight HIV/AIDS

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC – The United States is providing nearly \$100 million over a five year period to help Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean to combat the spread of the deadly HIV/AIDS virus.

Health ministers from Barbados and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) last month signed a partnership framework agreement with Washington to chart a path for

sustained support in the fight against the disease. The new collaboration, worth up to \$100 million over five years, is being made possible by the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The funds will become available from next month.

“As the region with the second highest rate of HIV/AIDS prevalence in the world, second only to Sub-Saharan Africa, the United States recognizes that a regionally targeted program for the Caribbean could directly meet critical public health needs and support the outstanding work already ongoing in the region to combat this disease,” the U.S. Embassy here noted in a statement.

IMPACT

It claimed the AIDS epidemic continues to be a leading cause of death among Caribbean adults age 25 to 44 years of age and has left nearly a quarter of a million Caribbean children orphaned.

Dr. Brent Hardt, the chargé d’affaires of the U.S. Embassy to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, signed the document on behalf of his country together with minis-



ters of health of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the OECS HIV/AIDS Program Unit (HAPU).

Similar events were scheduled to take place in the other participating partner nations, including The Bahamas, Belize, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago, to include the CARICOM Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP), the statement noted.

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Increasing malaria risk in Haiti ~ U.S. health officials

ATLANTA, Georgia - United States health officials have warned that as many as half a million people made homeless by the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti now face the risk of malaria infection.

Officials said early last month that relief workers who may not have built up immunity to the sometimes-deadly strain found in Haiti are also at risk.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) here said that 11 cases of the P.falciparum

malaria infection, acquired in Haiti, have been confirmed among emergency personnel and Haitian residents who traveled to the U.S.

"Displaced persons living outdoors or in temporary shelters and thousands of emergency responders in Haiti are at substantial risk for malaria", it noted in a statement.

It stated that the cases include seven emergency responders, including six military personnel; three Haitian residents who traveled to the U.S., including one Haitian adoptee; and one U.S. traveler.

CASES

The CDC noted that among the cases, four were uncomplicated and the patients treated in Haiti, while two were "moderately to seriously ill" and transferred to the U.S. for intensive care. It added that all are expected to make a full recovery.

Carried by mosquitoes, the P.falciparum strain of malaria is the predominant species in Haiti, the CDC

noted.

Nyka Alexander, a World Health Organization (WHO) spokeswoman in Haiti, said the post-earthquake tent cities could create more malaria cases.

"There's a higher risk of malaria under current conditions. When people live in such close quarters, an infected mosquito can come into contact with larger-than-normal numbers of people," she added.

The CDC said malaria symptoms include high fevers, shaking chills and flu-

like illness. It said each year Haiti has 30,000 confirmed cases of malaria, though officials believe the actual number is closer to 200,000. The CDC said a few dozen die annually.

Kristen Knutson, a



Mosquitoes carry malaria strain.

spokeswoman for the United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said while "malaria is endemic to Haiti," the disease can be prevented in many instances through the use of mosquito nets or simply wearing pants or long-sleeved shirts.

- CMC



Seniors beware: Stroke is more dangerous for people over 65

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20)

for Aging Research).
 • 75 percent of all strokes occur in seniors over the age of 65, according to the American Stroke Association.

90 percent of all stroke victims suffer lingering, long-term effects (University of Medicine and Dentistry in New Jersey).

PREVENTION

- Exercise regularly to reduce high blood pressure.
- Avoid high fat and cholesterol foods on a regular basis
- For seniors with or at risk of diabetes, keep blood sugar

levels under control.

- Reduce sodium in daily diet.
- Quit smoking immediately.

WARNING SIGNS

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arms or legs, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion or trouble speaking and understanding.
- Sudden trouble seeing out of one eye.
- Sudden trouble walking or loss of balance.
- Sudden, severe headaches without cause.



Lectures focus on infant mortality among Afro Americans

Concern over the rising infant mortality rate among African

American communities in the United States will be the focus of a lecture series this month in Miami, Florida.

In an effort to raise awareness of infant mortality and educate mothers and families on how to protect themselves and their infants, the Sweet Home Health Ministry will partner the Growth Institute to present "Healthy Moms = Healthy Babies" at 7:30 p.m. on three consecutive Mondays, **May 10, 17 and 24.**

"We believe it's very important to focus our series on mothers and babies," Mikki Thompson, chair of Sweet

Home's Health Ministry, said in a recent press release.

"We've experienced this tragic loss of life within this congregation and want to do all that we can to educate women of child bearing age on what can be done to improve outcomes."

Among the scheduled presenters are Tamara Taitt, Shiela Simms Watson and Jamarah Abdullah Amani.

Taitt is a trained midwife and marriage and family therapist with a varied background in women's health activism and midwifery. She has a bachelor of science degree in psychology from Princeton University and a masters degree in marriage

and family therapy from Nova Southeastern University. She has been working in maternal, infant and child health services for the last six years.

Watson has been practicing midwifery for 18 years. She currently runs "Spirit of Life Midwifery" in Miami, an independent practice which offers personalized care for homebirth.

Amani is a student at the International School of Midwifery in Miami.

The lectures will be held at Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church, 10701 S.W. 184 St. For more information, call **305-251-5753.**



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"At FCC, we encourage students to build on their strengths and to study what specifically interests them in an environment designed to foster individual goals and learning styles," said Ryan Cottonaro, executive director, Lauderdale Lakes campus. "Our goal is for our students not only to succeed in school but in their careers."

FCC has South Florida campuses in Miami, Hialeah, Pembroke Pines, Lauderdale Lakes, Boynton Beach and West Palm Beach which are accredited by the Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) to offer diploma, Associate of Science degree and Bachelor of Science degree programs. Program offerings vary per campus.

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Forecasters predict above-average Caribbean hurricane season

DENVER, Colorado - Caribbean countries can expect an above-average 2010 Atlantic hurricane with a 58 percent chance of a major hurricane affecting the region, respected United States forecasters have said.

The team from Colorado State University is predicting as many as eight hurricanes, four of which will become major weather systems with winds in excess of 111 miles per hour, to form over the Atlantic Ocean during the June 1 to Nov. 30 hurricane season. In all, it said that there would be up to 15 named storms.

Dr. Phil Klotzbach, the lead forecaster on the university's hurricane forecast team, said the prediction was based on the premise that El Nino conditions continue until the summer.

"We expect current moderate El Nino conditions to transition to neutral conditions by this year's hurricane season," Dr. Klotzbach said in a statement.



Forecasters at Colorado State University predict up to eight hurricanes in the Atlantic this year.

"The dissipating El Nino, along with the expected anomalously warm Atlantic ocean sea surface temperatures, will lead to favorable dynamic and thermodynamic conditions for hurricane formation and intensification," he added.

PREDICTION

The team predicts tropical

cyclone activity in 2010 will be 160 percent of the average season. By comparison, 2009 witnessed tropical cyclone activity that was about 70 percent of the average season.

The 2010 forecast marks 27 years of hurricane forecasting at Colorado State, led by Dr. William Gray. The hurricane forecast team said it makes its predictions based on

58 years of historical data.

"While patterns may change before the start of hurricane season, we believe current conditions warrant concern for an above-average season," Dr. Gray said.

Long-term averages are 9.6 named storms, 5.9 hurri-

cans and 2.3 major hurricanes per year, the team said.

The Colorado State University team said it will issue forecast updates on **June 2 and Aug. 4.**



Developing a family disaster plan



Families should make a plan to deal with disaster.

- Discuss the type of hazards that could affect your family. Know your home's vulnerability to storm surge, flooding and wind.
- Post emergency telephone numbers by your phones and make sure your children know how and when to call 911.
- Locate a safe room or the safest areas in your home for each hurricane hazard. In certain circumstances the safest areas may not be your home but within your community.
- Check your insurance coverage - flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance.
- Determine escape routes from your home and places to meet. These should be measured in tens of miles rather than hundreds of miles.
- Stock non-perishable emergency supplies and a disaster supply kit.
- Use a NOAA weather radio. Remember to replace its battery every six months, as you do with your smoke detectors.
- Have an out-of-state friend as a family contact, so all your family members have a single point of contact.
- Take first aid, CPR and disaster preparedness classes.
- Make a plan now for what to do with your pets if you need to evacuate.

Retrofitting your home to prevent major damage

The most important precaution you can take to reduce damage to your home and property is to protect the areas where wind can enter.

According to recent wind technology research, it's important to strengthen the exterior of your house so wind and debris do not tear large openings in it. You can do this by protecting and reinforcing these five critical areas: Roof, straps, shutters, doors and garage doors.

A great time to start

securing - or retrofitting - your house is when you are making other improvements or adding an addition.

Remember: building codes reflect the lessons experts have learned from past catastrophes. Contact the local building code official to find out what requirements are necessary for your home improvement projects.

FLOOD INSURANCE

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in the United States, is a pre-dis-

aster flood mitigation and insurance protection program designed to reduce the escalating cost of disasters.

The NFIP makes federally backed flood insurance available to residents and business owners.

Flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance. Do not make assumptions. Check your policy.

To contact the NFIP, call **1-888-CALL-FLOOD ext. 445, TDD# 1-800-427-5593.**



Supply and demand: Disaster kit essential for survival

It is important to prepare a kit of essential items before a hurricane strikes. Below is a listing of useful items which can be used in the package:

Water - at least one gallon daily per person for three to seven days.

Food - at least enough for three to seven days

- non-perishable packaged or canned food / juices
- foods for infants or the elderly
- snack foods
- non-electric can opener
- cooking tools/ fuel
- paper plates/plastic utensils

Blankets/pillows, etc.

Clothing - seasonal/rain gear/sturdy shoes

First aid kit / medicines / prescription drugs

Special items - for babies



Having the proper supplies ready is essential.

and the elderly

Toiletries/hygiene items/moisture wipes
Flashlight/batteries

Radio - Battery operated and NOAA weather radio

Telephones - Fully charged cell phone with extra battery and a traditional (not cordless) telephone set

Cash (with some small bills) and credit cards - Banks and ATMs may not be available for extended periods
Keys

Toys, books and games
Important documents - in a waterproof container or watertight resealable plastic bag. Insurance, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security card, etc.

Tools - keep a set with you during the storm

Vehicle fuel tanks filled

Pet care items

- proper identification/immunization records/medications
- ample supply of food and water
- a carrier or cage
- muzzle and leash



What is a hurricane?

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

- **Tropical depression** - An organized system of clouds and thunderstorms with a defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds of 38 mph or less.
- **Tropical storm** - An organized system of strong thunderstorms with a defined surface circulation

and maximum sustained winds of 39 mph to 73 mph.

• **Hurricane** - An intense tropical weather system of strong thunderstorms with a well-defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds of 74 mph or higher. Hurricanes are categorized according to the strength of their winds using the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale.

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



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