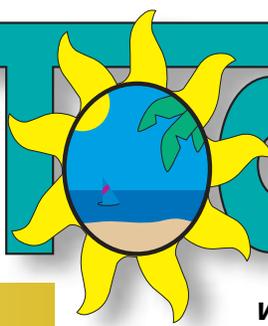


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ONE STEP CLOSER

Thousands of undocumented Caribbean people living in the United States may be a step closer to becoming American citizens after the U.S. Senate passed a bill to overhaul the country's immigration system, **page 3.**



New York State Senator John Sampson has found himself on a list of notable Guyanese nationals who have recently run into trouble with the law in the United States, page 7.



Barbadian singing star Rihanna, left, and Jamaica's sprint sensation Usain Bolt, have landed on Forbes magazine's list of most powerful celebrities globally. The Caribbean duo has not only attracted the world's stare, but raked in millions of dollars as well, page 13A.

SPOTLIGHT ON 'YARD'

Entertainer Pluto Shervington is among many outstanding Jamaicans who have pushed the Caribbean island into world prominence. He's featured in Section B, Caribbean Today's special supplement, marking Jamaica's 51st anniversary of Independence.



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NEWS



Judge overturns Buju Banton's gun conviction, defense hopes for same ruling on drug charges

JASON WALKER

Jamaican entertainer Buju Banton got a reprieve last month when a Florida judge overturned his conviction on gun possession, slashing five years off his 15-year sentence.

Now at least one legal expert believes the circumstances, which led to the judge's ruling, could also benefit the reggae/dancehall star's bid to overturn his conviction on drug charges, which carries a 10-year sentence.

United States District Court Judge James Moody Jr. dismissed the gun charge against Banton, real name Mark Myrie, after discovering that jury forewoman Terri Wright had researched aspects of the case on the Internet during the trial, which is against the law.

In Dec. 2009 Banton was arrested in Florida and slapped with drugs and gun charges. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison. However, the five years attached to the gun possession charge have now been dropped and

Banton's lawyers believe Wright's misconduct, which led to her being charged with contempt of court, may be grounds for a new trial for their client on the drug charges.

That view received some support from Tasha Rodney, a



Buju Banton

South Florida lawyer and former human rights director for the Jamaica's Ministry of Justice.

"The judge essentially found that the juror was not being truthful and that she did research regarding the Pinkerton Rule that applied only to the gun conviction," Rodney told **Caribbean Today**. "So he overturned that conviction.

"...Buju still has 10 years to serve," Rodney added. "...The implications of all this: If her research tainted

one conviction, logically, more than likely her research tainted the entire conviction."

The possible outcome, according to Rodney, is that "the prosecution could try again to get a conviction (of Banton), which seems unlikely and may not be worth the time, energy and money to them.

"Buju could appeal again and, given the judge's finding that Terri Wright was dishonest, it could only help...More than likely her improper research influenced all three convictions, not just one."

The next likely step, according to Rodney, is that "the government will decide whether to prosecute (Banton) again."

According to her, "Buju and his supporters are optimistic that this is only one of more dismissals to come.

"...Given Terri Wright's egregious behavior, Buju Banton did not have a fair trial by impartial jurors. For all we know she may have had a sinister agenda all along."

Last month Judge Moody ordered the prosecution to file criminal contempt charges against Wright. She faces a fine and up to six months in prison if found guilty.

Jason Walker is a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.



U.S. helps seize 1,500 pounds of cocaine in Caribbean Sea

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The United States Coast Guard, along with the Royal Netherlands Navy, has seized 1,517 pounds of cocaine, with a street value of about \$24 million, from a go-fast vessel in the Caribbean Sea.

In a statement last month, the Coast Guard said as a result three smugglers from the Dominican Republic were detained.

The sea-interdiction stemmed from an "international multi-agency law enforcement effort" in support of Operation Unified Resolve, Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force.

The Coast Guard reported that on June 11 the crew of a marine surveillance aircraft detected three men aboard a suspicious go-fast vessel "loitering," about 105 nautical miles south southeast of Ponce, Puerto Rico. The Coast Guard alerted the Royal Netherlands Navy HNLMS Holland Offshore Patrol Vessel that was also on patrol.

FLLEE

On being detected, the suspected smugglers "began to flee the area at a high rate of speed and jettisoned multiple bales of suspected contraband overboard.

"With the HNLMS

Holland's boats in pursuit, the smugglers came to a full stop," it added. "The U.S. Coast Guard LEDET proceeded to board the suspect vessel and detain the three men onboard.

"Our local, federal and international partnerships are making a difference to stem the flow of drugs into Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands as far as possible and bring those responsible to justice," said Coast Guard Capt. Drew Pearson, Sector San Juan commander.

Rosa Emilia Rodríguez-Vélez, U.S. attorney for the District of Puerto Rico, said "these arrests and multi-kilogram seizure are a clear indication of the success of the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force Initiative.

"We will continue maximizing all of our combined resources to investigate and prosecute those who in flagrant disregard of our laws and way of life try to smuggle illegal contraband into our area of jurisdiction," she said.

Since May 21 last year, the U.S. Coast Guard - under Operation Unified Resolve, in partnership with regional law enforcement authorities in the Caribbean seized over 31,000 pounds of cocaine and 8,500 pounds of marijuana during 18 law enforcement interdictions.



Police nab third suspect linked to murder of Antiguan-born semi-pro football player

MIRAMAR, Florida – Police here say they have busted a third man linked to the murder of Antiguan-born, semi-professional football player Odin Lloyd.

As investigators probe the alleged role of National Football League (NFL) star Aaron Hernandez in Lloyd's murder, the police have reported that Ernest Wallace, who was wanted for aiding Hernandez in the alleged execution on June 17, has turned himself in.

According to court documents, another alleged accom-

plish, Carlos Ortiz, was already busted by police.

According to the **New York Post** newspaper, Hernandez allegedly "orchestrated the execution" of Lloyd for speaking with the NFL star's enemies at a Boston club.

Prosecutors in Boston, Massachusetts charged that Hernandez had texted two out-of-state friends, urging them to



Lloyd

come to Massachusetts. The trio then allegedly picked up Lloyd, took him to an industrial lot near Hernandez's home. Lloyd was shot five times, according to law enforcement authorities.

JUSTICE

"I want the person that killed my son to be brought to justice. That's my first-born child, my only boy child, and they took him away from me," Ursula Ward, Lloyd's mother, told United States national television.

Lloyd's funeral took place on June 29 at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Mattapan, Massachusetts.

Hernandez was denied bail despite pleading not guilty to the murder charge. Ortiz is being held without bail, pending a court hearing on July 9. Wallace has been transferred to a jail in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, awaiting extradition to Massachusetts.



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GIANT STEP: Senate bill gives hope to undocumented Caribbean people in U.S.

Thousands of undocumented Caribbean people living in the United States may be one step closer to becoming American citizens after the U.S. Senate late last month passed a bill to overhaul the country's immigration system.

The 100-member Senate, by a 68-32 vote, approved the 1,200-page bill, which must now seek approval from the U.S. House of Representatives. If that is obtained, the president is expected to sign it into law.

The Senate's bill would create a 13-year path to citizenship for most undocumented immigrants, while raising the cap on visas for high skilled workers and establishing a new visa program for low skilled workers on America's farms, according to a report from U.S. television network CNN.

A recently added border security amendment would require 20,000 more border agents, complete 700 miles of fence along the boundary with Mexico, and deploy \$3.2 billion in technology upgrades.

The amendment also strengthens eligibility verifica-



Obama calls Senate bill 'critical step'.

tion and border entry-exit controls.

Most undocumented immigrants would be eligible for permanent residency only after the five conditions have been met and verified by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

'CRITICAL STEP'

U.S. President Barack Obama, in a White House statement, called the Senate vote "a critical step" toward fixing what he called a broken immigration system.

"This legislation will reunite families," said Senator Patrick Leahy, a Democrat

from the state of Vermont. "It will bring millions of people out of the shadows and into our legal system. It will spur job growth and reduce our deficit. And it will make us safer."

Most congressional conservatives, however, remained staunchly opposed to the measure. They said the Senate bill would not pass the House. However, Republicans who supported the Senate bill have touted the legislation as a positive step, which should be encouraging news for undocumented Caribbean people in the U.S.

"No one should dispute (that) like every sovereign nation on this planet, we have a right to control who comes in. But unlike other countries, we are not afraid of people coming in here from other places," said Florida Senator Marco Rubio. "I support this reform. Not just because I believe in immigrants, but because I believe in America even more."

- *Compiled from various sources, including CNN.*



Key witness in Trayvon Martin case has Caribbean connections

A key prosecution witness in the case to determine if American teenager Trayvon Martin was murdered has strong connections to the Caribbean.

Rachel Jeantel, the last person to speak to Martin before her "friend" was shot dead by George Zimmerman in Feb. 2012, was born in Florida to parents from the Dominican Republic and Haiti. She grew up speaking English, Spanish and Haitian creole.

During two days of testimony late last month, the 19-year-old Jeantel created mixed public emotions about the credibility of her story. She related her cell phone discussion with Martin as he was being followed by Zimmerman just before he was killed by a bullet fired by Zimmerman.

Jeantel proved, at times, to be feisty on the witness stand, despite her often low voice, which prompted the judge to ask her to speak up, or into the correct microphone, several times during her testimony.

'GET OFF'

Jeantel said she heard Martin say "get off" during his confrontation with



Jeantel

Zimmerman, a key point which underlines the prosecution's claim that Zimmerman attacked Martin.

"I could hear Trayvon," Jeantel said.

Jeantel, then 18, was on the phone with Martin, 17, when she said Martin told her he was being followed while returning to his father's fiancée's residence in Sanford, Florida after purchasing some ice tea and candy at a nearby store on Feb. 26, 2012. Zimmerman eventually shot Martin in the chest, killing the teenager, but later claimed self-defense.

If convicted of second degree murder, Zimmerman faces 25 years to life in prison. The trial continues this month.



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U.S. claims relatives in South Florida fueling Caribbean migrant smuggling

MIAMI, Florida – A high-ranking United States military official claims that Haitian family members in South Florida are possibly behind a “dangerous new trend” of smuggling undocumented Haitian immigrants from the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico.

“The new thing that’s happening is in the Mona Passage between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, and it’s being fueled, we think, by money from relatives probably, almost assuredly, up here in South Florida,” Rear Admiral William D. Baumgartner, commander of the Seventh U.S.

Coast Guard District in Miami, told reporters here last month.

“In February, they started smuggling Haitians,” he said, adding that the (migrant smugglers) are charging \$1,500 to \$2,000 a person, “again probably being paid for by relatives up here.”

TREND

According to the Miami Herald newspaper, the trend was first mentioned by U.S. Coast Guard officials earlier this year. But it said Baumgartner’s statements are the first to “directly link the smuggling to possible payments

to Dominican migrant smugglers by Haitian family members in South Florida.”

Baumgartner said his goal was to publicize the dangers of the new Haitian migrant route and, by doing so, to try and deter family members in the U.S. to stop paying smugglers to get their loved ones to the U.S.

“The (migrants) are going in homemade open boats that can have anywhere from 30 to 100 migrants stuffed in them and they’re highly unstable and they capsize easily, we are worried that it’s only a matter of time before we lose dozens of

lives,” he said.

“The seas are fairly rough in the Mona Passage,” he continued. “When these boats slow down to approach the shoreline, they tend to lose control.”



Baumgartner

to cross the Mona Passage since Feb. 1. In the previous eight years, he said the US Coast Guard detected only 188 Haitians in the passage.

He described smugglers involved in the “criminal enterprise” as “ruthless”.

“They have no concern about the people that they’re smuggling,” he said. “And we’ve already see them force people into the water and tell them to swim to shore, and many of them don’t swim. If they think they’re going to get caught, they’ll throw migrants into the water,” he added.



Obama appoints Washington lawyer to close detention center in Guantanamo Bay

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The administration of United States President Barack Obama has appointed a long-standing Washington lawyer to find ways of closing the detention center in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The Department of State said Clifford Sloan, who has worked in both Democratic and Republican administrations, will be responsible for closing the center that has held some of the top terrorism captives since it was constructed shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S.

Sloan’s appointment came after the Republican-led House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a \$638-billion defense bill to keep the prison operating. U.S. Secretary of State John F. Kerry said in a statement last month that closing the prison “will not be easy.”

‘BRIDGE-BUILDER’

“But if anyone can effectively navigate the space between agencies and branches of government, it’s Cliff,” he said, referring to Sloan and describing him as “the kind of bridge-builder we need to fin-

ish this job.

“Our fidelity to the rule of law likewise compels us also to end the long, uncertain detention of the detainees at Guantanamo,” Kerry added. “We can do it in a way that makes us more secure, not less.”

Sloan was White House associate counsel under President Bill Clinton, an

assistant solicitor general under President George H.W. Bush, and a U.S. Supreme Court clerk.

Jennifer Psaki, a U.S. State Department spokeswoman,



Sloan

said closing the prison at Guantanamo is “something we are committed to, and we will be driving moving forward.” She said 56 of the current 166 detainees at the prison have been approved for return to Yemen. Another 30 have also been approved for repatriation to their home countries, she said.



Caribbean to comply with U.S. in preventing use of foreign bank accounts to evade taxes

BASSETERRE, St. Kitts, CMC – The St. Kitts-based Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) says it is spearheading the establishment of a working group to ensure that financial institutions which operate within the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU) are prepared to the comply with the United States Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA).

FATCA seeks to combat tax evasion by U.S. citizens and resident non-citizens with U.S.-sourced income in Foreign Financial Institutions

(FFIs) outside of the U.S.

The U.S. initiative requires the FFIs to report information to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service on assets held by U.S. taxpayers, or by foreign entities in which U.S. taxpayers hold substantial ownership interest.

The ECCB said that the working group comprises representatives from the Attorneys General Chambers, Inland Revenue Departments, Single Regulatory Units/ Financial Services Authorities, and Ministries of Finance of the ECCU member countries,

and representatives from the financial services industry and the ECCB.

“The Working Group is charged with making recommendations to the respective member governments on the appropriate approach for ECCU FATCA compliance, including the development of a harmonised legislative and regulatory compliance framework, and monitoring the compliance status of the respective territories and financial institutions,” the ECCB said in a statement.



Canadian couple kill teenage Jamaican daughter

BRAMPTON, Ontario, Canada - A jury in Canada has found a couple here guilty of the first-degree murder of their Jamaican-born teenage daughter.

The jury of six men and six women took about five and a half hours to reach its verdict on June 26. It means that the couple will be sentenced to life in prison.

The body of Tiffany Gayle, 15, was found in a tub in the basement of her family home three years ago. An autopsy revealed that she died from blunt-force trauma. Her father, Federick, and stepmother,

Elizabeth, were arrested three days later.

The conviction follows an intense and often brutally graphic trial, during which Tiffany’s father and stepmother denied responsibility for savagely beating the girl to death.

ATTACK

The Crown argued that both parents were involved in the attack and pointed to blood found on their clothing, as well as bloody footprints found in the basement.

It was alleged that in 2010, the pair attacked the girl with a baseball bat and barbecue

utensil, in an assault that began in the garage and made its way into the family’s Brampton home, where the young victim was later found in a bathtub.

The parents’ motives were not made entirely clear over the course of the trial, but there was evidence that suggested a division between Tiffany and her parents, including suicidal notes and testimony from her half-sister that the pair was considering sending her to Jamaica, where she had lived until she moved to Canada shortly before the murder.



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Jamaican pleads guilty of defrauding hundreds of U.S. seniors in lottery scam

WISCONSIN - A Jamaican national has pleaded guilty in the United States for his role in a telemarketing lottery scheme that defrauded hundreds of senior citizens.

Last month, the U.S. Department of Justice said O' Brian J. Lynch, 28, the first Jamaican to be charged in the U.S. for this type of fraud, pleaded guilty to wire fraud.

James L. Santelle, U.S. attorney for the eastern district of Wisconsin, said Lynch faces up to 20 years in prison and a maximum fine of \$250,000.

Santelle said the guilty plea resulted from an investigation conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Social Security Administration's Office of Inspector General (SSA-OIG), and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS).

According to court documents, in Mar. 2012, the SSA learnt that a Social Security recipient, from Glendale, Wisconsin was receiving Social Security benefits in the name of other recipients and cashing

in these benefits. SSA-OIG special agents discovered the recipient was sending this money to Jamaica because he believed he had won "The Jamaican Lottery".

'SWEEPSTAKE'

According to the court documents, the American man said he was contacted by an official from Global International, who informed him he won \$2.5 million and two Mercedes Benz vehicles in a sweepstake. He was then advised that in order to collect the money and the cars, he had to pay taxes, customs duty and other fees. The unidentified senior citizen initially sent his own money to Jamaica.

"Once he had depleted his own assets, he was directed by telephone to accept checks, Direct Express cards, and other cash value cards in the names of other people (who were also victims), cash them out and then send the money to Jamaica," the Justice Department said.



Scammers involved in "massive telemarketing scheme."

"As a result, numerous victims did not receive their Social Security benefits, and instead they were mailed to Jamaica," it added.

The Justice Department said investigators from SSA discovered that hundreds of victims throughout the U.S. were losing their social security benefits and their life savings, "either because they believed that they had won 'The Jamaican Lottery' or because, as part of another telemarketing scheme, they revealed enough information about themselves that allowed the identity thieves to fraudulently divert their money."

It said SSA-OIG, USPIS and HSI joined forces and identified Lynch as "one of the principal individuals involved in this scheme in Jamaica." Lynch was arrested in February.

SCHEME

According to the Justice Department, numerous records

showed that Lynch and his co-conspirators were involved in a "massive telemarketing scheme involving hundreds of victims."

"They identified vulnerable victims and changed the recipients' addresses to a third party. They then had the third party send the money to Jamaica or to others in the United States who then wired the money to Jamaica.

"At the direction of Lynch (and others working with him), numerous victims received SSA Direct Express, netSpend, Green Dot and other types of cash value cards in the names of other victims," the Justice Department said.

It said in addition, items were ordered in the U.S. by Lynch and others, and were paid for "using money fraudulently obtained through the scheme." These items, "including jewelry, cell phones, a computer tablet, various electronics and other items, were received by victims or other co-actors in the United States, and then sent to Jamaica where they could not be traced or recouped."

PLEA

The Justice Department said many of these items have now been linked directly to Lynch. As part of his plea agreement, the department said Lynch has agreed to pay at

least US\$100,000 in restitution. The restitution amount will be determined by the court at the time of sentencing.

"Unscrupulous scam artists prey on the vulnerabilities of others and are solely motivated by greed," said HSI Chicago Special Agent in Charge Gary Hartwig.

"We will continue to work with our partners in Jamaica and other law enforcement agencies to put these criminal enterprises out of business," he added.

SSA-OIG Special Agent in Charge William Cotter said "the arrest and conviction of O' Brain Lynch is a significant breakthrough in our investigation into this Jamaican Lottery Scheme, which has redirected millions of dollars in senior citizens' retirement benefits to thieves' accounts opened for the purpose of stealing this money."

Cotte said Lynch was "a major organizer of this scam, and he personally received or was responsible for defrauding hundreds of thousands of dollars from very vulnerable senior citizens."

The U.S. Justice Department described the Jamaican lottery scheme as "a form of mass-marketing fraud committed via the Internet, telemarketing or mass mailings."



Guyanese to face U.S. trial for mail fraud, conspiracy

NEW YORK - Guyanese-born, New York-based attorney Albert Baldeo is set to face a November trial for conspiracy to commit mail fraud, attempted mail fraud, conspiracy to commit obstruction of justice and obstruction of justice charges, stemming from alleged campaign-finance improprieties.



Baldeo

Judge Paul A. Crotty has set a Nov. 18 trial date for the Queens district leader and two-time candidate for the City Council candidate.

The feds allege that Baldeo used phantom donors to funnel illegal campaign

contributions to his unsuccessful 2010 campaign for the Council as part of a fraudulent effort to increase the amount of matching funds he would have been eligible for from city. But irregularities were uncovered in an audit by the New York City Campaign Finance Board, which passed the information along to the authorities, and no matching funds were ultimately provided to the campaign, prosecutors said.

The government alleges that Baldeo fabricated contributions to his campaign to receive \$6 in matching funds for every \$1 he reportedly raised.

- Edited from News Americas.



Haitian fishermen rescued

MIAMI, Florida - The United States Coast Guard last month said it rescued five Haitian fishermen aboard a disabled vessel that had been drifting in the waters off northern Haiti.

A Coast Guard statement said officials were notified that the vessel had been found in the area of Canal de Tortue with five fishermen. All were safe and in no immediate dis-

stress.

Officials launched a search for the fishermen after their vessel, called the "Aisha", became disabled and started drifting in the waters off Labadee. The Coast Guard said the vessel originated in the Turks and Caicos Islands and started drifting just as it arrived at its destination in north Haiti.





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American conspirators get prison for importing cocaine from St. Vincent

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) says that a Baltimore, Maryland man was last month sentenced to 15-and-a-half years in jail for conspiracy to import cocaine from St. Vincent and the Grenadines and distribute it in Maryland.

After an investigation by ICE's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Metropolitan Area Drug Task Force, ICE said Lorenzo Solomon, 28, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Roger W. Titus to 188 months in prison followed by four years of supervised release.

ICE said co-conspirator Ronnie George, 27, pleaded guilty to "participation in the drug conspiracy" and was sentenced to a year and a day in prison.

'LEADER'

The immigration agency said Titus "enhanced" Solomon's sentence on finding that he was "a leader of the conspiracy" and that he obstructed justice by attempting to intimidate witnesses to prevent them from testifying

Guyanese teen lovers buried together in U.S.

NEW YORK - Two Guyanese nationals, who were killed in a vehicular accident here late last month, were scheduled to be buried side-by-side this month, according to relatives.

Meera Dukharan, 17, and Anil Persaud, 18, the parents of a 14-month-old toddler, were, according to police, killed early June 29 when they were thrown from the back seat of a car in which they were travelling.

"We would never separate them in life, and we will never separate them in death," said Dukharan's grandmother Jina Mangru, who promised to take care of the daughter Meya. "They were lovers."

Police have charged Guyanese Madosh Hansraj, 20, the driver of the vehicle, alleging that he had been drinking alcohol at a bar in the Richmond Hill section of Queens before losing control of the vehicle on the Grand Central Parkway.

There were five people in the vehicle and Hansraj wept as he was being arraigned on charges of manslaughter, assault, criminally negligent homicide and driving while under the influence.

against him at trial.

ICE said between April and Dec. 2010, Solomon arranged with "co-conspirators in St. Vincent" to send him packages containing up to a kilogram of cocaine, "hidden in the soles of flip-flops.

"To pay for the drugs, witnesses testified that Solomon arranged to have friends and family members send large amounts of cash via Western Union and MoneyGram, most frequently in US\$2,000 increments, which Solomon provided

them," it added.

ICE said Solomon recruited George to send money on his behalf, and that, "in addition to providing him cash to send to St. Vincent, Solomon provided George several hundred dollars in cash or merchandise as compensation for sending money.

"Solomon suggested that George recruit friends to send money to reduce the chance of the scheme being detected, which he did," the statement noted, adding that Solomon also "recruited his sister, girl-

friend and others to send money to St. Vincent for him."

According to court documents, more than 17 individuals sent a total of \$117,270 from the U.S. to St. Vincent between April and Nov. 2010. ICE said on Nov. 26, 2010, CBP officers intercepted a "package of cocaine-filled flip flops intended for Solomon, but addressed to a friend."

After unsuccessfully attempting to deliver the package on Dec. 6, 2010, ICE said HSI special agents left a note

on the door advising of the attempted delivery of the package and provided a telephone number to call to arrange delivery. ICE said Solomon returned to the U.S. in Mar. 2011, and on April 6, 2011, George and Solomon were indicted on drug conspiracy charges.

George was arrested and pleaded guilty, but Solomon was not located until after George's sentencing Mar. 2012, ICE said.



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TELLING TREND: Trail of fraud follows some Guyanese Americans

NEW YORK - The icing on the cake of dismay for many Guyanese and Caribbean nationals in New York City, the United States and even Guyana, was the recent slapping of embezzlement and obstruction of justice charges on New York lawmaker, Guyanese-American State Senator John Sampson.

It marked number five in a list of notable Guyanese who have recently been arrested and charged with fraud.

Sampson, 47, who was a former head of the New York State Senate's ethnic committee and represents the 19th



Sampson

Senate District in southeastern Brooklyn, which comprises Crown Heights, East Flatbush, as well as portions of Brownsville, Canarsie and Spring Creek Towers, areas that are largely home to many Caribbean immigrants, was charged in federal court in Brooklyn on May 5 with embezzlement and obstruction of justice.

Interestingly enough, his charges are apparently linked to another Guyanese, former realtor and Richmond Hill mogul Edul Ahmad, who is set to be jailed on a multi-million dollar mortgage fraud and seemingly squealed on Sampson after



Ahmad

copping to a plea deal. Ahmad, 44, pleaded guilty last year to a mortgage fraud scheme in which he and others fraudulently obtained more than \$50 million in loans. In so doing, he avoided a trial and a sentencing date had not been set up to press time.

'THE ASSOCIATE'

In the Sampson indictment, Ahmad is referred to only as "The Associate". But sources say it is Ahmad, the once flamboyant businessman, who flashed around in a yellow Lamborghini motor vehicle and handed off wads of cash to the campaigns of many local politicians and some in Guyana as well.

The U.S. federal indictment against the N.Y. state senator alleges that he asked "the associate" for \$188,500. The money, at Sampson's direction, allegedly was paid in the form of three bank checks payable to third parties.

Sampson characterized the "Associate Transaction to the Associate," as a loan that he would repay but took this "loan" without written documentation or any rate of interest, the indictment further claims. He also never repaid "The Associate". Further, Sampson concealed the "Associate Transaction" by lying on his Senate financial disclosure forms, falsely claiming that he had incurred no liabilities in excess of \$5,000 or gifts or income in excess of \$1,000, the indictment said.

Sampson is further accused of using a portion of the Associate Transaction funds to pay back some of the money he embezzled from two escrow accounts. However, Sampson never repaid any of the approximately \$160,000 he stole from two other escrow accounts that are the subject of the embezzlement charges

in the indictment.

OBSTRUCTION

Then in the summer of 2011, after the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York filed bank and wire fraud charges against the Associate in relation to a mortgage fraud scheme and he was arrested, Sampson is alleged to have engaged in a multifaceted scheme to obstruct justice and to prevent the Associate from cooperating with law enforcement authorities or disclosing Sampson's criminal conduct. Evidence of Sampson's obstructive conduct includes intercepted phone calls from Sampson's cellular telephone, the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York said.



Ramdeo

Sampson also allegedly tried to obtain confidential, non-public information regarding the mortgage fraud case. Soon after the

Associate's arrest, Sampson informed the Associate that he knew an individual who, at that time, was an administrative employee in the USAO, the indictment said. Sampson told the Associate that he could persuade the employee to give inside information that would assist the Associate's defense in the mortgage fraud case, according to the indictment.

As alleged in the indictment, Sampson then asked the employee to determine whether the USAO was conducting a criminal investigation of Sampson and whether certain mortgage fraud defendants were cooperating with the government's investigation. Sampson told the Associate that he was attempting to determine the identities of cooperating witnesses in the mortgage fraud case, and that if they were able to identify those witnesses, Sampson could arrange to "take them out," it is alleged.

According to the indictment, when the Associate asked Sampson about his

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8A)

Caribbean migrant welcomes U.S. repeal of Defense of Marriage Act

NEW YORK - Hemish Gervis has been standing up for gay Caribbean immigrants with his Gay Caribbean USA Pageant since 2009. As Gervis tells it, the contest was launched "to help foster tolerance of the gay lifestyle within the Caribbean American community.

On June 26, Gervis was among those welcoming the United States Supreme Court's decision to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). The Supreme Court ruled that married same-sex couples were entitled to federal benefits in a five to four vote, sending the gay community in New York and across the United States into celebratory mode.

Gervis is among those celebrating, along with his friends and contestants of his annual pageant.

"The Caribbean American gay community are in high spirits and view the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act - DOMA - as a fundamental step towards equality for all of humanity," Gervis told NAN, while calling the vote a "historic moment in our times."

SPOTLIGHT

But the pageant founder says the U.S. Supreme Court ruling now puts the spotlight on gay rights in the Caribbean,

where homosexuality is still illegal in many nations and where gays still face discrimination even in the Caribbean American community in the U.S. So much so that a protest action was planned for June 28



Gervis

in Queens, New York to support the Guyanese contestant Sundari Indian Goddess, who pageant officials say "was gay bashed" recently.

The Indo-Caribbean drag queen, whose real name is Mohamed "Zaman" Amin, 28, was bashed over the head on June 23 by a man who hurled homophobic slurs at him and his friends. New York police are investigating the attack as another hate crime in a wave of rising violence against the city's LGBT community.

The incident began about (CONTINUED ON PAGE 8A)



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TIME TO PAY: Suriname demands reparations for slavery from Dutch

PARAMARIBO, Suriname - The search for compensation many descendants of Dutch slavery feel is due to them became official recently after members of the Committee Reparations Slavery Past Suriname deposited a claim at the Dutch embassy here.

"We want to discuss the material and immaterial damage," said committee Chairman Armand Zunder as he presented a petition to Dutch Charge D'Affaires Ernst Noorman.

Zunder was joined at the presentation by committee member Guno Rijssel, who stressed "we're did not go begging. We only demand a satisfactory settlement that is due to us."

In its petition, the committee requests that The Netherlands acknowledges the suffering of people were enslaved here.

"We request that the Dutch Government appoint an institute with which we could enter into dialogue regarding the reparations of the damage we suffered," Zunder said.



Citizens of Suriname want compensation.

RECOGNITION

He acknowledged efforts by The Netherlands to give Afro-Surinamers a place in the Dutch community - like the Slavery Memorial statues of Amsterdam and Rotterdam - but said that these were feeble.

The Dutch shipped an estimated one million Africans from their continent to work on plantations in "the new world". Slavery was officially abolished on July 1, 1863, which this year is 150 years ago. The Netherlands

has not offered a formal apology.

Zunder, an economist, has previously published research results that showed that the Netherlands earned some Euro125 billion (one Euro = US\$1.29) from Suriname during slavery.

"That money was earned through the hard work of the slaves and they were never compensated," he said. "... (The Netherlands) still benefits from these investments."

'WAIT AND SEE'

Last month, Noorman urged the committee to "wait and see" what message Dutch Social Affairs Minister Lodewijk Asscher had to say.

"The committee expects a formal response in writing from The Hague to our petition," Noorman said. "The Netherlands only seems to want to talk about oppression and the slavery that exists today, and disregard the riches they earned from enslaving our ancestors."

Zunder said that he did not consider his committee a

mouthpiece of the Surinamese government, but stressed that he was following a path that has been laid by government. He expected a tedious process, but said he was in for the long haul.

"Fact is that reparations are due because our ancestors suffered material and immaterial damage," he said.

Asked whether he thinks compensation should be in the form of funds or in the form of projects that help the ancestors of slaves bridge disadvantages, he said: "Well that's what we need to start the dialogues for."

REQUEST

Talk of slavery reparations has been ongoing for a while, but this is the first time that an actual request has been submitted with the Dutch government. The committee finds many likeminded individuals in the region. Pro-vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies (UWI), Sir Hilary Beckles recently made a case for slavery reparations in his book, titled "Britain's Black Debt:

Reparations Owed The Caribbean For Slavery And Indigenous Genocide".

Calls have also been made for compensation in Guyana, Antigua and Barbuda, and Jamaica. St. Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Goncalves has also weighed in on the issue, saying that the Caribbean must remain part of the leadership on the debate of reparation for slavery.

Zunder said he felt reinforced because the reparations issue being a hot topic in the Caribbean.

"Our countries are all former colonies," he said.

"Slavery and reparations are a shared history and reparations are a topic we can approach together. There is movement to have it become an agenda point for the heads of government to discuss."

- Edited from CMC.



Caribbean migrant welcomes U.S. repeal of Defense of Marriage Act

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7A)

9 p.m. when one of the men, who was emceeing a duck curry cook-off, announced to bar patrons that "the gays are in the house," the victim said.

"I approached him and told him, 'What you just did is very disrespectful to our people'," Amin told DNAinfo New York last month.

"He laughed about it and walked away," added Amin. "I held his hand and told him, 'You have to understand this is not a laughing matter'."

The men continued to

hurl more homophobic slang at the group, the victim said. Amin's sister Bibi Amin began arguing with one of the men. Another member of Amin's entourage, Anoop Pandohie, traded punches with one of the alleged harassers. That's when the attacker, who had not been identified up to press time, allegedly picked up the second-place trophy Pandohie had won in the cook-off and bashed Amin over the head with it.

The Caribbean-born Amin, who's an activist at the

Queens gay rights group Chutney Pride, was rushed to Jamaica Hospital and needed seven staples to stop the bleeding.

"This was an attack on me but it's also an attack on the LGBT community at large," he told DNAinfo. "There have been so many attacks in Manhattan and now they're moving to Queens."

The U.S. Supreme Court repeal has now put the "discussion on the state of gay rights in the Caribbean region," Gervis said.

"Many Caribbean

American gays are now turning their attention to the possibility of gay rights being taken more seriously and placed on the front burner of Caribbean decision makers and leaders," he said. "It is our hope that (the June 26) decision by the U.S. Supreme Court will pave the way for easing legislation towards the gay community in the Caribbean."

- Edited from News Americas.



TELLING TREND: Trail of fraud follows some Guyanese Americans

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7A)

efforts to use the employee to obtain information about the mortgage fraud case, Sampson was reluctant to discuss those illegal efforts over the telephone. For example, while meeting with the Associate in Nov. 2011, Sampson stated, "I can't talk on the phone... From now on, our conversation is, 'I don't have no contacts, you don't know nothing.' When we talk, that's how we talk," the indictment states.

TREND

But the Guyanese alleged fraud trend does not stop there. Late last year, the Guyana-born owner of the now defunct airline, EZJet, Sonny Ramdeo, was arrested

and charged. He is now in jail, in Florida, awaiting an October trial for embezzling \$20 million from his former employer in a payroll tax fraud scheme from as early as 2005 from Promise Healthcare Inc. and Success Healthcare Group, where he worked as the payroll supervisor.

Also last year, Queens district leader and two-time candidate for the City Council, Guyanese-born attorney Albert Baldeo was arrested. He is now facing charges for campaign-finance improprieties.

And last month, another well-known Guyanese-born attorney Michael Gangadeen was charged by the Queens DA's office. He is now facing charges of conspiring to com-

mit mortgage fraud and larceny from Wells Fargo Bank by fraudulently obtaining mortgage funds in excess of \$3.3 million

All in all an embarrassing trend that has many Guyanese New Yorkers shaking their heads but declining comment for fear of ruining associations and friendships or reprisals. Still others quoted the old all are "innocent until proven guilty" line to stay above the fray and not appear to take sides.

But for Guenet Gittens, a small business owner, there was no holding back.

"As a Guyanese, and especially one in business, I'm disappointed," Gittens told News Americas. "However, I

remember being in real estate and realizing that some of our own people were the worst predators on our own - simply because we trusted in them. I now realize that instead of just not doing business with them I should have reported them.

"We should feel no loyalty to these people. They are dragging us down as a community. After a while with all of the drugs coming out of Guyana and all of the fraud happening...we'll all be tarred by the same brush and we can't afford that as we have too many hardworking, upstanding people contributing to this economy."

- Edited from News Americas.



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Mixed minds over Senate's U.S. immigration reform bill

Dear Mr. President,

On the afternoon of Thursday, June 27, 2013 I should have been happy. In fact, I should have been hysterically overjoyed and celebrating at the passage in the United States Senate of the much fought for and touted immigration reform bill by a vote of 68-32.

Yea, at letter number 33 and counting, we have passage of this longer overdue measure in the Senate. Instead, I do not know whether to laugh or cry.



FELICIA PERSAUD

That's because minutes before the passage of S. 744, House Speaker John Boehner, told reporters: "The House is not going to take up and vote on whatever the Senate passes. We're going to do our own bill, through regular order."

Thanks a lot for nothing Boehner. Seems the addition of an immigrant to his family has done nothing to soften up the Republican conservative who insisted that not only will any immigration reform legislation have to go through the entire committee process in the House, but whatever emerges will have to meet the "Hastert rule", which says the majority of the party in control of the House must back a given measure for it to receive a vote by the full chamber.

CHANGE

Gone was the lawmaker who, immediately after Republicans were dealt a whipping at the polls last November, changed his hard line tone against "amnesty" and said comprehensive reform - which includes a pathway to legalization for the undocumented - will be a priority in 2013.

"This issue has been around far too long," Boehner said in an interview on Nov. 9,

2012 with ABC News' World News.

"A comprehensive approach is long overdue, and I'm confident that the president, myself, others can find the common ground to take care of this issue once and for all."

But all that is behind now as Boehner continues to put his job security first and cave to the Tea Party congressional members against any reform, even though they have no solution to deal with the problem of 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the shadows.

SOLUTION

The Senate has delivered a solution. If Boehner was a real leader, he'd put the measure to a House vote and let the chips fall where they might.

Now Mr. President, it's time to show real leadership just like Mr. Boehner challenged you to do last November. Call John Boehner out on his flip-flopping and tell him to show "common sense" and remind him and Senator Ron Johnson, a Tea Party favorite, of what they said last year. That Republicans haven't provided immigrant voters, especially Hispanics with "a home... in terms of some of our hostility toward the immigration issue."

Tell Boehner now is the time to be on the right side of history for a change and show his words are not just wind but he meant what he said last November and what's to come in other national elections if he and his party does nothing.

Respectfully,
Felicia Persaud

The above is the 34th in a series of 'open letters' to U.S. President Barack Obama. The writer is founder of NewsAmericasNow, CaribPR Wire and Hard Beat Communications.



Vital lessons learned from a box of cereal

MICHELLE CAWLEY DRESERIS

Six-year-old Grace Colbert - the adorable little actress and star in the controversial Cheerios commercial that ran on television in the United States last month - must be wondering why some people have made such a fuss about her role, and the role of the people who played her parents, in the cereal commercial.

In the 31-second video, Colbert plays a girl who goes to her "mother", and asks her if what her "dad" said about Cheerios "being good for your heart" is true. Her mom says "Yes". The girl smiles, and walks off camera with her box of Cheerios.

In the next shot, the "father", who was lying on the couch, wakes up to find Cheerios poured all over the left side of his chest. The girl, it appears, wants to protect her dad's heart by covering it with Cheerios. The message? Cheerios are good for you, and your heart. Share them with the people you love, so that they will be healthier.

Cheerios is not one of my top 10 favorite cereals. But this Cheerios ad is, because it shows a family - embodied in Colbert - that has chosen to ignore racial issues, and replace them with love. "Dad" is black. "Mom" is white.

UPROAR

The commercial set off a blaze of negative comments on the Internet's YouTube last month. Some comments (before the comment page was removed) apparently referred to Nazis and "Troglodytes", according to an article on Ace Metrix's site.

Troglodyte? How on earth could anyone look at that television family and compare them to cave dwellers?

Colbert is still too young - perhaps - to understand why her television role as the daughter of a white mother and a black father should be a problem for some. Janet, Colbert's real-life mother, is white, and Christopher, her real-life father, is black. So, this little girl must be wondering: "What's the



Diversity in cereal is like diversity in life.

problem?"

While Colbert's real family have been on talk shows since the commercial ran, the girl may not grasp the full effect of her 31-seconds of fame until she is much older. What seems to have been the problem, for those who seem to have had a problem with the Cheerios ad? Even Cheerios (and many other cereals) come in several flavors and varieties, just like people everywhere.

Browsing past the tightly-packed, supermarket cereal shelves recently, I found different Cheerios. There are plain Cheerios, frosted Cheerios, multi-grained and multi-grained Cheerios with peanut butter, banana nut and honey nut. If you want some Hispanic sweetness, you can get crunchy in dulce de leche. Or, go tropical, and slurp some fruity or banana nut Cheerios. If you don't like

Cheerios, you can pick any one of hundreds of other cereals on the shelves, and they have their own varieties and flavors.

DIVERSITY

This is all about accepting diversity, and allowing for freedom of choice. Apparently, some people on YouTube did not like the casting of the commercial: the mother is white, the father black and the little girl is bi-racial. Some of the comments were not "family-friendly" - to say it nicely - and General Mills, Cheerios' parent company, decided to disable the comments on the commercial's YouTube channel.

Yes, it seems that in 2013, some people got angry because a mixed race couple and a bi-racial girl were portrayed as a "family" on television. In 2013? Really?

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10A)

Confessions of the mistress

Even when men have good wives, they still often dabble in the delights of desire and go where angels fear to tread.

Why do they go, who do they go to and where do they fulfill these untold and unwise pleasures? Ah, the mistress.

There is no love lost between the wife and the mistress and, in fact, she is not loved by society, as she is

deemed a destroyer of relationships, a demolisher of homes - a home wrecker. Knowing the uncertainties and pain that go with being with a mar-



TONY ROBINSON

ried man, the mistress is still a part of many marriages - irritating and hard to get rid of.

For some reason, the mistress is drawn to him and he to her, even though they both know deep down that the illicit relationship has no future.

PRESENT

The mistress has existed (CONTINUED ON PAGE 10A)

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Confessions of the mistress

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9A)

for centuries, giving pleasure to the man and misery and torment to his wife. But still, the mistress will persist, persevere, plunder and pleasure other women's men.

Why? She fulfills a need the wife does. When the wife is too busy to spend a few minutes of her time with him, she will put aside an entire weekend for him. She is never tired and shows interest in his day.

She doesn't whine and complain about her day and she listens to everything that he has to say about his. She soothes him, comforts him and sympathizes with all the wrongs that were done to him. Plus, she never says no to sex. Never.

KNOWLEDGE

The fact that the wife has



the ring means nothing to her. Well, it means a little bit...as a matter of fact it means a lot, for she has his name. But it doesn't bother the mistress that much. Well, it used to, but he tells her the marriage is dead anyway, and he's only

staying with her because of the children.

It sounds like a cliché, but the mistress believes she and her man are different from other affairs she's heard about. She know he loves her as much as she loves him and

as soon as the time is right, she believes he will leave his wife and be with her. She knows it's true, for the man tells her so.

The mistress knows that on those special occasions he cannot be with her - his birthday, Valentine's Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve night, the wife's birthday, his children's birthdays.

The mistress knows that on that fateful day, if he passes away, she will have to sneak into the church and sit in the back pew, grieving silently, not as his widow, but his mistress.

PLAN B

The mistress has learnt to occupy herself on those special days, so she doesn't get too lonely anymore. She is nameless and faceless, but she exists.

He came on his own free will. And yet the wife dares to curse the mistress and call her names. If it wasn't me, then he would simply choose someone else. The mistress doesn't care, for when the husband is with her, the wife's name doesn't even come up.

But then years roll by and the mistress is no longer in the flower of her youth. He still hasn't left his wife and he doesn't visit as often as he used to. The mistress, meanwhile, has passed the point of no return. She has wasted her youth on an implausible, impractical, impossible dream with the man.

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.

seido1@hotmail.com



Vital lessons learned from a box of cereal

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9A)

Would the YouTube naysayers have complained any more - or less - if one parent was Chinese, one Hispanic, and the girl bi-racial? Or, pick any other racial or ethnic combination you'd like, and fill in the blanks.

Regardless of the uproar, according to Ace Metrix's website many more Americans like the Cheerios ad than dislike it. Many more. Ace Metrix, www.acemetrix.com - headquartered in California - uses technology to measure "the creative effectiveness of in-market and video advertising".

It tests audiences for their responses to ads. The Cheerios ad, "Good for Your Heart", was created by Saatchi & Saatchi, New York, notes Ace Metrix's site. According to Ace Metrix' report, which surveyed over 500 consumers:

"The ad scored best with African-Americans...followed by Asian Americans and Hispanics". It achieved "high attention" and "likeability scores, especially with females".

RATINGS

According to Ace Metrix's site, "the Cheerios 30-second version of the ad, is the second-highest rated ad in cereal in

2013, and rated the sixth among 50 ads tested, in the last 12 months". In other words, while a few voices seemed to complain, many more people favored little Colbert and her modern, mixed-race American family.

In April 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau released a 2010 Census brief, titled "Households and Families: 2010". It showed that interracial, or interethnic opposite-sex couple households grew by 28 percent over the decade, from seven percent in 2000, to 10 percent in 2010. States with higher percentages of couples of a different race, or Hispanic

origin in 2010, were primarily located in the western, and southwestern parts of the United States, along with Hawaii and Alaska. A higher percentage of unmarried partners were interracial, or interethnic, than married couples.

Photographer Michael David Murphy and Alyson West have created a website entitled "We Are the 15 percent - A crowd-sourced collection of portraits of American interracial families and marriages, inspired by a Cheerios ad". Murphy's website states: "When my wife and I watched the video, it felt great to (finally) see a representation of our own family...We created this site to publicly reflect the changing face of the American family.

"According to the 2008 census, 15 percent of new marriages are interracial. And yet, it still feels rare to see something like the Cheerios ad represented in mainstream culture," states Murphy on his site, "We Are the 15 percent."

INVITATION

Murphy and West invite couples in interracial marriages, or families, who live in the U.S., to e-mail their photograph to us@wearethe15percent.com. Interracial families from around the U.S. have already posted several photos on the site. Perhaps, they'll need a whole website just for Caribbean and West Indian interracial couples and families. What color is the child from the Caribbean island - or diaspora - whose parents are brown-skinned and half-Chinese, whose grandparents were half-Cuban, black, Chinese and Jewish? Trace their ancestry

further back - if you can - and it can get genetically very interesting.

Mix up the ethnicities, using any combination you want. The concept is the same.

We are one or the other, or all of the above, through destiny and God's grace only. When can we drop all these boxes, prejudices, and discriminatory labels by skin color, sex, race, age, or ethnicity, "uptown", "downtown", or whatever and look at who we are as individual people?

Are we close-minded, racist, pathological liars, evil? Or, are we kind, creative, hard-working, loving, honest, dedicated, open-minded, mentally balanced, and making the world a better place?

Whether we, as people, are - plain, frosted, cinnamon-coated, cocoa pebbles, honey nuts, multi-grained, froot loops, fiber one, cookie crisps, lucky charms, smart starts, raisin brans, corn flakes, all-bran, rice krispies, honey bunches of oats with vanilla bunches, cinnamon toast crunch, oatmeal - or any of the other countless personalities that live on the big cereal shelf of life - we all have our special contributions to make to each other, and to this planet.

It would be very boring if we were all the same.

Kudos to Cheerios' advertising for continuing this discussion, and promoting cultural diversity for "We the People", in the U.S., the Caribbean and the world.

Photograph and story by Michelle Cawley Dreseris, a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.



Successful Caribbean Women In Business



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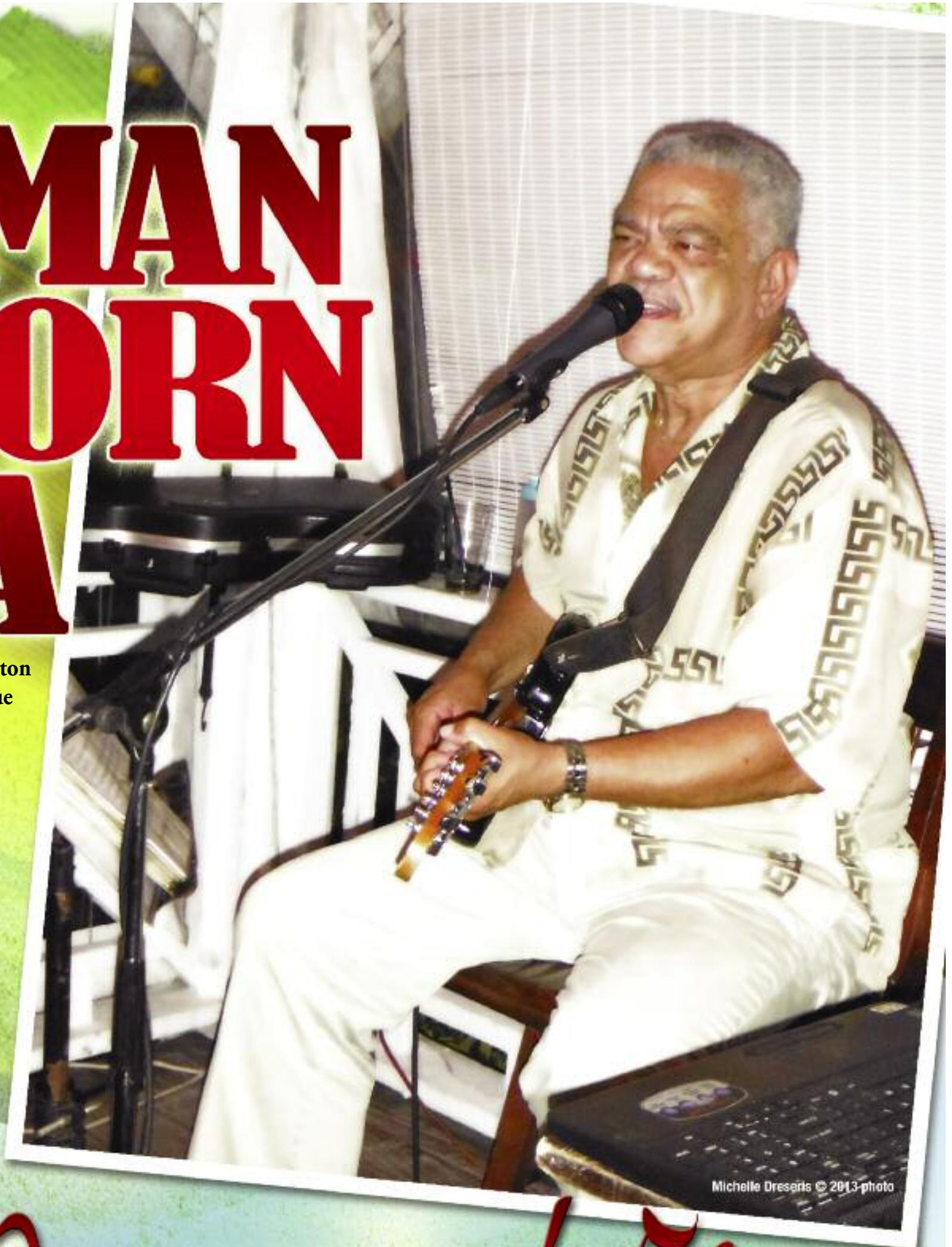
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I MAN BORN YA

~ Pluto Shervington
tells Jamaica's true
stories in songs,
page 2B.



Michelle Dresaris © 2013 photo

Jamaica at 51

Caribbean Today

Jamaica at 51

~ A Caribbean Today special feature

'I MAN BORN YA': Pluto Shervington tells Jamaica's true stories in songs

**MICHELLE CAWLEY
DRESERIS**

Some musical legends are like 24-carat gold. Their talent and value increase with time – with each song they sing and every strum of their guitar's strings.

One of Jamaica's golden icons is reggae artiste Leighton Shervington, known worldwide as Pluto. While other stars have risen sharply then fizzled, Shervington's popularity has continued globally for more than 40 years. There's no sign of burnout.

"I'm performing five nights weekly, sometimes more," he told *Caribbean Today* recently. "I'm working harder than I've ever worked before."

A good friend and former back-up musician for the late Bob Marley from the early days of reggae, Shervington is an original. His reggae songs – sung largely in Jamaican patois – have been hits in Jamaica, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Germany and other countries. At 62, he's still rocking audiences in those places and the rest of the world, including the islands of the Caribbean.

"I don't know how non-English speaking audiences understand my Jamaican patois," he says. "But I'm just happy they enjoy my songs!" Shervington serves up

potent reggae beats and timeless, socially conscious lyrics. The Miami resident is a versatile singer, songwriter, musician, engineer and producer. He is often found traveling the world to perform – either with his band Pluto and Company or as a solo act.

"I've had only one non-music job in my life when I was young," says Shervington. "All I have ever wanted to be was a musician!"

He released his most recent reggae compact disc, titled "PLUTO SHERVINGTON: The Gold Collection", in early 2013. The CD, his 13th album, contains new versions of his hit reggae songs now woven into the hearts and souls of his fans, including 11 reggae songs and international hits such as "DAT", "Ram Goat Liver", "Your Honor", "Letter to Miami", "Dis Ya Hard Time" and "I Man Born Ya".

In 2008, Shervington released "Second Wind", a timeless reggae CD containing 12 songs, many featuring his original lyrics and music. Jamaican entertainers Ernie Smith, Tanto Metro and the late, Byron Lee are featured. The CD includes "That's The Kind of People We Are", "Glory and Grace", "Jamdown We Dey", "Ivan", "Inna Your Room" and "Long Blackwood".



Shervington

"That's the Kind of People We Are" was written by Shervington and Smith. The two icons have been friends since childhood and they continue to collaborate internationally on songs and events.

"This song talks about what makes Jamaicans so unique!" says Shervington as he sings a few lines. "We are a proud, proud, nation, a funny kind of people, for all that we've achieved throughout the years, don't mistake de fact that though we fight 'mongst one another, don't come between us, or yu will, feel the fire!"

"More church by far dan' any other place, but the nightly news is a big disgrace, that's the kind of people we are!" sings Shervington at his Miami home. "De P.M. making a crucial speech. De M.P. behind 'im, fas' asleep, that's the kind of people

we are! Funeral late an' everyting' ruin. Benji late fi him very own viewin'! That's the kind of people we are!"

"My song 'Glory and Grace' is saying it makes no sense to fight over religion, when all these religions agree there is only one God," says Shervington.

"Baptist or Jew, Catholic or Presbyterian, Rasta, Seventh Day Adventist, put up yu han', mek we big up the Man! find Glory and Grace in de Almighty," he sings.

In 1997, Shervington was named one of Jamaica's 15 musical "Living Legends" at the Reggae/Soca Awards in Miami. He received the prestigious award for Outstanding Contribution to Jamaican Reggae Music from Jamaica's then-Prime Minister P.J. Patterson.

Other "Living Legends" recipients include Marley, Smith, Byron Lee and the Dragonaires, The Mighty Sparrow, The Merry Men, Bob Andy, Jimmy Cliff, The Merritones and Keith Lyn.

Shervington has received countless other musical awards as well. He is still in demand as a performer.

"Last year, I was invited to perform on the beach, in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. That was fun!" he says. "There are many Jamaicans in Abu Dhabi."

When he's not travelling to perform outside the U.S., Shervington's South Florida fans find him at Bahama Breeze restaurants in Broward County or Kendall, Miami. On Sundays, when he's in town, fans can also join Shervington and his band at Sundays Pon Di River in downtown Miami.

Growing up in Jamaica, Shervington says he loved "listening to all the hits from Jamaica, the U.S. and Great Britain on the radio. There were no Internet stations back then!"

Yet he refuses to be pigeon-holed.

"I don't want to be labeled as a black musician, or a 'dis, or a dat!" Shervington says. "I will play any music that comes to my mind! I love all kinds and genres of music. I love rock and roll a lot. I like country. I just love music! We shouldn't need to label people by their color. It doesn't matter what you are. It's who you are that's important. I am a proud Jamaican."

Shervington has been an integral part of Jamaica's music history progress – from mento to ska, then rocksteady and

reggae. But he hasn't fully embraced dancehall because he doesn't like the blatant "slackness" in many of the songs.

"I like the beats," Shervington explains. "I respect the musicians. But, a lot of the dancehall lyrics are very demeaning to women and girls."

While several of Shervington's songs – and hits – clearly contain sexual innuendos and scenarios, he has his own boundaries.

"Demeaning women is not what I am about," says the husband, father and grandfather.

Shervington has performed with hundreds of Jamaica's – and the world's – most popular musicians. These include: Marley, Lee, Toots and the Maytals, Cliff, Chalice, Smith and Monty Alexander. He's been invited to play in the world's great musical venues, including the Lincoln Center, the St. Kitts Music Festival and the Hammersmith Odeon/Apollo in London, England.

In 1976, he met George Harrison of The Beatles at the BBC in London, when Pluto's song "DAT" was number one, and Harrison's was number two on the charts in England. In 1982, his song "Your Honor" was number one in Amsterdam.

"Even kids in Germany were buying my 'DAT' record," says Shervington. "I still don't know how they understand my Jamaican patois!"

In 1966, Shervington graduated St. George's College, a high school in Jamaica. His musical career kicked off immediately.

"I was playing in a band the day I graduated high school," he says. "A regular nine to five job was not for me."

"Back then, Jamaica's music on the radio was rocksteady. That was way before anybody heard about Bob Marley."

"My song, 'Ram Goat Liver', was the number one hit in Jamaica, in the islands, and number one in England, before Bob had his first hit record," remembers Shervington. Marley was three years older than Shervington. The two were good friends and, like many musicians, played with different bands.

"Many times in the late 1960s, before Bob became famous and got his own band, he would ask me and my band – Tomorrow's Children – to back him while he was singing," says

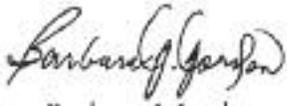
(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10B)




The Honorable **Barbara J. Jordan**
Miami-Dade County Commissioner
District One

Congratulations on 51 Years of Independence!

The residents of Miami-Dade County join all Jamaicans, locally and abroad, as they celebrate their Independence Day. Let us all observe this milestone as Jamaica marks its 51st year of self-governance. Let's take a moment to rejoice and reflect on a country that has produced world renowned music composers, legendary sports figures, great literary artists, distinguished physicians, and record-breaking aviators.



Barbara J. Jordan

Jamaica at 51

~ A Caribbean Today special feature

HONORING A HERO: Marcus Garvey exoneration drive hits high gear

I. JABULANI TAFARI

Concerted community efforts to make Marcus Garvey's exoneration a reality have increased ahead of the upcoming 126th anniversary of the Jamaican National Hero's birth on Aug. 17, 2013.

The Coalition for the Exoneration of Marcus Garvey recently achieved its goal of 10,000 signatures in support of Garvey's exoneration and at press time the total stood at 10,467.

The signatures were compiled in an online petition to Florida Senator Bill Nelson, Florida Representative Frederica Wilson, and to the Congress of the United States seeking Garvey's exoneration.

Coalition Coordinator Geoffrey Philp said the petition and signatures were forwarded to Sen. Nelson, Rep. Wilson and the U.S. Congress and he is awaiting a reply from them.

On Jan. 10, 2007, Congressman Charles Rangel introduced H. Con. Res. 24 to the 110th Congress. The resolution expressed "the sense of the Congress that the President should grant a pardon to Marcus Mosiah Garvey..." In the communication to the Florida politicians and the U.S. Congress, Philp stated that "the undersigned are requesting the assistance of our representatives" in reintroducing the resolution initially introduced by Rep. Rangel.

EXONERATE

However, rather than seeking a "pardon," Philp suggested that the wording of the new resolution be changed to recommend that the U.S. president should instead exonerate Garvey in order "to clear his name and affirm his innocence of crimes for which he was unjustly prosecuted and convicted."

In the meantime, the Coalition for the Exoneration of Marcus Garvey is directly petitioning U.S. President Barack Obama to exonerate Garvey. There are currently another 2,340 support signatures at moveon.org petitions urging Obama to do so.

Philp is expected to seek more public support for the exoneration drive at the annual Marcus Garvey Rootz Extravaganza on Aug. 17 at Carter Park in Fort Lauderdale. During the event,

Philp, an author and lecturer at Miami Dade College, is



Garvey

Improvement Association (UNIA) - the largest black organization in history - which was dedicated to fostering of unity among all people of African descent. In 1916 he migrated to the U.S., where the UNIA gained over two million members. Garvey became the target of surveillance and harassment by U.S. law enforcement agencies in the early 1920s. He was eventually prosecuted on a conspiracy charge, convicted on a single count of mail fraud in 1923 and sent to federal prison in Atlanta, Georgia

two years later.

In response to the public outcry over Garvey's conviction, U.S. President Calvin Coolidge commuted Garvey's sentence in 1927, establishing the precedent for executive clemency in this case.

Garvey himself submitted his first official application for executive clemency in 1925. In 1926 nine members of the jury that convicted the UNIA leader signed an affidavit recommending the commutation of his sentence. Garvey maintained his innocence and his desire to be exonerated throughout the remainder of his life. Many believe the case against Garvey was politically motivated, that the charges were unsubstantiated and that his conviction was unjust.

To date, millions of petitioners including individuals,

private organizations, city councils and even the Jamaican government have appealed for the exoneration of Garvey, who died in England in 1940. In 1964 his body was returned to Jamaica,

where he was officially declared the country's first national hero.

I. Jabulani Tafari is a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.



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Jamaica at 51

~ A Caribbean Today special feature

NAJASO's annual confab July 18-20 in MoBay

The National Association of Jamaican and Supportive Organizations (NAJASO), an umbrella group of associations throughout the United States and internationally, will stage its 36th convention July 18-20 in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

The convention, under the theme "NAJASO- a partnership for transformation", will be held at Secrets Wild Orchid Hotel.

NAJASO was founded July 4, 1977, when representatives of Jamaican groups from across the U.S. met in Washington, D.C. and launched the national body to address immediate problems which primarily affected their communities in the U.S.

The convention is hosted by the NAJASO Jamaica team in collaboration with its executive body: Roy Davidson, national president; Dr. Richard Constable, board chairman; Carol Williams, national convention chair; and Winston Wellington, Jamaica Education Team member.



Keynote speaker Andrew Holness.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of NAJASO is to work together with other organizations for the economic and social development of the people of Jamaica on a national and local level. This year's convention is scheduled to highlight transformative relationships, recognize members, business partners, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders for their outstanding leadership, professional skills, membership

training and volunteer work in support of the association and its mission, goals and objectives.

The convention's programs include guest speakers, seminars and workshop presentations focusing on health, education, business and investment opportunities, tourism and young professionals. A formal opening ceremony and reception will be held from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. July 18. Governor General Sir Patrick Allen will be among the guests.

At noon the following day, there will be a formal business luncheon with scheduled keynote speaker Andrew Holness, Jamaica's Opposition leader. This will be followed by panel discussions.

Jamaica's Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller is the scheduled keynote speaker at the July 20 gala and awards presentation.

For more information, visit www.najaso.org.



BRIEFS

Wolmer's South Florida banquet

The South Florida Chapter of the Wolmer's Alumni Association will hold its annual banquet this month in Plantation.

The event, featuring guest speaker Douglas Orane, executive chairman of Grace Kennedy and Jamaica Ltd., will be held on **July 13** at the Renaissance Hotel Plantation, 1230 Pine Island Road. Cocktails are at **7 p.m.**, dinner at **8 p.m.**

For more information, call **1-888-WOLMERS**.

Reggae Sumfest July in MoBay

"Reggae Sumfest", Jamaica's long music festival, will be staged **July 21-27** at Catherine Hall, Montego Bay.

Among the performers scheduled for this year's show are local-based stars Beres Hammond, Beenie Man, Lady Saw and I-Octane, plus American R&B singer Miguel.

Ban smoking in public places

Jamaica intends to join its Caribbean community (CARICOM) partners in banning smoking in public areas and the workplace.

So far the legislation exists in Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname and Jamaica's Health

Minister Dr. Fenton Ferguson last month said he will be seeking the assistance of local and international partners, including the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), in the effort to reduce tobacco use here.

He said the administration of Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller is seeking to table the Tobacco Control Act, which will protect citizens from the harmful effects of tobacco smoking, by prohibiting its use in public areas and workplaces.

Clarke to coach Jamaica at WCA

Successful high school track and field coach Michael Clarke has been named head coach of Jamaica's team to the IAAF World Championships in Athletics in Moscow, Russia, Aug. 10-18.

Clarke is a long-time coach at Calabar High where he has won four national titles including the 2013 Boys' Championships. He has also served as a coach on a number of traveling teams to the Olympic Games and World Championships.

Clarke replaces Maurice Wilson, who is reportedly unavailable due to personal reasons.

- Compiled from various sources.



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Jamaica at 51

~ A Caribbean Today special feature

CALL TO SERVE: P.M. rallies diaspora support for Jamaica's development

Engagement of the government with Jamaicans overseas is central to the country's advancement, according to Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller.

Simpson Miller said Jamaica's government has embarked on an aggressive growth and development strategy to spur investments, create jobs, boost business, and enable a better quality of

life for all Jamaicans, and the diaspora is integral to the process.

"We take the position that Jamaica's growth and prosperity agenda is incomplete without the committed engagement and active participation of the diaspora," the prime minister said while delivering the keynote address at the opening ceremony of the 5th Biennial Jamaica



Simpson Miller

Diaspora Conference last month in Montego Bay, St. James.

"We are resolutely committed to implementing the policies and programmes necessary to facilitate increased levels of inclusiveness and involvement to make Jamaica-diaspora investments, business and philanthropic activities seamless and successful."

The four-day conference

was held under the theme "A Nation on a Mission: Jamaica-Diaspora Partnership for Development". It highlighted investment and business opportunities in Jamaica.

- Edited from JIS. Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller urges overseas-based investors to target Jamaica, page 6B.



Progress made tackling crime ~ gov't

MONTEGO BAY, Jamaica, CMC – The Jamaica government is implementing measures to further reduce crime in the country and is focusing on at-risk youth, according to National Security Minister Peter Bunting.

He told the 5th Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference here last month that while the country has made significant progress in dealing with the crime situation, including a 40 percent reduction in homicides over the last three years, the Portia Simpson Miller government is determined to employ measures for further reductions.

Last year, 1,087 people were murdered and according to the official figures, at the end of April, there were 350 murders.

"We have an increased emphasis around prevention," said Bunting. "There is hope, we have made progress, and we are determined to continue to make progress, and we want to engage the entire society in this mission, whether in the diaspora or locally. We take this on as a societal issue."

UMBRELLA GROUP

Bunting said the authorities were engaging the umbrel-

la group of churches to reach out to targeted groups, and people from service clubs were mentoring young people in juvenile correctional facilities.

"We have one group that is working with persons at the Tower Street Correctional Centre that is helping them and teaching them life skills and anger management," he said. "We have a group in Manchester that has trained first responders in domestic violence, while many faith-based groups and some of our conscious entertainers partner with us."

Bunting told the conference that 500 young people are benefitting from an on-the-job internship program with the engineering regiment of the army, where they are engaged in construction projects, and the number will be increased to 2,000 per year.

"They spend a year; they are not soldiers. They work in developing construction skills; they work in developing hurricane relief homes after Hurricane Sandy. They are doing legitimate construction projects. Transformation takes place with the young people," Bunting said.



Conference facilitates investments

Some 240 business meetings were facilitated at the 5th Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference, according to the country's Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Arnaldo Brown.

Brown said Jamaica attracted several investments as a result of the links made at the three-day event last month at the Montego Bay Convention Centre, in St. James.

"The 240 meetings were facilitated among 14 investors on 30 local projects," Brown said at the closing ceremony. "That is significant. Out of that, seven investors indicated that they were desirous of making equity investments in 17 projects, and have requested additional information from these project owners."

"JAMPRO is going to follow-up with these (prospective investors), and the country will

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6B)

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Jamaica at 51

~ A Caribbean Today special feature

RITE OF PASSAGE: English priest returning to Jamaican roots

MARIE GREGORY

Father Howard James, London-born son of Jamaican parents, has spent almost half of his life in his birthplace and half in the land of his forbears.

James's first two years were spent in England, the next 20 or so in Jamaica. Following his ordination as a Catholic priest, the first one of Caribbean origin to be ordained in London for work in England, he has returned to the Caribbean at regular intervals with stints in Ocho Rios, Jamaica and Antigua.

Now, after completing his five year assignment as parish priest of Saint John the Evangelist in Islington, London, James is to return to Jamaica to take on the responsibility for Our Lady of Fatima church in Ocho Rios.

This will be a homecoming as it is the church of his previous assignment in the late 1990s. En route to Jamaica, James will spend his three month sabbatical in Antigua working on a project for Bishop Ken Richards. He is no stranger to Antigua having spent three years there, one as administrator of the cathedral.

DESIRE

James always wanted to return to Jamaica. Equally comfortable in England or the Caribbean, he feels his experience has given him the ability to make a contribution wherever he serves. In addition to being in charge in Ocho Rios,

he will have two mission stations in rural areas. He is looking forward to this after a busy metropolitan life over the last few years.

Few Jamaicans live in his London parish. Yet James is involved with Jamaicans in London and has many friends from his early schooldays who visit his church. He will miss Islington, particularly the children, because he has enjoyed seeing his parishioners grow within the church.

When James first arrived there and asked people to do things, they would hesitate. Once encouraged, they not only took on the tasks, but did them well. James was pleased to see them take responsibility for the parish. Many came back to mass after a long absence as they felt welcome.

James will also miss the freedom of life in Islington. Fitness is high on his priority list. He goes to a gym and runs regularly, which he hopes to continue in Jamaica.

FAMILIAR GROUND

James is aware his new assignment will not be easy. But he is not going to a strange place. He still has many friends in Jamaica and has made regular visits over the years.

Before he takes over in Ocho Rios early next year, James has a busy time. Officially, he leaves his parish at the end of July, but will visit four African countries the following month. The first trip will be to Uganda.

shock and prepare migrating Jamaicans for assimilation so they can contribute to the development of both Jamaica and their new country of residence. It will also assist in tracking the number of Jamaicans joining the diaspora.

"Our objective is to prepare our people to deal with the challenges that they will face in different spaces, and to let them know that if things don't work elsewhere, they can return home, anytime they are ready," Brown said.

"We want Jamaicans to know that this is their home, and once you are ready to return, we are ready to receive you."



James

The last four years his parish has supported a vocational training center for girls there. He will then go on a retreat in Rwanda, followed by a visit with friends in Zambia. The

trip will conclude in Malawi.

Packing to leave his present house is a problem. James needs to ship possessions to Jamaica, take items to Africa, along with whatever he needs for Antigua. Jamaican items are prominent in his living quarters. Pictures, pottery and a seemingly endless supply of Jamaican coffee proclaim his roots, as well as embroidered Jamaican shirts he likes to wear when off duty.

One possession will certainly go with James across the Atlantic. Last year he was interviewed for a story in Caribbean Today. He was surprised to receive a package from the United States containing a framed copy of the article. A friend in

Washington had heard about the interview, mounted and framed the article. James plans to hang it in Ocho Rios.

Will James return to London after his five-year stint in Jamaica? Time will tell. James believes this is an exciting time for the Jamaican clergy. He will work with the newly appointed Bishop of Montego Bay Reverend Burchell McPherson, who, until recently, was pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Kingston.

Photograph and story by Marie Gregory, a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.



WELCOME ALL: Jamaica opening doors to mega projects for investors ~ P.M.

MONTEGO BAY, Jamaica, CMC - Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller has called on members of the Jamaican diaspora to invest in the country, saying also that foreign investors have shown their confidence by investing in mega projects here.

"Along with our diaspora, we need our international partners, and we will continue to invite foreign investments," Simpson Miller told last month's 5th Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference here. "Belgian-registered companies have invested in our transport sector; the French, in our road network infrastructure; the Spanish, in expanding our tourism industry, and the Chinese, in sugar cane manu-

facturing, bridges and other infrastructural developments. All these are welcome.

"There is room and space for everyone to participate, and this conference is a clarion call to all Jamaicans, at home and abroad, to engage in Jamaica's drive for growth," she said. "I hope you will grasp the opportunities, which will be presented at this Conference for investments in business and social projects," adding that her government is determined to put the diaspora at the center of the growth and development agenda.

She also pointed to the Joint Select Parliamentary Committee on Diaspora Affairs as another instrument designed to provide a direct

channel to the corridors of decision making.

"Throughout the past ten years, there has been a progressive sensitization of government departments and agencies on issues and services pertaining to the diaspora," said Simpson Miller.

"To this end, diaspora units have been established in various agencies of government, notably in the Ministry of Health, Jamaica Customs and the Trade Board. In keeping with the new approach of this administration, JAMPRO has also designed a Diaspora Global Business Connect strategy, which will be in execution mode at this conference."



Conference facilitates investments

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5B)

hear more about the investments. The future of Jamaica is extremely bright."

COMMITMENT

Brown noted that some 600 delegates attended the conference and reiterated that Jamaicans overseas are committed to their country.

"The important story is not the size of the conference, it is the commitment of Jamaicans to Jamaica," Brown said.

The conference also featured deliberations on the soon-to-be-published Jamaica International Migration and Development Policy, which will seek to minimize culture

MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS



Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator A.J. Nicholson, second left, cuts the ribbon to open the Diaspora Marketplace, a new feature at the 5th Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference 2013, held last month at the Montego Bay Convention Centre in St. James. Assisting Senator Nicholson are, from right, are: State Minister in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce Sharon Ffolkes Abrahams; Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce Anthony Hylton; Conference Co-ordinator Lisa O'Gilvie; and Chairman of the Jamaica Diaspora Conference Preparatory Committee Richard Powell.

a culture so rich you can taste it



Some believe that Jamaica's national bird, the Doctor Bird, got its name because its long tail feathers resemble the formal tailcoats island doctors once wore. Others believe it has healing powers. But everyone agrees that it holds a very special place in this Caribbean country's history and heart.



Jamaica Celebrates 51 Years of Independence
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Jamaica at 51

~ A Caribbean Today special feature

ISLAND MIX: Curtain rises to reveal cycle of family struggles

MARIE GREGORY

Jamaican writer Tony Tame's first novel was "The Village Curtain", a collection of short stories depicting the lives of fisher-folk in coastal communities.

In that book, Tame wrote of the society: "You see how tranquil it looks, but underneath it is savage and violent and tough creatures survive. It's just the same all over. Nobody gives a damn what happens to these people; businesses exploit them, police rough them up, politicians lie to them so they got to find any way they can to adjust".

That comment could well have been written about Tame's latest offering, "The Desperate Cycle". This novel deals with three generations of a poor family trying to make a living from fishing in Kingston Harbour. Pedro, commonly referred to as "old man" though only 45, suffers a stroke and is taken to a public hospital. The porters try to rouse him saying they don't want to put him on the floor, which is "not so clean". The author describes them as "not heartless men, just ordinary people who grow defensive

calluses on their sensibilities in order to cope with life as they found it".

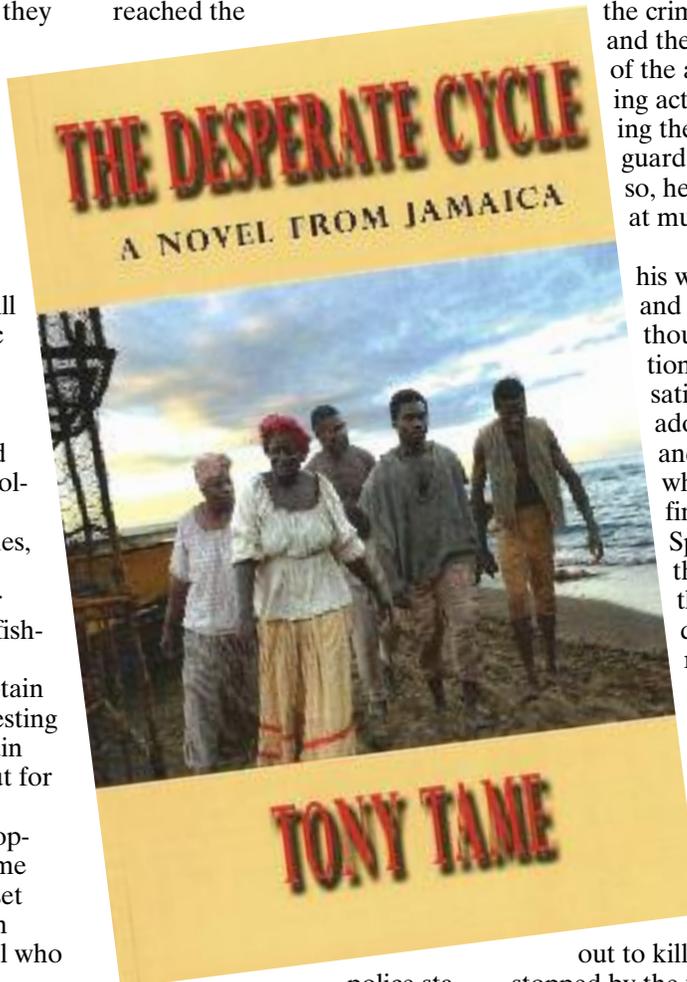
Pedro needs drugs for the rest of his life, but the hospital has run out and he cannot afford the cost at a pharmacy. The help of his son Sprinter is essential if he is to continue fishing. Technically, Sprinter is still in school though sporadic in attendance.

TURNING POINT

Sprinter is the second generation, unwilling to follow exactly in his father's footsteps. When Pedro dies, it's a turning point for Sprinter who found other friends and decided that fishing was not for him. His friend Rocky and the captain of a yacht provide "interesting ideas" for him. The captain was always on the lookout for "bright new talent".

The change or development of Sprinter is, in some ways, predictable, but is set vividly against a Jamaican background familiar to all who live, or have lived, on the island. The often told account of police taking on a gang of young men, and the shootout

which ensued before they reached the



police station as one of the men "pulled a gun" and threatened their captors, has long been part of the reality of island life.

In the novel it is described as a standard story. "A police patrol accosted a man who suddenly pulled out a gun and was killed in the subsequent shootout. Officers deemed to have acted in justifiable self-defence".

COMMENTARY

Social commentary is prominent though not to the detriment of the story. The background, attitudes and differences formed by the social classes add to the hopelessness of the situation of young men, making the outcome inevitable, but perhaps understandable.

Yet these young men are not without talent. Sprinter

makes his name with the criminal element and the young women of the area by a daring act of immobilizing the new coast-guard cutter. Even so, he draws the line at murder.

Sprinter has his woman, Lucy, and son Peter, though this relationship is far from satisfactory. Peter adores his father and is with him when the police finally catch up. Sprinter falls for the old trick of the damsel in distress by the roadside, steps out of his van to help and is shot. A confused little boy calls, "Get up daddy". The man with the gun steps

out to kill the boy, but is stopped by the woman.

Rocky, the old school friend who had introduced Sprinter to Jinks and his gang, was not with the gang when they were rounded up. He sought a safe hiding place for Peter and his mother. The child had seen too much. The Jinks gang were all shot dead in the jeep transporting them to prison, having "pulled guns". The standard story again.

LIKE FATHER

Third generation Peter combines elements of his father and grandfather. He is not interested in school, but loves fishing. He builds himself a boat and catches fish, which he sells. From his little boat, Peter "looked at the now brilliant daybreak sky and knew happiness that was unequalled in his life. He knew for sure that he had been born to be a fisherman".

The pollution of Kingston Harbour is often touched on in the novel as the author is an expert on Jamaica's marine industry. It eventually ruins Peter's dreams and possibly his chance to lead an honest life. When a tanker smashes into the jetty one night and punctures a pipeline, oil floods the harbour, killing fish for miles. Peter is devastated. He'd been encouraged to believe that the

harbour was coming back to life.

Just as the captain had helped his father, so the mysterious Mr. Martinez from Colombia, who lives on another yacht in the harbor, is willing to help the bright young boy who sold him fish.

The book's ending is slightly ambivalent. On one hand we think, "Here we go again". The title is, after all, "The Desperate Cycle". Much depends on what Mr. Martinez does from his yacht on Kingston Harbour. The mention of Colombia pushes thoughts in one direction. Perhaps the outcome will form the third novel by Tame.

There are some wonderful minor characters, particularly the Member of Parliament. This is a Jamaican portrayal realistically evaluated by the author. The speeches are amusing exercises in sound and fury, signifying nothing as he plays with the public for whom he bears nothing but contempt.

Corruption regularly raises its head, the rivalry between different branches of the security forces, even the supply of top quality coffee from the Japanese project manager to the Coastguard base gains attention. When the supply ceases, Mr. Akiyama explains this by the need for even small economies but that this may be only a temporary situation!

Despite the grim picture of Jamaica offered by the book, there is no sensationalism as such. Jamaicans will recognise the truth of the background and the author's deep understanding of the sea and its importance to the island. There can be no doubt as to his sympathies with the underclass of people either. As already mentioned, "Nobody gives a damn what happens to these people; businesses exploit them, police rough them up, politicians lie to them so they got to find any way they can to adjust". This novel shows how some of them go about it.

This is an interesting read. It takes a little time to get into the story as the author sets the background but the pace quickens as the characters take over the action.

Marie Gregory is a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.



CARIBBEAN TODAY



In December, Caribbean Today will be celebrating our 25th Anniversary by honoring 25 living legends who have made our community in South Florida a better place for all of us to live.

Over the past 25 years, Caribbean Today has developed close ties throughout the South Florida Community and has taken the role of chronicling the many Caribbean American leaders that have made our community so unique.

25 Living Legends Nominations

As valued community members, C.T. seeks your suggestions by nominating candidates who you think fit these parameters and should be celebrated as a Caribbean Today Living Legend. We ask for your assistance in the nomination process.

Living Legends Prerequisites:

- Nominees must have made a significant imprint on the development of the Caribbean community in South Florida over the past 25 years.

- Nominees must be able to attend the 25th anniversary event in December 2013.

Please e-mail your nominations along with a one page explanation about why you are nominating this candidate to Peter Webley at Peter.Webley@CaribbeanToday.com with the subject line: Living Legends Nomination.

Caribbean Today

Thank you all for your kind assistance.

Jamaica at 51

~ A Caribbean Today special feature

New York to host July 21 jerk fest

The annual Grace Jamaican Jerk Festival in New York will be held July 21 at Roy Wilkins Park in Queens.

The park is expected to once again become the center of Caribbean culture, as the festival offers jerk foods, presentations, entertainment and activities for children.

"We are working to ensure that patrons have the best possible experience at this year's festival. From speedy admissions at the gate, seating and first class entertainment, this year's festival experience will be out of this world," said Eddy Edwards, chairman of Jamaican Jerk Festival USA, Inc., co-producers of the event with VP Records.

Early event activities will feature Grace Foods' chef

Mazie Miller, who is scheduled to offer cooking demonstrations and sampling. Singer/actor Leon, of Cool Runnings

Fame, will host the celebrity cook-off.

The cultural stage will feature Braata Folk Singers and Diane Dixon, a fashion show and the Brown Rice Family band.

Star entertainer Shaggy will also perform, along with singer Christopher Martin, the Fab 5 Band, comedian Blakka Ellis, the violin duo Sons of Mistro and gospel artiste George Banton.

For ticket information, visit www.jerkfestivalny.com or call 718-425-1177.



JN Foundation initiative to receive \$1M investment

The Jamaica National Foundation project, Social Enterprise Boost Initiative (SEBI), is to receive investment funding of \$1 million over three years, with the USAID providing the majority of the funds as part of a co-operative agreement between the international agency and the foundation.

The investment will be used to lay the foundation and create an infrastructure for the ongoing support of local social enterprises, aimed at increasing employment, investment and revenue in communities across Jamaica.

Speaking at the recent launch of SEBI at The Jamaica Pegasus hotel in Kingston, Denise Herbol, mission director of USAID/Jamaica, said the partnership between JN Foundation and USAID was part of the international agency's Development Grants Program.

"We must embrace new models of development that tap into the expertise, resources and innovations of a diverse array of organizations across the public, private and non-profit sectors in order to identify the most advantageous solutions to solving local development challenges," Herbol said.

EXPECTATIONS

She said at the end of the three-year period of the initiative, there is expected to be an increase in the technical

capacity of social enterprises, having developed the pre-requisite business skills, knowledge and information to build sustainable organizations; and improvement in the business performance of social enterprises, resulting in increased income generation, business growth and reduced reliance on outside funding and donations.

In addition, it is expected that SEBI will facilitate organizations which contribute to economic and environmental development, as well as growth in Jamaica's social economy.

Businesses owned by non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, for example - which are directly involved in the production and/or selling of goods and services for income generation and social, and environmental development - stand to be empowered by SEBI.

Jennifer Sharrier, SEBI's project manager, said 90 organizations responded to the initiative's "Call for Applications" to benefit from the business development support which SEBI will be offering social enterprises. The selection process is underway, after which some of the applicants will be incorporated in the business clinic, where they will have access to business professionals, technical support and training.



Government announces plans to establish National Museum of the Jamaican People



Hanna

Jamaica's Government has announced plans to establish a National Museum of the Jamaican People, with branches in Kingston and Montego Bay.

Minister of Youth and Culture Lisa Hanna, who provided details during her contribution to the 2013/14 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives last month, said the museum will be created as part of the Institute of Jamaica (IOJ).

"It will be a space where our children will be able to learn the glorious history of this nation and register pride in our achievement and so develop new confidence and self-worth," she said.

Hanna explained that the museum will contain, among other exhibits, artefacts from "our African heritage now being stored in the IOJ, hidden from the eyes of the Jamaican people."

RASTA FIRST

The museum project is scheduled to begin this month with an exhibition on the Rastafari movement.

"Every year, our national museum will consider and address another defining part of our history to strengthen our shared understanding of who we are and the national mission we are embarked on," Hanna said.

She said the IOJ's

Museums Division has been cataloguing and storing artefacts and memorabilia that tell the story of the Jamaican people. The national collection now has more than 17,000 objects, many in storage in the basement of the IOJ building on East Street, downtown Kingston.

"As we build the economic structure of Jamaica we must also build our national cultural identity in order to give every citizen of this country and every curious visitor to our island the opportunity to trace our history and cultural roots through National Museum," Hanna said.

She said in the first instance the National Museum will open in Kingston and will give new life to the capital city as the historical, cultural and artistic center of Jamaica.

- Edited from JIS.



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Jamaica at 51

~ A Caribbean Today special feature

TOP CHOICE: U.N. appoints Jamaican diplomat to key position

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon has appointed Jamaican-born diplomat Michelle Gyles-McDonnough the resident coordinator of the United Nations System's operational activities for development in Malaysia.



Gyles-McDonnough

She also will serve as resident representative of the U.N. Development Program in Malaysia, with additional responsibility for the Republic of Singapore and Brunei Darussalam, and will have overall responsibility and team leadership for the coordination of U.N. development activities in these three countries.

Her appointment became effective July 1.

The Barbados-based diplomat, served as U.N. resident coordinator and UNDP resident

representative for Barbados and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean (OECS) for the past five years.

"During her tenure, she significantly raised the visibility of the development challenges facing small island developing states and mobilized other development partners to work together with the U.N. to support Barbados and OECS member states to address the impacts of climate change," according to a U.N. statement.

ROLES

It noted that she also played a role in making the transition to more sustainable energy future; strengthen capabilities to assess and manage disaster risks and impacts; and improve citizen's security, well-being and life chances, among other key development areas.

Prior to her posting in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Gyles-McDonnough was program adviser in the Executive Office of UNDP and regional adviser in Jamaica.

She has also served in the U.N. as coordinator for the Grenada Recovery Program following Hurricane Ivan in 2004, and chief - UNDP Caribbean

Sub-Regional Resource Facility in Trinidad and Tobago.

Gyles-McDonnough is married to Ambassador Lorne McDonnough, chief executive

officer of the Caribbean community (CARICOM) Development Fund.

'I MAN BORN YA': Pluto Shervington tells Jamaica's true stories in songs

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2B)

Shervington. "It wasn't until Bob had a hit here in the U.S., and all over the world, that he got his own band."

Shervington says he witnessed the emergence of the late reggae superstar.

"In 1976, my hit song, 'DAT', was number one on the charts in England," he recalls. "I was in England on tour at the time. I heard that Bob was playing at the Hammersmith Odeon. I wasn't performing that night, so I went to see his show. Bob hadn't had a hit yet."

"When I walked into that room, I knew that Bob was going to be a worldwide success! There was an all-white crowd in the room. There were hardly any black people in there. Everybody in the room was so high from the amount of weed in that room! You didn't have to be smoking to get high in there that night!"

"Bob would say 'Jah! Rastafari!' and the whole white crowd would go crazy! It was an awesome night at The Hammersmith Odeon!"

"I will always remember that night! That's the night I knew that he was going to be a superstar!"

The Hammersmith Odeon, now known as the Hammersmith Apollo in London, has been one of London's major live entertain-

ment venues since 1932. Legendary acts, including The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, REM and Elton John have performed there.

Even after Marley became an international success, he would listen to Shervington and his band play.

"In 1978, I had moved to Miami, and I was playing at the Ramada Inn on Kendall Drive," Shervington recalls. "Bob had a house off Old Cutler Road back then. He was huge! He had hits all over the world, but every night when he was in Miami, he would come and listen to us play. He told me that he liked hearing me sing his songs!"

"He'd hang out by our band, in the corner, in the dark, listening to us perform, and he'd just enjoy himself! He didn't want anybody to recognize him. He just wanted to relax, and listen to us play!"

How would he describe Marley?

"He was just a good human being!" remembers Shervington. "Whatever was on Bob's mind, was on his lips. He didn't hold back! He would tell you the truth!"

"The world sees him as a huge star. I knew him as 'Bob', my friend. His estate, in 2012, earned about \$180 million U.S. dollars. That is a lot of money! But, I remember how Bob was, and he really did not care about

money! He had no attitude nor airs about him."

Would Marley have been surprised about how wildly successful he has been in his death?

"No," says Shervington. "He would have handled it like how he handled all his hits when he was alive. He would have calmly said, 'Oh, well. This is what I do.'"

When Marley couldn't 'do', after cancer ended his life, Shervington was sad.

"When Bob got sick, they tried all kinds of things to save him. But, it was all over," he remembers.

"I always wonder what the music world would have been like if Bob was alive now. He would have been 66 this year."

Shervington has six children, including current wife Dinora's daughter. The rest are from other marriages. He has been married to Dinora, who is originally from St. Croix in the Virgin Islands, for 21 years. Yet Shervington vividly remembers when they first met. She literally left him speechless.

"One night, we were performing at Sundays on the Bay. We had about 1,800 people there, and it was jam-packed! I saw this lady walk in. Suddenly, I couldn't remember the words I was singing!"

Shervington has a degree in business administration – in accounting – from the College of Arts, Science and Technology (now University of Technology) in Jamaica.

"I have never worked a day as an accountant!" he says. "I only studied accounting so that I could run my own music business. I don't want to do anybody's accounting!"

Today his advice to young artistes is to educate themselves.

"Musicians have to know how to handle their money, or soon, they won't have any!" Shervington says.

They'll do well to listen to a legend.

Story and photographs, including the one on the cover, by Michelle Cawley Dreseris, a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.

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Jamaica at 51

~ A Caribbean Today special feature

Gala, church service to highlight 51st Independence

The Consulate General of Jamaica and the Jamaican Diaspora Florida/Southern USA will mark the Caribbean nation's 51st anniversary of Independence with two programs next month.

At 8 p.m. Aug. 3, a

Jamaica Independence Grand Gala and 2013 Honors ceremony, under the theme "United...The Journey Continues", will be held at the Signature Grand hotel, 6900 W. State Rd. 84, Davie, Florida.

The Annual

Independence Ecumenical Service will be held at 4:30 p.m. Aug. 4 at the Cooper City Church of God, 9191 Stirling Rd., Cooper City, Florida.

For more information, visit info@jamaicacgmiami.org.



Independence essay competition

July 17 is the deadline to submit entries in The Consulate General of Jamaica in Miami's annual essay competition, to commemorate Jamaica's Independence 51st anniversary.

The competition is open to Jamaican children, first and second generation, residing in Florida, and forms part of the Independence celebrations across the state's communities.

Eligible students can choose from a selection of topics related to the Jamaica's cultural heritage, including community leadership, entertainment, education, history, cultural heritage, geography and national development.

Applicants must normally be a Florida resident and submit entries in one of three age

categories - five to eight, nine to 12 and 13-18.

The winner in each category will be awarded with a plaque by the consul general in celebration of Jamaica's Independence.

The event is partnered with the Partners for Youth Foundation, a Florida based community association engaged in youth development programs.

For information on the competition, including entry requirements, contact the Consulate General of Jamaica in Miami, 25 S.E. Second Ave., Suite 609, call 305-374-8431 extension 232, e-mail info@jamaicacgmiami.org or visit the consulate's website at www.jamaicacgmiami.org.



Consulate seeks outstanding Jamaicans in U.S.

Jamaica's Consul General Sandra Grant Griffiths is inviting nominations from the southern United States for the 2013 awards recognizing those who have given outstanding service to the community and country.

The awards will be presented at the Jamaica Independence Gala and 2013 Honors on Aug. 3 at the Signature Grand hotel in Davie.

In commemoration of the Jamaica's 51st anniversary, the consulate general, in collabo-

ration with the Jamaica United Relief Association (JURA), will host the gala.



Grant-Griffiths

Award categories include community-building, philanthropy, public service, entrepreneurship, youth leadership and the cultural arts. They will seek to identify the outstanding contributions of

contemporary change-makers and long-serving luminaries. The selection process will be guided by a Jamaica Diaspora Honors Selection Committee.

Nomination forms are available at the consulate's website www.jamaicacgmiami.org, request by e-mail at info@jamaicacgmiami.org, or telephone 305-374-8431.

The deadline for submission of nominations is July 11.



Vote for 'All Time Best' festival song winner

The Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC) is inviting members of the public to name their favorite top 20 "All Time Best" festival songs by voting from the pool of 47 winners.

Voting for the competition closes Aug. 1.

Voting in Jamaica can be done by text message to 444-2407.

Each of the 47 songs have been assigned a text code and members of the public can look in the press, or visit the JCDC website and Facebook page to view the text codes assigned to each song.

Prizes will be given to the top

voters each week. The overall top voter will also win \$150,000 and other prizes at the end of the voting period.

The top 20 songs chosen by public vote will be revealed on Aug. 2 at the Festival Song Showcase scheduled for the Ranny Williams Entertainment Centre. This Festival Song Showcase will feature performances by some of the singers named in the top 20, as well as other contemporary artistes. A souvenir album comprising of the songs chosen by the public will later become available as the Festival Song Competition salutes the JCDC's 50th anniversary.

sary.

The Festival Song Competition which started in 1966, is the longest running song competition in Jamaica and has been the avenue to stardom for many new and upcoming artistes.

The winning songs, year and text codes are as follows:

Year	Song Title	Text Code	Year	Song Title	Text Code
1966	Bam Bam	01	1989	Stop & Go	24
1967	Baba Boom Boom	02	1990	Island Festival	25
1968	Intensified	03	1991	Come Rock	26
1969	Sweet & Dandy	04	1992	Mek Wi Put Things Right	27
1970	Boom Shaka Laka	05	1993	Big It Up	28
1971	Cherry Oh Baby	06	1994	Dem A Pollute	29
1972	Pomps & Pride	07	1995	Join Di Line	30
1973	Jump in the Line	08	1996	Mek Wi Go Spree	31
1974	Play Di Music	09	1997	Peace & Love	32
1975	Hooray Festival	10	1998	Jamaica Whoa	33
1976	Dance Dis Yah Festival	11	1999	Born In Jamaica	34
1977	Sweet Jamaica	12	2000	Fi Wi Island A Boom	35
1978	Land of my Birth	13	2001	Lift Up Jamaica	36
1979	Born Jamaica	14	2002	Progress	37
1980	Come Sing with Me	15	2003	Jamaican Tour Guide	38
1981	No Weh Nuh Betta Dan Yard	16	2004	Ole Time Jamaica	39
1982	Mek Wi Jam	17	2005	Poverty	40
1983	Jamaica, I'll never leave you again	18	2006	Remember the Days	41
1984	Proud to be Jamaica	19	2007	Woman A Di Beauty	42
1985	Love Fever	20	2008	Rise & Shine	43
1986	Dem A Fi Squirm	21	2009	Take Back Jamaica	44
1987	Give Thanks & Praises	22	2010	My Jamaica	45
1988	Jamaica Land We Love	23	2011	Oh If We	46
			2012	Real Born Jamaica	47



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ISLAND TREAT: Caribbean delicacies light up 'Taste' 2013 in Miami

**MICHELLE CAWLEY
DRESERIS**

Barbados, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, The Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago served up winning flavors to take top honors at last month's "Taste of the Caribbean 2013" competition in Miami, Florida.

National and individual teams of chefs and bartenders from across the region, including Anguilla, Bonaire, Curacao, Suriname and the United States Virgin Islands, converged on the Hyatt Regency hotel for the food and beverage contest organized by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA).

The event featured tradeshow, workshops, meetings between leaders from the international hotel and tourism industry, and the "Taste of the Islands Festival", presented by Ask Me, Inc.

This year's "Taste"



Chef of the Year Lumley.

challenges included: "The Seafood Mystery Basket", "Pastry Chef Competition", "Creating Culinary Cocktails and Infusions", "Rums of Puerto Rico Mystery Basket Bartender Competition" and "Cheesecake Competitions".

WINNERS

After days of intense chopping, mixing, baking, flipping, frying, stirring, shaking and sharing their authen-

tic and delicious Caribbean delights, the winners were announced on June 30. The winners, who received medals and engraved golden plates, are as follows:

- The 2013 Caribbean Culinary Team of the Year – Barbados. Gold medals in the top category were also awarded to teams from The Bahamas and T&T. Silver medals went to teams from Anguilla, Curacao, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Suriname and the United States Virgin Islands. Bonaire's national team won bronze.

- Caribbean Chef of the Year – Brian Lumley, Embassy of France in Jamaica.

- Caribbean Bartender of the Year – Roberto Rodriguez, Instituto de Banca, Puerto Rico.

- Caribbean Pastry Chef of the Year – Sheldon Tracey Sweeting, The Bahamas.

- Caribbean Junior Chef of the Year – Naomi Lovell, student of T&T Hospitality and Tourism Institute.

- Taste of the Islands People's Choice Award - Puerto Rico.

- Best Team for Taste of the Islands - T&T.

For a complete list of all awards, visit <http://www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com>

Bajan 'Suck-A-Bubbies' a big hit at cooking show

"Get your Suck-A-Bubbies!" Barbados's Chef Julian Broome said, smiling and offering guests soft triangular palm-sized plastic bags, tied at the top, and filled with a creamy liquid from a large soup ladle.

"What is it? How do you drink it?" guests asked.

Suck-A-Bubbies are made with Barbadian rums and spices, coconut milk, bit-ters and linseed or flax seeds, Broome explained Broome.

"You suck it through the tip, at the nipple," he said.

"It's sweet and creamy!"

"This is really good!" said guests, who also ate bite-size samples of Bajan food prepared by Team

Barbados.

Guests also sampled other specialties from Barbados, including beef soup, mappie (a coconut sweet bread and cheese), bread and two (cod fish cakes), coconut turnovers, steamed sweet potato pudding and souse (a pork dish traditionally eaten on Saturdays).

"Suck-A-Bubbies" may have done their bit to help Barbados win the top golden plate and top award of the competition, the Caribbean Culinary Team of the Year.

- Michelle Cawley Dreseris.

Mangoes take the spotlight in T&T

Mango, the Caribbean's king of tropical fruit, will be in the spotlight during a street food festival in Trinidad and Tobago this month.

The twin-island republic will host its fourth annual Mango Festival on July 7, focusing on the sweet, juicy, delicious and versatile fruit.

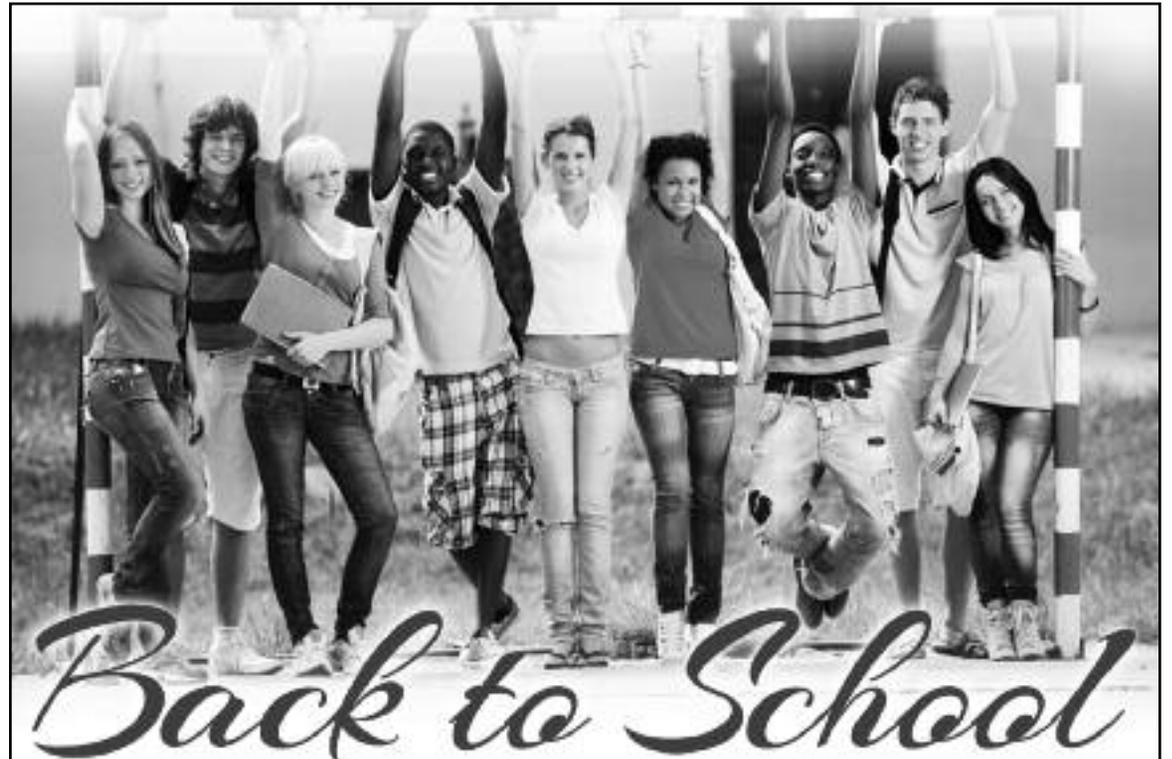
The event will feature a mango market, mango products, grafting demonstrations, exhibitions, children's activities, games and mango-eating competitions. Product made from mango, including soaps, preserves, candles and gift paper will also be available.

At the mango market, a variety of the locally-grown fruit, including the Julie, considered the queen of mangoes,

which was developed in Trinidad, and other varieties such as Rose, Hog, Calabash, Douxdoux, La Brea Gyul, Turpentine, and Graham – a seedling of the Julie mango – will be available for purchase.

Preceding the festival will be the island's second Mango Conference on July 4, which is also being hosted under the auspices of the Network of Rural Women Producers (NRWP) of Trinidad and Tobago.

The fourth annual T&T Mango Festival will be held at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Field Station in Mount Hope, Trinidad.



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~ A CARIBBEAN TODAY SPECIAL FEATURE

CARIBBEAN ON STAGE



Obie Wilchcombe, left, tourism minister of The Bahamas, poses with American actress Cicely Tyson last month in New York. Wilchcombe was one of several in a Caribbean delegation who visited Tyson during "Caribbean Week". Tyson, who has Nevisian heritage, recently won a Tony Award for her role in the play "The Trip To Bountiful". The delegates watched the play.

Bahamian sprint icon Sturup retires from track

FREEPORT, Grand Bahama, CMC - Chandra Sturup, a sprint icon in The Bahamas, has announced her retirement from athletics after a long career.

Sturup, the national record in the women's 100 meters (10.84 seconds) announced her retirement at the National Open Track and Field Championship in Freeport, Grand Bahama last month. The announcement from the 41-year-old athlete came a year after the London summer Olympics when she announced her intention to quit the sport.

"I have run my race. It's sad to leave but you have to go



Sturup

one day," said Sturup, who will go down as one of the most accomplished track and field athletes in the history of The Bahamas.

"I have many proud moments, but 2000 is the single most proud moment when we got the gold in Sydney. That was

a touching moment for me that I have never experienced in my life."

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Sturup has a personal best time of 22.33 in the 200 meters and was a world-class performer in the long jump as well. She is a former world indoor champion over 60

meters, a two-time World Championship bronze medalist, a World Championship sprint relay champion and an Olympic sprint relay champion.

"My hope is that they take their talent and use it wisely and carry themselves approximately," said Sturup of the emerging athletes in her country.

"Wherever they go because they are not just representing themselves they are representing Bahamas".

The Bahamas athlete, who made her Olympic debut at the Atlanta Games in 1996, is returning to school. She already is involved in coaching.

"I have been coaching high school for five years now so I am back and forth coaching high schools and doing school," Sturup said.



40% of Bahamian students exposed to illegal drugs ~ survey

NASSAU, The Bahamas, CMC - A survey has found that as many as 40 percent of students attending both the

within the past year, 28.6 percent did so on a weekly or more frequent basis.

The survey showed, however, that the "proportion of students receiving drug prevention education in schools, was at an unacceptably low level, was not universally implemented within schools, and varied its coverage's across schools".



Bahamian students are using marijuana.

private and public schools in The Bahamas have been exposed to drugs by friends who use the illicit substance.

The 2011 Secondary School Drug Prevalence Survey also indicated that 28.2 percent of all 12th Grade males had tried marijuana at least once in their lifetime and that males were using marijuana at more than double the rate of their female counterparts.

Additionally, of those who admitted smoking marijuana

NEED

National Security Minister Dr. Bernard Nottage said the results of the survey "speak to the need to implement and or strengthen substance abuse prevention programs in the primary schools with reinforcements continuing throughout the students' school career while ensuring that programs are age appropriate.

"The lives of too many of our young people, especially young men who had tremendous potential to contribute to the further development of this nation, have been cut

short due to their involvement in the illicit drug trade and the use of illicit drugs," he said.

He used the opening of an exhibition to commemorate International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking to caution students and adults to stay away from the sale, distribution and/or use of illicit drugs.

"The call goes out to all Bahamians and residents of The Bahamas alike, not to involve yourselves in the trafficking, sale and/or use of illicit drugs (as) to do so would most probably result in arrest, conviction and incarceration and worse, the loss of your health, well-being and life and that of family members and friends," said Nottage.

"...Drugs and crime are a waste of time. Therefore I suggest to you that you put your minds to positive activities..."

- Edited from CMC.



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Bolt, Rihanna among Forbes's most powerful celebrities

NEW YORK - Two Caribbean celebrities are among the most powerful globally, according to **Forbes** magazine.

Barbadian singer and actress Rihanna, who burst on to the world stage in 2005 with her "Music Of The Sun" debut album, is at number 13 on the list compiled annually by Forbes, while the world's fastest human Usain St. Leo Bolt is at number 48 with \$24 million.



Rihanna

"RiRi", as she is known, took home \$43 million last year, but shone brighter than most celebrities for her press and social media ranks, at number one and two, respectively. But the rank was a marked drop for Rihanna, who the year before was

named by Forbes as the fourth most powerful celebrity of 2012, with earnings of \$53 million between May 2011 and May 2012.

Rihanna's work has earned her numerous awards and accolades, including six Grammy Awards, five American Music Awards, 22 Billboard Music Awards, and two BRIT Awards. She has sold more than 100 million records worldwide, which makes her one of the best-selling artists of all time. She has achieved 12 number one singles on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, the youngest solo artist to achieve the feat. Billboard named her the Digital Songs Artist of the 2000s decade, ranking her 17th overall.



Bolt

Last year, TIME magazine named Rihanna one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World.

BOLT

Bolt is making his debut on the Forbes list. He introduced himself to the world at the 2008 Olympic Games when he set world records in the 100 meters and 200 meters.

Bolt earns less in actual prize money than he does cashing in on endorsements, appearance fees and sponsor bonuses for record race times. He is among the top 40 highest paid athletes in the world.

Meanwhile, Puerto Rican American actress and singer Jennifer Lopez came in at one rank above Rihanna, at number 12 with earnings of \$45 million.

- Edited from *News Americas*.



Jr. Gong, Allison Hinds among headliners for N.Y.'s Jamboree

The annual Irie Jamboree Caribbean Fever Music Festival, featuring some of the top performers from the region, will be held over three days on Labor Day weekend in New York City.



Jr. Gong

The three-day festival, with Jr. Gong Marley and Allison Hinds listed among the headline performers, begins on Aug. 30 and ends on Sept. 1 at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn.

Jr. Gong is no stranger to international success. His 2005 monster hit "Welcome to Jamrock", from the Grammy Award-winning album of the same name, was listed as one of the "Top 100 Songs Of The Decade" by **Rolling Stone**

Magazine. It also topped music charts in Canada, the Caribbean and Europe.



Hinds

Soca star Allison Hinds is confirmed to perform on "Carnival Mania" - day two of the festival. The "Queen of Soca" began her reign as lead vocalist of the

Square One Band. She made her mark with "Raggamuffin" and "In the Meantime". The British-born, Barbadian star re-emerged on a remix of Kevin Lyttle's "Turn Me On", which became a worldwide hit. The success of the track paved the way for her solo career with the hit "Roll It Gal" from her debut album "Soca Queen".



Ziggy Marley wins Emmy Award

NEW YORK - Jamaican-born reggae star Ziggy Marley has added an Emmy Award to his list of distinguished honors. The eldest son of late reggae legend Robert Nesta Marley won the Emmy for outstanding original song, writing the music and lyrics for "I Love You Too" for the Disney Channel show "3rd & Bird!"



Marley

The singer already has four Grammys. The song for the show came following his children's album "Family

he "never expected it, but it feels good."

"3rd & Bird" is a British television program aimed at young children. It revolves around a community of birds and their adventures. The series is described as "a charming new animated series all about community."

- Edited from *News Americas*.



Time" in 2009. Ziggy, in commenting on the honor, told the **Jamaica Observer** newspaper,

'Portraits by Four Caribbean Artists' exhibition in Florida

The works of four South Florida-based artists with Caribbean roots are currently being displayed at the African-American Research Library and Cultural Center (AARLCC) in Fort



Curtis

Lauderdale.

The exhibition, which began last month and runs through July and is called "Portraits by Caribbean

Artists", features artists Phillip Curtis, Shernett Muhammad, Melissa Aldana and Courtney Henderson, whose images are inspired by their Caribbean heritage.



Aldana

Curtis paints portraits, jazz musicians and sports scenes. He studied in New York City at the Fashion Institute of Technology and the Art Student League. He was a courtroom artist for the trials of Jim Baker and Manuel Noriega. He lives and works in the Sail Boat Bend Arts Loft in Fort Lauderdale.

Muhammad is a visual artist and concept painter. At age 12, shortly after moving from Jamaica to Florida, she discovered a love for drawing. She graduated from the Art

Institute of Fort Lauderdale and pursued a career in fashion illustration. She gained experience in graphic design, portrait painting, custom design painting and created and exhibited thematic



Henderson

paintings.

Aldana was born in Barbados and currently lives in South Florida. She is an art graduate of Simon's Rock of

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14A)

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ST. VINCENT'S 'MISS CARNIVAL



Leslassa Armour-Shillingford on June 28 won the "Miss Carnival" pageant in St. Vincent, less than two months after she emerged first runner-up in the "Miss Caribbean World" pageant held in the British Virgin Islands. The Dominican beauty also captured the "Miss Photogenic", "Best Talent", "Best Evening Wear" and "Best Interview" awards in the competition that attracted contestants from the English and Spanish speaking Caribbean.

Caribbean writers for 'South Florida Book Festival'

Several writers with strong Caribbean roots are among peers and sports celebrities scheduled to participate in this month's "South Florida Book Festival" in Fort Lauderdale.

The event, sponsored by the Urban League of Broward County and the Friends of the African-American Research Library and Cultural Center, will be hosted by the AARLCC July 26 and 27.

"Women Writers of Haitian Descent", featuring authors Marie Ketsia Theodore-Pharel, Mahalia Solages, Michele-Jessica



Farquharson-Morgan

Fievre and Joanne Hyppolite will be among the writers.

Theodore-Pharel writes children's books and short stories.

Solages authors picture books and women's fiction. Fievre writes mystery novels and children's books in French and Hyppolite is a museum curator in Miami and author of children's novels and short stories.

'TESTIMONIES'

Also scheduled is Jamaican-born author, editor and publisher Suzette Farquharson-Morgan, president of FarMor Group, Inc.



Hyppolite

In 2002 she wrote her first book "Living Testimonies", which she published in 2005 through FarMor Publishing.

Other authors expected at the event include mystery writer Angela Henry, who will conduct a workshop on how to write mystery stories, former basketball stars Tim Hardaway Earl "The Pearl" Monroe.

For more information, call the Youth Services section of the AARLCC at 954-357-6209. The general information number is 954-357-6210. The library is located at 2650 Sistrunk Boulevard.



Solages

Veteran stars line up for Curaçao's jazz festival

Some of the biggest names in show business are scheduled to perform at this year's Curaçao North Sea Jazz Festival.

The event, slated for Aug. 30 and 31 in the World Trade Center - Piscadera Bay, will feature a mix of jazz, blues, pop, soul, R&B, rock, Latin and gospel music. Scheduled performers include Usher, Diana Ross, Gladys Knight, The Roots, Erykah Badu, Marc Anthony, Toto, Luis Miguel, Raphael Saadiq, Los Lobos, Harry Belafonte, Paul Anka, Sonny Rollins and New Cool Collective.

Leading up to the festival, a variety of free concerts and events will take place around the island.

"The Curaçao North Sea Jazz Festival is growing into one of the best music festivals in the world," said Andre Rojer, marketing manager North America, Curaçao Tourist Board, in a recent press release. "...Curaçao is truly now an A-list destination for



Usher

music and cultural tourism in the Caribbean."

For more information about travel packages to

attend the festival, visit www.curaçaojazzpackages.com

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'Portraits by Four Caribbean Artists' exhibition in Florida

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13A)

Bard College and has shown her paintings at the Museum of Art in Fort Lauderdale and the Girls' Club Art Fallout. "I love to paint fish," she says. "They are so at-home and fluid in their home, the water. I could paint them forever."

Henderson is a photographer. She took her first photography class as an undergraduate. Since earning her

bachelor's degree in journalism and working in photojournalism, she has lived and taught in Germany, Ohio and Hawaii. The majority of her landscape portfolio is from international travel, as well as Hawaii, New York and South Florida.

For more information, call the AARLCC at 954-357-6190.

FIU, Susan G. Komen unite to promote breast health

MIAMI, Florida – The Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine (HWCOC) at Florida International University is partnering with the Susan G. Komen for the Cure® Miami/Fort Lauderdale to promote breast health and early diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer in underserved populations of North Miami Dade.

“This relationship will help us deliver on our mission to address community needs in North Miami,” Dr. Carolyn Runowicz, HWCOC executive associate dean for academic affairs, said in a recent press release to announce the partnership. “The alarming rate of presentation in advanced stage breast cancer will be impacted by this partnership.”

Figures from the Florida Cancer Data System show women in north Miami-Dade County are affected by high rates of late stage breast cancer, resulting in an alarming statistic: a 52 percent breast cancer-related mortality rate, in comparison to the state of

Florida and the national rate of 40 percent.

ACCESS

“This high incidence can be attributed to lack of access to service for screening and follow up in our medically underserved communities,” said project director Iveris Martinez, assistant professor and chief of the division of medicine and society, department of humanities, health, and society. “Educating our future physicians in the barriers local women face to access will be key to addressing disparities in the long term.”

The HWCOC’s Miami Breast Health Initiative is also working with The Beautiful Gate Cancer Support and Research Center in Miami Gardens to train medical students on cancer risk, disparities, barriers to care, and strategies for educating vulnerable women about the importance of early detection and early mammography and follow-up for uninsured women.

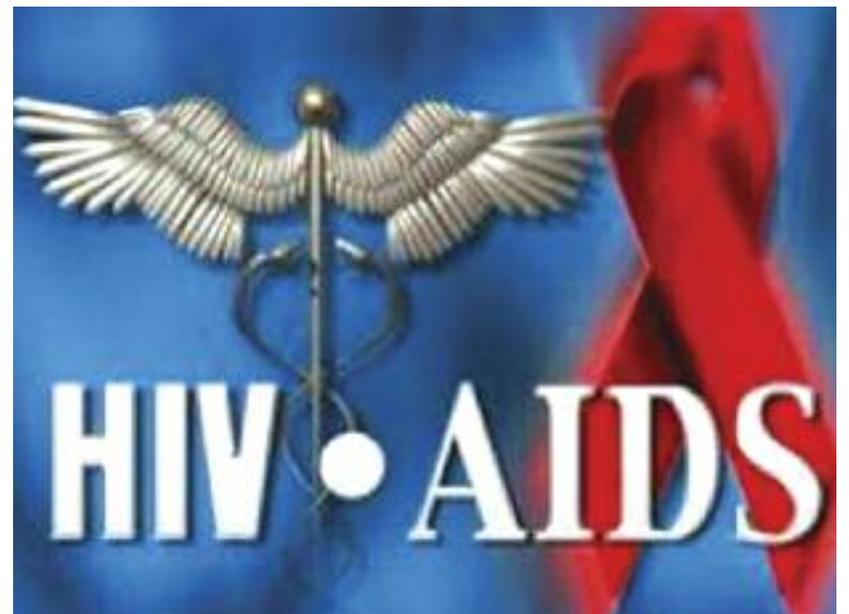


Challenges remain in Caribbean HIV/AIDS fight ~ experts

ATLANTA, Georgia – Caribbean American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day was observed in the United States last month with two experts indicating that, despite significant progress, many challenges remain in addressing the epidemic in the Caribbean.

“Although tremendous progress has been achieved in the Caribbean region, and we have the tools needed to achieve an AIDS-free generation, many challenges remain,” said Dr. Rachel Albalak and Dr. Jean Wysler Domercant of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Albalak, director of CDC’s Caribbean regional office, and Domercant, acting director of clinical services, noted in a statement that the Caribbean has higher HIV rates than any region outside of the sub-Saharan Africa “though the epidemic is relatively small.” They said that, in 2011, an estimated 230,000 people were living with the virus in the Caribbean and that AIDS is the leading cause of death among people



between the ages 29 and 59.

PREVALENCE

The experts said the HIV epidemic varies across the region, but is mostly concentrated in key groups such as men who have sex with men and sex workers. The two experts pointed to studies that show that men who have sex with men account for an estimated 30 percent of the new HIV infections in Jamaica “making this the group at the highest risk of HIV infection.”

They said that prevalence rates in the general population in the Caribbean range from a low of one percent in Suriname to a high of 2.8 percent in The Bahamas.

The experts said that HIV affects young women 1.2 to three times more than young males in The Bahamas and Barbados, while in Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago “the reverse is true.

- Edited from CMC.



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WINNING WORK



Neysha Soodeen, right, managing director of Tote Bagai Publishing Company, producer of MACO publications, is this year's recipient of the Marcella Martinez Award. The presentation was made by the Jamaica Tourist Board's Deputy Director of Tourism Donnie Dawson during the joint Caribbean Tourism Organization/Jamaica Tourist Board Allied Members luncheon in New York, held as part of last month's "Caribbean Week" activities. Established in 2004, the Marcella Martinez Award is presented annually for unparalleled achievement in the design and implementation of successful programs to strengthen and support Caribbean tourism. The award is named in honor of Jamaican Marcella Martinez who dedicated her career as a public relations professional to the promotion of tourism to the Caribbean. Soodeen has been showcasing the Caribbean to an international readership for 15 years through MACO Caribbean Living, as well as MACO Destinations, a magazine she launched in 2003 to feature the Caribbean from a holistic perspective. The Marcia Vickery-Wallace Award, presented to a journalist promoting the Caribbean, went to Gay Nagle Myers, senior editor of "Travel Weekly".

New airline service from Haiti to serve Jamaica, Turks and Caicos

Sunrise Airways, a new airline based in Port-au-Prince and currently serves domestic routes within Haiti, is planning to expand in the Caribbean.

According to a press release issued by SBPR Corp., a South Florida-based public relations agency, the carrier plans to expand its route network in 2013 by launching service to Kingston, Jamaica and Providenciales, Turks and Caicos as first steps toward establishing a hub in Port-au-Prince to serve air travel in the western Caribbean.

"While the Eastern Caribbean has long been well-served by hub operations in



San Juan, we here in the west have generally been forced to endure lengthy connections outside the region," Philippe Bayard, president of Sunrise Airways, was quoted

as saying in the release.

"Sunrise Airways aims to change the old paradigm, creating enhanced, more efficient air service options for business and leisure travelers in our corner of the region, while also boosting business development and tourism prospects here in Haiti."

SBPR will provide marketing communications services for Sunrise Airways, which operates a 19-seat Jetstream 32 EP aircraft manufactured by BAE Systems.



TV channel brings 24-hour cricket to Caribbean

FREEPORT, Bahamas, CMC - A television channel that broadcasts cricket around the clock is being made available to viewers in the Caribbean.

Ten Cricket is being launched as the first all-cricket station for television viewers in the Caribbean as a result of a programming partnership with Columbus International Inc. The channel will showcase several series, including

the Celkon Cup Tri Nation One Day International Series, currently being played in the region.

The partnership will enable cricket fans across the region to see the broadcast of all home and away matches, played by teams representing West Indies, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, Pakistan and South Africa. Ten Cricket's 24-hour programming will

include live and repeat broadcasts of major matches, such as Test, one-day internationals and T20.

Ten Cricket will be exclusively broadcast on Flow in Jamaica, Trinidad, Grenada, Barbados, St. Lucia, Antigua and St. Vincent.

- Edited from CMC.



American black hotel owners' summit in Miami July 24-27

An opportunity to learn about the hospitality business will be available in South Florida this month during the 17th annual "International African American Hotel Ownership and Investment Summit and Trade Show" in Miami.

Between July 24 and 27 at the Marriott Miami Biscayne Bay Hotel, African American hotel owners, hospitality industry professionals and international and national leaders are expected to offer information on being a hotel owner or investor, how to supply goods and services to hotels, and management and employment opportunities.

The event's theme is "Networking-Connect for a Lifetime". It is being presented by the National Association of Black Hotel Owners, Operators

& Developers (NABHOOD), Black Meetings and Tourism Magazine and Horizons Marketing Group.

The summit is designed to educate attendees on becoming a hotel owner or investor, share minority investment trends, explore supplier opportunities, how to market to minorities and diversity issues affecting the industry.

The summit opens with the NABHOOD/HBCU Scholarship Deep Sea Fishing and Shark Tournament to raise money for minority hospitality students. An orientation program, workshops and a NABHOOD Career Fair and Job Expo are also on the summit's agenda.



Regional travel challenges top CARICOM's agenda in July

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC - The challenges of regional travel was expected to be placed on the front burner at a meeting of heads of government from across the Caribbean community (CARICOM) this month.

The CARICOM meeting, which coincides with the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Chaguaramas, was scheduled to be held here July 4-6.

In the aftermath of a meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) held in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in May, several recommendations were made and these will be discussed at the 34th CARICOM Heads of Government Conference.

According to CARICOM, the ministers will recommend

the reintroduction of the Single Domestic Space (SDS) that was established for Cricket World Cup in 2007, as one of the measures to provide some relief to those traversing the community. Among the features of the SDS that involved the participation of 10 CARICOM member states was freedom of movement for all domestic travelers and a special visa stamped at the first port of entry for travelers from outside the region to allow hassle free movement among the participating SDS states.

COTED also agreed to recommend to the heads of government that they support the proposed LIAT application to the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) for the required financing to meet the costs of its re-fleeting exercise.



New documentary focuses on St. Vincent's Garifuna people

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent - A new film by Andrea Leland is focusing on the Garifuna people and their culture in the Caribbean nation of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Filmmaker Leland, who produced "The Garifuna Journey", has just launched a crowd funding campaign for her upcoming film "Yurumein", which focuses on the revival of Garifuna culture in St. Vincent.

For the past 200 years, Garifuna/Carib culture had been all but lost on the island of St. Vincent. The indigenous

Garifuna, descendants of Carib and Arawak and West African people, once lived freely on the island of St. Vincent for hundreds of years. After the defeat of their chief Chatoyer most were forced into hiding and eventually exiled by British colonial forces during the 18th century. Only a handful remained in hiding in St. Vincent.

Edited from News Americas. Watch a trailer for the film at www.cid.mimoona.com/Projects/477.



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SPORT



Caribbean quartet bow into CONCACAF Gold Cup soccer

Four Caribbean nations will this month compete in the 2013 CONCACAF Gold soccer tournament to be staged in the United States.

Cuba, Haiti, Martinique and Trinidad and Tobago are among 12 teams seeking to become champions of the Caribbean, North America and Central America region.

Cuba has been placed in a group with Costa Rica, Belize and the U.S. The Spanish-speaking nation will open tournament play against Costa Rica on July 9. Martinique bows into the tournament on July 7 against Canada. Both T&T and Haiti play on July 8, with the Soca Warriors facing El Salvador and Haiti against Honduras.

Martinique plays Panama on July 11. The fol-

lowing day T&T and Haiti clash. Cuba faces the U.S. on July 13.

Group play winds up when Mexico plays Martinique on July 14, Honduras faces T&T on July 15, Haiti versus El Salvador on July 15, and Cuba faces Belize on July 16.

The quarter finals begin on July 20 and the semi-finals on July 24. The final is set for July 28.

Going into the tournament, T&T has hired a new technical director and head coach. Leo Beenhakker, who took T&T to the 2005 World Cup, is the technical director. T&T native Stephen Hart, a former Canada national team coach, is the new head coach.



VCB suspended, awaits disciplinary panel

Jamaica's Olympic and World Champion sprinter Veronica Campbell-Brown has tested positive for a banned substance.

Campbell-Brown has denied knowingly committing the offense. However, she has been suspended by the sport's governing body in her country pending a hearing.

Both her "A" and "B" samples showed traces of a banned diuretic. The samples were taken after she competed in Kingston, Jamaica on May 4.

Campbell-Brown's first public reaction to the test

results came in the form of a statement released by her On Track Management (OTM) group. The OTM statement noted Campbell-Brown is determined to clear her name and included a public apology to



Campbell-Brown

her family, supporters and sponsors for "any embarrassment".

"Her faith which rest not in device or creed will see her through this dark period," noted the OTM statement.

OTM's release followed a statement from the Jamaica Athletics Administration Association (JAAA) confirming that the Jamaican sprinter was suspended from competition pending the findings of a disciplinary panel that will hear her case.

Campbell-Brown is expected to miss next month's 14th IAAF World Championships in Athletics in Moscow.



T&T female star signs with U.S. pro soccer league

WASHINGTON, D.C. - A Trinidad and Tobago woman has secured a contract with United States top flight National Women's Soccer League.

Striker Kennya Cordner

last month signed with Washington's Seattle Reign FC after a successful stint with the club's reserve team. The 24-year-old T&T international has been handed an uphill task of helping to lift the struggling

club in the eight-team table in the league's inaugural season.

"To be honest I prayed for this day all my life," said Cordner, a two-time T&T female footballer of the year. "And, yes I am excited to represent this club to the best of my ability. I want to prove that signing me was worth it."



Cordner

IMPRESSIVE

Cordner, a Tobago native, impressed Reign FC's staff after scoring and providing an assist in her debut with the reserve team. The Trinidadian footballer enjoyed a run of four goals in three matches and was given an opportunity to shine in a team which has struggled to score this season. Reign is in the cellar position.

"Now I have to prove to the world my worth playing professionally among some of the best, and to open doors for the younger T&T female footballers to get the same opportunity as I did," said Cordner.

"The reason why I'm here today is because I never gave (up) on my dreams...I work hard every single day and with God's guidance I was able to make it to the big stage."

- Edited from CMC.



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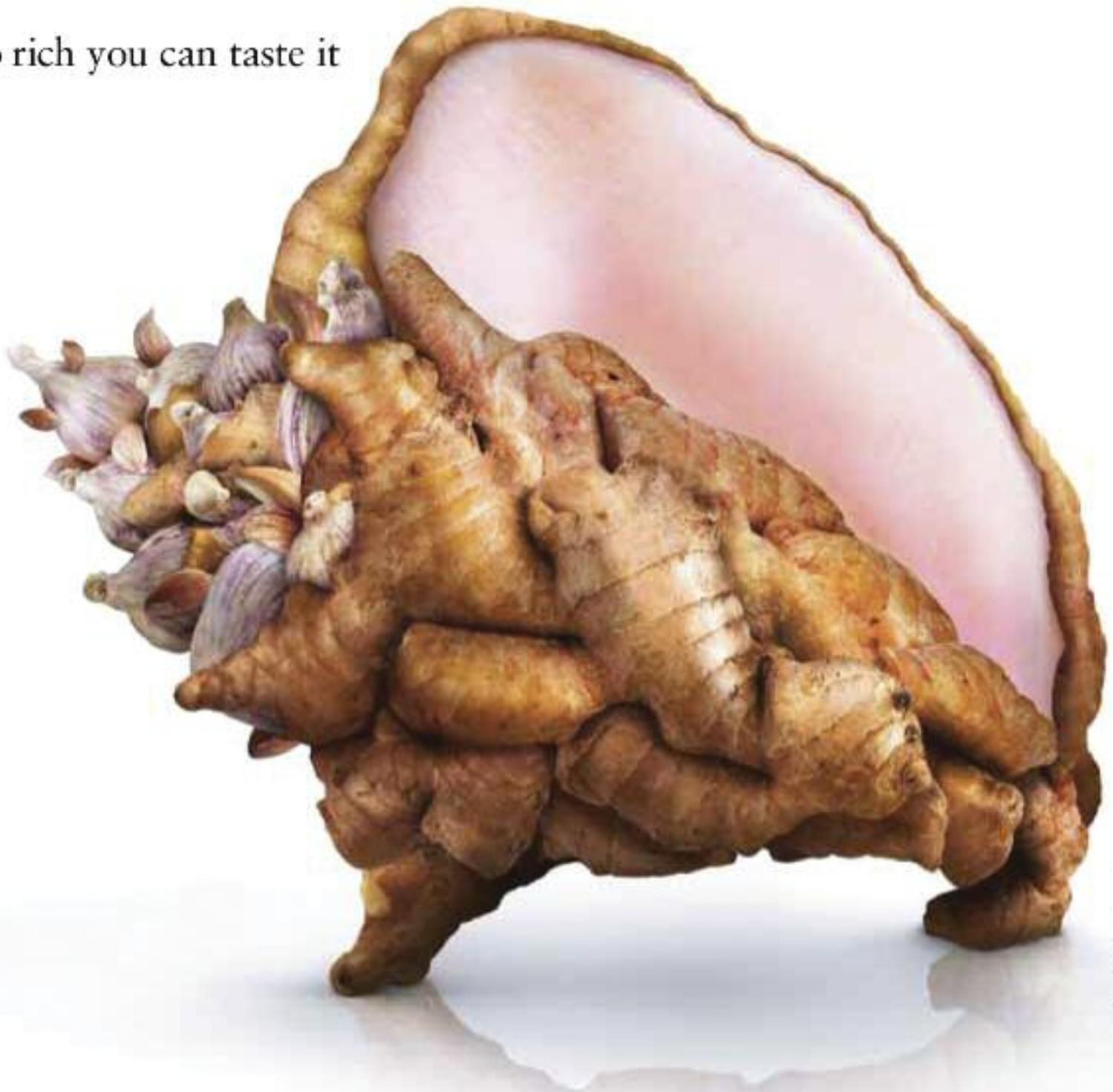
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