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Monster Balls



New Foreign Minister "International Velvet"

Extremely rough political plays are dominating the current political scene in Belize. There have been numerous cabinet shuffles, at least 10 since Musa/Fonseca took control of the country's affairs in 1998. And there have been public hearings into the highly disturbing "money matters" that dominate the administration, especially at the Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and the Social Security Board (SSB).

Elsewhere in this edition we have a long list of former ministers who have been shuffled out of the inner circle deck over the past nine years (see page 5). But it doesn't begin to tell the true story of the Courtenays' losses in 2007.

First it was brother David, Vice Chairman of the DFC, who died in few weeks ago in a rather mysterious accident where a diesel SUV exploded in a ball of flames and consumed the lone occupant. Police

forensics assured the public almost immediately that the dental records confirmed the identity of the occupant. See photo of the vehicle the diesel burnt... provided by an official and credible source.

Then, at the General Assembly of the Organization of American States in Panama, in front of all the foreign ministers and US Secretary of State (not to mention the international media), brother Eamon is unceremoniously defrocked of his lofty ministerial position, representing Belize, the member state.

What's next? The former foreign minister says he may run for elected office as a PUP — but after the elections next year. He insinuated that the PUP would lose in 08 and he would then have the political latitude to stake out an electoral division. That is our inference anyway.

Lest we forget, it was former Belize Ambassador to the USA, Lisa Marie Shoman, who as Chairlady of the SSB (above), informed the Chief Justice that the SSB was no longer interested in enforcing the high court's ruling to collect a \$3.34 million that the law firm of W.H. Courtenay & Co owed. Public perception was that this was a favour to the Courtenays, immediately after the PUP took office in August, 1998. Or was it?

Mr. Eamon, the honorable gentleman he is, suggests in his local TV interviews that the Honorable former Chairlady of BTL (fourth cap) will have a difficult time at the Ministry given all that lies ahead. The lady it appears, is ready for the challenge her uncle Assad assumed on more than one occasion and also the position her ex, Hon Godfrey Smith, assumed in between. Seems like she was tailor made



Despecho? Not at all, says former Foreign Minister.

for the post. Or least, well groomed for it.

We have every confidence the lady ambassador will do well as Foreign Minister with the level of support she is expected to get from: Uncle Assad, Godfather Said, ex Godfrey, and the host of "Assadistas" in the Belize Foreign Service, specifically and at the min-

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Fish Kill in Orange Walk



Fish kill on the New River near the Tower Hill sugar factory has alarmed Orange Walk environmentalists. (See story in Tidbits on Page 3)

100 escape death on Hummingbird Hwy



FC Belize MVP goalie Charlie Slusher (striped shirt) carries his infant daughter as he clammers from Leslie Rogers' bus, which ran off the Hummingbird Highway on Magnetic Hill at mile 27 at 10:30 PM Sunday night.

(See Story on Page 3)

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Letters

Avoid Camel boy slurs

Dear Editor,

I live in Norway and read your paper every week online. Great graphic and generally great paper. This week I take issue with the Meb Cutlack column, however, viz:

..on page 9 above the zoo ad, lose 'camel' in "camel boy", or, apologize in a meaningful way to your Muslim and Arab readers.

..keep in mind "we the Europeans" have all the nukes in about the same way the Nazis had all the gas at Auschwitz, and any sane person looking at the sh—t going on in Iraq and Afghanistan can see who is waging war on who and what.

I see no need to pitch the Independent-Reformer against any religion nor any race. So fix what you can, promptly, this will help ease and cure the damage done. Mistakes are forgivable when fixed. Racism is not.

..then, carry on going after Said Musa. ..med vennlig hilsen, with kind regards from Arnt

Monster Balls



David Courtenay's Toyota Land Cruiser was charred to a crisp after it is alleged he ran off the highway and hit a light pole.

☛ (Continued From Page 1)

try. Expect however to see the CEO, Amalia Mai, sent out to an insignificant Ambassadorial posting. And only the Lord knows what will happen to former UN Ambassador Stewart Leslie.

The new Foreign Minister had indicated to the journalist Nathan Gothman from El Haaretz in 2002 in Washington that she is anxious to tackle the Israel/Palestine issues if ever provided the opportunity. We hope she remembers Belize, the country she lives in, shuld

come before the country her family comes from...

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TOPICAL TIDBITS

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Freight	\$0.0700	\$0.0700	\$0.0700	\$0.0700
Additive	\$0.0019	\$0.0019	\$0.0019	\$0.0019
GST	\$0.8149	\$0.8069	\$0.5186	\$0.5911
BC Pump	\$10.00	\$9.90	\$6.35	\$7.30

International Velvet

She's smooth as silk, or should we say velvet? Ambassador to the US Lisa Shoman slid right over to the chair next to her in Panama last week and took over Belize's Foreign Ministry when Foreign Minister Eamon Courtenay "resigned" in solidarity with his old college roommate and cabinet ally DPM Johnny Briceno. It all happened right in the middle of the OAS General Assembly. The moves left no doubt in the minds of the entire assembly about Musa's inability to keep his government together and his desperation at having to recruit relatives of his best friend and advisor Assad Shoman to step into the breach. What those on the outside don't know is that Lisa Shoman, as Chairman of the Belize Social Security Board, told the courts SSB had no further interest in trying to recover \$3.4 Million from W.H. Courtenay and Company. ..Immediately after the 1998

elections. Now she is collecting... fancy shoes to walk all over former buddies? Lets see how soon the CEO gets stepped on, again.

Trying to unseat the King?

The Northern Caucus powerhouse was "coronated" last time around at the PUP Orange Walk convention. But now the dastardly duo have decided to discipline him for voicing objections to the carte blanche way in which the British Lord is allowed to rule over the PUP. Johnny is standing up for core party values so it's a silly move to give him the rinse. Johnny's media empire has as much clout in the north as the Hydes have in the City. To take Johnny down, they'll have to take down the radio & tv stations and SMART. And this is precisely where the British Lord may be of assistance. What he has been doing to KREM is child's play....

Fish Kill in Orange Walk

The Environmental Protection Society, NEPS, founded only a year ago is reporting a fish kill in the river between the Orange Walk Toll Bridge and Orange Walk Town. It is believed pollution from the sugar processing plant is responsible. NEPS has spent the past

several months on a cleaning campaign in San Jose Nuevo Palmar, Tower Hill, Chan Pine Ridge, and Louisiana Nature Park all in the Orange walk District. NEPS is a non-governmental and non profit organization which sustains itself through fundraising.

100 escape death on Hummingbird Hwy

100 FC Belize players and fans returning home to Belize City after winning the 2007 RFG Cup championship in Dangriga, narrowly escaped tragedy when the bus in which they were travelling ran off the Hummingbird Highway on 'Magnetic Hill' around 10:30 PM on Sunday night.

The bus driver lost control when his brakes failed as he reversed down the hill. The bus had been pushed to the extreme, as in addition to being overloaded with 100 passenger; it was also towing an empty 20-seater tour bus, which the bus owner Leslie Rogers insisted on towing to Belize City. The transmission of the 20-seater had failed as it returned to Belize City with an under-12 boys team, who were to have played an exhibition match before the semipro championship.

The team players, their wives, girlfriends, children, and fans had already got off the bus twice and walked up two big hills when the bigger bus was unable to climb the hills while towing the smaller bus. They count themselves lucky to have escaped with their lives when the bus partially flipped on its side in the gully beside the road after it ran off the pavement.

FC Belize striker Jerome "Jaro" James suffered a blow to the head and number of other passengers suffered numerous contusions as the panicked passengers scrambled madly to exit the bus, which they feared might overturn and fall further. Two U-12 players were injured exiting the bus. Some suffered leg injuries as they jumped from the windows. The passengers were stranded for hours until help arrived.

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Senate Sensation



By: Karla Heusner Vernon

If you had told me four years ago that in 2007 Belizeans would be passionately debating whether or not this country should have an elected Senate, I would not have believed you. When Godwin Hulse and Francis Gegg and Hipolito Bautista, and a few others, (and forgive me for omitting you) were putting forth their positions on the radio and print media, most Belizeans either yawned or tuned out. I admit, I was one of them.

Perhaps it took some flares being set off in the Senate itself and the broadcast of the proceedings to alert us to their plight. It was shocking and eye opening to discover despite their

enthusiasm and zeal to serve their country, some of the senators are beginning to realize there are limitations on what they can and can not do. They have

their duty to pass anything that is put in their hands. Shut up and do as you are told....

It is a testimony to our increas-

“People who are morally bankrupt are bankrupting the nation.”

begun to chomp at the bit a bit and ponder the possibilities of better governance. To ask themselves how they might perform, if their performance was not almost predetermined by their very appointment and the interests which appointed them.

They have caused the rest of us to wonder too.

As heartening as this all is, it has been equally disheartening to observe those senators who rise and support motions and bills they do not understand, have not even read, or asked to read. It is disturbing to hear some senators dismiss the concerns of their fellows or imply that it is not their job to question, but rather

ing political maturity that Belizeans, both inside and outside the Senate chamber, now want more from this important component of the legislature. A movement that now has grassroots support as well as the of a few elite intellectuals.

Amazingly, the debate has become so intense it now consumes a good portion of time on the morning talk shows, and some of the evening ones. People are even getting personal with each other over it— one host last week implying another was an Uncle Tom for not supporting an elected senate, and wondering aloud whether

Belize was “had the political maturity to handle it.” (I believe the same caution was voiced about Independence.)

The leader of the Opposition is under intense scrutiny for his own position against an elected senate and all of the aspiring alternative parties have been forced to state their own stance on the issue. Interestingly, the Prime Minister appears to have escaped any questions about how he feels. At least I have missed it if he has... No doubt they will get around to it, or he will get around to issuing an official position, as the real election campaign begins. For make no mistake, the elected Senate issue will be a campaign issue in 2008. (Yes, it appears the PM is going to hold out on us.sigh!....)

My own view, if you care to know it, is that yes, an elected Senate may serve an important role in terms of checks and balances in the system, and having these elections in between the General would be key, BUT un-

(Please Turn To Page 13)



Don't worry, International Velvet will take the jumps easily, just give her free reign. But, P.M., she won't make it with all this weight! You guys will have to _ _ _ _ Off! Or resign! whatever!

What Dreams Are Made Of



By: Trevor Vernon

The People's United Party was founded in the last century by some giants of the time who had to stand up to the colonial masters. This was their reason for banding together and harnessing the anti-colonial energies in the colony at that time. Or so it seemed. They so passionately disliked the Englishman they rushed to go study in London and marry the Englishman's daughters. Hell of a paradox.

Most thinking people could be supportive of the early PUP's cause: Home Rule. But although Belize is now independent of Britain, some things have remained the same. We are still controlled by one man with all the powers of the Governors of old (and then some) who operates with the bold and unrepentant blessing of a political party that controls the land under the direction of UK trained lawyers, with British born wives and children possessing British passports while they are acquiring foreign owned properties in the US, UK and elsewhere.

Today's PUP hardly resembles the one created by Goldson, Richardson, Price & Pollard. This is no longer the PUP that drew its support from the unions of the Colony. This modern day PUP has no use for the labor unions. Absolutely none. They, not unlike other fascist leaders, have turned their backs on their own roots and taken deadly aim at their own history. Those early PUP founders would never be cutting self-enrichment deals with the British Lords, much less flying in their private planes. Or would they?

For we hear that even Mr. Price, Belize's first PM, recently accepted special lifts from the overbearing British Lord to go pick up awards in the Caribbean. We don't believe it but that's what we hear. Hell of a thing. Can you believe that? No disrespect to Mr. Price intended.

But Rt. Hon. Price has been retired; enter the self described Kipling's man of Palestinian ancestry, Musa. He massaged the process to become Prime Minister with Fonseca, the after dark PM, at his side. One hell of a leader they have been within their little cabal. It couldn't have been an easy task to climb that far and that fast. Lots of sacrificial offerings litter that road to glory and now we have more bodies falling by the wayside as their old school, Panamanian styled political training, kicks in fully.

Price in his time was a one man show. His deputies came and went like a change of underwear. Now we have Musa & Ralph, inseparable, like Siamese twins joined at the head (or is it the tail?). This brings us to the drama we face in Belize today with constant change of the generals and troops. Ministers and ranking supporters (elected or not) have been dropping like konkas since the twins took control of the party. A brief body count:

- 1) Chanona, A (not a minister yet; was roughed up at a convention to favor Moises Cal aka Panama briefcase man)
- 2) Aranda, Ted (former UDP leader who had turned PUP)
- 3) Canton, Henry (retired after one term as PUP Minister to take up job in citrus sector)
- 4) Silva, Dan (walked off into the sunset)
- 5) Marin, F (retiring next year, after 8 years on the back bench)
- 6) Burgos, Dave (sunset bound)
- 7) Espot, Jorge (remember him?)
- 8) Hyde, Cordel (owns Lake Eye Division)
- 9) Court, Eamon (party animal who owns street & court muscle)
- 10) Espot, Mark (former popular tourism minister)
- 11) Briceno, John (owns the entire OW divisions)
- 12) Samuels, Maxx (sunset grill)
- 13) Dolores Balderamos Garcia (made AIDS ambassador while losing ministerial rank)

14) Dickie B (never won at the polls but got high posts anyway)

15) Cawich, Agripino (deceased, RIP, a decent man but ran for PUP even though dying)

16) Sylvester, Louis (now UDP; former PUP party chairman)

17) Hunter, Federico (still loyal pup; ex-business senator, former works minister)

18) Castillo, Valdemar (gone to the free zone in latest shuffle)

19) Urbina, Lito (kicked out and turned UDP, like Sylvester)

20) Carlos Diaz (he rents out portable toilets now; party animal)

21) Sam Waight (whatever happened to him?)

22) Shoman, Assad (on scholarship in London with incredible perks courtesy the Belizean taxpayer, former Foreign Minister)

23) Senior Minister Price (forced retirement compliments of G. Smith. No portfolio but who needs none with the punch he packs?)

24) Patricia Arceo (a charming lady "disappeared" from cabinet 7 shuffles ago)

25) Hon Remijio Montejo, (a people's man... pushed out before he passed away)

26) RAY Lightburn (never a minister, but squeezed out ...after running hard for PUP against the super successful politician M. Finnigan nee Myvett)

27) We still have Hon Hector Silva (off and on PUP senator in Musa admin

but retired from elective politics. Does he ever have stories to share. He needs to write a book.)

28) The Great San Perdomo (still alive and kicking but retired from elective politics. Has businesses in Belmopan.)

29) Moises Cal (retired before the race started because of Panama incident, despite beating Chanona in a convention)

30) Glen Godfrey (former Attorney Gen & Tourism Minister who oversaw the offshore laws that made Michael Ashcroft King almost two decades ago.)

31) Big man Polo Briceno (truly Kipling's man, now retired.)

Now after all this, the PUP issues a government release to say that their party will be holding a national convention on July First, 2007, to do what we don't know and don't really care. Let them figure out it on their own for as they say: politics is the art of accommodation.

Who will rise and who will fall isn't even public spectacle anymore. We've seen enough and had enough of it. The people deserve to be treated better; they've had enough of the charades and the parades, lower the damn consumption taxes, get rid of all these usurious fees on utilities and set the people free...or the body count will grow exponentially come zero eight. You don't need to have a heart to know this, just check up on what's left of your soul, Mr. Party Animal.

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Oil brings No Money just ill Effects Spanish Lookout Gets Hit 3 Ways

1. Too much oil greed
2. Too much pollution
3. Too much sickness

Since BNE drilled the first well over a year ago and discovered oil in Spanish Lookout the flow of oil has not stopped, neither has the polluting smoke that makes the people sick. To date **NO money has been paid for the royalty fees from the oil**, even though promises were made from the very beginning when BNE moved in and occupied the land. The pollution has affected approximately 12 families seriously on a daily basis. BNE does not yet know the extent of the health damage to the public.

For those that are not informed about oil business, here is some information. They will drill a hole over 3000 feet in the ground and put a pipe in and when they hit oil, they put a valve on top. There is a tremendous amount of pressure that pushes the oil out of the ground into a holding tank. From here it goes into the oil truck and is hauled to Big Creek port and sent to a foreign country in a barge. There is an excess of toxic gases that comes along with the oil flow which evaporates into the air by means of a pipe coming up which is lit fire to minimize the danger of "pollution". The flame is approximately 10 to 20 feet in height and throws off a dark cloud of toxic smoke that burns day and night.

This has been going on for over a year among the residents of Spanish Lookout. Those that live nearby have had to move away. Many complaints were made at the BNE's office and Government offices. At the very first when they opened the first well, they tried it without burning the gas, and that experiment almost killed two close-by residents in one night. Then they started to burn the gases. But the smoke attacks adult people's health to where they get nervous and affects the children in different ways. It also pollutes the rain water in the whole area so people can't use it for drinking anymore.

One of the most serious problems is when the wind shifted at night time while the people are asleep. The smoke blows into their homes, and they would not have time to evacuate. Every time people complain at the BNE office, they say, "We have checked with the proper authorities and we have the rights to do what we do. You guys complain too much." Other times they say, "The smoke will stop next month when we



Oil in Spanish Lookout but no royalties yet for this hard working community.

put a pipe in to pump the crude oil further away." Other times they say they would pay a certain amount each month for the damage. This went on month after month until the year ended. Now word goes around saying they will not pay anything because they have moved the flame two miles out of Spanish Lookout. But now the eastern breeze blows it right back over the area again. At this point no one knows the extent of permanent damage is being done to the people's health. Slow working toxins take a while until the disease appears.

Many have been going to doctors in the process but no money from BNE is as yet visible. The toxins of a well are called organic toxins, which are the worst and are known to cause cancer. **It seems like the Government cannot afford to hold the company to restrictions and regulations on pollution. What about citizen's rights and protection?**

According to talks it's more about saving Belize from going bankrupt. An oil expert from the US visited Spanish Lookout. He explained that the gases should go back into the well to keep up the pressure, or the gas could be used to run a gas powered light plant; not wasting energy nor causing pollution.

The BNE did run a light plant for a while, then stopped it for some reason. There is also a special apparatus to put on the pipe where the fire burns to minimize pollution which cost some \$3,000 but apparently BNE does not want to spend that money. It would seem that BNE is running behind on common respect and regulations. They came in as a small company and seemed to be friendly people, kindly asking for permission to access and possession of the land. But then their attitude soon changed. Now lately

they have sped up production to the point where record keeping is questionable. At present they are hauling some 25 semi-trailers loads of oil a day, a market value of 5 to 6 hundred thousand dollars a day.

While searching for oil they do seismic testing. It is not a rare thing to see how they invade any property. At times they move their machinery over people's land all over the place. When they meet up with an obstacle, such as a fence, they break down and don't bother to fix it again, causing cattle to come out of the pastures and damaging neighbors' property.

Any complaint for damage is looked on with indifference by BNE authorities. Many residents have not even bothered reporting because they deny their responsibilities of payments. On the other hand their PR are exploiting their rights, and try to show the public how they are making Belize a better country, even donating money to

hospitals in Belize. They go on headline news about making Belize better. But forget the damage they are causing to the residents of the area. They seem to not think too much about the development of the country but rather on the immediate cash money they can make.

Most company care a lot for public relations but this one makes you wonder why oil companies don't. I am sure they have heard about Belize being a good country and took it for what it seems to them. Maybe primitive, freedom and tolerance for all matters, freedom from laws being enforced, where money and a good front means more than friendship and health of the people, even to those that help them get rich and wealthy in material things. Let them go back to their classroom for a better PR lesson and maybe a health and environment lesson and throw in a Social Studies as well, if they can afford it.

We understand that BNE does not bring in any monthly report of the amount of oil being extracted to the Spanish Lookout Community.

Again, it makes you think that if a monthly report cannot be kept how will we know at the end of year how much it is, in this case it would be after two years, because they have not paid anything as yet for royalties and it is over one year that they have been extracting. Besides this there is always of the syndrome of forgetfulness.

The above is a Statement from the National Reform Party - www.nrpbelize.org

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Is socialized medicine falling apart in Belize?



By: Ray Auxillou

The incumbent PUP controlling government seems hell bent on doing away with socialized medicine, while spouting bombast and rhetoric on the rostrum that they are for the poor, the indigent and unemployed.

I gave a ride to a mother, father and sick vomiting boy to the bus stop today in Santa Elena Town. The family were going to Belmopan Hospital to seek treatment, by long bus ride. They had already been to the Government Hospital across the river of the twin towns in San Ignacio nearby. Apparently there is no doctor on duty and treatment by Cuban nurses was not working over several visits. I can empathize with that as my wife has had the same experience. The majority of people in the Cayo West mountainous district, an agricultural area, look to the government hospital for medicine. From British Honduras colonial days the medical treatment was the best thing Belize has ever had. It was FREE, or so low cost as to be negligible. It cost \$49 Bz for my eldest daughter to be born in a semi private ward. I loved it.

Most Belizeans don't make a lot of money. The majority of people earn

cash money, about \$40 to \$60 Bz a week today and raise their families on it. Growing their own food is a must. This particular family earns about \$135 Bz a week, which is \$66 USA. Full time worker. Of course the family is illiterate, and unskilled workers. The man works odd job construction, chops yards with a machete to keep them clean and the wife in orange tree picking season picks fruit. The rest of the time they live on tortillas and beans. I've explained to them over and over about vitamins and malnutrition which the three children have. But their story is not unusual. Actually, it is the norm. The majority of families are like that.

I asked the man what happened at

the Government Hospital? He said they had been several times, but his son was still sick and vomiting. There is a private hospital in Santa Elena but he said he could not afford to go there for medicine. I suggested a couple of doctors that were reasonable and excellent old time diagnosticians. He said they charge too much. My wife stopped going to the Government hospital because of the same complaints. So she now goes to one of two well liked doctors in San Ignacio. They charge a \$40 Bz flat visit fee and medicines can run over another \$100, which makes us pause before medical treatment and we are middle class. What it must be like for someone living on \$60 Bz or less a week for a

family of five, I cannot comprehend.

One hears of the newspapers talking about \$100 million dollar government guarantees for private hospital ventures with \$1500 deposits before you can get in the door and can only wonder what is happening to the BEST THING BELIZE EVER HAD. Socialized medicine is great. We seem to be traveling as a country toward the European and USA medical business disasters. Medicine in Belize has always been better than in the USA, and I've lived in both countries. It was one of the reasons I retired back home in Belize for the better medical service. But it seems our medical system is in trouble also like the rest of the world? I wonder why?



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Current Issues

Time to jump ship

By: Meb Cutlack

The dismissal of Ministers Espot and Hyde and the resignations of Deputy Prime Minister Briceno and Foreign Minister Courtenay, means more than just a crisis in the PUP. It signals a shattering blow to what was left of democracy in Belize.

The PUP is not longer a viable political party but a mere shell of sycophants surrounding totally failed leadership. When the few men of stature in the party, Espot, Hyde, Briceno and Courtenay are ousted from their portfolios and replaced by yes and yesterday's men, then the time has come to try and rebirth the PUP.

I was one of those misled into supporting the PUP in 1998. I believed that the image they presented, of a new, young PUP was what the nation needed. It turned out to be neither a new nor a young party but the same old corrupt PUP under even more corrupt and venal leadership than the 'old' PUP.

Whatever happened to the "father of the nation?" Stand up? Speak out? He gave that up a long time ago and yet, spin he must, sometimes in his sleep-

as his dreams turn into nightmares.

It is sad to think today that Belize, a country desperate for true democracy, must ricochet between the 'hardplace' of the PUP and the 'jelly' of the UDP - a party which seems incapable of promising real electoral reform and is therefore without democratic credentials.

It is not so much that the fate of our nation could rest with some sort of third party group being the only valid opposition, but the PUP, once proud and dignified, has crumbled into a hollow shell - like a toadstool or fungi in which the centre has rotted out.

The men I call "men of stature" will be but men of straw unless they now take the bold step of rehabilitating the PUP. The four— Johnny Briceno, Eamon Courtenay, Mark Espot and Cordel Hyde— and others of like mind within the PUP, should now resign from the party and form a new party distinct from the Fonseca/Musa PUP. A party to accommodate the reforms and the new thinking and ideas promised by the PUP in 1998, but which were never delivered.

One of the saddest things our nation faces today, since the removal of some of the brightest men in the cabinet, is the total lack of candour, honour and talent among all those persons newly inflated to high office.

What a laughing stock Belize must appear to the world when the places of those Belizeans were proud of are

taken by corrupt lightweights thinking only of where their next grubby dollar is coming from.

Belize desperately needs the third parties that are now offering themselves to the electorate. It also, for the sake of democracy, needs a re-born PUP. The PPR, People's Party for Reform, for example.

Delta Airline starts Nonstop flights Belize-Los Angeles



Delta's Boeing 757 will fly up to 184 passengers to LAX non-stop on Sundays only..

Press Release Delta Airlines

Belize, June 2007 – Delta Air Lines continues its international expansion this week with the addition of nonstop flights from Belize to Los Angeles International Airport once a week on Sundays. Delta will serve with a Boeing 757 aircraft seating up to 184 passengers.

"We are very pleased of being operating during three years in Belize and to announce to our local clients a new nonstop flight to Los Angeles. Our two routes from Belize to Atlanta and - now- to Los Angeles will let us offer time-saving alternatives for business and leisure travelers flying to USA and back", said Gladys Henríquez, Delta Air Lines Sales Manager.

Delta is already the leading U.S. carrier and all these new routes further position Delta as a global carrier, adding international routes faster than any other airline and being encouraged by the response from passengers to our new destinations all over the world. Belize is an essential part of that international expansion plan for Latin America.

This new nonstop flight from Belize to LAX represents one more successful addition for Delta's expansion into Latin America and the Caribbean since it launched an aggressive plan to rebalance its mix of domestic and international flying last year.

The frequency of the flights from Belize to Los Angeles will be from June 10th to July 15th. After that there is going to be a frequency from November 17th to April 2008.

Meanwhile, with the addition of new flights from LAX to Belize, Delta and Delta's Connection carrier, Atlantic Southeast Airlines, will offer 9 weekly flights from Belize with a daily service to Atlanta (twice on Sundays) and once a week to Los Angeles. Belize is a unique destination for ecotourism due to its exuberant jungle and because of its second place world's biggest barrier reef. It also will bring a lot of benefits to the Belizean community living in Los Angeles.

Delta's new nonstop service between Los Angeles and Belize, from June 9th, is scheduled as follows:

Flight	Departs	Arrives	Frequency
197	Los Angeles at 01:01 am	Belize at 6:39 a.m.	Only on Sundays
196	Belize at 8:00 a.m.	Los Angeles at 11:47 a.m.	Only on Sundays

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The Best Political Platform

Preface:

While many people talk about our government in Belize not working very well, and while many political parties have historically proposed political manifestos with very little detail that sound great but have very little substance, there is a group of Belizeans and friends of Belize that have been working to write a manifesto that should be considered by all political parties in Belize.

Even a cursory look at the following manifesto will show that much work has been done with much insight provided by those with experience in government and working with government. The manifesto came about through the Internet list called Belize Culture that has daily on-line discussions about Belizean culture and politics. There is also the bz-polisci@yahoo.com which I administer.

After much discussion, participant Bob Brotherton (an engineer who lives in Dunedin, Florida) suggested that the group stop talking and start writing their ideas down in an organized fashion in the form of a manifesto or what some call planks in a political platform.

Mr. Brotherton offered some of the ideas and served as the editor of this document.

We believe this manifesto speaks for itself and presents many ideas about how this group feels that government in Belize could be improved. The idea was to not look to the past and criticize, but rather look to the future.

It will be interesting to see how many, if any, of the planks are adopted by the PUP, UDP, and other political parties in Belize for the upcoming elections. Many thanks to all those who contributed to this proposed "Best Political Platform."

Over the next several weeks we will present the planks developed in Independent Weekly for public persusal.

-Trevor Vernon

Introduction: The platform of this party shall include the following provisions. The party shall insure that these provisions are enacted into law as soon as practical after entering into office. A public quarterly report on the progress made to fully enact and enforce these changes will be made throughout this party's administration.

Plank No. 1

Granting of Powers to Local Government

Whereas, it is recognized by this party that local town and village government is considered as being superior to federal regulation in dealing with certain local village matters, and Whereas, each town or village is recognized as having different standards and needs for the provision of certain services, and Whereas, the ability of the GOB to finance and provide all services to local towns and villages from funding sources

available to the GOB is very limited, this party will insure if elected into office that:

1) Local towns and villages will be allowed to petition for incorporation by Charter from the GOB, to be responsible for raising local taxes and fees, if required, in the provision of certain services including but not limited to road and drainage maintenance, utilities, telecommunication services, solid waste services, local police services, and certain other services as may be petitioned by the local town or village.

2) Decisions concerning the quality of service and the administration of such services, including setting fees and taxes for chartered services, will be totally the responsibility of the local elected town council with no oversight or determinations by Ministries of the GOB being required.

3) That the GOB will work with local towns and villages to the extent possible in grant assistance and other cooperation between the town and GOB.

4) That in order to petition the GOB for a town Charter, that a minimum of 51% of local registered voters must petition the GOB for a Charter through the local town or village council.

5) That all local town and village elections will be nonpartisan in nature and any participation by any recognized party will be specifically prohibited by law.

6) That local Towns and Villages will have the specific authority to regulate the use of land through zoning and land use designations through the use of appropriate planning principals and through public participation in the development of such land use regulations.

7) All Chartered Towns and Villages shall be required to operate with a balanced budget each year with an audit of all accounts performed by professional auditors on an annual basis.

Plank No. 2:

New Requirements of Elected Officials

Whereas, it is recognized by this party that holding public office is a public trust granted by the general public, and Whereas, the appearance of wrong doing can result in the loss of trust in government officials, and Whereas, holding public office requires 100% of available time dedicated to the office held, this party will insure if elected to office that:

1) Declaration of Assets - A law shall be passed requiring that all people running for public office at the national or local Town and Village level shall declare to the public, in a form to be determined, all assets and interest held in any and all businesses both within Belize and in other countries. The candidate shall also make public their prior year's income tax statement. Discovery of assets not declared shall result in the immediate termination from office.

2A) Business Interests During the Term of Office - During the term of office, the elected official (at the national level), shall not participate in any private business operations directly or indirectly including attending any meeting concerning the business, presence in the office of any personally owned business, work of any kind for the business(s) or government contracting that would lend favor to any personally owned business or business of any relative. Local Town and Village elected officials may hold public office and continue in their normal business, however, anytime a vote of the council relates to any business or personal interest of the local Town or Village official, that official will withdraw from voting on or discussing the issue. Failure to comply with these requirements shall result in the immediate termination from office.

2B) Any lawyer or other professional who is elected to office (at the national level) shall immediately assign all work load to associates of the firm or other companies and cease and desist from any work representing any past, current, or future client, until such time as the term of office is over. Any lawyer or other professional who is elected to local Town or Village Mayor or Council Member may continue their practice, however that official will withdraw from voting on or discussing any issue that relates to personal or family business and other similar interests. Failure to comply with this provision in the proposed law shall result in immediate termination from office.

3) Campaign Finance Reform - In order to improve the public confidence and reduce the excessive influence of individuals or corporations in the election process for national and local elections, this party shall pass laws that will (a) require the maximum contribution of any individual or corporation (including the candidate themselves) to any one candidate for office (including the party of the candidate) a maximum contribution of \$1,000 BZ for each election campaign, and (b) all contributions shall be kept in the records of the candidate and such records shall be available as public information within 7 days of the contribution. After the day of the election, no contributions will be allowed in any amount to any successful or unsuccessful candidate until a formal announcement is made that the candidate will run for the same or another elected office in the next election cycle. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in the immediate termination from that elected office. Nothing in this law shall be intended to limit the reporting by news media on the status of the election process, news articles reflecting the opinions of individuals or editors of the papers, public meetings, or other forms of communication in-

cluding the use of the internet for public information. Political advertisements in the form of ads in various print media, ads on TV or other visual media forms shall be paid for by the same fees as other similar forms of advertisement. All advertisements shall be paid for from funds collected and reported as described above.

Plank No. 3 :

Implementing the Political Reform Commission Recommendations

Whereas the final report of the Political Reform Commission contained several recommendations that have not been totally implemented to date, and Whereas there continues to be a lack of accountability of elected and public officials, this party pledges to enact or revise legislation to fully and effectively implement the following recommendations from the 2000 Final Report of The Political Reform Commission:

1) Statutory Instruments - This party recommends that the use of the Statutory Instrument mechanism be further regulated by: (a) curtailing the enabling power of Ministers to legislate by reducing legislation that gives this power; (b) Making it mandatory for all statutory instruments to go to the House of Representatives for ratification at the next sitting of the House.

2) Public Debt - This party recommends that: (a) provision be made for all details of all loans made to the Government of Belize to be published in the Government Gazette;

(b) The Government take measures to ensure that public debt as a proportion of national income is kept at a prudent level.

3) Government Contracts - This party recommends that the following measures be taken with regard to the process of awarding government contracts: (a) that the Constitution and relevant laws be amended to require the House of Representatives to approve the awarding of all contracts over \$100,000, or to any one entity whose aggregate contract exceeds \$100,000; (b) That internationally recognized standards for competitive public contracting be adopted by the Government through legislation such that there be public bidding process that is opened to the general public.

4) Auditor-General - To enhance the effectiveness and independence of the Office of the Auditor-General, this party agrees with the Commission that:

(a) the Constitution be amended at section 109 of the Constitution to reform the appointment process so that the Auditor-General is appointed by the Governor-general acting on recommendation of the National Assembly contained in a resolution passed on that behalf.

To be continued next week 

Will Dean Barrow provide a better form of Government?

Contributed opinion

During one of his volatile statements against Prime Minister Said Musa, the Leader of the Opposition, Dean Barrow, stated that Said Musa has "lost his legitimacy to govern". If that is so, where does it leave the voters of Belize?

Dean Barrow certainly cannot assert that he has shown his legitimacy to govern. For nine years Dean Barrow has criticized the actions of Said Musa and the PUP but offered nothing constructive to correct the problems. It is easy to criticize, any fool can do it. However, it takes a person with ability and integrity to provide the solutions. Does Dean Barrow have those qualities? If he has, he hasn't shown them.

Dean Barrow has previously utilized political reform as a campaign issue. But has he ever moved the legislature for such reforms? It appears not. Dean Barrow should clean up his own act before he criticizes others.

Manuel Esquivel was a champion of reform, yet the man he appointed to be Chairman of his political reform commission, this same Dean Barrow, has done nothing in that respect. When asked about an elected Senate he spoke against it stating his party was entitled to their "turn." Does this mean that he wants to retain the status quo so

that he can become Prime Minister and do as those before him have done?

By his statements and answers Dean Barrow has indicated that he is not part of the solution, that in fact he may be part of the problem. He has had nine years to move before the legislature the many different political reforms that were recommended by the Political Reform Commission and are necessary to stabilize the Government and prevent corruption.

Instead it has been the legitimate press and many leading Belizeans who have advocated for an elected Senate. Why? Because they know an elected Senate would be the best means of stopping the corruption of the past 25 years. Corruption that continues to grow in magnitude.

Dean Barrow recently stated that he was not sure that an elected Senate would work. That was a sick answer to an inquiry. If Dean Barrow has a real interest in the subject he would know that an elected Senate works. An elected Senate has worked in all of the countries that have it. In the recent election in the United States of America the voters changed Senators so as to curb objected to activities of President Bush. This was a showing of the power that the right to an elect a Senate gave to the people. Is it that the potential can-

didate does not want the power to be in the people of Belize? Is it that politicians wish to retain the dictatorial power in the Prime Minister so that the crony system will continue?

Senators should be elected so that they answer to the voters, not to a Prime Minister who retains a position akin to that of a dictator, a position he can use to punish the members of his cabinet if they do not agree with and support him.

With an elected Senate the Senate would no longer be a rubber stamp. An elected Senate gives the power to the people.

Political promises are mere rhetoric that politicians hope will get them elected. It is rare that a politician, when elected, will perform such promises. If Dean Barrow's criticism of Said Musa is offered as constructive criticism he should immediately move the legislature for political reform, including an elected Senate. If he doesn't when it comes time to vote in the next National Election the voters will know that a vote for Dean Barrow is probably not a vote to improve the politics of the country. It could then well appear that Barrow's criticism was mere jealousy, coveting the position of Prime Minister.

Those members of the Legislature who demonstrate the true quality of leadership will be the ones who imme-

diately move for an elected Senate and other necessary political reforms.

That would be the actions of true patriots, however, the actions must be in time to pass the motions before the next General Election. Promises will not suffice as they are seldom fulfilled.

Recently Dean Barrow praised the virtues of Michael Ashcroft. After Michael Ashcroft donated \$1,000,000 to the PUP's 1998 election campaign, the PUP also praised Michael Ashcroft's virtues in an open letter to the British Press. Michael Ashcroft had been receiving bad press in England. Press that suggested that Ashcroft was exercising unhealthy control over Belize. Thereafter, it appears that Ashcroft interests gained with every involvement with Belize's Government.

Dean Barrow, as an attorney, has received large sums of money while representing Ashcroft interests.

Is there going to be a repeat of the scenario that has taken place during the last nine years if he becomes Prime Minister? Why did Dean Barrow praise Michael Ashcroft's virtues? Should the country be governed by an Ashcroft supporter who doesn't support an elected Senate? Or should a candidate who believes in power to people be elected?

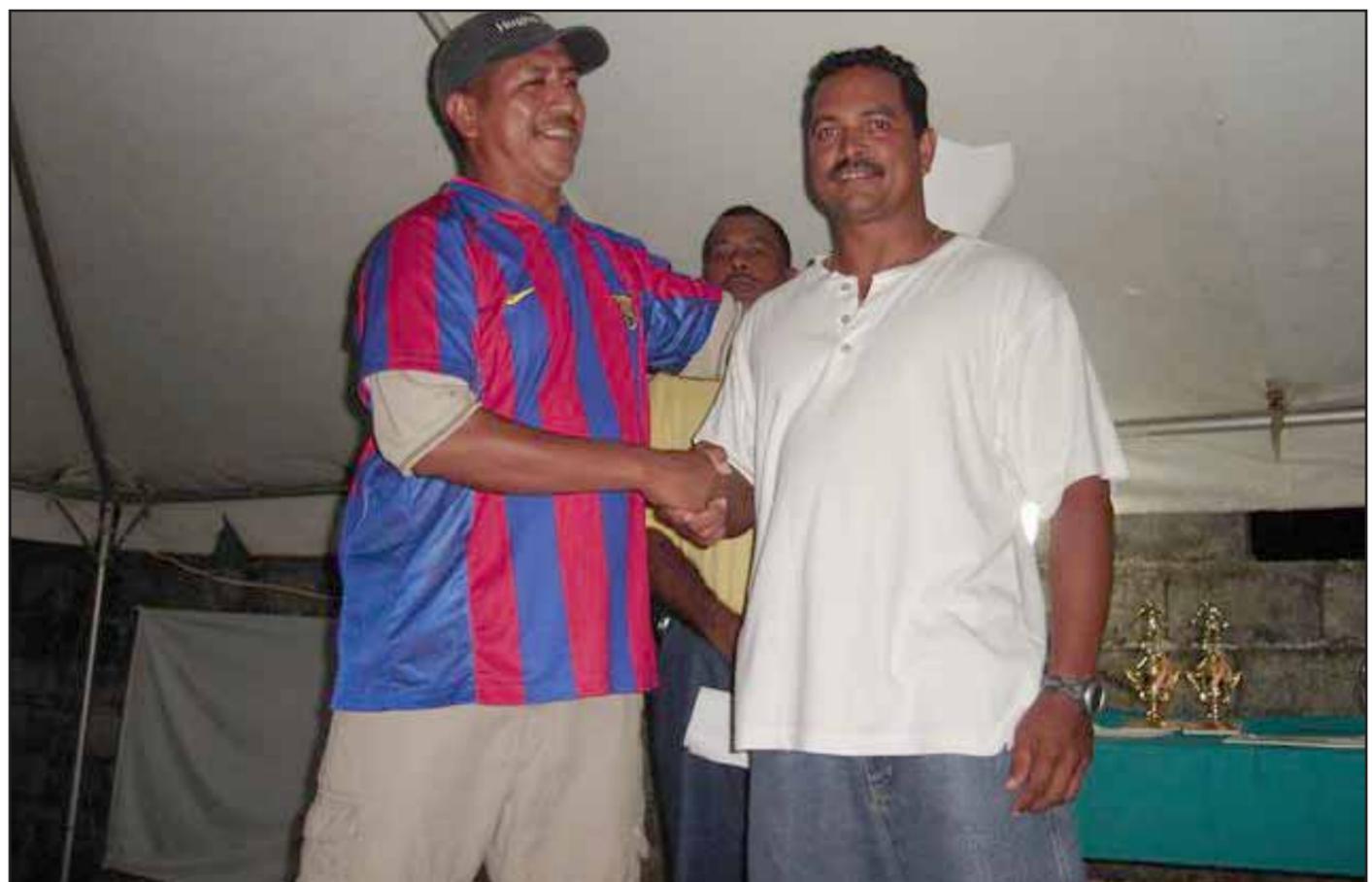
PNP leader presents environmental award at TIDE Freshwater Cup

Peoples National Party Leader, Wil Maheia presented an Environmental Award to the Integrity Strikers of Emery Grove at the TIDE Fresh Water Cup on Saturday, June 2, 2007, at the Union Field, Punta Gorda Town, Toledo District. Maheia also presented a cash donation to the player who scored the most goals.

"Congratulations to TIDE for a job well done," said Maheia at the event on Saturday. "I encourage the teams to think about the environment as they continue to play football... The purpose of the TIDE Fresh Water Cup is to educate the young people about the environment while having fun and to promote healthy lifestyles."

When the PNP get into government, we will make sure that young people have sports programs to participate in that are sponsored by the GOB. This is part of our platform, to engage young people in positive recreation

Press release from the People's National Party.



PNP Leader, Wil Maheia (right) congratulates Integrity Strikers



Shout outs to fathers.

My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person, he believed in me. —*Julia C. Heusner, age 13*

My dad is the most perfect dad of the world! —*Emily Rose Vernon, age 5*

My dad is the most protective person you'll ever meet, but I love him anyway! —*Francesca Sharp, age 13*
He always there for us ... if u never

know how much we respect and admire you, we want you to know it now Dad, we think you're the best father any child ever had

—*Chelsea, Kelsie & Artie Huge*

My daddy's always with me, even though we are apart, I know because he told me, he'll forever be in my heart.

—*Abigail Marshal, age 13*

My Daddy is one of the biggest computer nerds I've ever come in contact with I think he might be a bigger nerd than Bill Gates he just not as rich But you just got to love him. —*Angelica Alderman, age 15*

I know he is working 'cause he wants the best for me. —*Benjamin Hidalgo, age 12*



ARIES (Mar. 21- April 20)

It might be best to work on your own; if possible, do your job out of your home this week. Take time to explain your intentions to loved ones. Opposition is present and you should be prepared to counteract it as best you can. You may be tempted to get involved in secret affairs or love triangles. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

TAURUS (Apr. 21- May 21)

You have to believe in yourself and your talents. Rewards for past good deeds will be yours. You will meet new romantic partners through the company you keep. Chances to express your ideas and beliefs can bring popularity as long as you're not arrogant. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21)

Keep an eye on your weight. You will be in a high cycle regarding work. Communications with loved ones may be strained. Take a trip or just spend some quality time with your mate. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

Be quiet about your intentions or ideas that might bring added cash. Your attitude is changing rapidly and your plate is overloaded. Try not to lend or borrow money this week. Don't overdo it. You need to enjoy yourself. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

LEO (July 23-Aug 22)

Don't jump into investments too quickly. It won't take much to upset your lover. You can make new connections if you play your cards right. Your ability to be practical in business will help. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 -Sept. 23)

Your communication skills are at an all-time high. Loved ones may be annoyed if they feel restricted. Your home environment may be hectic, which could result in emotional upset if you aren't well organized. Be prepared to deal with groups and organizations of greater magnitude. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 -Oct. 23)

You need to refrain from being the generous one in the group. Don't be disappointed if you don't get your way emotionally. Don't be too quick to let friends and relatives know what you're up to. Romantic opportunities will develop through friends or relatives. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)

You could have a need to make some changes this week. Real estate investments could be to your advantage. You will probably have to defend your mate. You may want to take a look at the personal papers of elders in your family. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 -Dec. 21)

Your partner may blame you for everything. You need to look into new philosophies. If you have treated them equitably, you might be able to count on their loyalty. You will be uncertain of your feelings. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22.- Jan. 20)

Express your interest if you want the relationship to progress. You will have no problem getting your point across to those in a position to help you. You are best to put your efforts into redecorating or inviting friends over. Your emotional life may be up in the air if your mate has been going through a change of heart. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 -Feb. 19)

You may be able to impart knowledge that's innovative to those searching for a new angle. Plan your day thoughtfully, but try not to rely on others. Refrain from arguing with your mate. Advancement can be yours if you put your efforts into work related matters. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

PISCES (Feb. 20-Mar. 20)

Opportunities may come up at prestigious affairs. Go out with friends and avoid the situation on the home front. You can meet new friends who will let you know just how valuable you are. Self-deception is likely. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

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Costa Rica criticizes Taiwan as stingy

By: Marianela Jimenez

AP--Costa Rica's president has criticized Taiwan for being stingy with aid to its handful of allies, while other Latin American nations struggled with whether to remain loyal to the democratic island or strengthen ties with Taiwan's diplomatic rival, China.

Taiwan is lobbying to hang on to its 24 remaining diplomatic partners after Costa Rica announced June 5 it was switching relations to China. Taiwan's allies, many of them poor countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, help bolster its claims of international legitimacy.

Self-governing Taiwan and Communist China split amid civil war in 1949 and China insists that the island remains a part of its territory. In the battle for friends around the world, the two sides routinely offer generous grants and other inducements.

Taiwanese Foreign Minister James Huang accused China of offering Costa Rica "an astronomical figure" to ditch Taipei. He did not specify what it was.

Costa Rican President Oscar Arias acknowledged that the decision to go with Beijing was related to Costa Rica's desire to bolster its economy, and he criticized Taiwan for giving "insufficient" aid to its allies. "I was always critical of the Taiwanese, and I can say now that I always told them ... if you want to have friends in the world, you should be more generous," he said. "Considering the few friends they have, they don't treat them very well," Arias said of Taiwan, adding: "Without a doubt, we will get more help from China."

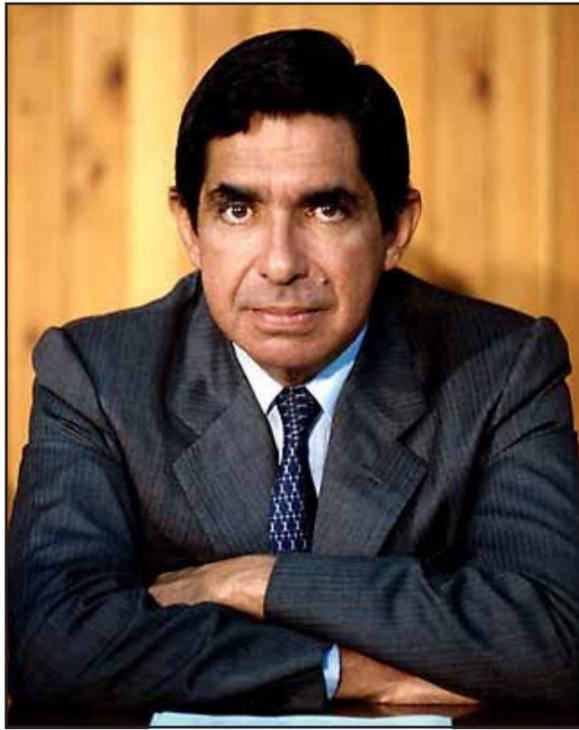
Alarmed Taiwanese diplomats met last month in Belize with Central American officials, hoping to shore up support after Costa Rica voted against discussion of Taiwanese membership in the World Health Organization.

Taiwan had achieved a victory on May 1 when the tiny Caribbean nation of St. Lucia announced it was shifting its relations to Taiwan. As China's market grows, many Latin American nations worry that allying with Taiwan will cut them out of important trade with China.

"No one can dispute that having better commercial relations and investment with China is positive," Arias said. "I'm sure they will give us external aid. That's something we have discussed, and it will probably be more than Taiwan gave us, but what we really want is more trade with China."

Taiwan has tried to battle that by signing free trade agreements with Panama, Guatemala and Nicaragua. It recently added pacts with El Salvador and the Honduras and is negotiating with the Dominican Republic.

In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said the ties with Costa Rica have "paved the way for friendly and beneficial cooperation" and she



Costa Rica's President Oscar Arias takes a hard line.

called on other countries to follow suit.

Huang, meanwhile, said he had ordered Taiwanese embassies in Latin America "to take extreme precautions against any further pressure by the Chinese communists."

Many leaders are walking a fine line between recognizing Taiwan and opening the door to China. Panama and Honduras issued statements Thursday that they would maintain diplomatic relations with Taiwan and commercial ties to China. The Dominican Republic has pledged to maintain relations with Taiwan through at least 2008, but it has quadrupled its trade with China in the past three years. Paraguay is solidly behind Taiwan, which funded construction of the country's congressional building and a new, \$20 million housing project for the poor. The Dominican Republic has pledged to maintain relations with Taiwan through at least 2008, but it has quadrupled its trade with China in the past three years.

In May, Nicaragua's Vice President Jaime Morales raised the possibility of cutting ties with the island when he told

Huang that "we as a sovereign country choose who our friends are" and that he "doesn't deny the reality that China represents economically, commercially and geopolitically."

Analyst Andrew Yang of the Taipei-based Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies said the Costa Rican decision would likely create a chain reaction. "Probably Nicaragua and Panama are next and then maybe Paraguay," he said.

Taiwan cut 70 mln usd in aid to Costa Rica in reaction to San Jose's switching diplomatic recognition

from Taiwan to China.

Taiwan's embassy informed Costa Rica on Thursday that it was ending cooperation programs in the wake of President Oscar Arias's decision the day earlier to establish relations with Beijing after four decades of siding with Taipei in the longstanding dispute between the two.

Taiwan had committed 35 mln usd to the construction of a 30 kilometer stretch of road in tourism-heavy northern Costa Rica.

It had also offered 15 mln usd to construct a building at the Calderon Guardia Hospital after it was burned down four years ago.

Taiwan was also supporting farm production programs and had offered a fleet of vehicles for Costa Rica's police as well.

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Senate Sensation

➡ (Continued From Page 4)

less we start examining the character of persons elected to office and stop voting purely for political party loyalists, senate elections will bear no better fruit than area representative elections.

Corruption and the now pervasive mafia mentality—not the mechanisms of election and recall—are at the root of our current evil. People who are morally bankrupt are bankrupting the nation.

We complain about this, but no one holds our elected officials' well heeled shoes to the fire hearth or makes them respect rules and laws already on our books. Specifically I am referring to the Integrity in Public Life Act and office. Those officials who declare their assets are the exception rather than the rule and it is widely perceived that many of those who do comply GROSSLY understate their own personal wealth and acquisition of wealth while in office.

Like junior customs officers who suddenly build mansions to replace their moderate income bungalows and purchase SUV's not only for themselves but wives and sweethearts, so our politicians, men and women who are paid extremely modest salaries by international, and I daresay, domestic standards build and buy homes here and abroad, live a lavish lifestyle and/or stash money away in offshore accounts. We, the general populace, do nothing more than gossip about them like as North Americans do the morning after they watch "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous." We feel resentful and angry, but we do not channel that outrage into any insistence or demand for investigation or accountability.

We do not ask politicians on the campaign trail if they have declared their assets, nor do we tell them we cannot vote for them until they do.

The members of the Integrity Commission resigned in disgust when they realized they were being used as poster kids for integrity and character. The response to their protest was to replace them with a rubber stamp group even more ineffectual than our Senate. Rather than resign, I wish the previous commission had raised a ruckus. But that is water under the overpriced, contractor kickback bridge now...

So what will happen if the government changes and legislation is introduced to change the constitution to allow for the election of Senators? Will we just have 12 more people who can be bribed or bought or skive off lucrative contracts or sales of national-ity? Will 12 more people have the

opportunity to get rich quick, at our expense? Twelve more people to laugh at the suggestion they declare their wealth for all to see?

How do we protect ourselves from additional corruption unless we tackle the current problems and enforce existing laws? How do we screen applicants for these, the most important jobs in the land, for their qualifications and character? For example, do we put rules in place that exempt people from running for office if it has been proven they lied to the public either in the House or a local village or town council? Just think about if we had that restriction right now...we might have saved ourselves a lot of grief, particularly recently. Do we put rules in place that the immediate family members of public officials are also subject to financial review? Would such a policy have saved us from any of the recent featherbedding? Do we make a law insisting that no private entity can receive a government guarantee, or that government cannot take over any private entity without a public disclosure of the financials and information about the personal assets of shareholders, and silent partners?

The list goes on and on. The lessons we are learning now could serve us well in the future. The current turmoil does not have to be for naught.

Right now, it seems the only rule those in power seem to care about is the one concerning crossing the floor. Because this protects the cohesion and power of the ruling party; it does nothing to protect the people. On the contrary, it PROMOTES blind allegiance to party, the supremacy of private interest at the expense of the

public and national interest.

Should we continue on this road? Should we allow our party system—which is supposed to be the symbol of democracy—to instead be the instrument of exploitation and dominance? Can Belize and our lawmakers and law-making bodies ever improve unless we enforce protective mechanisms already in place and enact new, necessary reforms to our system?

If we cannot dismantle the party system can we at least put the brakes on what has become a runaway train running over everyone and everything on either side of the tracks?

It is a positive development to see

the debate on the elected senate grow so passionate, although we could do without the personal attacks. If we can stay focused on the issues and not personalities we could push this thing through and make the politicians respond to the will of the people, instead of the other way around.

Reforms are critical, checks and balances imperative.

But most of all, we must begin to choose men and women of character with a desire to serve, over men and women of flawed character and self-serving greed. Elect the Senators yes, but only if we ensure they serve the people and not the parties only.

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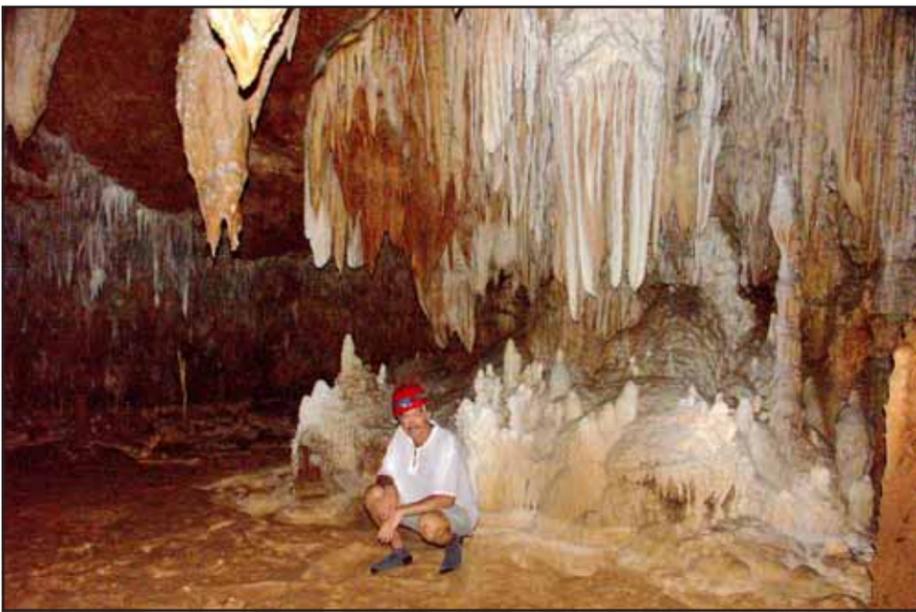
Celeste McCain caught this Wahoo.... (photo submitted by her proud father)



Marty Casado sent this photo of darling water babies at the cayes.



The sherds of Mayan clay pots found in a Mayan Cave, portals to the underworld. (photo by Marty Casado)



Stalagmites and stalagmites in a cave in the Chiquibul reserve dwarf visitors. (Photo by Marty Casado)



Casado was struck by the color and pattern of tiles in a swimming pool at Turtle Inn.

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investment blog and podcast. Go to <http://investtheworld.blogspot.com> as we travel the world for fun, investment and profit. **For Rent:** A (2) bedroom flat located in King’s Park, Belize City \$800/month

One commercial building (4 offices, conference room, reception area) in King’s Park \$1800.00/month
 Computers \$800/each Call: **223-1668/602-9182**

Free Ads! The INdependent Reformer is offering free classified ads for the month of June:

- 1) 20 words or less
- 2) one ad per person in the promotional period for free (additional ads are only \$10 each)
- 3) with photo (first time free...\$10 additional for photo ads)

jpeg or tiff formats only. **Must be emailed, no disk pickup or drop off**
 4) business card –first run is free for month of May, 2007, \$20 a run thereafter
 5) All classified ads must be emailed to independent.newspaper.bz@gmail.com

kheusner@yahoo.com with cc to kheusner@yahoo.com and checks to PO Box 2666, Belize City. Please note: We must receive your ad by Friday at mid-day for inclusion in following Tuesday issue.

Mentors Wanted

Press Release--Spouses of staff members of the U.S. Embassy, in collaboration with the George Price Centre, are organizing a creative reading programme for Belmopan primary school children.

The programme is now in search of reading mentors who will lead a group of children with reading and related activities. The aim is to stimulate the children to enjoy reading and to gain confidence in their ability to read. There will be three 2-week sessions; each session will be daily Monday through Friday from 9am to 12pm (3 hours). Volunteers could choose to participate in all of the three sessions, or in one or two of them, be it for an entire week or selected days only.

- Session 1: July 9 - July 20
- Session 2: July 23 - August 3
- Session 3: August 6 - August 17

A manual of suggested activities is being developed for use by the reading mentors. If you would like to help us with reading to the children, or with

ideas for games and other fun activities based on reading and books, we and the children would love it! Call us at 822-1054 or e-mail at info@gpcbelize.com

Thus far the programme has received financial assistance from the J. Kirby Simon Trust and the Belmopan International Womens Group for the purchase of books. We would appreciate any additional donation towards this programme, which we plan to continue during the school year.



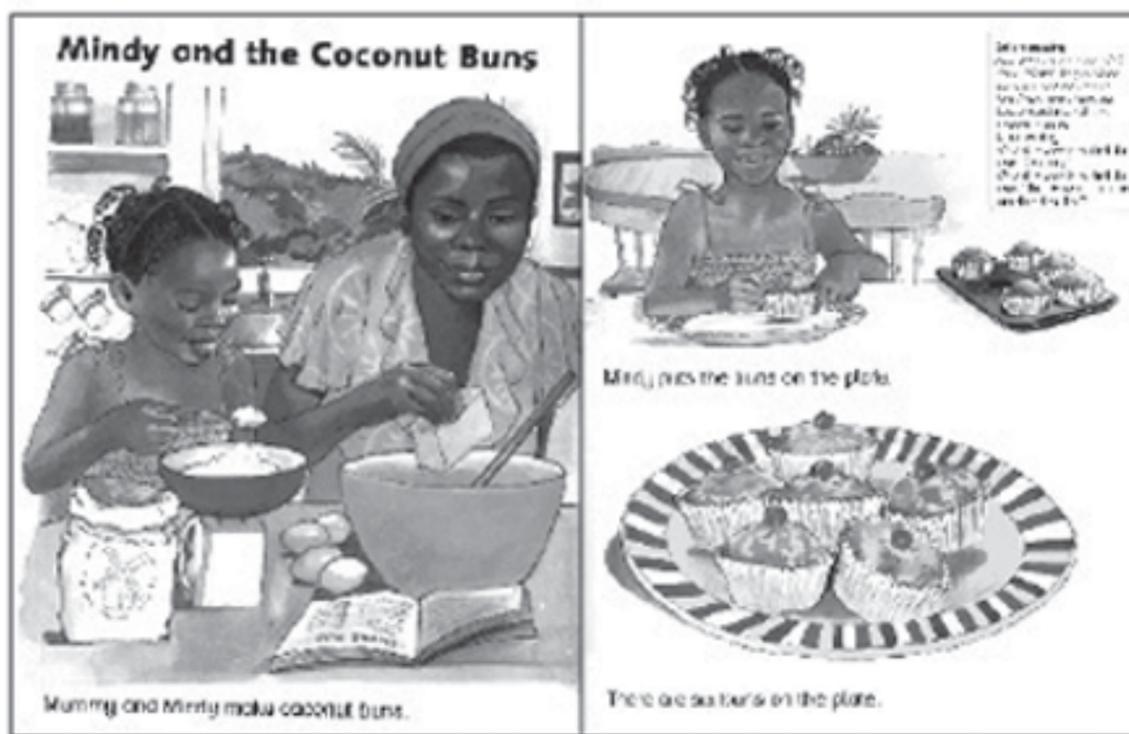
Land For Sale Suitable for Conservation



70 acres in Burrell Boom for US\$50K
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PARENTS

Ministry of Education is forcing our schools to use the Language Tree Readers. The two pages below are from the first story in the Language Tree Reader for Infant One. The only way our children will be able to read the story will be if parents read the story to them over and over and over. If parents read the story enough times, children will memorize the story. They will not be able to read the words in the story. Children will never learn to sound out words. Children without parental help may never learn to read.



BRC's Infant One Reading is used in more than 80% of the schools in Belize. BRC's Reading is widely used because children are learning to read by sounding out words. Ministry of Education Officials do not even want BRC's Reading in the schools. They know that if BRC's Reading is in the schools, no one will use the Language Tree Memorization Books.

A Ministry of Education official said: We know that children will not be able to learn to read using the Language Tree Reading Book for Infant One.

You answer the questions if you are not at a loss for words.

Why spend taxpayers' money to put these known to fail books in all our schools?

Why does MoE want to replace a very successful reading book (BRC) with a reading book MoE knows will not help children learn to read?

Why does MoE give a foreign publisher the sales for a book that they know will not help children learn to read and take away jobs from Belizeans?

The Ministry of Education Official continued: Because we know that children will not learn to read using the Language Tree, we are developing Fast Phonics. We know that Fast Phonics will help the children learn to read Language Tree.

The Ministry of Education had 12 schools use Fast Phonics this past school year. MoE has not tested children's reading in those 12 schools but they claim that everyone learned to read. The children in those twelve schools and children using BRC's reading should be given an independent reading test. MoE would not do that because MoE knows which group of children would read better. Teachers have said that Fast Phonics will not work.

We do not know how much taxpayers' money has already been spent on trying to write Fast Phonics. Much more than \$100,000⁰⁰ is a good guess. We do not know how much more will be used to complete the writing and art work for Fast Phonics. Much more than an additional \$100,000⁰⁰ is a good guess. We do not know how much taxpayers' money will be spent on printing Fast Phonics. A good guess is \$300,000⁰⁰.

The Ministry of Education is willing to spend more than \$500,000⁰⁰ of your money to produce a book which is not as good as BRC's. It will be a waste because teachers will use BRC's Reading.

OUTRAGEOUS

A paid ad