

Acts of Treason

by Des Parette

June 19, 1953 was an interesting day in history, for on that date Julius and Ethyl Rosenberg were executed by the United States for treason. They were American Communists, and although they were free to believe what they wanted to, they were not free to obtain national secrets and sell them to the enemies of the US... the Russians. In other words they enriched themselves by using their position of trust to damage their country. The court said they were guilty of treason and ordered them to be executed. A little later a scientist named Fuchs did the same thing with the same results, and more recently a bureaucrat named McClean and his gay partner sold American secrets for a bunch of money and when discovered, quickly scooted to Russia.

Oran's Dictionary of the Law de-

fines **treason** as "*the crime of disloyalty to one's nation. A person is guilty of treason who betrays the nation of their citizenship and/or reneges on their oath of loyalty.*" Treason is willful betrayal of confidence, fidelity or trust for personal gain at the expense of one's country.

What does disloyalty to one's nation by willful betrayal of trust actually mean? How about giving citizenship to our enemies so they can damage us from within our own borders? Definitely that would be treason, wouldn't it? But isn't that exactly what is happening when truckloads of Guatemalans are brought across our border and given passports so they can vote for PUP in the next election [as reported by the STAR recently]? Have they forgotten that Guatemala is still trying to take over Belize?

How about immigration officials and

their political bosses who sold hundreds of passports to Chinese, Arabs, Pakistanis and even terrorists to line their pockets with millions of dollars? Treason compounded by greed.

How about the questionable Challilo dam and making the government responsible for any failures that may occur, approved because certain government officials will make a lot of money from contracts to supply the gravel and cement?

How about stealing hundreds of acres

of government land valued in the thousands of dollars an acre and worth millions for a trifling \$50/acre in a sweetheart deal with other government officials? Not only an outrageous betrayal of trust but blatantly done! Over and over again.

How about government officials and police in collusion to bring stolen cars to Belize to be sold at great profit, or to conduit drugs through the country on their way north? This damages both our

(Please Turn To Page 3) 

S&P says "Belize has the highest debt burden in the region"

This article discusses some of the quantitative trends affecting Standard & Poor's Rating Services' analysis in 2007 for all 18 sovereigns rated in Latin America. A wider selection of economic indicators can be consulted in the recently published Sovereign Risk Indicators for 113 sovereigns rated by Standard & Poor's, which is published semiannually in January and July. In addition, a commentary comparing sovereign rankings globally titled "Sovereign Risk Indicators: 2007 Outliers" was published this week.

"Sovereign Risk Indicators: Latin America" —Only two Latin American sovereigns— Chile and Mexico— have investment-grade ratings. At year-end 2006, only eight Latin American sovereigns out of a total of 18 had foreign currency credit ratings that were


higher than they were in 2000. Over this same time frame, the credit ratings on seven sovereigns deteriorated, and the ratings on three remained unchanged (see Table 10 for a list of all rated sovereigns in the region).

Latin America has gone through two very different economic periods so far this century. In the first couple of years of this century, many Latin sovereigns experienced significant political and economic crises that led to worse creditworthiness. (Examples include Argentina's default in 2001, Uruguay's default in 2002, Venezuela's political crisis and near default in 2003, Brazil's recession in 2001-2002, and Bolivia's ongoing political crisis since 2003.) The region's average creditworthiness has started climbing back to where it was at the end of the last century only since 2004, helped by sharp improvements

(Please Turn To Page 5) 

Band Fest II- Bigga & Betta!



See story on Page14 

Letters to the Editor

Editorial Director

Meb Cutlack

Editor

Karla Heusner Vernon

General Manager

Trevor Vernon

Design/Layout

William G. Ysaguirre

Published by:

Independent Publishing

P.O. Box 2666

Telephones:

(501) 225-3520

Company Ltd.

Email:

Belize C.A.

independent.newspaper.bz@gmail.com

Printed by:

National Printers

New Road

Belize City, Belize

For an online version of the

INdependent Reformer

visit us at

<http://www.belizenorth.com/independentreformer.htm>
OR
<http://belizenews.com/independentonline.pdf>

“Duct Tape to the Rescue”

Dear Editor,

I enjoyed your column on 30 minute Belize from a few weeks ago. Belize is hard on men’s shoes as well.

Two years ago, I was going to the closing ceremonies for the Belize Film Festival. A short film of mine was up for an award so I dressed up a bit more than normal. For me that basically just means long pants. Anyway I dug out a pair of nice brown leather lace up shoes from my closet. I don’t remember what brand they were, but they were a good “states brand”. I didn’t buy them in Belize. Nor did I wear them often. Probably only 4 or 5 times over a period of about 2 years.

So after scrubbing the green mold from my shoes I got dressed and went off to the Bliss. Just as the cocktail reception was winding down, mere minutes before the awards ceremony was to begin, the sole of one of my shoes fell off! No warning. I just took a step and the upper part of my shoe simply came away from the sole.

As the ushers began herding us from the palm court to the theater, I asked one of the Bliss technicians to find me some duct tape. While Suzette Zayden and others made speeches, I was making repairs to my shoe. By the time they called my name as winner for the Best Belizean Documentary I had managed to get the sole of my shoe to stay attached, thanks to a very hideous-looking tape job.

I had to walk up on stage to accept my award and I’m sure everyone else noticed my footwear disrepair, but oddly nobody said anything to me about my duct-taped shoe. Probably

because most of them had already “walked a mile in my shoe” somewhere in Belize.

Cheers
Brent Toombs,
Oxa Productions

Falling house, crooked contractor

Dear Editor,

My husband and I were ready for warmer climates and researched Belize for several months before moving there. I must say, that far too much of what we learned on the net, just is not true and is not a reality once you live there. We researched the QRP program and like many people, were lured into thinking that this country really does want retired folks to live here.

We rented in a town in western Belize for well over a year. While we were there a local business man there introduced us to this contractor. He showed us several homes in the area he had built and told us that he could build us a home that we wanted.


He built the house alright, but he used inferior goods charged us for better goods....in the middle of building the house he would change what we had picked out to use for flooring and use one that was cheaper from a different vendor. He told us it was because what we had selected could not be used because there was not enough of it. Not true. I called both places and was told, yes they did have what I wanted in stock and had enough and the second place quoted me a price several dollars cheaper.

Well, the house is now falling down and a disaster. We have now been involved with a court case against the

contractor for well over three years. Apparently he called all of the best lawyers in Belize before we could hire one, to make sure that we were limited in who “could” even take our case. Thanks be onto our Lord we finally found a lawyer who could not be bought. After paying for three different engineers to investigate and write a report, all making reports of faulty everything, the Supreme Court finally heard us.

Well, as far as the Registrar General. Two days before we departed Belize our lawyer told us that the Registrar General had ruled in our favor. Wonderful, great, finally. Not so. Now we get word from our lawyer that there is a new Registrar General and we are in “case management”. What? What does that mean?

We left a man there with papers signed and authority to finish the sale of what could be sold of our falling home. We have since heard from him that three different people have been arrested stealing from the property and that items that had been removed for sale have been stolen. Rumors have it, that the original contractor is involved with the stolen items!

What is going on? First the man steals from us in building a faulty structure/home and then when we can no longer live in it he can steal from it again and we lose even more. The stolen items were already removed from the dwelling to resell and were stolen from a different location. The information that has been shared is reliable but as is so often the case in Belize, no one wants to say or be involved because of retribution for stepping forward with information. I had several men who worked on the construction of our home come and tell me after the fact of things to look for and (Please Turn To Page 15) 

The INdependent Reformer

independent.newspaper.bz@gmail.com
P.O. Box 2666
Belize City, Belize

☒ YES!

Send me 6 months of the INdependent Reformer for as little as BZ\$30.00 (US\$30.00 international)

Name

(please print)

Address

Apt.

City

State

Zip

Email Address

Payment Included ☐

Bill me later ☐

Prices for subscription and postage may vary for subscription outside Belize.

Precious Reserve faces extinction

It took 30 years of painstaking personal effort; of weeks and weeks, and months and months, and ultimately of years and years, for 'Chocolate' Heredia to finally plan and put together the 7000 acre Swallow Caye Manatee Reserve, a few miles north east of Belize City.

For most of those years it was a lonely battle, a personal crusade, fighting official indifference on the one hand and the prejudices of his fellow fishermen on the other.

'Reserve' to them meant a 'no go area' and Chocolate had to argue and plead their reluctant support.



Chocolate Heredia founded the Swallow Caye Manatee Reserve.



He achieved this by (at first) secretly nurturing his reserve and then by introducing his fellow guides, one by one, to the manatees. The reserve is now recognized as one of the world's most extraordinary nature 'parks' with abundant bird and marine wildlife and manatees (endangered in many parts of the world) interacting with their human contacts without fear or danger.

And now; along comes the Stake Bank mega cruise ship project, which is backed by local entrepreneur Mike Feinstein and who plans to build a gigantic four cruise ship berthing facility and a huge two island development with casino, convention center, three five star hotels, lots of condos and a marina for about 250 boats.

The islands will be 'created' and connected to Belize City by a 4 mile causeway. The horrific development includes North Drowned Caye right near the western border of the sanctuary and Stake Bank right near the southern edge of the sanctuary! The plan is to construct the causeway from Belize City to North Drowned Caye and then another through the Sanctuary to Stake Bank. It will totally destroy the nature reserve.

The Environmental Impact Assessment has already been completed for

The Stake Bank pier under construction. the two island developments and it looks like Stake Bank is only waiting on the EIA approval for the causeway. Already millions of tons of fill are being dredged and dumped in the area.

The Swallow Caye Wildlife Sanctuary is not just about Manatees but, with over 7,000 acres of sea and mangrove, provides a unique bird and abundant wildlife sanctuary on the very edges of Belize City. These are the very attractions which bring cruise ship passengers to Belize! What sort of logic allowed the 'powers that be'

to even think about granting permission for such a project?

The answer is personal greed, because, all the project will do is to enrich a very few - as major profits, work contracts and even jobs go out of Belize. Belizeans will be forbidden to enter the Exclusive Stake Bank resort area. The causeway will also cause many fishermen from Belize City to detour some 6 miles to reach their normal fishing grounds!

It is a shame, for the manatees, for Chocolate, and all the rest of us.



The gentle West Indian manatee has a safe haven at the Swallow Caye Manatee Reserve, now threatened by the Stake Bank development

Acts of Treason

☞ (Continued From Page 1)
national reputation and integrity.

How about the tragically disgusting plundering of DFC, or the Social Security fund before it?

When ever government employees are implicated, all of these are acts of treason because they are willful acts of betrayal motivated by personal greed that damage our nation.

But it gets worse.

Our population is small enough that we could actually function as a pure democracy with every issue of policy and taxes taken straight to the people and voted on at town and village meetings. Of course pure democracy becomes awkward and cumbersome as populations grow, and the issues become more complex and difficult to explain to voters. The political system then evolves into a republic where we elect *trusted* people to be our representatives to un-

derstand the issues, and to vote in a way that is best for our community and our country.

To "serve" our country as a representative of the people is the highest honor we can offer an individual, because we are saying that we trust that elected individual to protect our health, safety and economic well being. Conversely when such individuals offer themselves as candidates, they are saying they understand and accept this great trust that is being placed in them, and they agree to serve their community to the best of their ability. **They swear before God** in their oaths of office that they will do so.

Whenever a hired government employee uses his position to enrich himself by selling passports, refusing to prosecute crimes, stealing or misappropriating government land, property or funds, these acts are obviously treason;

but when an **elected official** uses his *position of trust* to enrich himself at the expense of the country, such acts are the highest of treason. Every act of corruption by an elected government official is high treason, because such acts not only damage our nation but actually kill our democratic system. A corrupt elected representative reneges on his oath of trust and is a traitor to his people, his community, his country and even to his God

People guilty of such treason should be stripped of their position, forfeit all their assets, be denied all pensions and privileges, and be barred from any public job or position of trust for the rest of their lives. In short they should be prosecuted as traitors to their country and suffer the full penalties for high treason. Corruption will continue to be rampant until such anti-corruption laws are enacted and we have an independent an-

nual audit [as already required by the Laws of Belize], which is published in full for the public to review and act upon.

We have a wonderful country. It has problems, but if we believe in ourselves we can make Belize realize its potential. A few centuries ago, pirates used our country to prey on ships, stealing the goods of the world's wealthy merchants. Today the pirates have returned as a Mafia which has invaded and taken control of our government, converting our system into an elected fascism. Our government now preys on the wealth of our country stealing from the poor who can least afford the loss, to enrich the already wealthy. The people of Belize must take back control of our country or stand by and watch us sink into the poverty and despair of another Nigeria, Somalia and other Third World example.

Numb, Dumb, and Comical



By: Trevor Vernon

Been traveling around the country a bit, papers in hand, visiting our gracious distributors while looking for additional secure distribution outlets countrywide. We've had to hit the road because the powers that be are trying to sew up the city and intimidate our distributors and sellers in the Old Capital. They buy up our papers in bulk from some willing sellers and attempt to run the unwilling ones off the street in Belize City.

We sort of expected that. The political doyens want absolute control of what is circulating. And you can't blame them really. They must control the minds of the masses of the Belizean people to

stay in power, stay in control. Lose the mind control factor in the city and all hell breaks loose.

Heretofore, everything was either red or blue, not unlike the gangs of Los Angeles. Every single Belizean had been conditioned to think in these terms only. If you are not with the Blue machine, you must be with the Red, or vice versa. This colonialization enslavement of the mind is what kept a great many people in line. Not the church and its dogma, like the politicians would have you believe. Not the Royal this and Royal that like they like to spew. It's this red/blue hocus-pocus hypnosis emanating from the very top.

Let it be known that the era of mind games is over. The people of Belize are beginning to see the chess board for what it is, and to realize that the red/blue kings and queens are not opposing forces, but in collusion, in bed together, if you will....to the detriment, and loss, to all the rest of the players on the board.

It's not just the swing voters moving away and becoming apathetic; at this juncture, the diehard rank and file are becoming the most disillusioned of us all. They work tirelessly for their red/blue party of choice, only to be swept aside once the ballot is cast. There was a time when the worker bees were "taken care of", if only superficially. These days there isn't even the pretense of "turning them on" after the government has been installed. It's a new day and most diehards don't know how to deal with the new reality, not unlike the

crack addiction epidemic or crime wave that the political establishment can't seem to solve.

This is explicitly part of this newspaper agenda: tear down the walls of this jail they have created for the minds of the people of Belize. They know this and that's why the Independent Reformer is the newspaper neither the PUP or the UDP want you to read. They want to keep you numb, dumb, and full of despair...for now.

But we'll get it to you anyway so you can see what they are up to. Somehow.

**Visit
The Belize Zoo
The Best Little Zoo
In The World**



Office Gossip



By: Karla Heusner Vernon

No se mi say, but I hyar den di talk bout Said step down.

Cho! He a neva give up powa.

No, well maybe he have to dis time, dey know dey cyan win unless he go...

But who woulda tek ova? Mark? Johnny? Godfrey? Eamon? Ashcroft??

Den betta watch deyself—

Don't you just love the gossip at the business lunches and cocktails? It's so different from the conversations in the streets about shootings and lootings and who is the latest pervert.

Of course, it may just be idle chatter. But you know what they say in Belize, "if da no so, da nearly so."

What would happen I wonder if the PUP did change leadership. Would the public suddenly forget the national debt and depression and vote them in again, hope renewed?

Or would Barrow then get his chance? Maybe, if his own people don't decide maybe he is a liability too and throw their weight behind someone else? Wonder what kind of party leader Lois would be... Or Zenaida, or even Merlene?

It's all being tossed around, believe me. I have heard it. Why not? Just because a man holds onto power as stubbornly as any two year old holds onto a lollipop does not mean he deserves to have it. Or keep others from getting a lick.

Too many people have been licked down lately and kicked around for anyone in national leadership to feel too secure in their positions. Anyone.

But the aspiring hopefuls should be careful too. Watch out and make sure they are not getting set up to get their heads chopped clean off when they stick their necks out.

Payback for that little cabinet rebellion. Or retribution for getting too popular with the electorate and stealing the attention from the chief of the tribe.

Saaflly, saafly tiga ketch monkey. Same tiga which gaan wid Banner dog.

Gyal, yu tink BTL workers when strike again fi tru?

Buoy, you tink di doktas no gwine a work if this UHS ting happen?

Da sin what dey do at customs, wanting dem to get master's de-gree...

What you tink pipples woulda do if the govament go bruk and cyan pay salary one of dees enda month?

Dat woulda be ruction fi tru!

Have you noticed the interest people are paying to these developments? Are you also feeling the almost eerie, hurricane-like watch going on over BTL? Like people know we're going to get hit this time and somehow they don't even mind. That they are almost hoping something dramatic starts to force some change...

Shopkeepers, shop girls, messenger boys, teachers, students, bus driver, bus riders, everyone asking, asking, will they strike? Asking union leaders they see on

TV... reporters, arm chair pundits, street side soap box specialists. Their barber, their hairdresser.

What kind of breeze will blow this time? Wa li pass ova, or some real man breeze?

Where are the manly men?

They kill up the woman and none of dem bredda, fadda, uncle dem stop them.

Den fus Belizeans tief up di money and no one cyan get it bac?

Dey kill up di buoy dem and di police cyan ketch dem or the jury dem con-

vict them?

Wey di man dem gone ina Belize?

Even di lawyer dem sey da woman fum fum now... let the woman dem liberate di country if de man no gat no b—lls.

Yes, lotta talking in Belize right now. Maybe it's just gossip; or maybe there is some fire behind the smokescreens. Maybe some people really are getting ready to make a bid for control... of more than just BTL.

Well, all we can say is Godspeed to anyone willing to step up and out. I just happen to know a newspaper editor who will give them free space and a good discount for ads too.

In the meantime, I join the rest of the country keep watch with the angels, the stars and moon... hoping freedom comes tomorrow's noon.

Maybe some people really are getting ready to make a bid for control... of more than just BTL.

smart! ways 2 SAY I Love U

For the month of February 2007

get your **FREE PHONE** now
and also a **FREE PHONE** for life *

smart users enjoy per second billing!



smart! gives you more to share your love!

5 + 1 = smart! love

- ◆ For every 5 minutes of calls made, smart! gives you **1 minute FREE!**
- ◆ For every 5 SMS you send, smart! gives you **1 SMS FREE!**





smart!

www.smart-bz.com

* Valid Promotion for post-paid plans. All promotions end February 28 - Restrictions Apply.

Dealers Countrywide
Showrooms: Belize City, Orange Walk, Corozal, Benque and San Ignacio
Opening Hours: M - F 8am - 6pm Sat 9am - 1pm
For more info or to join call: 280-1010, 670-1096/13/15/16/18/19

S&P says “Belize has the highest debt burden in the region”

➡ (Continued From Page 1)
in the terms of trade, more flexible exchange-rate regimes, debt reduction (including by defaulting in the cases of Argentina and Uruguay), and more prudent fiscal management in some countries.

In 2006, GDP growth for the region as a whole was about 5.5% (all data come from the Sovereign Risk Indicators tables). No rated Latin sovereign experienced negative growth in 2006 or in 2005. The Dominican Republic, Venezuela, and Argentina recorded the fastest growth rates, while Paraguay and Brazil had the lowest growth rates. With the exception of the Dominican Republic, South American countries grew faster than Central American countries.

GDP growth is likely to approach 4.6% in 2007, led by small countries like Panama and Dominican Republic as well as by Peru. Growth is likely to be modest for the two largest regional economies—Mexico and Brazil—at about 3.5% in each of them.

Falling External Debt

The Latin American region has benefited in recent years from good external conditions. High commodity prices and easy availability of external capital have bolstered economic growth and facilitated the implementation of improved debt-management practices throughout the region. The terms of trade for the region as a whole—a measure of the change in export prices compared with the change in import prices—are better than they were in the past decade, largely because of higher commodity prices. This external stimulus has helped boost economic growth, especially in South America.

The direct impact of higher commodity prices has been on the balance of trade, which has been in surplus in Latin America as a whole since 2002. Moreover, the regional trade surplus has been growing in recent years. The region's balance of services remains in deficit, but the deficit level has been stable in recent years. The net result is a current account surplus for the region since 2003, boosting foreign exchange reserves and reducing net external debt.

Much of the regional current account surplus arises in only a handful of sovereigns, such as Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile. All regional data in this report are based on simple average calculations.

The sharpest improvement in the net external position has been in Venezuela, which was a net creditor by this measure in 2006 compared with a net

debtor position only a few years before. Interestingly, all other sovereigns in the region are in a net debtor position, showing the region's traditional dependence on external capital. Narrow net external debt fell to 132% of current account receipts (CAR) in Argentina last year, but that country still has the second-highest burden for this measure in the region, exceeded only by that of Panama. **Belize, which is now in selective default on its debt, has the next highest external debt burden, at about 124% of current account receipts.**

The reduction in external vulnerability has boosted creditworthiness in several sovereigns. Overall, the region is better prepared now to absorb an external shock than it was in 2000. The (simple) average current account deficit in 2000 was of 3.3% of GDP. It fell in 2006 to 0.7% of GDP (see Chart 2) and is likely to expand toward a bigger deficit of 1% of GDP in 2007.

However, the biggest and third-biggest economies in the region (Brazil and Argentina, respectively) enjoyed current account surpluses in 2006, and Mexico, the second-biggest economy in the region, had a very small deficit. Venezuela is likely to again have the biggest current account surplus in 2007 because of oil exports, while Brazil is likely to run a surplus similar in size to its surplus of last year. Central American countries (which typically are net importers of commodities) are again likely to run the biggest current account deficits in 2007. Some of them, like Costa Rica, can largely fund the cur-

rent account deficit with foreign direct investment inflows. Others—such as Panama, Guatemala, and El Salvador—will depend more on debt inflows.

The data for gross external financing show a similar pattern. Of the top nine countries with the largest external financing needs, all are from Central America (with the exception of Uruguay). Peru, Bolivia, and Venezuela have the lightest external financing needs in 2006 and 2007 because of healthy exports of natural resources.

Gross external financing needs for the region as a whole in 2000 were at about 121% of CAR plus usable reserves, whereas in 2006, they were down to 100% of CAR. External debt, net of liquid assets, in 2006 is expected at 54% of CAR, a significant improvement from the 110% of CAR recorded in 2000.

Better Fiscal Profile

The average figure includes massive fiscal surpluses in countries like Chile (estimated to be 7%-8% of GDP in 2006 because of high copper prices) and more modest surpluses in Argentina and Venezuela (both less than 1% of GDP). Nevertheless, Brazil continues to run a general government deficit of just under 4% of GDP, a modest improvement from previous years.

Chile is likely to again enjoy the largest fiscal surplus in 2007, even if copper prices continue to decline from their current high levels. However, most Latin American countries, including the bigger ones like Brazil and Mexico, will again be in deficit. Although its general government deficit is likely to decline

modestly towards 3.4% of GDP in 2007, Brazil will again have the largest fiscal deficit in the region.

This reduction in external vulnerabilities has also been accompanied by a significant improvement on the fiscal accounts. Fiscal balances have improved in most of the region. The average general government fiscal deficit expected for 2006 is about 0.2% of GDP, which compares very well with a deficit of about 3.6% of GDP recorded in 2000.

It is encouraging to note that government revenues have generally increased as a share of GDP in the region while spending has increased at a slower pace, allowing the primary budget surplus to increase. That, in turn, has given sovereigns the resources to either retire debt or reduce the pace of new borrowing.

The overall debt burden of Latin American sovereigns (measured as a share of GDP) has not improved as much as the external indicators of debt. General government debt (net of government liquid assets) is expected to have fallen below 35% of GDP in 2006 and is expected to reach 32% in 2007. However, the recent decline in the general government debt level is largely a recovery from higher debt levels in the recent past. For example, general government debt on average for the region was 36% of GDP in 2000.

Belize has the highest debt burden in the region at more than 84% of GDP, followed by Argentina at about 61%. Based on current projections, (Please Turn To Page 7) ➡



Nature's Way Guesthouse
In Punta Gorda

Welcome To Nature's Way Guesthouse
Clean, Safe, Affordable,
Central Location Sea Front View & Breeze
Single \$23BZD, Double \$33BZD,
Triple \$48BZD
Get off bus at Catholic Church on
Main & Church Streets, walk down
hill 75 yards to Guesthouse.

Taxed to Walk, Sleep, Breathe & Eat

By Meb Cutlack

Belizeans are reeling under the most iniquitous tax system ever imposed. They are taxed when they sleep, when they wake, when they rise, when they walk, when they buy and when they sell. They are even taxed, through hospital and funeral parlor, when they are born and when they die.

They are taxed when they get up in the morning and turn on the light. They are taxed when they turn on the gas. They are taxed when they telephone. They are taxed when they drive. They are taxed when they buy breakfast, lunch or dinner. They are taxed just to buy a coke or lime juice!

Yes, the GST puts 10% on everything! Ten percent - twenty times, or more, every day! Some businesses are lucky because they get it back. Not Tom, Dick or Juan or Juanita or Mike or Neida or Rosita or Julian, or any other ordinary citizen – they have no tax breaks - just pay, pay, pay!

And check out this! The US Embassy in Belize City had a sale last week of leftovers after their move to Belmopan. And, the taxman was there! Fifty percent (yes, 50%) tax on old furniture. An old chair, a desk, table, and anything furniture-wise, and the grab bag was open and the PUP Government grabbed 50% of the purchase price!

The PUP government puts out its fist

for every single penny it can squeeze from the people. It threatens and intimidates anyone who can't pay. It exploits the poor to hand to the rich!

Just take the 'few' driving all those vehicles with blue and green number plates who pay little or nothing for their land grabs, their gas or even for their income tax. They are the privileged; the cronies and the thieves who masquer-

Just think for a moment--a real tourism couple staying 3 or 4 days or more in Belize (taking in the reef and the mountains) leaves \$800 US or more in the communities and in the country – and that filters down through local hotels, tour guides and little restaurants. The same couple, staying just a day and a half, leave only \$70 US plus a nights stay. And, virtually nothing fil-

It's time that Belizeans demanded a better accounting. It's time that they demanded a real revision of the Cruise ship head tax.

ade as loyal Belizeans but who are the ones who benefit while others pay. They are the ones who are destroying Belize!

And, look at the inequalities the PUP hands out to those who visit this country; the ones who come to stay for days at a time (with love and money in hand) to visit our rivers, mountains, Mayan ruins and reef. They are taxed \$70 a head to stay more than 24 hours!

The PUP Government forgets the possibility of those people spending \$100 to \$200 a day if they stayed longer. No, that would go into the local communities and only filter slowly to government. They are addicts and they must have their fix immediately!

ters through!

You would think that a wise government economist would get the picture but, no.

The time has come for this to change. Visitors should be given incentives, not punishments for staying longer. Give them 'free' exit if they stay more than 3 days.

Why not?

Why not treat them with the same love as the cruise ship tourists. They pay no exit tax at all. Yet they stomp and block the streets, they overtax the sewerage systems, their busses pound the roads in the city and districts and they aren't taxed. They are just charged a token fee - half of which

goes back to the cruise ship company.

How did this happen? That money was meant for Belize - instead it ended up in the hands of a PUP crony and was then handed back to the Cruise ship Company!

It's time that Belizeans demanded a better accounting. It's time that they demanded a real revision of the Cruise ship head tax.

Forget an extra dollar and demand want it costs Belize to put up with them. And, that includes the cost to our roads and infrastructure and our ecotourism reputation – now butchered internationally by thousands of cruise ship passengers crowding our streets, our roads, our reef and our ruins.

Other countries; many have little or nothing to offer, compared with Belize's natural attractions, yet charge cruise ship passengers \$20 U.S.

We must up our charge to at least \$12.U.S to \$15. U.S per passenger with a 5 year review built into all contracts. Certainly at least a dollar a head for the city, \$2 for roads and infrastructure - and an urgent review of all the monies which go back to the Cruise ship company.

Only then might it make the money we receive, to have these hoards descend on us and stomp on our Belizean heritage, almost worthwhile.

Think about it.

S&P says "Belize has the highest debt ...

☞ (Continued From Page 6)
both Chile and Venezuela could become net creditors in 2007 because of high commodity prices, which have allowed their governments to retire debt and to acquire assets.

Interestingly, all Latin American countries (other than Belize and Argentina) currently have debt levels of less than 60% of GDP, the threshold level set by the European Union (under the Maastricht Agreement) a few years ago for European countries that sought to join the union's common currency. Latin American countries have far weaker revenue bases and shallower domestic capital markets than developed countries in Europe do. As a result, they run a higher risk of debt default compared with developed European sovereigns at the same level of debt (as measured against GDP).

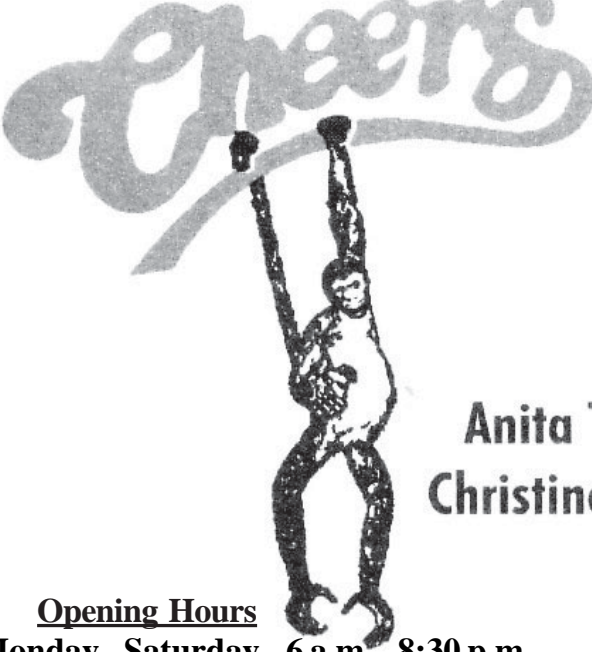
The improvement in external measures of debt in Latin America in recent years reflects many sovereigns having taken advantage of the favorable conditions in the external market to develop their domestic capital markets, thereby gain-

ing more sources of funding. Governments throughout the region have sought to reduce their foreign currency debt by replacing it with local currency debt, reducing the exchange rate mismatch between their liabilities and their revenues.

The switch from foreign to local currency debt is favorable from a ratings perspective, as the new debt profile

typically reduces the vulnerability of the government's finances to an exchange rate risk or to a negative external shock. However, the overall levels of general government debt remain high in Latin America, when viewed against the typically narrow tax base or the volatility of government revenues (especially for large commodity exporters).

The encouraging macroeconomic performance of recent years in most Latin American countries is expected to continue in 2007. Large countries—such as Brazil, Colombia, Chile, and Peru—now enjoy a positive outlook on their sovereign ratings, indicating the possibility of higher sovereign ratings in Latin America in 2007.



Cheers

With a Tropical Twist

Tel: 822-8014
Res:/Fax: 820-2062
Int.: 501-822-8014

Mile 31 ¼
Western Highway
BELIZE, Central America

Mailing Address: Box 346, Belmopan
E-Mail: chrissey@cheersrestaurant.bz

**Anita Tupper
Christine Tupper**

Opening Hours
Monday - Saturday 6 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Sunday & Holidays 7 a.m. - 7:30 pm.
Breakfast Lunch and Diner



ARIES (Mar. 21- April 20)
You will be popular and will easily attract members of the opposite sex. Get involved in sports groups or hobbies that attract you. Catch up on overdue phone calls and correspondence. You can come up with solutions to the problems responsible for inefficiencies at work. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

TAURUS (Apr. 21- may 21)
Spend time with friends or family. You may find that getting together with colleagues after hours will be worthwhile. Be prepared to counteract the damage that adversaries are about to create. Residential moves will be favorable, and larger quarters the most probable direction. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21)
Don't forget to let your mate know how much you care. Family outings or a quiet stroll through the park will lead to stimulating conversation and a closer bond. Take care of any dealings with government agencies. You can be sure that any dealing with large institutions should go well. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)
Pleasure trips will be most enjoyable and should lead to new and lasting friendships. You can solidify your relationship if you plan a special evening with your mate. You will do well if you mingle with the brass this week. You can change your living arrangements. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

LEO (July 23-Aug 22)
You will enjoy travel and getting together with peers. Your added discipline will enable you to complete some of those unfinished projects. Do your own thing. Your outgoing nature might work against you this week. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 -Sept. 23)
You will feel tired and rundown if you have allowed yourself to get into a financial mess. Try to stay calm and understand both sides of the situation. Romance is likely if you participate in unusual forms of entertainment. You can make gains if you look at long-term investments. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

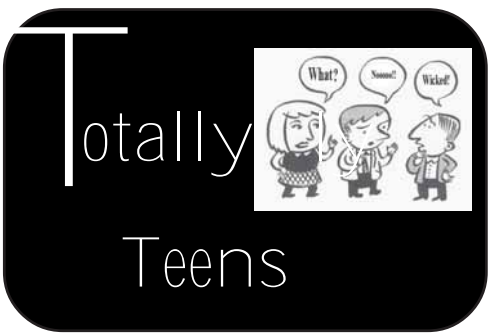
LIBRA (Sept. 24 -Oct. 23)
Family outings should include visiting friends or relatives. Use your charm to get your own way. You don't owe anyone an explanation. Do your own thing, you need time to yourself. Do not push your opinions or try to reform your emotional partner this week. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
Real estate investments will payoff. You must be careful not to trust just anyone. Your ability to be practical in business will help. It's time to reconnect with some of the people you used to know. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 -Dec. 21)
Take care when dealing with older relatives. You can develop your creative talents if you take the time to practice your art. Interaction with colleagues will only be upsetting. Use your creative talent in order to accomplish your goals. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22.- Jan. 20)
A need to express yourself may come out in creative ways. You can make a difference if you offer your help at functions that involve children. Before you proceed be sure to talk your plans over with those they will affect. You are best to be discreet. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 -Feb. 19)
Don't let your work and your personal



“We come to love not by finding a perfect person, but by learning to see an imperfect person perfectly.”

“I get the best feeling in the world when you say hi or even smile at me because I know, even if its just for a second, that I’ve crossed your mind.”

“The spaces between your fingers were created so that another’s could fill them in.”

“Never frown because you never know who might be falling in love with your smile.”

“Find a guy who calls you beautiful instead of hot, who calls you back when you hang up on him, who will lie under the stars and listen to your heartbeat, or will stay awake just to watch you sleep... wait for the boy who kisses your forehead, who wants to show you off to the world when you are in sweats, who holds your hand in front of his friends, who thinks you’re just as pretty without makeup on. One who is constantly reminding you of how much he cares and how lucky he is to have YOU... The one who turns to his friends and says, “thats her”....

“You know you’re in love when you don’t want to go to sleep at night because your life is better than a dream.”

“Meeting you was fate, becoming your friend was a choice, but falling in love with you was beyond my control.”

“If you love something, set it free. If it comes back, it’s yours. If it does not come back, it was never meant to be.”

“Today I caught myself smiling for no reason... then I realized I was thinking about you.”

“Last night I looked up and matched each star with a reason why I love you; I was doing great, until I ran out of stars.”

“If you truly love someone, then the only thing you want for them is to be happy....even if its not with you..”

“Once I dropped a tear in the ocean, the day I find it is the day I’ll stop loving you”

life interfere with each other. Stop those bad habits. Communication will be the source of your knowledge and you must be sure to spend time with those who have more experience. Don't make large purchases unless you have discussed your choices with your mate. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

PISCES (Feb. 20-Mar. 20)
Speak of your future goals, intentions, and commitments. Don't donate more than you can afford in order to impress others. Visitors may be likely to drop by. You can make extra cash by moonlighting. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



Photo & Design ©2007 YELLOWTAIL CREATIVE

THE

hunt

FOR

GOOD FOOD

with Anthony Hunt

EL ESTABLO

Intersection of OW Bypass and Corozal Rd. • Orange Walk

Ceviche is the dish of record at this quaint establishment. I stopped by on a Saturday afternoon to find a place bustling with activity, and bursting at the seems with good food and cold beer. I was truly not surprised by the high standard of the ceviche (one would expect nothing less in Orange Walk), but I was taken aback by the excellent “fiyah haat” taste of the rice and beans. The stew chicken was up to par with the best family places around, and I would boast that the pork was better than most. It was also refreshing to see that quite a lot of effort had been taken in providing a nice atmosphere to dine in, with nostalgic mementos on the walls and prompt and very friendly service. Need I mention AGAIN that the beers were ICE COLD! And you know it is a good sign when policemen are sitting, enjoying their meal too. So don't just fly past Ole Rambo Town anymore, stop by El Establo and tell them we sent you.

★
★
★
1/2

Restaurant OPEN DAILY, LUNCH / DINNER
Approximate Meal Cost \$6.00 & UP

A perfectly good plan, going to waste

By: Independent P.G. correspondent

For many years the people of Toledo have tried to get recognition for their homegrown development plan, the Toledo Eco-Park Plan. On September 12, 2003, representatives of all the democratically elected political leaders in the district as well as the cultural, conservation and development organizations signed a memorandum of understanding prepared by the General Manager of the Toledo Development Corporation in support of the further development of the plan. Seeing the united consensus of support the United States Peace Corps and the Toledo Civil Society also signed.

In a foreword to his Toledo Strategy and Action Plan 2006-07, Minister Mark Espat writes, “government has taken a lead role in the planning process, and we are committed to use this plan to guide development in the district”. Then he goes on to write “however, true development will only be achieved if the energy comes from those within those targeted for development.”

This is precisely the type of community consultation brought out the support for the Toledo People’s Eco park plan back in 2003. But rather than use any of these ideas, government planners put in what they wanted. The cost for preparing their “action plan for poverty elimination in Belize?” **A half a million dollars!**

Among the goals of this action plan, listed under “Enterprise Development” page 45, is to “Promote tourism and investment and development through the establishment of the Toledo Gateway Program listed as part of this program was the following: Establish the Toledo Eco Cultural tourism zone

\$15,000. Establish of the Maya heritage trail and sea route \$150,000. Establish the Toledo in Gateway program \$150,000. Source of funding BTB, GOB, BTIA. Implementing agencies BTB, BTIA, TDC, TIDE, other NGOs and CBO’s community.”

Recently however, I interviewed several people from these agencies about the status of the government’s poverty alleviation plan for Toledo. Dr. Ludwig Palacio General Manager of the TDC: “Dr. Palacio, what do you know about these programs.” “I don’t know about them.”

Question, “how can we establish a program if it doesn’t yet exist?” “Well I believe it means to design the program”.

Question, “Well the programs have not been designed, how can they determine funding for three years?” No answer.

Next was the President of the Toledo branch of the BTIA, Mr. Bruno Kuttinger, “What do you know about these programs.” “Nothing, I have never heard of them?”.

Mr. Roberto Echeverria, President of the Toledo Tour Guide Association, “What do you know about these programs?” “Nothing, I have never heard of them.”

Ms C. Ross, Belize Tourist Board says, “I don’t know about them”.

Mr. Kenneth Williams, Product Development Officer, “I can’t tell you anything about them, but I think I remember hearing about them once at a meeting”.

Mr. Andrew Godoy President of the National BTIA “I have no knowledge of any of this plans”.

Mr. Carlos Galvez, Mayor of Punta Gorda Town, “I have never heard of any of these projects, many times

projects and plans come to Toledo without proper consultation, we only hear about them after they have been approved by those higher up.”

Mr. Mario Chavarria Town Manager “I have never heard of these projects”.

Mrs. Celia Mahung, Executive Director of TIDE “Never heard of these programs” Mr. Vincent Sacul, Chairman of the Toledo Eco Tourism Association, “I know nothing of these projects”

Mrs. Leela Vernon, Chairlady of the Punta Gorda Conservation Committee, “I have never heard of them.”

Mr. Lenardo Acal, Chairman of the Toledo Maya Cultural Council, “I have never heard of these projects.” No one told me about any of them.

I also wrote Honorable Godfrey Smith, our Minister of Tourism, asking if he knew anything of these projects and programs. This letter was registered, and sent on December 14th, 2006, 74 days ago, still no answer, what a sad joke.

What will happen if our people are not supported in our efforts to help ourselves to take advantage of the rich natural resources we have been blessed with and the tremendous opportunities for harvesting them that are now available to us with the Toledo People’s Eco-Park Plan? The answer should be obvious to most Belizeans by now.

Foreigners will come here and they will take advantage of them. Some of them will use many of their ideas.

They will say, “well, why shouldn’t we take advantage of the resources and these ideas to develop them, the people haven’t, if I don’t, someone else will. While I might be the owner instead of them, at least I will provide jobs for them!”

The sad truth is as many of us have already seen, our government leaders will rush to support them, the foreigners, when they wouldn’t help our own people. Our government’s lack of faith in the ability’s of the people of Toledo is painfully obvious.

Or do they believe in our potential and just don’t want us to succeed, so that they can get their money under the table? By selling their support and our resources to those from outside, who have money to pay them?

So what we have here is the Government of Belize Ministry of Economic Development, paying some consultants to consult with the local stakeholders in tourism in Toledo to help put together a plan they believe in, and will put in the energy necessary to implement.

Paying \$500,000, to come up with plans for tourism development in Toledo that no one interviewed here has ever heard of, and omitting a tourism development plan that took many years of trial and error and success to design by the democratic participatory planning process is ludicrous.

What we need is a holistic plan for the unification of all the ministries, non-governmental organizations, and people who are living and working in Toledo for a better Toledo. One that recognizes that in 2003, after singing the national anthem under our national flag in the parish hall, some of our most respected citizens signed onto the plan, or as witnesses.

The first step was simply to get a pilot project, give the People’s Plan a chance. But it seems the ministry was afraid it would succeed, and then, everyone would want to try it, and there would be no stopping them.....

The Magical Biodiversity of the Runaway Creek Nature Reserve

By Sharon Matola

A magical forest ALWAYS harbors the rarest of the rare!

To keep within this well-earned reputation, the Runaway Creek Nature Reserve is home to one of the rarest small mammals in all of Belilze!!

The Greater Grison, *Galictis vittata*, is the name of this unusual animal.

The Belize Zoo is home to two Grisons and they never fail to thrill their visitors. Dashing about, these happy Grisons will flip their bushy tails into the air and spray out a bit of “Grison perfume”!!

Does it smell bad? Well, NOT if you



The Greater Grison hunts small rodents day & night and is a skillful swimmer.

are a Grison!

The eyesight of the Grison is not so sharp and they most likely depend on their ears and nose to locate food in the jungle.

Fruits and insects make a grand feast for them, and check out those Grison feet! They are semi-webbed, making any effort to swim, an easy pursuit.

What makes the Runaway Creek Nature Reserve the perfect happy home for a Grison? These fast-moving small mammals enjoy roaming about in Savanna habitats, as well as lush tropical forest. Both of these important Grison-friendly ecotypes thrive within the boundaries of Belize’s Runaway Creek Nature Reserve.

To register or for more complete information, visit TIC Americas on-line (www.ticamericas.net).

Call 225-3586 anytime

**[http://belizenews.com/
independentonline.pdf](http://belizenews.com/independentonline.pdf)**

ghe hâu oy f tç \zçtvio goãç



ADVENTURE BELIZE



22 BURNS AVENUE
SAN IGNACIO TOWN
BELIZE, CENTRAL AMERICA

WEBSITE: www.evasonline.com
E-MAIL: evas@btl.net

Cubola Productions releases New Book

Benque Viejo del Carmen,

In a timely fashion, as in 2007 we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the former British Empire, Cubola Productions is pleased to release a new book, *Family and People all Well... an Account of the Occurrences in the Business of Mahogany and Logwood Cutting in the Bay of Honduras in 1789*.

This account not only depicts the business of mahogany and logwood cutting during the slavery years but also allows us to glimpse into the real lives of slaves.

The book's is based on the diary of Colonel Lawrie, one of the biggest slave owners in the Colony, who owned and exploited a tract of land known as Rowley's Bight in the Bay of Honduras in 1789, in the vicinity of what today is known as Corozal Bay.

Colonel Lawrie's account of the lives of the slaves living and working under his command was discovered by Roy Murray, the author of the book, at the Scottish Record Office in Edinburgh. These primary sources are extremely rare and valuable and, as far as we know, Colonel Lawrie's diary is the only day-to-day account of the activities

of timber slaves in Belize that has survived the ravages of time.

Through the Journal, we learn of the existence of Violet, Creessy, Indian Nanny, Othello, Cato, and Harlequin who were among the 104 other men women and children slaves named in the slave inventory. We learn how much they were priced at and their family relationships, their health and living conditions, including food rations and the provision of clothing,

Reading through the book, we are exposed to the suffering and humiliation men and women had to endure on this land before the right to own slaves was abolished by law.

As the author, Roy Murray, tells us in his introduction "I feel privileged to have worked on this manuscript and to have had the opportunity to bring to live the experiences of one group of slaves in Belize, as a testament to their efforts and those of generations of bondsmen and bondswomen in the settlement to make as much of a life of their own as they could in the circumstances in which they found themselves, and to leave their mark on the history of a country who owe them so very much.

This book is the third volume in

the Belize Collection, which presents issues of Caribbean-wide interest from a Belizean perspective.

It is available in bookstores and gift shops throughout Belize

Events at the George Price Centre for Peace and Development this month

Exhibit: The World of Wu

Enjoy the art of Taiwanese-Belizean multi-talented artist Steve Wu: illustrations, woodwork, photography, cartoons, sculptures, drawings and design. The exhibit will be on display until February 23.

IT Training: Microsoft Excel

From 1.00 to 5.00 p.m.

Thursday, February 8 - Beginners

Tuesday, February 13 - Intermediate

Thursday, February 15 - Advanced

Movie Club: Secondhand Lions

Join the movie club on Thursday, February 8 at 7.00 p.m. for a showing of Secondhand Lions with Michael Caine; Robert Duval and Haley Joel Osmont.

Valentine's Dance organized by the Belmopan Cancer Society

On Saturday, February 10 from 8.00 p.m. enjoy good food, good music in good company, all for a worthy cause!

For further information, contact:

Elsie Alpuche, Curator / Coordinator

The George Price Centre for Peace and Development

Price Centre Road, City of Belmopan

E-mail: info@gpcbelize.com

Website: www.gpcbelize.com

ROTARY'S

2nd Annual



Entrance \$4
Under 12 enter free!!

March

3rd & 4th, 2007
Sat & Sun

Do you have a boat, product or service you want to sell?
Call 610-1681

Show/Sale

Place: Cucumber Beach Marina (Old Belize)
Mile 5 Western Hwy, Belize City
Time: 9am - 5pm



- * Marine products & services
- * Outboard engines
- * Inboard engines
- * Fishing supplies
- * Boat Manufacturers

- * Companies offering charters for snorkeling, fishing, sailing
- * Intro to scuba diving
- * Safety equipment
- * New and used boats for sale

Private Listing

Lake Gardens, Ladyville

“Chalet d’ Eve”



Beautiful 2900 sq foot home on ¼ acre property in **highly secure** neighborhood, 10-12 feet above sea level with on site hurricane shelter

HOUSE

- * 5 bedrooms (ac unit in each)
- * 4 full bathrooms
- * 2 kitchens
- * 3 fully screened porches
- * breakfast room/ study/ games room
- * walk-in pantry
- * mahogany cabinets
- * utility room

SAFETY/EMERGENCY FEATURES

- * **Hurricane shelter with metal windows and ferro concrete roof**

- * 1000 gallon water collection backup cistern
- * reverse osmosis water system for potable drinking water

GARDEN

- * decorative plants & 20 fruit trees
- * pagoda
- * external electrical outlets and faucets

SECURITY

- * 6' security fence
- * motion detector spotlights
- * off street parking for one or two cars
- * privacy of cul-d-sac living on private estate

LOCATION

Just 20 minutes from Belize City, 7 minutes to International Airport close to grocery shopping and 2 banks

Taxes-- approx BZ \$200/year property taxes (fully paid up)

PRICING

property appraised at \$ 420,000 but ask for details



VIEWING

by appointment only

Please call Trevor @ 600-1627

<p>1/2 acre lots in Burrel Boom starting at \$10K Call 600-1627 for details</p>	<p>10 acre plots in Burrel Boom starting at \$50K Call 600-1627 for details</p>	<p>12 acre plots in Ladyville starting \$120,00050K Call 600-1627 for details</p>
---	---	---

TOPICAL TIDBITS

El Pilar Coloring Book

A new book hopes to impress in the minds of Belizean students the “marriage of nature and antiquity.” The coloring book is about El Pilar, the huge Mayan site in Cayo, and it is aimed at students as part of their African and Maya history curriculum. Archaeologist Dr. Anabel Ford: “...This is a tiny book, it is not the encyclopedia. I hope that the students in standard III will be able to start bringing forward this wonderful chance to save the Mayan forest.” Over 8,000 copies are being distributed free to students across the country. A teachers guide is also being prepared by Dr. Ford.



Police complain!

We hear from a concerned policeman who overnights at a Mayan site that the food is not up to scratch, the accommodation is uncomfortable and that his ‘rifle’ doesn’t work. We are not saying which site he works...

BTB having a rethink?

Tracy Panton of BTB told Channel 5 last week: “...we are at the stage where we really need to look critically at what we are doing, not only in the public sector but also in the private sector. When



Panton said the question of a new cruise port for Belize City has yet to be resolved, but construction has already begun at Stake Bank.

you look at the competitive spend in Central America and the Caribbean, Belize is way below that. We are being outspent three to one by our Central American neighbours, and five to one by Caribbean partners.” And she added: “I think maybe the marketing spin may seem stale to us... This year, for example, we are going to do exten-



sive research to test how our marketing spend is affecting our arrivals, and what is effective, what isn’t effective in the long and short term. New blood is always good. It adds new energy, but we don’t want to fix something if it’s not quite broken.” Panton said that the question of a new cruise port for Belize City has yet to be resolved.



Parkinsons cure?

Cannabis may cure Parkinson’s by boosting levels of the brain’s natural cannabis-like chemicals. This could improve the treatment of Parkinson’s disease, a US study suggests. Mice with a similar condition could move normally within 15 minutes of having a cocktail including a compound which increases endocannabinoid levels. But the scientists, writing in Nature, warned smoking cannabis would not have the same effect.

Iran claims found herbal cure for AIDS

A journalist, Ron Brynaert, reports that Iranian scientists have claimed that they have discovered a herbal cure for AIDS. “The drug named ‘IMOD’ is completely effective and safe with no proved side effects,” Former Minister of Health and Medical Education Dr.

Mohammad Farhadi said the chemical and herbal treatment appeared effective on other immune disorders as well. “It is not a medication to kill the virus, it rather can be used besides other anti-retroviral drugs,” Baqeri Lankarani said on state radio.

The drug, made after five years of



research, has been tested on 200 patients, IRNA said, adding that it is considered the fifth generation of medications helping control the HIV/AIDS virus. Farhadi said the medication will now be tested on some 3,000 to 5,000 Iranian patients in the next year to monitor its efficacy. Health Minister Baqeri Lankarani said that the number of HIV/AIDS cases in Iran stands at around 14,000 while 1,700 people have died of the disease.

**Announcing our new internet host:
For an online version of the**

INdependent
Reform for the People

visit

www.belizenorth.com

Band Fest II- Bigga & Betta!



Mayor Zenaida Moya presents the winners' baton to Succotz Festival Marching Band, second time overall winners of Band Fest II on Saturday, February 10th.



BEL marketing manager Diane Forman presents prizes and trophies to Christy Pech and band leader Leon Palacio of Mt Carmel School, winners of primary school category.



Drummers of Banda Bethel of La Ceiba, Honduras put on a show to wow the crowd.



Lovely majorettes of the Colegio Osorio Sandoval Band from Guatemala stole the hearts of many Belizean spectators.



The Youth Band of Chetumal, Quintan Roo also performed in this year's Band Fest II.



The San Pedro High School Band brought the Isla Bonita rhythm to Belize City.



This precocious pom-pom girl of the Holy Redeemer School Band drew rounds of applause with her performance onstage.

Social Page



M&M Tour 2006 champion Marlon Castillo plants a kiss on Atlantic Bank employee after she presented him with the leader's jersey for the start of the 2007 M&M Tour.

Letters to the Editor

Falling house, crooked contractor

✎ (Continued From Page 2)
 be aware of, that they knew were faulty in the construction, but would not state it in a court for fear of what would happen to them if they did. How very sad.
 I cannot see things getting better for anyone there who is honest and law abiding. It sure does appear that if you are honest you had better be afraid to step forward and if you are a crook, you have all the power and ability to keep information from being told to a court.
 There is no doubt that this loss has hurt us. I don't know if we will ever be able to recoup it, but, I am still in a better situation then those that are so afraid to step forward with the truth and to not work under situations that they are required to do sub-standard work to just have a job.
 I read tonight on the news that yet another house has fallen, this is the second in as many weeks. How many homes need to fall, how many families that have paid for those homes need to suffer before the law holds those who build them to be accountable?
 Do I sound angry and disappointed?

You bet I am. I did not move to Belize and sink our entire life savings thinking that every bit of it would be taken and we would have no ability to avail on honest recourse for what was stolen.
 The GOB promotes one thing to lure retirees to move and then, poof..... like the old rabbit in the hat trick, the promises and incentives are gone. The only thing worse is that as a US citizen I could leave, those there who cannot leave are stuck.
 And I do mean stuck.
 Why is it that there are more people of Belize living anywhere other than Belize? More and more families of Belize trying to get their children out of Belize? We had many different friends in the area and in all honesty, 95% of them were either trying to get out as a family or at least the children. It makes me weep for Belize.
 In closing I share Ecclesiastes 8:11. and encourage all to read this verse.
 Name withheld,
 case pending in court.
 (She hopes.)



US Ambassador Robert Dieter presents certificates at the closing of Medical Readiness Training Exercise (MEDRETE) at Santa Teresa RC School, Toledo.

BelpAC's awards Citizen of the Year 2006



Mrs. Ofelia Novelo - BelpAC's Citizen of the Year.

Belizeans Promoting Active Citizenship (BelpAC) hereby announces its selection for the 2006 Citizen of the Year Award.
 The recipient of this first Award is Mrs. Ofelia Novelo from Orange Walk Town. Mrs. Novelo is the leader of the group MAMAS - Mujeres Ayudando a Mujeres a Superarse. This organization, which was founded by Mrs. Novelo a few years ago, has been helping women to excel in various fields, including handicraft-making. The organization also offers mentoring programs for women, among other activities.
 Mrs. Novelo was selected for the Award from among an impressive field of candidates. The Orange Walk public had an opportunity to submit nominations, which were then reviewed by the BelpAC Executive Committee. Award nominees were required to meet the following criteria:
 *Be a model Belizean citizen/resident living in Orange Walk for at least 5 years
 *Contribute to the social improve-

ment and/or physical conditions of Orange Walk on a voluntary basis
 *Possess a character beyond self-interest in whatever activity she/he is involved.
 *Be willing to have his/her contributions highlighted in the local and national media
 BelpAC introduced this Award initiative last year to acknowledge the tremendous voluntary work being carried out by citizens of Orange Walk, and expects to continue the program on an annual basis.
 A special reception in honour of Mrs. Novelo will be held on Thursday, February 15, 2007, in Orange Walk Town. Mrs. Novelo will receive the BelpAC Citizen of the Year plaque, as well as a cash prize.
 BelpAC applauds Mrs. Ofelia Novelo for her inspirational contributions to the Orange Walk community, and for her unswerving commitment and dedication to the improvement of the lives of women in the community.

PARROT TREE

PLANTATION



**\$259,900
& up**

Roatan's Most Prestigious Resort Community!

**1- 4 Bedroom Units
Beachfront Condos
Marina Villas
Retail Space
Home Sites**

**200 Acre Gated Community
5 Acre Private Lagoon
Full Service Marina
Day Spa & Retreat
Coffee Shop**

J. Edwards Real Estate
BelizeSales@Century21Roatan.com
Tels: Honduras: 504-320-7177 US 011-04-320-7177
www.ParrotTreePlantation.com / www.Century21Roatan.com