

The Independent

Reformer for the People

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Step off!

Mayan leaders tell PM Musa

Belize City, April 3, 2007

The Alcaldes and Village Chairpersons of Conejo and Santa Cruz Villages representatives of the Mayan Leaders Alliance and in the Toledo district filed a petition in the Belize Supreme Court against the government of Belize on Tuesday for what they say is the GOB's failure to recognize, protect, and respect the Maya's customary land rights.

The "Ten Points of Agreement" signed by the government in October 2000 acknowledges the Mayan people's "rights to land and resources in southern Belize, based on their long standing use and occupancy."



Human rights attorney Antoinette Moore argues for the Toledo Maya's constitutional rights.

What has the Mayan people so incensed is that since then the government's actions have not followed the spirit of the agreement. By granting concessions for oil exploration and development, logging license and the production of hydro electricity without consulting with the Mayan communities in the area, the government has ignored

the rights of the Mayan people, the leaders charge.

Prime Minister Said Musa has countered these accusations by saying that while his government recognizes the rights of all Belizean people to own land from which they may earn a living, he will not allow what he calls the

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Supreme Court orders Christine Perriot reinstated



A jubilant Christine Perriot talks to reporters after the decision.

Belize Communications Workers Union General Secretary Christine Perriot was overcome with emotion when she won her petition to the Belize Supreme Court to be re-instated to her job with Belize Telecommunications Ltd.

Attorney Lois Young accompanied Perriot in court on Thursday, April 5, when Justice Sir John Muria ordered BTL to **temporarily** reinstate Perriot to her post as a Grade 6 technician in the company's Internet department, with full salary and benefits with effect from

February 27, the day the company had dismissed Perriot from her post.

Perriot had appealed her firing to the court on the grounds that her job performance was exemplary, as she had obtained a grade of 4.4 in her last job evaluation and that the primary reason for her dismissal was because of her activities as an officer of the Belize Communications Workers Union.

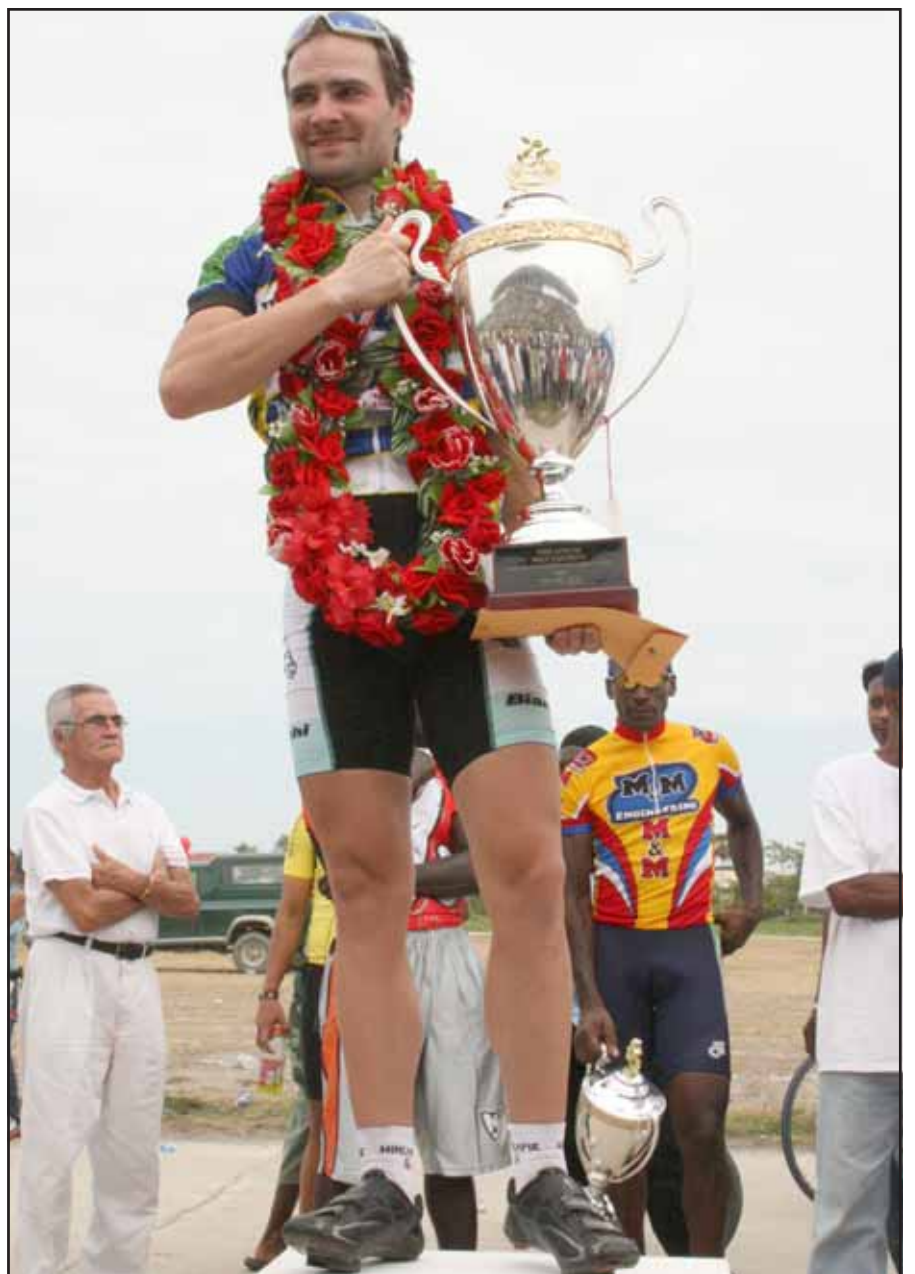
"I was fired from BTL because I was standing up for workers' rights," Perriot told reporters outside the court immediately after the verdict. "I was fired as a trade unionist. I was not terminated because of my job; I was terminated because I was defending these guys, three workers who were fired."

Perriot had 16 years of service with the company, the last 3 years as a Grade 6 technician in the Internet department and is currently involved in the union's representation of three other BTL employees who were dismissed following the theft of several hundred telephones from a BTL depot in Ladyville.

In reading his judgement, Justice Muria dismissed arguments submitted by BTL Chairman Dean Boyce in an

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Boyd Johnson wins 2007 Cross Country



Boyd Johnson proudly displays the champion's garland & trophy (Story on pg 14).

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Burdensome taxes

Dear Editor,

Well, let's see, in the last 5 or 6 years:

1. I pay triple the amount of taxes I used to pay.
2. I still don't see any local benefit from those taxes - we still don't have a road, adequate healthcare or better schools. (As an aside, it seems that the road will be delayed again - GOB apparently can't come up with their end of the deal — despite the triple taxes.)
3. I spend at least triple the amount of time doing tax-related paperwork, use triple the amount of paper and ink.
4. Prices for food, electricity, butane and gas have at least doubled.
5. I no longer have a vehicle because of the road conditions, high gas prices and inability to get repairs and maintenance due to road conditions and high prices for replacement parts.
6. I didn't go to the States last year to visit family and friends because I couldn't afford it.
7. Interest rates are now at 15%, up from 10% 4 years ago.
8. I now have to have burglar bars on my windows because of increasing crime.
9. I still have to pay for two different sources of Internet access because BTL still isn't reliable.
10. I have much less free time than I used to have due to increased paperwork loads and having to work twice as hard to earn a decent income due to higher prices.
11. The environment is being degraded at a rapid pace, with any spare time I have being devoted to issues such as how do we pay for a sewer system locally without government assistance - despite the triple taxes. How do we keep developers from cutting down mangroves illegally because the Forestry Department is so underfunded that they don't have the manpower for

enforcement, and the fines are too low to be a deterrent, etc., etc., etc. In addition to the personal effects, local community effects:

1. Fewer and fewer children are going to high school because of increasing school fees and costs of books – most kids in Seine Bight Village don't have any books at all- at any school level, despite the much touted Hands Foundation, and the GOB certainly doesn't help.
2. Standardized test scores are dropping.
3. Even Guatemalans and Hondurans who migrated to Mango Creek are leaving because of high prices.
4. Tourists are complaining about high prices, to the point where I think we're going to price ourselves out of even the moderate income tourism market — and how many wealthy people want to visit a country where they can't get the goods and services they want due to GOB ineptness, greed and shortsightedness?
5. Disaffection in this area is at an all-time high. Why bother to try to improve your community when absolutely nothing seems to work - when you can't even get your Village bylaws considered much less passed, leaving the Village entirely at the mercy of GOB to do whatever they want.

If I sat here long enough, I could continue adding to this list, but I have work to do so that I can pay the government more taxes.

Signed, Mary Toy

Protect Constitutional rights

Dear Editor,

It seems even as the GOB and a few Belizeans cash in on the legacy of the Mayans of Belize via the tourism industry, the descendants are still among the poorest in our country and still struggling for their ancestral rights to be recognized.

The Prime Minister has apparently made up his mind on this issue and left the Mayan people with no alternative but to take their issue to the Supreme Court.

Isn't it ironic that the Mayan people are now fighting for their ancestral rights and continuing their legacy of resistance by using the European judicial system and Constitution that we inherited from our colonial masters? Are they about to impart another important legacy by demonstrating for the benefit of all Belizeans the true meaning of independence and what a Constitution ought to be? Are they about to teach us a lesson that a Constitution ought not be a document used by the elite ruling class simply to protect the status quo and their narrow interests but should instead be a document that protects the rights of the least powerful in our society? Let's hope our Supreme Court rises to the occasion.

Signed Mario Lara

Corregidum

An apology to our readers and We The People for the headline of a report in last week's edition which was incorrectly titled "PNP & VIP denounce Political Interference in Village Council Elections." It should have read PNP & WTP denounce,,,"

Editor's note: Whenever Monday is a holiday, Independent Weekly will hit the streets on Wednesday

The INdependent Reformer

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Honest Mistakes



By: Trevor Vernon

Like many other Belizean families, ours was blessed this past weekend with the visit of relatives from abroad. What a pleasure that was: interacting with people you can totally drop your guard around and spend quality time with. People who, inadvertently or otherwise, don't try to hustle you. Instead all they want is the pleasure of your company and to see the country they left long ago.

My brother and his son came to spend the Easter with us and I had to show them a good time and make them know that our casa is their casa, anytime. Since I sold my boat (it pays to advertise in the Independent!) I had to lean on an old friend who was kind enough to work with my last minute schedule a bit and lend us one of his. No mistake about it, that friend is the kind of guy you could trust with your life. Old school and hard to find in Belize today. Much respect.

But it went downhill from there.

Gas station attendants aren't all hustling people, I swear by the folks at BUCA Shell on the Northern and Highway Man Service Station in Ladyville and several others in the city. But I had to stop elsewhere due to chores and

schedules. So anyway I asked the attendant at one particular station that shall remain nameless (unless you email me privately) to pump \$25 dollars regular gas. He "accidentally" pumps only \$20, while collecting the \$25. You can't get too distracted. Regular gasoline is at a near all time high in Belize at near USD\$5 (and apparently it went up again on Monday night...) something a gallon, or almost \$10 BZ. That is bad enough but then to have attendants follow our leaders and jack you some more is absolutely incredible. (Here, the editor will have to edit the expletives *^\$&@(!@!))

Then we pull up to the marine terminal where the enterprising cooperative guys have made arrangements for security the overnight parking customers who want a little safety for their rides. We are informed by everyone that the overnight rate is \$20.... The parking lot guy finally shows up and informs that its actually \$25 a night. I feel hustled but its not justified. It gnaws at my stomach a bit but thinking about the money I had to spend to replace a window and a stereo last time around, figure its worth it and go looking for a cold beer for my visitors.

But, it's Good Friday and sorry: no cold ones for sale at the terminal, not even at \$5 at pop. A bit ridiculous in a country that claims tourism is number one foreign exchange earner ...but hey, it's the law.

Both the Caye Caulker Water Taxi Association and Triple J run a pretty tight ship and give value for money with their

services. Both. I can't imagine how they make it with gasoline prices where they are...thanks to government taxes that bleed the poor and indigent. Those oversized machines cost a hell of a lot of money to buy and maintain. Both boats we ended up on have three 200 Yamahas. My boat had one, so I know what the fuel consumption is like. So I was mentioning to the operator that the association should apply for some sort of EPZ status to have access to duty free fuels. Both the tourists and the residents would benefit tremendously if the round trip were 25 instead of 30 buxx. And the fares would drop by those \$5/head, if government were to grant the same duty free status to the hard working water taxi service providers as they do to our hermanos caneros.

So I am sitting on the 45 minute ride feeling more hustled by the Musa Administration. Imagine if I were a fisherman! I'd definitely buy contraband fuels and take the duty exemption that's given to the privileged few...

Despite this its a smooth ride out to Caye Caulker. Good clean accommodations too, given my last minute arrangements.

So we go out to celebrate a bit. The restaurant is relatively upscale for the island and we don our Sunday best. Fantastic food, excellent wine. The family thoroughly enjoyed the meal, even the children. We even had a gracious visit to our table by the owners.

Terrific evening until the bill comes. Now trust me, I check every item and add everything again every time I am

handed a bill now. So if I had not been in a habit of doing this, my brother would have been cheated on his credit card for— get this: \$200 buxx!

We were actually being charged two big bills over what we spent. Now the young lady at the bar doing the bill, just smiled and acted as though it were a mistake. But we noticed she sent an entirely new bill instead of a corrected version within moments and came personally for us to sign the credit card form instead of just sending it back with the waiter so either 1) she is putting the whop on the owner with bogus bills and receipts or 2) she really is lousy with math and didn't want the boss to know she screwed up. But (s)he is going to know, trust me.

We all felt tremendously let down, especially me, since I so highly recommended the outfit. I felt like I betrayed my brother, whose treat it was.

Another incident happened on another night when we were promised desert with our meal, but the cook claims it got "wet" in the rain and we'd get it the next day. Never happened. So much for food reviews...

I was telling a buddy out there what happened, both times. He just shook his head, laughed and said "Tourist whap!"

But you know what? I can't let a string of people trying to make money at our expense ruin an otherwise positive experience on our outlook on life in Belize. Not everyone is out to get you, although it can feel that way sometimes.

Supreme Court orders Christine Perriot reinstated

☛ (Continued From Page 4)
affidavit that Perriot did not have cordial relations with her employers or workmates, as simply an assertion which has yet to be established. Boyce's affidavit had also alleged that the company had decided not to continue employing Perriot because her contribution to the Internet department was negligible, and that she had a negative attitude and was a difficult and uncooperative employee.

Attorney Lois Young had dismissed these allegations with the argument that had Perriot been unhappy in her workplace, she would simply have resigned.

The counsel for the defendant, Andrew Marshalleck had argued originally that the court did not have jurisdiction to grant a temporary reinstatement. He had also submitted that the B.C.W.U. was not a registered trade union and so was not protected under the Trade Unions Act of the laws of Belize. He had also argued that under the conditions of the Act, the burden of proof lay



Christine Perriot gets a congratulatory hug from her attorney, Lois Young.

with the plaintiff.

Justice Muria based his decision on Section 5, subsection 2 of the Act which protects workers against discrimination or prejudice. He ruled that the burden of proof lay with the defendant, BTL, and found that the Court did have jurisdiction to grant an interim remedy, prior to or ancillary to a final order in the dispute of Perriot vs BTL.

Marshalleck's arguments also foundered when a certificate of registration was produced to establish the fact beyond doubt that B.C.W.U. was a registered trade union.

After the verdict, Marshalleck said that no date has yet been set for the actual trial of the case, as the company still has many document to submit in its defense.

Since Perriot's re-instatement still leaves the way open for the company to find more legitimate grounds to terminate her a second time, Perrito argued, "if they want to terminate me, they would have to prove that I was a 1% performer."

Paradise Lost



By: Karla Heusner Vernon

I am watching the water taxis arrive with boatloads of local and foreign tourists. Whether from Houston or London or Belize City, each person has that universal “going to make myself relax this trip” holiday expression on their face, the same excited gleam in their eyes as they step onto the pier.

“Welcome to paradise, my friends,” I think to myself. “If only for a little while.”

Holidays are always a welcome break from the workaday world, a chance to forget ordinary lives and drab clothing, to wrap up in tropical sarongs or printed shirts, nibble on barbequed shrimp and sip tropical fruit concoctions.

Changing location is always a good way of changing your perspective, as is spending time with people who do love

Belize, but do not live here. Time spent with Belizeans residing abroad is particularly rewarding, for their success abroad reminds us of what our people can do, once transplanted outside this crab hole.

It is refreshing also, for they are not as burdened down with negativity as Belizeans who live in Belize. They see

better opportunities, now many are going simply because they want a “normal” life: a chance to be positive and productive and escape from the fatalism and fatalities.

To rid themselves of the oppressive sense that nothing is ever going to change, to improve, to work out...the belief that bad things happen to good

That we, who live in this geographic space called Belize, are somehow avaricious and greedy and evil for wanting the kind of life others all over the globe acquire, through hard work and dedication to their careers and family.

Or, that in order to obtain these “luxuries” for ourselves we must become involved in illegal activity or under the table trade. Sell your body, your soul, your honor—not to become wealthy, but simply to enter the middle class. Or stay there.

When exactly did we lose our footing as an emerging nation and become a failed state?

When exactly did we lose Belize?

Does we even remember a time when we were not under the constant stress and strain of trying to create a comfortable life, or even a basic one? A time when we, like our gas tanks, were not running on empty emotionally, patriotically?

When did we stand tall and proud, not bowed from the sheer burden of life here, of struggling to get through the week, the day, without having to

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When did simple pleasures, simple purchases become so complicated, so expensive, so out of reach, so unsafe and illusive?

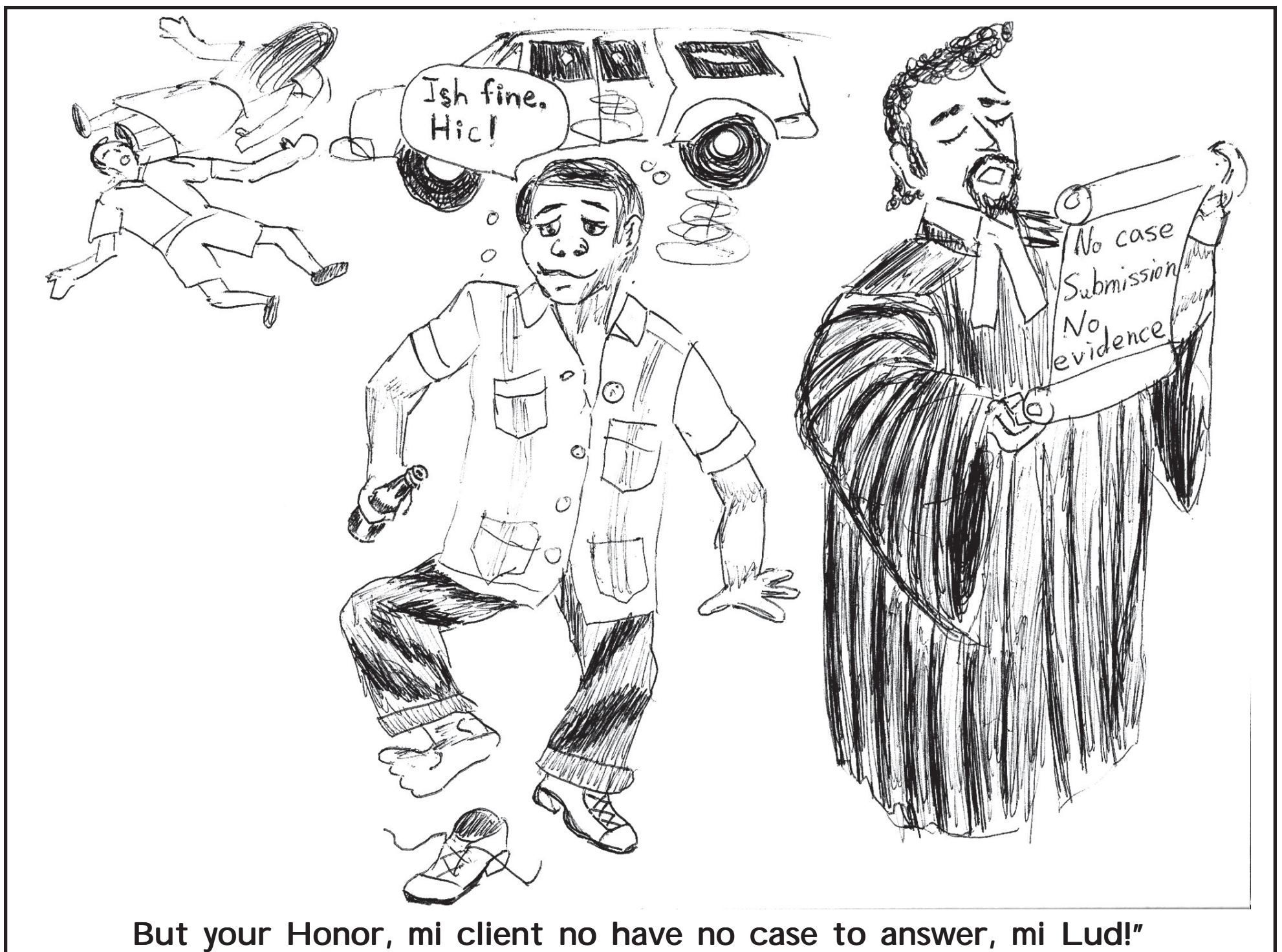
potential everywhere, instead of broken dreams.

Yes, maybe that is it; they have not had to watch things slip away, slip out of their hands and run down the drain over and over again. Have not had to watch so many people with good ideas get beaten down, or have their ideas stolen or perverted. Or stand by and mourn as the best and brightest among us are left disenchanted, disillusioned. Stripped of their dignity, squeezed and intimidated by subtle, and not so subtle tests of political and familial loyalty.

Decades ago people left Belize for

people because God wants it to, or that some people will never amount to anything because they aren't “meant” to.

That somehow Belize, and Belizeans, are not just not good enough, not worthy enough to send our children to decent schools, to get sensible jobs, to purchase modest homes, take a yearly vacation, purchase a few electronics or home furnishings and equipment to make our lives easier and more enjoyable, take our children to shows and plays and concerts and the cinema, eat at restaurants and sip coffee at sidewalk cafes.



But your Honor, mi client no have no case to answer, mi Lud!"

Land is the Basis of Everything



By: William Schmidt
PG correspondent for
INdependent Weekly

The development plan for the Toledo People's Eco Park (TPEP) integrates the traditional indigenous knowledge and system of land management with the capitalistic idea and system of private land ownership. Right now approximately one half of the land in the Toledo District is in private ownership; it also happens to be the best land. The other half is national land owned by the people of Belize and managed by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. With the Toledo People's Eco Park Plan, private land owners will work their land if they choose. The public land within the village jurisdiction will be used in sustainable ways by citizens of Belize who live in the villages and do

not own private land.

It will be managed by the Alcalde and Village Council Association according to the traditional system and the new laws of Belize as laid out in the Alcalde, Village Council and Toledo Development Corporation Acts. In this way all Belizeans in Toledo, rich and poor, who want to have land to work to survive will have it. One alternative to this plan, not a new idea, will be for all the land to be divided up and sold. Unfortunately there are too many people and not enough land for everyone to get a piece of private land. When all the land has been sold, those who are left out will have to move to the outskirts of the towns and cities in the usually devastating process called urbanization. This is more often than not bad for the villagers and townspeople. Another is for 500 thousand acres to be set aside for the exclusive use of Belizeans of Maya heritage. This is unfair to other Belizeans. And still doesn't guarantee that the presently endangered flora, fauna and watershed will be protected. The Eco Park Plan insures they are for the benefit of all Toledo's citizens

The present government has recently issued a number of titles to private land to individuals in and around rural vil-

lages. The presumed unwritten understanding of many of the beneficiaries is that they will vote for the politician who helped them get the chance to buy what's left of the public land. Unfortunately the same politicians often recommend when they pass over the titles that the new owners use them as collateral to get loans from the bank. This is unfortunate because many of these villagers are very poor and will be unable to repay their loans. The bank will take their property and auction it to those from within and outside who have money to buy it. In a relatively short time the wealthy, mostly from outside, will own all the land.

This has been done successfully in many times and places by insensitive governments to force indigenous peoples' land into the mercantile system. If there are any Belizeans who doubt this, I ask them to think of all the small homes and properties for auction they see each week in the newspapers - especially before Christmas. Think of the many years of saving and struggle to say nothing of the hopes and dreams that the small, and sometimes not so small, homes represent to the families that are losing them. If the government really wants to improve the quality of

education our people are receiving as they say, why don't they encourage and facilitate the general awareness of how and why loans are given by the banks? Let the people know who really benefits.

Be sure they understand how interest payments increase with late payments, and the difference between the interest and the principal. Why and how so many home and property owners think they can benefit from these loans and what actually happens to so many of them to make them default. Does anyone actually wonder why our rich government leaders don't see that this important information is taught? I wonder how many of the properties that so many of our leaders own, were purchased at these auctions? Many were probably purchased with social security or DFC money they borrowed and then defaulted on, while still retaining the properties they purchased with that money. Appropriate knowledge and power to our people! Its time the real benefits of the proposed Toledo People's Eco Park be known! Who besides the INdependent Reformer Newspaper will help to spread this important good news to our people who are sincerely looking for ways and means to make the promised, peaceful, constructive, Belizean revolution a reality.

Palm Fair at Cayo Market

Palm Sunday weekend kicked off to a creative start at the San Ignacio Saturday market. Kids of all ages came from surrounding schools in the Cayo district to join the Belize Botanic Gardens (BBG) in promoting the conservation of one of Belize's most diverse plants: the palm. Beautiful, resilient and used internationally for everything from thatching for roofs to extracting oils for cooking and soap- palm trees truly are nature's "prince of the plant kingdom."

With a focus on the conservation of one of Belize's native palm species known locally as xatýe the crew from BBG set up a small palm fair at the market. The fair was held to mark the conclusion of the "Darwin Initiative" project. As part of the project it was BBG's goal to promote education and the sustainable cultivation of xaté in Belize. The booths included educational displays demonstrating the many uses of xaté and other palms. There were also arts and crafts for kids, a potting activity using xatýe seedlings, information about xaté for sustainable growth, and vendors selling coconut water, peach palm tamales and local crafts.

The main attraction was a "Xatýe Display Contest." The contest was open to the first twenty registered students of the Cayo district. Contestants were invited to create floral displays using three of the eleven species of the



Cayo children exhibited their creativity at the Palm Fair.

Chamaedorea: C. ernesti-augusti (fishtail, xaté), *C. elegans* (parlor palm, xaté embra), and *C. oblongata* (jade, xaté macho). In addition to using palm leaves, contestants were given a variety of other natural materials to work with such as heliconias, gingers, seeds, and ferns. For about two hours, thirteen students flaunted their creative talents by constructing amazing jungle-like wonderlands filled with leaves, flowers and miniature floral sculptures of fish, birds, bugs and even people.

The contest wrapped up with a final judging of the botanic creations. Judges included Belize Botanic Garden's own curator Heather du Plooy as well as Brenden Sayers, visiting horticulturist and foreman of the glass houses at the National Botanic Garden in Glasnevin, Ireland. With such a plethora of intricate designs to choose from, the judges were hard pressed to select a winner. After much deliberation, they finally elected the three lucky finalists. Third place winner was Miss Melissa Can-

ton, a standard four student from United Pentecostal in San Antonio. Melissa was awarded a \$50. gift certificate at "Gitz" for books and school supplies, a \$10. gift certificate for ice cream at "Cayo Twist" and a BBG t-shirt. Second place winner was Miss Merlin Mendez, a standard four student from Santa Elena Primary School. Merlin was awarded a \$150. gift certificate to "Gitz" for books and school supplies, a trip for four to "Tropical Wings", and a BBG t-shirt. The grand prize winner who came to register bright and early and stunned the judges with his originality and overall balance in his design was Mr. Eric Mazin, a standard six student from Howard Smith in Benque. Eric was awarded a \$200. gift certificate to "Gitz" for school supplies and books, a \$50. gift certificate to "Back to My Roots," an all expenses paid field trip for his class to BBG and a tree planting for his school courtesy of the BBG staff.

On behalf of the Belize Botanic Gardens, congratulations to all of the students who participated in the contest and thanks to the teachers, parents, volunteers, and staff who made it possible. We knew plants are necessary for our survival providing us shelter, food, medicines and the very air we breathe; but who knew they could inspire creative works of art and be so much fun!

The Sheltering of 300,000

By: Richard Harrison

A home is a basic need for all human beings. Some argue that it is the *right* of every individual to have a shelter. Others say it is the *responsibility* of each individual to make sure there is a shelter overhead.

The socialist in us like to talk only about rights. The capitalist in us like to talk only about responsibility.

May I suggest that the best in us, like to talk about how rights and responsibilities should depend on each other.

Let us look at housing in Belize from different perspectives:

HOUSE VS HOME

Since capitalists and socialists both seek to be more efficient and effective in the use of scarce resources, they both agree on one thing....that to efficiently utilize land space, the poor must live in cramped high-rise apartments, as can be seen in the center of most US cities and in such places as Russia and Cuba.

In Belize, average population density is relatively low at around 30 persons per square mile, or 12 persons per square kilometer. Mexico has 53.84 persons per square kilometer, while Jamaica has 216 persons per square kilometer. If only 10% of Belize is made available for dwelling centers, there would be 283,744 acres of land available. This would mean that every man, woman and child would have about 1 acre of land on which to dwell.

Since land mass can be deemed to be finite, less land for the lower income people means more land for those of higher income. Successive governments have been telling the lower income people that there is 'no' land left in Belize.

In the time of my parents, most housing lots were surveyed at 100 feet by 100 feet. Today, most house lots are being surveyed at 50 feet by 75 feet. This is a direct reflection of the 'political managerial policy' implementing the above premise made by successive governments since Independence. This might be required for countries with a population density much higher than Belize, where average family size is 3 persons.

It is known that when rats are raised in cramped quarters, they display more aggressive behavior towards each other. Persons who are raised in cramped urban centers in the US and Russia are also known to display more aggressive behavior.

Belize should reflect on this policy for lots subdivision. Forcing Belizeans into cramped quarters is also forcing them to become more aggressive. We should revert to allocating lots of 100 feet by 100 feet, enough space to build a home for a family of 6 persons.

DEMAND VS SUPPLY

Estimating demand for dwellings can use a 'down and dirty' guesstimate process, or a more precise and refined scientific process.

Guesstimates might be good for small industries, however larger industries demand more scientific market research that seeks to define and forecast market demand in a way that minimizes risk and enhances opportunity. This research can be used to develop a 'market strategy' for each 'market segment', so that the 'needs' and 'desires' of the potential home owner (customer) can be more precisely responded to, reflecting their 'ability' and 'willingness' to pay.

Some have said that "Belizeans are third world people, but they certainly desire to live like first world people". Does the experience of COURTS in Belize tell us anything about the desires of Belizean people, and the choices they make when appropriate financing is tailored to their ability and willingness to pay?

Since family size in Belize is around 5 persons, total demand for dwellings for 300,000 persons would amount to 60,000 homes. According to Belize Central Statistical Office, around 30,000 persons will become 20 years of age over the next five years, and around 69,000 will reach that age over the next ten years. At an average of BZ\$30,000 per dwelling, the 'stock' in this industry could be a total of BZ\$1.8 billion. Assuming that 50% of 20-year old persons would 'couple' and enter the demand for a new home, the demand for housing over the next five years would be 7,500 new homes; for a required investment of BZ\$225 million. This is by no means a small industry.

Belize should create an economy where a person reaching 20 years of age, and economically engaged in the labor force, can aspire to owning a first-home.

Belizeans should learn the discipline to 'place their hat, only as high as they can reach it'.

Historically, the commercial banks in Belize have managed to maintain low default rates on housing loans, by utilizing a number of parameters to qualify individuals for such. One of the basic parameters is that individuals should not be required to spend more than 25% of their income on housing. This means that an individual earning BZ\$800 per month would be able to afford to pay a mortgage or rent of BZ\$200 per month. If a 20-year old is allowed to build a first home with a mortgage financed over 30 years, he would finish paying off his home by the time he is 50, well

before retirement age. He would also have paid back BZ\$72,000 over the 30-year period. Should he not be able to build a comfortable BZ\$30,000 home for that amount? Should the house not be built with a quality that allows it to last 30 years or more?

PUBLIC VS PRIVATE RESPONSIBILITY

In a robust economy where the factors of industry and services are well-oiled, there will be sufficient well-paying jobs such that unemployment will be at around 6 percent, allowing for persons in transition. Governments that are able to mobilize the factors of industry and services do not need to intervene directly in the building of homes, which should be considered a private responsibility....just like the responsibility of parents to provide basic nutrition for the children they bring into the world.

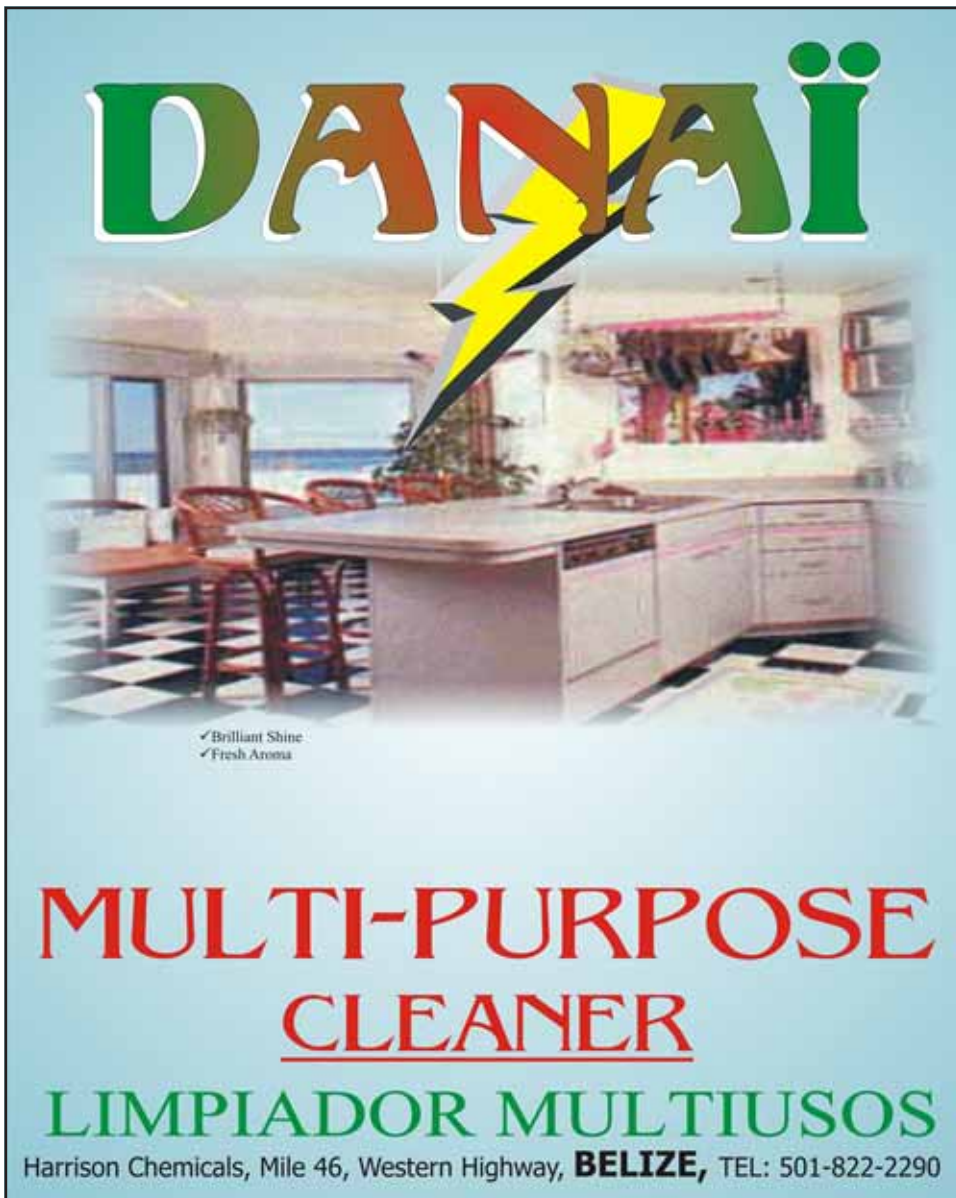
If Belize has around 160,000 persons of working age (16-65), it should be able to provide at least 150,000 jobs (part-time and full-time jobs). Of this, at least 120,000 persons should be earning at least BZ\$800 per month. Unskilled and semi-skilled persons of high productivity, willing to work 50 hours per week, should be able to earn a minimum of this amount. We have to set our own practical standards for work, according to the ambitions and desires of our people.

If unskilled and semi-skilled work-

ers between the ages of 16-19 years know that it is possible for them to earn BZ\$800 per month by the time they are 20 years old, and that this will be able to buy them their first home; they will be more responsible and likely to develop the work habits, skills, attitudes and productivity that employers need from them to be able to afford such salaries.

When the government skews its focus on micro-economics, such as directly intervening in particular industries such as housing, it may compromise its focus on its *responsibility* to develop a macro-economy conducive to development of robust industries and services which create the number and quality of jobs required. What happens as a result of such compromise is that you get low-quality houses; typical of government housing projects all over the world; with high mortgage requirements, which persons with no jobs or low-incomes cannot afford to pay for.

When Governments usurp the responsibilities of individuals to provide for their own basic needs, under the guise of promoting rights, it destroys the impetus for self-responsibility, it dampens the productive spirit of its people, and suppresses the human nature to aspire to live their full potential as responsible law-abiding citizens capable of working hard and smart, and harvesting the fruits of their own labor.



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Holy Week celebrated in Benque Viejo

Semana Santa or Holy Week marked the major liturgical celebration in the Roman Catholic Calendar and was once more solemnly featured in the town of Benque Viejo del Carmen. Palm Sunday was observed with the colourful procession of the Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem, with Jesus riding his donkey accompanied by his twelve apostles, as Benquenos acclaimed him with the traditional hosannas and blessed palms. The procession began at 9:00 a.m. from the entrance of town on Sunday, April 1.

An array of cultural and religious traditions, infused in a town settled some 150 years ago by Petenero and Yucatecan Mestizo, were displayed in the processions during the week. Monday, April 2, featured the procession of “Nuestra Señora del Silencio” accompanied by the pious Cargadoras dressed in black and purple vestments, and veiled with the traditional mantilla. The float with Our Lady of Sorrows clad in black swayed through the century-old Churchill and Church Streets to the beats of the Belize Defence Force Band. The customary Gregorian chants of “Salve Regina” and accompanying saetas were recited to the bereaved Mother of Sorrows before the procession.

The procession of “El Encuentro” brought by the founding parents from San Andrés, Petén in 1848, was held on Tuesday. It commemorated the fourth station of the Cross, with Mary meeting her Son. A new statue of the beloved apostle, St. John, carved in Guatemala City flanked the statue of Our Lady.

Wednesday evening of Holy Week brought the Spy Wednesday Mass for the youth of the parish. Earlier in the day, the parish priests con-celebrated the Chrism Mass at Holy Redeemer Cathedral in Belize City.

Holy Thursday opened the Easter Triduo Sacro with the washing of the feet, and the Mass celebrating the institution of the Holy Eucharist and sacred Priesthood. The Mt. Carmel School teachers arranged the Altar of Repose at the elegant Parish Hall in the new rectory, and the adoration of the Eucharistic place continued until midnight of Holy Thursday.

The crack of dawn echoed the beats of the drums of the Roman centuries, announcing the Ecce Homo in the Drama of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ on the morn of Good Friday at George Price Boulevard. The fifteenth re-enactment of the Drama of the Passion featured a cast of close to thirty actors of different nationalities and denominations. The Via Crucis proceeded through the streets of the town to culminate with the scene of the cru-



Benquenos re-enact Jesus Christ's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

cifixion in front of the historic church of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel dedicated in 1942.

Novena prayers in honour of the Divine Mercy were followed by the Liturgy of the Word and the veneration of the Cross. The corpus of Jesus Christ was solemnly descended from the main cross at the altar to the chanting of the Gregorian hymn “Cruz Amable y Redentora”, in an evening ceremony led by the devout cargadores. Mauve flowers of bougainvillea lazily brushed the gentle, bruised face of Jesus when El Santo Entierro, shrouded in a cloud of white incense, processed out of Mt. Carmel Church to the beats of the drums and bugles, followed by a mourning mother, Our Lady of Sorrows. As the

shadows of a day of mourning alighted upon the funeral dirge, the floats of Christ and Mary came to life with the dazzling light of flood lights hidden within the arrangements laid upon the refurbished andas. The service of the Tenebrae was sung as the procession re-entered the church, as a reminder of the desolation left when the Light descended into the underworld.

These acts of worship culminated with the solemnities of Holy Saturday when the traditional elements were blessed at Centennial Memorial Park. With the chanting of the Exulcet and the opening of the black curtains symbolic of the old and the new, the traditional prophecies of the Old Testament were read, and the Gloria sung celebrating the triumph of Christ over

the last enemy, death, bringing the season of hope and good will to humankind. One highlight of the Easter Vigil was the initiation of the new catechumens into the Church, this year being youth and adults from all over the parish.

Mt. Carmel Church thanks all those who assisted in sharing time, talent and treasure to make these activities possible. The Church also invites men and women who are interested in participating as a cargador or cargadora to register for next year's event. Ladies are required to dress in the traditional black/purple vestment and men are requested to wear white shirt and tie, and black pants and shoes. In either case, a contribution is requested.

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1st traveling Caribbean Film Showcase opens in Belize

The Caribbean Region's first Traveling Film Showcase will be officially declared open in Belize during ceremonies at the Bliss Institute of Performing Arts in Belize City on the night of Wednesday, April 11th.

Sponsored regionally by UNESCO and supported by the Cuban Institute of Art and Cinematographic Industry in collaboration with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Traveling Caribbean Film Showcase is a 12-week itinerant Caribbean Film Festival bringing together the works of filmmakers from 14 countries. It will showcase feature length films as well as shorts and documentaries produced in the Caribbean and is expected to promote Caribbean cultural identity, raise awareness of the potential of the Caribbean film-making industry and contribute to the preservation of Caribbean audiovisuals in all of its diversity.

Over the course of eight days at the Bliss (April 11 - 17), the Showcase will feature more than 30 hours of film divided into 16 programs each approximately 2 to 2 ½ hours in length. According to the Chairman of the International Organizing Committee, Cuban filmmaker Rigoberto Lopez, the films in the Showcase's Official Screening Program were selected from a pool of more than 110 films submitted by 21 countries.

The films, a mix of romance, drama and comedy showcase Caribbean peoples, their culture, lifestyles, music and carnival as well as touch on common social issues affecting the region such as HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, migration and poverty.

The films are subtitled in English, Spanish, French and French Creole and entrance to all of them plus the Opening and Closing Ceremonies is free for the public. A copy of the screening schedule & synopses of the films can be found at <http://embacu.cubaminrex.cu/Default.aspx?alias=embacu.cubaminrex.cu/beliceing>

The Showcase opened in St. Kitts and Nevis in February and will end in Cuba in May with intermediate stops in 21 countries including St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, Haiti, the Bahamas and Belize. It will officially close with a conference being convened by the International Organizing Committee to discuss **Strategies for the Collaboration and Integration of Cinema and Audiovisuals of the Caribbean** which will be held as part of the International Congress on

Culture and Development at the Palacio de las Convenciones in Havana on June 11-14, 2007. Regional filmmakers, producers, exhibitors, distributors, audiovisual and TV professionals, as well as governmental authorities of Audiovisuals and Cinema in the area and UNESCO representatives are invited to participate.

In Belize, the Showcase is being supported by NICH, the UNESCO Belize Commission, the Embassy of Cuba in Belize and Fer de Lance Productions all of whom have representation on the Committee.

From Aruba comes **Salt in My Eyes**, portrait of Arubian society as seen through the eyes of three young girls. Each with a different background, each with a different future, but above all they show us courage, power and optimism.

From Antigua & Barbuda comes **The Sweetest Mango**, a romantic comedy that tells the store of lovely Anne "Luv" Davies, who returns from Canada to Antigua the home of her birth. The film tracks her adjustment to life in Antigua, including being caught up in an unexpected love triangle.

Belize's offering is **The Days of the Dead**. Present Day Yucatec Mayas in Northern Belize invite us to witness their Maya-Mestizo tradition of Days of the Dead held every November in the village of Xiabe in the Corozal District.

The Bahamas offer **Show Me Your Motion** - the ring play games of the Bahamas, which explores issues of gender, national identity, globalization, class and race in The Bahamas. The film affords us a compelling glance at complex issues through an often-overlooked lens the eyes of our children and reveals the inspiring passion for invention and celebration that so many Caribbean children possess. During the process it becomes clear that Bahamian society has changed greatly since the days of British colonialism and the onslaught of American popular culture.

From Barbados comes **Steps of Forgiveness**. This film explores the relationship between a father and his returning son, a pair of shoes, a cutlass. Will the shoes fit? Or does the father cut his toes to make it fit?

The Boabab Tree

The story of Kirikou and the Sorceress was too short to show everything that Kirikou had accomplished. So, here are some secret feats that had to be revealed, as told by the noble grandfather. Tiny, naked Kirikou, a gardener, potter, traveler, and doctor, faces up to danger unflinchingly, with shrewdness, courage, generosity, and... success.

From Martinique comes **Black Shack Alley, (Rue Cases Negres)**.

Martinique, in the early 1930s. Young José and his grandmother live in a small village where he listens to stories of Africa told by an old sugar cane worker. After the old man dies, the boy writes the stories in his own words and submits them as a school essay. His telling is so eloquent that the school master accuses him of plagiarising them from a book. Utterly humiliated, Jose flies from the school and goes downtown with the intention of getting into trouble. He comes home very late to find his school master having tea with his grandmother. The teacher rises to attention and says, "Your grandmother has told me all about the old man who was your friend. Some day you are going to be a very great writer."

Trinidad & Tobago has four offerings.

JAB! The Blue Devils of Paramin

Kootoo is a hillside farmer in the mountain community of Paramin, but once a year he becomes the King of Jab followed by his brothers, James, Harry and Corpad who transform themselves into the Blue Devils of Paramin and their tranquil paradise becomes a living hell as the Jab competes to win the prize for being the worst devil.

In the documentary **Calypso Dreams**, filmmaker Geoffrey Dunn explores the history of calypso music in Trinidad and Tobago. Featuring performances by such seminal acts as Mighty Sparrow, Calypso Rose, Lord Superior, Brother Valentino, Regeneration Now, and Mystic Prowler, Calypso Dreams also includes archival footage of Calypso pioneers Grandmaster Kitchener and Lord Pretender

In **Herman Tales - The Banana Robber**, citizens of Pou Village live their lives in fear. They are bullied and terrorized by two competing delinquents. Manni, the local beggar, is driven by hunger to use his cunning to rid the village of these two delinquents.

What My Mother told Me is an exquisitely beautiful and profoundly moving journey towards self discovery. The story focuses on Jesse, a young woman from England, who goes to Trinidad to bury her father. She meets her mother, whom she thought had abandoned her when she was a child and learns of a troubled and violent marriage, and is forced to face the truth about her past.

Curacao has two offerings **Zulaika** and **Ava & Gabriel**. **Zulaika** won awards: for the Best Feature Film for Young People Jury Award, 4th Buenos Aires International Film Festival 2005 and Certificate of Excellence Live-Action Feature Film, Chicago International Children's Film Festival 2004.

The story of **Ava & Gabriel** takes place on the island of Curacao in the

late 40's. Upon request of Father Fidelius, parish priest of St. Anna's, the Surinam painter Gabriel Goedbloed arrives from Holland to paint a mural of the Virgin Mary in St. Anna's Church. The close knit Antillean society did not welcome strangers who would not conform to their colonial way of life in those days. In the end, Gabriel Goedbloed falls victim to the controversies, hypocrisies and intrigues that have arisen around his person and his paintings.

From the Dominican Republic come three offerings.


For a Hundred Thousand (A CIEN MIL)- an amount, a transaction and the latent possibility of immigration causes four individuals to fall into the most subtle yet elaborate trap. Based on a true story, it is one of the many fiascos where the victims are those who try to buy a dream on principles.

Under the Shadow of Blood - Cristiano Bruno is a young resident of one of the humble neighborhoods of Santo Domingo. Raised by his mother Maritza Bruno, after the jailing and supposed disappearance of his father Marcos Ramirez for corruption and drug trafficking, Cristiane ends up leaning towards the lucrative drug trafficking business and is eventually betrayed by one of his own into a tragic path of treachery and greed.

In **The Letter (La Carta)**, Juan is a rural youth who emigrates from the field to the city, where he finds a very singular and lucrative employment, which he explains to his mother in the form of an epistle.

From Cuba come four offerings. **Jazz and Us (Nosotros y el jazz)** is the story of a group of black Havana youths in the 1940's and 50's who enjoyed what were then called "Jam Sessions, in private houses, black societies, and some bars in the cities. Movies such as Stormy Weather and Cabin in the Sky made these young men and women dream as they discovered the art of African American musicians, singers, and dancers.

The Last Supper is set during Holy Week at the end of the eighteenth century, when a count visits his Havana sugar mill on a day a slave has run away. The recaptured runaway is among 12 slaves chosen to be guests at the count's table. During the dinner, the count lectures his guests on the perfect happiness possible in slavery while they tell stories and make requests. He promises no work on Good Friday, and they rebel when the cruel overseer roasts the slaves for a long day cutting cane. Which side will the count take?

Scent of Oak (Roble de Olor) is set in the first half of the 19th century, in (Please Turn To Page 9) 

Science & Religion

By **R. Bowman**

In the beginning of the 15th century, science and religion may have started out as closely knit disciplines, but by the end of the 20th century, a great almost insurmountable divide existed as evidenced by their two accounts of creation listed below.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; and the earth was without form and void; and darkness fell upon the face of the earth. And God said “Let there be light”. And there was light. And the light He called day, and the darkness, He called night. And this was the beginning of the first day; and God saw that it was good. So begins a paraphrase of the Book of Genesis, an account that is held sacred by all three religions of the Abrahamic faith: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. According to the Book of Chronicles this divine creation occurred some 6000 years ago (4004 B. C. as calculated by Bishop Ussher). Accordingly, we had a law-abiding world, but the law was moral, not mechanical.

In the beginning, the energy of silence rested over an infinite horizon of pure nothingness. And a mighty sound ruptured the tranquil stillness as a single point of raw potential, a singularity, bearing all matter, bearing all dimensions, bearing all energy, and bearing all time, exploded like a massive fireball. The time according to human reckoning, was some 13.7 billion years ago. This primordial “egg” provided all that exists today from the smallest matter studied by particle physics, to the largest clusters of galaxies studied by Cosmology.

This phenomenon according to modern scientists is made known to us by scientifically studying the ages of the rock and not by relying upon the “Rock of Ages”.

Men like Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton, who started this scientific revolution all believed in God. Copernicus, who gave us a heliocentric model of the known universe (the earth circles the sun in spite of Joshua’s pronouncements), worked for his uncle who was a Bishop (probably where nepotism started); Galileo, who gave us some initial laws of motion, had a daughter who was a nun. Yet he got put before the Inquisition even though he tried to tell them that the Bible teaches us how to go to heaven, and not how the heavens go. And the curmudgeon genius, Sir Isaac Newton, who combined the works of Galileo, Kepler, and his own imaginative genius, to give us universal gravitation, was a staunch Protestant. God was still relevant, and was First Cause, and God of the gaps.

Today, a survey of the nearly 2000 members of the National Academy of Sciences (the elite in science and technology, 200 of whom have won Nobel Prizes), shows that nearly 90% of them are Agnostics or Atheists. What happened in the intervening 400 years to cause such a drastic change? And why is the scientific community so at odds with the populace at large who still overwhelmingly believe in a Supreme Being?

Two theories may have swung the balance almost irretrievably: Evolution and the Big Bang. Evolution provided

a basis for gradual change (Darwin’s work) through adaptation of “better” genes (given or mutated) to the environment, and the Big Bang provided “deep time” for this change to occur. Six thousand years would not have been sufficient for evolution to occur from matter, to single cell, to multicellular, to vertebrates, to primates, to hominids. But 13, 700 million years, the scientists concur, is. Plus the records in the rocks, show such a progression. The Bible does not require this time frame since the species and the universe were created by God and were essentially immutable (they are now as they were then). Unfortunately, the creationists have never been able to find a hominid fossil mixed in with the early non-vertebrate species. Are there any scientific data to foster a big bang theory? Science gives three pieces of evidence: abundance of the light elements (hydrogen and helium), the red shift, and the microwave radiation. The sun converts hydrogen to helium to produce energy and light and these were the elements predominantly present after the first half million years of the big bang and are still in abundance today. The longer wavelength Dopler red shift effect shows that all the planets and galaxies are moving apart, and not static. The cosmic microwave radiation shows the last whimper of the big bang which began with trillions of degrees, and is now just 3 degrees above absolute zero because of the expansion of the universe. This piece of evidence obtained relatively recently, is sometimes regarded as the smoking gun.

Do religion and a supreme being have a chance against such documentations? I believe they do, maybe because I want to. Science still cannot explain why there is something instead of nothing. How did life arise? It has never been duplicated in the laboratory. What caused the big bang to go bang? Why am I here to contemplate this phenomenon (anthropogenic principle)? Could God have allowed evolution to proceed as suggested by science? The scientist Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin explained that evolution proceeded in the direction of increasing complexity and concomitant consciousness culminating in human spirituality. Quantum physics questioned classical Newtonian physics cause and effect, and determinism, by introducing such concepts as probability, and uncertainty principles. It appears God does play dice with the universe in spite of Einstein’s query.

Should we invoke Pascal’s wager who said that a gambling man would bet on God and the existence of heaven and hell, since if true we lose a lot if we bet against (eternal damnation), and less loss if untrue (disgust for not going for the gusto and the “good life”). It is said that religion is subjective, and that science is objective; that one gives certainty without proof, while the other, proof without certainty. Science can only ascertain what is, not what should be; science addresses how, but not why. Value judgments of all kinds remain necessary. I have a hard time believing that life and the universe have no purpose; that in the final analysis, abject nothingness will prevail. May the Force be with you.

1st Caribbean Film Showcase...

 (Continued From Page 8)

Cuba. A space of changes, enigmas, dreams and endless tragedies. A black woman, beautiful and distinguished, from Saint Domingue and a German, a romantic tradesman recently arrived in the country are the central characters in a story of boundless love, a doomed Utopia fighting to give birth to the fate that made the richest coffee plantation in Cuba - Angerona - reach its peak.

In **VIVA CUBA**, Malú y Jorgito are two children sworn to lifelong friendship although their families are bitter enemies. When Malú’s grandmother dies, and his mother decides to leave Cuba, Malú and Jorgito seek to escape in search of hope for their love.

From **St Lucia**, comes **Ribbons of Blue** tells the story of a mother’s undying love and sacrifice for an ungrateful daughter obsessed with maintaining appearances and the daughter’s prodigal repentance after hitting rock bottom.

From the **Cayman Islands** comes

Swallow. Lacking the grades and money to get into college, a Florida high school student takes assignment as a drug mule.

Haiti - Does the President have AIDS? Dao is the star of more cinemas in Haiti, the “self-named President of Compass”. He has women that fall to his feet and men that emulate him. He feels invincible - living the life of a star of the stone—the sex, drugs and alcohol—only he can no longer hide their illness that is threatening to derail his career.

Men and Gods--This documentary shot in Haiti is about homosexuals and queer people in Voodoo. Through this we learn of the need these men have to find meaning to their lives in a society where homosexuality is still a taboo subject. Through Voodoo, some homosexual Haitians find an explanation to their sexuality, and regard themselves as “children” of the gods, therefore being provided with a divine

protection is also what forces the civilian society to accept and respect them to some extent.

Port au Prince Se Pam

This documentary provides a portrait of the beleaguered city Port au Prince, the capital of the Republic of Haiti, which is today a victim of overpopulation, lack of urban infrastructure, and environmental degradation.

From Jamaica comes a cult classic and two other offerings. In **The Harder They Come**, reggae legend Jimmy Cliff stars as Ivan Martin, an aspiring young singer who leaves his rural village for the capital city of Kingston, Jamaica hoping to make a name for him self. Robbed of his money and possessions his first day in town, he finds work with a self-righteous, bullying preacher and an unscrupulous music mogul who exploits naive hopefuls. In desperation the simple country boy turns outlaw, at war with both the police and his

rivals in the ganja trade. Ivan’s dream of stardom soon becomes a reality as he rises to the top of the pop charts and the most-wanted lists.

This gritty, groundbreaking film brought reggae music to the international stage, made Jimmy Cliff a star worldwide, and demonstrated that music and art can change the world.

Country Man

By rescuing two Americans from a plane crash, Countryman, a lonely fisherman becomes involved in a political plot devised by a power-hungry colonel. Marked as enemy agents, Countryman and the Americans flee into the wilderness, but when the violence peaks, the peaceful Rastafarian shows he is capable of unleashing an awesome, almost magical display of acrobatic hand- to- hand combat.

Life and Debt is a documentary look at the effects of globalization on Jamaican’s industry and the agriculture.



ARIES (Mar. 21- April 20)

Empty promises will cause confusion. Tell it like it is. Try to be tolerant of the moods of those around you. Uncertainties about your personal life are probable. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

TAURUS (Apr. 21- may 21)

A change is as good as a rest. Don't go looking for change. You may have more to do with children this week; keep an open mind. You are best to work at home, clearing up overdue projects. Rewards for past good deeds will be yours. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21)

Catch up on your reading and correspondence. You will get out of shape easily if you don't keep on top of things. You need a change and you need to earn more cash. Someone around you may not be trustworthy. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

Good friends will give you honest answers. Jealousy may be a contributing factor to your emotional ups and downs. You can get into self awareness groups or look into physical enhancement programs. New love connections can be made through group associations. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

LEO (July 23-Aug 22)

Someone envious of your popularity may challenge you to a debate. Travel for business will not only bring you valuable information but also profits as well. Secret affairs will come back to haunt you. Don't blame every thing on your

mate. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 -Sept. 23)

You can come up with ways of earning extra cash. Be creative in your efforts. Be sure to keep communication open with those you live with. Go out with friends and avoid the situation on the home front. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 -Oct. 23)

Be cautious while traveling; minor accidents are evident. Keep your wits about you and be sure that you can trust those you confide in. Relationships have not been the best for you lately and it's left you somewhat gun shy. Keep an open mind when listening to the opinions of others. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)

Older family members may take advantage of you by making you feel guilty. You will profit from home improvement projects and real estate deals. Your ability to deal with humanitarian groups will enhance your reputation. Use your creative talent in order to accomplish your goals. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 -Dec. 21)

Don't get so wrapped up in being rich that you overlook the fact that your plan may not be as solid as you thought. Someone you live with could be frustrated and upset. Disappointments are likely if your mate embarrasses you in front of friends. Partners may try to argue with you; however, you must stand your ground. Your lucky day this week



Someone told me that a picture tells a thousand words but when I saw your picture... I was speechless.

Everyone wants to be happy and nobody wants to feel pain. But you can't make rainbows without any rain.

Older person: I have to watch what I eat.

Younger person: Me too. I watch what I eat right before it goes in my mouth.

When U call us losers, we look at each other and crack up because we knew that way before you did.

You're like school on a Saturday . No Class.

Memories are bittersweet; they're good times that we can't repeat.

Sweetie, you're so fake you make

will be Sunday.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22.- Jan. 20)

Opportunities to get ahead will be evident. You can pick up some overtime this week. Concentrate on spending quality time with children and friends. You will meet new and exciting people if you attend social activities or sporting events. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 -Feb. 19)

You can't lock your partner up and if you keep restricting their freedom you may be left out in the cold. Your mate

Barbie seem real.

Buying a bat and ball: \$50
breaking a vase: \$400; breaking the home base (glass cup): \$25; scoring the winning home run: priceless

I have the kind of friends where if my house was burning down, they'd be roasting marshmallows & hitting on the firemen

Have you ever been alone in a crowded room?

Cheerleaders are dancers who have gone retarded.

Passwords are like underwear. You shouldn't leave them out where people can see them. You should change them regularly. And you shouldn't loan them out to strangers.

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Never make fun of the geeks, one day they will be your boss.

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will be pushing you to do things that you really don't want to do. You are best to put your efforts into redecorating or inviting friends over. You will be accident prone if you aren't careful this week. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

PISCES (Feb. 20-Mar. 20)

You may be likely to have difficulties with females. Romantic opportunities are evident. This will not be the best day to initiate change. There might be a problem with a will or with an insurance policy. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

Result	Ref. Range
Phosphatase	0-9 U/L
LDH	111-199 U/L
min	3.5-5.3 g/dL
Phosphatase	25-123 U/L
ase	0-105 U/L
rubin, Total	0.2-1.6 mg/dL
rubin, Direct	0.0-0.8mg/dL
IN	6.0-22mg/dL
alcium	8.5-10.5mg/dL
Carbon Dioxide	23-34 mEq/L
Chloride	98-106 mEq/L
Cholesterol	120-199 mg/dL
Cholesterol, HDL	40-75 mg/dL
Cholesterol, LDL	63-129 mg/dL
CPK-MB	0-24 U/L
CPK	Mi: 25-192 U/L F: 25-170 U/L
Creatinine	0.5-1.5mg/dL
Ethanol	<17mmol/L
GGT	Mi: 0-45 U/L F: 0-30 U/L
Globulin	1.2-3.0g/dL
Glucose (FBS/RBS)	FBS 65-120 mg/dL
Glucose 1/2hr	mg/dL
Glucose 1hr	mg/dL
Glucose 2hr	mg/dL
Glucose 3hr	0-40 U/L
GOT	0-38 U/L
GPT	

Test	Result	Ref. Range
Glyco. Hb A1		6.0-8.3%
Glyco. Hb A1C		4.2-6.2%
Iron		M: 70-150mg/dL F: 60-180mg/dL
Iron-TIBC		250-450mg/dL
LDH		M: 80-285 U/L F: 103-227 U/L
Lithium		0.3-.2 mEq
Magnesium		1.3-2.5 mEq
Phosphorus		2.5-4.8 mEq
Potassium		3.5-5.3 mEq
Protein		6.2-8.5 g/dL
Protein-CSF		8-43 mg/dL
Sodium		135-148 mEq
Triglycerides		30-150 mg/dL
Uric Acid		M: 3.6-7.0 mg/dL F: 2.5-6.0 mg/dL
Creat. Clearance		M: 85-120 mL/min F: 75-110 mL/min
A/G Ratio		
Nasal WBC/Diff (left)		Nasal WBC/Diff
wbc/hpf		wbc/hpf
Neutrophils		Neutrophils
Lymphocytes		Lymphocytes
Monocytes		Monocytes
Eosinophils		Eosinophils
Basophils		Basophils

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Every House, Country of Belize

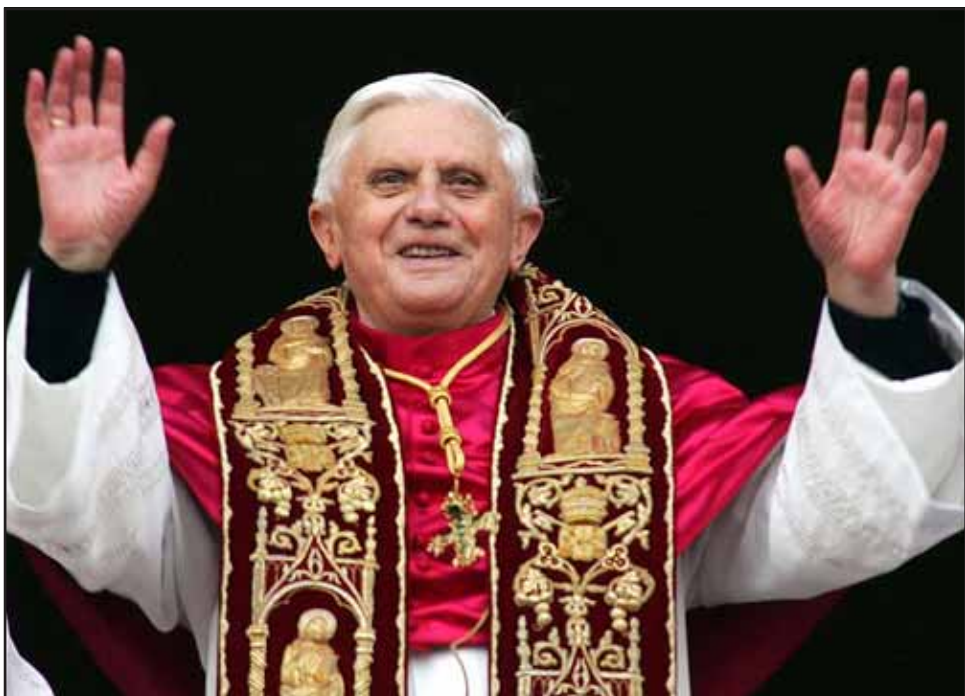
You know the day had to come, the day of the bad news from the doctor, the day that I would have to start looking after myself and pay for my self inflicted sins. I just didn't expect it this soon. With high cholesterol and really high triglycerides, sure medicine will work, but a lifestyle change is needed. That lifestyle change brings to an end multiple weekly doses of panades, li chee chicken, and rice and beans with fry fish. So what to do with a column that focuses on the nice and greasy food around town? My first inclination was to end it, but after some thought, I realized that many people have these bad eating habits, and most don't even know it till they wake up in the ICU...so perhaps we could move in a direction to seek out the establishments with meals that won't cut our lives in half. Yes, from time to time, we will drop off the cart and do a "special" review for the guilty pleasures in life, but I do hope that you enjoy the new focus...and if you know of places that caters to this niche feel free, to drop me a line on yellowtail@btl.net, so I can check them out. The new me starts NOW (well actually next week in print)!

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TOPICAL TIDBITS

Pope says rich nations 'plundered' Third World



VATICAN CITY (Reuters) - Rich countries bent on power and profit have mercilessly "plundered and sacked" Africa and other poor regions and exported to them the "cynicism of a world without God," Pope Benedict writes in his first book.

The Pope also condemns drug trafficking and sexual tourism, saying they are signs of a world brimming with "people who are empty" yet living among abundant material goods.

In the 400-page book, called "Jesus of Nazareth," the Pope offers a modern application of Jesus's parable of the Good Samaritan, who stopped to help a man who had been robbed by thieves when others, including a priest, had not. "The current relevance of the parable is obvious," the Pope writes.

He drew a link between the lifestyle of people in the developed world and the dire conditions of people in Africa. "We see how our lifestyle, the history that involved us, has stripped them naked and continues to strip them naked," he writes.

The German Pope, who has condemned the effects of colonialism before, said rich countries had also hurt poor countries spiritually by belittling or trying to wipe out their own cultural and spiritual traditions.

"Instead of giving them God, the God close to us in Christ, and welcoming in their traditions all that is precious and great ... we have brought them the cynicism of a world without God, where only power and profit count..." he writes.

In what could be seen as a strong self criticism of the Roman Catholic

Church, whose missionary activities often went hand-in-glove with colonialism, the Pope writes:

"We destroyed (their) moral criteria to the point that corruption and a lust for power devoid of scruples have become obvious."

Belizeans added to Drug Traffickers list

On March 28, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) named three Belizean nationals to its list of Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers:

HYDE, Clive Norman (a.k.a. HYDE SR., Clive Norman; a.k.a. "MR. HYDE"); DOB 8 Apr 1956; POB

Belize

LOGAN MOREY, Elvis Angus (a.k.a. "BURTON BURGESS"); DOB 28 Jul 1963; POB Toledo District, Belize; Passport P0017003 (Belize); SSN 561-77-9011 (United States)

WORRELL, Gareth Bruce (a.k.a. WORRELL MURRAY, Gareth Bruce; a.k.a. WORRELL MURRAY, Garrett; a.k.a. "GARETH MOREY"); DOB 19 Jun 1971; alt. DOB 19 Jan 1971; POB Belize; Passport 0159817

At the same time these individuals were named, OFAC designated 45 companies and 64 individuals in an extensive criminal and financial network, stretching across Colombia, Belize, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, and Panama.

These actions are part of an ongoing U.S. Government effort which applies economic sanctions against drug cartels. The designation action freezes any assets the designees may have subject to U.S. jurisdiction, and prohibits all financial and commercial transactions by any U.S. person with the designated companies and individuals. U.S. persons are prohibited from engaging in any transaction with Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers. These prohibitions affect trade transactions as well as accounts, securities, properties, and other assets. Further information about the designation program can be obtained by visiting <http://www.treas.gov/ofac>.

Mexican journalist gunned down

ACAPULCO, Mexico AP- Media

rights groups and family members demanded an investigation Saturday into the death of a Mexican journalist gunned down after leaving his radio show in Acapulco.

Amado Ramirez, a reporter for top Mexican television news network Televisa, was killed Friday night by two gunmen waiting at his car, police said. He died on the steps of the nearby Hotel California as he tried to escape. The shooting occurred near the beach resort's central plaza, packed at the time with tourists and hundreds of people attending a Good Friday Mass at the cathedral.

The gunmen escaped, and the motive for the killing was not immediately clear. Police said they had a description from a witness of at least one of the gunmen.

Acapulco has been plagued by a wave of drug-related violence in recent years that have included many brutal slayings of police officers. The police department has also received calls threatening to kill both police officers and journalists.

The Miami-based Inter American Press Association has reported an alarming number of journalists killed in Mexico on orders from drug gangs, including seven since October. Two others have disappeared and eight have reported receiving death threats.

In his radio program Friday, Ramirez criticized leftist Guerrero state Gov. Zeferino Torreblanca for refusing to give his state-of-the-state address in front of state lawmakers. The governor instead gave address his report in written form.



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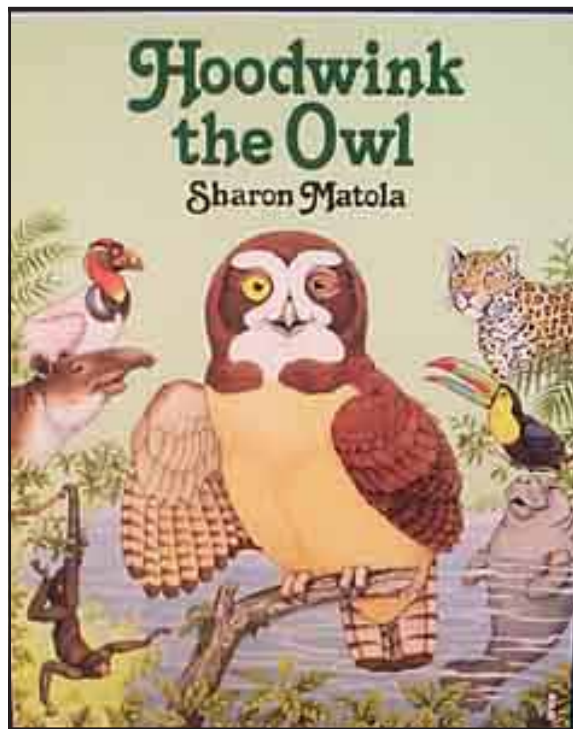
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TOO WILD FOR WORDS!

Real live hoodwinks now call the Belize Zoo their home!!

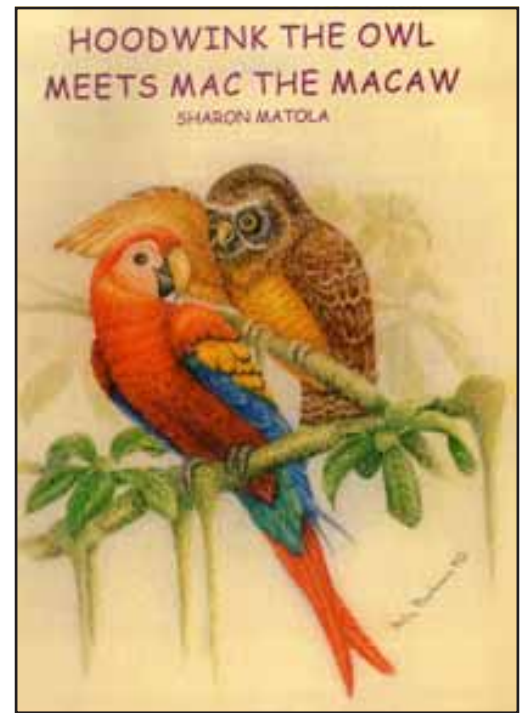
Hoodwink the owl has been a familiar storybook character to many children here in Belize. He is a spectacled owl, considered to be one of the most beautiful of our tropical species, the adventures of Hoodwink the Owl are told in three different children's books, written by Zoo Director Sharon Matola, the subjects of Belizean nature are seen thru the eyes of this wise owl, and the book has proven to be an important education tool here in our country.

Now, the "real thing" can be seen at the Belize Zoo! Two captive bred spectacled owls were given to the Zoo as a gift from the Ellen Trout Zoo, in Texas. They are used to the



company of visitors, and remain "easy to see" and for those visitors who tour the Zoo at night, they readily call out to their nocturnal visitors.

It is not a common event to see a spectacled owl in the wild. Like many nocturnal birds, they stay well hidden. Seeing these beautiful owls in their spacious exhibit will, without a doubt, bring big smiles to Belize Zoo visitors! It's a hoot!!! and too wild for words!!



Toledo Teachers Recognized

By: William Schmidt
PG correspondent for
INdependent Weekly

"Nineteen Educators Honored at Education Ceremony", the front page of the Belize Times April 1, states. I read on to see who of our many good teachers in Toledo were honored by our PUP government.

I read the many names of teachers from the Belize, Cayo, Orange Walk, Corozal and Stann Creek Districts but not one from the Toledo District! Forgotten again. What blatant discrimination.

I read on: "Eight and a half million dollars for the University of Belize"...

I remembered a meeting where Ms. Florence Pennell Johnson told of the difficulty she was having in getting funds for a dedicated group of teachers, who after working all day, still make the effort to provide evening classes for school leavers young and old who want to better themselves. She said the government had promised to continue to help with the small stipend offered. If the Government of Belize has this much to fund the University of Belize surely they must have provided something for the night school which has been struggling so long and hard and graduating some of our finest citizens!

On second thought, since they didn't think any teachers from Toledo were worthy of honoring, perhaps they neglected the evening school teachers and students as well. I decided to call Flo and find out.

"Hello Flo? I read in the paper how the Government of Belize honored teachers in all districts except Toledo and gave the University of Belize eight and a half million dollars, how much did



Florence Pennell Johnson.

your night school get? "Not one single cent for the past two years" she replied. Toledo forgotten again. I decided to write an article in the INdependent Reformer honoring Toledo's teachers. Here in Toledo they are NOT forgotten.

"Flo, I know you had a lot to do with the creation of this school and have been the driving force behind it, what's the story?"

Flo: "It all started at the third Claver College alumni reunion in July 1998. We were discussing how we could involve the alumni in the continuing development of the Toledo community. Father Leo Weber suggested we form an extension to offer a high-school education for adults who for one reason or another were never able to get one. The idea was enthusiastically supported.

Emmelina Guy, Cordelia Flores Avila, Mary Parchue Avilez and I began to consult with everyone in PG who would listen to us. Wallace Cayetano, Jimmie Lino, Lotte Flores and I joined we started meeting with Father Weber to plan the school. Anthony Paulino, Leo Sanchez joined us and our dream became a reality. Claver College Extension opened the door on August 30th, 1999."

Chet: "How many students have graduated since then?"

Flo: "We offer a three-year course and hundreds of students have been enrolled over the years, some can only afford to study for one or two years or for some other reason have not been able to stay for the entire course, but to date we have graduated 82."

Chet: "How has it been funded?"

Flo: "The students pay a small tuition, the government has given small grants in the past, the general public has contributed, but most has come from Claver College Alumni. What we really want it is a written guarantee from government for a continuing payment for teacher's stipends. We want our budget to be included in the Ministry of Education's budget, I think we deserve it, because we have proved that we are a first class institution. We have excellent, dedicated teachers, we have been

called the "hallmark for adult education in the South". We are patterned on the St. John's extension program."

Chet: "How can people contribute to this important project?"

Flo: "Some of our alumni pay for scholarships, others for printing, or the janitor. We have an "adopted a teacher" plan where one can contribute \$68BZ per credit hour."

Chet: "How much is this per month?"

Flo: "For example, a teacher who teaches three classes per week for four weeks gets \$204BZ per month. However we welcome and appreciate whatever one can afford. We have received calls and letters that have provided moral support. For more information you can e-mail flosiej@yahoo.com or contribute directly to the Belize Bank account 5426 PG branch."

Chet: "If you were to honor PG teachers, who would you pick out for special mention?"

Flo: "I don't want to do that, because I think they all deserve special mention, there have been so many over the years."

Chet: "Who have been the longest in addition to the founders?"

"Dave Forman, Carmen and Winston Lopez, Modesta Palacio, Nora Garay, Joe Cayetano, Nana Mensha, Steve Innendo, to name a few. Ms Ercilia Jimenez is one of our first graduates, she went on to graduate from the University of Belize with honors and now she is teaching Spanish at CCE."

Congratulations with much appreciation and a big thank you to all Toledo teachers, to Father Leo Weber who founded this program, the students and especially Ms. Florence Pennell Johnson.

Step off!

Mayan leaders tell PM Musa



(l-R) Professor James Anaya, SATIIM executive Director Gregorio Choc, the chairman of the Alcaldes Association Martin Chen, the Alcalde of Santa Cruz Village Aurelio Caal, Filiberto Penados of the Julian Cho Society, Manuel Coy of Conejo village, Christina Coc of the Julian Cho Society, Conejo Village chairman Manuel Caal, and Santa Cruz Village chairman Basilio Teul.

➡ (Continued From Page 1)
“Balkanization” of Belizean lands.

The Mayan people of Toledo are claiming rights to land which they and their ancestors have traditionally occupied for hundreds of years, dating back to pre-Columbian times. The existing laws of Belize do not provide for the granting for title of ownership of communal lands, but the Toledo Maya assert that they depend on these lands for their survival. They live, farm, hunt, fish, collect medicinal plants, construction materials and other forest resources from these lands. They also engage in ceremonies and other activities on these lands around their communities, and have done so for centuries.

The Toledo Maya are not alone in their struggle to have their rights acknowledged and respected. The O.A.S. Inter American Commission on Human

Rights, found in its decision on the Mayan communities of the Toledo district v Belize, that “the Maya people have rights to their traditional lands and that these rights constitute property protected by international human rights law.” The OAS commission further called on the government of Belize “to delineate, demarcate and title Mayan traditional lands according to the customary land use and occupancy practices of the Maya people.

The Toledo Maya got additional support from the United Nations. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples urged GOB to “Fully implement the recommendations of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.”

Championing the Toledo Maya’s cause in the Supreme Court are human

rights activist and attorney Antoinette Moore and Professor James Anaya of the University of Arizona.

Immediately after filing their petition on Tuesday, the Mayan leaders joined by hundreds of supporters (seven busloads) who had journeyed all the way from their villages in Toledo to the city, marched through the streets of Belize City to the Radisson Hotel where they held a press conference to make their grievances public.

Among the speakers at the press conference were Professor James Anaya, Filiberto Penados of the Julian Cho society, SATIIM executive Director Gregorio Choc, the chairman of the Alcaldes Association Martin Chen, the Alcalde of Santa Cruz Village Aurelio Caal, attorney Antoinette Moore, Manuel Coy of Conejo village, Christina Coc of the Julian Cho Society, Conejo Village chairman Manuel Caal, and Santa Cruz Village chairman Basilio Teul.

The busloads of supporters came from Conejo and Santa Cruz, and from the surrounding villages of Pueblo Viejo, San Jose, San Antonio, Midway, Crique

Sarco, Aguacate, Blue Creek, Santa Ana and Big Falls.

Also present to express her solidarity and the solidarity of the Belizean labour unions with the Toledo Maya in the fight for their rights was B.C.W.U. General secretary Christine Perriot. Perriot said she came to say “nuff respect to the Mayan people in their struggle.” She also had special words of admiration for the many Mayan women who had traveled the hundreds of miles, many of them nursing mothers with young babies in their arms to stand beside their menfolk in their stand to have their rights respected.

SATIIM Executive Director Gregorio Choc has avowed that his organization and the people of the communities within the Sarstoon Temash community managed protected area will not allow consultants for an oil company, namely Jose “Pepe” Garcia and his subcontractors, to enter the reserve to do an Environmental Impact Assessment for oil development until there has been proper consultation between the GOB and the Mayan people regarding the granting of such concessions.

Paradise Lost

➡ (Continued From Page 4)
deal with something broken, something unpaid, something spoilt, having to smile and act normally in the presence of someone just reeking of dishonesty or dishonor?

When exactly did so many people lose their reputations, their integrity anyway?

When did paradise get taken over by so many parasites?

Those who come to Belize on vacation, or to visit after a long time away, generally have a good time. They enjoy our warm smiles and friendly conversation. We may grumble a bit about the cost of living, but we seldom reveal to them just how

desperate the situation has become, how many people would be plunged into poverty without those remittances from abroad, tips from tourists, side money made from side jobs or skiving off the till.

I doubt they would believe us if we told them anyway. Things look too lovely out at the cays, or by the light of shimmering candles in a popular bar or restaurant.

No, they probably would not truly understand how hard it is for those of us who live here.

Or how hard it is to watch them go home, taking their positive outlook and opportunities for success with them.

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Boyd Johnson wins 2007 Cross Country Classic



The first Belizean to finish, Roger Troyer receives trophy for 5th place.

American cyclist Boyd Johnson of Team western Spirit won the 79th running of the Annual Cross Country Cycling Classic, the grueling 140 mile race from Belize City to San Ignacio and back to the city on Holy Saturday.

Johnson and his teammate 2006 Cross Country champ Shane Vasquez were among a group of ten Belizean and foreign riders who entered the Marion Jones Sporting Complex after almost six hours of hard riding. Shane Vasquez led this breakaway group on the first lap around the track inside the stadium as the main peloton rolled in, but on the second lap, it was Johnson who had the get up and go to win the sprint to the finish.

With his victory Johnson captured the first place trophy, the victor's garland offered by Florasol, and the \$4,000 cash prize offered by the Belize Bank, Fort Street Tourism Village and the Ministry of Sports. He also won a Typhoon bicycle from Amparo's of Orange Walk, a diamond ring from JEC Ltd, a

dinner for two from Lee's Restaurant of Orange Walk and a trophy from Glen Young and family.

Anthony Taylor, also from the USA, riding for the M&M engineering team, was second, winning himself a \$2,000

cash prize offered by Minister of Health Jose Coye and a trophy from Glen Young and family, who sponsored trophies for all top ten finishers.

Mexican rider Ismael Ponce of the Acros Guinness Smiling team took 3rd place to win a \$1,500 cash prize offered by ESSO Standard Oil and a trophy.

Colombian rider Miguel Angel Diaz Tafur of the Guatemalan Team Café Quetzal was 4th to win a \$1,000 cash prize offered by Barrow & Co. and a trophy.

Roger Troyer of Team Sagitun was the first Belizean top finish, riding into 5th place and winning himself a \$900 cash prize from the Atlantic bank and a trophy.

Nicaraguan rider Walter Gaitan Aguirre of the Roaring Creek Cycling club, finished 6th to win a \$800 cash prize from Anthony Turton & Associates and the Gillett family in memory of Dwayne Gillett.

Mateo Cruz of Team Santino's rode into 7th place to win a \$600 prize from Western Union and a trophy.

Nary Felipe Velaquez Ariaz of Team Café Quetzal finished 8th to win a \$400 prize from St John's Credit Union.

The defending champ Shane Vasquez rolled into 9th place to claim a \$200 prize from SHELL Powertrain.

Giovanni "Froggy" Leslie of Team Santino's rounded out the top 10, winning himself a \$150 cash prize from Seawell Spices.

Juan Manuel Sandoval of the Acros Guinness Smiling team rolled into 11th place, to win a \$100 prize from Martha Watter-Ordonez and family and a trophy from Edmund Castro, who sponsored trophies for the 11th to 15th place finishers.

Guatemalan rider Lizandro Acu Velasquez of Team Santino's was 12th to win a \$200 prize from Martha Watter-Ordonez and family.

Jeffery Zelaya of Team Benny's megabytes finished 13th to win a \$100 prize and Mexican rider Ricardo Samuel Tapia Rodriguez of the Acros Guinness Smiling team was 14th, also claiming a \$100 prize.

Sherman Thomas of the Roaring Creek Cycling club rolled into 15th place to also win a \$100 prize.

Mayor Zenaida Moya was present to offer some words of encouragement in the moist dawn air as 93 riders lined

(Please Turn To Page 15)



Over 90 cyclists began the race in Belize City

Lawsuit challenges DOE approval of Ara Macao

The Peninsula Citizens for Sustainable Development (PCSD) filed a lawsuit on Monday, 2 April 2007, asking the Belize Supreme Court to overturn the decision of the Belize Department of the Environment (DOE) approving the Ara Macao Resort and Marina development at the northern end of the Placencia Peninsula. PCSD also asked the court to grant an injunction to prevent Ara Macao Development Ltd. from proceeding with the development.

PCSD's suit is based, in part, on DOE's failure to comply with Belize's environmental regulations.

PCSD also maintains that DOE unreasonably and irrationally approved the

development because it did not have critical information about environmental issues such as downstream beach erosion, effect of the development on the Peninsula's marine environment (such as lobster, conch and coral reefs), and whether Ara Macao and other new developments could quickly use up the water supply that provides Placencia, Seine Bight, Maya Beach, Independence and Big Creek with drinking water.

PCSD also argues that DOE's approval failed to protect the public's access and use of the 66' public reserve on the beach surrounding the development, and that the development vio-

lates zoning for the area under the Mango Creek/Placencia Special Development Area, as recognized by Belize law.

A court date has been set for 20 April 2007 for judicial consideration of PCSD's claim.

Donations to the Ara Macao litigation fund may be made by depositing funds into the PCSD account at Atlantic Bank, account number 100158838. Donations may also be made by check made payable to the Peninsula Citizens for Sustainable Development, General Delivery, Placencia, Belize. Please contact the Peninsula Citizens for Sustainable

Development at 610-4718 or info@placenciadocuments.info for further information.

The Peninsula Citizens for Sustainable Development is a Belize non-profit corporation and grass roots community organization of Placencia Peninsula residents concerned with the rapid, and often poorly planned and executed, development of the Peninsula. PCSD seeks to bring information about proposed developments to Peninsula residents to ensure that all developments are environmentally sustainable with respect to the fragile eco-systems of the Peninsula and its communities and cultures.

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World Health Day symposium raises concerns

Belize’s health professionals discussed the threat of the avian influenza pandemic, HIV/AIDS, global warming and the dangers of genetically engineered food crops at the one-day symposium health symposium hosted by the Ministry of Health and the Pan American Health Organization at the Radisson Hotel on World Health Day, on Tuesday, April 3.

After opening remarks by Minister of health Jose Coye, Belize Poultry Association president Orlando Habet discussed the poultry industry’s concern about the threat of an avian flu pandemic. While the virus normally only affects birds and pigs, a new strain of the virus H5NI has demonstrated the ability to mutate into a form which can bridge the species barrier to affect even humans. Since its emergence in Hong Kong in 1997, this viral stain has proven to be lethal among humans who become infected. The virus recognizes no borders, as it can travel around the world with migratory birds, which in turn can infect the domestic bird population. Dr Paul Edwards discussed the perceived impact of a possible influenza pandemic on Belize.

The debilitating effect of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on the people of Belize and its impact on the development of the nation were discussed by National AIDS Program Director, Dr Marvin Manzanero. While the health workers and the media promote the use of condoms as a form of prevention of contagion, the long term solution will require a changing of social mores and attitudes toward recreational sex, which can only come from proper education of the young.



National AIDS Program Director Dr. Marvin Manzanero. National AIDS Prog

Meteorologist Ann Gordon discussed the impacts of global warming and climate change on Belize. Since global warming will cause sea level rise with the melting of the polar ice caps, this will impact on Belize land area as low-lying parts of the country become submerged. It would also have profound impact on the barrier reef, resulting in bleaching which would also affect the future growth of tourism industry.

Dr. Michael Deshield of the Belize Agricultural Health authority discussed the dangers of genetically manipulated crops as he presented the national bio-safety policy. Genetically engineered crops become the property of the research firms which develop them, creating a form of dependency among the client farmers and countries who buy the genetically engineered seeds.

The symposium concluded with a panel discussion of the international collaboration required to combat these global health threats, with education serving a primary role in making the people aware of these dangers.

Boyd Johnson wins...

➡ (Continued From Page 14)
up for the start of the race in front of Acros Imports on the Western Highway just outside Belize City. Then they were off and Darnell Barrow took the first couple of station prizes.

Rudy Amil Guzman Isosche of Team Café Quetzal took the lead briefly and won a prize, and Doniseti Aburto Vasquez of Team Typhoon won a couple.

Then the Belizean radio audience was to become very familiar with the name Deivi Alejandro Ibanez Forero of Team

Café Quetzal as he swept many of the next station prizes on the road to Belmopan

Giovanni “Froggy” Leslie joined Ibanez’s breakaway to win a couple of prizes in La Democracia and passing Cheers Restaurant, and it was Robert Mariano of Team Benny’s Megabytes in the lead as the race rolled through St Matthew’s Village.

Darnell Barrow led again as the race passed Roaring Creek but it was Peter Choto of Team C-ray who led at the

(Please Turn To Page 16) ➡

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Boyd Johnson wins 2007 Cross Country Classic

➡ (Continued From Page 15)
half-way mark, turning around the Constitution Park in San Ignacio.

Choto won a couple more prizes on the way back and then it was Deivi Alejandro Ibanez Forero again, sweeping the next 18 station prizes from Esperanza Village all the way back to

Roaring Creek Village.
Ricardo Sameul Tapia won the prize at the Belmopan junction on the return and Miguel Angel Diaz Tafur led as the race rolled past the Hector Silva airstrip.
Shane Vasquez led briefly at mile 38 but he was reeled in by Jose Choto who

won the next station prizes up to La Democracia. Ismael Ponce took over the lead and he and Jose Choto worked together as a two man breakaway sharing the station prizes as they rolled to the city.
Ismael Ponce swept all the station prizes from mile 16 to mile 5. Mateo

Cruz made a bid for the lead and was challenged by Lizandro Velasquez and Miguel Diaz Tafur. Boyd Johnson led as the race entered the city, with Shane Vasquez, Anthony Taylor and Ismael Ponce all jockeying for the lead. Then the race entered the stadium and history was written.

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	Wednesday April 11th	Thursday April 12th	Friday April 13th	Saturday April 14th	Sunday April 15th	Monday April 16th	Tuesday April 17th
			2 p.m. - 3:45 p.m. THE LAST SUPPER 100 min (Cuba)	3 p.m. - 5:10 p.m. STEPS TO FORGIVENESS 7 min (Barbados) DOES THE PRESIDENT HAVE AIDS? 120 min (Haiti)	2:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. VIVA CUBA 80 min (Cuba) THE BAOBAB TREE 27 min (Barbados) BANANA ROBBER 16 min (Trinidad + Tobago) ZULAIKA 78 min (Curacao)	2 p.m. - 3:45 p.m. THE HARDER THEY COME 100 min (Jamaica)	
	OPENING NIGHT 7:30 p.m. - 8 p.m Opening Ceremony	5:15 p.m. - 7:10 p.m. FOR A HUNDRED THOUSAND 11 min (Dominican Republic) COUNTRYMAN 103 min (Jamaica)	5:45 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. UNDER THE SHADOW OF BLOOD 16 min (Dominican Republic) CALYPSO DREAMS 90 min (Trinidad + Tobago)	5:45 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. DAYS OF THE DEAD 12 min (Belize) SHOW ME YOUR MOTION: THE RINGPLAY GAMES OF THE BAHAMAS 88 min (Bahamas)	6 p.m. - 7:47 p.m. OF MEN AND GODS 52 min (Haiti) WHAT MY MOTHER TOLD ME 55 min (Trinidad + Tobago)	5:15 p.m. - 7:20 p.m. SALT IN MY EYES 39 min (Aruba) JOEBEL & AMERICA 83 min (Trinidad + Tobago)	CLOSING NIGHT 7:30 p.m. - 8 p.m Closing Ceremony
	8 p.m. - 10:15 p.m. JAB The Blue Devil of Paramin 47 min (Trinidad + Tobago) ZULAIKA 78 min (Curacao)	7:30 p.m. - 10:15 p.m. JAZZ AND US 45 min (Cuba) RIBBONS OF BLUE 112 min (St. Lucia)	8 p.m. - 10:15 p.m. SWALLOW 23 min (Cayman Islands) THE SWEETEST MANGO 106 min (Antigua + Barbuda)	8 p.m. - 10:15 p.m. THE LETTER 2 1/2 min (Dominican Republic) SCENT OF OAK 125 min (Cuba)	8:15 p.m. - 10:05 AVA AND GABRIEL 110 min (Curacao)	7:45 p.m. - 10:15 p.m. PORT AU PRINCE SE PAM 57 min (Haiti/Cuba) LIFE AND DEBT 90 min (Jamaica)	8 p.m. - 9:45 p.m. BLACK SHACK ALLEY 100 min (Martinique)