

# The Independent

Reformer

Belize's Rebel Paper

Vol. 2 No. 31

Friday, August 10, 2007

\$1.00

## Doom or Boom in Placencia?

*Submitted by The Peninsula Citizens for Sustainable Development*

Consider these numbers:

· Approximately 575 rooms, condos, villas and suites are currently available for tourist rental on the Placencia Peninsula.

· Approximately 1,500 rooms, condos, suites, villas and lots have been approved for the Placencia Peninsula, with about 500 under active construction, along with ancillary swimming pools, marinas, restaurants, bars, gyms and spas – all, of course, completely air conditioned.

· Developers are currently seeking approval for another 415+ villas, condos, rooms, lots and suites – and this number includes only those about which information is somewhat available. This number does not include development (Please Turn To Page 2)



*artists conception of Grand Reef Condos to be built in Placencia*

## The Case for Independent Candidates

**By: Mario Lara**

Belizean voters don't have a real choice between the UDP and PUP because neither one represents a real challenge to the status quo. The case can be made that it would be at least worthwhile to replace the current administration with a different set of managers who say they will work to bring the national debt under control and reign in the rampant corruption.

But, so what? All that would mean is that the UDP would be committed to managing the debt in order to protect the same "investors" to whom they now claim that the PUP have sold out. They would simply renegotiate deals and make it look as if they've accomplished something. Just listen closely to what both parties are saying about the \$33 Million UHS mess.

So, let's not fool ourselves into thinking that the UDP represents anything fundamentally different than the PUP.



*VIP's Paul Morgan*

They may differ in style but not in substance.

Both the UDP and PUP have been financed and continue to be financed by the elite foreign and local business interests in Belize. So, how can either party claim to represent the grassroots? They simply pretend to do so and claim to be agents of change meanwhile they both protect the status quo. They help to convince Belizeans that in order for



*NRP's Dueck*

Belize to progress, we must be willing to exploit our valuable natural resources with the help of foreign lenders and "investors." Both the UDP and PUP try to convince us that one is better than the other at playing the economic growth game – but it's the same game they both say we must play.

The party system in Belize is designed to work this way. Every five-years or so, it allows the people to let off some



*PNP's Will Maheia*

steam by pretending they can vote for real change; meanwhile the elite movers and shakers remain well in control.

Enter the independent candidates... The independent parties are not well organized and not as well financed, so it will be tough for them to present a real challenge. Bucking against the status quo is not an easy task. And, the second they start to show a little head- (Please Turn To Page 6)

Read Independent Online at <http://belizenews.com/independent> or <http://tinyurl.com/245dpp>

General Manager  
*Trevor Vernon*

Editor  
*Karla Heusner Vernon*

Design/Layout/  
Environmental editor  
*William G. Ysaguirre*

Published by:  
*Independent Publishing Com-  
pany (of Belize) Ltd.  
P.O. Box 2666  
Belize City, Belize*

Telephones:  
*(501) 225-3520  
(501)600-1627  
(501)664-1627  
(501)671-1964*

Printed by:  
*National Printers  
New Road  
Belize City, Belize*

# Letters to the Editor

## GOB has right focus

To the Editor,

I have watched with interest your publication’s attitudes toward development in Belize and in particular toward your criticism of the government (both of the major political parties) and its approach to development. As a developer for over 45 years in the US, currently considering development in Belize, and as an elected official in state government in the US for a number of years, I would like to comment on your approach.

First of all, few generalizations about development are appropriate. Each development should be judged on its own merit. And it should be judged by someone knowledgeable in development. While rapid, high cost development on the coast of Belize will create certain problems, it will also create certain advantages. Development must start somewhere. And good development breeds more development. In the last analysis, good developers will create good developments regardless of government’s attempt to regulate. And bad develop-

ers will create bad developments regardless of government’s attempt to regulate. It comes down to the competence and integrity of the developer.

The government of Belize has, during the almost four years that I have been investigating developing in Belize, been uniformly cooperative, while always asking the key question – “is this development good for Belize and in what ways?” Because I have seen the proliferation of high end developments along the coast of Belize, I have concluded that the development of middle class, large scale developments in the central part of the country is what is most needed. The development of an economy is based upon a strong middle class. Therefore, while there are economic benefits to attracting wealthy retirees to Belize, the future of Belize ultimately lies in middle class developments, the creation of middle class jobs, and a commitment to reinvest a significant part of the profits of development in Belize.

Belize is massively underdeveloped. Countries of similar size and even fewer resources support populations twenty times as large as that of Belize. Belize has the potential of quickly becoming the flower of Central America. Only inappropriate perceptions created by the media can stand in its way. The media has an obligation to cover improper actions in the public arena. But the media has the obligation to treat such actions proportionately and also to cover with equal zeal the many positive accomplishments of the country and its governments.

The government of Belize has demonstrated to me that its focus is correct. After almost four years of investigation, many meetings with government officials, government civil servants, non governmental organizations, and professionals, including attorneys, accountants, and engineers, I have found competence, cooperation, and not the slightest hint of corruption. On that basis I have concluded that I should recommend major investment in the future of Belize and I intend to do so.

THE QUANTUM GROUP  
David N. Levinson, Chairman

(Please Turn To Page 15)

**Comments? Suggestions?**  
**or want to share your thoughts & photos? Email us at**  
***[Independent.newspaper.bz@gmail.com](mailto:Independent.newspaper.bz@gmail.com)***  
**For an online version of the INdependent**  
**Reformer visit us at**  
**[www.belizenorth.com](http://www.belizenorth.com)**  
**OR**  
**[www.belizenews.com](http://www.belizenews.com)**

The

INdependent

Reformer

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

☒ **YES!** Send me my FREE T-shirt with my year’s subscription of the INdependent Reformer for BZ\$60.00 in Belize (US\$60.00 international)

Name

(please print)

Address

Apt.

City

State

Zip

Email Address

Payment Included ☐

Bill me later ☐

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



# Doom or Boom in Placencia?



Developers are clearing mangroves and dredging up landfill; where are the Environmental Impact Assessments and the Department of the Environment in all this?

☛ (Continued From Page 1)  
plans for a resort on Lagoon Caye, the best permit flats in the country – or for a resort on False Caye, which is a teeming nursery for juvenile fish and conch, the nearest good snorkeling spot to the Peninsula and the site of a Mayan ruin. Now consider this:

- The Placencia Peninsula has one dirt road, an unreliable electrical supply, and a water system that is already under considerable stress from water requirements of existing residents and tourists.
- Only one doctor and two nurses are available on the Peninsula to handle ALL medical care, including emergencies.
- The Peninsula has no sewage treatment facilities. While larger resorts are now being required to install package sewage treatment plants, individual lot owners and smaller condos and hotels still rely on often poorly designed and improperly constructed septic tanks.
- The Peninsula has one garbage dump to handle all household, resort and construction garbage. That dump has no landfill or garbage management equip-

- ment or expertise.
- Dredging for fill needed for new construction and to develop marinas threatens to destroy seagrass beds in the Placencia Lagoon that provide food and safe harbor for manatees, juvenile permit, rays, snook, barracuda and lobster. One contractor recently received a permit to dredge the Lagoon from mid-July 2007 through November 2007!
- The same dredging and filling has already destroyed much of the mangroves along the Peninsula coastline, especially on the northern end of the Peninsula from Maya Beach through the Plantation area.
- Affordable housing is extremely limited, forcing many Peninsula born Belizeans to move from the Peninsula across the Lagoon to the Mango Creek area.
- Clearly, the Peninsula’s infrastructure already can’t handle existing loads. How will it handle double that load when the developments already under construction are completed in less than a

- year? What happens when that load triples and quadruples in the next few years?
- Of particular concern is the road, the only path of evacuation for most residents of the Peninsula when a hurricane threatens. Will residents of Placencia Village be able to make it off the Peninsula behind possibly a thousand new vehicles also seeking escape?
- The Department of Geology, which issues dredging and mining permits, refuses to send permit applications to the Department of the Environment for review, even though the Government of Belize acknowledges that the Placencia Lagoon is an ecologically sensitive environment.** Geology even goes as far as to claim the dredging is “good” for the Lagoon because it deepens the bottom and that the “fish like that.” Maybe a couple of big snappers like it, but one of the primary functions of the Lagoon is as a marine nursery, not a series of fishing holes for a few big fish.
- Geology also won’t release the per-

- mits to the public so that the amount of dredging that is occurring can be monitored by people living on the Peninsula.
- The Lands Department continues to issue permits for mangrove clearance even when Environmental Compliance Plans prohibit mangrove removal.
- The Department of the Environment claims not to know about most of the new developments planned or already under construction on the Peninsula. Why? Because, says DOE, other departments, such as Geology, Forestry and Lands, are purposefully bypassing DOE.
- So, DOE remains ignorant of the cumulative impact of development occurring on the Peninsula, and developers use DOE’s ignorance to avoid cumulative impact analyses that might highlight the uncontrolled development that is occurring on the Peninsula.
- Ara Macao is a prime example of this strategy, as evidenced by its answer to the requirement that the Ara Macao developer characterize the extent and quality of the cumulative impact of developments on the Peninsula. As stated in Ara Macao’s EIA, Section 18-2:

The determination of potential cumulative impacts . . . is difficult to quantify, since data is limited due to the fact that all projects have not been subjected to the environmental clearance process.

Further, little or no monitoring is being done of any of the developments on the Peninsula, and the Departments of Lands, Geology, Forestry and Environment have not responded to requests for information that would allow local residents to monitor the developments themselves.

For example, on 14 May 2007, a letter was sent to all four departments asking for copies of mangrove and dredging permits, Environmental Compliance Plans, engineering studies and other official documents that are supposed to limit the environmental, social and cultural impacts of new developments. (The letter was actually hand-delivered to DOE and Geology.) This letter was again faxed to all four departments on 17 July 2007. No response has been received from any department.

Ironically, Travel Mole, an Internet based travel agent newsletter, reports that the number of tourists visiting Caribbean countries declined 10% in the last year because tourists have “been

(Please Turn To Page 7)



A satellite image from Google Earth with new developments for Placencia marked by pushpins.



# Voting Rights, or Right to Vote



**By: Karla Heusner Vernon**

A little snippet in one of the party papers recently lambasted Belizean Associations abroad for not doing more to ensure Belizean children get a good education. The nameless author was shamelessly begging these organizations for books and other supplies and to help with school fees. Now, excuse me, but isn't the responsibility for making sure our kids get to school and stay that of the children's families living here and also our own Ministry of Education?

It also did not take into account the fact that thousands of our children **do** get their fees, books and uniforms from Belizean relatives abroad through remittances and boxes and barrels of shoes and school bags and shirts and pants and skirts and crayons and blanks, etc, etc. Perhaps some of these children would

have had to drop out long ago if it had not been for this support; perhaps some of them only eat every day because some auntie or uncle or granny sends the person they live with money for

efficiently, money spent more wisely. The little piece was crawling around in the back of my mind even as I was skimming through an unrelated document, the Political Reform Commission

..their sheer numbers would enable them to turn ova Big Fat Jerry's barge, if they wanted to.

food!

So I found the piece quite ignorant and reckless.

But perhaps it is symptomatic of that "kruffy" mindset which believes just because someone lives in the States they are somehow obligated to help those back home. That Belizean organizations abroad are formed for the sole purpose of collecting donations and bundling them back to Belize, not to help maintain cultural and social ties or enhance business networking and so on. . . .that some Belizeans of a certain socio-economic background even regard Belizeans living away as little more than "shugga" daddies and mommies and resent it when they come back and point out things could be run better, more ef-

Report, 2000. And I realized that even those higher up the food chain want those financial contributions to continue to the state, but prefer to keep those sending the money in their place over yonder. For the simple reason that their sheer numbers would enable them to turn ova Big Fat Jerry's barge, if they wanted to.

Their attitude is once Belizeans have left Belizean soil they are no longer sons and daughters of that soil, and somehow forfeit their right to participate in Belizeans society and political process. If you don't believe me, judge for yourself. And I quote:

Under Recommendation 82, Voting Rights for Belizeans Abroad 13:24:

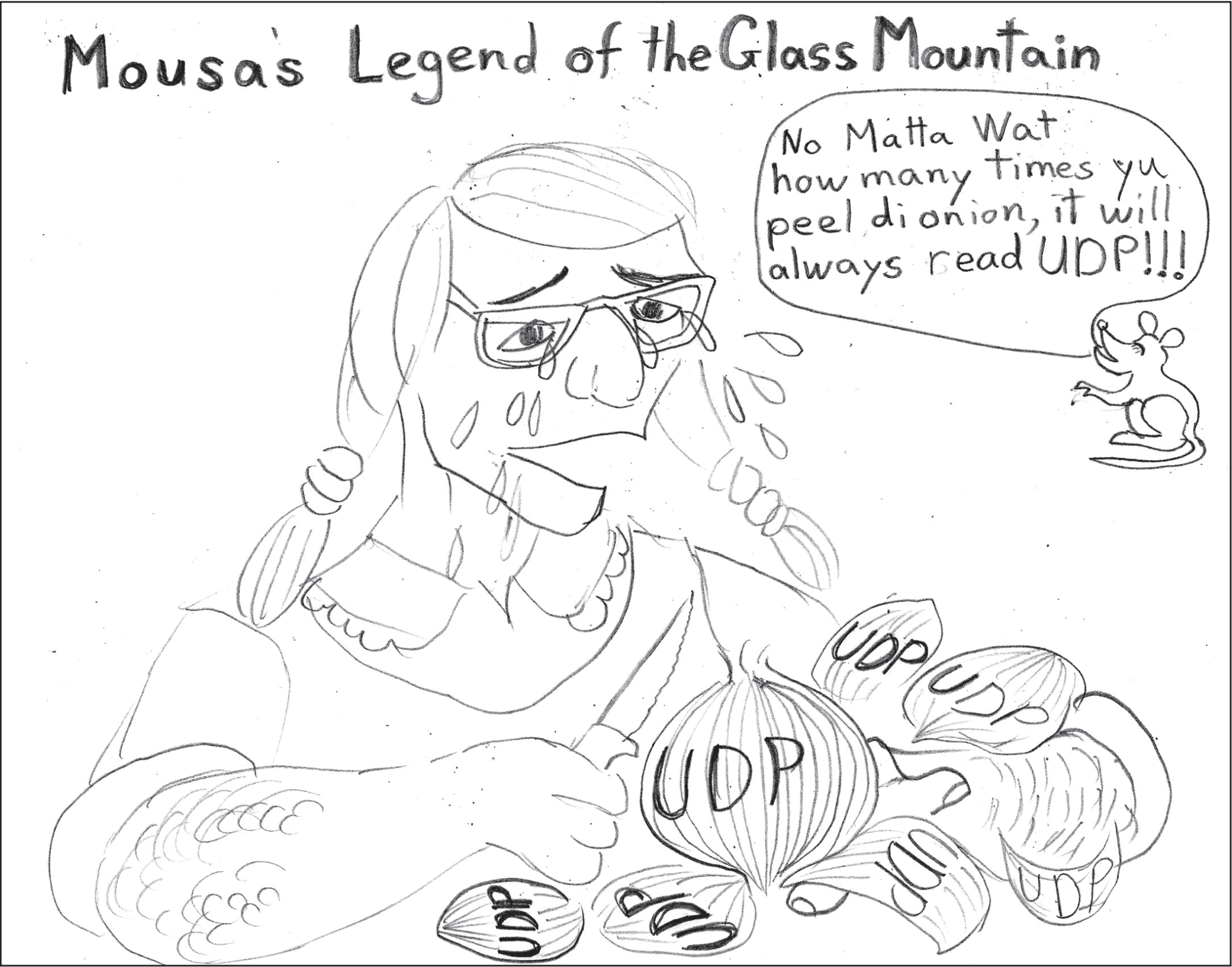
*"It is the considered view of the (Political Reform) Commission that voting rights, outside of those presently existing should not be conferred on Belizeans abroad. As it is, Belizeans living abroad can register to vote once they have lived at an address in Belize for over two months."*

13:25:

*"The Commission also noted that there were many risks that allowing registration outside of the residency requirement or voting by proxy could cause, including the extreme situation of a government that has minority support at home. When elections in Belize are sometimes determined by one vote, the influence of large numbers of Belizeans not living in Belize voting in Belize's elections is extremely significant. Additionally, a basic principle of democracy is that it is government with the consent of the governed and Belizeans living abroad can in no way claim to be governed."*

Wow, so I guess all the millions of US citizens abroad who vote through absentee ballots in major US elections

(Please Turn To Page 16)





# THE TASTE OF HOME

AVAILABLE IN THE USA!

**Arizona**

Chandler  
A's Chandler  
Liquor Square

**Phoenix**

A's Comeback  
A's Central  
Sportman's Liquors

**Scottsdale**

Sportman's Liquors

**Tucson**

Runrunner Liquors

**California**

Beverly Hills  
Robert Burns Wines

**Costa Mesa**

Hi Time Wines

**Glendale**

Red Carpet Wine

**Hollywood**

A&L Wines

**Los Angeles**

Beverage Warehouse

**Redwood City**

A&L Wines

**San Francisco**

A&L Wines

**Florida**

Boynton Beach  
Royal Wine and Spirits

**Brandon**

Kingdom Liquors & Fine Wine

**Bradenton**

Zodiac Fine Wine & Spirits  
Rum Runners Liquor

**Deltona**

Deltona Liquors

**Ellenton**

AAA Discount Liquors

**Ft. Myers**

ABC Store: 75

**Ft. Pierce**

Roy's Liquors

**Jacksonville**

Total Wine & More

**Jupiter**

Country Liquors & Fine Wines

**Kissimmee**

ANA Spirits And Grocery

**Miami**

J & J Liquors  
Pamen Liquor #2  
Tio's Liquors  
Miami-Dade Liquors

**Naples**

Bottoms Up Liquor and Wine

**Orlando**

Shamrock Beverage

**Palm Bay**

ABC Store No. 6

**Pembroke Pines**

Gaby's Lounge & Liquor Store

**Poina Vodka Beach**

ABC Store: 195

**St. Petersburg**

Pic Pac Liquors St. Petersburg

**Tampa**

Gaspard's Grotto  
Liquor Depot  
Total Wine & More  
Tom McEwen Fine Wine & Spirits

**Tarpon Springs**

B-21 Wine Company

**West Palm**

Congress Avenue Liquors

**Idaho**

Any Store, Special Order  
Stone Liquor Dispensary

**Illinois**

Belleville  
Belt West Liquors

**Bloomington**

Friar Tuck

**Edwardsville**

Crushed Grapes

**Fairview Heights**

Randa's Wines & Spirits

**Granite City**

Cornell Liquors

**O'Fallon**

Pizza Liquors

**Skokie**

Schofer's Wines & Spirits

**Waukegan**

Paul's Amoretti Liquors

**Indiana**

Bloomington

Big Red Liquors

**Carmel**

Classic Spirits  
Hamilton Beverage  
Kahn's

**Evansville**

University Liquor

Winebar

**FL Wayne**

Cap N Cork

**Indianapolis**

A-1 Liquors  
Elite Beverages  
The Hop Shop  
Kahn's Fine Wines & Spirits  
Crown Liquor  
John's

**La Porte**

Bottle Shop One

**Middlebury**

Chalet Party Shoppe

**Millford**

Millard Party Pack

**Mishawaka**

Belmont Beverage

**Muncie**

Friendly Package

**South Bend**

City Wide

**Valparaiso**

Real Inn Liquors

**Michigan**

Ann Arbor

A&L Wine Castle

**Belmont**

Home Run Liquor and Deli

Belmont Beverage

**Bridgeport**

U.S.A. Liquor Express

**Canton**

The Cracker Barrel

**Cornstock Park**

Party World

**Empire**

Deering's Food Market

**Grosse Pointe Woods**

Oxford Beverages & Deli

**Holland**

Youngs Party Shop

South Side Party Store

Bayshore Yacht Club

**Livonia**

Brass Mug Liquor

**Marine City**

Uni-Can Duty Free

**Marysville**

Gronek's Party Store

**Royal Oak**

Late Night Party Store

**Saginaw**

Dispenman's Cork N' Ale

**Southfield**

Majestic Market

**Springport**

Duck's Point

**Sterling Heights**

Franklin Drugs

**Utica**

Max Liquor & Wine Shop

**Wyne**

7 Star Market

**Mississippi**

Any Store, Special Order

MS Alcoholic Beverage Control

**Nevada**

Henderson

Lee's Discount Liquor

**Oregon**

Any Store, Special Order  
OR Liquor Control Commission

**Pennsylvania**

Any Store, Special Order

PA Liquor Control

**Texas**

Austin

A&A Liquor

Chris Liquor #2

Oak Hill Liquor

**Dallas**

PK's Dallas

Monticello Liquor

State Street Spirits

Papas Liquors

Andrews Fine Beverages

Duncan's

**Houston**

Houston Wine Merchant

Sunny's Liquor & Discount

Royal Liquor

Crown Liquor

Right Liquor Store

**San Antonio**

Dino Discount Liquor

Bootlegger's Fine Wines & Spirits

**Virginia**

Any Store, Special Order

VA Alcoholic Beverage Control

**Washington**

Concrete

Concrete Liquor Store: 573

**Seattle**

State Store No. 101

State Store: 28

State Store: 43

**Sultan**

Store No. 594

**Wyoming**

Any Store, Special Order

WY Liquor Control Board



TRAVELLER'S  
LIQUORS LTD.

WWW.ONEBARRELUM.COM  
WWW.BLUEFIELD-PROD.COM



# What happened to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Parties?



**By: Trevor Vernon**

All the republics around us have more than ten active political parties, some as high as 20 plus registered parties. Caricom countries have on average fewer than four, which don't have to be registered at all. In Belize, we have the two mass parties (not unlike Caricom countries) and four other serious contenders; but, the latter have been dormant in the last month or so. And, this is troubling to all of us concerned about our democratic future.

Our legal system is based on what they call "common law traditions", British

Common Law traditions to be exact. Our Central American neighbours have a codified legal structure they inherited from Spain, which allows for better facilitation of formation of multiple political parties in the Republics. The Brits saw no need for more than two parties. Hence, the so called "third parties", have legalistic hurdles to get around as if they don't have enough challenges as it is.

Yet clearly we see a need for more than the two mass parties the colonial masters envisioned, enshrined in the common law system, and handed down to us or to those of us who copied down our constitution from other post colonial constitutions.

Political Party formation takes organization and that requires financial outlays. I don't know how the colonial masters envisioned political organization but clearly it was not well thought out. Now, I have not studied legal traditions to any degree so the arguments con-

tained here are not to be confused with any academically structured thesis.

There is in Belize today a fairly active third party movement, struggling but active. And while many are expressing dismay at the apparent inability for these 3<sup>rd</sup> parties to show some force, I would like to suggest that they/we take that disappointment and get active with the third party of your/our choice. Third Parties in Belize, all four of them, need the help and active volunteerism of the people, you & I. What are you/we waiting for?

These days it has become quite fashionable to talk about "the removal of the last vestiges of colonialism". Well, let us do that but getting rid of the old boys club of the colonial vestige called the two mass parties. If we've truly had enough of them, being controlled by the new vestige called the "Lawd", then let us unite for the sake of our beloved Belize and rally around the 3<sup>rd</sup> parties and their candidates. Some 3<sup>rd</sup> parties

are still looking for candidates. Get active, get involved, or get taken for another long ride by the two mass parties and their cesspool of lawyers, funded by massive funny money, with the legal cover of the truly last colonial vestige: the outdated, antiquated, inherited constitution coming indirectly from the colonial master of this "common law tradition" country.

So the answer to the question: what happened to the 3<sup>rd</sup> parties? is simple. You & I are not active enough with the third parties. We need to take ownership of this political system and not trust it to our "bling, bling" lawyers posing as politicians backed up by their funny money financiers posing as investors/clients. We can't trust them anymore to handle Belize's affairs for us. They have, as a collective group, failed us. If we are to see positive changes, then the baby must go out with the bathwater. Get involved or get taken yet again. The choice is yours Belize.

## The Case for Independent Candidates

➡ (Continued From Page 1)  
way or progress, you bet that the members of the elite business class will immediately take notice and just as immediately try to sabotage any progress that the independents make by any means necessary including threatening, bribing, slandering, and co-opting.

So, we can quarrel, fuss, and fight all day long about an elected senate, or about who are the better managers or which party is more corrupt. But when it boils down to it, a handful of people with deep pockets will ultimately continue to control the direction of development in Belize because we are a people divided and there is no leader in sight who is capable of capturing the collective imagination and leading us down a different path toward a unique vision of what Belize might be.

We allow our leaders to use words like "sustainable growth" and "grassroots" without holding them accountable to what these terms really mean. The Mayan people of Belize, for instance, who are arguably the most representative of what it means to be grassroots Belizean and who have a long history, full of important lessons for us to learn are hardly paid any attention. The Mayans too had elites who were interested in amassing wealth only for themselves; but eventually they collapsed. The ones who survived, survived because they clung to a traditional culture and communal lifestyle based on subsistence living (some might say sustainable living). But, this philosophy is of no

interest to today's elites nor to a majority of Belizeans.

I am not suggesting that we should all give up our modern lifestyle and be willing to live in traditional Mayan villages. What I am saying is that until a majority of us are willing incorporate some of this subsistence philosophy into our way of living and to give up our insatiable appetite for material wealth; and look around us and see and appreciate the plenty that we have and embrace a more modest lifestyle and create a culture that says to our leaders and our would-be leaders that what we want most is to protect what we already have, and stop the madness of borrowing and spending for projects that enrich a few at the expense of many and at the expense of our natural environment. We will all remain partly to blame for the continued sell out of our national wealth and its concentration into the hands of a few.

So, having said all this, what is the ordinary voter supposed to do? Let's assume, for the moment that you agree that there is no fundamental difference between the UDP and PUP and that the independents don't stand a very good chance. Under this scenario, why bother vote?

I offer the following as food for thought. Even though the independent candidates may not stand a very good chance and may not have their act fully together, they represent the best hope for change. If the independent candidates are able to gain a majority or at least a significant showing in the number of

seats they gain, it will create a window of opportunity. Members of the status quo would be caught off guard and would be forced to negotiate with a new set of leaders that they have not dealt with before.

Yes, they will attempt to bribe, divide, conquer, and co-opt the independent candidates who are successful and they may even be able to frustrate their effort to bring about meaningful change; but at

least the people would have dealt a blow to the status quo and begin to create a culture and environment where our political leaders and parties might be inspired to truly champion the cause of the people rather than simply manipulating the electorate.

If either the UDP or PUP wins a majority in the next general elections it will represent a continuation of the status quo, period.

**U.S. Embassy Belmopan 6<sup>TH</sup> Annual  
MADE IN THE USA EXHIBITION**

*Fifth Floor, Radisson Fort George  
Hotel and Marina  
Belize City, Belize*

**August 24-25, 2007  
9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.**







**American Expo 2007 - The place to promote your American products and services in Belize! Especially those new-to-the-market US-made products and services!**

Firms interested to showcase American products and services may contact  
U.S. Embassy, telephone 822-4011, extension 4308  
Or visit <http://belize.usembassy.gov> for application details

**Come experience a truly American event at  
MADE IN THE USA EXHIBITION 2007**

**\* Admission on both days is FREE to the general public \***

Sponsored by: U.S. Embassy-Belmopan and the U.S. Department of State



# Doom or Boom in Placencia?

☛ (Continued From Page 3)  
there, done that” and want “something new.”

That “something new” could be Belize. However, in addition to an apparent total lack of concern for environmental, cultural and social issues, it seems that the Government of Belize is trying to turn the country, especially the Placencia Peninsula, into a carbon copy of Caribbean islands already full of casinos, marinas, tennis courts and spas, while ignoring the uniqueness that could attract tourists to fill locally owned and operated hotels, guesthouses, resorts, tour boats and tour vans.

Clearly, the Government of Belize and the People’s United Party don’t care about planning, controlled growth and protection of Belizeans, their families, their businesses, their culture and their environment. Does the United Democratic Party? Maybe. Maybe not. We haven’t seen any concrete evidence of concern, and, in fact, the UDP Manifesto promises to bring cruise ships, with all of their attendant problems, to southern Belize.



Sunset Point in Placencia.

## Coco Plum Responds to PCSD

Not everyone agrees that the Placencia Peninsula cannot sustain the projected increase in condominiums and other units. Independent Weekly spoke with Coco Plum developer Stewart Krohn about infrastructure and other concerns.

*IW. Is the current road in Placencia going to be able to accommodate an increase in traffic and all the building going on in the area?*

SK. Government has already given its commitment, signed the loan agreement for a new road. The chief engineer told me construction should begin

around November. So that is not even an issue.

*IW. In terms of water supply, will there be enough water to supply all these units?*

SK. There is no way to measure the capacity of the aquifer, that may or may not be a problem. What I can give you is an example from Cocoplum, we have a covenant arrangement that every purchaser must have an underground system. In other words, they will collect rainwater and only tap into the main water system as a supplement. For nine months out of the year we have good

providing information (and pictures) about Peninsula developments. This slide show can be downloaded from <http://www.placenciadocuments.info/2007pljdevelopments.exe>. (The show must be downloaded and saved to the desktop. The commercially produced player for the show is included in the download and will not harm computers.)

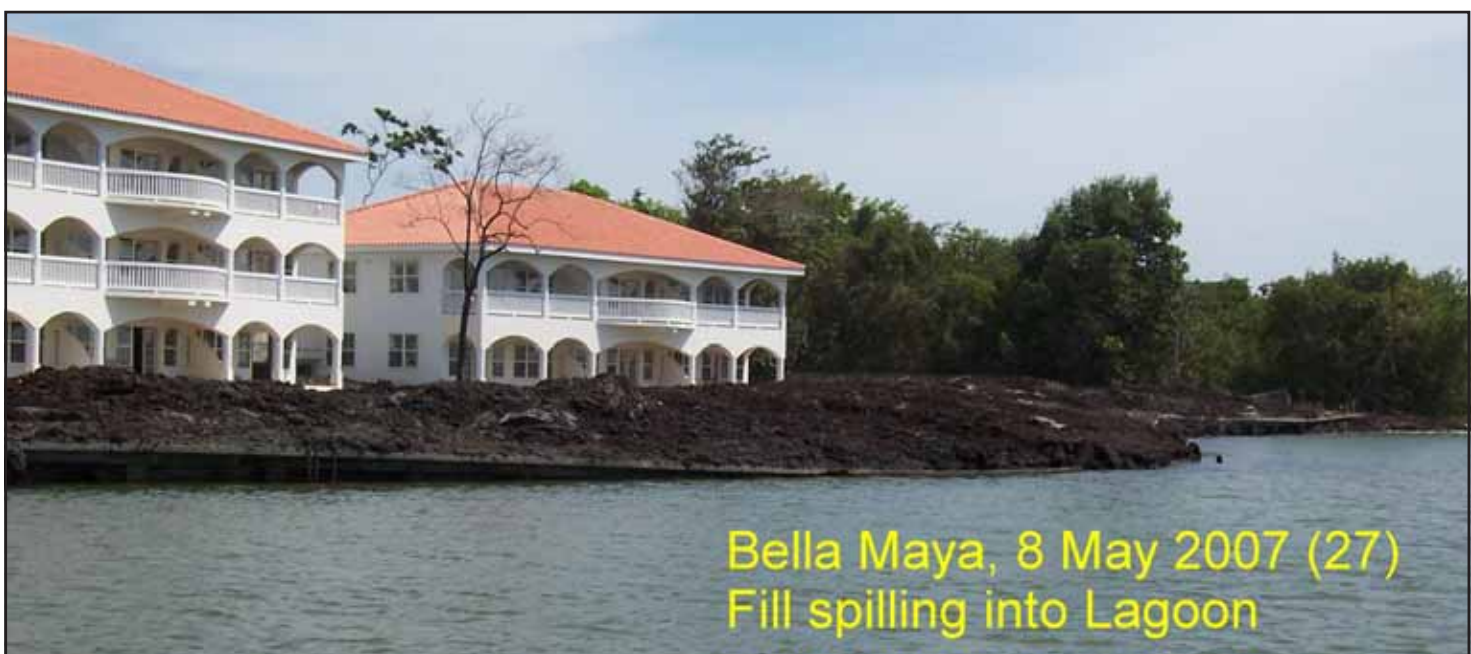
What is happening on the Placencia Peninsula is mirrored by projects occurring elsewhere in the country, such as government support for a causeway that would destroy the Swallow Caye sanctuary for manatee and birds, failure to prosecute individuals who forge ahead with projects without obtaining legally mandated environmental review and approvals, such as Luke Espot’s cruise ship terminal, inadequate funding for the Department of the Environment, and refusal to require compliance with environmental compliance plans, such as the government refusal to require BEL to implement a community warning system for the Chalillo dam area.

Development can be sustainable and offer positive economic growth and environmental, social and cultural protection at the same time. But, rampant and uncontrolled development offers neither sustainable economic benefits nor environmental, social and cultural ones.

Your home and your community could be the next to suffer unless all of us begin to take responsibility for our communities and our environment, AND embrace our duties, responsibilities and obligations as citizens to ensure that our government acts in OUR best interests, and according to OUR goals and priorities - not the desires of a few political cronies and foreign investors.

The Peninsula Citizens for Sustainable Development (PCSD) is one local organization that IS concerned. PCSD is attempting to bring this situation to the public’s attention, as well as monitor dredging, mining, mangrove destruction and water quality through citizen monitoring programs.

PCSD has also produced a slideshow



Bella Maya, 8 May 2007 (27)  
Fill spilling into Lagoon

Land fill used on the Bella Maya development is spilling into the lagoon.

rainfall down here. But look at San Pedro. They have no water and have gone the way of water treatment, turning salt water to fresh. If there should prove to be a problem with the Placencia supply, we can always go the reverse osmosis route.

*IW. Do you share any of the concerns by the Peninsula citizens group?*

SK. I believe it’s a way of life issue. I wouldn’t want to see a casino at Ara Macao, or anywhere for that matter. I don’t think that type of thing is compatible with eco-tourism. I also find

the Ara Macao project offensive in terms of scale. So maybe we are on the same page with that. But development can be done right. Again, the example of Coco Plum. We are setting the standard for low density development, we believe that is the way to go. I would much rather see that instead of just condemning all the projects, rejecting everything, the PCSD should put their efforts into establishing a Peninsula Planning Authority to ensure things are done right and the infrastructure is there to meet the demand.



# Could We Live the Next 5 Years Without Politicians?



By: **Ray Auxillou**

In Belize, we surely could. The civil service runs the government and all the government revenues for the next five years have already been allocated. The money must be spent on maintaining the government, the teachers and the medical system, with the remainder if any, going to pay the interest on the PUP Super Bond created National Debt. We don't start paying PRINCIPAL if I have understood the PUP announcements on their created national debt, until after the next new government five year period. Gawd help us if Musa manages to saddle the taxpayer with his UHS foolishness to the tune of \$120 million?

It doesn't seem to matter who will get elected, or who collects the politicians' salaries and perks for the next five years. There is little, if anything, for them to do. We can expect another five years of austerity, perhaps a little more rigid and tighter than this past five years and probably more of the same extending out for another 18 years, or 3 ½ more elective terms of office.

Financially, we require a \$100 million foreign exchange permanently in our foreign reserves, which is equivalent to \$200 million Belize currency, to be available for any Hurricane strikes and fixing any aftermath damage.

This past five years saw some public works activity, using various foreign loans, a favorite operating method of the PUP, which is only exacerbating our national debt problems. Preferably we would make no more foreign money loans for five years, or at best very minimal, in sort of emergency cases.

The PUP of this current term has brought the National Debt down from

8% to 3.2% of GDP— they say. Independent observers hint it is back up to over 4% of GDP because of continued borrowing. The PUP carefully explain this only covers foreign loan debts. I believe we have been quoted of having a total of 90% of GDP in TOTAL debt?

The European Union require their member states to have below 3% of GDP in foreign debt. In our case with looming interest and principal payments in six years, the debt must rapidly be reduced to less than 1% of GDP right NOW, in order to be able to prepare for payments on the PRINCIPAL of the PUP Super Bond ten years from now. In other words, we cannot take on any foreign loan debt for the next five years. We shouldn't have borrowed any this past five years, but you know the PUP, they can't stop borrowing and spending as a substitute for poor management skills.

It does seem that without any extra money to spend and a curtailing of a lot of activity in public works, we could easily live as a country without politicians, at least for the next five years.

There isn't a lot of work to be done really in the nation. We are going to need a steady building of new classrooms, as the Belize Baby Boom starts to escalate exponentially over the next five years but most of these new chil-

dren will be in private for profit, pre-schools, so we can build new classrooms using other methods than foreign loans. It is the term **after that** when we are really going to need a lot of classrooms as this population hits school age.

If we put wild spending politicians in power for the next five years, people who continue to take on loans abroad, we will be in real trouble by the end of the next new five year government term. So it does seem that we would be better without politicians for the next five

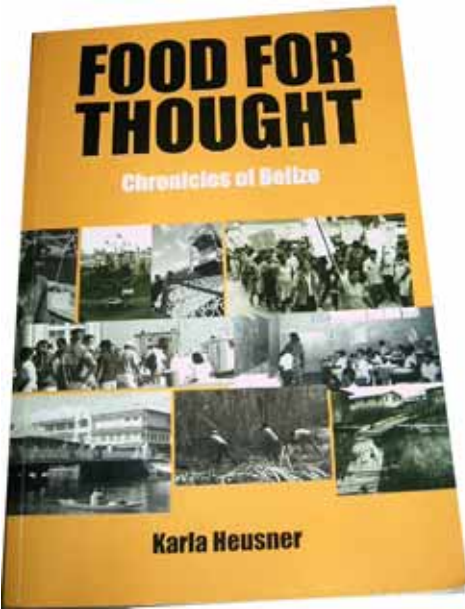
years, or perhaps a consensus type political government with lots of Independent representatives and a clean slate unconnected to the two major existing political parties' machinery. We may be lucky enough to find some constitutional reform people among them who would spend the next five years reforming the legislation which would lead to a more democratic consensual partnership type government for the better future of Belize.

What do you think?

**SPECIAL OFFER**  
for  
**Independent Weekly**  
readers

**An autographed copy  
of Karla Heusner's  
collection of columns  
Only \$25 BZ**

**(including shipping)  
Call, email or write to  
Independent Weekly  
now!**



## HOUSE FOR SALE



**By Owner**  
+Exclusive Ladyville neighborhood  
+Quiet cul-de-sac in close knit, security  
+conscious community  
+Two bedrooms, two

bath  
+Newly constructed home office/ sunporch  
+Fully tiled, laundryroom,  
+vat, generous yard,  
+fully fenced 6' high  
Perfect for young family

or retirees  
**Asking  
US\$75,000**  
Contact  
Independent Weekly





# Papal diplomacy - God's ambassadors

*From The Economist*

The job of representing the Pope in Burundi brings with it a fine colonial villa, but nobody would say Archbishop Paul Gallagher has an enviable post. In 2003 his predecessor, Archbishop Michael Courtney, died in a hail of bullets after mystery attackers ambushed his car. Whoever they were, the killers were clear about their target: the vehicle bore diplomatic plates and a Vatican flag, while the Irish cleric, in white cassock and purple skull cap, was known to all; so was his role in negotiating a peace accord, sealed a month earlier. The day of his death, December 29th, is now a fixture in Burundi's calendar.

Thousands of miles away, on the frontier between Argentina and Chile, papal diplomacy is remembered in a different way. A mountain pass has been renamed after Cardinal Antonio Samorè, who before his death in 1983 helped settle a territorial dispute that could have led to war. In different ways, the Irish archbishop and the Italian cardinal represent the best of an ancient and often contentious quirk of the international scene: the fact that the Roman Catholic Church, alone among faiths, is a diplomatic player.

Over the past century—despite the march of secularism—the Vatican's role in world affairs has expanded. In 1890 a famous English Catholic, Cardinal Manning, said the Holy See's diplomatic activities were “a mere pageant”, a medieval relic. He would be amazed to find that in 2007 papal diplomacy is more active than ever.

The real explosion came under John Paul II. When he was elected in 1978, the Holy See had full ties with 85 states. When he died, the figure was 174. Among states that dropped their misgivings were Margaret Thatcher's Britain, Ronald Reagan's America and Mikhail Gorbachev's Soviet Union. The Holy See now has full diplomatic relations with 176 states. Vietnam, China and Saudi Arabia are among the few without formal links. Recent years have also seen an expansion in the See's multilateral diplomacy. It sits in on the deliberations of 16 inter-governmental bodies, including the United Nations, the African Union and the Organisation of American States.

The Vatican acts, by its own choice, as a “permanent observer” rather than a voting member of the UN; but it is a signatory to some UN human-rights conventions, including those on racial equality and the rights of the child. It uses these vantage points to lobby for its ideas: non-violence, a better economic deal for poor nations, the extension of international law, support for marriage—and, controversially, the “sanctity of life” from the time of conception, which means opposing contraception, abortion and euthanasia.

Arguments over the Holy See's diplomatic status came to a head in 1994 when the pope's envoys—lining up with Muslim states—used their muscle to water down the outcome of a UN meeting on population in Cairo. The Vatican took a similar, albeit slightly lower-key, stance at a follow-up conference in 1999. This prompted campaigners for “reproductive rights” to demand that the Vatican be stripped of its diplomatic status—arguing that neither as a state, nor as a religion, should the Holy See have a place at the UN.

The pope's “diplomatic service” is a reminder of his unique and ambiguous status as both a religious and temporal leader. Formally, the pope's diplomats represent the Holy See—not the Vatican state which, under a 1929 accord with Italy, is the sovereign power in part of Rome. But in years past, some states (such as America in the 19th century) would deal with the pope only as head of a sovereign state. The fact that pontiffs wear two hats, temporal and spiritual, gives them, and their interlocutors, a certain flexibility. In 2001, when Greece's Orthodox clergy grumbled over a visit by Pope John Paul II, the government in Athens could retort that it was merely receiving him as a head of state.

But more and more governments have in recent years seemed happy to deal with the Holy See on its own terms, especially after John Paul II boosted its global profile. For any state, an embassy to the See offers attractions. For poor ones, it is a chance to garner information from one of the world's best-informed chancelleries. For powerful ones, it offers a way to influence the Vatican and seek papal approval. Na-

poleon told his man in Rome: “Deal with the pope as if he had 200,000 men at his command.” After some years in Rome, the envoy said 500,000 was nearer the mark.

The real extent of the Vatican's power is hard to compute. One in every six human beings was baptised into the pope's church. Of course, many quit the faith, but he remains a global opinion-former. His views can sway Catholic votes—a point not lost on American presidents, who rarely miss a chance to visit the Vatican. In Burundi all top politicians and expatriates flock to Archbishop Gallagher's residence for the papal feast day. Cutting a lower profile than his predecessor, the 53-year-old Englishman reports only “occasional” contacts with Burundi's rebel factions, the last of which signed a ceasefire agreement in September 2006. In the rich world one respecter

of papal clout is Britain's new prime minister, Gordon Brown. Three years ago this son of a Presbyterian minister went to seek Vatican endorsement of a proposal to boost aid to poor nations. This year he returned to co-launch a plan to bring new vaccines to poor states.

*The pope's divisions*

Papal diplomacy is almost as old as the papacy. But it was not until 1500 that a permanent nunciature, or diplomatic service, was established, in Venice. The earliest Protestant state to send an ambassador was Prussia in 1805: its envoy was Baron Wilhelm von Humboldt, a philosopher and linguist. The first non-Christian state to establish relations was Japan, in 1942.

Of the countries with links today, only 78 keep missions in Rome—and they form one of the world's odder diplo-

(Please Turn To Page 9)



## FOR SALE

### Trek Alpha, 7300 Custom Multi-Track Cross Trainer



Top of the line parts.  
Asking Bz\$1,200 O.B.O.  
contact Independent  
Reformer Weekly

225-3520  
600-1627  
664-1627



Reservations: 501-226-2012  
U.S. Toll Free: 800-422-3435  
Fax: 501-226-2338  
Email: [reservations@tropicair.com](mailto:reservations@tropicair.com)  
[www.tropicair.com](http://www.tropicair.com)



# Papal diplomacy - God's ambassadors

➡ (Continued From Page 8)

matic corps. The embassy with the biggest staff, along with that of Germany, is the Dominican Republic's. Iran has a large mission, with as many diplomats as America. ("Who knows what other duties they have?" sighs a senior Vatican official.)

## Courtney gave everything to his mission in Burundi

The diplomats' main point of contact with the papal administration is the Secretariat of State, housed in the pope's residence, the Apostolic Palace. It has two departments: the Section for General Affairs deals with national churches, while the smaller Section for Relations with States does conventional diplomacy. Its current head, in effect the Vatican's foreign minister, is Dominique Mamberti, a French expert on Islam. Born in Morocco, Archbishop Mamberti has represented the Holy See in Algeria, Chile, Lebanon, Sudan and at the UN.

Papal diplomats, all priests nowadays, are trained at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy in Rome. The academy has had a colourful history, once losing its assets to a rogue administrator. Its graduates do two jobs: representing the Holy See to the local government and keeping a vigilant eye on national churches. Vatican envoys usually stay longer *en poste* than secular ones (one nuncio was in Dublin for 26 years). Some cover vast cultural distances: the nuncio in Algeria was born in Taiwan.

Conventional diplomacy is a small part of what they do. "In most places, 95% of our work relates to the life of the church," says a former nuncio. "The overwhelming bulk of the correspondence has to do with the appointment

of bishops."

Another big difference between papal and ordinary diplomats is that the former have little protection—and never pull out of dangerous situations. "The pope leaves his representatives to suffer with the people of the country to which they are accredited," says a Vatican official.

Compared with many foreign services, the Holy See's is tiny, less than 300-strong. There are rarely more than two people in each mission. According to the Vatican's official directory, the "Section for Relations with States" has only 18 diplomats and 29 other staff in Rome. Until recently, one desk officer watched Britain, South Asia and bits of Latin America. Yet visitors to the Vatican "foreign ministry" are amazed by the knowledge they find. "We are priests," says one veteran. "We have no family. We work 24 hours a day if necessary. It's the key to understanding why we are so few, and so efficient."

Oded Ben-Hur, Israel's envoy to the Holy See, adds that its diplomatic service is "just like any foreign service, with different people having different abilities. But they have an advantage: they are highly cultured. They know languages. They know history. They are very well-informed." A former papal envoy to a war-torn nation tells with pride how the American embassy would send a diplomat each morning to ask him about the war zones, knowing the pope's man would have been fully briefed by local nuns.

Like their secular counterparts, these brainy clerics have in recent years had to share the diplomatic action with other institutions, both official and unofficial. The Pontifical Council for Justice and

Peace, a sort of overseas-aid ministry, speaks for the Vatican in some forums, while an independent Rome-based body, the Sant'Egidio Community, has achieved some of the more spectacular successes of Catholic diplomacy. Sir Ivor Roberts, a former British diplomat who worked with Sant'Egidio over schools in Kosovo, calls it an "unorthodox, extra *corps d'elite*" that can plug gaps "in areas where conventional diplomacy hasn't worked." Mario Giro, a Sant'Egidio official, says it is now doing mediation work in "Darfur, Ivory Coast, north Uganda and two other places outside Africa I cannot name".

In Burundi last year the Catholic Peacebuilding Network—which calls itself "a network of practitioners, academics, clergy and laity"—held a meeting on the Great Lakes region that involved the nuncio, local bishops, Sant'Egidio and other Catholic agencies: an array of expertise on the related conflicts of Burundi, Rwanda and Congo. Last month the network held a similar pan-Catholic forum in Colombia.

Even as they share tasks with sister agencies, envoys from the Vatican must live with the fact that their boss—like any political master—reserves the right to upset the whole apple-cart with "un-diplomatic" outbursts. John Paul II's blunt talk about communism swept away years of cautious accommodation. His successor has upset Muslims (by seeming to link their faith with violence), South Americans (dismayed by his views on the record of missionaries), Jews (because of the revival of a liturgy whose original form called for their conversion, though the number two in the hierarchy has said that bit of the rite might

be changed), and most recently, Protestants, who ask why the Vatican chose last week to repeat its view that their churches don't deserve the name.

These embarrassments highlight one of the drawbacks of the Holy See's ambiguous situation: it enjoys many of the privileges of a state while also speaking for a faith. Vatican officials say this paradox is both defensible and beneficial: unlike diplomats who act for a state, and whose first duty is to promote and protect its interests, papal envoys strive for the good of humanity. A former Vatican "foreign minister", Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, said recently the Holy See "tries not only to promote and defend, if necessary, the freedom and rights of the Catholic communities around the world, but also to promote certain principles without which there is no civilisation." But it also has a specific political agenda. It wants international status for Jerusalem. It recognises Taiwan as China. Listing the keystones of foreign policy, Cardinal Tauran stressed the "right to life at all stages of biological development".

Statements like that make the Vatican respected in some quarters, mistrusted in others. Some activities, such as taking lethal risks for peace in Burundi, are almost universally admired. But in an age when the power of independent agencies (including Catholic ones) is growing by the day, mightn't the Vatican enhance its authority by clarifying its own status? Instead of claiming to practise a form of inter-governmental diplomacy, it could renounce its special diplomatic status and call itself what it is—the biggest non-governmental organization in the world.

# Kyrgyz asked to chip in to repay state foreign debt

Reuters—Kyrgyzstan's government has offered a novel idea to repay the impoverished nation's giant foreign debt — simply to club together and pay it off.

The Central Asian state's government rejected in February the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which would have slashed its \$2 billion (1 billion pound) foreign debt in half in return for reforms.

President Kurmanbek Bakiyev said

at the time that by signing to the foreign-prescribed initiative, the Kyrgyz risked losing face and would better tighten their belts to repay all debts.

Finance Minister Akylbek Dzhaparov said last week the government would issue interest-free securities to the population and would use the proceeds to pay off the massive debt comprising 80 percent of Kyrgyz gross domestic product.

"I hope government members will show an example and be the first to

buy the securities," he told a cabinet meeting.

The cheapest security will have a nominal value of \$2,600, and the government set a limit of \$26,500 per person for a one-off "assistance" to the state.

Monthly salaries average less than \$100 in the mountainous nation of 5 million people.

The government had earlier opened a special "people's" account at the central bank, inviting compatriots to make contributions

— including in personal jewellery — to help repay the foreign debt.





# Belize Limericks

Authored by members of the Belize-Culture internet list

In our little jewel of Belize  
There is no shortage of sleaze  
As politicians know  
Their hands out for the snow  
And suitcases fly with great ease  
It comes to no one's surprise  
What a grim future therein lies  
For our young generations  
Who shan't know the libations  
There will only be tears in our eyes  
The future we'll see  
And ponder what it shall be  
both parties are riddled with graft  
and either option will give you the shaft  
Be it UDP or PUP  
Forgive us for being leery  
As we grow old and weary  
For we have seen all the tricks of the past  
Is there a blue for the vote that we shall cast?  
The outcome is sure looking scary  
The oldest do remember  
Our celebrations in September  
And revel in the times of yore  
But now the super bond will sure make us poor  
As our wallets we are forced to surrender  
Now so many threaten to sue  
Oh my, what shall we do?  
We wring our hands slowly  
And will all end up lonely  
As we will surely be under curfew  
It wasn't a dump, but a back-handed lump,  
Of masculine praise, you must know.  
When guys offer praise,  
They do so in ways  
That don't have a feminine glow.  
Beneath the surface so tough  
Is a very thick layer of fluff.  
So soft and so kind,  
The ladies go blind.  
"Better them, than us," they huff.  
Belize is a place like no other  
You can work all your life like a mother'  
But if you're not well connected  
To those who're elected

You'll remain broke like a monk or a brother

Belize has a fantastic Prime Minister  
Who signs deals some might think are quite sinister  
Yet there are those who'll defend  
Honorable Said 'till the end  
Against the Reds who just can't wait to administer

Free text books for the children sounds great  
But I wonder if they're giving it to you straight  
Who will pay for the bill  
In excess of \$6 mil  
Might it have something to do with your tax rate?  
Who will get the contract to print those free books?  
Will it be just a bunch of slick crooks  
Or will they go out to bid  
Should we ask old Said  
If the contract will be made public for a quick look

I'm guessing the key to real progress  
Is disguised in a girl with a short dress  
With a wiggle and sway  
She will show us the way  
To make men bob their heads and cry "Yes!"

That men are such fools is a pity  
It's the scourge of our country and city  
While these guys get there juks  
Neocons sneak out nukes

And what happens next won't be pretty  
There once was a guy from Belize  
Who said hey I can do as I please  
Opened up a cafe  
But found to his dismay  
That his profits were all eaten by fees

# The Belize Zoo hosts Galen University & Cockscomb Basin Sanctuary wardens

Learning about the wildlife of Belize was brought to an exciting level recently for visiting vet students attending Galen University.  
A unique opportunity to get up close to animals and accomplish basic vet procedures, was appreciated by all.  
The students also learned about the Belize Harpy Eagle Restoration Program, and had fun joining in for an afternoon feed with Panama, the harpy eagle living at the zoo.  
Also receiving valuable education about Belizean wildlife were the Cock-

scomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary wardens. Sponsored by the Wildlife Conservation Society, WCS, and led by Dr. Bart Harmsen, all of the wardens were able to see and get to know well, the species of animals who call Belize their home.  
The wardens were given special attention to the jaguars, and were introduced to the Belize Zoo Problem Jaguar Rehabilitation Program.  
A highlight for all was a personal meeting with Junior, the jaguar cub who was born at the zoo earlier this year.  
The Belize Zoo is just TOO WILD FOR WORDS

Full Service Airline  
With over 180 daily  
scheduled flights  
throughout Belize  
and Flores in  
Guatemala

Charters also available



Reservations: 523-3410  
reservation@tropicair.com  
www.tropicair.com

**For Sale**  
**Four bedroom house**  
**plus 2 room guest**  
**house / office on the**  
**Macal River**

Call or email: [traceybd@yahoo.com](mailto:traceybd@yahoo.com)  
225-3520  
600-1627  
664-1627  
671-1964  
670.4045



T

een

Page



# Diving

By: **Ronnier Leonardo**



Ronnier Leonardo prepares to enter the water in full scuba gear - head first!

I have always loved the sea, and I learnt to swim while out with my Dad and family on different outings. So this summer I was looking forward to spending a couple weeks out in San Pedro and if possible learn to dive, scuba dive that is. My parents made all efforts to get me one of the best instructors and I was placed with Gill Nunez at Ramon's Village to start what I thought was gonna be a great adventure.

I was a bit scared when I heard about all the things that can happen to you very easily if you don't follow the rules when you dive. I was not really thinking about having fun at this point, actually I was a bit worried. After I had a preliminary

dive in the pool I became a bit more confident in diving. I was taught and learned the basic skills on how to avoid an injury while diving.

So on my second day I was taken to a dive site that was located on the other side of the barrier reef in San Pedro. I was a bit scared for you could not even see the bottom of the sea. The waves were so big it felt as if the boat would turn over!

But I got into my gear and I made my way into the water. You could hardly see, however I felt less scared as I made my way down and after a while I finally touched the bottom of the sea. Then I was not scared at all, I was just amazed by the colorful cor-



Our intrepid Teen Page writer beneath the azure waves of the Caribbean!

als and fish in the sea I was so amazed that I had not realized how deep I was. I then checked my gauge and I found out I was over 60 ft deep! I took over 40 minutes diving in the sea it was just amazing. On the third day I learnt some more skills for becoming a better diver. I was again taken to another dive site to see if I had actually learned what they had taught me. After some daily quizzes I had to sit a final exam.

I am now certified as a Junior Open Water Diver. I am very excited for I know I have done something good in my life. I am happy because this was an experience I can look forward to enjoying in the future.

Hopefully soon Dad and I can go diving together now!

If you would like to share your experiences or thoughts with other teens, email your article to teen page editor at [jch\\_artist@hotmail.com](mailto:jch_artist@hotmail.com)

## Your weekly HOROSCOPE

**ARIES** (Mar. 21- April 20)

Don't give them the use of your credit card. Your ability to ferret out secret information will lead you to an inside scoop on an amazing financial deal. Changes regarding your career direction will payoff handsomely. Children will keep you busy. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

**TAURUS** (Apr. 21- May 21)

Try to calm down emotionally about personal financial matters. Romantic relationships should stabilize. You will find the perfect outfit if you shop this week. New romantic partners will evolve through group endeavors; however, the association may not be likely to last. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

**GEMINI** (May 22-June 21)

You will communicate with ease this week. Problems with your partner are apparent. Your personal secrets may be revealed if you let coworkers in on your

family dilemmas. Take a close look at any contracts you've signed in order to be sure exactly where you stand. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 22)

Take time to make physical improvements that will enhance your appearance. You'll be pleased with the results if you take the time to decorate your home. Don't overspend on friends or children. Gambling will be a waste of time and money. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug 22)

Try not to judge too quickly. Abrupt changes in your home may send you for a loop. In return, the satisfaction you get is enough for you. Quarrels will erupt if you get into philosophical debates with friends. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23 -Sept. 23)

Take that long overdue vacation if you can. New romantic relationships will

develop through group activity related to sports events. You are best not to confront situations that deal with in-laws or relatives. Spend time getting into physical activities with your lover. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 24 -Oct. 23)

Be careful when dealing with loved ones. Opposition is present and you should be prepared to counteract it as best you can. If you can't get ahead in the company you're with, perhaps it's time to move on. You will probably have to defend your mate. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)

It might be time to pick up the slack and do your share. Direct your energy wisely this week. Anger will prevail if you expect help from others. Think twice before you speak. You will get bored quickly, so make sure that you have scheduled enough activity to hold your interest. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 23 -Dec. 21)

You will be overly sensitive this week. Try to have patience and refrain from being judgmental. Go with the flow and don't be concerned about your own job.

Opportunities will develop through those you encounter while attending organizational events. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec 22.- Jan. 20)

Discrimination will be in order. Control your temper when dealing with your emotional partner. New relationships could evolve through group activities. Try to find another time to present work or ideas this week. Financial difficulties may be worrying you. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 21 -Feb. 19)

Your devotion will be persuasive. Keep on your toes when dealing with others. Luck is with you. Take things slowly, especially for the sake of those you love. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

**PISCES** (Feb. 20-Mar. 20)

Think about your budget before booking a trip. Your mind may not be on the job. You will be relentless when it comes to getting yourself back into shape. Consider a trial separation if you and your mate just can't come to terms. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



# Guatemalan Commission to investigate Organized Crime

By JUAN CARLOS LLORCA, Associated Press Writer

Guatemala’s Congress has voted to create a commission of foreign experts to investigate organized crime and police corruption.

The commission, first proposed by the United States, is an attempt by the Central American nation to counteract rampant drug smuggling often aided by officials.

The so-called International Commis-

sion Against Impunity in Guatemala will be made up of a team of international crime experts who will investigate organized crime and its links with Guatemala’s police and government. It will then issue recommendations to authorities.

The United States, Sweden, Norway and Spain have offered to help finance the commission, which is expected to start work in November.

“The commission’s goal of helping

Guatemalan authorities to investigate criminal groups and take them to trial ... will help to strengthen the rule of law,” the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala said in a statement Wednesday.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also applauded the commission as “a clear commitment by Guatemala to fight organized crime.”

Guatemala and the U.N. agreed on the international commission in December, but its establishment took on a

sense of urgency in February when six police officers were accused of killing three Central American Parliament members.

Guatemala is a main corridor for Colombian cocaine heading to the United States. Compounding the problem is a culture of violence, fueled in part by youth gangs and a brutal civil war that ended 10 years ago and claimed more than 200,000 lives.

## What about our Oil Resources? A statement from the NRP

When you are in Spanish Lookout on a hill around the Esso gas station at night and you look towards the east you see in approximately 2 miles east the air light up of a flame where Belize Natural Energy is wasting natural gas from the 5 producing oil wells all joined by a pipe underground. At times you can see the flame arising above the bushes from 2 miles away and the toxic smoke covering the whole area and the breeze blowing it towards residential areas. This has been going on since they open the first well and the complaints made and sickness caused by this waste have been completely ignored by BNE and other authorities.

The BNE is sending in various newspapers a colourful release on how much they have benefited Spanish Lookout, by sales of goods and fees, and how the have **one** person working from Spanish Lookout Also how they have

pleased Spanish Lookout by removing the gas burning flame from near the houses which was sickening them over one year, to 2 miles down the road to where it blows over Spanish Lookout in a wider area than before and how they are promising once more that they will get the royalty fee **some day**.

Then there are questions about the actual amount of oil being produced: the Spanish Lookout committee reports BNE informed them they are extracting 3200 barrels per day. But the record we have from the truckers indicates they are hauling 24 tankers per day which equals to 4800 barrels of oil per day. What is BNE trying to hide? Do they think they can hide a big semi-truck? And what is exactly the reason they bring out a colourful release of how great they are, while they are intoxicating our air and wasting our irreplaceable natural resources? They seem to

sell their public image relations real cheap.

Information from other countries has also arrived. We happened to get a visit from an oil specialist from Houston Texas. He said that even in Nigeria, a country with little social and health control, they do not allow the burning of toxic gas at the oil wells, but they re-inject it back, not to damage the gas cap in the earth. He says the gas cap over the oil must stay there until the well is depleted so we can expect approximately 60% of the deposit, in the case of letting the gas out maybe only 40% can be extracted. It is also important how fast the oil is extracted not to damage the core. He also stated that the gases should be pumped back into the gas cap in the earth in any case to get 20% more oil out.

One must ask the question: Are we so broke that we have to rush and get the 40% of our oil resource and run and not able to keep a record closer than 30% from 2300, to 4800 barrels and no matter who gets sick, who loses and what is wasted, and to dis-

regard peoples health, rights, environment and international rules? Some one sooner or later will have to answer these questions. Before to much negative vibes are created.

## In the dark? Use your cell phone

*Reuters*—the light from the cell phone screens allowed surgeons to complete an emergency appendix operation during a blackout in a city in central Argentina.

Leonardo Molina, 29, was on the operating table on July 21, when the power went out in the Policlínico Juan D. Peron, the main hospital in Villa Mercedes, a small city in San Luis province.

“The generator, which should have been working correctly, didn’t work,” a hospital spokesman, whose name was not given, told TN television news station.

“The surgeons and anesthetists were in the dark... A family member got some cell phones together from people in the hallway and took them in to provide light,” he said.



Ricardo Molina, 39, Leonardo’s brother, told La Nacion newspaper that the lights were out for an hour and his brother’s anesthesia was wearing off.

Hospital Director Dario Maurer told La Nacion the surgery was without light a maximum of 20 minutes.

Now available



Get your Free Gift of an Independent Reformer Weekly t-shirt when you buy a year’s subscription to the paper.

Visit

The Belize Zoo

The Best Little Zoo In The World



# Guest Gallery



*Dancers bedecked as dragons perform during Taiwan's 'Double Ten' National Day celebrations in Taipei on October 10th.*

If you have any photos you would like to share with Independent readers in our Guest Gallery, send your digital jpg or tiff images to [karlavernon\\_belize@yahoo.com](mailto:karlavernon_belize@yahoo.com).



*The tomb of Chiang Kai-Shek in Taipei is ablaze with light during the Taiwan's National Day celebrations. The presidential palace is across the square in the background.*



*Happy birthday to Alfred Vernon who celebrated his birthday August 1st.*

## Conservation Land For Sale



**70 acres in Burrell Boom for US\$50K**  
[independent.newspaper.bz@gmail.com](mailto:independent.newspaper.bz@gmail.com)



# Letters to the Editor

➡ (Continued From Page 2)

## What Is The Alternative?

To the Editor,

That is the big question on some people's mind today. The Musa Administration is crooked and corrupted to the core, what is the alternative?

The answer to that question brings the focus on the UDP and third parties.

Those who seek to promote a third party will tell you that they are the best alternative. They will say that UDP and PUP are the status quo. They will say only the third party will bring reform. But we really do not know what the third party will do, do we? In many cases the leadership of the third parties is unknown. History has also thought the Belizean people that anything can look on paper. Reality tends to be quite different.

Take for example, the elected Senate debate. Has anyone factored in what it would cost to run additional elections? If the UDP can barely keep up with municipal and general elections will the elected Senate favor the PUP that has the millions to pay for anything that come their way? The third parties may be seeking more elections but they have not been able to finance a single successful election. What would happen if they actually won an election?

None of the third parties are ready for general elections for 2008; it seems that the UDP is the only alternative.

Is the UDP a good alternative? Most people who say the UDP are not a good alternative quickly agree that under a UDP leadership the cor-

ruption would be reigned in and they would probably offer a better solution to the nation's debt crisis. If the UDP can do that, that alone would qualify them as a good alternative for Election 2008.

The strength of the UDP has always been good governance; but their weakness has always been the lack of good politics. The UDP propaganda is weak, and they lack the ability to maintain momentum. The UDP policies have been good for Belize, even when it has hurt us individually. Take the VAT, the Musa Group crucified the VAT, but Prime Minister Musa has implement a new VAT that raked in \$30 million more than expected. Are Belizeans paying \$30 million more that under the old VAT? Which VAT is now the Killa?

Then there is retrenchment. The PUP Administration was the first to retrenched pubic officer back in the early 1980's when the Price Administration had to place Belize under an IMF standby arrangement. Basically, the IMF was running Belize finances in order to get their assistance after the PUP Administration had run the country into the ground. It was the UDP who restored the economy and placed Belize on the path to sustainable growth and development.

Just before the elections of 1998, when the PUP Leaders realized their inability to keep Belize afloat, they called an early election. The PUP Administration had promised salary increases to public officers, but knew they have wasted the resources to pay for it. Fortunately, the UDP won the

election, but it was the UDP left holding the bag to pay for something which the PUP has no intentions to pay. The UDP made a decision to retrench rather than to run budget deficits, hence avoiding the need to increase the national debt. Why can I say the PUP Leaders had no intention to pay salary increases in 1998? The Musa Administration did the very same thing in 2003. Before the election, the Musa Administration promised all kinds of things, including raises for public officers. What happened after the election? The Musa Administration told the Union "no money deh". Musa had effectively failed to pay the promised raise of pay. That was precisely what the PUP Administration had done in 1998; only that it was the UDP that had won after PUP's false promise. It took the Unions about two weeks of strike actions and protests to bring the Musa Administration to its knees. The Musa Administration finally borrowed the money to pay the promised raise. Borrowing to pay salaries had been one of the failed policies of PUP Administrations

that the IMF has identified as leading to the Belize's economic downfall. But, Musa is not concerned about Belize economic downfall, Musa only want to be Prime Minister.

Since 1984, the UDP has always been considered the better managers of the affairs of Belize. The Musa Administration has raided and raped the resources of this country, leaving very little to work with. It is time for seasoned leadership; it would seem it is time for the best managers we can find. It is time for the next best alternative, the UDP.

Signed: By Patrick Tillett



## INdependent Classifieds

Phone: 501-225-9041  
**Wrobelize Consulting**  
 General Business & Real Estate  
 Consulting - Escrow Services -  
 Property Searches and more.  
 Visit our website at [www.wrobelize.com](http://www.wrobelize.com) for more  
 information or email us at [wrobelize@gmail.com](mailto:wrobelize@gmail.com)

**Needed:** Mountain Bike Tour Operator wanted in Cayo with equipment.

Tel: 663-5580 Cayo Adventure Tours Ph# 824-324

**Need help** with cleaning, ironing, painting or other household chores at your Ladyville home? Then call me at 624-3652. Reasonable rates, mature female.

**For sale:** Home overlooking Sittee River w/1/3 acre. Info/photos at: <http://web.mac.com/nadjablz> 609-5632 3-5pm daily. (Photo below)

**"Free international real estate and investment blog and podcast.** Go to <http://investtheworld.blogspot.com> as we travel the world for fun, investment and profit."**For Rent:** A (2)

bedroom flat located in King's Park, Belize City \$800/month

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

**Free Ads!** The INdependent Reformer is you your first classified ad with us free of charge! After that only \$10 per advert per issue. Ads must be: 1) 20 words or less 2) photo must be jpeg or tiff formats only. **Must be emailed, no disk pickup or drop off**

3) business card -first run is free 2007, \$20 a run thereafter

4) All classified ads must be emailed to [independent.newspaper.bz@gmail.com](mailto:independent.newspaper.bz@gmail.com) with cc to [kheusner@yahoo.com](mailto:kheusner@yahoo.com) and checks to PO Box 2666, Belize City. Please note:

We must receive your ad by Friday at mid-day for inclusion in following Tuesday issue.

## For Sale



**Two Yamaha propellers:**

**1) for 115 Enduro (Aluminum)**

**2) for 200- Stainless Steel- 19 pitch**

**Asking Bz\$600 O.B.O.**

**Contact Independent Weekly**





# Voting Rights, or Right to Vote

➡ (Continued From Page 4)

cannot claim to be governed either ....but at least they are still considered American citizens wherever they reside. Nor are they considered a “risk” to the democratic process! Quite the contrary.

I must admit my jaw dropped when I read these comments from our Political Reform Commissioners. I had to wonder who among them influenced this recommendation and if the rest of them just went along with it, taking this person or person’s arguments against it at face value.

The key phrase of course is “the extreme situation of when a government has minority support at home.” Clearly some political interests were worried that should their government find itself hanging on by its fingernails (such as the current Musa administration) they would lose for sure if Belizeans abroad were allowed to vote.

But what is this fear based on? Might that tenuous government actually be strengthened by the votes from the absentee ballots? From voters not on the ground, not taking the lick under their day to day rule, but a little more dispassionate or even nostalgic about a party as it was when they left Belize?

How could we possibly predict how the election would go if Belizeans abroad were allowed to come home and vote or send proxy ballots? It could go either way.

To argue that these people can already vote after two months residence in Belize is absurd. How many Belizeans living and working or studying abroad can abandon their jobs and schooling to come reside in Belize two months before an election, especially when we have a floating date for general elections? This requirement effectively eliminates all but retirees from qualifying and the shapers of the law knew it.

How astonishing that born Belizeans who have emigrated to other countries but send back millions of dollars in cash and goods each year, are frustrated from voting in our elections while thousands of newly arrived foreign nationals who send money out of Belize are fast tracked through the immigration and voter registration process in an attempt to swell the voting lists precisely **because** “elections in Belize are sometimes determined by one vote.”

Why is there no concern over the influence of large numbers of foreigners living in Belize as there is over the “Influence of Belizeans not living in Belize” on our elections? Unlike many immigrants who speak neither English nor kriol and do not watch or read local news or keep abreast of current events, Belizeans abroad tend to pay keen attention to happenings back home, reading and watching news

online or through paid subscription services.

They also know the names, reputations and track records of people running for office—or ask around to find out, unlike so many of the people being naturalized right now, who only know the political candidates through the agents who hustle to get their papers approved, pay them cash for votes, and scare them into thinking if they do not vote for the man who gave

them their papers his opponent will have them deported.

A Belizean living abroad cannot be manipulated like this and is far more likely to be deeply concerned about political, economic and social issues in Belize. No matter how long they have lived away.

The Political Reform Commission report does highlight significant reforms that should be adopted to ensure Belize is governed in a more open,

transparent and fair manner. But on recommendation 82, sections 13:24 and 13:24, I think they let Belizeans down, all of us, not just those living away. And both mass parties signed off on that report!!!

We can only wonder who might have won or lost before, or who might win or lose this time if even a fraction of the over 200,000 Belizeans abroad could send in their ballots in time for elections.

## *NOTICE TO ELECTORS* *Change of Electoral Division*

Two months are set aside each year by Law for transfer of electors from one electoral division to another.

**These two (2) months are July and August.**

Application for a change of electoral division from one electoral division to another, will be processed during normal working hours as of

**July 1, 2007 to August 31, 2007.**

Requirements to change from one electoral division to another are:

- **Be a registered voter**
- **Reside at the new address for not less than two months**

Visit an Elections and Boundaries District Office in the Electoral Division where you reside, for more information.

**ELECTIONS AND BOUNDARIES DEPARTMENT**

**TEL: 222-4992/4042**

**[www.belize-elections.org](http://www.belize-elections.org)**

