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Dodging DEAN

Belizeans at home and abroad waited anxiously through Monday night into Tuesday morning as Hurricane Dean approached the southern Yucatan of Mexico. From Toledo to Corozal, the question was the same: how badly would this category five affect Belize?

It was not until around midnight that we found out. High speed winds and rain began lashing San Pedro, Caye Caulker, Corozal and Orange Walk. At the cayes, high waves washed over piers and onto village streets. In Corozal zinc -- even entire roofs-- were torn off off houses, trees and utility poles toppled. The wind howled and people huddled together and prayed. Electrical power losses added to the darkness and confusion.

In the morning, when the rain eased off and daylight made it possible to evaluate the damage, the reports came flooding into LOVE FM and NEMO: downtown Corozal filled with downed poles and trees, windows on seafront hotels and homes smashed, plywood ripped off windows in

(Please Turn To Page 3)



Hurricane Dean slams into the coast of the Yucatan peninsula, dumping several inches of rain on Belize.

Fighting Dirty

By: Mario Lara

With the general elections around the corner and political campaigns in full swing there will be much mudslinging and dodging by candidates. Politicians assume, justifiably so, that this is a show voting citizens expect.

Politics is not for the thin-skinned. So, how do we get good moral men and women to volunteer to step into this fray and offer themselves as potential candidates? The answer is that we generally don't get the most moral of men and women to step forward. This is why it is important that we have a system of checks and balances to keep those less than purely honest individuals who do step forward from running amuck.

But, how do we vote-in a group of people who will be honest and moral enough to do what they say they will do and enact changes to institute a system of checks and balances that

will be worth at least the paper that the legislative reforms will be written on? Well, you can see why many people don't hold their breaths in hope for significant improvement and why the Prime Minister can be so confident that all this will "blow over like wan lee breeze." The Prime Minister knows who his opponents are and he knows that if he invests enough effort in the mudslinging and confusion that political campaigns are all about then there's still is a good chance.

Allegations of corruption in politics can be expected to blow over like a breeze and incompetence can be reduced to minor "hiccups" along the way once you know that your competition -- your main opponent - is of not much higher caliber than you are. Then it all just becomes a game to win over the people's affection and loyalties by putting on a great show (at

least for the moment.)

Third party candidates have a much more daunting challenge at playing that game because they're not in a position to mobilize public resources to win over the people's affection by paving their streets, or putting in long overdue streetlights, or anything like that. The party in government has a clear advantage.

Third party candidates also don't have a record they can point to and remind people in creative and sometimes even fictitious ways of how good and how different things were under their watch, unlike the current opposition.

Third party candidates who have not had a chance to govern previously, typically don't have the business support and financial resources to stage a political campaign that can match the mudslinging, dodging, and confusion that is put on display by the main-

stream political parties. So, third party candidates are clearly at a severe disadvantage. The main thing that third parties DO have going for them is the hope that they will be different.

But, if they engage or can be drawn into the mudslinging, dodging, and confusion that the mainstream parties do, their chances can be easily diminished; because we are already skeptical in the first place about their true motivation and capabilities. So, third party candidates have to be much more prepared and organized and state their case in a straightforward and well thought out manner. I don't know if our third parties have achieved that level, yet. I do think, though, that even if they are ultimately unsuccessful in their bid, their participation will have had a positive impact on the political campaign process because it adds another, hopefully more serious element, to the jockeying for people's votes.

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Letters to the Editor

Travel Writer Finds All is Well with Tourism Sector

Dear Editor,

Based on emails I've received and from reports on www.BelizeEmergency.net, nearly all hotels in Belize, even those in Corozal District, escaped Dean without serious damage.

Nearly all hotels, except those that are closed for routine seasonal maintenance, are open. A few hotels in Corozal Town say they will reopen later this week. Hotel Maya in Corozal Town and a couple of small Corozal guesthouses report they suffered some structural damage and haven't decided when they'll reopen.

Reporting hotels in Orange Walk District say they suffered no significant damage and are open (unless already closed for seasonal maintenance).

Most hotels on Ambergris Caye re-

port that they suffered no structural damage. A few had minor damage and downed trees and some beach erosion. Most will reopen on Thursday, after grounds cleanup. Victoria House, Costa Maya Resort and a few others are closed for a short time for cleanup.

Hotels on Caye Caulker uniformly report no damage, and most have stayed open, though a few will reopen later this week or early next, after cleanup.

Properties in Belize, Cayo, Stann Creek and Toledo districts uniformly report no damage and are open for business, except for those already closed for routine seasonal maintenance.

Bottom line is that the tourism industry in Belize suffered very little damage and that except for some short-term cancellations during the next few weeks — Belize's slowest tourism period anyway — the tourism industry should not have any significant impact from Hurricane Dean.

Signed, Lan Sluder



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Dodging DEAN

☛ (Continued From Page 1)

villages like San Joaquin. The sea in the Corozal Bay had receded before the storm hit, as it generally does, but washed back in again as residents began to move about and the all clear was called.

It was a similar sight across the Mexican border where international media reported the eye of the storm came ashore near the cruise port of Mahajual, just outside the state capital of Chetumal, in area described by Associated Press as sparsely populated. Quintana Roo authorities reported there had been a mandatory evacuation of villagers living in thatched huts, but that many hid from the soldiers or chased them away with machetes, refusing to leave their homes. Fortunately no loss of life has been reported at press time on either side of the border.

Further north in Cancun, some 50,000 tourists and thousands more local residents had been successfully evacuated, the memory of other devastating hurricanes fresh in their minds.

In Belize, residents of the cayes had been moving out since Friday but some those who waited until Monday afternoon found themselves stuck where they were as airplanes and water taxis ceased their runs.

International aircraft canceled flights for Tuesday in anticipation but hundreds of tourists left on Sunday and Monday.

There was a bit of a power struggle between the Mayor of Belize City, Zenaida Moya and Central Government’s National Emergency Management Organization, NEMO. The mayor stated early on Monday she was not recommending opening the 10 shelters (of 24) approved for occupancy since they were not able to withstand anything stronger than a category 2 and Dean was already at category 4. She told Belizean listeners to LOVEFM that she would only order shelters opened if Dean was downgraded. She also complained her office could not for some



Total blowout in Corozal at the famous “crystal palace” (residence of former Social Security Board head Narda Garcia) as flying debris shattered all the plate glass windows during the hurricane, leaving only its skeletal frame.



Belize Defense Force recruits of Recruit intake No.49 hauling away trees and other debris after Hurricane Dean.

reason reach NEMO officials and there had been no official order to mandatorily evacuate the city and she needed buses to do so if it was indeed in effect. NEMO authorities bristled at her wording and said there was no mandatory evacuation...but people were being

urged to leave of their own volition. (Translation: no money no dey?)

But the Mayor was able to open shelter doors later in the day the advisories coming from the Met Office said

Belize City would only be experiencing tropical storm force winds and so the shelters opened. At least some of them. For soon enough there was another is- (Please Turn To Page 13) ☛



Dean’s 165mph winds mangled the zinc roof of a lean-to shed in front of this colorful stall in the Corozal market.



Lots of work ahead to restore this home to its former state, as it lost a good portion of its roof and sustained damage to its front verandah.

The Chosen Country: New Belize



By: Trevor Vernon

Hurricane or no hurricane, Belize is the best place to invest your money these days. There's no hit or miss proposition when investing here. You invest in the right industries that the central planners have designated, and you will be living the good life in the best country, anywhere.

The new "big five" industries that the Musa Administration has re-designated at the end of the eleventh hour of his term are: agribusiness, tourism, aquaculture, information communication technology, environmental goods & services. These are truly the best industries to invest in now, per government orders.

Yet we see world-class Belizean investors investing in none of the government designated areas. Take mas-

ter investor Luke Espat. Does he invest in information communication technology? No! He went after the upscale condo market in Belize City. Did he invest in environmental goods & services? No! He went into developing a tourist resort in Placencia. Did he venture into aquaculture? No! He invested heavily in the privatization of the ports: air, sea, and other points of entry. Mr. Espat is the Warren Buffet of Belize's Wall Street.

Money is real cheap and easily accessible in Belize. Walk into any local or offshore, or nearshore bank with a most basic feasibility study, cash flow projections, heavy collateral (or sovereign guarantee) and you get instant approval. Well, cheap is relative but easily accessible isn't. So, you don't even have to bring venture capital monies just a vivid imagination and we'll provide access to the parallel foreign exchange markets...at pennies on the dollar. Hell, you can do pretty well for yourself just on the exchange.

We have great foreign controlled utility companies too so the power is always on, the phones impeccable, the ISP superb, the water as pure as the

driven snow, and the instant nocturnal activity exciting. The road conditions are second to none and there is even a helicopter company to fly you around to selected spots at about 1000 dollars an hour. What there that's missing you ask? Absolutely nothing. We've got everything your little heart desire, for a small price anything can be arranged with the greatest of ease.

You may have heard bad things about Belize by the malcontents who don't share the vision of the great leaders and who through their own treacherous illusions of grandeur speak ill of the great Musa/Fonseca revolution. Whatever you may have heard are all lies I tell you. Yes we have had a few hiccups with power outages, overzealous security forces, organized gangs, contaminated rivers and aquifers, spots of dying reef, and wild nocturnal activity but none of this will affect you. Just ask Jeffery Prosser, Sir Ronald Saunders, and their top notch Belizean attorney Lionel Welch.

And how can anyone or anything be against this country and its government when God is with them? Just look

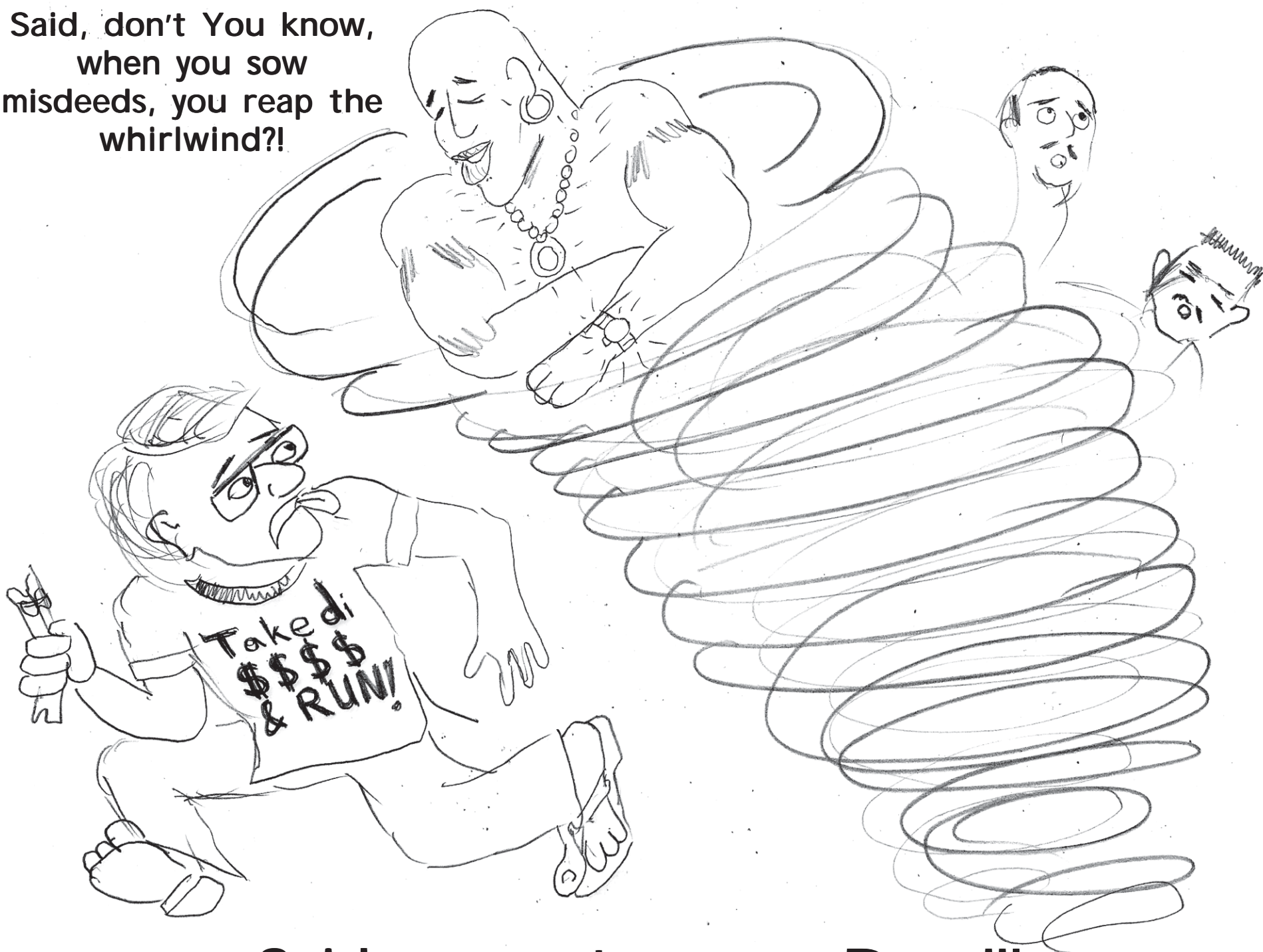
what happened when Dean was threatening: God intervened and dissipated it, shrunk it, and made it go away. Belize is more than just a good country. It's a chosen one with lots of great investment opportunities. Just ask Luke.

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Said, don't You know, when you sow misdeeds, you reap the whirlwind?!



Said cannot escape Dean!!!

Control of the Poles



By: Karla Heusner Vernon

I did a double take when I passed through Orange Walk the other day (pre-hurricane Dean). The sign strung across the highway, attached to two utility poles, was demanding that the Prime Minister call elections NOW! Actually, it called him a nasty name too. There were other signs, with uncomplimentary photos or caricatures of him perched like a puppet.

The diversity of the artwork makes it difficult to determine if they emanate from a single source, or were erected by a group or party branch. Some of the signs appear to be UDP sponsored, but you cannot be sure. Until someone claims credit, we can only speculate.

A Belize City divisional candidate for the UDP Michael Peyrefitte has claimed responsibility for the signs he has posted all along the utility poles of the northern highway and main streets of his division. They are red and attention getting and show he is ready for action. Actually they make you feel kinda festive. Like “Merry Christmas” or “Happy September Celebrations” signs. I like them.

The blue t-shirts on roadside workers are harder to enjoy. I just keep

thinking how awful it must be out in the sun all day and how lousy the pay must be. But then again, the PUP’s blue and white paint stripes at the base of telephone polls in the Corozal district villages are certainly decorative. Every

“But the jostling for control of the poles is child’s play compared to the pending war at the polls. It is just nervous sideways glancing before the start of the race...”

once in a while there is a red one sticking out like a sore pole, but by and large the blue and white seems dominant. At least paint can-wise. We cannot be sure how much it reflects the nearest home owner’s sentiments since most utility poles are outside their yards on the streetside. Maybe someone just sneaked up to the pole in the night and painted it. The next morning the residents came outside and either felt a surge of PUP pride or sucked their teeth.

The National Reform Party is also joining the color war, putting up billboards to try and convince Belizeans to go orange this time around, introduce their candidates—many of whom have abandoned the red and blue in search of something more pure and promising.

It is probably only a matter of time before the Vision Inspired by the People and We the People’s yellow begins to dot the landscape, bright and fresh, untainted by any tinge of scandal.

But the jostling for control of the poles is child’s play compared to the pending

war at the polls. It is just nervous sideways glancing before the start of the race. Compounding the tension is the frustration that no one knows when the gun will go off, except the Prime Minister. Hence the Orange Walk signage trying

to bully him into making an announcement.

But the Prime Minister is as inscrutable as a Buckingham Palace guard, keeping his secret. No doubt he enjoys everyone trying to read his mind: “Should we run? Or wait? Save our money or spend?” It must be nerve wracking for the various party leadership!

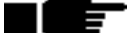
It certainly is nerve wracking for the business community and international investors who once more in “wait and see mode” just as they always are for the year or so before an election in Belize. Money stops flowing, people start hoarding, thinking about their options if this one win, or that one lose, making fake friends, hedging their bets, just in case. It’s all so unnatural, bizarre even.

Of course media managers love to prolong the inevitable, make more money from the ad campaign. You never hear them calling for early election. Oh no, the longer the term the bigger the bill!

The only real mystery to me is why we, as Belizeans, allow this cat and mouse game to continue. The Political Reform Commission considered a proposal to fix the date of the General Elections, just as the Municipal and Village elections are set. But they declined. “The majority of the Commission does not recommend that there be fixed dates for national elections in Belize in the context of the parliamentary executive model of government as practiced by Belize.” (See recommendation 84 of your bedside copy of the Political Reform Commission Report 2000. I believe it is there right next to your “Constitution of Belize.”)

It was not just a matter of consistency with the inherited model; the Commission maintains there are other mechanisms which offer alternatives to waiting for the Prime Minister to call an election, mechanisms which can be easily activated: “One of the basic principles of this model is that a government must resign if there is a vote of no confidence or if they otherwise lose the majority in the House of Representatives.”

Hmmm, not quite sure what “otherwise lose the majority” means since Reps are not allowed to cross the floor, but the part about vote of no confidence is pretty clear. However, what provision is there is when the ruling party representatives just grumble about losing confidence but no one actually makes a motion?

Seems we are back to square one, (Please Turn To Page 11) 

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 they 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.

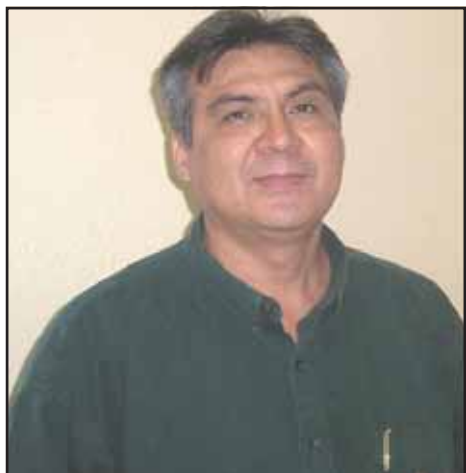
Information from other countries has also arrived. We happened to get a visit from an oil specialist from Houston Texas. He said that even in Nigeria, a country with little social and health control, they do not allow the burning of toxic gas at the oil wells, but they re-inject it back, not to damage 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 de-

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

“Face of the Nation”

“Our countenance is the mirror of the soul”



By: Gus Perera

It is such a great feeling to be writing again after a short but wonderful vacation. In order to make the holidays just that – holiday - I self-imposed a media blackout and insulated myself from all things political – newspapers, talk-shows (more like spin shows), news and political ads. The political “detox” was a liberating experience. Now I am even more conscious of just how uninspiring the politics of “winning elections” is. It is a brand of politics for enfeebled men – self-serving, seeking validation through positional power and control, and the amassing of wealth. It is a “two faced” kind of politics – “look-

ing good on the outside but doing badly on the inside.”

Speaking about “two faced,” during a recent visit to Chetumal, and while browsing the stores, I happened to notice the brand name “Dorian Gray.” It reminded me of a movie I saw during my high school days; the name of the flick was “*The Portrait of Dorian Gray*”. The entire movie plot and main actors eluded my memory but it did not matter, it was just a brief journey down memory lane – nothing important.

As if by pure co-incidence though, and during one of my daily devotional readings this week, I came across an article entitled “*About Face*.” In it, the author spoke of an encounter with an elderly man with a cane whose face “*radiated such jocularity and positivity*” that she was compelled to ask the man about his life. After talking with the elderly man, she could not help but recall the novel written by Oscar Wilde, “*The Portrait of Dorian Gary*.” We were “on the same page!”

She wrote: “*Dorian Gray is an exceptionally charming, wealthy*

and handsome man. A friend, and admirer of his, paints his portrait and Dorian expresses the wish that he could remain as handsome and young as the portrait and that the portrait age instead. He gets his wish. But not only does the portrait age, its features change and grow uglier as Dorian slowly immerses himself in a sordid and reprehensible lifestyle full of ignoble deeds.” Dorian Gray never lost his looks and charisma but his portrait reflected the decadent rogue that he had become.

King Solomon wrote: “*As in water face answers face, so does the heart of man to man.*” The truth is that there is a connection between a person’s face and his heart. The countenance of our face is the mirror of our soul. Perhaps this should challenge our leaders to look into their leadership mirror. What is the face of the nation telling them? Why is her face so wrinkled? Why the stress lines on her forehead? Why the puffed eyes? Why the countless tears streaming down her face. The countenance of our national face is one of stress – the mirror of our

R. Saltzman – Jewish World Review government?

At the individual level, what is the mirror telling each leader about the state of his soul? Sure, some leaders have said time and time again, “Everyday I look myself in the mirror,” as if to suggest that they habitually hold themselves accountable for doing the right thing. But the statement is both legal and ambiguous, and intentionally so, for it fails to address two critical questions: “What do I see?” And “What will I do about it?”

The answer to the first question “What do I see?” cuts through the facade of charisma, it blows a hole through the pretence of caring, and it exposes the putrid stench of blended confidence and arrogance (“confi-gance”). The answer to the question “What do I see?” cuts to the bone – it exposes the very soul of the leader – the very “Portrait of Dorian Gray.”

The answer to the second question “What will I do about it?” challenges the heart of conscience, it renders the phony leader helpless in the face of searing truth – truth that exposes the evil motives of the heart.

Belizeans are Ready to Take Back Their Country

By: Patrick Tillett

Some people are suggesting there is not much hope for Belize over the next 5 year, or even 10 years. The truth is, the journey of a 1,000 miles starts with the first step.

Belize has been in this same situation before, and it did not take 10 years to recover, it did not even take 5, in less than five years a good and prudent government turned around the economic situation: creating jobs and growth in GDP over 10%.

Prime Minister Musa has created a debt crisis for Belize. Resolving the debt crisis will be a challenging task, but it has been done before, and new, seasoned leadership can do it again.

Political reform is important, but, almost none of those reforms will help deal with the crisis of the debt, at DFC or Social Security Board. The SSB Chairman admits that SSB will contribute \$10 million this year to the NHI when it had only planned \$5 million. The Musa Administration cannot manage the financial affairs of the

country and are repeatedly robbing from Peter to pay Paul.

The most popular reform is an elected Senate. The UDP has proposed its alternative to an elected Senate. Let the debate begin. Prime Minister Musa has said publicly he supports an elected Senate, but he is unwilling to push it. The Prime Minister also supports giving \$37 million to Belize Bank for UHS, and he was willing to push that. Perhaps to Prime Minister Musa it is better to give away \$37 million of taxpayers money, than to push for an elected Senate.

In spite of the sound financial management by UDP Administrations, some people keep suggesting that UDP and PUP are the same. When has UDP bankrupted DFC – or anything else? When has the UDP used privatization to transfer the wealth of the nation into hands of a few? When has UDP bankrupted the nation by accumulating debt recklessly and wanton spending? Ignore those, the UDP and PUP are still the same.

The third parties have a lot to offer Belize, but, none of them will be ready for 2008. What do Belizeans do?

Should Belizeans stay with the corrupted and crooked Musa Administration or look to the UDP where there is a record of sound manage-

ment?

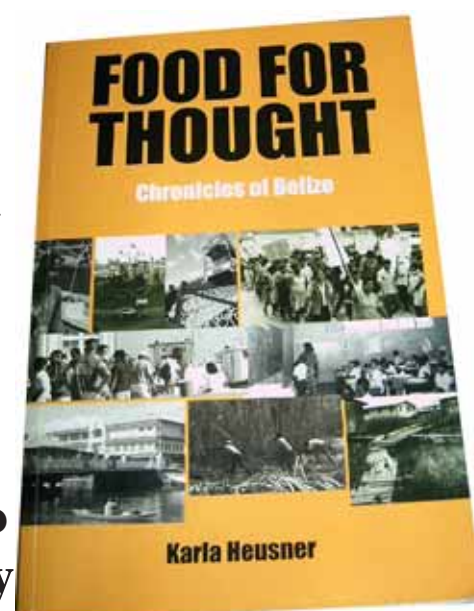
Belizeans are ready to take back their country, and it starts with changing the PUP Leadership. Change must come, and now. The UDP is ready, able and willing, the third parties are not...

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National Reform Party: the new Government of Belize?



By: Ray Auxillou

In chatting with some NRP knowledgeable people, I'm told all the secrecy of the intentions of the NRP are based on the strategy of waiting for the incumbent PUP government to call the next elections. I'm puzzled by this political strategy, but am assured they are ready to contest the next national elections and provide a much better form of government than previously held under either the UDP or the PUP.

Apparently they have all the election divisions throughout the nation covered with candidates and have a solid party equal to that offered by the UDP, if not better. They would not give me candidate names, because they claim the PUP conduct dirty politics and they are afraid that their candidates would be persecuted and intimidated by the power inherent of a patronage political party machine holding the reins of the police, the government jobs, the court dates and justice system controls and the Belize Defense Force. They don't want their candidates beaten up by police, or homes raided by the Belize Defense Force military on trumped up charges, with ransacking of their belongings. Nor do they have a newspaper, radio station, or television station to get into a lying, insulting competition.

The NRP attitude seems to be they want to provide good, honest government based on logical development, through consensual views arrived at through debate. They do not want anything to do with character assassination, trumped up charges in court cases, insults and slander, which is the way the PUP operate in an election campaign using the successful political patronage model of election campaigning.

I'm not sure waiting for the last thirty days until election time is a good political strategy, particularly if they are not getting any publicity of their mis-

sion goals, vision and ideas before hand. It was pointed out to me, however, that the UDP suffer the same victimization at the hands of the PUP in that the PUP will steal their ideas if they announce them, and do their best to destroy their candidates reputation and characters should they announce too early their candidates names.

Can we as a nation elect a party like the NRP based on HONEST government and using consensual views of different parties to achieve an honest government, taking the moral high ground? Any perusal of archives of newspapers in election years in local libraries, or for that matter in any year, will certainly find that dirty political tricks are one of the ways the PUP win general elections. One would think any political party wishing to govern Belize would automatically have to follow the same course of electioneering as the successful piratical PUP! Certainly the UDP try to follow this crude, cruel model of election warfare.

I'm not at all sure the citizens of Belize are ready for honest government!

The National Reform Party would be run on Mennonite governing principals, at least, I assume so. The Mennonites as a group have their individuals who are less than perfect too. But overall they have been very successful in governing themselves and certainly made the first two generations born in Belize these past fifty years, upper middle class, if not wealthy. They are also the political party of the poor, as they do, through their social communal cooperative rules make sure all people have equal opportunities and none are left out. I can certainly attest to that myself, as the corner house across from me was rented by a Mennonite church group and a West African Creole lady of Mennonite beliefs was installed in this house and is being supported and looked after with her four young children, when abandoned by a non Mennonite African Creole husband, who beat her and threw them out on the street to survive by themselves.

The PUP to all appearances are no longer the party of the poor masses, but of the wealthy and rich elite. I can certainly agree, that the PUP have

done some stupid things. Still, the PUP have done some good healthy infrastructural things like roads, community centers, water systems in Toledo also. Whether or not any government of any other party would, in the normal course of events, have done the same things anyway is open to debate. Most of this stuff is done by the civil service anyway I believe, in the normal course of running a government.

The district for Ralph Fonseca is expected to sell their votes this year for \$700 to \$1000 each as usual. They don't give a hoot about honest government apparently... Then there is Said Musa's seat in the Fort George Division. As far as I can ascertain from newspaper articles, this is bunch of wealthy old ladies and widows not interested in politics, or the nation, but are lonely for some company and the party leader has already wooed them with one tea party and expect another one around Christmas for their votes. At least, that is the impres-

sion I am getting. There is one shining example among the electoral divisions. Remember when the candidate for Belize Rural South ran for office on an HONEST representative, blazoned across his street banners? He beat out Patty Arceo of the PUP who was kinda slow on the bookkeeping and accountability part of government finances she handled. Just the same, this electoral division did go against the trend back then, by voting in a UDP representative solely on the HONEST campaign slogan.

He is still in office and after the first term, I notice this second term even the incumbent PUP cooperate with him. He's not really a party person, but had to run on the UDP ticket at the time to compete against what was perceived as unsatisfactory accounting. So it is possible the NRP can field honest candidates and take the government in the rebound and dissatisfaction from the PUP shenanigans. Their competition is really only the UDP.

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Voting for Real Issues



By: Moses Sulph
Pres. UB Student Government

An Election should be based on debates on moral value, credibility and proven track records. We must seriously look into the ideas which both parties campaign on as a platform. We must know who is going to fix the situation our country faces, economically, socially and spiritually. I am not sure if we as young people are voting on the issues, yet we must put the issues at the forefront. Such as: the affordability and the accessibility of education, the creation of employment opportunities, accessibility to affordable health care, the accessibility to owning a piece of land, who is benefiting from our resources, the economic debt.

As election draws near we must demand that the cost of education be at a rate where it is affordable to each and every person wanting the opportunity to be educated at any level. The contribution by our government to education is the lowest in the Caribbean for secondary and tertiary. Jamaica is a country with almost 3 million people; the government pays 50% of the cost and the parents pay the other 50%. Belize is a country with only around 300,000 thousand people, so why can't we do the same or better?

At the tertiary level again the contribution by government per student

is at the lowest.

Mr. Nelson Mandela of South Africa said, "Education is the most important weapon we can use to change the world," so why is it that our leaders act as if they don't see our people being educated as an economic benefit and also social plus for our nation?

Some argue that this 'free education' will be paid out of our tax dollars, but that's nothing new, everything else is paid out of our tax dollars, both the necessary and the unnecessary. This venture, however, would be one of the necessary things.

Despite how much the PUP scoff at the idea - which was the same way that the JLP scoffed at the idea of free health care - it is still viable, and their opposition to it is only because they didn't promise it first - pure politics!

It is an absolute insult by those who consider themselves to be intellectuals to those who are seeking to the opportunity to become intellectuals, to believe that a university can properly operate with \$8.5 million.

The University of Belize, our only national university should be a symbol of pride to our nation, and the only way this will come to actualization is if it is developed and the service given is second to none. With Belize City being the most populated district in our country, one would believe that the main campus would be located in such a place; however this is not the case and I will not attempt to debate that at this time. As a person who loves, and is

very concerned about our country and its people, I urge our young people to demand that the cost of education both at the University and secondary institution be affordable, which it is not at this time. I have seen many of my peers both at the University of Belize and other colleges not being able to pursue their goal of getting a higher education due to the cost. I have seen students like my self not being able to take the city bus, or have a good lunch due to the fact that there is no money after paying their school expenses.

My solution to the problem? Government's contribution must increase, the government can do this if they truly want to see our nation move forward and be able to compete with the global economy. We have most recently started selling oil in commercial quantity, but who is benefiting from this? Government can create an education fund or tax paid by those selling the oil. Say for every dollar made off the oil 10% goes to education.

According to our government, tourism is our future, but whose future? To make sure we do benefit from tourism, from every \$1 collected from the tax tourist pay in this country 10% should go to a specific education fund that a percentage of that would go to our National University, a percentage to the secondary institutions and other colleges.

Scholarships are a big joke in my book. First of all some of the per-

sons who have received scholarships in the country should not even be a candidate for scholarship; their parents are wealthy and can afford to pay their way through any educational institution, and yet these are the same persons we see get scholarships. Scholarships should be given to those who are in need of financial assistance and not those who are not in need. Let us demand that our leaders invest in our country's future and the best way to do so is by making education affordable and accessible to each and every person in this country, regardless, of race, religion, financial background. One way we can do so is by voting for those who are committed to educating our nation's human resource. Young people, unite for a better Belize. Thanks to all the students who voted for me so I can continue to represent you in our fight to keep education affordable.

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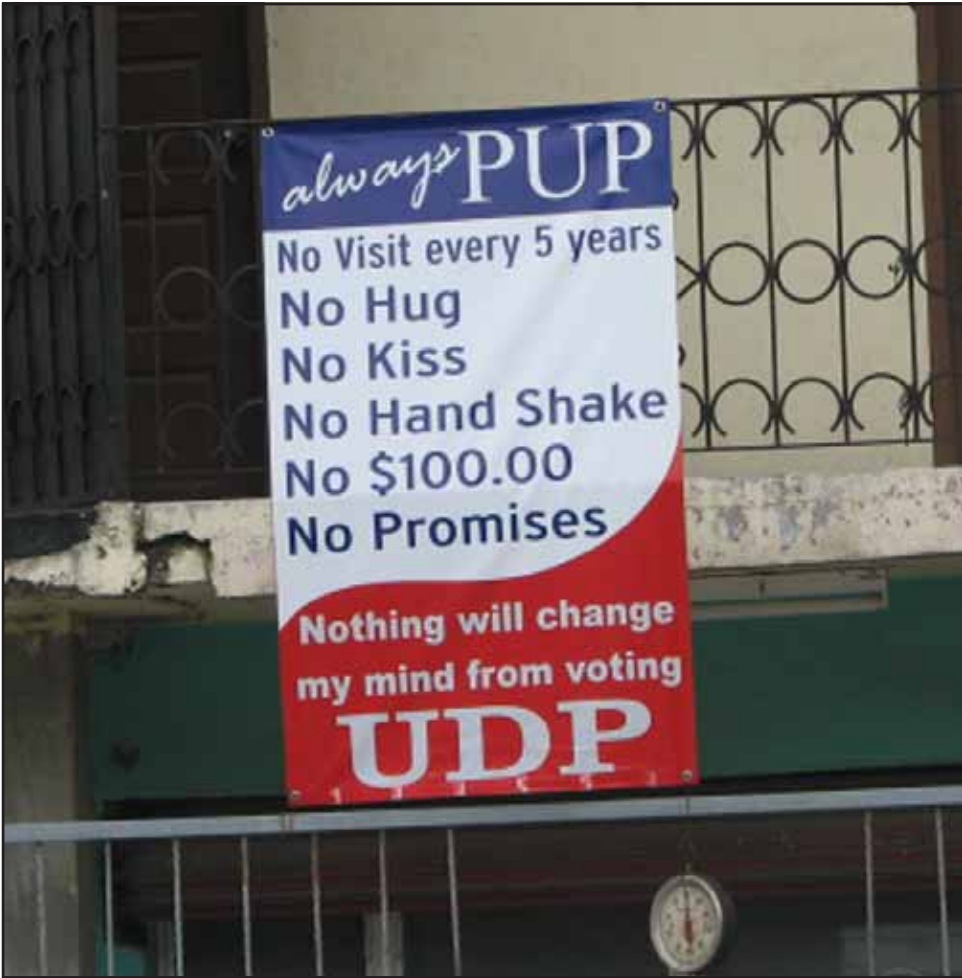
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Orangewalquenos are impatient for elections



TOPICAL TIDBITS

US Embassy Revokes corruption suspect's visa

Reports are the US visa belonging to Lionel Tillett, aka "Ombudsboy" has been revoked following a sting operation in which he is alleged to have been extorting money from a recently paroled Hattieville prisoner. But the plot thickens as the names of two magistrates have reportedly also come up in the conversations.... Might we see some magistrates losing visas as well? This one will be a real challenge for Ombudsman Paul Rodriguez and his office. But kudos to the police for the sting and for jumping on the issue so promptly. One can only wonder how many other criminals might be out on the streets right now because they paid their way out.

Boxing Day for MOE?

It was supposed to be a welcome gift: "Free textbooks." But the costs just seem too high already. Outraged that Belize is depicted as part of Mexico on maps in the Spanish book, the Belize National Teacher's Union has told the Ministry of Education to get rid of the books, now. What will happen if they don't comply? Will the teachers simply not teach this subject? Sounds like a showdown in the classroom. But it could be a good social studies lesson on Nationalism.... Also disturbing is reading the interview with MOE officials on LOVE FM website. Just how many grammatical errors can our educators

make in one breath anyway? Maybe we need some free adult education English books?

US Terror Suspect Pleads Guilty

Well, some Belizeans who believed a US fugitive hiding out in Belize, James Ujama, was being unfairly persecuted because of his race and/or religion may be surprised to hear he has pleaded guilty in the US to helping raise money for terrorist groups in Afghanistan and Britain. According to Channel Five, Ujama had been plea bargaining to help US officials catch some of his co-conspirators when he fled to Belize. Will his arrest lead to any examination of his contacts here? In light of arrests in Trinidad, it's not impossible. As to why any of our people might have believed he was innocent, maybe he neglected to mention he had already served two years for setting up terrorist training camps.... The question now should be: why did he come to Belize

COMPOL: in the hot seat

Commissioner of Police, Hon Gerald Westby, comes from salt of the earth but he's been taking a heavy licking in various corners of the Belize media, not unlike his political bosses. He has gone on the defensive and has responded to numerous claims this past weekend. We like Westby but we know the modus operandi of his Belmopan bosses. He must be under a lot of pressure with such a weakened morale in the public service.

Luke's new Towers

Lukas' new skyscraper on the barracks called the Renaissance Towers is a sight to behold with eight stories. Beautiful inside and out, obviously inspired by the Panama landscape, took a lot of determination, money, and some vision. Its like many we've seen in Punta Paitilla in Panama but he doesn't intend to keep his tower empty unlike the dozens of empty ones we saw in Panama. Prices start for the 2 beds/2 baths at \$255,000, if we heard correctly but you better check on those figures yourself because those prices might well be in Balboas!

Great views all the way around. Say what you will of the man, he created a magnificent landmark from scratch! Expect to see many more works of art from him and others in the great

peeing contest; he's got a lot of fight left and extremely wicked connections. Placencia might be next as we heard he (*and his partner*) just finished buying out a resort there. Lets hope Placencia doesn't sink with all these heavyweights coming to the point to compare penis sizes. Felicitaciones Luke! You are the man.

Hurricanes

This is hurricane season folks; be prepared and don't take it lightly although no previous hurricane ever gave us a direct hit in the month of August except in 1979 when we got the tail end of one. You can monitor direct from national hurricane center in Miami by subscribing to their list at: <http://hurricanes.gov/>. Also, <http://www.ambergriscaye.com> has a great section on links, discussion groups, and a host of great resources.

Control of the Poles

☞ (Continued From Page 5)

waiting for the PM to call the date.

Everyone is quick to point out in hushed, reverend tones that Britain and Canada and many other Commonwealth nations, don't have fixed elections either. But we tend to forget their parliamentarians can and do exercise their right to conduct a vote to determine the confidence of the members in the government. British and Canadian Prime Ministers have been taken down for doing far less "ras" than many people in Belize think has gone on here.

(Not to mention all the officials in Asian countries who quickly resign at the least hint of scandal, or worse, kill themselves to save face. Or have their officials executed. We are not asking anyone to do that here. But it would be nice if some of our leaders could be a little less facey and develop some backbone...hmmm?)

So, disappointing as it is, the Political Reform Commission gives us no hope for reform on this one. Although they did offer a healthy reminder that the other ministers and members of the House can ultimately control the fate of the government,

unlike the rest of us. And showed us we do not live under a dictatorship, by any stretch of the imagination. Our representatives consent/support whatever control they are under. And we consent to letting them do nothing.

But just suppose for a moment, that the date for National Elections in Belize WAS fixed and the people, and political parties, knew their time limits, when their power and access to taxpayer money, would run out.

Why, that might be just as confidence building as knowing there was a term limit for a Prime Minister. Yes, what if a political party HAD to change leaders after two runs, offering the electorate a new choice, new blood, new vision for a party they want to remain loyal to, even if an individual leader has not lived up to his promises.

Might that be an even better parliamentary model than the one we have? A more democratic one? But it seems we shall never know.

And as long as the man is calling the election, he di call all di shots.

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“Dialogues from the country side”: The problem with Familiarity

Familiarity is a slow killer within a society. What do we mean? Is it not good for someone to get to know you really well? Of course, but let us not think about their negative behaviour and weaknesses as a person or a group. Soon, others become less important than our-self **and that is the problem**. It sets in like a slow poison to friendship or any social life as gangrene covers the body.

In religious circles, **self righteousness** is a troublesome disease created by **familiarity** and has robbed the peace and happiness of millions of good people. In every society many are held captive by familiarity. They are held **captive** in their own mind of low self-esteem, low self-worth, even when they are very talented people with special gifts. Parents have screamed at them “you are a failure”. Friends have been cruel to them as well. We have too many Belizeans in this miserable condition.

How to wake up the people? We need to look past a person’s weakness and faults to see his/her talents, gifts, dreams and desires. We need to see ourselves as productive people. We need to see the opportunities of making a difference in this beautiful country of ours. We need to stop following blindly our blind leaders. We need to understand that each one is responsible for the mess of our country. Hey, we have to say: enough is enough.

Here is where National Reform Party can make a difference because we see the value of every Belizean and takes seriously the contribution of each one. We have to stand up like this nurse at Medical Associates. She came back from the US to take care of her elderly mother. She lives in the worse crime zone of Belize City. As a single parent she goes to work every morning with a smile in her face. Some time ago she was fired from her second job because she would not go along with corruption. She refuses to go along with familiarity. As this nurse, you can also stop “familiarity, for it breeds contempt”. Let us make a difference in our country.



NRP members on the campaign trail in the Cayo District

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Your weekly

HOROSCOPE

ARIES (Mar. 21- April 20)
Be sure to organize events that will keep the children busy. Don't overspend to impress others. Be careful not to push your luck or take too much for granted when dealing on either a personal or professional level. Overexertion and negligence will be your worst enemies. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

TAURUS (Apr. 21- may 21)
Reevaluate your motives. Keep important information to yourself. You can't do everything on your own. Do not ruffle feathers if possible. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21)
You may want to make changes that will turn your entertainment room into a real family affair. Do not let the reactions of others get you going. Eliminate situations that are no longer to your advantage. Some situations may be blown out of proportion. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)
Be diplomatic when dealing with in-law. Don't promise to deliver the goods if you aren't positive that you can meet the deadline. Lighten up your serious attitude Organize social events or family gatherings. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

LEO (July 23-Aug 22)
You will be extremely receptive to new and progressive methods at work. You will be able to get good advice if you listen to close friends or relatives you respect. Your creative ideas will be put to good use if you dig in and do things around the house that will make your family happy. Frustrations and limitations could cause anxiety this week. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 -Sept. 23)
Don't second guess yourself, just go to it. Sudden changes regarding your domestic scene are probable. You will encounter those who can help you further your goals if you

attend functions that attract prominent people. Personal alterations will be in your best interest. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 -Oct. 23)
Be sure to cover all the necessary groundwork before signing binding contracts. Avoid being intimately involved with clients or colleagues. Your ability to organize and get everyone together will enhance your popularity and bring interest from potential mates. You are best not to confide in anyone right now. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
Organization will be the key to avoiding discord and family feuds. You might get behind if you spend too much time debating senseless issues. Get involved in sports events that will benefit your physical appearance. You can expect the fur to fly on the home front. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

SAGITTARIUS(Nov. 23 -Dec.22)
Don't hesitate to voice your opinions at a group meeting; however, keep your thoughts to yourself at home. Those you work with may have little consideration for the un-

derdog. Changes in your home environment may cause friction. Make a point of working on yourself. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22.- Jan. 20)
Your emotional partner will push the right buttons this week. Concern yourself with legal matters and formulating contracts rather than finalizing your objectives. You need to sit back and enjoy. Be discreet and don't present your ideas until you're certain that they're foolproof. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 -Feb. 19)
You can make a difference if you take a position of leadership. Limitations at work might set you back. Secret affairs will only lead to deception. Catch up on overdue phone calls and correspondence. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

PISCES (Feb. 20-Mar. 20)
You may have to take a short trip to visit someone who hasn't been well. You will have the stamina and the know how to raise your earning power. Get the whole family involved in a worthwhile cause or cultural event. You will be emotional with regard to your personal life. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

Medieval Crucifix found in trash

Reuters—An 800-year-old, gold-plated crucifix that went missing after being seized by the Nazis has been found in a rubbish skip in Austria.

The crucifix, made of copper and enamel, was crafted in Limoges, France, and was part of a Polish art collection brought to Austria during Nazi rule, according to Josef Holzberger, police spokesman in Salzburg.

It was found in 2004 in the lakeside winter resort of Zell am See by a woman combing through a skip filled with the discarded possessions of a neighbour who had just died.

Last month the woman showed the crucifix to a friend who realized it might be something special and took it to a museum.

In the run-up to World War Two, the owners of the crucifix had hid it and other treasures by walling them inside the basement of a house in Warsaw.

They were discovered by the Nazis in 1941, brought to the Polish Na-



tional Museum and later transferred to a castle in the Austrian village of Bruck an der Grossglocknerstrasse, near Zell am See, police said.

"We lost track of what happened then — we don't know how the crucifix ended up in Zell am See," Holzberger said.

The crucifix might be worth up to 400,000 euros (270,400 pounds) at auction. Poland's culture ministry has contacted the London-based Commission for Looted Art in Europe.

Man told to "walk off pain" after shooting

Reuters—A South African man shot three weeks ago was told to "walk the pain off" and is still trying to persuade hospitals to remove the bullet lodged in his side, a newspaper said Thursday.

Three Johannesburg hospitals refused to remove the bullet for security guard Phillip Mashiane, 38, who was shot during a burglary at the property of South Africa's ambassador to the United Nations, the Star newspaper said.

The bullet passed through his elbow and entered his body just above the hip, missed his vital organs and stopped beneath the skin on the opposite side of his body, the Star said.

Mashiane told the paper he was turned away by one private hospital because he could not afford the bills while a public hospital took X-rays and kept him in for observation before patching him up and sending him home with painkillers.

When he returned a doctor told him to "walk the pain off."

Doctors at a third hospital said it could not remove the bullet because Mashiane had started treatment elsewhere.

South Africa is battling some of the highest rates of violent crime in the world, and its underfunded public hospitals struggle to treat all those who need healthcare.

Couple tried to name baby "@"

A Chinese couple tried to name their baby "@," claiming the character used in e-mail addresses echoed their love for the child, an official trying to whip the national language into line said Thursday.

The unusual name stands out especially in Chinese, which has no alphabet and instead uses tens of thousands of multi-stroke characters to represent words.

While "@" is familiar to Chinese e-mail users, they often use the English word "at" to sound it out — which with a drawn out "T" sounds something like "ai ta," or

"love him," to Mandarin speakers.

It was not clear if officials accepted the "@" name. But earlier this year the government announced a ban on names using Arabic numerals, foreign languages and symbols that do not belong to Chinese minority languages.

Sixty million Chinese faced the problem that their names use ancient characters so obscure that computers cannot recognize them.

One of them was the former Premier Zhu Rongji, whose name had a rare "rong" character that gave newspaper editors headaches. --Reuters

Dodging DEAN

(Continued From Page 4)

sue: government personnel assigned to shelters were not showing up, or showed up late causing people to wait anxiously, even as night approached.

By 7 pm all the Belize City shelters were filled and three more had to be opened to take the overflow. Evacuation buses also reported difficulty departing the city. At one point, there were 40 buses waiting but only one service station open to fuel them up!

Villagers all over Belize called radio stations to report their shelters were non-existent, substandard or not being announced, while shelters in San Ignacio and Benque reported lower than expected occupancy and invited people to come out west to safety. The questions began to swirl as menacingly as the storm bands: what happened to all

the hurricane shelter retrofitting and promised new shelters after previous storms? Work supposed to be carried out from hefty loans and grants from international lenders...Friends of Belize?

But as the storm bore down, those who had hesitated or not found an open facility were forced to ride it out at home. Miraculously no loss of life was reported, although there was damage to some homes in the Corozal and Orange Walk districts.

At press time there has been no serious flooding since the rains ceased early on Tuesday and did not continue as expected for several days. Belize had once more escaped with minor injuries instead of major casualties and relatively minor financial damage.

"Princess of Angels"

A leading Norwegian newspaper called on Princess Martha Louise to renounce her royal title Monday after she said she communicates with angels.

The 35-year-old princess, who is fourth in line to the Norwegian throne, has come under intense media scrutiny for her involvement in an alternative school that aims to teach people how to get in touch with angels.

Some observers have questioned whether her work for the private institute, dubbed "the angel school" in Norwegian media, can be combined with her duties as a member of the royal family.

"As princess and theoretical heir to the throne Martha Louise must ... operate within a certain framework," the Bergens Tidene daily said in its editorial Monday.

"If she feels that this would clip her wings, so to speak, ... the solution is clear and actually not dramatic: Drop the princess title and her place in the line of succession, (and) choose to live life in her own way."

Martha Louise is the daughter of King



Princess Martha Louise

Harald V and Queen Sonja, and the older sister of Crown Prince Haakon. She was married in 2002 to Ari Behn, a Norwegian writer.

Many commentators said a member of the royal family should not be involved in spiritual healing, and some even questioned her mental health.

In an interview Saturday on national broadcaster NRK, Martha Louise stated "I am very happy that I don't live a few hundred years ago, because then I would have been burned at the stake a long time ago," she said.

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Guest Gallery



Hurricane Dean's 165mph winds blew down the Island Academy's wooden picket fence on Ambergris Caye. (photo from [tacogirlblogspot](#))



Popeye's on Caye Caulker got roughed up from Hurricane Dean's winds and wave action.. (courtesy [ambergriscaye.com](#))



The thatched roof on Ramons's Village dock in San Pedro Town stood up to Hurricane Dean's 165mph winds but their pier did not fare as well. (tacogirl)



Tropical Touch on San Pedro got debris from the sea. (tacogirl)

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.

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

Announcement of Sale of Business

This article is to give notice that the business known as C@fé Caye operating at 12 Burns Ave, San Ignacio, Cayo District is under contract for sale. Completion of sale to take place 28th August 2007.

Any persons or businesses who believe they have outstanding accounts to be paid from said business should contact; Rainforest Realty, PO Box 195, San Ignacio, Cayo District, in writing 7 days before the date of completion.

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