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Double Trouble

As if the damage to the north and anxiety throughout the rest of Belize from Hurricane Dean was not enough, on Wednesday Belize City was practically underwater as a tropical wave dumped torrents of rain. The Belize Met office reported that over 10 inches of rain fell in one day! More rain in one day than the previous record of 7.2 inches for the entire month of August.

The drains in low-lying streets in this below sea level town just could not absorb all the water coming down so rapidly and within a matter of hours people's homes and businesses on lower flats had water spilling over their thresholds.

The Northern Highway was submerged in the usual trouble spots before the Haulover Bridge and Ladyville had a half mile stretch of flooded road, both of which threatened to make the highway virtually impassable had the rains continued unabated.

Princess Margaret Drive was a river (Please Turn To Page 10) 



An SUV churns up a wake as it ploughs through flood waters on Barrack Road after torrential rains on Wednesday.

Dean 3rd most intense hurricane

By JOHN PAIN, Associated Press
MIAMI - Hurricane Dean was the third-most intense Atlantic hurricane to make landfall since record keeping began in the 1850s, based on its central atmospheric pressure, forecasters said.

The pressure in a hurricane's eye is often used to compare storms throughout history because in the past, wind gauges were often damaged or destroyed by powerful hurricanes. Now, technology exists to more accurately measure winds, said Jamie Rhome, a hurricane specialist with the National Hurricane Center.

"And the damage is caused by the wind, so that's what most people look at," he said.

But pressure also measures strength: the lower the pressure, the greater a hurricane's power to suck in air. A



Hurricane Dean's 165mph winds blew down trees, ripped off many rooftops and left many families homeless in Corozal


hurricane's winds are blown because higher-pressure air rushes toward the lower-pressure eye to equalize the dif-

ference. Typically, the lower the pressure, the faster the air speeds in. But because of

other variables in each storm, a certain pressure does not always correspond to a specific wind speed.

Dean was a top-scale Category 5 storm at landfall Tuesday on Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. Its maximum sustained winds were near 165 mph and gusts reached 200 mph. Just before landfall, a Global Positioning System device dropped from a hurricane hunter aircraft found it had a central pressure of 906 millibars, forecasters said.

The only other storms that hit land with a lower pressure were the 1935 Labor Day hurricane that hit the Florida Keys and Hurricane Gilbert, which hit Cancun, Mexico, in 1988, forecasters said.

Gilbert caused more than 300 deaths in Latin America and the Caribbean. The (Please Turn To Page 11) 

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Alarmed and Ashamed

Dear Editor,

I recently received a call asking if I would donate to the relief efforts in the Corozal District. Evidently the Belizeans in the Tampa area are asking for funds so that they can ship down some bottled water and other supplies. The Belize newspapers have stories of unhappiness and some serious problems with relief supplies being distributed.

It all brought back the horror stories of the hurricane Iris relief efforts in Mango Creek area and Southern Belize. The number one helpers in terms of **not** trying to steal anything or make a profit out of Hurricane Iris were the Mennonites. Never in my life did I see such withholding of goods and services for the poor people that needed help the most than during Iris!

I was really ashamed to see the stealing of funds and material by those in charge. It appears to me that the same might happen again in re-

gards to this distribution effort...

Signed,
KC

Stop Dog poisoning

Dear Editor

Greetings from Seine Bight Village. I am writing in response to the strychnine eradication being planned for Belmopan 26 August.

I am a Belizean, and a member of the Placencia Humane Society and I have to agree with the Belmopan Humane Society that such a practice is totally inhumane and senseless and can be handled in a more modern way that does not harm any beloved pets.

The poisoned chicken will be around for days. Yes, you may kill a few strays but you will also kill pets. Most cats are not tied or leashed, plus, the poison is around for a long time after the date of poisoning, and can poison any wild creature or bird as well, not to mention a dog being walked properly on a leash—we see our own dogs gobble up garbage off the beach even when we are scolding them. They just cannot resist!

My family experienced the strychnine poisoning of our beloved dog

Dee in 2005. She was in our yard but someone planning a robbery threw some strychnine-laced meat into the yard that night and she ate it. We were lucky enough that a veterinarian was conducting clinic in our area the next day and we rushed her to the clinic where she had blood transfusions for about 12 hours. The strychnine had seized up her muscles and her teeth had actually clamped down so hard on her tongue that the teeth came through the other side. Her body was tensed as a rock. Everyone at the clinic was horrified and a story in our local paper Placencia Breeze was printed about this terrible incident. Our dog was saved but only lived a short 2 years before her liver gave out from the poisoning, as the veterinarian explained might happen. A few months ago this year she suffered stroke, loss of coordination and finally died, years ahead of her natural time.

Dee was poisoned by strychnine and we all know the suffering an animal goes through.

(Please Turn To Page 15)



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Where to put my X

By: Charles L. Payne

Another election is coming up and the political machines are gearing up to make their pitch to a mass of people with unclear vision. The propaganda is usually so stifling that the smoke screens are layer deep. You would almost have to have a degree in political science to sift through the cesspool of cons, briberies, trickery, etc.

I would like to offer one logical approach to it, a sort of a strategic voting, a sifting tool to filter all of the garbage being thrown at you. This election is going to be like a math probability, an equation so to speak.

What is the Value of X and where should it go? The Value of X is easily answered...."IT IS DIRECTLY PROPOTIONAL TO ONE'S SELF WORTH"! To some people X may be valued as a swamp lot offered by a political bribe OR you can be bought for \$100.00BZ, \$1,000.00BZ, a political promise or favor etc.

The fact of the matter is that a bribe is a criminal offence and any political

candidate or their assigns' offering you a bribe is a criminal, period! Do you want to vote for a criminal? We made that mistake already and look at the mess we are in. **Taking** a bribe is also a criminal act.

Some people ask, "What if I take their offering but I vote against them?" Actually, that is not a criminal act as you are not giving anything (your vote) in return. Voting is a private and moral issue. You are who you are you cannot lie to yourself.

When our civil servants (politicians) offer you a swamp lot (as they keep the good stuff for themselves) don't forget that we are the ones that have empowered them to do this act by virtue of the office we have given them by the power of our vote. It is therefore part of our "constitutional right" to receive property form these civil servant ministers. **THIS IS NOT THEIR PROPERTY....THIS IS OUR HERITAGE AS BELIZEANS!**

I truly believe that the value of X should be something with real meaning, a long term investment in your country such as the greater good of

all Belizeans, the greater good for the environment, a better financial life for your children and their children, a better quality of life. Belizeans tend to have this "NOW" mentally—instant gratification and short sightedness. Politicians know this fact and they exploit you easily. They give you cash now, and they "own" you forever!

Life in Belize City is like living in the past in Nazi Germany. There is a tangible taste of fear in the air. There is an absence of police, deserted streets at night, self imposed curfew, high violent crime. Keeps the people occupied with fear, depressed, poor and helpless and control is yours. The Devil operates best in chaos; I use the term Devil loosely.

Yeah, but we have it all under control (Belize's socio economic, socio ethnic, upwardly mobile and Nouveux riche).....We have our huge concrete homes/fortresses with concrete backyards 3 stories high all dressed up with barbed wire and pit bull terriers. Locked up tight inside with all of the North American luxuries such as large

colored TV, stereo, fancy furniture, expensive foods from superstores--WOW Double WOW. We have succeeded in bringing the US to us! The true fact is that we have created a beautiful JAIL for ourselves. We venture outside in our air-conditioned SUV comfort OR we say something against the Government and we could be the next victim. Watch your Back!!

I feel diminished as a Belizean when I hear the saying, "They are both the same" referring to the two Political parties the PUP and the UDP. This is the type of Propaganda the PUP dishes out and feeds off. You see, this statement justifies their corruption, gives them even credibility, a level playing field so to speak. This could not be more far from the truth. I say to you: become informed before you utter and spread such ignorant statements. Become an educated Voter. Do your homework before you make that ever so precious VOTE that all those politicians are after; Research each candidate...each party's manifesto and make an informed commitment (Please Turn To Page 9)



Could never happen to us



By: Karla Heusner Vernon

When Belizeans saw the images of Hurricane Katrina victims in New Orleans, saw their poverty and frustration when they tried to get aid, we told ourselves that would never happen here.

We believed, as poor as so many of us are, that the rest would pitch in and help if a hurricane destroyed one of our cities or towns, devastated our countryside villages. We were sure our government would mobilize its resources faster than they did in Louisiana. After all our country is so small. Surely we no one would suffer as they had back in the "old days," after Hattie, after 1931. Belize is so much more modern, up-to-date, well connected, internally and externally. Right?

From the pleas coming from Corozal district residents, perhaps not.

We have been astonished and astounded to hear and see villagers begging for water, food, building materials. We knew GOB was essentially broke, but somehow convinced ourselves there was some reserve money set aside in the treasury for emergencies, not just stashed away for elections or in politicians' offshore accounts. We believed, deep down, that there was some remnant of decency in the indecent ones.....

But apparently there was no money to fix the shelters BEFORE the storm (although where it went will likely remain a mystery only the IDB and others may attempt to solve), no money for fuel for evacuation by bus, and no ready money for water and rations afterwards.

There couldn't have been, or it would not have taken three or four days for it all to begin trickling towards the desperate. Almost a week for government grants and loans to come on stream.

Perhaps it was an emergency dispersal from USAID, a western union

from Taiwan or Guatemala.

Although, to be fair, there were personal contributions from some local leaders; not the ones we expected, who act as if they have the north under control, their personal

... just grumbling and fighting and backstabbing as usual. Greedy choke puppy problems. So typical. So expected.

fiefdoms, but others who took the time and commitment seriously to go there in person. There was a host of non-governmental and private enterprises and volunteer groups who took on the job of relief and rebuilding. The BDF, even prisoners from Kolbe, were seconded for clean-up duty. A casino in the Free Zone helped provide water, PACT and others water and ice.

Much has been made of the tribal politics interfering with the distribution, of conflicts between NEMO and local government. What a sad, sorry commentary on our maturity as a country. A pathetic comparison to our neighbors across the border who are able to join hands and rise above party differences to save lives, prevent children from going hungry or getting sick.

Why did our government not open soup kitchens immediately like the Mexicans? Why did we not see community work brigades organized from a higher level?

Instead it was just grumbling and fighting and backstabbing as usual. Greedy choke puppy problems. So typical. So expected.

For like so many of our citizens who do save for a rainy day, our government spends money like there is no tomorrow. Refusing to learn the lessons of so many near misses. Prodigal sons all.

And come September those of us who panicked at our lack of cash to get ready for Dean will not go to the bank or credit union and set aside some pay for the next disaster. No, no, we will spend it on bling and blang for the celebrations. Buy rum with the money we said we did not have for powdered milk, tins of corned beef and candles.

Come Christmas we will spend lavishly for fancy lacy curtains for

windows we bawled we had no money to protect with plywood. We will shamelessly festoon our spouses and sweethearts and children with gold, just weeks after we cried we had no cash to put these

people we say we love on a plane or boat or bus and move them to higher ground.

And during the General Elections? Why, all those politicians who slapped away the hands of the people seeking water and food will readily grease their palms with money for votes. Convinced some chunk of zinc whopped their victim in the head so hard he or she does not remember how they were forced to live like animals so that others could live like princes. Believe they will be so grateful for the "grant" they received to rebuild their humble home they will give their lifelong loyalty to the Patron who patronized them so...

Come next June we will still not have our boxes of supplies and bottled water, no chunk of change set aside for rebuilding, no insurance for our home and its contents. We too will be as broke as our government... and go begging for lodging and assistance.

For we all seem to believe we are

a charmed people, living in a good country, blessed by the gods.

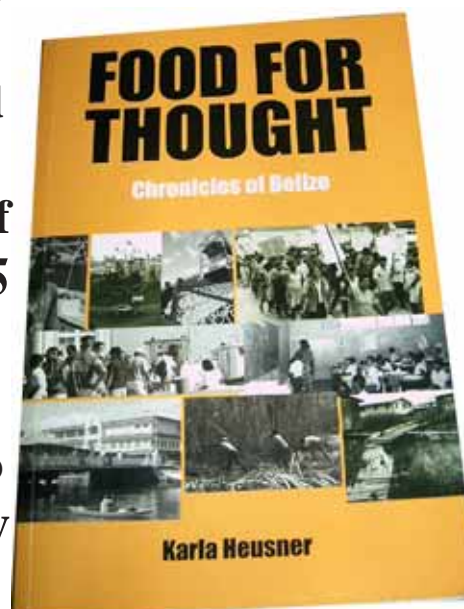
By June we will forget that back in August so many of our people were lined up in the hot sun and sleeping in rain filled homes, as deprived of food and water and shelter as those Americans up in New Orleans after Katrina. Belizeans, our Belizeans, not strangers or foreigners but people WE are responsible for.

The saddest part of all this is, Belize will not learn anything yet again. We will continue to expose thousands more men and women and children all across this land to this same fate again next year.... Continuing to believe, despite all the twisted zinc and downed trees and ruined crop evidence, that true suffering could never happen to us. That somehow, someday, someone will have us covered. That neither we, nor our government, have any need to set anything aside for the next rainy day and wind filled night. Even though the next time Belize might not be so "lucky."



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"PUP fails to run with the ball, PNP picks it up to score"



By: William Schmidt
PG correspondent for
Independent Weekly

People's National Party leader Will Mehia has adopted Toledo People's Eco Park Plan for the official PNP strategy and action plan for the sustainable development of the Toledo District.

Mehia has been involved with the formation of the Eco park plan for many years, beginning when he was Director of TIDE, Toledo's largest conversation/development origination. He authorized TIDE's staff to attend the Eco-park planning meetings, which led in March of 2003 to their signing what Dr. Palacio, General Manger of the Toledo Development Corporation, who drafted the M.O.U. , called a "historic document".

For the first time in Toledo's history that representatives of all the elected political leaders-- rural and urban-- the Toledo Civil Society, the major cultural, conservation and development organizations including the USA Peace Corps signed in support of the further development of the Toledo People's Eco Park Plan.

Mehia said "the Eco park is truly the way to go if we in Toledo are going to keep the economic benefits of our rich natural resources and be able to develop them for own people". Will further stated that "the Eco Park is the way to guarantee that the resources of Toledo are developed in sustainable ways

so they will be there for our children. The success of the Eco Park could serve as a model for the rest of Belize.

In all fairness to RT. Hon. Prime Minster Said Musa, he has also been supporting and recommending the Eco park for many years now. In February 2000 he sent Martin Enriquez, Chairman of the Punta Gorda Conservation Committee the urban of the Eco park plan a letter of support stating, "I wish to confirm my support for the Punta Gorda Conservation Committee. I cannot underscore enough the importance of protecting the rich flora and fauna of the area to which I known your organization is fully committed our government shares this vision of eco tourism development for the south".

Again in March of 2004, he sent Mr. Richard Thorpe, a distinguished planner and volunteer for the eco park working team, a letter of support where he said 'I am as anxious as you are to see what need to be done to implement the eco park plan for Toledo. As you so rightly note democracies work only if all kinds of residents get working and take some responsibility".

The most recent support was on Friday 12 July at a public meeting of the PUP at the sports center in Punta Gorda Town. The PM told a huge crowd of nearly a thousand citizens of Toledo that he supported the eco Tourism plan and had directed the new Minister of Land and Natural Resources to help the project and recommend it to PACT for support.

Minister Mike Espat, Area Representative for Toledo East, told me the Prime Minster had told the Cabinet that he wanted support for the Eco Park at their last meeting. While we all are sincerely grateful for the support Prime Minister Musa has attempted to get for our eco park and the many poor people who support

it, the fact is it's been more than **seven** years since his first letter of support, four years since his second letter and over two months since his last and there has been no support offered from the Minister of Tourism Godfrey Smith, who appears to only be interested in the big plans for the wealthy. Minister Mes, Area of Representative for Toledo West, as far as we in Toledo know, has no plans for our development. Minister Mike Espat, Area Representative for Toledo East and Chairman of the failed board of the T.D.C has shown no knowledge of the eco-park plan or interest in supporting our people's, or our Prime Minister's wishes.

In fact, if our Area Representative had truly helped with the pilot project for the eco park back in 2003 when

M.O.U. was signed most people here believe we could have eliminated a lot of poverty in Toledo by now. The saddest fact is that while both our Area Representatives refused to help the people of Toledo to develop the potential for eco tourism that Toledo has, they have no plan of their own to help our poor people. They appear to only have plans for the rich foreigners who are rapidly taking advantage of the many opportunities.

No wonder the last survey taken in Toledo shows that over one third of our people are ready for a third party! No doubt Will Mehia and the PNP will win a lot of votes by taking the Toledo people's Eco Park as their development plan. The PUP have dropped the ball. Power to all the people.

Costa Maya's bad fortune may spell temporary increase in Belize cruise tourism



The Costa Maya port at Majahual before Hurricane Dean.

By: Lan Sluder

One of Hurricane Dean's victims was the Port Costa Maya cruise ship terminal near the village of Mahahual, Mexico. The cruise ship docking pier was at least 50% destroyed, and the village of 300 people, established just to serve the cruise ships, was wiped out, although thanks to a required evacuation there was no loss of life.

Bad news for Mahahual could be good news for Belize's cruise tourism industry. It's expected that some cruise ship operators will replace Costa Maya with stops in either Belize City or Roatan, while others will stay longer in Cozumel or reroute to other parts of the Caribbean. Some 300 ships docked at Costa Maya in 2006, with about

600,000 passengers from around a dozen cruise ship lines, including Carnival, Princess, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn and others. It is the Mexican Caribbean's second-busiest cruise port, after Cozumel. It is expected to take at least six months to rebuild the cruise terminal.

The number of cruise ships and passengers visiting Belize has been declining since its peak in 2004 of around 850,000; cruise ship passengers at Belize City totaled 656,000 in 2006, although the first few months of 2007 saw an increase over the same period in 2006.

(You can read more about Belizean tourism by Lan Sluder by going to www.belizefirst.com)

Hurricane damage closes Costa Maya cruise port

Mexico's second largest cruise port, opened just six years ago at Costa Maya on the southern Yucatan Peninsula, was severely damaged by Hurricane Dean and will be closed for repairs at least until mid-2008, a Costa Maya spokesman said Wednesday.

Dean made landfall at the port Tuesday morning as a Category 5 hurricane. About half of the port's infrastructure, including the cruise ship pier, was damaged. Repairs will take an estimated six to eight months and cost millions of dollars, officials said.

The port opened in 2001 with a pier that could accommodate three cruise ships and a 70,000 square foot shopping and entertainment complex and grew quickly in popularity. Last year it hosted more than half a million cruise passengers.

Most of the major cruise lines make port calls at Costa Maya, about 150 miles south of Cancun and just north of the Belize border. As of Wednesday, neither Carnival nor Royal Caribbean, two of the port's most frequent users, had decided on an alternate port.--Miami Herald

Who to vote for?



**By: Ray Auxillou
(Swing Voter)**

Part 1

Like many of you, I don't know who to vote for. By chance, I caught a Channel 5 news program on TV Thursday night. It covered the National Health Insurance issues, the tour of the Prime Minister in the Toledo District. Following this was a story on CARICOM and the \$5 billion food importation bill in foreign exchange, experienced collectively by CARICOM countries. Then there was the new extended airport review, which was quite well explained, by Minister Godfrey Smith, I believe. All good issues to discuss with a coming election for a new government in Belize.

I am as yet undecided. But here is what I do know: the PUP advertising documentary program covering the Toledo Tour of the Prime Minister is designed of course to get votes. Perfectly legitimate use of party campaign monies. Over the past ten years, Musa has taken it to heart to see that the Toledo District got more attention from government departments and services. That impressed me greatly.

From his commercial documentary, I was counting the things his PUP had done for the Toledo District in the last five years. There is a school building done in the coastal village of Barranco. Wasn't that built by the US Army or something? There were a couple of foundation posts being dug for a future bridge to connect the village of Crique Sarco with the rest of the country. It hadn't been built yet though and probably will never be in the immediate future.

There has been a lot in the newspapers and on this PUP documentary about land titles for Toledo residents. That might be impressive as an accomplishment, but I don't know how much is hype and bombast and how much is reality. It's hard enough getting titles to land in the Cayo District. I can't imagine it will be easier in the Toledo District. All in all, the documentary was interesting for scenery as a travelogue, but not very informative for vote getting.

With the PUP National Debt crisis being what it is, I haven't really expected too much of anything, so what has not

happened in Toledo, I don't find too distressing. I can understand a nation in debt and the choices one must make. Where it becomes confusing is when the paucity of development in Toledo is contrasted with the Universal Health Care Hospital fiasco. A total debt cost that will, at 17% interest, cost us taxpayers another \$120 million, the Opposition say, before it is over and if the PUP get elected for next term.

Street people tell me there are no investors for this private hospital and the announcement of same, was just a political gambit to take a bad publicity issue off the election campaigning table, until the PUP win again.

On the other hand, some newspapers are saying that Ashcroft and his Belize Bank can see the writing on the wall

and he is going to London arbitration, to make the PUP Government pay up, based on Musa's assigning responsibility to us taxpayers. Or really make the debt legal somehow, since there is a question of the legality of Musa's unilateral action without Cabinet and Legislative authorization, binding on the next elected government, before the PUP leave office? We can only await developments on that one! The original loan was with the DFC and this institution is supposed to go bankrupt and thus negate the Belize Bank loan. They should get pennies on the dollar, like any bankruptcy creditor. I don't care about Musa's ego here; this loan is not a valid taxpayer obligation!

Stewart Krohn for Channel 5, a PUP leaning station most of the time, did ask

some questions on the NHI medical service issue that had been puzzling me. Belizeans will have to pay \$10 for service at the doctors and give their social security number. The rest of their medical services via private for profit referral doctors will be paid for by the government. This just doesn't ring true!

When pressed by TV interviewer Krohn, Minister Coye said the oil income would pay for medical services through a special fund, added to Government's deductions from revenues for medical service. This definitely sounded fishy to me.

How can they pay medical service with oil money and can't pay the landowners their oil royalties? The small oil field was only supposed to last two years and time is fast running out... Other quasi experts

(Please turn to Page 8)



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OAS names Jamaican director, Department of Trade & Tourism

Secretary General of the Organisation of American States (OAS), Dr. José Miguel Insulza, has named Pamela Coke Hamilton, first female and first Jamaican national, as the new director of the Department of Trade, Tourism and Competitiveness (DTTC), effective August 1.

In her new job, Pamela Coke Hamilton will seek to bolster and support the efforts of the OAS member-states to expand trade opportunities, increase competitiveness and foster economic integration throughout the Americas.

The division also focuses on tourism development, which is a crucial area of importance for the CARICOM member-states of the OAS. The department also seeks to strengthen and enhance the contribution of this critical



Pamela Coke Hamilton

sector to the overall regional thrust to increase employment and to realise higher and more sustainable levels of economic growth and prosperity within the Caribbean.

Mrs. Coke Hamilton currently holds the position of Principal Trade Specialist with the OAS, with specific responsibility for CARICOM trade capacity-building.

In addition, since July 2004, she has spearheaded, under a cooperative agreement between the OAS and the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, the establishment of the Masters in International Trade Policy (MITP) programme, which is now an internationally recognised programme for training of trade policy specialists.

Capacity-building exercises

She has also served as the director of

the Sir Shridath Ramphal Centre for International Trade Law Policy and Services, which has conducted numerous capacity-building exercises for CARICOM member-states, including training trade policy analysts for a programme aimed at developing trade negotiating capacity within Commonwealth states.

An attorney by profession, Mrs. Coke Hamilton has had a long career in trade policy and trade negotiations at the national, regional and international levels. She previously served as a trade negotiator for the Government of Jamaica in both Geneva and Washington, and was the Free Trade Area of the Americas coordinator for CARICOM's Regional Negotiating Machinery.

--the Jamaica Gleaner

Who to vote for?

☞ (Continued From Page 7)

say that while gas pressure may decline, there might be lower production volume of oil over another ten or fifteen years, but never again at the rate the oil is flowing right now and soon to slow down. Any oil revenues are going to drop off any month now? There are no other oil finds, at least not that I've heard of. Trinidad just had some of their gas field run dry and have no more natural gas, just as an example of what can happen.

NHI, as touted by the PUP, sounds like some sort of copy cat deal from some other country. I don't see it working for long, at \$10 co-payment for poor people. Forty years ago I had to pay government \$50 co-payment for the birth of each of my daughters in the Belize City hospital by the waterside. How could it be less now?

So the whole NHI thing is confusing. PUP Health Minister Coye has said he doesn't think the Social Security should pay for it. I agree with that! I'd hate for the PUP to break the Social Security Fund like they did the DFC. Another e-mail writer stated that Social Security has funded the present NHI pilot project in South Side and lent their Social Security staff to the running of it. Yet, the PUP have announced they will be expanding the NHI project as a done deal, prior to the election and NHI will be established elsewhere in the nation before then. (Sound like one of those election campaign gimmicks?)

Yet PUP Health Minister Coye has said the Cabinet does not know how they are going to pay for it. General Rev-

enue fund has no money. They cannot even fix our streets up here in Santa Elena town, or elsewhere in the country for lack of money. Social Security has money if we wish to bleed that dry. Which apparently is the way they are doing it now. How can you implement a project as huge as this without knowing how to pay for it?

In other health news, it seems District Hospitals will now be called Polyclinics. Which means what? Far as I can see, these district hospitals are now going to be emergency field dressing stations and transporting all serious cases to Belmopan via ambulance.

If you die because of delays, or time spent on the road, too bad. Apparently from the descriptive newspaper articles, Belmopan hospital is a TRIAGE station, meaning they call your loved ones to pick up your dead body, or they stick another fresh IV in your arm and shoot you off to the center of ALL emergency health care, which will be in the port Belize City by another fresh ambulance. Do you go to KMH, or do you go to this new MUSA funded \$120 million expensive rich folks hospital called UHS? If you go to UHS, who pays and what is going to happen to KMH? Is that just another Polyclinic now for referrals? What happens to current medical funding? Does it go into a new fund, to pay UHS for emergencies? Or private doctors who will rapidly be setting up their own private for profit diagnostic clinics to suck Social Security Medical funding program dry?

Some doctors will now form partnerships obviously and become polyclin-

ics of their own and specialists, so they can have the General Practitioner look at you, then double charge you to go see his stockholder buddy as a Specialist referral. There are so many ways to rip off the government taxpayer....

The medical profession is as greedy as any other group of people. Can you imagine the flurry of tests you will have to get done, and expert doctor referrals to treat a simple flu, by a batch of private get rich quick scam artist doctors (a common medical scam by doctors in the USA). Anywhere else they did this system, like the USA; it broke, or is breaking the government treasury. It sure sounds like the public slander asking Musa how much stock he had in NHS might have some foundation, here? A private hospital venture, getting a \$120 million cost free government debt guarantee? One can see if the NHI referral program was planned to feed customers to the Universal Health Services at their alleged \$10,000 a day costs, how somebody was going to ruin Social Security and the government general revenues. Another plunder and looting debacle on the horizon, it looks like to me...

On the other hand, one reads all the time in the newspapers how government creditors can't get paid anyway. I can't imagine UHS cashiers taking treasury vouchers that won't be honored. I've still got a 32 year old Treasury Voucher I've spent more money than it's worth, trying to collect on it, several times over. I keep meaning to frame it and put it on the wall to remind me NEVER to take a government treasury

voucher under the PUP. Or can you imagine doctors waiting either and they will have to quadruple their fees to hustle the insurance collection expenses from the treasury. Can't you just picture a \$10 co-payment mother of premature triplets running up five months in special medical care units and \$4 million dollars in medical bills at UHS and multiply that scenario by 50,000 medical customers. It won't take long to break the government AGAIN! The system we have, or had, is superior to NHI.

More of the issues of interest to swing voters like myself next week! (Part 2 in next week's issue) ☞

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

Where to put my X

☞ (Continued From Page 4)
ment to vote!

The PUP has laid down a legacy of corruption. They were given a second chance by the Belizean People....they even Promised attacking corruption on their pulpit acceptance speech for their second “MERRY-GO-ROUND.”The corruption actually increased a hundred fold.

In the United States, a President can only serve two terms. If he turns out to be a bad apple for the country, he can only do so much damage and he is gone for god. Besides, it keeps them from entrenching and getting too much POWER. Great Wisdom. We should adopt it sometime.

The UDP needs to be on top of their game and remain resilient if they are to win this election. They make good managers of our economy and Lord knows we need to get our economy

back in order. No political party is perfect, but as reasonable intelligent Belizeans, we have seen both parties performances in the past and can judge for ourselves without the influences of propaganda.

WHO SHOULD I VOTE FOR? Let's examine the situation.

The PUP...not an option! Unless if you are a PUP. Too difficult to penetrate that kevlar armor. I won't even try. Too much entrenched brainwashing, indoctrination, bribes, hand-outs, partybashes, material greed and just plain old needy. These robots will only vote PUP even if the sky was to fall on them.

The Independent Candidates.....in my humble opinion, although it is clearly democracy at work and I respect them and love their courage, I do not believe that they are ready for 2008 Not equipped, not experienced,

not organized, not financed, not well known and no established manifesto.

The only viable option I see is the UDP. I also see a clear and present danger that the independent candidates will no doubt take valuable votes away from the only true adversary the PUP has.

Political history at home and abroad has shown that independents, although well intended, have not yielded much success. Those redirected votes will hurt the UDP; as those are the votes most likely to come from leery and weary voters who are fed up with “poly-tricks” as a whole. Other votes that are up for grabs are from new immigrants (you can bet that PUP has them well tied up) and the uninformed and the undecided. This situation could conceivably give the PUP a chance towards a minority victory.

Let's not take our eyes off the real

prize: “TO CHANGE THIS CORRUPT GOVERNMENT”!

I believe that at least under a UDP administration the Independents can forge ahead... on a fair playing field, with no threats of violence, putting fort their agendas and becoming a bona fide and credible political force to be reckoned with in the following election.

Meaningful change usually comes slowly and caution is in the wind to quick unprepared changes. This change will bring Belize into a Multi-Political Party system with more checks and balances, which is good for the country, bringing us closer to that elusive imaginary figment called Democracy.

Do you know where your X Belongs?

I do!

Secretive lord runs Tory vote

By Oonagh Blackman, Political Editor

27/08/2007

David Cameron (PA)

David Cameron was yesterday accused of losing his grip on the party after allowing an offshore billionaire to control the Tories' election campaign.

Controversial Lord Ashcroft has taken over a large office at party HQ to oversee strategy in target areas.

The peer, with extensive business interests in tax haven Belize, is pumping cash from one of his investment firms into chosen marginal seats.

But senior Tories are alarmed he is developing a rival power base to their floundering leader's despite being unelected and unaccountable.

Opposition parties claimed it was a clear sign of Mr Cameron's growing weakness.

Labour whip Tom Watson said: “Cameron seems to be letting Ashcroft take more power while he increasingly loses his grip on the leadership.

“For some months Cameron has shown he can't run the party and the old guard are taking it back.” Lib Dem peer Lord Oakeshott added: “The Tories are still taking money from Michael Ashcroft despite the controversy over his offshore situation, which is absolutely outrageous.

“How can Cameron claim to be socially responsible when he is let-

ting him increase his own alternative power base?”

Lord Ashcroft, who has dual citizenship of the UK and Belize, has given the party more than £10million.

But he has drawn flak for his commercial dealings in the Central American country and the fact that he was made a peer in 2000 without permanently living in Britain and paying full income tax.

He also has close links to the Turks and Caicos Islands, another tax haven for the super-rich.

The tycoon, a former party treasurer, has previously shown his willingness to defy Tory leaders.

In 2004 he clashed with Michael Howard when he insisted his £2million donation support specific candidates rather than the national campaign.

There is mounting speculation Gordon Brown could call an election as early as October.

Lord Ashcroft, in a sign of his growing influence in the party, emailed activists last week urging them to keep him informed of their campaigns.

The note said his team was on election alert and that a “Field Campaigning Department” had been set up to oversee the blitz on target seats.

He added: “Over the coming weeks we will be producing a range of campaign materials but I wanted to outline a few particular priority services.”

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Double Trouble

➡ (Continued From Page 1)

and Freetown Road was more like a canal in Venice with vehicles passing each other like boats creating a wake behind them. Small cars, even some pickups and vans stalled and were abandoned by their drivers. Pedestrians waded in knee-deep water trying to reach home.

Schools all across the city were dismissed by 2 pm and many offices sent their employees home well before five to allow them time to secure their families and premises. The Belize City Council reopened several hurricane shelters and advised residents of Belama phases 3 and 4 to evacuate. However, it seems the waters began to subside, or people were reluctant to leave and no one took the city council up on their offer.

Forecasters had predicted another 24 to 36 hours of rain, but strangely it did not appear and fortunately too, for Belize City would have had some serious difficulties if it had.

On Thursday, much of the water had receded but many homeowners were

(Please turn to page 11) ➡



Cars and trucks looked more like boats on Freetown Road in Belize City at the height of the rains.



Boledo buyers stood in water up to their ankles at this neighborhood shop.



A motorcycle looked more like jet ski on North Front Street.

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Double Trouble

Dean 3rd most intense hurricane



Barrack Road looked more like the Belize River.

➡ (Continued From Page 10)
left to mop out and try to dry their furniture and other belongings.

The bad weather could almost be described as a freak storm for although the weather bureau had warned the public of the wave, their personnel admitted none of the computer modules predicted such a heavy downpour, most forecasting only 2-4 inches, not the 10

High School in Corozal opens Doors despite major set-backs

Many schools in the Corozal District were not spared by Hurricane Dean but have proved to be resilient in times of reverse entropy. Despite the great loss, schools made every attempt to bring life to normality for their wind battered students today.

One such school is the agriculturally based High School, the St. Viator Vocational High School, which lies about 1.5 Miles beyond Chunox Village, on the Sarteneja Road, in the Corozal District. The school may have been irreversibly kept back in it's aspirations to reach out to students in the information technology area. The High School lost five Windows XP based computers to moisture. (Some five sheets of zinc were blown off from the School's roof.)

The School was also hit in the agricultural area, losing some fifty chicken layers. Also lost were about five thousand dollars worth of seedlings. The good news is that the school now has fresh water; as it has a back-up water

inches which actually fell.

Many Belizeans joked the storm brought the rain they had expected from Hurricane Dean, but the volume of water on city streets and the northern highway was no laughing matter. Just a sobering reminder of vulnerable Belize City remains and how quickly conditions can deteriorate, catching thousands off guard and unprepared.

tank. Principal Patrociana Cho (Tel: 420-2031) is confident that better conditions will come with time.

➡ (Continued From Page 1)
1935 hurricane was responsible for more than 400 deaths in the Keys, primarily among World War I veterans working on a highway connecting the island chain to the mainland.

Only eight other Category 5 storms have been known to hit land in the Atlantic basin, including Gilbert, the 1935 hurricane, Hurricane Camille in 1969 and Hurricane Andrew in 1992. Andrew had top sustained winds of 165 mph at landfall. It was the second-most expen-

sive hurricane in U.S. history, after Hurricane Katrina.

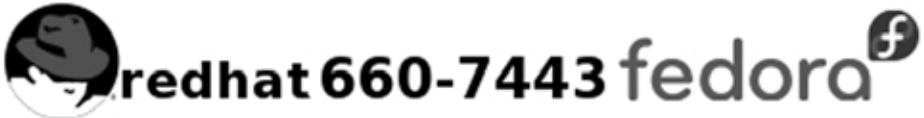
Hurricane Wilma is the most intense Atlantic hurricane ever recorded in terms of pressure: It was at 882 millibars when it was in the Caribbean before it weakened ahead of landfall in the Yucatan.

The lowest pressure ever recorded in a tropical cyclone was 870 millibars in Typhoon Tip in the northwest Pacific Ocean in 1979.

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Page



Your weekly

HOROSCOPE

ARIES (Mar. 21- April 20)
You must avoid gossip and focus on what you have to do. Listen to the complaints of others. A trip to visit relatives should be rewarding. Recognition can be yours if you present your ideas and stand behind your beliefs. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

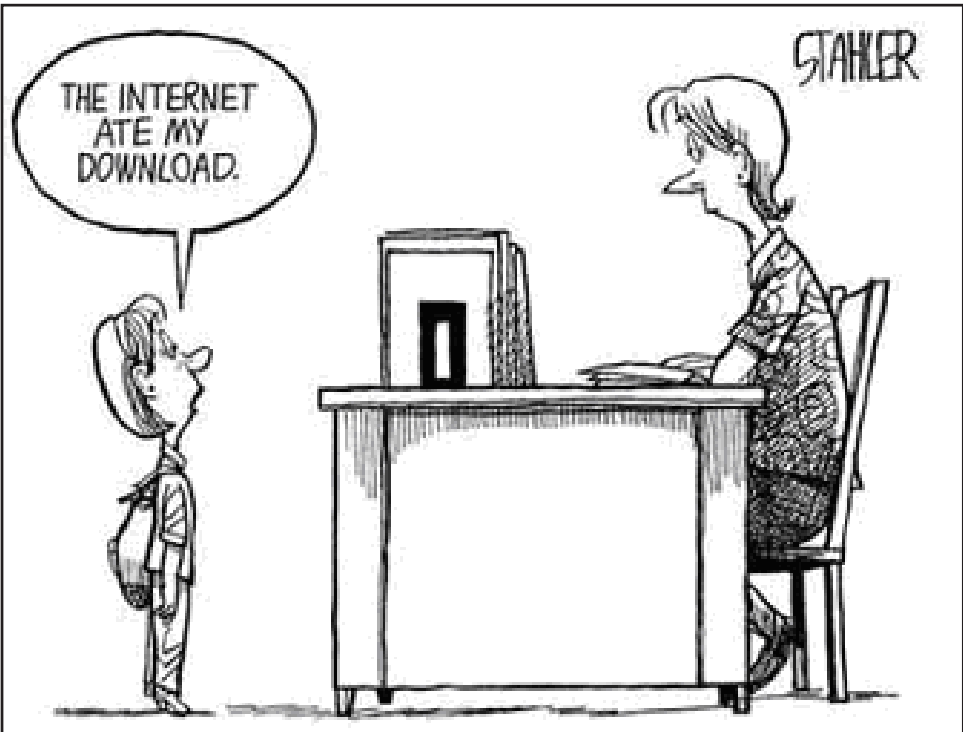
TAURUS (Apr. 21- may 21)
Social activity should be on your agenda this week. Your lack of attention may have been a factor. You can buy or sell if you're so inclined. Try not to let your emotions interfere with the completion of your work. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21)
Your own small business on the side

sounds pretty lucrative. You need to make your environment a better place, with more comforts and a better entertainment center. Your position may be in question if you haven't been pulling your weight. Be careful what you consume this week. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)
Short trips will be educational. Don't be too quick to judge partners or those you work with. Be careful; you may upset someone you live with if you don't consult with them. Update and review your personal investments. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

LEO (July 23-Aug 22)
You should check out prestigious



clubs or groups that have a cause you believe in. You'll look guilty if you don't lay your cards on the table. This may not be your day if you are overly melodramatic and unnerving everyone around you. Secret affairs could cause upset. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 -Sept. 23)
Someone is trying to pull the wool over your eyes, and if you're gullible, it may cost you. You will be popular and will easily attract members of the opposite sex. Take care of chores that have been hanging over your head. Secret love affairs may be enticing; however, you must be prepared for the restraints that will follow. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 -Oct. 23)
You may have difficulties with foreigners. Try not to allow your partner to lead you astray or upset your routine. You can make changes to your domestic scene that will benefit all who reside

there. You'll find it easy to meet new people. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
This will not be the best day to try to push your ideas or concerns. You may cause a fuss if you come on too strongly in public. Self improvement projects should be your key concern. Deception in your home is evident. Don't beat around the bush. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 -Dec. 21)
Your ability to take hold of a situation will surely bring you popularity and leadership. Over spending or unexpected bills could set you back. Try to be there for someone if they need assistance. Keep tabs on your spending. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22.- Jan. 20)
Keep calm. Someone around you is bouncing off the walls. Secret enemies (Please Turn To Page 15)

US helps Belize after Hurricane Dean



Hurricane dean affected homes in Corozal and Orange Walk, flattened cane fields and papaya plantations and uprooted numerous trees.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23 / PRNewswire-USNewswire/ — The U.S. Government through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced it will provide \$50,000 to support the relief efforts of the Government of Belize (GOB) arising from Hurricane Dean. In addition, USAID will provide emergency relief supplies, valued at approximately \$50,000, to the Belize Red Cross for hurricane-affected populations in northern Belize. These supplies include 500 wool blankets, 1,056 hygiene kits, 100 rolls of plastic sheeting, and 5 chainsaw kits. The total value of the assistance is \$100,000.

Hurricane Dean made landfall approximately 40 miles north of the Belize-Mexico border as a category five storm. According to the GOB, high winds and heavy rains resulting from the hurricane have caused significant damage to housing and agriculture in the northern districts of Corozal and Orange Walk,

which the GOB declared disaster areas on August 21. Preliminary assessments by the GOB report that the hurricane damaged more than 1,500 houses, rendering approximately 2,000 people homeless in northern districts and causing an estimated \$5 million in damage. Initial aerial estimates also indicate that the storm destroyed the entire export papaya crop, valued at more than \$20 million, and caused at least \$1.2 million in damage to sugar crops, affecting the livelihoods of small farmers.

On August 23, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Leonard A. Hill declared a disaster in Belize due to the impact of Hurricane Dean. USAID has a two-member emergency team in Belize which has assessed and identified needs in conjunction with the GOB’s National Emergency Management Organization, and U.S. Embassy staff have conducted aerial assessments utilizing U.S. military helicopters.

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➡ (Continued From Page 12)
may be holding a grudge that you’re not even aware of. Don’t say things that could be damaging later on. Cut loose. You need some help this week. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.
AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 -Feb. 19)
You will have a tendency to put on pounds. If everyone wants to do their own thing, let them. Get the red tape and the unwanted paperwork out of the way. You can get the attention of important individuals but it might not be the time to get them to help or to back your ideas. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.
PISCES (Feb. 20-Mar. 20)
Don’t be shy; show your abilities! Do not get upset about situations you cannot change. You can enjoy short trips. You can make money, but try not to let it slip through your fingers. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

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hill 75 yards to Guesthouse.

Guest Gallery



Melanie Ysaguirre and Daniel Weber, both of Rochester, New York, exchanged vows of holy matrimony at the St Thomas Episcopal Church on Saturday, August 25,2007. Melanie is the daughter of Belizean parents, former Customs broker Jim Ysaguirre (r.i.p.) and well-loved school teacher Zoila Carmona Ysaguirre (r.i.p.).



IW Reader Karol Valecillo on a recent trip to Egypt



aspiring photographer/designer Julia Heusner did this collage of her cat, Louie.



Strange sight: a gas truck 100 yds from shore. (courtesy San Pedro Sun)



Independent Weekly's rambling reporter William Ysaguirre sent us this image from the deck of the 'Maid of the Mist' at the foot of the horseshoe falls at Niagara, Canada.



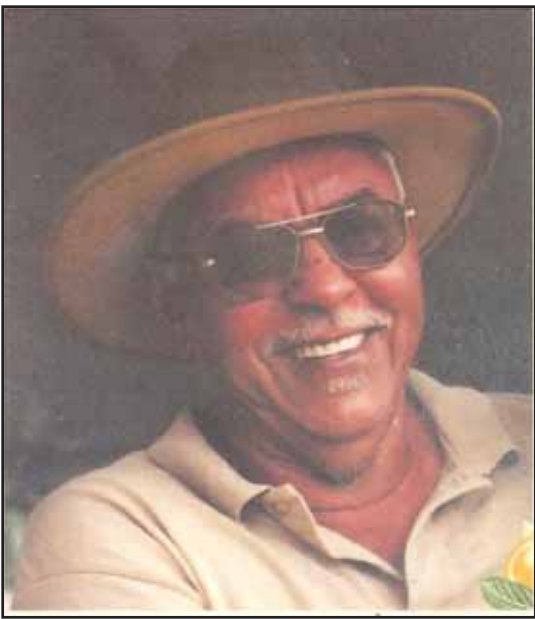
The Maid of the Mist IV is one of several vessels which carry visitors to Niagara right up to the base of the horseshoe falls, the better to appreciate the magnificence of the falls..

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.

Letters to the Editor

mal goes through—it takes a long torturous time to die. I don't know how you feel about pets but my family suffered terribly over this incident. We were saddened by the senseless cruelty & pain that an innocent creature had to endure, and for what? We wondered where the strychnine came from because it's not sold in stores for rat poison anymore. Now I am wondering if the strychnine came from the government strychnine eradication program. Some scamp could have stolen it or might have been hired by one of these towns in an "eradication" project & kept

some for personal reasons.
I will be personally emailing a story about Dee's case to the newspapers. It's time to share the grief & reality. Belizeans are more humane than that, and everyone I spoke to hates the strychnine eradication program. I include a picture of our much missed pet and hope you as a sensible and proud Belizean will be moved to stop this cruel eradication.
Sincerely
Linn Wilson
Seine Bight Village
Placencia Peninsula
cc: Mayor of Belmopan



A fond farewell to Charles Woods Sr, an avid reader of Independent Weekly, who left this earth so suddenly and sadly.

Thank you Mr. Charles for sharing your perspective with the editor over the years for her column and book.
Condolences from the staff of Independent Weekly to the Woods Family, especially Silvana and Jackie and their wonderful children.

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Poet's Corner

“Listen”
By Giselle O’Brien

Can you hear it?
It’s called silence
It happens when we all stop
And we listen...
Listen to the trees
And the rustle of their leaves
Listen to the river
As it runs into the seas
Listen to the birds
And the shuffle of their wings
Listen to the insects
And the midnight song they sing
Listen
Do you hear it?
It’s called silence
It happens when we stop
And we listen...
Listen to our elders
And the wise beneath their words
Listen to the young ones
And their ideas so absurd

Listen to the foolish
And understand their views
Listen to the wise
And relish in their news

Listen
Will you just listen?
Its called silence
Devour it



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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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