

The Independent

Reformer for the People

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Morality vs Money

NRP promises Belizeans both

Businessman Cornelius Dueck has stunned Belizean voters by announcing his new political party has enough candidates at the ready to contest EVERY division in the country, all 31 of them, should General Elections be called tomorrow. He also claims they have the resources to match the PUP and UDP



NRP leader Cornelius Dueck addresses the nation.

machineries, combined.

The starting revelations came during ceremonies broadcast live from the National Reform Party Headquarters in Belize City on February 21.

Dueck, a Belizean Mennonite, who owns a truck parts store, is a pastor in the "Streams of Living Waters Ministry" and spent the last two years dis-



The NRP candidates Manuel Avila, George Boiton Jr., Fermin Choc, Alden McDougal, back row Enio Lopez, Hilberto Nah, Charles Selgado and Derick Stuart, each addressed the electorate via live radio broadcast.

tributing Bibles in Honduras. He says he has enough money in his own bank accounts, support from the Belizean business community and donors abroad to spend around \$50 to \$100 MILLION Belize dollars if necessary to convince voters the NRP should form the next government.

Nine candidates were introduced at the launch but the party claims they have others standing by, some of whom currently work in the public service. So far there is only one woman, Darlene Graham on the ticket, but Dueck says the party is seeking additional female

candidates and welcomes all Belizeans, regardless of sex, ethnicity, religious denomination or past political affiliation.

Campaign Coordinator Estevan Berejano says it is a diverse, but unified group: "The National Reform Party has one goal, and only one goal, and that is to see this country rise from the poverty state we are in and to move into a place of economic stability to advance this nation into a first world nation."

Dueck, hails from Spanish Lookout, a Mennonite settlement which has yet to collect any royalties from GOB for

the discovery of oil on their communal lands. He says it is crucial that Belize use its oil revenues wisely, citing the case of Nigeria, a national rich in natural resources, but whose corruption level has (Please Turn To Page 16) 

Avalanche of Anger

By: Meb Cutlack

An avalanche of anger is building in the country. The Trade unions, most young people and the entire media (except two government outlets) are solidly against the present Musa/Fonseca government.

Amandala has gone as far as to declare its support for third parties: "...And what we mean by "third party" in this context, is any initiative which is not beholden to Lord Michael Ashcroft."

Commenting on the Union march

Amandala amplified its statement: "At the core, the demonstrators were demonstrating against Lord Ashcroft's hegemony – directly in the case of BTL, and indirectly in the case of KHMH. UDP Leader, Hon. Dean Barrow, conveniently absented himself from the old capital on Saturday, because his law firm represents Ashcroft's interests at both BTL and at the Belize Bank, the bank which is prominently involved with The Universal Hospital deal, which is the direct cause of the KHMH staff protest.

"As a result of Barrow's absence and the UDP's practical ambivalence, the leaders of the demonstration found themselves effectively isolated by the two Ashcroft-influenced major parties. On the one hand, they had been condemned by the PUP as UDP, and on the other hand, the UDP itself had chosen to confine its support to tepidity.

"In conclusion, then, we repeat, whether the Leaders intended it to be so or not, Saturday's Demonstration was a third party

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VIP-Public Consultation update: The People Speak Out!!

Dear Editor,

Since the launching of our Party's National Direction, we have been receiving much response from the Belizean public. VIP appreciates and takes very seriously such advice. Please allow us to share with the public a few inputs to date. We have picked those that capture the general mood of responses we are getting.

1. Dear VIP, I first voted in 1979 and have witnessed the first time the UDP and PUP governed our beloved Independent Belize. What they have both done is run down our country into the mess we have today. I advise the VIP to work as a team with the public service. The day to day running of our country is really in the experienced and professional hands of the public service but the parties have instead retrenched, manipulated or totally bypassed them.

2. Dear VIP, I am a Belizean living in the US and have maintained my close ties with my family and homeland. I fully support VIP's initiative to allow Belizeans abroad to vote. Like me, most of us own property and pay taxes. As a Tax paying Belizean, I believe I should have the right to vote no matter where I am in this world. Thank you VIP for championing our constitutional right to vote.

3. Dear VIP's, I think that fixed, land purchase values need to be established and a law passed so that it cannot be reduced by politicians. Offer soft terms including interest free payment plans for Belizeans to purchase their first lot.

4. VIP, I am a resident of San Pedro and strongly object to (name withheld) owning 9000 acres of Prime Island property or (name withheld) owning 1500 acres of southern coastland. VIP should set a limit on the amount of beachfront land Belizeans can own. I also believe that **no foreigner** or foreign owned company should own more than 200 feet of beach front property or ten acres on any island or along sea coast. VIP should set up a review board to look at all land sold by the PUP in the last two terms and take appropriate action.

5. Remove land distribution from the hands of the Politicians of all shape and color. Implement a system that would empower wide spectrum district committees to recommend all or any decisions regarding land allocation.

6. Dear VIP, I will support your new party simply for your humility and openness to publish your municipal campaign financials. I look forward to seeing your national campaign financials. I don't ever expect to see financials from the PUP or UDP who will always dance to the tunes of the First Belizeans: (names withheld).

VIP will continue to update the public on all inputs that will be compiled into our final National Plan 2008.

Yours in Service to Country,

Bobby Lopez

VIP Public Relations

Congratulations to the Minister of Education

Dear Editor,

The Hon. Francis Fonseca, Minister of Education, should be com-

mended for his efforts in the enforcement of the Education Rules that prohibit a school from denying attendance to, or discriminating against, a child of compulsory school age, when the child's parent or guardian is unable to pay the schools fees.

Under the present rules it appears that the compulsory school years are now through Standard 6. Previously truancy laws and their require enforcement included secondary education. But in 2005, the Government canceled the truancy programs. It is certainly more than arguable that prior to the canceling of the truancy programs that education was to be provided through the fourth form.

In similar respect, prior to the cancellation of the truancy program, the unanimous recommendation of the Political Reform Commission was that Chapter 11 of the Constitution be amended to expand the rights of the persons of Belize to include "Protection of the Right not to be denied Basic Education". With modern day advances and requirements, a "Basic Education" would, by necessity, include the right to an education through the fourth form. Anything less would not be basic.

If the schools elected to do so, such education could be provide in the manner that was successful in the Soviet Union. That is, those who intended to continue on to college proceeded with a course of studies that provided all of the college preparatory subjects. Those who did not intended to proceed to college could elect a course of studies that would also teach them a trade or craft.

There are thousands of children annually that are being denied secondary education. Such denial is the re-

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Diplomatic SNAFU: Cal violates the Service



By: Trevor Vernon

A lot of people are expecting me to write about the Moises Cal situation as reported on in both the local and foreign press. They ask me what I know from my interactions with him 2000-04, my second stint with the Foreign Service. I don't want to write about Cal. I am uncomfortable, I must admit. I see the Foreign Service as sacrosanct; so, I am terribly disappointed with Cal's purported behavior as it serves, to my mind, to taint everyone else's past service in the foreign service, and GOB's current leadership role (rotating) in the SICA.

Moises Cal, for those of you who don't know, was a staunchly loyal Shoman man when I knew him. The Ambassador Cal I knew was willing to take a hit for Show-Time, anytime. Now Show-man isn't known to be wrapped up with big time funny money; so, the news of Cal being busted in Panama with a million USD\$ in a suitcase doesn't add up to my mind. Show-time is the known sponsor of the Cals' entry into elected politics in Belize. Money, they say, is the root of all evil

and Ambassador Cal has always been ambitious. But I can't see the man getting wrapped up with the kind of folks "DEA wants to talk to". The man I knew wasn't that desperate. He was closely allied with Chief Pharisee Assad, the brain of many officious operations. He did whatever Assad wanted, anytime...not unlike quite a few other PUP insiders. Worshipped him unapologetically, without reserve. I used to shudder at Moises' knee time both in front of and behind Assad's back, given the latter's reputation.

Now, there is a lot of speculation as to what the Show-man is/was doing in London. A lot of speculation. Put to pasture, some say. Not the Assad I know; he'll never be put to pasture. The smart money says he is raising money for Rigoberta's Presidential bid in Guatemala. I mentioned this in a private conversation to a player and he chuckled nervously. He knew I was deadly serious but his intelligence was telling him otherwise, apparently. Besides, his eyes were focused elsewhere...apparently on Dueck's political ascendancy, given some of the statements Dueck made at his launch.

I can't see Cal doing the dirty work for the PUP Risk element where one's almost expected to be a mule in order to be inducted into the fraternity and become a made member. The pressure has always been on the diplomatic corps worldwide to use those diplomatic pouches to bag underworld

interests. And, stranger things happen in politics, especially Belize politics, where the Risk Analyst still rules money matters (Red & Blue), no matter what.

So in many ways, this is not about Ambassador Cal and his wild ambitions in as much as it is about other, larger underworld forces. What interests me right now is the big money the NRP's leader talked about being prepared to spend. The mass parties are expected to blow \$50 to \$100 MILLION on the next general election, Cornelius Dueck—a truck parts dealer and pastor from Spanish Lookout—stated in the launch last Wednesday of the National Reform Party he doesn't plan to be left behind or be outspent. Choice expletives came to my lips as I heard Dueck make his statement in response to a tough question from the Editor of another local paper. Like most observers have been whispering, I too wondered about the gargantuan mysterious financial backing.

Big money circulating in our little Belize and here I am struggling to meet payroll and printing costs on a subsistence basis...while fighting with GST to get registered. Obscene sums of money from supposedly clean money sources.

And, the tainted money is here, no doubt about that. Mr. Risky Business himself called it "parallel market" foreign exchange outsourcing when the

laundering scheme was blown wide open at BTL a few months ago. I shudder to think of all those who have been lured in. It seems like it's become the norm in business circles and social clubs. It's kosher in Belize to take cocaine money and become apart of the rinse cycle. Even cool.

Some people here worship the lavadoras unreservedly. All the supposedly big name social elites are swimming in the stuff while their very own kids, siblings, and spouses are hooked on some form of the real devil's excrement: powdered courage. It's simply too bloody incredible.

We at this paper are not interested in the blood money machinations. They can keep it and keep worshipping it. We will keep our sanity and our focus. Moises apparently lost his and I hope to God Chief Negotiator wasn't behind it, for the country's sake. Not that he'll suffer in Hell for it, or anything. He can always go to confession, too.

Moises will live a full life, no doubt; and, as a good Catholic will receive absolution. But he has lost all the respect people had for him, no matter how much money he has been able to amass. You can keep your blood money, your fancy cars and material wealth. I'll keep my sanity, self respect and respect for my fellow man. I am not a predator or preacher, and I rather like the simple life.

Avalanche of Anger

➡ (Continued From Page 1)
demonstration. At Kremandala, we support third party initiatives. But they have to be serious. We are not here to be the butt of Lord Ashcroft's jokes."

It was interesting to see The Reporter's recent editorial reflecting on an old 'crime' carried out by Musa. "Nine years ago" wrote Harry Lawrence, "a Commission of Inquiry similar to the one now looking into allegations of irregularities in the Development Finance Corporation, published a report of its findings into allegations of misdeeds against Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Said Musa. He went on "The two Commissioners found that despite some stonewalling from government officials who could not produce two requested files, and despite the refusal of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to assist the Commission with his testimony, it had sufficient information to

determine that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Said Musa, was 'responsible' for the loss of \$7,535,833.38 of government revenue." Mr Lawrence noted "The Commission in its published report went on to say: 'We are also of the view that he knowingly and deliberately acted in contravention of the requirements of the Economic Citizenship Programme, and therefore may have committed a criminal offence.'"

That is strong language; and if you add to this indictment the recent extraordinary and hard hitting Guardian exposé of the PUP government's ugly and unlimited give away of some of Belize's best land (and huge chunks of our cayes) to cronies and foreigners, you have the building of a huge media swell against the Musa Government.

Where does that leave the third parties? Well, it is the two party system, the status quo in politics, which has got

us to where we are today. The fact that there are now 5 different third parties—representing a huge tide of Belizeans throughout the country—means that the status quo is now quite likely broken forever.

The new third parties have emerged BECAUSE too many people cannot see enough light between the PUP and the UDP. It is not that there is not a large space between the philosophies of the two main parties, there is.

It is just that, for whatever reason, the UDP continues to refuse to actually reveal how the UDP would be different, from what it used to be or from the PUP, when it comes to land reform and an elected Senate.

In a small start to answering electoral concerns, Opposition Leader Dean Barrow has declared that a UDP government would cancel all leases involved in the scandals the

Guardian have exposed. The UDP government would also re-acquire any lands that have been titled to what Mr. Barrow's letter calls 'cronies'. Barrow's letter also advised third party buyers of those lands should beware before they buy.

But for the most part, the whole country is crying out for a break up of the tremendous power of the Executive branch of government, by empowering an elected senate to monitor government corruption - and actions. The UDP is just not listening.

There is a sense arrogance in the manner in which they presume they will be the next government and see no reason to bother to address the electorate on issues which are screaming to be addressed.

They should wake up before they too are swept away in a tsunami of disgust and distrust!

Fly Tropic Air - Fly Tropic Air - Fly Tropic Air

Calling all Belizeans



By: Karla Heusner Vernon

There is nothing new about Guatemalans, Hondurans, perhaps even Mexicans, being imported to vote in Belizean elections. In fact, the practice may be as old as "free and fair" elections. Yes, there are regulations to prevent it, but there are ways around residency requirements, officials and doctors willing to sign documents, fake test results. The most recent innovation was the former head of the immigration department personally ordering stamps from Angelus Press to allow people to begin entering Belize at a southern crossing without having to go through the official border at Benque..

Selling citizenship and residency cards is big business in this country, even if the recipient pays, not with cash, but political support.

To be fair, not all the illegal voters come in under the wire unchallenged. In every division there are vigilant people (most often campaign workers) who challenge the names on the voter's lists, even take the matter to court.

Some stand, some are thrown off. You win some, you lose some. When

democratic process, steal our elections out from under us.

Recently a gentleman from Burrell Boom called a morning show regarding certain divisions and Guatemalans being given residency and registered right now. He also claims that if you check the numbers in the last election, certain candidates in certain divisions lost by the EXACT number of people brought in. Or should we say certain people WON by that number of votes.

to offices that real Belizeans wanted to cast out, by casting their ballot. How many Belizeans might not go to the polls this time around because they feel their own vote will be canceled out by a paid foreigner?

What can we do about it? Clearly the challenges are important, but are they enough and will they not simply be circumvented once more? When asked about illegal registrations, the VIP responded, "We will leave that one to God." (They don't have the resources to monitor and they don't have \$50 million to hire people to do it.)

Hmmm, well if it is true God helps those who help themselves, maybe we can do something. One suggestion, made to me by the General Manager of the Independent, is that Belizeans should demand a moratorium on new registrations with naturalization certificates. Set a cut off date and that is it. No more newly naturalized Belizean voters can be added to the lists.

In addition, I propose that we try to counter the influx with an influx of our (Please Turn To Page 14)

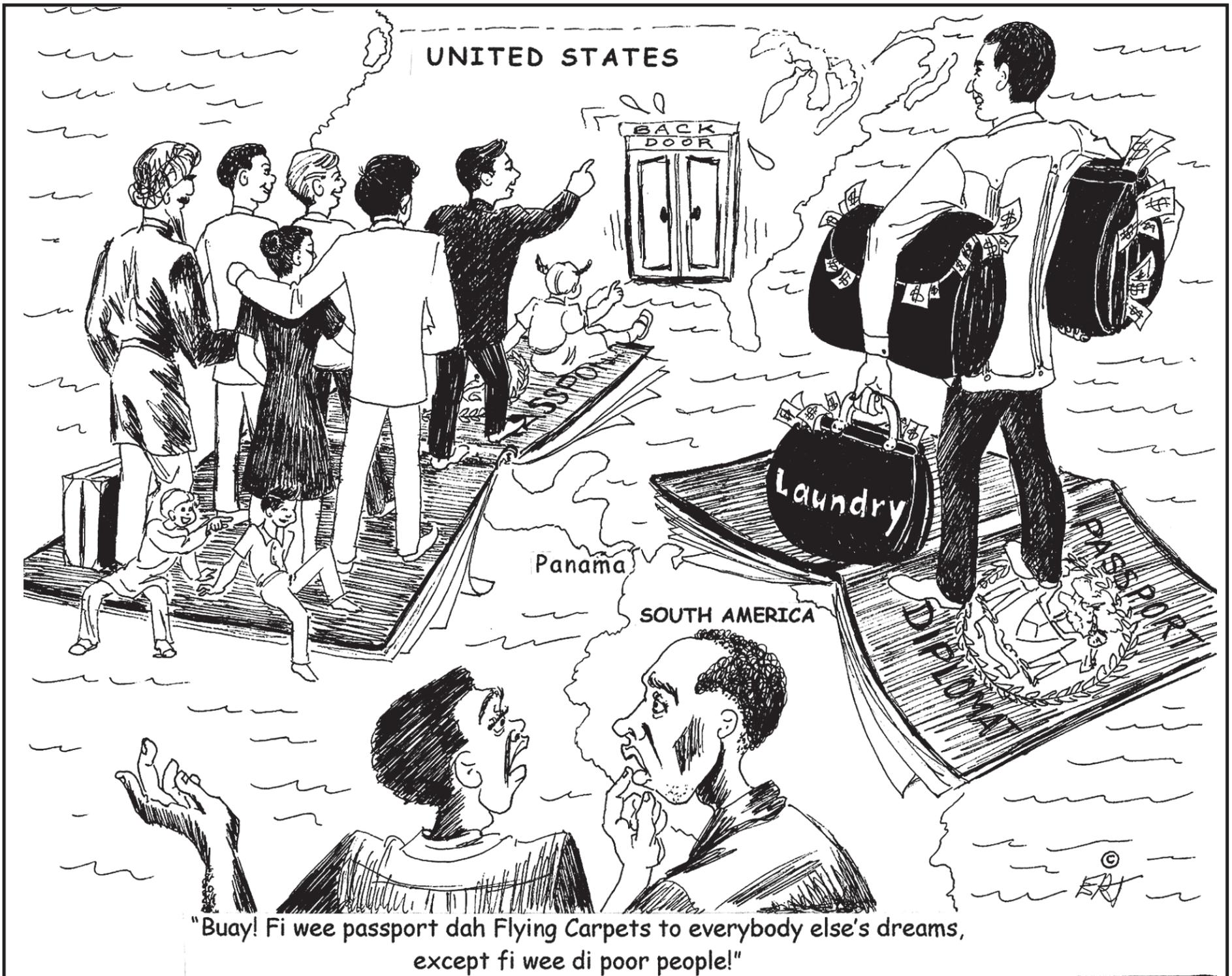
These allegations should cause us to wonder just how many "false" Belizeans were responsible for returning people to office real Belizeans wanted to cast out, by casting their ballot.

you lose some, they just bring in some more...

But aside from a few blips on the election day reporting radar, I don't know that the Belizean public has any real tabulation of the numbers of people entering this country to destabilize our

This gentleman seems convinced so many Guatemalans and others will be coming into Belize for this election, the PUP has already won it!

These allegations should cause us to wonder just how many "false" Belizeans were responsible for returning people



Belize Vice Prime Minister commits to IUCN's Ridge to Reef approach

Belize City, Belize – River sediments and pollutants are badly affecting the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System (MBRS). To help conserve the reef system, John Briceño, Belize Vice Prime Minister expressed support for IUCN's efforts to work with partners on the 'Ridge to Reef' approach, which aims at integrating watershed management upstream with marine environments downstream.

"We now know that we cannot manage the reef system sustainably without addressing the problems originating from land-based activities," said Briceño. During a meeting last week in Belize with the Head of IUCN's Water Programme, Ger Bergkamp and the Mesoamerica Water Coordinator, Rocio Cordoba, Mr Briceño expressed his commitment towards engaging with IUCN on safeguarding the reef, stressing the need to work together on a 'Ridge to Reef' approach.

The Mesoamerican Barrier Reef is increasingly under pressure from industrial impacts such as oil spills, irresponsible tourism development and over-fishing. In addition land-based activities are increasingly threatening the reef ecosystem. Unsustainable agricultural practices, deforestation and inadequate solid waste disposal are among the many causes of excessive sedimentation and accumulation of pesticides and nutrients in the Gulf of Honduras. The pollution and degradation of the reef's watersheds not only harm natural ecosystems but also put at risk people's health, their livelihoods and living standards.

The current IUCN mission to Belize, Honduras and Guatemala is to design IUCN's support to the 2nd phase of the MBRS project. During this phase the MBRS Commission and Marine Research Centre will be established in Belize City. Over the next 6 months, under the presidency of Mr. Briceño, Belize will also lead the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD). A major emphasis will be given to establishing sustainable watershed management in the rivers flowing into the Gulf of Honduras.

The governments involved have requested IUCN to support their efforts on watershed management in the years to come. Noel Jacobs, Director of the MBRS Project, stressed that IUCN's involvement was sought "because of its trusted relationship with relevant governments and ministries, its extensive membership and partners' network in the region, and its strong technical expertise in watershed management."

The IUCN Water programme is cur-



rently working with over 150 member and partner organizations in more than 30 countries worldwide on river basin

management. During the meeting Mr Bergkamp stated that "IUCN has gained significant experience in sustainable wa-

ter and watershed management in recent years. It is well placed to work with its members and partners to address the problems in the river basins around the Gulf of Honduras". Rocio Cordoba emphasized that "the current involvement of IUCN in the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System follows years of work by a large number of IUCN members and partners working on protected areas and monitoring of marine ecosystems". IUCN supports sustainable watershed management in the region as part of the activities developed under the 2nd phase of the Water and Nature Initiative, due to start in the second half of 2007.

(IUCN Press Release)

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PUP Standard Bearer wanted by Panama Police

According a report published by the Panama press, the Panama police are seeking a Belizean diplomat who brought an undisclosed amount of US dollars into the country by paying off a group of Customs agents who, official sources say, are now in custody.

In a release to the media, the Director General of Customs, Daniel Delgado Diamante, announced the separate charges on Friday, while intense investigations of these four officials of this department of the Ministry of Economics and Finance continues.

The agents are "presumably involved in an act of corruption at the Tocumen International Airport. The part played by a Belizean citizen who presented a

diplomatic passport upon entry, is also under investigation," he indicated.

The sources also confirmed that the Belize government reported that the unidentified individual is not a member of its diplomatic corps.

Delgado Diamante said that in the wee hours before dawn last Saturday, four Customs officials detected a suitcase full of money passing through an x-ray machine in the baggage area of the Tocumen International Airport, which belonged to a passenger who identified himself as a Belizean diplomat.

"Upon detecting the cash, which had not been declared as required by Panamanian law, the purported diplomat offered and handed over sums of money

to the Customs officials, to avoid the total confiscation of the cash," he explained.

Only \$130,000 was reported as undeclared, while the officials allowed the entry of an undetermined quantity of cash.

Delgado added that the Ministry's investigations indicate the guilt of the Customs official, Gregorio Anselmo Villarreal Cedeño.

He was detained last week in the vicinity of the San Miguel Archangel Hospital in possession of \$88,000 in cash and another \$15,000 were later found at his residence, which at first he said were "his savings."

Villarreal Cedeño, who has worked in Customs since 1990 and had risen to

head his unit, confessed that he had participated in the illicit business and divided the money with his three co-workers, two unidentified young men and a lady, who have been employed by Customs since 2003, 2004 and 2001, respectively. The four Customs officials remain in custody.

Sources say the Ministry authorities are looking in Panama for the purported diplomatic, who was ordered to be restrained from leaving the country.

The source adds that this latest incident adds to a series of other incidents at this body last year, such as felonies involving the altering of official documents, the fraudulent introduction of used cars into the country and other acts of corruption.

GMO Corn now in Belize

By: Godsman Ellis

The approval by Government to import GMO corn raises a red flag for the health of the nation. The circumstances leading up to the approval raises a number of questions. The issue of imported foods and planting material containing GMO is not new to Belize and the relevant ministries have been long in discussions (public and internal) on the issue.

As recently as last October BAHA held public consultations countrywide on the issue of GMO's in Belize. In fact this Government agency made recommendations for policy guidelines to GOB. An underlying fact is that Belize ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biodiversity which obliges the country to implement and develop its own national regulatory framework "for the safe transfer, handling, use and release of genetically modified organisms, GMO's and products resulting from modern biotechnology"

It is the responsibility of Government to protect the health of its people and the environment from the adverse effects of modern biotechnology especially when the products are managed by unscrupulous businessmen. We are reminded how GMO corn imported from the United States ruined the corn industry in Mexico driving thousands of its farmers into poverty and dependency. Farmers of Belize have also suffered the consequences of biotechnology when they replaced their traditionally selected corn seeds with synthetic seeds (resulting in loss of germplasm) in that they were not prepared for the technology package.

It is reasonable to appreciate the urgency of the situation given the case presented by the importer and the situation with the usual suppliers. But the question remains: were other options explored? The potential risks associated with the permit for the 3,000 tons of GMO corn on our chicken meat (the most consumed meat product in Belize) is yet unknown.

In such a situation Government is well advised to follow the precautionary principle rather than put the health of the people at risk. This serious precedent can open the flood gates to the importation of unregulated GMO products into Belize.

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Main & Church Streets, walk down
hill 75 yards to Guesthouse.

PNP Plants Seeds in San Antonio Village Toledo District

**By: INdependent Weekly
P.G. Correspondent**

On Sunday, February 18, a new political party was launched in San Antonio, Toledo. They have two candidates who have offered to run in the national election, Wil Maheia for Toledo East and Dionicio Choc, for Toledo West.

Independent Weekly's PG correspondent was there... Bartolo Teul, Master of Ceremonies, opened the meeting by welcoming the people to "history in the making". He did this in English and then Q'etchi. Glenise Locario sang the national anthem, and pastor Dionicio Choc, PNP candidate for Toledo West, led in prayer.

Mr. Teul, welcomed the people who came from Orange Walk, Belize, Cayo, Stann Creek and Corozal District. The Chairman of San Antonio, Theodoro Oh and Alcalde, Inoscio Cho, welcomed everyone personally. Mr. Cho gave his remarks in Mopan Maya saying "change will only come if we all work together and make it happen."

The PNP was endorsed as the newest member of the Belizean political landscape by Hipolito Bautista from "We the People" based in Corozal. He urged the gathering to "do away with the two-party system, and welcome a new multi-party system. This is the message of today. A multi-party system will have more people in the system, watching to see that the money and other things are not lost. We have been living too long between the red devil and a deep blue sea. Thanks to the People's National Party, We the People's Party, and the Vision Inspired by the People Party, we are going to change things! It is up to all of us to take personal responsibility for what happens in this country."

Felipe Tzul, also of "We the People" spoke in Yucatec Maya, "let us work together, we have to work together if we want to make change, we have to support the National People's Party."

Vision Inspired by the People, VIP, also sent representatives to the PNP launch. Mateo Polanco of Stann Creek District: "For too long we have suffered from these two old political parties, who have misrepresented us" we have experienced that these two parties have only given us misery and sorrow. This is why I'm offering myself for the Vision Inspired by the People Party. I'm here to support Wil Maheia and Dionicio Choc of the People's National Party. Let us move forward in peace and unity for our beloved beautiful country."

Ivan Roberts from Cayo District:

"It is an honor and privilege to come here to give my support for fellow Belizeans who are against the present system. I hope that all our people will join together to make sure we make a new and better Belize, a reality. I have been telling my fellow Belizeans since 1998 to change our government, don't be doing the same thing, going from one party to the other, from red to blue, and back to red. This time join together and elect a new party."

Dionicio Choc, PNP standard bearer for Toledo South was introduced as one of the founders of the Toledo Eco Tourism Association some years ago who believes Toledo has great potential for eco-tourism in this district, is very active in his church.

Mr. Choc: "I pledge to you to bring justice, hope and integrity back to you in my district. We must stop the crime and corruption, we need a new party, and that Party is the People's National Party. Millions of dollars have been wasted, who is going to have to pay this debt, it is us and our children".

Bartolo Teul introduced the Standard Bearer to Toledo West: "Wil Maheia has founded an organization that has been working to protect our beautiful natural environment for many years, it is now the biggest in Toledo, TIDE. He has decided that TIDE can move on without him. He is offering himself to continue to work for Toledo by running for the national elections.

When it was his turn, Maheia began by saying, "let's hear it for the Maya Mountains". People ask me if I'm nervous to be speaking to such a big crowd, I say no, why should I be nervous, I'm among my friends and family today. We are planting the seed

for the National People's Party. You are here today because you're tired of the crime and corruption that has been happening in our country for too long. Today the winds of change are blowing out of the South and there blowing up north.

"The reason why we are launching the party in San Antonio is because we are going to focus in on the center of this district. Since 1998 the government has been robbing us, they have been getting millions of dollars, and we can't collect one penny from them.

"People ask me why I left a good job at TIDE, I was in a comfort zone, I had a good salary, but I asked myself, what about the poor of our country? Why do I want to get into politics? It's because I want to make a real change. I'm tired of seeing the big ones in our country ripping us off. Many of our leaders are making millions and millions of dollars, and still they can't even pay those of you who are the rice farmers, who they still owe money. We can't properly run this country while these people continue to rip us off.

"I promise you that within the first hundred days of our party, we will have a collection agency that will begin to collect the money for the people, and we will use it for the people! Today Belize is an oil-producing country, so why is our gas costing \$10 per gallon? It is a crime that poor people in Toledo have to take a bus or plane up north to get medical attention.

"I went up the Moho River the other day and I almost cried to see the amount of survey lines, and the chairmen of the villages there tell me they don't know anything about them. The

minister is giving out land to people who don't even live there. How many people here have traveled to Belmopan to try and get your land and they won't even see or talk to you? We are going to change that, when we get into power. I want to thank all those people who came from up north to support us."

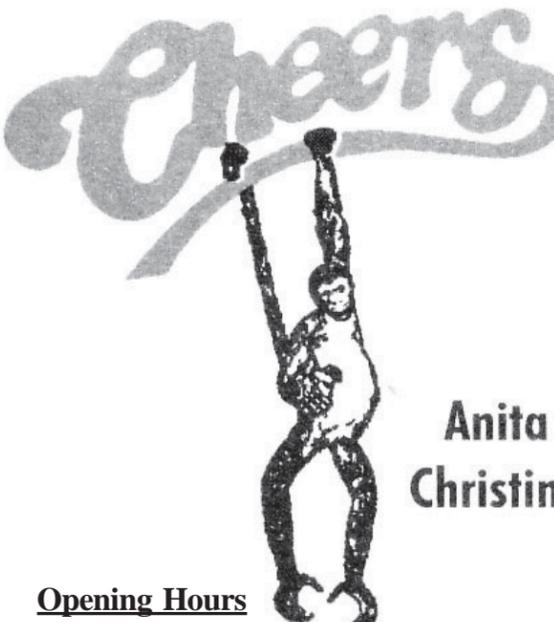
INdependent Reformer's correspondent took the opportunity to ask, Mr. Maheia what the People's National Party will do about the Toledo People's Eco Park Plan. Wil Maheia: "We will endorse that, I have always supported it, and we will continue to support it."

Correspondent: "Mr. Bautista, Wil says his PNP Party will support the eco park, what about We the People?"

Mr. Bautista: "We will support any plan that will protect the pristine environment, and we will support the eco-development of the district's economic potential."

Mr. Andre Price, closed the meeting by saying thank you all for being here today at the dawn of a new political party, a new age, together we can work to make Belize a better place. We stand for a responsible party, that stands for all our people, not just the chosen few. Thank you all, welcome to the People's National Party, "give change a chance, no mek dem chance you".

The PNP launch had a good turnout and was a lively event with plenty of Rice and beans, chicken, tamales, and chicken caldo. Entertainment was provided by the Punta Rebels, Paul Nabor and his group of Garifuna drummers, and the Shaka Shakers and singers followed.



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Your weekly
HOROSCOPE

ARIES (Mar. 21- April 20)

You need to take a long, hard look at yourself and your personal situation. You need activity. It's time to get yourself back on track. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

TAURUS (Apr. 21- May 21)

Your charm will be captivating. You must consider yourself for a change. You can anger others quickly this week. Avoid overspending on items for your home. Strength will come from your ability to overtake just about any one. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21)

Opportunities to make advancements through good business sense are apparent. Opportunities for romance will develop through activities with large groups. Don't let coworkers get wind of your ideas or they might try to take credit for your hard work. You could be blind to the defects of those you love. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

Curl up with a good book or go for a drive in the country. Try to understand both sides of the issue before taking sides. Old friends may not like your choices. Take a close look at any contracts you've signed in order to be sure exactly where you stand. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

LEO (July 23-Aug 22)

Someone you live with could be frustrated and upset. Get promises in writing or you will be disappointed. Your devotion will be persuasive. Take

time to catch up on gossip and make plans to do a little adventure travel. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 -Sept. 23)

Problems with fire, gas, or oil may cause disruptions and annoyances. Advancement can be yours if you put your efforts into work related matters. Opportunities to get ahead will be evident. Join humanitarian groups and let your leadership ability take over. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 -Oct. 23)

Now is the time to concentrate on building a strong financial future for your family. You will be extremely sentimental, and if pushed by others you may hold a lasting grudge. You may find that you are a little lucky this week. Emotional deception will cause friction on the home front. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)

Don't let relatives make demands of you. Major job changes or opportunities to get ahead professionally are apparent. Someone you work with may be withholding valuable information. You will find that unfinished projects at home will be most satisfying. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 -Dec. 21)

Be careful how you handle friends and relatives, they may take things the wrong way. Too much talk will



Your friendship means so much to me that... When you cry... I cry. When you laugh... I laugh. When you jump out a window... I laugh some more.

You are just jealous that the voices talk to me and not you.

You say "Psycho" like its a bad thing.

If you could read my mind you wouldn't be smiling.

"Smile... it confuses people"

I'll be nicer if you give me chocolate.

Sometimes, I have dreams, and in those dreams, THINGS happen to you...

I do whatever the voices in my head tell me to do

STUPID = Smart Talented Unique Person In Demand

One bright morning... in the middle of the night, two dead boys came out to fight. They stood back to back and faced each other drew their swords and shot each other. The deaf policeman heard the noise and came to kill those two dead boys. If u don't believe my story, it's true. Ask the blind man, he saw it too!

You're so stupid you threw a rock at the ground and missed.

lead to disputes. You will get drawn into groups that are not favorable to you. Much knowledge can be obtained through the experiences you have. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22.- Jan. 20)

You may be overreacting to a situation at hand. Your ability to charm others will put you in the limelight at social functions. Your partner could make you angry if they steal your thunder or embarrass you in front of others. Talk to those in a position of power about your intentions. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 -Feb. 19)

Organizations may cost you more than you can afford. Don't let

someone you work with put words in your mouth. You should focus on moneymaking matters and stay away from emotional disputes. It might be best not to spend your money on luxuries this week. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

PISCES (Feb. 20-Mar. 20)

Put your efforts into making constructive improvements to your environment and to your state of mind. Realize that you don't have to do everything yourself. However, you must not neglect your family. You will meet some interesting people if you attend promotional functions. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



THE

hunt **GOOD** FOR **FOOD** with Anthony Hunt

LE PETITE CAFÉ

Radisson Fort George, Cork St. • Belize City • 223-3333

It is about time that I get to Le Petite! Tucked in the Radisson Hotel, this little gem has become a popular snack and breakfast stop for hotel guests, tourists, taxi drivers and neighborhood residents. As one cabbie told me whilst taking the picture "OH OH, they are in trouble now with the critic" Nothing could be further from the truth. The Cafe's choices such as cinnamon rolls and sticks, powder buns and johnny cakes are excellent. And while, the coffee is a little pricey, the ambiance of the patio more than makes up for it. While I did pass on the dessert display (7am is a little early for Cheesecake!) it did look delicious. The Cafe also offers a wide range of breads for sale, as well as occasional "special" treats such as the "greasy greasy" as it is know to us commoners. What is better, rumor has it that they are expanding to make it easier to satisfy the demand!

- ★
- ★
- ★

Cafe OPEN DAILY
Approximate Item Cost 50¢ & UP

In the Belly of the Beast

By: Meb Cutlack

The expression in the 'belly of the beast' has been variously used to describe the continually warring conflict between various aspects of 'self'.

Take the PUP as The Beast - and the present fight going on in its belly! More and more it appears to be a fight to the death not just of one or other of the warring factions but of the beast itself.

There is the spectacle of Jose Coye (on Channel 5) discussing the ongoing discrepancy in the takeover of the Universal Group concerning its debt (some thirty three million dollars to the Belize Bank and an additional twelve million owed to the Development Finance Corporation). He could offer very little as far as the financial details of the transaction.

Jose Coye - "Whosoever is dealing, which is the Ministry of Finance, I would expect that — well they should be dealing with that, that's not the health matter for us. I'm certain the D.F.C. will have their figure and I would expect that the bank would have their figure, and I would expect indeed that when they are finalising the debt with the bank that they would be able to see that figure and see how they arrive at it. I would expect that would happen."

Janelle Chanona - "Who is your counterpart at the Ministry of Finance since, obviously, you are taking care of the Health aspect of it?"

Jose Coye - "I don't (know) who all are involved with the Ministry of Finance. I would expect that—I don't know who all are engaged in that exercise. I have tried to deal with the health side of it and although I try to..."

Adele Ramos, Amandala - "Sir, don't you discuss this at Cabinet?"

Jose Coye - "Yeah but what I'm trying to do is that I cannot be wearing the two hats at the same time and at the same time. I am taking up with the health aspects of it and at the same time I am trying..."

Adele Ramos, Amandala - "So you are not in discussions?"

Jose Coye - "No, I have not been dealing the debt side of it. I have not."

Adele Ramos, Amandala - "That's a serious problem, sir."

Jose Coye - "You'd like me to deal with both no? ... but what I'm telling you there is a — there are progress. They are dealing with the debt. I cannot also deal with that."

Adele Ramos, Amandala - "But you don't know who they are?"

Jose Coye - "The Ministry of Finance. I don't know exactly who it is, the

Prime Minister with the F.S. and whosoever they are; I'm not really into that."

It's a matter, not of substance, but only of how quick to make a deal! Grab and sell and grab an sell again! That's the roar in the PUP's belly; 'Quick fix! Quick deal... and damned be all who have to and accept these deals and suffer the consequences.'

It is getting to the point that not only do the warring factions within the PUP have very little idea of what their other half is doing but often enough no idea at all of what they themselves are doing.

Godfrey Smith Minister of Tourism is a case in point. He lauds the "success" of the tourism industry as he allows it to die; under resourced, over taxed and brutally under attack from the cruise ship industry.

The disintegration within the 'belly' of the PUP is nowhere better illustrated than in the enormous contradictions and existing hatreds between the 'executive' (containing the PM, Said Musa and Minister of 'whatever', Ralph Fonseca) and the eight 'might have been' rebels. This has become a disease in the belly, a poisonous substance which the PUP is unable to get rid of and which will, no doubt, lead to the beast's agonizing death.

Of course, you can also look upon the expression, 'the beast in the belly' with a less jaundiced and more hopeful view— as expressed by the famous, and often much maligned African American writer, W.E.B. Du Bois: "...this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others. ... [O]ne ever feels his twoness ... two souls, two thoughts, two un-reconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body...."

Du Bois imagined a united front people of persons of African descent wherein exiles could use their location "in the belly of the beast" to transform the international system for the benefit of all.

There is certainly not a 'united front' in the "belly of the beast" in Belize to reform anything. There is in fact a total inability among the PUPs to in any way transform the reign of incompetence and financial folly exercised today from the Prime Minister down!

And Du Bois? He gave up and, in 1961, he became completely disillusioned with the United States. He moved to Ghana, joined the Communist Party, and a year later renounced his American Citizenship. He died in August 1963 at the age of 95.

Slavery for the Children of Belize?

contributed

Slavery was abolished in Britain and its colonies in 1833 by the Slavery Abolition Act. But Belize has taken a step backwards in promulgating a situation that has burdens of slavery. Such attributes that are a creation of the Fonseca – Musa duo which is locking their yoke onto the people of Belize, their children and the children's children.

The Fonseca – Musa duo's machinations have resulted in a massive deficit that has resulted in an incredible increase in taxes. The taxes place a staggering burden on the people of Belize and the future lives of their children. The children's position is tantamount to being shackled to a debt that they will have to labor hard and excessively to pay off.

When the PUP went into office in 1998 the country's external debt burden was \$338 million dollars (see CIA World Fact book). However, presently the country is broke and indebted in the sum of over \$1 Billion and growing!

The increases in the tax burden is destroying Belize's economy. The present tax structure can bring the country down. Tax increases beyond a certain level do not result in increased revenue

to the country. To the contrary such taxes can cause the Countries revenue to decrease and the economy to fail.

The economists explain the phenomena by the process commonly referred to as "Supply – Side Economics". Supply – Side Economics is a process that has served many countries well. Briefly put, higher tax rates, beyond a point, do not result in higher revenue. The reason is increased taxes discourages investments and as a result production and supply decrease. With less output to tax, less revenue is collected. The reverse occurs when taxes are reduced because tax cuts are favorable to larger investments which result in increased production and supply that in turn bolsters the economy. This leads to more jobs and a greater revenue from taxes than were received prior to reduction of the tax rate.

The effects of such tax reductions were clearly shown in the US at the end of the Ronald Regan Presidency and during the Bill Clinton Presidency. Ronald Regan brought about a reduction in tax rates that resulted boosted the economy and thereby increased the tax revenue to United States treasury.

President George Bush brought about a reduction in tax rates and also pro-

vided an immediate tax write off for equipment purchased for less than \$100,000. As a result of the Bush tax reductions, during the Presidency of Bill Clinton that followed, the economy boomed. Annually, the country received a greater revenue from taxes than it collected during the earlier period when the tax rates were higher.

A country cannot borrow its self out of debt. But such a fact does not seem to bother the Fonseca - Musa duo. Belize, under their auspices, have made a practice of guaranteeing debts of private persons or non-governmental entities and then having the country pay those debts. In other countries such a procedure would not exist, it would be considered illegal.

Such guarantees are basically a gift of national monies to a crony or a non-government entity. One would wonder whether such a gift is shared and if so how? There can be no rational basis of providing \$45 million to Universal Health Services.

Where did such a large sum of money go? It certainly didn't all go for the facility and its equipment. Politicians do not have a right to give the people's money to their friends.

No problem for the Fonseca - Musa,

though, as the tax payer will directly or indirectly pay the debt, not the crony. The Government does not appear to want to be reimbursed from the crony for the country's loss. There are those who believe that if the Government attempted to collect the debt it would be shown, in court, that the crony debtor did not receive all of the money, that others shared portions of the money and should have to pay their portion of the debt to the Government. Are there Government officials that should have to pay portions of the delinquent debts attributed to the cronies?

The important question is, has the duo created a debt and resulting tax burden that is so great that tax relief is not possible? Currently, the tax burden is so broad that if a Belizean becomes ill he or she will have a tax added to their hospital bill. Is it cheaper to just die, or is that taxed also?

It is shameful that the rich get richer, through the misuse of Government funds, while the poor get poorer and the middle class becomes smaller. It is near criminal that the poor and middle class are required to pay off the improper indebtedness that was created to make the rich richer.

Our Government & Changes!

By: Ray Auxilou

One of the things that strikes me about our parliamentary model, is that while the idea of a national assembly electing a cabinet, or a federal council by any other name, in our model of government is democratically correct. The difference is mainly in that the role of electing a PARTY LEADER destroys the very democratic principal behind the system.

To make a genuine democratic government, the national assembly should by rights elect seven members to be the cabinet for one year of their five year term. This cabinet then in turn by secret ballot should elect the Prime Minister from among the seven members, for the one year term, of the five years that the party is in office. Each year the Prime Minister is changed and the position is non-repetitive and often some of the actual Cabinet members by the national assembly also. This only requires internal party elections. It does however serve to stop a repeat of abuse of authority and that of the government finances by a dictatorial party leader, over a party, which in turn rules over the nation as in our current case.

The act of making the party leader automatically the Prime Minister for the whole five years is subversive and corrupt. Of course in England where this originated it was intended to be so, by the get rich quick Lords from the aristocracy who were running for office.

The power of the people, taken mostly from the California model is exercised in direct initiatives and by referendums sorted out by people led, petition referendums. Referendums in our system currently are only to express political power, but the California model gives actual power to the people to disagree with political power and acts as a check and balance on totalitarian power. The whole idea is to follow the will of the people and not that of the alleged managers, which, in our current parliamentary system are dictators for five years--under the biggest dictator of all, the party leader. To pass such constitu-

tional changes there would of necessity have to be penalties spelled out, such as automatic loss of parliamentary seat for violations.

How does the population of our current state throw out the dictatorial system of our parliamentary model of rule by a party leader, who in turn uses the party as a second level set of rulers, instead of them being managers of government policy subject to people?

Belizeans are wrestling with these ideas for the past twenty years. Well, the populace must organize! One way uses petitions and strikes, as is currently being done, to try and obtain the keys to the treasury revenues and power of Ministerial Discretion (another bad thing).

Multiple parties must learn to unite for common goals against the entrenched incumbents who wish to preserve the GREED aspects of the looting mentality of the current model. Greed is natural, self interest is also. So the constitution has to be changed to thwart the effects of greed and self interest and substitute laws instead. Opponents of the current parliamentary system need to study how they can and will use media relations, arbitration techniques, and so on to elect their smaller group leaders, to form cells, and committees. People who don't learn these things will remain slaves in everything but name by their rulers.

One technique of ruling dictatorially is to educate young people and make them apolitical, passive and dependent on government jobs. This makes them malleable putty in the hands of determined power mad and greedy rulers. Another technical name for this program is co-opting. To be educated then in a small society like ours, means you lose the organizational skills needed to build a genuine democracy from those party people whose prime aim is greed and self interest. The political parties themselves have their cells and secret conference systems, though they go by different names, like block captains and such.

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Ara Macao Development update- PCSD needs funds and expertise

Press Release from The Peninsula Citizens for Sustainable Development

The Environmental Compliance Plan (ECP) for the Ara Macao development was signed by the Belize Department of Environment (DOE) and Ara Macao Development Ltd. on 3 January 2007. A copy of the ECP is available for review at http://www.destinationsbelize.com/ara_macao_ecp.htm

Now that the Ara Macao developer has a signed ECP in hand, it can legally begin construction under the timetable set-out in the ECP. However, no work appears to have started.

Unfortunately, whether Ara Macao Development, Ltd. does or doesn't continue is irrelevant because the ECP does not prohibit assignment of the development rights granted by the ECP. In plain English, this means that the Ara Macao developer can sell the land AND the ECP, and some other developer can come in and do what

the original Ara Macao developer received permission to do — with any such new developer certain to have LOTS of money, perhaps a cruise line or a casino, to name but two of the possibilities.

The ECP also does not include any deadline by which work must begin. Therefore, the original developer has plenty of time to find a suitable buyer, while the land and the development approval appreciate in value - meaning development could theoretically start years down the road.

Because immediate concerted action is so important, a request for judicial review of the DOE approval and the DOE approval process for the Ara Macao development will be filed during March 2007, and the PCSD has retained Belize attorney Antoinette Moore to represent PCSD in the litigation.

A meeting was held with Ms. Moore and Candy Gonzalez from BACONGO (Belize Association of Conservation NGOs) early this

week to discuss litigation strategy and grounds for the request for judicial review. The meeting was very encouraging, and it seems that there may be issues stemming from Ara Macao that could significantly affect the approval process for developments throughout the country. Legal research is currently underway.

However, legal research resources in Belize are limited and PCSD does need assistance with this legal research. Therefore, please contact PCSD if you have any Commonwealth legal contacts who might be willing to help.

Nadja Chamberlain from the Sittee River area has volunteered to assist in the litigation by reviewing documentation from DOE and the Ara Macao developer in connection with the validity of the DOE approval process.

PCSD currently has pledges and donations totaling a little over BZ\$16,000, with an additional BZ\$1,000 in donations received to-

day. The legal fees for the Ara Macao judicial review process are estimated at BZ\$25,000. However, copying, document delivery and transportation could very well cost another BZ\$5,000 to BZ\$10,000 given the number of possible parties to the lawsuit and the widely dispersed geographic locations of those parties.

Therefore, donations are needed now more than ever, and may be made by deposit directly into the PCSD account at Atlantic Bank, or by check or wire transfer. For details of these please email Peninsula Citizens for Sustainable Development Placencia, Belize at info@placenciadocuments.info or call 501-610-4718

The (PCSD) is now officially a not-for-profit corporation under Belize law. A meeting will be held in the next two weeks to elect a board of directors, and notices of meeting date and time will be sent out shortly. Please email PCSD if you're interested in being on the Board.

ROTARY'S

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TOPICAL TIDBITS



Beware Corozal

A Supreme Court ruling in Mexico has revalidated controversial gaming permits that were issued in 2005, for remote betting centers (offsite books) and numbers parlors. This means permit holders with gaming establishments already in operation will stay open, and others who may have hesitated due to legal doubts can now forge ahead. A ban on casinos could also soon be lifted. Senate Members of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) expressed their support for the installation of full-fledged casinos in Mexico. They said that the time has come for clandestine gaming activities to end, and for taxes that should exceed US\$800 million annually to be paid. On February 13 the Mexican Senate sent an "excitativa" to the Chamber of Deputies - a formal request urging the other chamber to move legislation that would reform the 1947 Law, and allow casinos.



Jamaica sugar losses

Losses by the Sugar Company of Jamaica (SCJ) from the 2006/2007 crop are expected to be in the region of \$500 million. This however is a big improvement over last year's losses of approximately \$1.2 billion.

Baby boomer wave!

There is evidently a growing wave of baby boomers planning to retire abroad in hot spots such as Belize, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic - where

beaches and pension checks stretch further "The retirement segment is one thing, but then there is the whole overseas lifestyle segment," said Avirett, who is spearheading a 'baby boomers'



website from his home in Fort Lauderdale. "We are creating a website for boomers going abroad whether it's for a visit or for a lifetime." By some counts, there are 75 million boomers in the United States making the slow march toward retirement. According to market research commissioned by Boomerscape, 70 percent say they would like to spend most of their time traveling.



How Wealth Creates Poverty

Michael Parenti writes that by displacing local populations from their lands and robbing them of their self-sufficiency, corporations create overcrowded labor markets of desperate people who are forced into shanty towns to toil for poverty wages (when they can get work), often in violation of the countries' own minimum wage laws. "In Haiti, for instance, workers are paid 11 cents an hour by corporate giants such as Disney, Wal-Mart, and J.C. Penny.

The United States is one of the few countries that has refused to sign an international convention for the abolition of child labor and forced labor. This position stems from the child labor practices of U.S. corporations throughout the Third World and within the United States itself, where children as young as 12 suffer high rates of injuries and fatalities, and are often paid less than the minimum wage." Parenti also alleges that, "U.S. foreign aid usually works hand in hand with transnational investment. It subsidizes construction of the infrastructure needed by corporations in the Third World: ports, highways, and refineries. The aid given to Third World governments comes with strings attached. It often must be spent on U.S. products, and the recipient nation is required to give investment preferences to U.S. companies, shifting consumption away from home produced commodities and foods in favor of imported ones, creating more dependency, hunger, and debt. A good chunk of the aid money never sees the light of day, going directly into the personal coffers of sticky-fingered officials in the recipient countries." Sound familiar Belize?



At long last!

Leaders from 20 countries, including China and the US, have signed a resolution that paves the way for a replacement to the Kyoto protocol, set to expire in 2012. Although the resolution is non-binding, it is being viewed as a "tipping point," that finally sees the US and China take full responsibility for helping to combat global warming. The forum's closing statement said man-made climate change was now "beyond doubt" - bringing it in line with the stance held in the scientific world.

Meanwhile, wild grass!

A wild grass found in Asia and Africa could hold the key to dreams of pro-

viding an alternative to fossil fuels blamed for global warming, experts say. Miscanthus, a perennial grass native to subtropical and tropical regions of Africa and southern Asia, is the ideal plant for producing ethanol at a lower cost than corn, currently the most widespread source for the fuel. The grass, which is used as an ornamental plant in the United States, produces yields between five and 10 times greater than corn, experts said.



The Real Cost of Bottled Water

Now a report from the USA: "San Franciscans and other Bay Area residents enjoy some of the nation's highest quality drinking water, with pristine Sierra snowmelt from the Hetch Hetchy reservoir as the primary source. Every year, the water is tested more than 100,000 times to ensure that it meets or exceeds every standard for safe drinking water. And yet San Franciscans still buy bottled water. Why?"

The report adds that in fact federal standards for tap water are higher than those for bottled water. And the report states "Clearly, the popularity of bottled water is the result of huge marketing efforts. The global consumption of bottled water reached 41 billion gallons in 2004, up 57 percent in just five years. Even in areas where tap water is clean and safe to drink, such as in San Francisco, demand for bottled water is increasing - producing unnecessary garbage and consuming vast quantities of energy. So what is the real cost of bottled water?"

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We The People throws its hat into the ring

It is time for the W.T.P, the We The People Reform Movement, to make its intentions known now that the V.I.P, the P.N.P, and the N.R.P. have declared their individual entry into the general elections.

From last year, the W.T.P. announced that it is contesting the general elections. This announcement was made in the media without celebration and without glossy brochures and dinner afterwards. We want to win this election strategically, with our brain, not brawn or millions and millions of dollars.

For a political party to say that it will spend \$50M - \$100M on a general election in a small country like ours with less than 140,000 voters and 44% poverty is nothing short of vulgar. In fact, it sends the wrong message. It says to 44% of poor Belizeans that more freebies are on the way and by extension, more disrespect and more dependency than we already have.

We do not wish to be a political party that buys elections. We have great respect for our Belizean people. How will we get them to grow and be agents of growth in our society if we continue to treat them like underprivileged men, women and children at Christmas parties feeding on free food, drinks, "caliente" dancers and mind-numbing music? Afterwards, we will complain like others that our society has become a society of beggars and thumbs still in their mouths.

Over the six years of our existence, and having contested general elections and municipal elections, the W.T.P has learnt that more "election-stealing" than "election-winning" goes on. The Blue and the Red have large armies of organized political campaigners, millions and millions of dollars and bags and bags of political tricks which they use to steal elections. It is important that new political parties face these two parties with combined resources, especially political intelligence. Otherwise, realistically speaking and despite good intentions, we will become no more than cannon fodder for the Red and the Blue monster parties.

At present, the Blues are badly wounded and desperate, especially the Prime Minister; and as we know, wounded and desperate individuals are usually at their most dangerous and unpredictable. We are already seeing the Blues at work with "no holds barred". At present, the offices of area representatives and political officers have evolved into branches of the immigration office, obtaining nationality for aliens and registering them like crazy. Without a transparent land distribution system, and to quote Minister of Natural Resources, John Briceno, thousands of lots have been given out across the country. The fact is that as usual, they are being

given away as an election gimmick, and many people with land are getting more while those with genuine need are getting none. Watch out too. Expect that blue and red notes in envelopes will be slipped under the door of undecided voters on election-day itself!

The Reds themselves, consumed with the euphoria of being the next government and intent on not missing this opportunity are not too far behind with their preparations, illicit and otherwise. They are keeping their war chest replen-

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ished by staying cozy with the Lord Ashcroft's and Santiago Castillo's companies, among others, not to mention fund raising groups in the USA. They are also meticulously registering voters on the very day they turn eighteen. They are not missing anyone. And like the Blues, their freebies flow in terms of food, paid bills, and chaperoning by political candidates.

The best chance for Alternative Parties to win this general election in the best interest of the Belizean people is to form an Alliance of Alternative Parties and vie for the "balance of power" in this coming election. We will win this election through education of the voting public and through real, practical reforms. We will win this election by ensuring we have winning candidates in areas where neither the Blue nor the Red are strong. This can be determined by polls. We will win by raising as quickly as possible an army of organized and experienced campaigners to hit the streets and the homes in every neighbourhood. Persons like Derek Aikman who offer election campaign consultancy should be brought in as soon as possible to head the overall Alliance election strategy. It is to be recalled that Derek Aikman through sheer determination and dogged dedication did what was viewed as impossible, defeating serving Prime Minister George Price in his own constituency. We will win by ensuring that neither the Red nor the Blue obtain an outright majority of seats in this election. That way, they will have to include elected alternative party representatives in any new government. There are many ways to victory.

What alternative parties must also understand is that presently pork barrel politics (giveaways), election trickery and lots of money is winning the elec-

tions for the Red and the Blue. Those parties promise free this and free that, like free education, another Cancun, ten thousand (free) homes, lower power, telephone, and water bills, knowing fully well they cannot deliver, grandiose things like that. And people fall for it and vote them in, overlooking their secret schemes and dreams to become powerful Ministers and representatives, intent on securing their retirement packages.

Today, the Belizean voting public,

deceived so terribly over the past 25 years, expect substance, no more rhetoric. If Alternative Parties say they will stamp out corruption, they must not be like the Red and the Blue. They must show the Belizean voter how they will effectively do this. Moreover, there are many searching and intelligent minds in Belize today, plus an emboldened media, who are showing a propensity to fiercely defend the Belizean people from being conned by political parties that make promises they cannot deliver and who are in fact, empty drums and frauds.

The sixty (60) reform ideas of the WTP to transform Belize society into a new and safe haven include an elected Senate and a Belize Whistleblowers Protection Act.

The WTP has already presented its "Reformed Senate" proposal. It calls for a People-elected Senate which will supervise Cabinet and not be controlled by it, a Senate that can say no to new taxes and their "no" sticks.

The Belize Whistleblowers Protection Act proposed by the WTP is designed to smother rampant corruption that has enslaved us and our country today. The US\$565 million bond which we and our

children will pay up to 2029 is one of the many children of this unchecked corruption.

The purpose of the Belize Whistleblowers Protection Act proposed by the WTP is three-fold:

- First, it is to encourage and facilitate disclosures of improper conduct by public bodies and public officers.

- Secondly, it is to provide protection for persons who make these disclosures and for persons who suffer reprisals in relation to these disclosures, and

- Thirdly, it is to provide for matters disclosed to be properly investigated and dealt with.

There will be penalties of up to two years imprisonment for anyone or any institution that causes persons to suffer reprisals in relation to their disclosures. It also carries fines and imprisonment for mischievous and irresponsible disclosures.

Who can make these disclosures? It is a person who believes on reasonable grounds that a public body or public officer has engaged, is engaging or proposes to engage in improper conduct as a public body or public officer. It is a person who believes on reasonable grounds that a public body or public officer has taken, is taking, or proposes to take detrimental action against the public as a public body or public officer.

Who are these public bodies or public officers? Certainly the DFC, the Social Security Board, the Small Farmers Bank, the Free Zones, and any government department or agency, any government hospital, contractor or sub-contractor. Public officers include members of the House and Senate, Mayors, Councilors, members of the Police Force and persons appointed by the Governor General, the Prime Minister or another Minister.

We will provide more details to the public in the form of a pamphlet we are preparing to circulate.

Hipolito Bautista - National WTP Party Coordinator

Lucilo Teck - National WTP Deputy Party Coordinator

**Comments? Suggestions?
or want to share your
thoughts**

Email us at

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BTB hosts Tourism Summit 2007



BTB Vice Chair Teresa Parkey, James Nisbet of Fort Street Tourism Village and CTO Secretary General Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace discuss managing the cruise industry. Vanderpool-Wallace emphasized that what hurts you most are the "Things you know that just ain't so!"



Director of Archaeology Jaime Awe, Environmental leadership expert Jamie Sweeting and PACT's Valdemar Andrade discussed "Green & Gold" - how to reap the profits from tourism while preserving the environment and Belize's cultural heritage.

Bird Day at the Belize Zoo!!!



Zoo Director Sharon Matola introduces the children to Alvin, the Roadside Hawk.

Bird's the Word! That was the theme of the day for 21 pre-school children from La Democracia Government school.

The children had been studying their birds and were well aware that the birds of Belize ARE special!

The Belize Zoo continues to work with schools and communities throughout Belize to draw attention to our "feathered Belizeans".

In early February, BIRD DAY was celebrated at the zoo and the children made visits to view their national bird, the Keel Billed toucan, and a list of other feathered friends including the Scarlet

Macaw, King Vulture, Jabiru Stork and of course, Panama the Harpy Eagle.

Zoo Director Sharon Matola brought out Alvin, the Roadside Hawk, and the children got "up close and personal" to this happy raptor, learning about the natural history of the Roadside Hawk here in Belize.

After a lunch of "bird sandwiches" (chicken salad), the children sang a conservation song, "Bird's the Word" and YES!!!! It was Fun, Educational, and Ultra Cool!!!

The Belize Zoo: Keeping true to its reputation of being The Best Little Zoo in the World!!!!

Calling all Belizeans

➡ (Continued From Page 4)
own. Literally.

For every "alien" willing to come to Belize to vote, there must be a Belizean abroad who would do it too. There are thousands who left within the last ten years and are still on the voting lists, or who maintain enough ties, help to maintain residences here that they are (or should be) eligible to vote. Add them to the hundreds of university students away studying and growing number of retirees/returnees coming home to retire and we could muster enough reinforcements to outnumber the fraudulent voters.

Most importantly, these Belizeans are people who have Belize's best interest at heart. People who are literate, mobile, and paying keen attention to recent economic and political developments. Hard working men and women who are providing tens of millions of hard currency dollars in aid to their families back home through remittances, making donations of supplies to schools and hospitals and helping Belizeans who emigrate get situated, get jobs and feel welcome in the Belizean communities abroad.

We must encourage these Belizeans to register, and to pull other relatives home to do the same. We must, at his juncture, get over any bitterness over those who "left" while we stayed, the brain drain and all the rest of it and band together in a common cause: saving this country from further "ruination". We must put aside any sibling rivalries and

put our Family—as extended as it is, as far flung as it is—first.

Granted it is an expensive proposition. But how much of their election campaign funds will the parties devote to importing the imposters? To stuffing the ballot box?

Surely once the election date is set, those Belizeans who do come home on vacation would consider timing their visit to coincide with going to the polls.... We could even ask hotels to offer them special packages in conjunction with an airline or two. Don't you think? Show them we need them more than ever at this time.

It is not impossible; it is infinitely doable given the time frame before us. The longer the Prime Minister takes to call elections, the more time Belizeans abroad have to prepare and plan. And if a political party should offer to fly them home... all the better, as long as they remember their vote is sacred, and secret and they owe it to no one.

We must pay attention to the growing number of reports and allegations of illegal registration. But we must do more than just be outraged and upset this time.

We must turn the tables on those who would try to use our apathy against us and sneak in people who have no right to be here.

We can fight both our apathy, and their subterfuge, by bringing in our own people. People who have every RIGHT to be here. Still.

Letters to the Editor

Congratulations to the Minister of Education

➡ (Continued From Page 2)
sult of the high cost of and often unavailability of books. Such high cost and unavailability are the result of the failure of the countries schools to standardized the text books utilized in the First through Fourth Forms.

Such failure to standardize, in addition to driving up the cost of books has placed an additional unnecessary burden on the parents. Many of the mothers have to travel great distances to Belize City in an attempt to purchase the required books for their children. They often have to go to at least 3 book stores to obtain the books. Frequently, the required books are not available at any price. The mother's child is therefore prohibited from attending the class that required the unavailable book.

If he put his mind to it, the Hon. Francis Fonseca could assist the Reverend Canon Flowers, President of Belize's Council of Churches, in Reverend Cannon Flowers' efforts to have the school text books standardized. Such standardization would reduce the cost of books to where thousands of Belizean children, who could not otherwise attend, would be able to attend the first, through fourth forms.

It is time for both the Churches and the Government to show greater respect for the poor and give them the assistance that they are entitled to.

Such standardization would not cost the Government or the schools one penny. It would reduce the cost of books to where thousands of the Countries children, from less fortunate families, could afford to attend the first through fourth forms.

There is no logical reason why the text books should not be standardized. The greed of the unscrupulous few who profit from the present situation is not a reason to prevent children of Belize from acquiring their right to a basic education that includes the first through fourth forms.

There is certainly no reason why the other Church officials should not join in and assist the Reverend Cannon Flowers in his attempt to have of school books standardized. Their failure to do so will continue to prevent thousands of disadvantage children from receiving a secondary education and be contrary to the teachings of Christianity and all other religions.

Signed, Belize's largest school book purchaser for the less fortunate

Guatemala strikes gold at 1st Central American Cross Country Track & Field Championships

The quiet bedroom community of Lord's Bank was a beehive of activity Saturday morning, February 23 as some 80 athletes from Costa Rica, Guatemala, Salvador and Nicaragua converged for the first ever Regional Cross Country track and field competition.

The Central American Isthmus Athletic Confederation (CADICA) awarded the Belize Amateur Athletic Association the privilege to be the first to host of this historical event.

A 2 kilometre course was mapped out over pristine terrain within the Lord's Bank area. The Guatemalans, accustomed to training in the mountains, had a decided advantage with



The girls from El Salvador won one gold and a bronze in the Junior B female 4,000 meter.



The Guatemalans took 5 of the 6 gold medals, including both the Female 8,000 meter Open and the Male 12,000 meter Open, the Junior A: Female 6,000 meter, Male 8,000 meter and Junior B Male 6,000 meter, 4 silvers and 3 bronze medals.

more oxygen in their system when they came down to the flat terrain at sea level. They swept five of the six gold medals, including both the Female 8,000 metre Open and the Male 12,000 meter Open. They also won golds in the Junior A Female 6,000 meters, Male 8,000 meters and Junior B Male 6,000 meters as well as four silver and 3 bronze medals.

The El Salvador contingent won one gold and a bronze in the Junior B female 4,000 meter and two silvers. The Costa Ricans won one silver in the male open.

Team Belize won no medals but might easily have won the award for Good Sportsmanship, if there were one. Part of the reason for the lack of Belize success in this event is the fact that the Belize Amateur Athletic Association has no long distance development programme for our athletes; they tend to focus on developing athletes for the sprints and shorter distances.

BNE Canoe wins Boom to City race



The BNE canoe (right) overhauls the Belize Bank team.

The Belize Natural Energy canoe, paddled by Elmer, Efrain and Felix Cruz (formerly the Pine Lumber team) finally triumphed against their arch-rivals, the Belize Bank team - Armin Lopez, Amado Cruz and Daniel Cruz in the Boom to Belize City canoe race on Sunday, February 25.

The Belize Canoe Association (BCAnoe) organized the race as a sort of dress rehearsal for the annual La Ruta Maya River Challenge race, coming up

for the March 9 weekend.

Some 20 canoes had begun the race in Burrell Boom and when the first canoes came in sight at the Belcan Bridge in Belize City, the Belize Bank team was leading with the BNE canoe digging paddles in the sprint to the finish.

By the time they reached the bridge, the BNE canoe had overhauled, the Belize Bank team to finish in 2:51:15, one second ahead of the Belize Bank team.



The BNE team receives their \$800 prize and trophy from Elvin Penner of BCAnoe.

Morality vs money

➡ (Continued From Page 1)
made its people among the poorest in the world.

He said he “almost cried” on a recent trip to Chetumal when he saw all the new stores, highway expansions and standard of living of the people compared to Belize which he termed a “disgrace.” He said he had to “drive over piles of garbage to enter Belize City, that to me is a sign our leaders have lost hope.”

Dueck dismisses the current opposition UDP saying they have “nothing to offer” and that while the PUP newspaper’s motto is “The truth shall set you free, the lies being told to the Belizean people have done just the opposite of setting them free.”

Dueck challenged the independence of Belize’s judiciary, “You just have to see the person charged last name to know the verdict... This diplomat that came from Panama, we know already the outcome for him.. That no justice will be served as long as this government is control.”

The NRP platform is decidedly pro-family and a stable home life is a requirement for candidacy. The party leader introduced his wife and children and Bejerano undescored the party’s position on the open display of sweetheart relationships by members of the government, “We believe a healthy family structure is the foundation for a strong nation. We believe in the principle of a leader being faithful to ONE partner... if a leader cannot lead or rule his house well it will be difficult for him to lead a nation.”

In terms of foreign policy direction for Belize, Dueck was unequivocal: “I don’t think we should look to Chavez for help. I don’t think he has the solution for Belize. I don’t think Cuba has the solution for Belize. I don’t think China has the solution for Belize, but the United States has the solution we need.”

The Israeli flag was displayed prominently at the launch and when asked by a member of the press why, Dueck said, “The Bible says anyone who blesses Israel shall be blessed and anyone who curses it shall be cursed.” But the party is not connected in any way to the State of Israel. Dueck claims numerous regional governments and friends in Washington want to see Belize become a “praise” for God.

Dueck urged anyone so frustrated with the current situation who may be contemplating leaving the country “to hang on” a while longer and have courage because “a change is coming to Belize.”

He was reluctant to name his backers before consulting with them. But he did say he has significant backing from Belizean businessmen....leading many to speculate about just who these big “investors” are. Who else has a private plane to fly him to Panama? The Lord? Susy & Sally? Are they providing, and will they continue to provide come election time? The people want to know not just who will be funding NRP’s campaign but all the other parties’ campaigns.

San Lazaro Orange Walk District



Hon Mark Espat and OW Standard Bearer Jose Mai



Rudimentary Water System Inaugurated

The Ministry of National Development, Investment and Culture officially inaugurated the San Lazaro Water System in the Orange Walk District on Sunday, February 18, 2007

The total cost of the project amounted to \$324,662.44 with the Government of Belize providing \$302,062.44 mostly from grant funds received from the Caribbean Development Bank under the Basic Needs Trust Fund Fifth Program. The community of San Lazaro contributed the value of \$22,600.00 through in-kind labour for the trenching of 11,300 feet of trenches dug for the water system. The project was implemented by the Basic Needs Trust Fund on behalf of the Government of Belize.

The scope of works included the provision of a production well; construction of a new elevated water tank with a capacity of 20,000 gallons, trenching and installation of 11,300 feet of pvc pipes, construction of a pump house at the well site to house pump controls, chlorinator and other electrical components of the system. Chain link fencing was built to secure the pump house. The water will be gravity flowed to the entire community through 4” 3” and 2” PVC pipes. A water meter and a stand pipe were installed for each household. The project was completed over a period of six months with the Village Council together with the Water Board supervising its implementation.

A Water Board has been appointed to administer the water system. Training in management, operation and maintenance of the system was provided to appointed operators, billing clerk and the Water Board members. The system will benefit over 275 families of the village of San Lazaro.

Main speakers at the event were the Hon. Mark Espat, Minister of National Development, Investment and Culture, Hon. Ismael Cal, Area Representative and Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Mr. Oscar Alonzo, Project Manager for the Basic Needs Trust Fund.



Ministry of National Development