

STAR

"The Newspaper That Cares And Dares To Bring Out The Truth"



No. 143

Wednesday, February 27, 2008

Price \$1.00

POLICE CORPORAL JOEL GRINAGE FACING CRIMINAL CHARGES

SAN IGNACIO TOWN, Cayo, Monday, February 25, 2008:

After spending the entire weekend on remand inside the San Ignacio Police Station where he once reigned supreme, **Corporal # 536 Joel Grinage**, was today released on a \$5,000 bail and ordered to return to court on Thursday, March 20, 2008.

Police reports that it was shortly after 10:30 on the morning of Wednesday, February 20, when a 14 year old primary school student, accompanied by her parents visited the station to file a report against the corporal.

The girl told the police that sometime in the month of September 2007, corporal Grinage asked her to come to his house to iron a shirt for

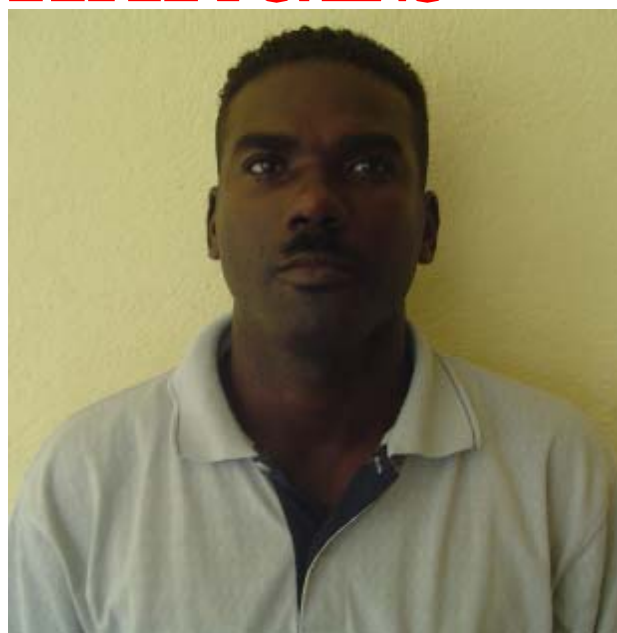
him. The girl told the police that when she entered the room to get the shirt, she encountered the police corporal in the nude inside the room. She alleges that the policeman grabbed her and pushed her onto the bed where he proceeded to have sexual intercourse with her against her will.

Although she was unable to recall a specific date, the girl further alleged that on another occasion the corporal had sexual intercourse with her. She also stated that in September of last year, he gave her a Razor cell phone.

The child was transported to the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital where a medical examination confirmed that she was carnally known.

Whilst this report was being investigated, a female resident of San Ignacio also visited the police station and reported that at his request, she paid the same Corporal Grinage the sum of \$400 for the release of a male relative who was detained by the corporal on a burglary charge.

After two days of investigation, Corporal Joel Grinage, 33, was formally arrested and charged for rape and carnal knowledge as well as for extortion. He first appeared before San Ignacio's Magistrate, **Kathlene Lewis** on Friday, February 22, where



Corporal # 536 Joel Grinage, 33

he pleaded not guilty to both charges. He was initially denied bail and was remanded to custody for four days, until Tuesday, February 26, 2008 as

Please Turn To Page 2

A Mother & Son Reunited

SANTA ELENA, Wednesday, February 20, 2008:

There are very few satisfactions greater than the feeling of having played a small part in reuniting a mother and her children after over thirty years of living separate lives.

During the latter months of 2007 we published the passing of **Carlos "Pajaro" Requena** and as is customary, the article carried the names of surviving relatives.

Shortly after that edition of the **STAR** was posted on the internet, we received an overseas email from a young lady who told us that the name of one of Carlos Requena's surviving sisters bore semblance to the name of someone who could very well be her mother.

At her request we were able to make the connection between

Mayolita and her mother Ms. Cupertina Requena with whom she had lost contact for over 32 years. Mayolita told us that she also has a brother, Gabriel, living in Las Vegas Nevada who would be happy to know that his mother is still alive in Belize since he has not been in contact with her for over 36 years.

Ms. Cupertina confirmed that she had given up her little boy and her little girl for adoption when they were five years of age.

Gabriel Requena, "Gabe Sablica" as he is known in Las Vegas, is now 41 years of age. He is a Police Corporal in the Training Division of the Nevada Department of Public Safety. Gabe took two weeks off from work and arrived in Belize, to be reunited with his mother, sisters and brother,



Ms. Cupertina Requena and her son Gabriel Requena, "Gabe Sablica"

specifically on his 41st birthday, last Wednesday, February 20, 2008. "This was the best birthday

present I have ever given myself," he said.

Please Turn To Page 11



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Arson Suspected In Santa Elena Fire

SANTA ELENA TOWN, Cayo, Monday, February 25, 2008:

It was shortly after 4:30 this morning when San Ignacio police and officers from the fire service responded to a report of a fire on the Western Highway at its junction with the Santa Cruz Road in Santa Elena Town.

Upon arrival the police and the firemen found a small wooden

POLICE CORPORAL JOEL GRINAGE FACING CRIMINAL CHARGES

From Front Page

the prosecution informed the court that the police might be pressing at least one more charge against him.

The police were reportedly investigating the possibility of the cellular telephone being one that was recovered from the burglary of a telephone store in San Ignacio and were contemplating additionally charging the corporal for theft.

Although he was scheduled to reappear in court on Tuesday, Attorney Simeon Sampson (SC) showed up in court on Monday, where he was successful both in an application for trial and requesting for the granting of bail to his client.

While corporal Grinage is bracing himself for whatever comes his way, he is not denying giving the student the cellular telephone. He said that he gave it to her as a gift for her 14th birthday in October 2007 and that at the time of the alleged incident, he was renting a house located behind the house where the girl's family lived, in the same yard in San Ignacio Town. According to Grinage, due to the proximity of their homes, the girl and her parents were frequent visitors to his house and that on one occasion he even gave the family a stereo system as he was making space for a new one.

At the time of the report Corporal Grinage and his family were no longer living in the family yard as they had moved out of San Ignacio Town and taken up residence across the bridge in Santa Elena Town.

Corporal Joel Grinage has since been interdicted from active duty and placed on half pay pending the

building, housing Lin's Fast Food, engulfed in flames.

Owner of the business, **Ethlin Robateau**, 37, Belizean business woman, told the police that she received a call from a friend informing her that her shop was on fire.

The uninsured 10 x 14 main structure and an adjoining 7 x 10 attachment valued at \$5,000 were

completely destroyed by the fire along with its likewise uninsured contents which, according to Robateau, included a GE freezer valued at \$1,000; a GE refrigerator valued at



All that was left of Lin's Fast Food after the blaze

\$595; an Agro Tech gas stove valued at \$695; three cases of Belikin Beer - \$225; four metal chairs valued at \$180; a Chinese one hole stove - \$95 and one small gas tank - \$75. All for a total valued of \$7,865.

While the suspected arson is under investigation, San Ignacio police informed of the detention of a male and female resident of the area. However, up to press time on Monday night no arrest has been made.



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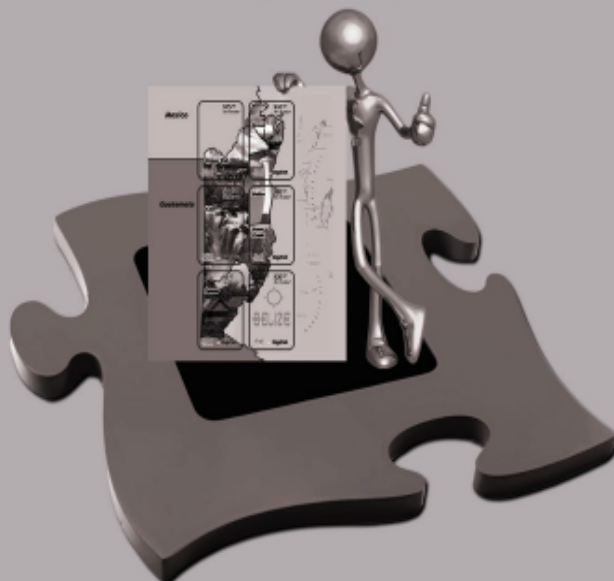
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STAR Newspaper

"The Newspaper that cares and dares to bring out the truth"

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Belize, Central America

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The People's Expectations Are High - They Must Now Feel The Positive Effects Of The Change

It's an honor to be back in service to our loyal readers many of whom have rightfully questioned our decision to suspend the publication of the newspaper in the three weeks leading up to the general elections. It was a hard decision for us to have made but after careful consideration, we decided that our contribution to assist in ridding the nation of the most corrupt administration would have been more effective by us getting into the trenches with those who were serious about working for a change.

The elections are now over and the reconstruction must begin in earnest. The task that confronts the new United Democratic Party government is monumental as the expectations of those who voted for change is rightfully high.

Aside from the rampant corruption that was widespread within the ranks of the previous administration, the bottom line is that the people came out primarily to vote against the high cost of living. If the level of corruption was high and the people were living in a good country as the previous administration wanted us to believe, then even if there was a change it probably would not have been so overwhelming.

Voters across the nation came out, and as predicted, they came out early

to vote. Yes they came out to vote against corruption, but most importantly they came out to vote against the high cost of living especially the increasing cost of food items and utility bills.

History has shown us that with the attainment of independence the people expected a better way of life and when the delivery fell short, the reigns of government was handed over to the United Democratic Party in overwhelming fashion for the very first in the very first post independence general elections held in 1984.

The new United Democratic Party government must therefore begin to deliver and they must begin to deliver early because if we have learnt anything from the general elections just gone, it has got to be that a government cannot punish the people for four years and in their final year in office begin to give them crumbs and expect the people to return them to office.

One would therefore hope that the new government would move swiftly to fulfill the promise of removing the burdensome Gross Sales Tax from those over 700 basic items. Furthermore, the removal of this tax must reflect an immediate reduction in shelf prices while merchants must not be allowed to use the opportunity

to maximize their profits. The shortfall of revenue from the removal of the GST can be met by reinstating realistic taxes upon those who have been getting away for the past ten years with paying ridiculously low taxes.

The effects of the new consumer protection unit within the Ministry of Economic Development must immediately be felt. The consumer protection unit must do its job. It would be useless to maintain the practice of monopoly importers if these importers are allowed to continue with huge mark ups on retail prices. The monopoly importer of Klim, for example, must understand that it will no longer be acceptable to import a tin of Klim for \$3.00 and retail the same product for \$10. These kinds of monopolies must be dismantled. These people must know that if they insist with these huge mark ups, then licenses will be awarded to others who are more considerate of the conditions of the consuming public.

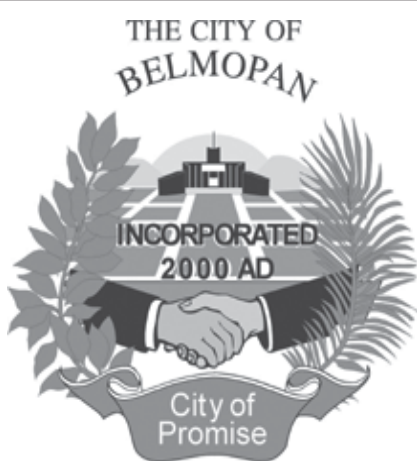
On another note, there is much talk about the Venezuelan money - was it 20 or was it 40 million dollars? The bottom line is that Venezuelan President **Hugo Chavez** attempted to use his people's money to buy the election for his PUP friends. Now that the attempt has failed, we hear Chavez crying foul. Simply put, Chavez was playing with fire and he might have gotten burnt in the process. The PUP already knew that they were going to lose the election, therefore, even blind

eye Jamsie, as **Michael Finnegan** would say, knew that no where close to that amount of money was spent by the PUP in the elections just gone.

Then one day after elections we hear of a Venezuelan official writing to **Amalia Mai**, the former CEO in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, requesting an accounting of the \$40 million campaign grant handed on a platter to the PUP. In this the era of instant communication, it is somewhat hard for even blind eye Jamsie not to see that long before the clock struck 12 midnight on Thursday, February 7, the all powerful Amalia Mai was reduced to private citizen Amalia Mai and that even the almighty Minister **Ralph Fonseca**, believed by many to be the broker of the Venezuelan campaign financing deal, was reverted to private citizen Ralph Fonseca as he was humbled at the polls by a carpenter and the voters of Belize Rural Central.

As for former Prime Minister, **Said Musa**, come April of this year he will be sitting in the House of Representatives not even as the leader of the party he led to its worse trashing ever.

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Belmopan City Council

NOTICE

All property owners in Belmopan City are hereby advised to visit the City Council to make suitable arrangements for the payment of all arrears on property taxes.

Failure to comply with this request will lead to legal action being taken.

Displaying Civic Pride

SANTA ELENA TOWN, Cayo, Sunday, February 24, 2008:

This Sunday morning we were called out to the Joseph Andrews Park in Santa Elena Town to witness and record the actions of a group of young men as they took on the task of putting their time, energy and limited resources to a worthwhile cause.

The five young men all from the Santa Elena community were busy picking up garbage, cutting the grass and painting the Joseph Andrews Park in their neighborhood.

The leader of the group, **Winston "Brick" Harris** who operates Brick City Barber Shop just across from the park on Carmen Street in Santa Elena said that it is just their way of giving back to the community. He said that the project will be an ongoing one as the group intends to also paint the two



Winston "Brick" Harris

sets of swings and other amenities in the park. *"The bright color that we will be using should attract neighborhood children to the park"* said Harris.

Harris informed that the group also intends to organize family activities at the park so that the young and the young at heart can interact in a healthy,



clean, attractive and secure environment.

Some of these young men might have had brushes with the law in the past. It is therefore encouraging to note that instead of engaging in questionable activities, they are using their time in a positive venture and so it is only

fitting that they be applauded for their effort.

We wish them every success in this latest show of civic pride and we encourage others to team up with Winston Harris for positive projects.



STAR HUMOR



Drunken Confusion

Mr. Garcia had too much to drink at the bar on Burns Avenue in San Ignacio was stumbling down the street on his way home.

Just as he was passing the police station, a policeman stepped out and said, *"Mr. Garcia, I've got to take you in, You're obviously drunk and might not make it all the way*

home".

"Officer, are yu veerry sure dat I druuuunk?"

"Yes, buddy, I'm sure that you are drunk," said the policeman. "Let's go."

Breathing a sigh of relief, Mr. Garcia said, "Thank goodness Sir, because I thought the I was crippled."

LIQUOR LICENSE NOTICES

Notice is hereby given that under the Intoxicating Liquor License Ordinance Chapter 150 of the laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000, that **SYLVIA NAJ** is applying for the renewal of her **RESTAURANT & BAR LIQUOR LICENSE** for the year 2008 to operate **SCORPION BAR** located on Riverside Street, Benque Viejo Town in the Cayo District.

Notice is hereby given that under the Intoxicating Liquor License Ordinance Chapter 150 of the laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000, that **INEZ FERNANDEZ** is applying for the renewal of her **SHOP LIQUOR LICENSE** for the year 2008 to operate **INEZ FERNANDEZ WHOLESALE** located on Garcia Street, Santa Elena Town in the Cayo District.

Notice is hereby given that under the Intoxicating Liquor License Ordinance Chapter 150 of the laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000, that **MARCO MAS** is applying for the renewal of his **NIGHTCLUB LIQUOR LICENSE** for the year 2008 to operate **OAKIS DISCO** located on Churchill Street, Benque Viejo Town in the Cayo District.

Notice is hereby given that under the Intoxicating Liquor License Ordinance Chapter 150 of the laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000, that **KENNEDY GENTLE** is applying for the renewal of his **MALT & CIDER LIQUOR LICENSE** for the year 2008 to operate **GENTLE TOUCH** located on Paradise Earth, Baking Pot, in the Cayo District.

Notice is hereby given that under the Intoxicating Liquor License Ordinance Chapter 150 of the laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000, that **MIKE BOGAERT** is applying for the renewal of his **MALT & CIDER LIQUOR LICENSE** for the year 2008 to operate **MIKE'S PLACE** located at Barton Creek in the Cayo District.

Notice is hereby given that under the Intoxicating Liquor License Ordinance Chapter 150 of the laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000, that **VICTOR TUT** is applying for the renewal of his **RESTAURANT & BAR LIQUOR LICENSE** for the year 2008 to operate **CRYSTAL PARADISE** located on Cristo Rey Village in the Cayo District.

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ATTENTION!!!

The Annual San Ignacio/Santa Elena Municipal Easter Fair will be held on Holy Saturday & Easter Sunday, March 22nd & 23rd at the Macal Park in San Ignacio Town, Cayo.



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Food Stalls: \$100

Food/Liquor Stalls: \$175

Anyone wishing to reserve stalls can do so by getting in touch with Mrs. Karen Fernandez at 804-0169 or Mr. Vallan Hyde at 804-2035.

I've Seen It All - A Policeman Writes

CONTRIBUTED, Monday, Feb. 25, 2008:

Most Belizeans I've spoken with, including mid level Police Officers, are of the firm belief that dismantling and rebuilding the Police Department, from the top to bottom, is desperately needed to restore discipline thus enabling the department to function professionally to meet the challenges of this era.

The current leadership of the department is evidently not up to the standards needed to provide the level of security that this country yearns for. It is therefore no wonder, that so many Belizeans have so very little regard or respect for the Police Department.

An unprecedented and most unusual practice over the past four years or so has left more questions than answers where advancement in the Department is concerned.

The repeated promotion of certain officers elevating them to very senior ranks within the Department on the advice or recommendation of their friends for being loyal followers and bullies of the public, even in the face of very embarrassing circumstances and allegations, and even though they possess no special qualities other than questionable characters, leaves one to wonder if not to speculate about the quality of men and women in the Department.

The question often asked is how, despite the many allegations of wrongdoings against them, that only certain individuals from among so many are singled out for upward mobility?

I have witnessed too many instances where Policemen openly and shamelessly profess to be more PUP's than Ralph Fonseca himself.

I've seen people being pepper sprayed and tear gassed for attending rallies which were not favorable to the PUP Government.

I've seen media personnel disrespected and harassed with such arrogance, barbarity and impunity that one could not help but wonder who is actually in charge of the Police Department.

I've seen the former Leader of the Opposition, who incidentally is the Prime Minister today, needlessly being disrespected by Police Officers during the BTL fiasco without justification or logic.

I've seen Police Officers being promoted to senior ranks immediately after disrespecting and/or incarcerating members of the United Democratic Party. It seems that the more senior the disrespected politician is, the greater the rewards for the disrespecting policeman.

I've seen people being intimidated at official UDP functions by Special Branch operatives who, with camera in hand, and with an in-your-face attitude, photographing persons attending these functions.

I've heard the play back of Special Branch telephone taps of UDP officials on national media.

I've seen the Mayor of Belize City being targeted and disrespected by senior Police Officers acting not as Policemen but more like guard dogs for the then PUP government. As a policeman myself these irresponsible actions make me sick to the stomach.

I've seen students of the University of Belize being locked down in police stations and elected officials of the UDP dragged on pavements in front of national television like rags.

I've seen Policemen physically slapping senior UDP elected officials during the City Council Elections in Belmopan.

I've seen Police Officers testifying under oath, as they willfully seek to mislead the highest courts of the land with their selective inability to recount the facts of serious and violent crimes and, only after public outcry is there redress to their wrong and criminal actions.

I've seen photographs taken during Police operations of a former UDP mayor in San Ignacio, delivered to the Belize Times Press, on the instructions of very high ranking Police Officials.

Clearly when any the Police Organization becomes so compromised, there is no time for crime fighting.

What Belizeans have certainly not seen, is a consorted effort on the part of the senior command of the Police department to effectively address the national crime situation that has slowly escalated to the boiling point it stands today.

The continuous in fighting and bootlicking by senior Police Officers of Politicians is a common sight. I can

only imagine that in so far as boot licking is concerned, the new Police Minister might soon have no need to clean the very shoes he wears.

What the Belizean populace voted for on February 7 though, was to effectively bring an end to this way of life by changing the many wrongs that has plagued this nation over the past ten years including the wrongs within the Belize Police Department.

Whenever a Police Officer can exhibit wealth to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars and sporting very expensive vehicles and accessories that all and sundry knows is far beyond the pay scales of these individuals, then we can only imagine that corrupt practices have become so institutionalized that there is no longer any control. When there is no control then there is anarchy and the rule of law no longer applies.

There is an urgent need for reformation and transformation of the Belize Police Department. We are confident that the Hon. Prime Minister and the new Minister of National Security are men of integrity who are committed to bringing about the changes so desperately needed.

The Police Department needs to be dismantled and rebuilt if there is to be any integrity and respect for this once noble profession. Nuff said.

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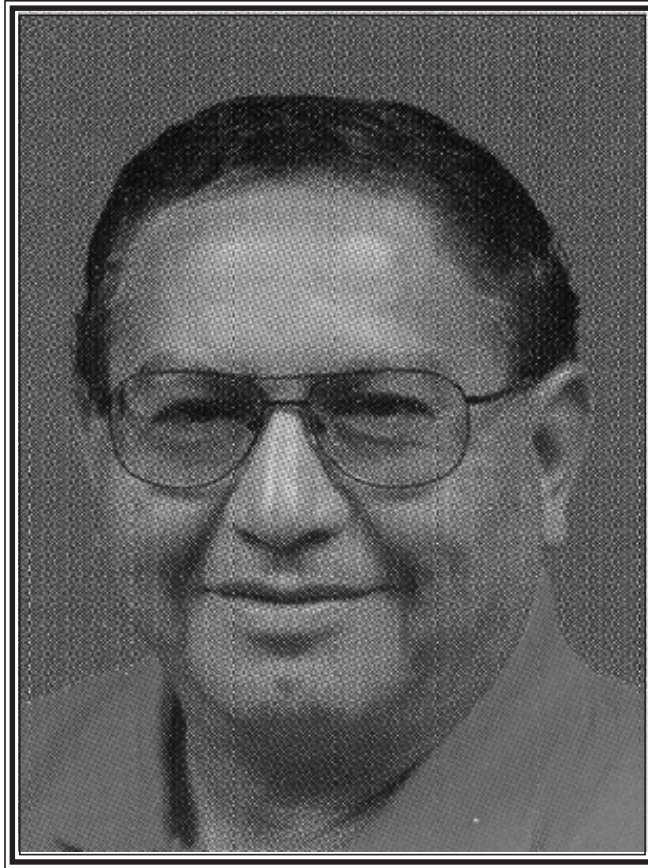
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Thank You Message From the Hon. Rene Montero Area Representative Cayo Central & Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries



Voters of Cayo Central;

I take this opportunity to extend a personal thank you to each and every one of you who came out on election day, February 7, 2008, and marked your **“X”** beside the red square for the United Democratic Party and for Rene Montero. By doing so you have vested in me the noble task of serving you for the next five years. This is a responsibility which I take seriously and one which I intend to perform to the very best of my ability while never straying from our motto of **“Putting People First”**.

I must also extend a heartfelt thank you to all the members of the United Democratic Party Cayo Central Executive Committee for all the long hours of hard work and dedication which ultimately resulted in our success at the polls.

A special thank you is likewise extended to all members of the campaign team who worked tirelessly in the weeks and days right up to the casting and counting of the votes.

Our success at the polls is the result of the efforts expended by all of you and as I go about fulfilling the ministerial responsibilities vested in me by our **Hon. Prime Minister, Dean Barrow**, I will always be mindful of the role each and every one of you played in making our victory a reality. It is with this in mind that, as your new Area Representative and Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries, I pledge to continue **“Putting People First”** in everything I do.

Thank you so very much

Hon. Rene Montero

***Area Representative, Cayo Central
Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries***

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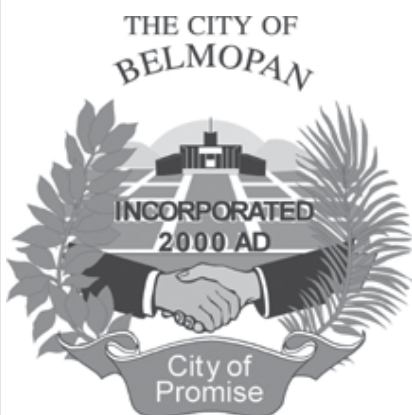
Chalillo Public Participation
Committee

Residents of Cristo Rey Village,
San Ignacio, Santa Elena Towns and
surrounding areas, are invited to an
information sharing meeting on
Mercury in our Environment.

This meeting is being coordinated by
the Chalillo Public Participation
Committee.

A presentation will be made during a
meeting on Monday, March 3, 2008 in
Cristo Rey Village at the Community
Center, commencing at 7:00 p.m.

In San Ignacio Town, the meeting will
be held on Tuesday, March 4, 2008 at
the Cultural Center at 7:00 p.m.



Belmopan City Council

Tax Relief Package For 2008/2009

As of January 14, 2008, Property Owners in the City of Belmopan are eligible to participate in the following discount package:

- **20% Discount for full payment of 2008/09 Property fees made ON or BEFORE February 15, 2008.**
- **15% Discount for full payment of 2008/09 Property Fees between February 16 and March 15, 2008.**
- **10% Discount for full payment of 2008/09 Property Fees between March 16 and March 31, 2008.**
- **5% Discount for full payment of 2008/09 Property Fees between April 1 and December 31, 2008.**
- **5% Discount for full payment of 2007/08 Property Fees made ON or before March 31, 2008.**

N.B. Senior Citizens (65 yrs or older) are eligible for an additional 5% discount for properties on which they reside.

Dated 14th January, 2008.
City Administrator

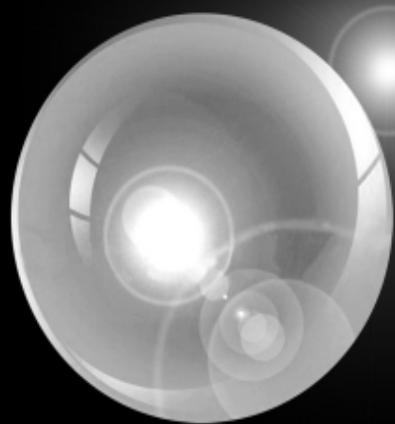


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BARGAIN CENTER at 54 Freetown Rd.
Phone: 223-0550 ask for Ext. 239

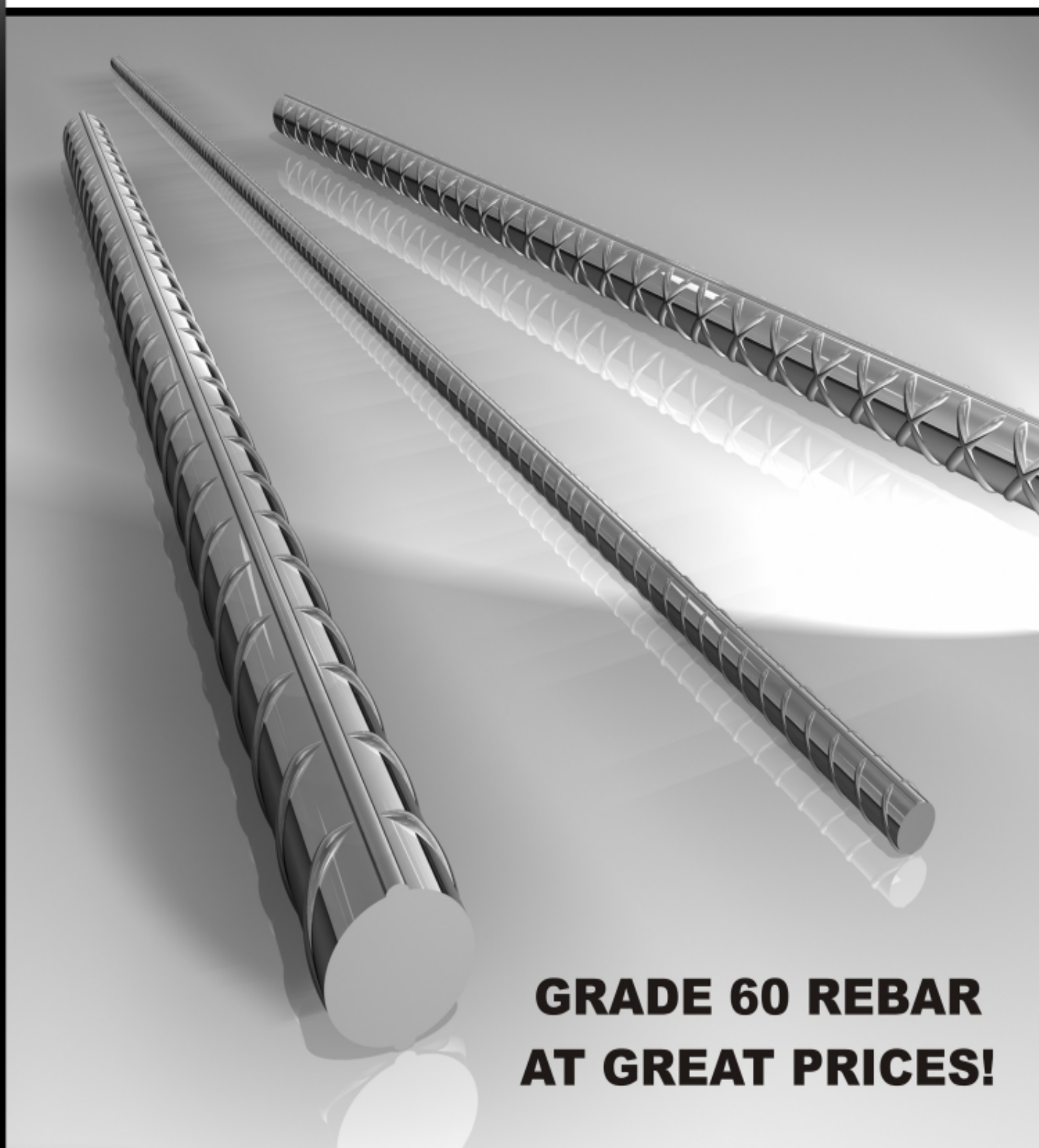
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The PLUNDERING OF BELIZE



BY: Jim F. Cavanaugh
junglejim@btl.net

It might be hard to imagine that the Spanish Conquistadors of five hundred years ago and modern oil companies of today have much in common, but actually, as far as Belize is concerned, they are in the same business: **PLUNDER**.

The Spaniards arrived in the New World and believed they had found the proverbial pot at the end of the rainbow. There was more gold and silver here to plunder than they had ever dreamed of, and all they had to do was kill off a few million **"ignorant indigenous folks"** and take what they wanted. Of course they proceeded to do just that and killed over 20 million, enslaved those who were still alive, and hauled shiploads of gold and silver to make Spain the richest country in Europe.

Fortunately today we ignorant indigenous folks are NOT as defenseless as our helpless ancestors of five centuries ago, but unfortunately we are not able to fully protect ourselves either.

Those countries which stole the wealth of our region in the 16th century used their evil gains to develop their own economies, and when they ran out of plunder they were forced to start using their own resources. The so-called advanced or developed countries were as careless as Spain in their efforts to develop sustainable economies. They cut their forests, used up their coal and iron ore, abused their land so it couldn't support their population, and consequently were forced to look elsewhere to replace what they had squandered.

Four hundred years after the Spaniards arrived, we were faced with a new plundering invasion. England, France, Spain, Portugal, Holland and Germany knew our gold and silver were gone, but we still had valuable natural resources, which in their developed egocentric wisdom meant we ignorant indigenous folks weren't using our resources properly, meaning they weren't getting the benefit. So they mounted a **Second Wave of Plundering** called **Colonization**, grabbed our lands and establish colonies throughout the **"undeveloped"** world under the excuse they were bringing us **"civilization"**. Their idea of civilization was to aggressively pillage our valuable timber, diamonds, iron and mineral ores, fisheries, and productive agricultural lands. We finally got tired of seeing all of our natural wealth being plundered for the sole benefit of

a few rich Colonial Fathers, so we demanded the right to govern ourselves and use what resources that were still left for our own benefit.

In the years following World War II dozens of former colonies around the globe achieved independence from colonial exploitation, although there were always strings attached, not because we needed their help and guidance, but to protect their existing colonial investments and economic interests.

As we Belizeans were celebrating the joys of Independence in 1981, we were not thinking about the rape of our forests from the uncontrolled harvesting of logwood, cedar, mahogany and other precious timber; nor the conversion of vast land areas of the Log Works to private property ownership for the former plunderers; nor the control of our commerce, markets and defense by the former Colonial Masters. No, we were just happy to be free at last. To the consternation of the left over colonials we didn't stay ignorant!

It wasn't that we didn't learn fast enough to protect ourselves, but we had no way of knowing that granting us Independence was only setting the stage for a **Third Wave of Plundering**, an international complex monster called **Globalization**. No, we didn't stay ignorant, and we were in a better position than the Mayas, Incas and Aztecs to protect ourselves, but the new thieves were harder to fight because their weapons were economics instead of guns and swords. We couldn't see the weapons, but the globalizers were still stealing everything and leaving us with bare shelves.

Newly emerging countries like Belize need money to start developing, so the **World Bank** graciously stepped in and made loans to help us get started. Unfortunately the World Bank tolerates an **"acceptable level of corruption"**, meaning they knew that political officials (*former colonial cronies*) pocket some of the proceeds instead of using them for the intended development funds. But our economy started moving ahead, and the World Bank was right there to loan more money. Then a new set of political pirates got elected to office with exciting plans to take the economy a great leap forward, and they borrowed more money. Huge sums in fact, and they are able to steal a larger proportion of the new loans because they refused to have audits that would expose their corruption. We soon found ourselves with debts greater than we could ever reasonably pay back (*our present debt is some 3 billion dollars now*), in fact greater than the total annual production of all of our commerce and industry plus the total earnings of every working man and woman.

The World Bank then, in their wisdom told Belize that we needed to have better economic policies, so the **IMF (International Money Fund)** was called in to supply fiscal guidance.

After analyzing the financial chaos the World Bank had helped create, we were told that we must restructure our loans and sell some of our assets so we could pay the interest on our massive debts. At this point the third strategy member of the **Globalization Third Wave of Plundering**, the **WTO (World Trade Organization)**, entered the picture and just happened to have associates who were generously willing to buy our natural resources and help us out of our financial mess. We couldn't begin to pay even the interest on our huge debt, so a financial package was cleverly devised with our financial advisers where we would put off any payments on our debts for many years in the future, naturally with high interest rate penalties. What we **"gained"** was to burden our children and grandchildren with an even greater debt and let them figure out how to solve the dreadful mess we created.

Now here we are in 2008 with too much help from the **Word Bank, IMF, WTO** and their foreign investor associates, ready for a brave new world of Belizean economics. Except our assets are gone:

*Our international airport was sold.

*Our Ports and cruise ship facilities are now owned by foreign investors, and even the revenues due GOB are being pocketed by them.

*Bank of Belize is owned by British investor Lord Ashcroft. This is the highest volume and most profitable business in Belize and our biggest dollar drain.

*our electricity system was sold to Fortis, a Canadian company.

*Our telephone system was sold to Ashcroft or Prosser or Ashcroft... who knows which one?, but British or American.

*Our water system was sold to a Malay-British group.

*Our gold assets were licensed to foreign owners.

*Our largest tourism hotels and resorts are owned by foreign investors.

In other words we can not expect income from our national resources because we don't own these assets any more. Whatever profits generated by our banks, utilities and resources are being siphoned off by foreign investors. Our politicians did not invest any of the proceeds from

selling our resources in income or job producing projects. Belizeans must now continue to support the utilities infrastructure and pay unreasonably high rates which further deplete our available money and impoverish our people.

Our new **Prime Minister Dean Barrow** has a treasury with no money, an overwhelming national debt at high interest rates, crushing debt payments, a credit rating that makes Rwanda look good, an already too heavy tax on the people, plus our national utilities and natural resources have been sold to foreign investors. Instead of congratulating Dean Barrow on winning the election, we should send him a sympathy card!

About all Belize has left for resources are agriculture with sugar, citrus and the Mennonite dairies and crops; and aquaculture with fish and shrimp farms. Those areas are already taxed to the max and with the closing of the Agriculture College at Central Farms will lose desperately needed support. The discovery of oil in 2005 offered a solution.

Petroleum has proven to be a mixed blessing of potential income introducing the **Fourth Wave of Plundering**. Exploring for oil is a costly high risk venture which no government could or should attempt on their own, so Belize licensed petroleum concessions to foreign investors willing to accept the high risks. Naturally high risks must have high potential rewards, and the exploration contract offered such rewards. Fortunately the first oil exploration license resulted in the discovery of oil, huge amounts of oil in fact, meaning the potential for significant new tax revenues. But the new wave of plundering has already firmly planted roots in our economy:

* Our current oil production is owned by British/Northern Ireland/American interests.

*The balance of our oil assets are licensed to 20 mostly foreign owned companies.

*Oil subcontractors – seismic, drilling, well service, transport, etc. – are owned by foreign investors

The oil field services for exploration, well logging, production and refining all require investments, training and technology which generally can not be supplied by

Please Turn To Page 11



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What Is A Stroke?

It appears like we are more frequently hearing of the sudden death of friends or acquaintances.

More recently we heard of the sudden passing of Belizean's Ambassador for Peace **Vivian Andy Palacio** and then there was the passing of **Roger Silva** who, although not as popular as Andy Palacio, Roger, as an insurance salesperson was known by many. The cause of their sudden death, we were told, resulted from a massive strokes.

As an informative piece this week we therefore jumped on the opportunity to produce the following article provided on the initiative of **Nurse Minerva Aponte Jolly** - The article was reviewed by Dr. Guillermo Rivas from San Ignacio Town.

WHAT IS A STROKE?

A brain stroke is what happens to you when the normal flow of either blood or oxygen to your brain is greatly interrupted. Stroke damage

can range from mild to very serious. This can happen to you as a result of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, a tumor, an accident, poisoning, or a blood vessel bursting inside your brain.

How you feel or how you look after a stroke will depend on how much and what area of your brain was affected.

These Are Some Of The Signs Or Symptoms You Might Have Before A Stroke

- *Unexplained dizziness
- *Not being able to see clearly
- *A strong headache
- *Not being able to think clearly
- *Feeling as if your face is numb
- *Having a sense of heaviness in your tongue or not being able to speak clearly
- *Numbness in your hand and feet
- *Feeling as if ants are walking on your hands or feet

A Mother & Son Reunited

From Front Page

He told us that although Mayolita is now in constant telephone contact with their long lost mother and siblings, she is anxiously counting the days when



Little Gabriel Requena when he left Belize at age 5. The photograph inside his British Honduras Passport taken in 1972

she will be free from work to come to Belize and be reunited with her mother and other relatives.



35 years later - Gabe Sablica, 40, Corporal Nevada State Trooper

The PLUNDERING OF BELIZE

From Page 10

Belizeans, thus it is understandable that foreign investors will dominate these fields. These activities all create jobs for Belizeans... but the profits are again siphoned off to foreign investors and can not be used to develop our country.

This ugly scenario only adds more emphasis to the importance of how we handle our oil revenues. We must clean up the political corruption mess and demand that the oil production be accurately measured, and all revenues be fully accounted for from the point of production to the end use of the funds. The production and revenue numbers supplied by Belize Natural Energy and GOB do not agree with one another and neither agree with the

actual production, and the amount of royalty paid to GOB is significantly less than what was due.

All oil contracts and every individual participant in these contracts must be fully exposed, and all illegal and improper ownership in the oil business through political conniving should be terminated immediately. This can only be done with an independent professionally managed Oil Commission, which can guarantee us Belizeans that our debts will be paid, and the proceeds will be used for the benefit of the people. We should require that a percentage (*perhaps as much as 50%*) of the profits of all foreign owned investments be reinvested in Belize in job creation projects

*Not being able to walk normally

There are other conditions besides a stroke that can cause you to experience some of these same signs and symptoms but if you are experiencing any of these, you must see a medical doctor immediately. The doctor will be able to give you emergency medications and direct you to the appropriate specialist.

What To Do If Any Of These Signs Or Symptoms Begin Suddenly

- *Tell someone that you must see a medical doctor immediately. Tell that person what you are feeling.
 - *If you are working, dancing, or exercising, STOP. Do not force your body.
 - *If you are outside, get in shade.
 - *Do not eat
- ### Here Are Some Of The Things The Doctor Will Check:
- *The way you have been feeling
 - *Your blood pressure
 - *Your pulse (on your wrist and chest)
 - *The way your eyes look
 - *Your medical history and the medicines you are taking
 - *The way your face looks and how you speak
 - *The strength of your hands
 - *The way you walk
 - *How your tongue works
 - *Whether you can concentrate

If Your Doctor Thinks You Are Having A Stroke He Might:

- *Put a small tube with oxygen in your nose
 - *Draw your blood and send it to the laboratory
 - *Give you medicines for your blood pressure or to slow down blood clotting
 - *Put a needle in your arm in case you need more medicines
 - *Send you to a specialist called a neurologist
- Your doctor's actions will depend on what's wrong with you.

Questions You Or Your Family Should Ask The Doctor

- *Did I have a stroke or am I in danger of having one?

*What is the best thing for me to do right now to prevent a stroke?

*What is the best for me to do right now so that I do not get another stroke?

*What do you think is wrong?

*What is the blood test show?

*What are the names of the medicines?

*Make sure you understand what your doctor is telling you. If you don't, ask the doctor to speak to you in words that you understand. Also, have a friend or family member accompany you and tell the doctor to keep that person informed.

If you are sent to the neurologist ask for specific information such as:

*Is it better for you to go by ambulance?

*Is the neurologist in his or her office now?

*Is there a neurologist in the hospital you are being sent to?

Make an appointment to come back and see your doctor to plan follow up care, diet, exercise, and needed medicines.

Keep in mind that small strokes are often followed by big ones and should be taken as warning signals from your body.

At The Neurologist:

If after examining you the neurologist believes that you had a stroke, or are in danger of having one, you will probably be told that you need certain brain tests.

A scan or an MRI will provide the doctor with good pictures of your brain. Scans are available at several places in Belize.

The neurologist will tell you what you must do next. It will be best for you if at that time your family meets with the doctors to find out if the hospital you are being sent to can provide you with the best care there is or whether that hospital can only give you basic care.

Talk about the different treatment options available, whether in Belize or outside Belize.

See your medical doctor at least once each year for a thorough physical examination since it is easier to prevent a stroke, or any other sickness, than it is to cure it.

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