

STAR

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

No. 150

SUNDAY, MAY 4, 2008

Price \$1.00



TRAFFIC ACCIDENT CLAIMS A LIFE

SAN IGNACIO, Cayo, Thursday, May 1, 2008:

An early morning traffic accident on the Western Highway has claimed the life of one person.

San Ignacio police reports that the call came in at exactly 4:05 on the morning of Thursday, May 1. Upon arriving on the scene, near the Texaco Kontiki Gas Station, on the outskirts of San Ignacio Town, police saw an overturned, gold color, Mazda 626, four-door car, with license plates CY-C- 27504, with all four wheels in the air.

Approximately 20 feet beyond the overturned car police came upon a male person on the ground bleeding from an injury to the head behind the right ear.

The person was transported to the San Ignacio Town Hospital where he was officially pronounced dead by the medical officer on duty and subsequently identified as **Silvio J. Torund**, 29, Costa Rican Football player residing in the Hills of Promise Area of Benque Viejo Town.

Shell San Ignacio Now Has A New Look

SAN IGNACIO, Cayo, Saturday, April 26, 2008:

After undergoing a total makeover, the Shell San Ignacio Service Station was officially inaugurated today.

The official ceremony began at 11:00 a.m., with Mistress of Ceremony, **Amini Habet**, extending the invitation to stand for the playing of the national anthem played by the Belmopan Steel Band after which **Fr. Jim Foley** from the local Roman Catholic Church delivered the opening prayer and blessing of the new facility.

In his address to the gathering, General Manager of SOL (Simpson Oil Limited) Belize, **Joe Habet** informed that in February 2005 SOL took over operations of Shell Service Stations in 11 Caribbean countries,



The scene of the accident 12 hours later. After the extensively damaged car was rolled over onto its wheels all 4 of which were broken and out of place

One of the first persons to arrive on the scene informed that it was exactly 4:00 a.m., when he heard the commotion. He said at first he thought

that a vehicle might have collided into one of the gas pumps but when he rushed outside he saw the overturned car a few yards pass the gas station.



The New Shell San Ignacio Service Station with its Fresh & Fast Store

including Guyana and Surinam and has since been engaged in upgrading its facilities. He informed that the company is also promoting the **Fresh**

and Fast Brand of convenient stores in order to provide customers with other goods and services.

Turn To Page 11



The deceased, Silvio J. Torund, 29

He immediately called the police and they arrived shortly thereafter.

Preliminary police investigation indicates that the deceased was driving the car towards San Ignacio Town after dropping off a passenger at one of the resorts further up the road when he lost control of the car and ran off the highway. Police suspect that the driver was not wearing a seat belt and was flung from the vehicle.

As the police investigation continues, the body is inside the morgue at the San Ignacio hospital where it awaits the legally required post mortem examination.

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Letters to the Editor

What Is Politics? What is Government?

Dear Editor;

Thank you for publishing my article under the caption *“Dr. Leo A. Obando Ph.D. is willing to help the national football selection face Mexico in June , 2008”* appearing in last weekend’s edition of the STAR Newspaper.

In the new edition of the **STAR Newspaper**, I will answer a question posed to me, a few months ago, by a student from Galen University. I do accept that this is only possible via the MAGIC AND WONDERS of the information super highway - the internet, and this newspaper.

Over the past ten years, I have lectured at several high schools and junior colleges throughout the country of Belize: these include Sacred Heart College in San Ignacio; St. John’s College Junior College in Belize City as well as Ecumenical High School and Junior College in Dangriga.

Even though I have been out of the classroom for a short while, I continue to receive numerous questions from former students and concerned Belizeans on varied topics of interest, as the one that follows from a student at Galen:

STATEMENT: Politics is a branch of philosophy, which is the foundation of knowledge. It deals with our existence, with men and women and our roles in society. Believe it or not - Politics is a branch of Philosophy! When you discuss politics, you may actually be philosophizing!

Politics examines how a society is structured, how it should be set up, and how the people should act within that society.

Governments have a Social Contract with its citizens. It is a study of Force; it examines the laws that governs society and the rights that members of society should enjoy and exercise.

QUESTIONS -So...what do you think should characterize Governments? What do think the Government of Belize should do for its citizens...regardless which party is elected?

ANSWER - I support the prelude to the concept but differ as to the definition of the word **“POLITICS”** I agree that Politics is a branch of philosophy....but I ask the question - whose definition are you talking about? ... Plato, Socrates, Aquinas, Martin Luther, yourself?

If I were to ask you what is your philosophy of life and you were to say: **“I don’t have one”**. Does it mean that the word doesn’t exist or has no meaning?

In Plato’s time, the interpretation of the word **“POLITICS”** as compared to our time, could be similar or totally different . Considering that every word

is a Metaphor ...words are not absolute per say and can mean one, two or NADA, at any time based on the TIME, CONTEXT, CULTURE, SPACE, where it is used or was used before.

Governments are not RED, BLUE or GREEN ...Political Parties are... but not governments!

A government is the legal body that runs the affairs of the country on behalf of the people and are accountable to them.

Government as a concept is one of the many elements that make a Political State a State. The others are: territory, people, and the constitution - which is the supreme law of the land...no one is or should be above the law!

FINAL- REVERSING QUESTION? Instead of asking what governments can do for the people - lets answer by saying - What can people do for their governments, you can start off by:

1- Making sure that the people you elect to represent you are honest and of high moral standards, capable of handling the job, are good community leaders and committed to them;

2- That the people you elect to represent you are conscious and respectful of the supreme laws of the country;

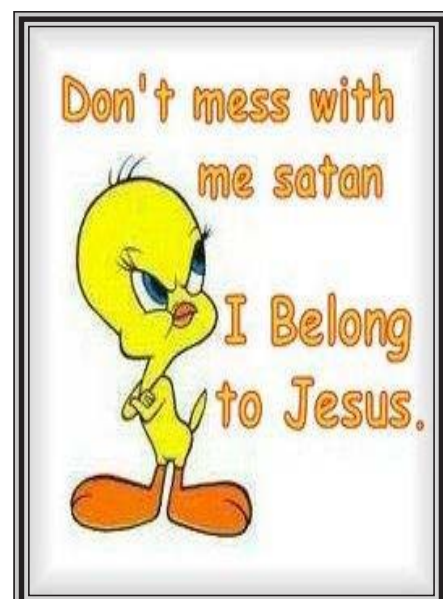
3- That the people you elect to represent you are accountable and transparent in their work;

4- That the people you elect to represent you understand that if he or she does not comply with the job expectation, he or she can be removed;

5- That you commit yourself to work hand in hand with your representative, to achieve those goals which will benefit, if not all the people, at least the majority;

6- That you pay your taxes and understand that your direct participation in the affairs of your country is vital for the success of the People and your Government ... Remember that Every Contract is Binding..... **“POLITICS IS THE ART OF GOVERNING”** - PLATO !!!!

Dr. Leo A. Obando, April 28, 2008, email: leo_obando@yahoo.com)



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

NOTICE

Government of Belize

Professional and Technical Scholarship Awards 2008

The Government of Belize is offering Professional and Technical Scholarship Awards for 2008. These scholarships are tenable **ONLY** at the University of the West Indies, the University of Technology in Jamaica, and the University of Guyana.

Limitation to the Awards

The scholarship award is limited to **Bachelor’s Degree Programs** only and is applicable for a maximum of three (3) consecutive academic years of study in so far as students remain in good standing for the duration of the program. Only in exceptional cases will the Ministry of Education consider **Post Graduate Programs**.

Coverage of the Awards

The scholarship covers tuition (including Economic Cost), allowances for room and board, books, and incidental expenses. The quantum of such allowances will be based on recommendations obtained by the Ministry of Education from the respective Universities. Airfare and matriculation cost will **NOT** be covered under the scholarship award.

Eligibility

1. Applicant must be citizen of Belize
2. Applicant must gain acceptance into the respective Faculty of the University at which he/she proposes to attend.
3. Applicant’s course of studies must be from among the following national priorities, which are not listed in order of preference

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. Agricultural Economics | j. Special Education |
| b. Agriculture Marketing/Trade | k. Vocational and Technical Education Administration |
| c. Chemical/Civil Electrical/Mechanical Engineering | l. Hospital Management and Planning |
| d. Computer Science | m. Finance |
| e. Curriculum Development | n. Psychiatry |
| f. Economics | o. Nursing Administration |
| g. Geology | p. Transport Technology |
| h. Public Administration | q. Labour and Employment Relations |
| i. Early Childhood Education & Development | |

(Please note that Law and Medicine are not included in the list of National Priorities)

Other Conditions of the Scholarship Award

Each Scholarship recipient will be required to return to Belize whenever he/she successfully completes his/her course of study and to serve the Government of Belize (or with the permission of the Government of Belize, serve in the private sector in his profession or calling) for a period of four years commencing from the date of employment in Belize. Applicants will be required to sign a Bond Agreement with the Government of Belize in this respect.

The scholarship is normally for the duration of the program of studies and requires that the scholarship holder maintains passing grades at the University where he/she is enrolled.

Application Forms can be obtained from the District Education Centers or at the Ministry of Education in Belmopan.

All completed Forms must reach the Ministry of Education in Belmopan no later than **Friday, June 6, 2008**.

Belize Signs MOU With Caribbean Group of Youth Business Trusts

Press Release from the Youth Business Trust Belize Contact: Dionne Miranda

BELIZE CITY, Monday, April 28, 2008:

At a ceremony in Georgetown Guyana on April 25th at Splashmins Park, Youth Business Trusts from Belize, Barbados, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago signed an MOU stating their commitment to alleviating poverty through enterprise development and mentoring through partnership and information sharing. Dionne Miranda from Belize, Garland Samuels from Trinidad, **Taryn Demondonca** of Guyana and Marcia Brandon of Barbados signed for their respective Organizations.

The partnership are inclusive of their fundraising efforts which are sought on a group basis as was seen in First Caribbean Internationals donation to the region's trusts for over \$300,000 dollars of which Belize received its first disbursement of \$20,000 just last week.

Dionne Chamberlain Miranda, Project Director of Youth Business Trust Belize, and **Alfonso Noble** "entrepreneur" and owner of "Shooting Stars Productions" returned to Belize today after attending the Inter American Development Bank Regional

Conference and Project Launch with the Caribbean Group of Youth Business Trusts within the MIF project "Mentoring Model to Develop, Young Entrepreneurs."

The Regional Coordinator of the Caribbean Group of Youth Business Trusts, **Ms. Marcia Brandon**, IDB's

Country Representative from Guyana, **Mr. Marco Nicola**, representatives from Caribbean Development Bank and CARICOM, Guyana's Minister of Trade, **Dr. Ashni Singh**, young entrepreneurs, mentors and the Executive Director of the Guyana Youth Business Trust were also in attendance.

A mini fair was held as part of the two day activities which showcased model entrepreneurs. It was at this

mini fair that Alfonso Noble took full advantage of the opportunity to market and show case his talents and services. Alfonso also served as the official videographer for the conference.

The conference closed with the signing of the MOU between the Caribbean Group of Youth Business Trusts comprising of Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Belize.

Unhealthy Garbage Condition At The San Ignacio Hospital

SAN IGNACIO HOSPITAL, Thursday, May 1, 2008:

Hospital waste is generally considered as hazardous material therefore requiring proper collection and disposal. However the sight

today on the compound at the San Ignacio Town Hospital is anything but proper.

An employee today informed that the hospital has been operating for several months without proper

garbage storage facilities.

As the situation now stands, the hospital waste is simply thrown out in the open compound near the morgue and left at the mercy of stray dogs and other wild animals.



The unhealthy garbage condition at the San Ignacio Town Hospital

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P.O. BOX 163, SAN IGNACIO, CAYO, BELIZE. - PHONE: (501)824 -2102; 824- 2758; - FAX: 824 - 3759.

Vacancies exist at **Sacred Heart College** for the posts of

- 1- Part Time Social Studies / Geography Teacher**
- 1- Part Time Religion / Spanish Teacher**
- 1 - Full Time Information Technology Teacher**
- 1- Full Time English Teacher**
- 2 -Full Time Math Teachers**
- 1 -Temporary Math Teacher (Sept. 08 – June 09)**

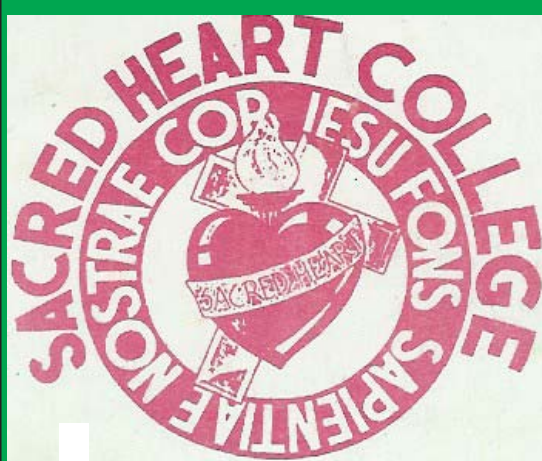
A professional background in education would be an asset.

Minimum Qualification: **Bachelor's Degree**

Deadline for Application: **April 30, 2008**

Please send application to:

**Chairman
Board of Governors
Sacred Heart College Inc.
P. O. Box 163
San Ignacio**



Four Belize City Females Stealing In Santa Elena

SAN IGNACIO TOWN, Cayo, Wednesday, April 30, 2008:

Four females, all residing in Belize City, pleaded guilty to theft charges in San Ignacio's Magistrate court today after being charged for stealing from at least three Santa Elena businessplaces in a single day.

San Ignacio police say that they are notorious shoplifters from Belize City who came to Cayo to engage in their illegal trade. Although there are three known Santa Elena business places from which they stole, police suspect that several other business places could have likewise fell victim to the



Kirian Gordon, 25

group of four.

The proprietors of Era Plus beauty care store located at the corner of Mabel Pitts Street and the Western Highway in Santa Elena were the first to report having a video recording of the females taking products off the shelves and stuffing them into their clothes. By the time the police caught up with them they had already "visited" Alwin's Supermarket, located in front of the Social Security Office in Santa Elena where store owner **Wai Qiang Huang**, 33, reported having one of them on video stealing a bottle of Ovaltine and two packs of Dial bath soap.

Furthermore, Wendy Requena, 22, Belizean businesswoman reported the same group entering her Mini's Boutique on the Western Highway in front of Joe's Cool Club making off



Nicole Smith, 22

with about \$70.00 worth of clothing.

The police eventually caught up with the group and recovered most of the stolen items including the bottle of Ovaltine and the 2 packs of dial bath soap. They were subsequently identified as **Kirian Gordon**, 25, of #13 Mayflower Street; **Nicole Smith**, 22, of #3322 Kings Park; **Marian Belisle**, 20, of #1623 Central American Boulevard and **Nicolie Vasquez**, 19, #3732 Freedom Street, all from Belize City.

They appeared in court on Wednesday, April 30 and entered into a guilty plea on joint theft charges. Magistrate **Kathlene Lewis** then sentenced them to each serve 40 hours community service. They were returned to the San Ignacio Police Station where they were put to clean



Marian Belisle, 20

the building and vehicles for about 3 hours after which they were released and told to complete the sentence in Belize City.



Nicolie Vasquez, 19

STAR Newspaper

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

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Friday May 9th 8:30 - 5:00 & Saturday May 10th 8:30 - 1:30. Mile 62.5 Western Highway, Cayo.

where : GALEN UNIVERSITY

Mile 62.5 Western Highway, Cayo
www.galen.edu.bz



when : Friday MAY 9TH 8:30 - 5:00 &
Saturday MAY 10TH 8:30 - 1:30.

who : Faculty, staff and currently enrolled students will host Open Day for you and other prospective students. Parents are also welcome to attend!

what : Campus tours, faculty introductions, program advising, financing information, student employment applications, faculty consultations, snacks and refreshments, scholarship applications, and 50% off of the application fee!

why : Because your future starts NOW. Find a career that you are excited about! We offer programs of study in Teacher Education, Anthropology and Archaeology, Environmental Science, Business Administration, Economics & Finance, Entrepreneurship, International Business, Marketing, Tourism & Hospitality Management, & Geographical Information Systems. At Galen University, you can earn a Certificate, an Associates Degree, a Bachelors Degree, or an MBA degree. For those of you that work, we even offer night and Saturday classes. The best part? Unlike any other college in Belize, Galen University offers an **ACCREDITED DEGREE** that is recognized internationally.

rsvp : You are welcome to just show up! If you have any questions, please feel free to call 824-3226 or email cwillacey@galen.edu.bz.

Need a ride? A Galen bus will leave Belize City at 7:30 a.m. on Sat. May 10th, from the corner of Central American Boulevard and Cemetery Road and from Belmopan at the Market Square at 9:00 a.m. See you at Open Day!

Landowners Meeting At Hode's Place

SAN IGNACIO, Cayo Tuesday, April 29, 2008:

Contact: Jim Cavanaugh,
Tels: 687-7204 or 670-1702 and
602-0236 email: junglejim@btl.net
For immediate release

The Belize Landowners' Association has scheduled a meeting for ten o'clock on Saturday morning, May 3, at Hode's Place in San Ignacio.

Issues of vital importance to all owners or legal occupiers of private property will be discussed.

The most important issue will be the question of who owns the petroleum rights on private land.

A proposed Constitutional Amendment had its first reading in the House of Representatives on Friday, April 25.

The amendment would make

Government the legal owner of all petroleum rights, whether on Crown land or private property.

Also to be discussed will be the present state of the petroleum industry in Belize, and the implications of future development.

Association Coordinator **Jim Cavanaugh** says the purpose of the Saturday meeting is to put together a plan to protect the rights of all Belizean land owners, large and small, now and in the future. The Association urges all landowners to attend.

For more information contact Association Coordinator **Jim Cavanaugh** at the above telephone numbers and email address.



Jim Cavanaugh

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**Vacancy exist at Sacred Heart College for the post of
Principal/Chief Administrative Officer**



The Board of Governors of Sacred Heart College invites applications from suitably qualified persons for the full-time post of Principal/Chief Administrative Officer. The position will be effective July 1, 2008.

The Principal/Chief Administrative Officer has oversight for the academic and administrative affairs of the College (high school and junior college divisions). He or she has the ultimate responsibility for general administration, the relationship between the school and its public, and overseeing the implementation of the policies and programs of the school in cooperation with the Board of Governors and Ministry of Education. He or she reports to the Sacred Heart College Board of Governors and is an ex-officio member of the Board. SHC is a Catholic institution and such its academic and administrative practices are molded by Catholic traditions

The Principal/Chief Administrative Officer will be a person who: is familiar with and supportive of the mission of Sacred Heart College;

Is capable of working as part of the College's senior management team which includes the Dean of the Junior College and the

Associate Principal of the High School; Is accessible and consultative when making decisions; Has excellent communication and interpersonal skills;

Has the ability to articulate effectively the school's mission to the College community, alumni and to the public-at-large; and

Possesses leadership and management skills.

Education and Experience: Preference will be given to applicants who possess a Master's Degree in Educational Administration (or related field) from an accredited institution, and a minimum of five years experience in teaching or administration in the Belizean educational system. Fluency in Spanish will be an asset.

Remuneration: In accordance with salary scales approved by the Ministry of Education.

Application Deadline: May 16, 2008.

Send or deliver completed application along with resume to:

The Secretary
Board of Governors
Sacred Heart College
P.O. Box 163
San Ignacio, Cayo

San Ignacio's Rotary Club Gets Grant Of Over BZ\$700,000.

By: Andre Lozez, San Ignacio, Tuesday, April 29, 2008:

The Rotary Club of San Ignacio Receives Grant of \$360,000US for Education

The 2005 National Report and Test Analysis from the Ministry of Education informs that 51% of Belize's Primary School Teachers had no formal teacher training - The Rotary Club of Belize aims to change this statistics.

The Rotary Club of San Ignacio has been awarded a Rotary Foundation 3-H (*Health, Hunger & Humanity*) Grant of \$360,000.00 U.S. dollars. These monies will be used to improve teacher training, provide internet access for remote schools and supply elementary teachers across Belize with computers to aid in their lesson preparations.

According to the Project Manager, Rotarian **Andre Lopez**, 360 primary school "*Master Teachers*" will directly receive in-depth workshops for teaching math, science and language arts over the next three years and some 2,500 teachers will be trained by the Master Teachers in a proposed cascade model. "*Our aim is to raise the P.S.E. pass rate by at least 25%.*" said Lopez

This ambitious project began modestly five years ago, when Rotarian **Christopher Aird** traveled to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada to confer with members of the Rotary Club of

Nisku-Leduc and the Black Gold School District of Edmonton, Canada.

The result was a plan for a pilot program to upgrade the teaching skills of primary school teachers in the San Ignacio area. With the blessing of Belize's Ministry of Education, four Canadian teachers traveled to Belize bringing along suitcases filled with teaching aids, school supplies, posters and games which were distributed to the 60 Belizean teachers who attended the 2 week courses in the summer of 2004 at Sacred Heart College in San Ignacio.

This humble start at improving the skills of Primary School teachers was such a success that it was repeated by popular demand in 2005 and again in 2006.

As word of the success of this local Cayo project, which became known as the "**Teacher Professional Development Program**", spread, other districts began to ask if they too could be included.

During the summer of 2007, with additional financial support from Rotary district 5370 of Alberta; the Rotary Club of San Ignacio, took the program nationwide.

In partnership with the Ministry of Education, eight sites were selected and 360 teachers were chosen to participate in the program

A total of 24 Canadian teachers, who were hosted by Rotarians during their two week stay, taught work shops in

Corozal, Orange Walk, Belmopan, Dangriga, Punta Gorda, San Ignacio and Belize City.

These workshops will continue during the summer of 2008, and in 2009 with the addition of San Pedro and Caye Caulker bringing the number of sites to nine.

The grant will also provide online support in the form of curriculum modules designed specifically to meet the demands of the Belizean educational system and will furnish online teacher support services by Canadian professional classroom facilitators in the art of teaching math, science and language arts.

In addition to orchestrating these workshops, the Rotary Club of San Ignacio gave each Belizean teacher who participated in the 2007 workshops a refurbished desk top computer. These computers were donated by Rotary District 5370 of Alberta, Canada and distributed with the help of other Rotary clubs and the cooperation and technical support of secondary schools throughout Belize.

Belize's 3-H grant committee includes: **André Lopez**, from San Ignacio's Rotary Club, as chairman of the committee.

Other members are: **Salvador Espot**, **Dr. Marcelo Coyo**, Rotary Club of Belize City; **Bridget Cullerton**, Rotary Club of Dangriga; **José Chan**, Rotary Club of Punta Gorda and **Christopher Aird**, Rotary Club of San Ignacio.

This is the first ever such award to Belize. Each year more than fifty



**Project Manager
André Lopez**

3-H grant applications are submitted to the Rotary Foundation with only four or five approved.

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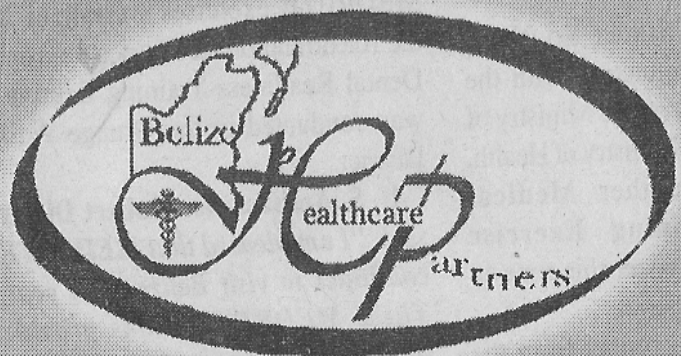
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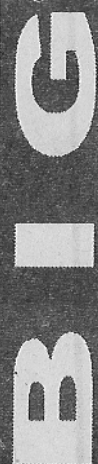
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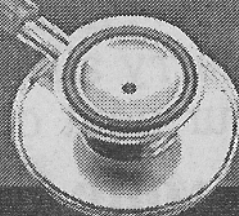
The Belize Pathology Service

A branch of BHPL,
formerly

The Pathology Laboratory
is now located at
Cor. Chancellor Ave. &
Blue Marlin Blvd.
(next to BHPL)
effective Wednesday,
April 30th, 2008

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★ STAR HUMOR ★

What Is The Fastest Thing You Know?

The Post Office was hiring a replacement postman.

After sorting through a stack of applications, the Postmaster General came up with four suitable candidates to be interviewed, Anthony, Rafael, Carlos and Juan.

His busy schedule did not permit the holding of long interviews and so the Postmaster General had one question that he would put to each of them in one interview. Their answers would determine who among them would get the job.

The day came and as the four of them sat around the conference table the Postmaster said *"In this job, SPEED is of the essence - The people must get their mails as quickly as possible and so today I will ask all of you the same question. The one who answers best will get the job. The question is: 'What is the fastest thing you know?'"*

Anthony was the first and he replied. *"The fastest thing I know is A THOUGHT Sir. It comes without any warning; it just pops into your head. as quick as that"* said Anthony.

"That's very good!" replied the Postmaster.

"What about you Rafael, what is the fastest thing you know?" asked the Postmaster.

"Well, Sir", said Rafael *"The fastest thing I know is a BLINK! It comes and goes without you*

knowing that it ever happens. A BLINK is the fastest thing I know.'

"Excellent!" said the Postmaster *"I can see that you are thinking"*.

The Postmaster then turned to Carlos who was contemplating his reply.

"Well, Sir, for me the fastest thing I know is a light, I flip on the switch and the light comes on instantly. For me, nothing travels faster than the speed of light", concluded Carlos.

The Postmaster was very impressed with the third answer and thought he had found his man. *"It's hard to beat the speed of light,"* he said.

Turning to Juan, the fourth and final applicant, the Postmaster posed the same question.

Juan replied, *"Pues, after hearing the three previous answers, I still think that Diarrhea is by far still the fastest thing anyone of us will ever know."* said Juan.

"WHAT!!" exclaimed the Postmaster, stunned by Juan's response. The others were giggling in their seats.

"Oh, I can explain Sir," said Juan. *'You see, Sir, di other day my belly start to hurt me really bad and before I coudda mi THINK, BLINK or TURN ON DE LIGHT I done mess inna mi pants!.'*

The man you see delivering your mail in town - His name is Juan.

U.S. Military Conducts Medical Exercise

BELMOPAN CITY, Wednesday, April 30, 2008:

The United States Southern Command, in conjunction with the Belize Defence Force, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health, will conduct another **Medical Readiness Training Exercise** (MEDRETE) in Belize, this time in the Stann Creek District.

U.S. medical personnel from the 396th Combat Support Hospital and U.S. Army South will be visiting the villages of San Juan, Independence, Trio Village, Red Bank and Bella Vista from 5 May to 15 May 2008 to offer free medical services to residents in these areas. Posters with information of exact dates and locations are being posted in all MEDRETE areas.

This is the first MEDRETE team to

visit Belize in 2008. Last year, two MEDRETE exercises were held in the Toledo and Belize Districts and one Dental Readiness Training Exercise was conducted in the Orange Walk District.

U. S. Ambassador Robert Dieter said, *"I am pleased that MEDRETE continues to visit Belize each year. These MEDRETE teams provide quality medical care free of cost to the public and receive training as they work side-by-side with Belizean military and civilian authorities."*

The MEDRETE team will provide basic medical care in the areas of family practice, pediatrics and dermatology, as well as eye care. Residents in the Stann Creek District are urged to take advantage of this opportunity.

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May 3 Is World Press Freedom Day

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN MEDIA WORKERS (ACM), WESLEY GIBBINGS, GEORGETOWN GUYANA, ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY MAY 3, 2008

Observance of World Press Freedom Day 2008 establishes the critical link between the untrammelled



Wesley Gibbings

ability of people to express themselves and to freely access official information, and their empowerment as citizens.

Some of us correspondingly contend that a principal measure of the power of the people is the extent to which the flow of information, news, opinion and analysis is facilitated by an environment that enables free expression and access to information.

The Caribbean region is, through this injunction, challenged by socio-political antecedents to contemplate a process which would have the impact of effectively transferring responsibility for the future from the grasp of a few to the hands of the people.

It is also a time when crime and violence, economic instability, natural disasters, political conflict and changing global circumstances presage continued uncertainty. The urgency to find solutions and to mitigate impacts is apparent, often in unbridled fashion.

The practice of journalism is unique as a professional function reliant on the view that more, not less, free expression and openness is desirable as a pre-condition for social progress, transparency and participatory democracy. This uniqueness is characterised by the manner in which the media serve as a bridge between civil society and the state.

The ACM also concurs with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, that press freedom and freedom of information, are “the founding principles for good governance, development and peace.”

Submitted by: Ifasina Efunyemi, UWI, Jamaica, Thursday, May 1, 2008:

It is true that professional imperfections militate against achievement of the broader social goals but a penalty of silence is unacceptable as a form of redress against perceived harm.

For reasons such as this, the ACM stands alert to interventions that have the impact of restricting, rather than facilitating free expression. Acts of official censorship, prior restraint and self-censorship in the media are condemned as inimical to the broader cause of progress and growth.

The absence of effective Access to Information laws in some jurisdictions also pronounces unfavourably on the degree to which people are empowered to impact on the decision-making process in a way that affects their everyday lives.

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environments are best advised by the view that content restrictions, beyond widely-accepted rules that protect a person’s privacy and character and the security of the state, are not supported by the principles of free expression, as defined by Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, among other hemispheric and international instruments.

The ACM is committed to raising awareness among media professionals on the value of press freedom as a function of freedom of expression with all its attendant benefits to humanity.

We believe professional standards

should rise to meet the requirements of such freedom and that a concerted effort to network Caribbean media professionals, improve standards, instil high ethical standards and to insist on adherence to the principle of press freedom is the responsibility of an organisation such as ours.

On World Press Freedom Day 2008, we re-dedicate ourselves to the task of shaping our profession in a manner that best serves the interests of a region in social and economic transition, challenged by changing global circumstances, impaired by a colonial legacy but committed to building a better future.

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Tourism Is Better In The Twin Towns

By: Ray Auxillou

SANTA ELENA, Cayo, Monday, April 28, 2008

This Tourist Season in the Western Cayo, twin towns' area, seems better this year. Particularly, for the transient backpacker visitor favoring smaller local accommodations.

They tell me the expensive tourist business is booming, due to professional marketing packages. It looks like in our second year of Falconview Backpackers Hostel, we will double revenue this second year of operation. The return is still in the RED, but encouraging. Unlike our sister hostel on Caye Caulker, (TINAS) which is expected to turn over 9,000 guests this year, our Santa Elena accommodation is only very miniscule in comparison.

Good reputation for exciting trips is the key! There are now two hostels in Cayo West and eight throughout the country. Smaller visitor accommodations are steadily increasing in the Cayo area. We have more beds to sell in the area.

Some of the reasons for increased traffic are;

a) the Greyhound Express bus now making a run between the twin towns and Belize City adding comfort, speed and convenience for the tourist.

b) There is more advertising going out on the tourist attractions of our Western area on the internet, as a winter recreational playground.

c) Often, word of mouth recommendations for individual places are building clientele for warm family friendly accommodations.

Reputation is everything in this business. The places that nickel and dime the tourist with extra charges are not increasing guest volumes, whereas the all inclusive type offerings are attracting tourists. The older tourist trend, just don't want to worry about being ripped off, or haggling, it seems.

A big change I've noticed; is that while the younger ADVENTURE tourist for places like ATM cave and the Mayan Ruins has stayed more or less even in numbers, a growing number of visitors are families, or older couples, seeking simply ordinary summer type visits out of their winter snows and cold places, looking for simple things to do, like canoeing and horseback riding. I've been absolutely shocked by the number of young ladies that do not



Ray Auxillou

want CAVE trips, or pyramids, like the exciting ATM trip, which they consider too strenuous. They do want more summer time family orientated activities.

Camping trips into the Belize Alps would be a big draw I think, for overnights, from the queries we are getting? Lots of the 20 year olds want a beer garden atmosphere in the evenings, for conversation and socializing. Socializing and partying for our type of crowd is the norm for their vacation.

The HOPKINS resorts are very noticeable in the amount of mini-van runs and tourists they are bringing to our Cayo area. They seem to have a good professional marketing program?

There is certainly room for more Tour Guides, with their own equipment, who offer all inclusive specialty tourist trips, through TOUR OPERATORS, that are different and unique.

Most visitors are staying three nights and going out for two days, before moving on to either the Barrier Reef Cayes, or Guatemala. The more choices of activities the better.

There is a new TOUR OPERATOR in a small office across the street from Mickey's Ice Cream, below the Plaza Hotel. Elias can be called at 610 6474 they are just starting out in the business. We wish them luck and look forward to working with them, soon as they get their ALL INCLUSIVE specialties logistically organized. Please include all charges, lunch and drinking water. Pampered service is the key to the trend away from the younger rough adventure tourist, to the now dominant older family tourists.

We do need an increase in vacation offerings, consuming two or

three days. We also need Tour Operators who can logistically arrange ALL INCLUSIVE trips, with no extra surprise fees and charges afterwards. Tourists get offended if people in a group paid different prices than what they are paying and they find out from their fellow travelers. FREE lunch and drinking water bottles are now the norm on any day trip. If not, the OPERATOR must warn the tourist before they sign up, what extra fees they must shell out during the day. Failure to do that, gains our area a bad reputation. Whether a very rich old tourist, or young poor backpacker, ALL tourists watch how they spend their money. Professionalism, honesty and courtesy are what make tourists happy.

The top happiness draws for this past season seem to be the Kayak trip down the Mopan River to Clarissa Falls, the horseback riding along the Mopan River and up to the Xununtanich, ruins, this trip is organized and run by Carla and Rudolfo Juan and when we tried to reserve horses, sometimes they were sold out.

There is also the Ultra Light sightseeing flying adventure in a TRIKE over the Belize River valley, held at either daylight, or sunset, when the air goes calm, from Central Farm airstrip.

The Trike finds the day time flying too bumpy, due to heat thermals and the light weight. More TRIKE ultra lights are coming to Western Belize as they do not require registration or licensing internationally and no pilot's

license is required for this type of recreational vehicle.

Ultra lights in Belize are classified as under 1600 lbs gross weight something similar to Canada and usually have limited range due to fuel weight problems. Hang gliders serving the European young crowd, who number several million customers may be coming to Spanish Lookout, or the Rio Bravo escarpment, from the gossip of entrepreneurs speculating on attracting this market of fanatic aficionados.

The Belize Alps has been ruled out for hang gliders, due to clear cutting of the remaining stands of surviving pines ruining the scenery and ambience, along with difficulties of cooperation from government departments, acquiring leases, or land titles for tourism.

I heard about 54,000 tourists visited the Mountain Pine Ridge this season. I'm certainly curious about this BTB figure and how it would break down into sub totals.

Tourism out in Western Cayo is on the upswing again. Working together we can probably enhance the myriad attractions and make our economy grow.

The days of the fly by night, tour operator are pretty much gone, as they should be, as tourist attractions increase and start to bring in larger tourist volumes. More cooperative organization and professional standards are needed locally to ensure a good experience by visitors, to make things grow like the offshore Cayes.



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From Front Page

He said that the new Shell San Ignacio Service Station was built with the latest technology and safety mechanisms to protect against any eventuality including leakage and spills. The six months project was undertaken by **Raul Martinez**' Misscol Construction from Belize City.

Joe Habet additionally informed that as part of the agreement to expand the facility, SOL undertook to finance the refurbishing of the nearby Columbus Park with a view of improving the appearance of the immediate surroundings.

Guest speaker for the occasion, **Mayor John August**, told the gathering that SOL's investment in upgrading the gas station serves as a clear indication of the company's



M.C. Amini Habet

LIQUOR LICENSE NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that under the Intoxicating Liquor License Ordinance Chapter 150 of the Laws Of Belize, Revised Edition 2000, that **JAMES SABALA** is applying for the renewal of his **MALT & CIDER LIQUOR LICENSE** for the year 2008 to operate **UNCLE JIM WINE** located at #24 Carillo Puerto Avenue, 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 **DANIEL CAL** is applying for the renewal of his **SHOP LIQUOR LICENSE** for the year 2008 to operate **LA TIENDITA** located in Santa Familia Village in the Cayo District

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WINNERS!! Nazette Burns (L) and Michael Young (R) with the Station Manager "Pappy" Habet (C)

confidence in the municipality. He thanked the Habet family, managers of the facility, for their show of support to the community.

Mayor August also thanked SOL for financing the refurbishment of the Columbus Park. *"The original plan", said Mayor August "was to inaugurate the park along with the service station but due to unforeseen circumstances the completion of the park project was delayed for a few weeks."*

informed the mayor.

Two prizes, each for \$100 worth of gasoline were won by **Nazette Burns** from Hode's Place and Belize City Attorney, **Michael Young**.

The Habet family will continue to manage the facility. They have been in the business for almost 60 years. The vote of thanks was delivered by **Yamira Habet Montero** after which Mayor John August was invited to cut the ceremonial ribbon and guests were invited for refreshments and a tour of the new facility.



CUTTING THE RIBBON: SOL General Manager Joe Habet (L) Yamira Habet Montero (C) and Mayor John August (R)

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