



Guatemalans Carjacked Senior Police Officer In Benque Viejo

BENQUE VIEJO TOWN, Sunday, February 14, 2016:

The Officer in Command of the Orange Walk Formation, Assistant Superintendent **Selvin Tillett**, was held up at gunpoint in Benque Viejo on Valentines Day, Sunday, February 14, and his 2014 Mazda pickup truck was taken away.

Tillett lives in the Lomos del Rodeo area of Benque Viejo Town.

After the carjacking he reported to Benque Viejo Police that at about 11:10 a.m. he was driving a white 2014 Mazda BT-50 Pro pickup truck that belongs to his son-in-law, **Sadani Harrison**, when two hispanic men approached him with guns as he parked in front of his house on Humble Street in Lomas Del Rodeo. As Tillett opened the vehicle door, one of the men pointed a black



Superintendent Selvin Tillett

9 mm pistol at him and said in Spanish, *“hand over the vehicle,*

we’re not playing!” Tillett complied and the robbers drove off in the

vehicle in the direction of Arenal Village.

Local police suspected that the culprits were from Guatemala and they immediately notified their counterparts in that jurisdiction.

The vehicle was found by Guatemalan police around 10:30 on Monday morning, February 15. It was found in an area known as Camalote, about ten miles from Melchor. According to reports, the vehicle was intact and only had damages to the door locks. The passenger window had to be broken for police to start the truck with a spare key. The vehicle was driven to the Melchor Police Station and will be handed over to Belize police immediately after it has been processed.

No arrest has been made as yet.

Attorney General Preparing Marijuana Decriminalization Bill for End of March



Cabinet Sub Committee At Launch Of Decriminalization Report

BELIZE CITY, Wednesday, February 17, 2016:

There is finally news on the Decriminalization of Marijuana movement. We have been reliably informed that the Attorney General has now been tasked with preparing a bill for the decriminalization of up to 10 grams of marijuana. Several criminal laws would need to be amended for the legislation to be constitutional; therefore, the Attorney General's Office is now combing through the laws of Belize for parts of the

criminal code that needs to be amended to accommodate the change in policy towards small amounts of marijuana. A bill is expected to be returned to Cabinet by the end of March.

The Cabinet Sub-Committee handed over its report on the pros and cons of the decriminalization of up to 10 grams of marijuana to Cabinet Secretary **Carlos Perdomo** on Thursday, February 26, 2015. That report was tabled in a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday, March 17, of

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PRINCESS INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS

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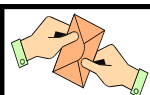
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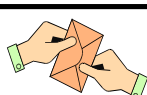
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Readers Write



Scotia Bank

Dear Editor,

For the past 20 odd years I have been doing business with Scotia Bank. I've had my share of troubles, concerning wrong balances, e-payments that have been delayed, the list can go on.

My concern right now however, is that I have been hearing rumors around town that an employee stole some money from the bank and that the person absconded to the states.

Well this is just my two cents! People work hard for their money, I believe that at the very least, the bank could issue a statement to calm the nerves of those of us who are wondering if it was our accoutns that

were touched. With the mistakes being made every so often, this is indeed troubling news for customers

Right now it seems that everything concerning this issue is very hushed. Nobody knows nothing, nobody can verify.

I strongly believe that the bank needs to set the record straight and let us know if there is any truth at all to these rumors. My intention is not to scandal anybody but I want reassurance that my account is in order and I'm sure many others feel the same way.

Thank you,
J. S.

Rotary Wheelchairs

Dear Editor,

The Rotary Club of San Ignacio will be receiving a small supply of wheelchairs for distribution to handicapped and needy persons in March.

Any person in need of such is encouraged to contact Rotarian John Acott on 678-2000 or

john@belizepropertycenter.com or any other Rotarian.

Information needed –

- * Name and age of handicapped person.
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- * Name and number for contact person.



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Downtown Parking

Dear Editor,

I'm writing concerning the issue of parking in the downtown area. I am a customer of the Belize Bank and it is extremely difficult for me to find parking when I need to do my business transactions.

Often times I find myself driving around and around trying to find somewhere to park. When you try to find a spot nearest to the bank the traffic officers are right on your back ready to give you a ticket. I was even told that Belize Bank customers need to use the original parking lot that was right behind the bank before it moved, but that is

always full.

Every other available space in the downtown area is crowded with taxis. The paid parking in the Welcome Center is always full, and seriously, why should I pay parking to deposit and withdraw my own money from the bank? This is a service that the bank should provide.! Trips to the bank are becoming frustrating.

It would have been nice if Belize Bank had taken into consideration where their customers would park. It would also be nice if the Town Council could send out advisories indicating where we should park.

Very Frustrated Citizen

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Prime Minister's Opening Statement At XXVII Inter-Sessional Meeting Of The Conference Of Heads Of Government Of The Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

PLACENCIA VILLAGE, Placencia Hotel, February 15-17, 2016

Colleague Heads, Mr Secretary-General, Ministers, Officials, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you to our country and to the Placencia peninsula.

We think this an idyllic spot. The Maya mountains, part of their world-famous eponymous Biosphere, are in back of us; and to the front is our Caribbean Sea, shared patrimony of **CARICOM** and **SICA** and emblematic of the proud duality that Belize is heir to.

I hope that the legacy features of these surroundings will act as aid and inspiration to our deliberations.

And very important deliberations they are.

For while that is always the case whenever we meet, I may be forgiven for thinking, and hope to make clear, that our issues and challenges are particularly pronounced at this time.

Let me therefore begin by considering the general economic climate in which we currently find ourselves. There has been a failure of the world economy to recover properly from the shock of the financial crisis that began in the last part of the first decade of this new century. That failure, for the majority of us in **CARICOM**, has meant slow growth, increasing difficulties with our public finances, and tremendous strains on our capacity to satisfy the life-improvement aspirations of our people. And it is worth noting that even in the few countries that have shown substantial enough expansion, much of the net effect has been depreciated by population increases. On the bright side, though, there appears to be what we hope will be a sustained resurgence in our region's all-important tourism industry. This would be a welcome offset to the continued volatility in our commodities sector.

The global oil price rout has, in particular, been a double-edged sword for a couple of us. So we salute the recent petroleum discoveries in Guyana and look forward to that country being able to exploit those resources on its own terms; and we welcome the benefit to consumers that cheaper fuel has meant. But at the same time we regret the effect that both the contraction of production and the precipitate price drop have had here in Belize. And we note the even

stronger detriment of the latter on public sector revenues in Trinidad and Tobago.

As well, the oil conundrum has severely constrained the flow of resources to those of us that participate in the PetroCaribe arrangements. This is, of course, in consequence of the havoc done to Venezuela, the source of our erstwhile bounty.

To compound matters, it is clear that the oil price phenomenon is symptomatic of the more generalized weakening, to which I earlier alluded, in commodities markets. This worsens the crisis situation in public finances in certain parts of the Eurozone, so that altogether there appears to be a distinct possibility of the world economy sliding back into recession. The consequences that would entail for our region are both obvious and frightening.

And when we move from the general to the particular regarding global economic and financial currents, there is one already extant development with absolutely cataclysmic ramifications for us. I am talking, of course, about the phenomenon of so-called de-risking. Under pressure from their regulatory authorities in Europe and especially the US, banks in those jurisdictions have been closing their correspondent relationships with our indigenous financial institutions. This deprives our banks of the ability to keep US deposits, do wire transfers, facilitate credit card settlements for their local clients and our economy. The implications of this for our international trade, for our remittances, for our structures of production, consumption and investment, are so obvious as to require little further elaboration. It is therefore no hyperbole to say that, especially in an environment where the value of our imports and exports taken together equals or exceeds our GDP, any attenuation, not to say complete cutoff, respecting our trade and remittance flows, constitutes a clear, present and compendious danger.

It is in this context of Belize, like so many others of us, being so fundamentally threatened, that I went to Washington two weeks ago for the express purpose of taking up this matter directly with the US Regulators.

And, truth to tell, I received much tea and sympathy. The former, in the aftermath of the historic blizzard Washington had just experienced, was welcome. But it was not

immediately clear that the latter, politesse apart, sufficiently advanced matters.

The Regulators all agreed that, absent a solution, our economies, our societies would go belly up; and conceded that could be in no one's interest, including theirs. The sticking point, though, was their proclaimed inability to oblige their private sector banks to engage or re-engage with ours. So the highest expression of that sympathy unguent I earlier mentioned, was no more than an undertaking by the US Regulators to say to their banks that our jurisdictions have done and are doing everything we can to be fully AML/CFT compliant; and that there was therefore no in principle objection to those banks doing business with us. But ultimately, the Regulators insisted, it was strictly a decision for those sovereign US banks to make. They would have to decide whether it was in their financial interest to deal with us, assume the full transactional weight of the resulting monitoring and reporting requirements, and run the risk of nevertheless paying huge fines if anything went wrong. Or, the US banks could simply continue to take the path of least resistance on the basis that our minuscule margins were not worth the trouble. It could not be supposed, of course, that any thought as to the catastrophe waiting to overtake our countries would enter into those banks's straightforward risk/reward calculus.

Despite, then, verbal emollients and undoubtedly sincere protestations of concern, the limitations on action stated by the Regulators seemed, in our circumstances, to pose an uncuttable Gordian knot. Then, as though to assist my digestion of realpolitik 101, a certain article appeared in the Financial Times just after my Washington meetings. It was a report on how developed country banking regulators were actively assisting Iranian banks to re-enter the global financial system following the lifting of economic sanctions. So the barriers on regulatory intervention are apparently far less constraining for a big country than for a small one, even when that big country has been dubbed a pariah and demonized these last few years.

To be fair, the U.S. Authorities have been as good as their word and have now spoken to at least one potential correspondent bank that Belize has approached. The outcome of that is still pending.

Meantime our campaign, and I speak now of **CARICOM**, continues. And it cannot be other than relentless in the face of the possible correspondent banking Armageddon that we face. It is therefore a matter that looms extremely large on our Agenda over the next two days, and has already been the subject of a dedicated Finance Ministers meeting this morning. Without prejudice to any other recommendations that will come to us from that meeting, I signal now that Belize will offer the following for consideration. Surely our respective country banks can get together across jurisdictions and as a bloc approach target banks in the U.S. for pooled correspondent services. That way we should be able to leverage the critical mass needed to make our business volume worthwhile in terms of the risk/

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(Third Publication)

Your Weekly Horoscope and Lucky Numbers

ARIES:

March 22 to April 20

You are the first sign in the zodiac. This is why you love to try anything new. Not only are you a pioneer - you like to win! You like the first word and the last. Because Aries rules the head, you charge headfirst into life, and most of you like hats and sunglasses. This week, the Sun enters Pisces, which is the last sign of the zodiac. This means the next four weeks are the perfect time for you to strategize what you want your new year to be all about. If you clearly define your goals and give them deadlines, you will more likely accomplish them. **Lucky numbers: 01, 17, 63.**

TAURUS:

April 21 to May 21

This month, when the Sun is in Pisces, is always a popular time for Taurus. You think more about your friends and you value them more. You are also more aware of the role friendships play in your life. Obviously, this means you probably get in touch with friends, and many of you also make an effort to join clubs, groups and associations. Remember - your friends are a reflection of who you are. Therefore, this is a great month to socialize and to put your energy into team efforts. It's also a good time to share your hopes and dreams for the future with someone because their feedback will probably help you. Why not find out? **Lucky numbers: 44, 76, 94.**

GEMINI:

May 22 to June 21

In the month ahead, when the Sun is in Pisces, Gemini people are in the limelight because this is the only time all year when the Sun is at the top of their chart. Symbolically, the Sun is "shining down on you" with a light that is flattering. Yes! You look wonderful to everyone! This is why bosses and others will ask you to take on extra projects or do something special. Say yes because you don't have to be special to please them - or even dazzle them. Because the Sun is at the top of your chart, it's also the one month of the year where you really think a lot about your career and your role in your community. Examine your life to see if you're headed in the direction you really want to go. Are you? **Lucky numbers: 32, 59, 82.**

CANCER

June 21 to July 21

For the next month, you want to broaden your horizons through study, travel, adventure plus thrilling and unfamiliar experiences. That's why this is the perfect time to take up a new course of study or a new hobby. You

will also enjoy talking to people from different backgrounds and other countries. Obviously, travel and being able to enjoy a change of scenery will please you. But the main thing is you want to learn something new and feel that you are grabbing more of life, which you can actually do without leaving your city. Often, publishing, the media, the law and medicine become a higher focus at this time. **Lucky numbers: 11, 27, 95.**

LEO:

July 24 to August 21

The month ahead is the one time of the year when you enjoy being more investigative. You want to dig deep and discover more about yourself. As such, you might be more aware of the things you say and do and even be surprised or chagrined. Because of your drive for self-discovery and your inclination for introspection, you will likely undergo some kind of psychological transformation in the next four weeks. You will meet someone who provokes powerful changes in your life or perhaps this person challenges your value structure? Quite likely, you will be concerned with taxes, debt, shared property and inheritances as well. And yes, sex will be on your mind. As ever. **Lucky numbers: 28, 87, 91.**

VIRGO:

August 22 to September 21

In the next four weeks, the Sun is directly opposite your sign. This is the only time all year this happens, and since the Sun is your source of energy, it means you will be more tired. You will need more sleep. This oppositional Sun also means your focus on partners and close friends will be more important. You will study these relationships to see their value in your life. The truth is, for your own benefit, you must be as good for your partner as he or she is for you. In other words, the relationship must be mutually beneficial. This is also a time to consult experts and get support from others. It's definitely not the time to go it alone. **Lucky numbers: 37, 81, 99.**

LIBRA:

September 22 to October 23

More than any other sign, you are affected by your surroundings. The ambience of a room impacts your mood - the lighting, colour, smells, appearances etc. In the next four weeks, you want to manage your life efficiently and effectively. You want everything around you to run smoothly and function well. It's a fact that when your surroundings are clean, attractive and shipshape - you are happier. Therefore, get to work and create surroundings that make you feel good. Give yourself the right tools and equipment to do a great job because you will love yourself for it later.

Lucky numbers: 03, 43, 50.

SCORPIO:

October 24 to November 21

Lucky you! As the Sun moves into Pisces this week, it moves into the part of Scorpio's chart that is all about love affairs, romance, pleasure, vacations, the theatre, movies, the entertainment world, sports events and the hospitality industry. Fun city! Therefore, satisfy your urge to get out and have a good time. You will also enjoy playful activities with children. In addition, if you have a chance to express your own creativity, this will please you. Basically it's the one time of year when you can say, *"I want to be myself and I want to have fun!"* It's a great month to date or slip away on a vacation. **Lucky numbers: 17, 48, 77.**

SAGITTARIUS:

November 22 to December 21

This week when the Sun moves into Pisces where it will be for the next four weeks, it means that for Sagittarians - the Sun will be at the bottom of your chart. This naturally heightens your focus on home, family and your private life. Some of you will be more involved with family events or with a parent. Others will want to cocoon at home and welcome chances to do some navel-gazing. In fact, many of you will start to think about the past more than you usually do perhaps because an event or a person prompts this. Of course, nothing is more conducive to your peace of mind than not having any opinions at all. **Lucky numbers: 06, 11, 30.**

CAPRICORN:

December 22 to January 20

The next four weeks are busy! Your daily tempo will accelerate because your agenda is booked with appointments, errands, mucho conversations, increased reading, writing and studying plus travel - oh yes, many of you will take short trips in the month ahead. You will also be extra keen to communicate. Not only will you want to learn new things, you will also want to enlighten others about your ideas. Because you will be mentally bright and alert, this is a good time to put your cards on the table and tell it like it is. Naturally, you will be polite because you have class plus you value your good reputation. **Lucky numbers: 09, 42, 53.**

AQUARIUS:

January 20 to February 18

When the Sun travels through Pisces in the next four weeks, for Aquarians - it is travelling through your House of Money. That's why you will ponder your values in general and ask yourself what really matters. It's true

that what you earn and what you own reflect your values; but there are also more basic values that dictate your happiness. For starters, it's a fact - what goes around, comes around. Plus, your values create your choices, and your choices create your future. So for your own future happiness, you have to have a handle on what your basic values are. **Lucky numbers: 23, 61, 74.**

PISCES:

February 20 to March 21

Happy Birthday! This week the Sun enters your sign to stay for the next four weeks, giving you a chance to recharge your batteries for the rest of the year. Plus, it will attract important people and favourable situations to you. Obviously, this happens only once a year, when the Sun is in your sign; and because the Sun is the source of all energy - you will be centre stage and powerful! This is why you will want to express yourself, especially creatively. Be aware that this might threaten or overwhelm someone. Well, too bad, because this is the one time of year when your first duty is to yourself. Enjoy! **Lucky numbers: 35, 79, 88.**

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Prime Minister's Opening Statement At XXVII Inter-Sessional Meeting Of The Conference Of Heads Of Government Of The Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

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reward equation. The modalities and logistics will take some working out but clearly are not beyond our skills.

Colleague Heads, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am trying to reiterate what we know only too well. The reality that forces us to acknowledge the limitations of individual smallness, is the same reality that obliges us to size-up both in terms of collective thinking and collective action. A precondition to this, though, is that we talk less and do more. If there is a perceived mismatch between CARICOM rhetoric and CARICOM achievement, we need to tone down the rhetoric and step up the achievement. It may mean a lessening of grandiose goals. It may mean long-haul, quotidian grind to achieve incremental accomplishments. Drudgery in the garret rather than flash- in-the-pan brilliance. But the times do seem to require this sort of workmanlike focus to wring from difficult circumstances the kinds of realizable, measurable objectives our people deserve. And on the back of sustained

slogging there is quite a bit we can do for ourselves even with respect to those generally recessionary global economic conditions about which I spoke earlier.

But I repeat: stock taking now for purposes of a reset requires a hard-headed assessment of where we are, where we need to go and how we get there. We need to settle on achievable goals for the immediate and medium term, and specify and take the necessary steps for realization on a time- and-action basis. In the process we may recognize, for example, that there is need for a workaround of the unbridgeable gap between our aspirations for a perfect single market and economy, and individual circumstance and sovereignty constraints. The nimbleness and flexibility that must be deployed to adjust to the changing world circumstances, may themselves militate against the centralized management mechanism that a full CARICOM single economy posits. So that to be driven back to a reliance on the less lofty but more practical virtues of functional cooperation, may be no bad thing.

In saying this, I am perhaps merely repeating what was stated some time ago by a past CARICOM Prime Minister: that our common cause effort simply cannot all at once incorporate the multiplicity of our individual drivers; that concentrating on the less poetic but more workable dimensions of our integration movement is both sensible and unavoidable; that to admit this is not to admit failure since prioritizing the more readily successful cooperative ventures does ultimately lead to the optimum future deepening that we both desire and deserve.

I realize that in suggesting what may appear to be a utilitarian, journeyman course of action, I am being counterintuitive; that it is at odds with our Caribbean penchant for heady visions and soaring oratory. And I certainly do not seek in any way to diminish the inspired legacy of our Community's founders. But the course of integration, as the threatened unraveling now of the European experiment makes clear, never did run smooth. And I certainly want to avoid, in simple hackneyed

terms, missing the forest for the trees. Or proceeding only by way of what Eisenhower called '*spasmodic reaction to the stimulus of emergencies*'.

Given all this, then, I believe that our efforts must focus on retaining and improving all that has worked. We therefore ought not to go pell-mell with what has been described as the built-in CARICOM integration agenda. On the other hand we must at once intensify those aspects of the CSME on which we are all fully agreed, and which we are all prepared fully to implement.

A more compressed canvas will surely sustain a more concentrated commitment. And that latter is what we as leaders owe to our people and to ourselves.

I thank you.

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Cupid Had No Surprises For Valentine's Weekend In NEBL Tournament

BY: Karim Juan, Commissioner SAN IGNACIO TOWN, Cayo, Sunday, February 14, 2016
Belmopan Bandits Finally Stole A Game, As Independence Remains Winless

On Thursday night, Belmopan Bandits hosted Independence Thunderbolts at the UB gymnasium in Belmopan City, as both teams were trying to record their first win of the season. The home team, Belmopan Bandits jumped out to a first quarter double-digit lead that they never relinquished, handily defeating Independence Thunderbolts, 114-43. Belmopan Bandits (1-3) was led by **Rhetton Belisle** who had the game high 19 points to go with 3 boards, including 5 three-pointers, while **Kyle Pascasio** finished with 18 points and four three point shots. **Nick Brown** registered a double-double with 17 points and 12 rebounds while **Christian Rodriguez**, **Jarell Velasquez** and **Stephen "Muerte" Williams** all scored 10 points each. **Kurt "Chengo" Burgess** finished with the game high, 14 rebounds and 8 points while **Geovanie Lennan** ripped 13 boards to go with 9 points. The top scorer for Independence Thunderbolts (0-5) was **Hyran Augustine** who tallied 16 points and 5 boards, while **Arnold Torres** and **Jason Daly** each finished with 5 points and 4 rebounds. Belmopan Bandits out-rebounded Independence Thunderbolts 66-35 and they led the entire game. Belmopan Bandits scored 20 points off turnovers compared to only 6 by their opponent, while they also led in second chance points, 51-26.

Defending Champs, San Pedro Tiger Sharks, Took A Bite Out Of Dangriga Warriors Winning Streak

On Friday night, Dangriga Warriors hosted the defending champions, San Pedro Tiger Sharks at the Ecumenical College down south. At the end of the closely contested match, the visitors, San Pedro Tiger Sharks was able to notch the 70-60 win in Dangriga. San Pedro Tiger Sharks (3-1) was led by **Raul Roches** with 13 points and 2 assists while **Ashton Edwards** scored 12 points. **Gene Myvett** tallied a double-double with 10 points and 12 rebounds, while **Andrew Ortiz** finished with 10 points and 5 rebounds. Dangriga Warriors (3-2) was led by **James Ewing** who had the game high of 15 points, while snatching 7 rebounds and **Jamir Flores** who sank 12 points to go with 2 steals. **Quinton Bowen** finished the game with 11 points, 3 rebounds and 2 assists. San Pedro Tiger Sharks out-rebounded Dangriga Warriors 35

- 26, while scoring 40 points in the paint, compared to Dangriga's 34 points.

Tiger Sharks Silenced Independence Thunderbolts In Mango Creek

The defending champions traveled to Mango Creek on Saturday night to take on Independence Thunderbolts at the Independence High School Auditorium, as part of their two game road trip down south. Independence Thunderbolts jumped out to a fast start, with a 15 - 9 lead at the end of the first quarter. However, by half time San Pedro Tiger Sharks took control of the game

with a 36 - 22 halftime lead that they never gave up, winning easily, 75 - 41. San Pedro Tiger Sharks (4-1) was led by **Caleb Sutton** with 16 points and 6 rebounds while **Ashton Edwards** sank five three-pointers, to finish the game with 15 points and 3 rebounds. **Gene Myvett** finished the night with 13 points, 6 boards and 3 assists. The home team, Independence Thunderbolts (0-6) was only able to suit up 5 players, and their top scorers were **Lisaney Lambey** with 17 points and 5 rebounds and **Arnold Torres** who tallied a double-double with 15 points and 11 boards. San Pedro Tiger

Sharks out-rebounded Independence Thunderbolts 48-30, while having the 32-0 edge on bench scoring, given that Independence had only 5 players.

Griga Warriors Slips Again As Smart Hurricanes Extend Wnning Streak To 5

On Saturday night, Dangriga Warriors traveled to Belize City to take on the undefeated Smart Hurricanes at Bird's Isle, in a much anticipated rivalry match. Last season, Dangriga Warriors entered the playoffs after defeating Belize Hurricanes in the last game of the regular season. The home team jumped out to an early 17 - 11 lead at the end of the first quarter which they maintained throughout the game,

Please Turn To Page 8



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STAR HUMOR

Church Feud

Church feuds are not uncommon, especially among cliques in the congregation. But when the pastor and choir director get into it, stand aside.

One week our preacher preached on commitment, and how we should dedicate ourselves to service. The director then led the choir in singing, *'I Shall Not Be Moved.'*

The next Sunday, the preacher preached on giving and how we should gladly give to the work of the Lord. The choir director then led the song, *'Jesus Paid It All.'*

The next Sunday, the preacher preached on gossiping and how we should watch our tongues. The hymn was *'I Love To Tell The Story.'*

The preacher became disgusted over the situation, and the next Sunday he told the congregation he was considering resigning. The choir then sang *'Oh, Why Not Tonight.'*

When the preacher resigned the next week, he told the church that Jesus had led him there and Jesus was taking him away. The choir then sang, *'What A Friend We Have in Jesus.'*

Baseball In Heaven

Two old men had been best friends for years, and they both live to their early 90's, when one of them suddenly falls deathly ill. His friend comes to visit him on his deathbed, and they're reminiscing about their long friendship,

when the dying man's friend asks, *"Listen, when you die, do me a favor. I want to know if there's baseball in heaven."*

The dying man said, *"We've been friends for years, this I'll do for*

you." And then he dies.

A couple days later, his surviving friend is sleeping when he hears his friend's voice. The voice says, *"I've got some good news and some bad*

news. The good news is that there's baseball in heaven."

"What's the bad news?"

"You're pitching on Wednesday."

Baseball In Heaven

A sales clerk asked his boss how to handle people who complained about the current prices compared to the low prices in the good old

days.

"Just act surprised and tell them you didn't think that they were old enough to remember them."

Cupid Had No Surprises For Valentine's Weekend In NEBL Tournament

Continued From Page 7

until Dangriga Warriors was able to close the gap to 47 - 44 at the end of the third quarter. However, Smart Belize Hurricanes was able to secure the 70 - 61 victory to remain as the only undefeated team in the league. Smart Belize Hurricanes (5-0) was led by **Akeem Watters** with 13 points, 3 steals and 2 assists. **Brian White** finished with another double-double, scoring 11 points to go with 12 rebounds, while **Farron Louriano** and **Glency Lopez** also sank 11 points each. Dangriga Warriors (3-3) top scorer was **James Ewing**, who had the game high with 15 points, while snatching 8 boards. **Edgar Mitchell** finished with 14 points, 5 rebounds and 3 steals while **Lisbey Castillo** scored 12 points to go with 3 boards and 3 steals. Smart Belize Hurricanes outscored Dangriga Warriors in points off turnovers, 20 - 8, but Dangriga had the 13 - 4 edge on second chance points. Dangriga

also won the battle on the boards, 39 - 31.

Upcoming Games

Friday at 9 p.m.

- Belmopan Bandits at Cayo Western Ballaz

Friday at 9 p.m.

- Orange Walk Running Rebels at Smart Belize Hurricanes

Saturday at 8 p.m.

- Dangriga Warriors at Independence Thunderbolts

Saturday at 8 p.m.

- Orange Walk Running Rebels at Belmopan Bandits

Saturday at 9 p.m.

- Belize City No Limit at San Pedro Tiger Sharks

All games can be followed live on our website at nebl.sportingpulse.net, with real time box scores while the game is being played. The website also has all game scores, box scores, players and teams' statistics, along with standings for the season.

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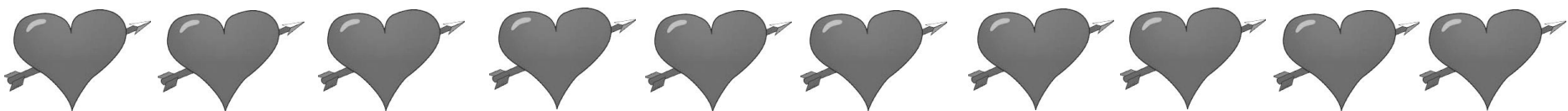
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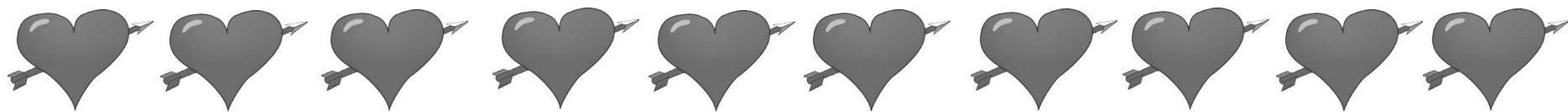
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Venezuela Raises Petrol Price For First Time In 20 Years

BBC NEWS, Thursday, February 18, 2016:

Venezuela is raising petrol prices for the first time in 20 years, although the president claims it will still be the cheapest in the world.

President Nicolas Maduro said pump prices of premium fuel would rise from the equivalent of \$0.01 a litre to about \$0.60 (£0.40).

The cost of lower grade petrol would rise to about \$0.10 a litre.

He unveiled a series measures to help ease Venezuela's economic crisis, including devaluing the currency.

The rise in the heavily-subsidised fuel price will save \$800m a year.

"Venezuela has the cheapest gasoline in the world," Mr Maduro said in a televised address. *"The cost is almost nothing."*

However, other countries,



Venezuela's Economy Has Been Pushed To The Brink By The Collapse In The Oil Price

including Saudi Arabia also have extremely cheap, subsidised petrol prices.

He said the price rise was "a

necessary measure, a necessary action to balance things, I take responsibility for it."

Food and petrol price increases in

1989 sparked nationwide protests that resulted in scores of deaths, unrest that is considered to have paved the way for the late President Hugo Chavez's rise to power.

Venezuela's economy has been pushed to the brink by the collapse in the oil price, which accounts for about 95% of the country's export revenues.

The economy shrank 10% last year, amid rampant inflation and shortages of some basic products,

According to the Bloomberg news agency, the state oil company Petroleos de Venezuela incurred \$15.2bn in costs in 2013 to maintain Venezuela's fuel subsidy.

Mr Maduro also announced that the government would "simplify" the complex exchange rate from Thursday, easing the protected official rate for food and medicine imports which will now operate alongside a parallel "floating" rate.

Investors have become increasingly concerned about Venezuela's potential default on its huge debts.

Freedom 251: India Firm Launches 'World's Cheapest' Smartphone

BBC NEWS, Thursday, February 18, 2016:

An Indian company has launched what is being billed as the world's cheapest smartphone.

Ringin Bells said their Freedom 251 phone would cost just 251 rupees (\$3.67; £2.56), and there was huge demand in the first hours of sale.

But sceptics have raised questions about the device and the company's price strategy.

India is the world's second-largest mobile market and has one billion mobile phone subscribers.

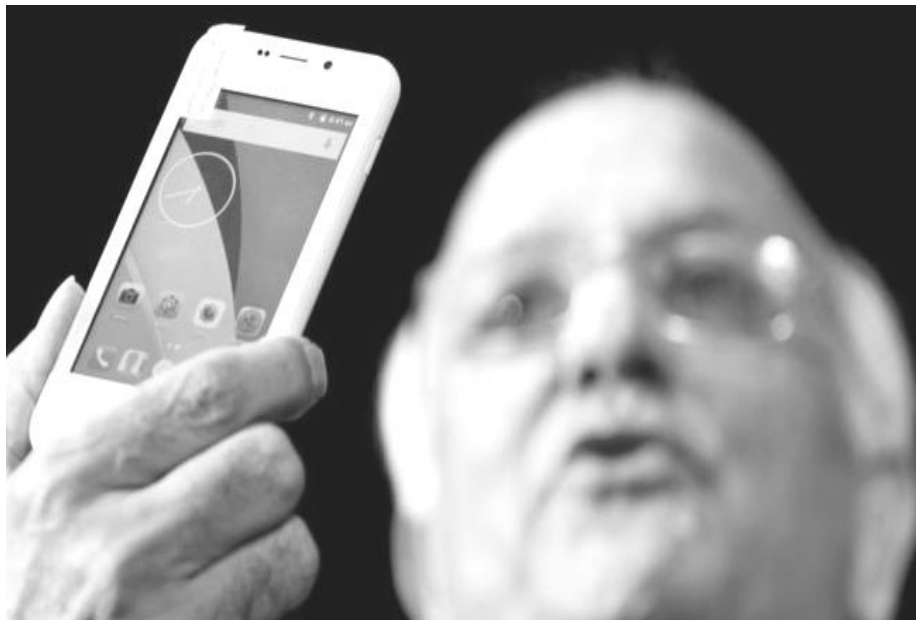
Freedom 251 is expected to target a market already dominated by low-cost handsets.

Is India's \$3.6 smartphone too good to be true?

The phone has 8GB storage and cameras in the front and back, and its model resembles Apple's iPhone 4, including the home button and icons.

"This is our flagship model and we think it will bring a revolution in the industry," the AFP news agency quoted a spokeswoman as saying.

The smartphone went on sale on Thursday morning but, just hours



The Freedom 251 Smartphone Resembles Apple's iPhone 4

later, the company had to stop accepting orders after its website crashed due to huge demand: 600,000 hits per second, it said.

Ringin Bells said the phone would be produced locally, even though it still has no factory in India. The prototypes handed to journalists were, actually, of a Chinese-made phone with its brand name, Adcom, covered with white paint.

It has promised to deliver the first devices in four months.

The company had initially said the

device would cost under 500 rupees (£5; \$7.3), before revealing a much

cheaper price at the launch on Wednesday.

But critics have raised questions about the smartphone, saying the price is far lower than what its components would cost, let alone costs with production, distribution and marketing.

"It looks like it is highly subsidized by the company and it is not clear how they plan to sustain this," Tarun Pathak, an analyst with Counterpoint Technology Research, told the Reuters news agency.

The Indian Cellular Association reportedly wrote to the country's telecoms minister Ravi Shankar Prasad saying it was not possible to sell a 3G phone below 2,700 rupees.

Ringin Bells was set up a few months ago and recently launched one of India's cheapest 4G smartphones at 2,999 rupees, the Press Trust of India reported.

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QUALIFICATIONS:	<div><div>* Degree in Civil or other Technical Engineering</div><div>* Five years’ experience in supervisory/management will be preferred</div><div>* Valid driver’s license</div><div>* Excellent command of English language; Spanish language will be an asset</div></div>

Please send your application letter with your detailed resume giving your current position and salary by March 4th, 2016 to:

Human Resource Manager

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Police Truck Flip Near Roaring Creek

ROARING CREEK VILLAGE, Cayo, Saturday, February 13, 2016:

The Belize Police Department has made no public report but we are reliably informed that three police officers were injured in a traffic accident that occurred on Saturday, February 13. The officers were on their way to the Roaring Creek Police Station when the driver lost control of the vehicle causing it to flip multiple times.

According to our colleagues at social media news site “*Breaking news Belize*”, the three police officers are constables **Mark Rodriguez, Kenroy Pandey and Nadir Mendoza**. The news outlet has reported that the driver of the police truck was trying to avoid



(Picture Courtesy our Colleagues at *Breaking News Belize*)

crashing into a green Toyota car that made an abrupt stop in front of them near the police station. The speed at which the driver tried to swerve out of the car’s way was too much for

control and recovery. This caused the vehicle to flip; fortunately, none of the officers lost their lives. They were rushed via ambulance to the Western Regional Hospital for medical

attention and are all expected to recover from injuries sustained. Accidents like these remind us just how dangerous the regular day to day duties of police officers are. These officers are expected to respond speedily to calls throughout the day, often putting themselves in danger on the streets and roads of Belize. We at the Star newspaper wish these brave officers a full and speedy recovery.

Liquor License Notices

Notice is hereby given that under the Intoxicating Liquor License Ordinance Chapter 150 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000, **GOMER ENRIQUEZ** is applying for a **RESTAURANT** liquor license for the year 2016 to operate **Paradise Auto Spa** located on George Price Blvd., Benque Viejo Town, Cayo District

where they noted that the male person was wearing a black shirt and blue short pants. He was lying on his left side in the shallow water of the creek.

The family’s worst case scenario proved true when the body was later identified to be that of Melendez. He appeared to have bruises on the left side and upper center of the head. Police are treating the matter as a sudden death, as it appears that he might have fallen off the bank of the creek, which was about 15 to 20 feet high.

Investigations; however, continue until police can definitely rule out foul play

Police Recover A Body In Mopan River In Benque

BENQUE VIEJO TOWN, Thursday, February 11, 2016:

Police are investigating the circumstances that led to the death of San Pedro Town resident in Benque Viejo Town. **Fernando Melendez**, 47, a Belizean laborer of San Pedro Town, who was visiting family

members in Benque. Melendez had come from San Pedro Town on Thursday, February 11, to visit his mother in Benque Viejo Town who was celebrating her birthday. At about 4:00 pm on that same date he decided to go to Melchor de Mencos to

socialize. He then left Melchor sometime Thursday night to return to his mother’s home in Benque. Melendez decided to walk through an illegal and bushy crossing area enroute to his mother’s home. When he did not show up Thursday night his family started to search for him.

News reached the mother that a dead body was discovered at about 3:05 p.m. in a creek about 200 yards up the Mopan River, in Benque Viejo on Friday, February 12.

Police officers visited the scene

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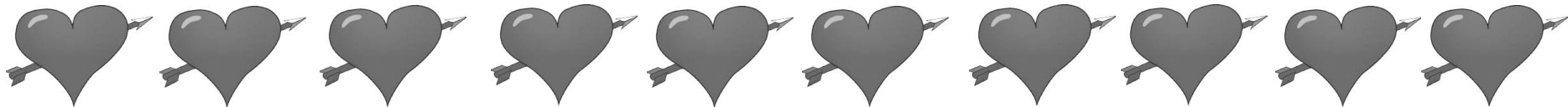
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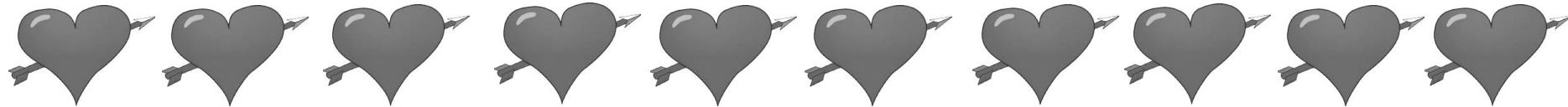
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Belizean Child Sent Back To Guatemala By Belizean Court

BELIZE CITY, Friday, February 12, 2016:

Ana Liz Perez Gutierrez ran away from Guatemala with two-year-old **Nina Charlotte Alexandra Barrera Perez** in October of 2015, allegedly escaping domestic abuse by the child's father, **Ernesto Barrera**. She went to live with her family in Orange Walk but that refuge was short lived. Nina's Guatemalan father reported to authorities in his country that the baby was taken across the border illegally and without his permission. As a result, an international complaint went in to the Human Services Department and the child was removed from the mother's care on Friday, November 13, under a provision for **"Emergency Care"** in the Families and Children Act. Under this law, the Department has two days to approach the court to confirm the legality of this emergency protective care. That was done on Monday, November 16, and the Family Court granted the Department interim custody of the toddler under the substantive issue of rightful guardianship could be determined. It was a tough couple months for the parents who had to spend Christmas and bring in the new year without their infant child.

The child remained in foster care until



Nina Charlotte Alexandra Barrera Perez

Magistrate Cayetano's ruling on Friday, February 12. The morning started with heavy police presence on Bishop Street. Word had reached Special Branch that well wishers would make it out to demonstrate in support of Gutierrez. Therefore, police set up barricades on both ends of the street. This proved to be unnecessary as no protest materialized throughout the day. As is

the case with almost all family court cases, the hearing was closed to the public. Inside the courtroom was **Magistrate Dale Cayetano**, Gutierrez and her attorney **Marcel Cardona**, Barrera and his attorney **Kevin Arthurs**, and representatives of the Human Services Department. The Director of the Belize Family Court, Magistrate Dale Cayetano, ordered the Department of Human

Services to return two-year-old Nina Perez to Guatemala. When the case concluded, Ana Liz Perez Gutierrez walked out and delivered what, for her, was very sad news. Gutierrez read out the decision verbatim, **"Take note that the above case for declaration of wrongful removal/return of the child was concluded on the twelfth day of February 2016 where the following order was made. The child, Nina Charlotte Alexandra Barrera Perez, born twenty-third October 2013 was wrongfully removed from Guatemala. It is hereby ordered that the child be returned to Guatemala immediately; pursuant to Chapter 177 of the International Child Adoption Act Revised Edition 200 and the subsequent articles of the convention."**

The child was handed over to the Guatemalan Embassy by the Human Services Department. She will be returned to Guatemala and handed over to the child care services agency in that country. It is likely that Nina will be put into a foster home while a custody battle takes place in Guatemalan courts.

People close to Gutierrez say there is legitimate danger in Guatemala for her, both from the authorities and Barrera's family, if she chooses to return to fight for Nina. Gutierrez seems to be undeterred however. She said, **"Right now I am not fearful. If my daughter has to go to Guatemala, I'm gonna follow her to Guatemala."**

Parent Of Drowned American Boy Wants Answers

MONEY BAY, Monday, February 15, 2016:

Freshman student of North Cobb High School, 14-year-old **Tomari Alijah Jackson**, was to have the time of his life on a week long mission trip to Belize with 31 other schoolmates. The well loved talented flute player of the school's freshman band was to arrive in Belize on Saturday, February 13, and head west to the Monkey Bay Wildlife Sanctuary where the team would spend five days on a field trip. Plans were also in place to celebrate Tomari's 15th birthday on Monday, February 15. Unfortunately, the trip went tragically wrong just hours after the students landed in Belize.

Soon after they arrived at the Monkey Bay Wildlife Sanctuary the students went for a swim in the Sibun River at Tiger Sandy Bay. Mathew Miller, Managing Director of the Sanctuary, said there were three tour guides along with the six chaperones to watch the children. **"It is a known bathing spot,"** Miller said, **"It's a shallow area; there is not a strong current; it's even a little back eddy where there is calm water. Tomari was swimming with his Go Pro camera, his swimming goggles,**



Tomari Alijah Jackson

his grey shirt and his blue shorts—going under and coming up."

Noone even realized Tomari was missing until the group was heading in and a head count was conducted. When he could not be found, the tour guides and chaperones searched the area and river. Police were called to the location at around 5 p.m. They requested assistance from a search team of the Belize Coastguard. An

extensive search was conducted in which a team of Coastguard seamen, tourguides and local swimmers combed the area for any sign of Jackson. It was not until a few minutes before 3 a.m. that local divers found Jackson's body some 25 feet below the water. An autopsy report issued on Jackson's birthday, Monday, February 15, stated that he died from asphyxia as a result of drowning.

Jackson's mother, **Adell Forbes**, was informed by United States Embassy officials that her son was missing shortly after Belize police were called to the sanctuary. She had already began preparations to travel to Belize to help look for her child when she received a call early Sunday morning informing her that Tomari's body was found under water. Needless to say, Forbes is demanding some answers. She wants to know how it is that noone noticed that Tomari was missing before they boarded the bus. She sent her child with 31 other students and six chaperones and noone even missed her son in the water. Forbes also informed the American press that Tomari was a Boy Scout and a pretty good swimmer so she was surprised

to find out that he died while swimming in shallow water. Forbes said she trusted officials at her son's school to keep him safe during the week-long trip.

The rest of the mission team returned to Georgia on Monday, February 15, six days earlier than planned. The school has already put in place counseling sessions for the distraught students. Tomari's mother says she is hoping that someone will come forward and shed light on what happened in the moments leading to his death because it is still a mystery to her.

NOTICE

Deadline for the submission of all ads, articles and humor will now be on Wednesdays at 12 noon.

We thank you for your continued support throughout the years and look forward to serving you more efficiently for many more years to come.

Minister Of Health Tours New Santa Elena Health Center

SANTA ELENA TOWN, Cayo, Tuesday, February 16, 2016:

The Minister of Health, **Hon. Pablo Marin**, was in Santa Elena Town on Tuesday, February 16, for a tour of the newly established Santa Elena Health Center. The Minister was accompanied by Chief Executive Officer in the Ministry of Health, **Dr. Ramon Figueroa**, on a tour guided by Area Representative for Cayo Central, **Hon. Rene Montero**.

The purpose of the tour is for the Minister to familiarize himself with the capacity and needs of the center. Minister Marin and Dr. Figueroa pledged their full support in the provision of equipment and assignment of staff for the institution. Building capacity of the municipalities to handle primary and secondary healthcare services is the number one mission of the Ministry of Health and Minister Marin complimented



center opens, residents of Santa Elena Town will no longer have to travel all the way to the San Ignacio Hospital for basic medical services. The design for the health center was unveiled in late September after months of strong lobbying by Hon. Montero directed at the Ministry of Health.

Upon the visit of Minister Pablo Marin, Hon. Montero reiterated his goal for the Santa Elena Health Center. He said, *"We want to provide a first class Medical Center for the wonderful residents of Cayo Central."* Previously, the Cayo Central Committee has been organizing temporary clinics and other initiatives to bring healthcare services closer to constituents but the long term goal has always been to establish a permanent first class medical center. Currently, residents of the Santa Elena area have to pay taxi fare to go all the way to the new San Ignacio Hospital on Bullet Tree road. Many people cannot afford that.

Attorney General Preparing Marijuana Decriminalization Bill for End of March

Continued From Front Page

2015 with a recommendation *"that it not be a criminal offense for anyone to be found in possession of up to 10 grams of marijuana"*. Our sources tells us that the report and recommendation was supported by most of the members. Prime Minister Dean Barrow says, *"We have agreed in principle but still need to work on a lot of the details."*

It is usually said that the devil is in the details but in this case the devil may well be in the name itself. The Committee proposes that there should be tickets issued with fines for discovery of a decriminalized amount and the recommended fine is \$15 per gram. The committee also recommends mandatory drug education programs for juvenile and repeat offenders. Two third of the fines collected from drug tickets will go to the courts and one third will be used to finance the drug education program of the National Drug Abuse Control Council. Penalties for repeat offenders also include community service and increased fines. However, the question was raised in Cabinet that if there is still penalties for less than ten grams of marijuana; is it really decriminalized? In order to work out the details, **Hon. John Saldivar**, Minister of National Security, who had the greatest reservations in supporting the bill was tasked with amending the proposal of the committee.

In an interview with the **STAR Newspaper**, Minister Saldivar explained that Cabinet received an update to the Decriminalization Committee's report three weeks ago. It was reviewed and sent to the Attorney General's office for changes to the laws to accommodate the move. Minister Saldivar explained to that the recommendations are not necessarily for the decriminalization of Marijuana, rather he deems it as *"de-penalization"*. Simply put, Cabinet has recommended that anyone who has been caught with 10

grams or less be fined and no prison term be attached when found guilty of that amount. Additionally convictions of these amounts would not form part of the person's criminal record.

Montero on his vision for healthcare in Santa Elena and San Ignacio.

Hon. Montero says the new Santa Elena Health Center will be officially open very soon. When the new health



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- Proficient in basic computer programs
- Client and customer relationships, inclusive of attending dietary restrictions

Qualification and Experience:

The ideal Chef will also be expected to have knowledge with *Italian* cuisine and cooking for volume while ensuring the quality for value. The ideal Chef should have at least 2 years reputable and recognized hospitality experience (preferable in same position as offer) as well as knowledge of kitchen management.

Applications will be accepted to end, Friday, February 26th, 2016 and you can send or drop off your cover application letter and resume to:

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