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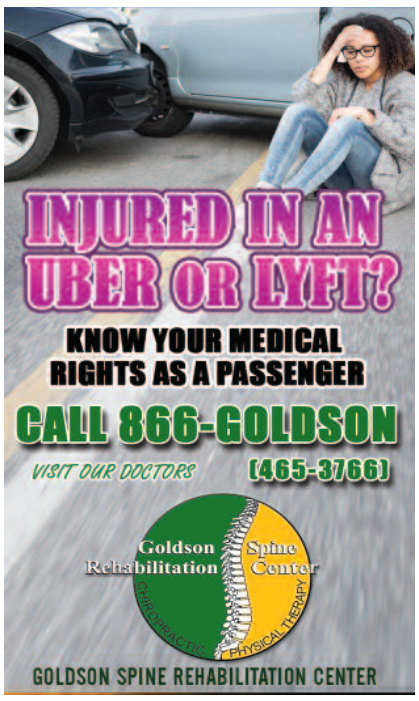

WILL TO WIN

~ Caribbean American Wayne Messam has jumped into the race to become president of the United States. Messam isn't bothered by his perceived underdog status or lack of national name recognition. He vows to get the job done, page 2.

U.S. President Donald Trump last month chose to meet with some Caribbean leaders in Florida. Others weren't invited. While some of the leaders were happy with the meeting, others, like Ralph Gonsalves of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, were a bit more skeptical, page 3.

Kingston College and Edwin Allen won their respective sections of Jamaica's boys and girls high schools athletics championships, widely acknowledged among the greatest track and field meets of its kind in the world, page 15.

RISE FROM RUBBLE

~ Embattled Caribbean American Robert W. Runcie rode a groundswell of support last month to return as superintendent of schools in Broward County, Florida, despite efforts to oust him. He also had to confront a horrible tragedy in his district that still threatens the lives of the people there, page 7.

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IN THE RING: Caribbean American enters 2020 U.S. presidential race

PATRICK SMIKLE

In a less than 25-minute informal gathering with reporters at Florida Memorial University (FMU) in Miami Gardens, following his formal announcement that he was running for president of the United States, Miramar Mayor Wayne Messam was called an "underdog" and "long shot" candidate.

One reporter used a "Cinderella" metaphor to describe the Caribbean American's candidacy. He quickly amended that to "Cinderfella".

The candidate laughed it off.

Messam had heard and seen these descriptions in the media since January, when he first floated the idea of running for president. Back then he was still a first term mayor facing an election for a second term.

Newspapers quoted some "political consultants" describing Messam's proposed candidacy as "far-fetched" and "absurd".

Messam easily won re-election as mayor on Mar. 12 and, the following day, announced he was forming an exploratory committee to examine the feasibility to run for president. Yet it was clear to anyone following his activities that Messam had already made up his mind to run. He had made several visits to South Carolina, an early primary state where the size of the black electorate makes it important to any candidate seeking the Democratic Party nomination.

He also visited the Middle East and held talks with Israeli and Palestinian elected officials, and community activists on both sides, presumably to sharpen his foreign policy chops. Messam visited Nevada, another early primary state, where his life-story as a first generation American, a child of working class immigrants, can be expected to get a sympathetic hearing.

'THE MUCK'

Messam is the son of Jamaican immigrants: His father, a cane cutter; his mother a cook and house-cleaner.

Born June 7, 1974 in the tiny rural village of South Bay (known affectionately, or derisively, depending on your perspective, as "the Muck"), he did well enough in high school to earn a full academic and athletic scholarship to Florida State University, where he was a wide-receiver on the 1993 national champion Seminoles football team.

Messam graduated from

Messam

FSU, married his college sweetheart. They have three college-age children. The couple started a construction business. Messam had been a student activist in college, so it surprised no one when he ventured into politics. He won a seat on the Miramar City Council in 2011.

Four years later Messam challenged incumbent Lori Mosely, a 16-year veteran on the council, for her seat as mayor.

"They said I was crazy," Messam remembers.

He won and became Miramar's first black mayor. When he won re-election, Messam got 86 percent of the votes, although only eight percent of the 83,000 registered voters cast ballots.

Although, not a strong mayor (day-to-day execu-tive authority resides in the city manager's office) Messam boasts that, under his leadership, Miramar has become an example of a successful municipality. It is one of the country's fastest growing cities. Messam has joined with other Florida mayors in suing the state to overturn a law banning local gov-ernments from regulating guns. He has fought alongside other municipalities and environmental or-ganizations against drilling for oil in the Everglades.

Messam is said to be well-known and respected among Democratic Party elected officials across the county. He serves on the National League of Cities' Board of Directors and is a past president of the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials.

CAMPAIGN POSITIONS

At his Mar. 30 campaign launch, a modest but enthusiastic crowd, estimated at more than 200, heard Messam outline an ambitious program of initiatives he would pursue as president.

He planned to forgive or pay off student loan debt (paid for by repealing tax cuts implemented by President Donald Trump), take action on climate change (by re-engaging with the Paris Accords dismissed by Trump), make health care a human right and "ban military-style weapons from our streets and our schools."

Messam said his administration would invest in the next generation of entrepreneurs. He wants to create an economic council to develop a long term program to plan for the advent of new technologies.

Messam joins Kamala Harris as two Democratic presidential candidates with a Caribbean background. The California senator's father is also from Jamaica. He understands his roots are different.

"I am not the traditional and status quo candidate coming out of Washington," Messam explained.

"I am a mayor of a growing and diverse city. Mayors get the job done."

Messam brushed aside talk his candidacy has no realistic possibility of success.

"Being called an underdog is not an insult to me," he said. "It's motivation. It's fuel."

Patrick Smikle is a freelance writer for Caribbean Today. The photographs of Wayne Messam on pages 1 and 2 are courtesy of Beyond Revealed Media.

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DIVIDE AND RULE?: Trump, Caribbean leaders meeting 'troubling' ~ *SVG P.M.*

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grendines Dr. Ralph Gonsalves has described the recent meeting between United States President Donald Trump and some Caribbean leaders as "troubling."

Speaking to reporters here late last month, Gonsalves said there was no true representation of the Caribbean community (CARICOM) as the current chairman of the regional body, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis Dr Timothy Harris, was not invited to the meeting.

Gonsalves

He also explained that also absent were members of the CARICOM advisory committee, which includes Gonsalves, Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley and Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley .

"None of those persons were invited and for it to be a true CARICOM representation you must at least have the chairman so that any discussion of Venezuela in that context... it cuts across the agreement mechanisms that we have put in place," said Gonsalves, who spoke following a meeting with stakeholders in the regional carrier LIAT.

'CREEPING COUP'

Gonsalves , who referred to the actions of the U.S. concerning Venezuela as "a creeping coup d'etat" against a legitimate government, said CARICOM will not fall victim to the entrapping of others.

"We in CARICOM have to be very alive to the mischief that some persons may be up to , to seek to divide us in a manner which we ought not to be divided and therefore reduce the extent of our work," said Gonsalves.

On Mar. 22, the prime ministers of Jamaica, The Bahamas and St. Lucia, as well as the presidents of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, met with Trump to discuss the crisis in Venezuela and energy.

- Edited from CMC.

'D.C. sniper' case to Supreme Court

The case of a Jamaican national who was convicted as a teenager for shooting and killing several people in the United States appears heading to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Lee Boyd Malvo was 17 when he and another man, John Allen Muhammad, went on a shooting spree which killed 10 people in Washington, D.C., Virginia and Maryland. Malvo is now 34.

Muhammad was executed for his crimes in 2009. Malvo, who once claimed he didn't commit most of the shootings and that Muhammad brainwashed him, was sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

Malvo

However, a lower court ruled that Malvo should be re-sentenced because he was not an adult when he committed the crimes. The state of Virginia, appealing that ruling, argued that court "precedent only applies when there is a mandatory sentence of life without parole," according to a report by **CNN**.

On Mar. 18, the Supreme Court, the highest court in the U.S., agreed to hear the case. The date of the hearing had not been determined up to press time. However, the court's ruling could possibly determine if Malvo's non-parole status remains in place.

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St. Lucian wins Commonwealth Youth Award

LONDON, England – St. Lucian Johanan Dujon has been named among four winners of the 2019 Commonwealth Youth Awards in recognition of their efforts to end hunger, sexual violence, sanitation issues and the damaging effects of climate change.

Dujon

Dujon, joined representatives from India, Nigeria and the Solomon Islands in sharing a £12,000 (one British pound =US$1) grant for their innovative projects. He won in the category of the Caribbean and Canada focusing on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 9) examining industry, innovation and infrastructure.

Dujon founded an indigenous biotechnology company, Algas Organics, which develops commercial agricultural products from harmful sargassum seaweed.

TRANSFORMATION

The Commonwealth Secretariat said in a statement that these products unblock fish landing sites and reduce the harmful effect of the seaweed's hydrogen sulphide emissions on local communities.

"St. Lucia heavily depends on tourism," Dujon said. "This seaweed problem has been having a crippling effect on our tourism and local fishery sector.

"We have developed a process to transform this seaweed to highly quality fertilizer that we now export to other countries."

Dujon said he intends to use his share of the award to expand his work to other affected small island states in Africa and the Pacific.

The other winners were Oluwaseun Ayodeji Osowobi of Nigeria, India's Padmanaban Gopalan and Bobby Siarani of the Solomon Islands.

Every year the Commonwealth Youth Awards for Excellence in Development Work recognize the exceptional contribution of young people, ages 15-29, of 53 Commonwealth countries who are leading initiatives in view of the sustainable development goals.

- Edited from CMC.

Jamaica's P.M. pleased after U.S. talks with Trump

MIAMI, Florida – The message coming out of dis-cussions between United States President Donald Trump and a select group of Caribbean leaders last month is that Washington "wants to encourage and promote stronger relationship with the region," according to Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness.

Holness, left, Trump

Trump met with the leaders of St. Lucia, Haiti, The Bahamas and Jamaica at his private residence on Mar. 22 for a two hour meeting to discuss, among other issues the ongoing political and economic situation in Venezuela, where Washington is at the forefront of efforts to remove President Nicolas Maduro from office.

Speaking to reporters following the meeting, Holness said "it's absolutely important that it's not just talk," that there will be real investments, adding "we're very happy with that message."

'PROMISING'

Holness had earlier posted on his Twitter page that he believed the talks were "promising".

Washington, along with its allies, has been seeking to remove Maduro from office in favor of the Opposition Leader Juan Guaidó, who has declared himself the interim president of the South American country.

CARICOM leaders had reiterated their position of non-interference in the internal affairs of Venezuela. In January, Jamaica, Haiti, The Bahamas, Guyana and St. Lucia supported a resolution at the Organization of American States in not recognizing Maduro's second five-year term.

Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname voted against the measure. St. Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and Belize abstained during the vote. Grenada was not present.

Last month, Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley brushed aside suggestions that Trump's non-invitation to the other Caribbean leaders was a snub.

- Edited from CMC.

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Haiti government falls, P.M. resigns, president urged to do same, protests continue

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti – Six months after he was sworn into office, the government of Prime Minister Jean-Henry Céant was forced out last month after the Lower Chamber of Deputies voted overwhelmingly to remove it from office.

The move came as Céant

Céant

had gone to the Senate for a meeting only to find 13 senators present. The Senate, citing the recent arrest of five armed Americans last month and their subsequent release with the help of the United States Department of State, had summoned both Céant and his justice minister to its chamber on Mar. 18.

CENSURE

Senate President Carl Murat Cantave tweeted that due to the lack of a quorum, the prime minister's session was being rescheduled for Mar. 20. However, in the Lower Chamber of Deputies, where 104 deputies, were present, they voted by a wide margin to censure the prime minister.

The agenda of the session was adopted by 88 deputies, 12 against and four abstentions and without the prime minister present, the speaker of the Chamber of Deputies announced the continuation of the interpellation.

In the vote to remove the government, 93 law makers voted in favor of the motion, six against and three abstained.

A letter was expected to be sent to President Jovenel Moise regarding the appointment of a new prime minister. However, not all backed the move to oust Céant.

"It was illegal," said Deputy Sinal Betrand, who was among the six who voted against the government's censure. "It was unconstitutional."

Political observers said in the absence of a quorum in the Senate on Mar. 18, Céant could not benefit from a six month stay by way of a vote of confidence. Céant later told the Miami Herald newspaper "the decision is illegal and was outside of the constitution, It is unacceptable." He said the justice system needs to shed light.

The Senate was, up to press time, trying to fight Céant's ouster.

LAW

Under Haitian law, a caretaker prime minister and government can only oversee the country's day-to-day affairs, and cannot enter into any new contracts.

Céant, a lawyer, had replaced Jack Guy Lafontant, as prime minister following a series of street demonstrations over fuel increases.

In recent weeks Moise was under pressure from Opposition parties to step down over his handling of domestic affairs, as well as the use of funds under the PetroCaribe an oil alliance of many Caribbean states with Venezuela to purchase oil on conditions of preferential payment.

Moise has indicated that he does not intend to step down.

- Edited from CMC.

U.S. group honors former Jamaica P.M.

Team Jamaica Bickle, a United States-based hospitality group, is honoring former Jamaica Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller.

Simpson Miller, Jamaica's first female leader, was among several individuals scheduled to be honored on April 1 at TBJ's 25th anniversary reception in Kingston.

TJB provides hospitality support for Jamaican and other Caribbean athletes who compete at the annual Penn Relays Carnival at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. The reception, held under the patronage of Jamaica's Governor General Sir Patrick Allen with the theme "Celebrating Volunteerism, Heralding Excellence" TJB said it would also honor Don Wehby, chief executive officer of the Jamaican-owned Grace Kennedy Group, and "recognize those whose lives have positively impacted others and, who, through their actions, have brought about change."

HONOREES

Rounding out the list of honorees are Dr. Walton Small, outgoing Jamaica Inter-Secondary School Sports Association (ISSA) president; Ali McNab, former Jamaica national soccer player, broadcaster and current special advisor to the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports in Jamaica; Sekou Clarke, Jamaican immigration attorney; and Trishana McGowan, Jamaican sports analyst and former athlete.

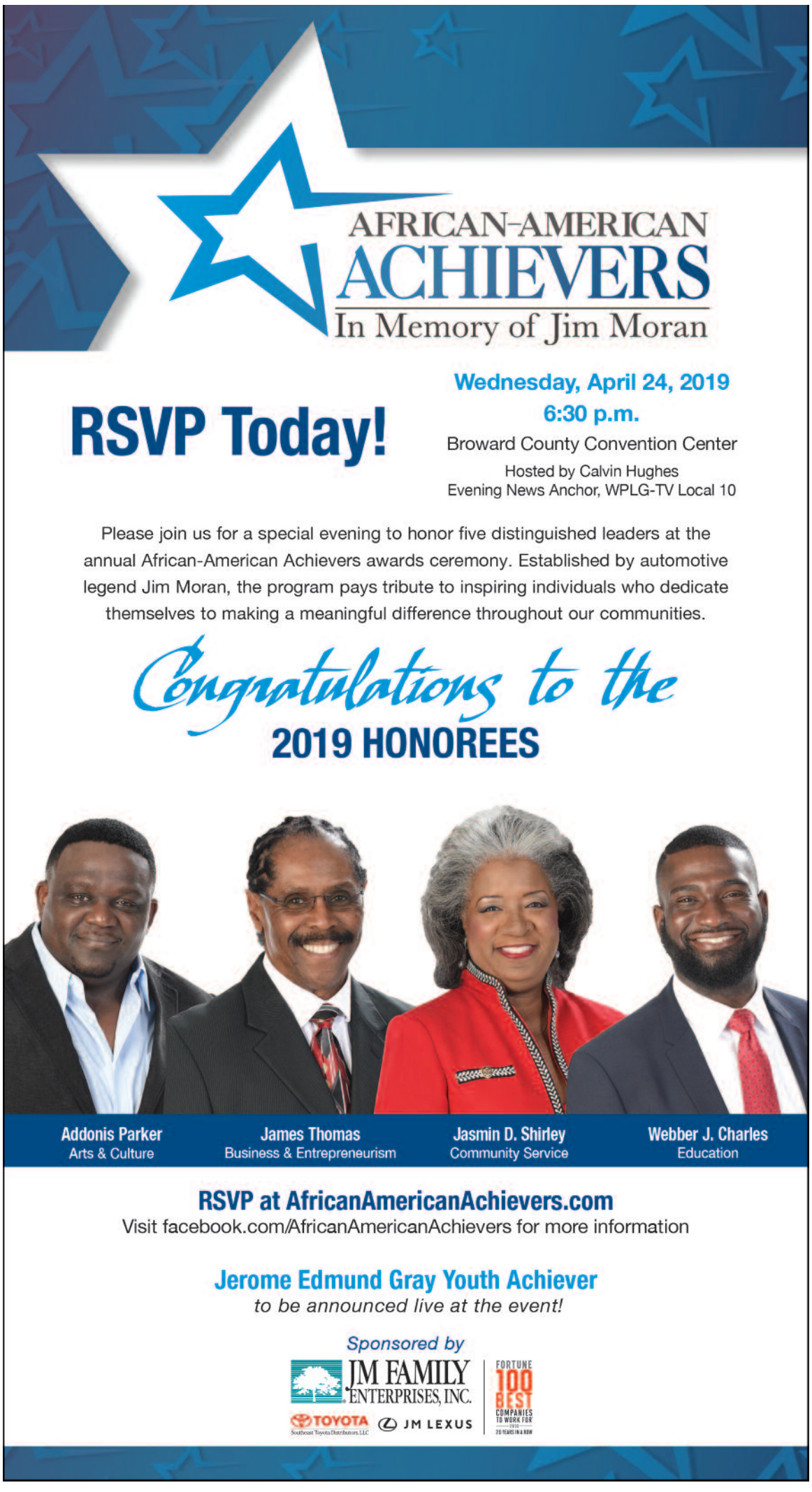
Simpson Miller

TJB said Simpson-Miller is "heralded as a standard bearer for women.

"She became Jamaica's seventh prime minister in March 2006 and was conferred with the Order of the Nation in May 2006.

"Mrs. Simpson Miller's ascension to Jamaica's highest political office came after having served for 17 years as a Cabinet minister.

"Her distinguished record of service at the regional and international levels deserves much acclaim," TJB added.



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Dance party

The 14th annual "For Jamaica Fundraiser and Dance Party" will be held at **7 p.m. April 6** at the Bamboo Gallery (Gardens), 1775 S. Flamingo Rd., Davie, Florida.

For more information, call **954-281-9849** or visit ***www.forjamaica.org***.

American Friends of Jamaica gala

The American Friends of Jamaica will host its 15th annual Jamaica Charity Gala in Miami this month.

The event, to be held on **April 13** at the InterContinental Hotel, will feature honorees of the AFJ International Humanitarian Award, including entrepreneur and philanthropist R. Danvers "Danny" Williams and marine wildlife artist and conservationist Dr. Guy Harvey.

For more information, visit ***https://theafj.org/all-event-list/2019-jamaicacharitygala/***.

JADE banquet

The Jamaican Association of Miami-Dade Educators (JADE) will be celebrate its 25th year as a non-profit organization with its annual scholarship award banquet in South Florida.

The event, scheduled for **9 p.m. May 11** at the Miami Marriott Dadeland Hotel, 9090 S. Dadeland Blvd., is expected to recognize high school graduates with scholarships in recognition of their scholastic achievements and community service.

For more information, email ***mpowis@bellsouth.net***, or ***lgcohen@ bellsouth.net.***

Eric Williams essay contest

Entries are being accepted for the annual Eric Williams "School Bags" Essay Competition, which is open to Caribbean nationals.

The late Eric Williams was a former prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

The essay competition, organized by the Eric Williams Memorial Collection Research Library, Archives & Museum since 2007, is offered in 178 schools in 17 English-speaking Caribbean countries.

Deadline for entries is **Sept. 15, 2019.** For more information, e-mail ***ewmc@ewmc-tt.org***.

Veteran Jamaican broadcaster die

Longtime Jamaican broadcaster Dorraine Samuels died last month after a battle with illness. She was 59.

Samuels, who suffered from cancer, worked for the RJR/Gleaner Communications Group as an anchor for Television Jamaica's nightly news. She died weeks after undergoing surgery. Samuels also worked on radio broadcasts, and for decades appeared with popular personality Alan Magnus on his morning show.

Learn about benefits online with my Social Security

April is National Social Security Month and this year the Social Security Administration (SSA) is highlighting time-saving features of the my Social Security account.

Once a person creates an account, they should see that the SSA already has their work history and secure information to estimate what they could receive once they start collecting benefits.

Learn what you can do online anytime, anywhere by visiting ***www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount***.

Dominican receives Paraguay's 'Grand Cross National Order'

Dominican-born Dr. Carissa F. Etienne has been awarded the "Grand Cross National Order of merit by Paraguay.

Etienne

Dr. Etienne, who is director of the Pan American Health Organization, received the award last month in recognition of her work supporting Paraguay in the improvement of its health system. The honor was presented by the National Chancellor Luis Castiglioni.

The National Order of Merit was created by Paraguay's National Extraordinary Congress in 1865 and is "granted to those worthy of national gratitude for extraordinary and exceptional services rendered to the country".

- Compiled from various sources.

WOMEN OF POWER

The Jamaican Women of Florida (JWOF) recently held its annual "Women's Empowerment Conference and Scholarship Luncheon" in Miami. The function, during which marked JWOF's sixth anniversary as an organization seeking to empower women through mentorship, education and personal development, was attended by R. Oliver Mair, second right, Jamaica's consul general and honorary JWOF chair. Also present were the newly elected JWOF Executive Board and recent scholarship awardees , from left, Mikala Uter (2019), Rachel Wildman (2016), Taylor Reid (2019); June Minto, JWOF president, Brianna Murphy (2018) and Arlene Lewis Marr, vice president.

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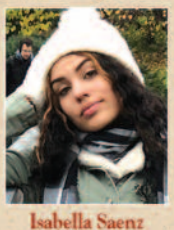

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Broward's Caribbean American school boss looks beyond shooting tragedy

DAWN A. DAVIS

Embattled Caribbean American Robert W. Runcie rode a groundswell of support last month to return as superintendent of schools in Broward County, Florida, despite efforts to oust him.

Broward County School Board members voted by a margin of six to three to retain the Jamaican-born educator in the post.

Hundreds packed the meeting room, overflow room and hallways of the board's building in downtown Fort Lauderdale on election day, Mar. 5. Almost 100 Broward residents were allowed to speak, with the majority advocating for Runcie. After more than six hours of comments and discussions, he was re-elected.

The motion to oust Runcie was brought by Lori Alhadeff, a board member for District 4, whose daughter died in last year's tragic school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School (MSD) in Parkland. Seventeen people - 14 students and three teachers - were killed by a lone gunman on Feb. 14, 2018.

Still reeling from pain, anger and hurt, parents, students and the community are searching for answers. Some blamed Runcie for not doing enough. Among them was Florida's new Governor Ron DeSantis, who called for Runcie's removal. However, Runcie claimed he's tuned out naysayers and is focused on his task as head of Broward schools.

"It's a very significant and important job," he told **Caribbean Today**. "I can't wake up every day worrying about what someone may or may not do relative to where we are at."

MISCONCEPTIONS

However, Runcie said he welcomed DeSantis's recent announcement of a statewide grand jury to look at safety, security and spending practices in districts across Florida, which would cover Broward County. That initiative, he explained, would help clear up misconceptions.

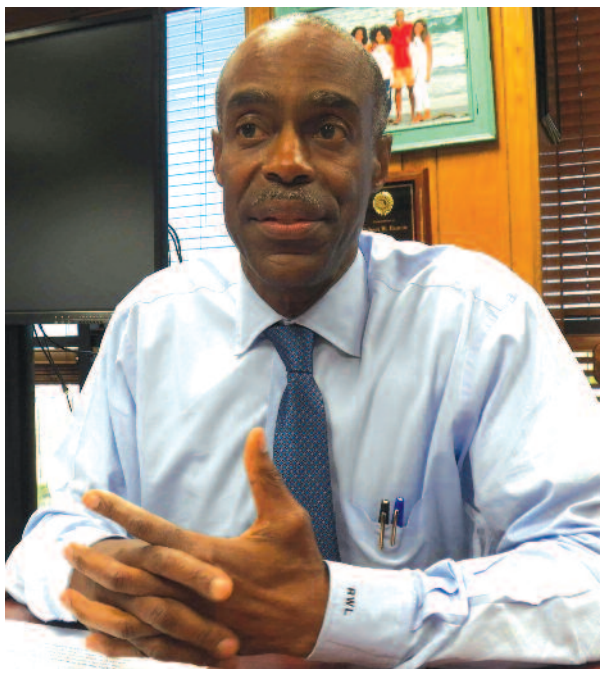
I know that what we do it's never going to be enough because I can't bring back the lives that we lost. I can't bring them back.

"What I have witnessed and experienced over the past several months, and most of the past year, is an enormous amount of misinformation, spin and intent to essentially, sometimes even create chaotic situations relative to the district and undermine what we try to do," said Runcie.

"So, I believe that any type of independent, fact-based review of what we actually do in Broward County will be a good thing because it will, again, further demonstrate the transparency that we've been providing to the public."

It could also provide a fresh start in dealing with issues confronting school districts in the state.

"This is ground zero for what I see as a new era in how school districts look at school safety and security," said Runcie.



Runcie

As for the Stoneman Douglas incident, Runcie believes his district's response was appropriate.

I can tell you that we reacted to the Stoneman Douglas tragedy on February 14 with an enormous sense of urgency.

"I can tell you that we reacted to the Stoneman Douglas tragedy on February 14 with an enormous sense of urgency," he said.

According to Runcie, the superintendent's office focused on three areas immediately after the tragedy: Wellness of students, families and the community; putting better safety and security measures in place; and cooperating with and supporting investigations, in particular supporting the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Safety Commission, the entity set up by Florida and charged with the enquiry into the shooting.

SUPPORT

The focus on wellness led Runcie to open five resiliency centers in Parkland where students, teachers, administrators, employees and community residents could receive mental health services and support. He also brought in national experts to help deal with the tragedy and trauma, including the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement, the Center for Mind Body Medicine, and the National Centre for Victims of Crime. Runcie also reached out to other school districts that experienced similar misfortunes.

"We talked to individuals from Columbine, Sandy Hook, the Pulse nightclub. Again, the constant focus on bringing resources to deal with the human element of the tragedy," explained Runcie.

"In order to make sure that I continued to do that, I spent the first month basically stationed and working out of the Stoneman Douglas High School."

Runcie said he held numerous meetings with students, teachers and families in the Parkland community, plus Parent Teachers Associations and other organizations, trying to reach out to as many as he could as they struggled to deal with the tragedy.

"When you lose your child or you have a child who is significantly injured in this tragedy, you're angry and upset and you may not want to talk to anybody from the district," he explained. "But, I will tell you that there hasn't been a lack of trying to reach out. I really think about the MSD community every day, in particular the families I know that are suffering. I am trying to do work to honor the lives that we lost."

Stoneman Douglas and other schools in Parkland were staffed with 25 additional mental health clinicians. The high school also housed two mental health centers and received several therapy dogs to help surviving students cope.

In Mar. 2018, the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act was signed into law by Florida's then Governor Rick Scott. The legislation requires districts to conduct risk assessment at all schools. According to Runcie, the Broward conducted 250 such analyses last summer.

SAFETY

Broward County Public Schools has also accelerated and enhanced its existing safety and security protocols. Runcie explained that the county engaged the services of an independent security consulting firm to conduct risk assessment, train and upgrade all countywide security systems. Based on their report, the school board adopted and prioritized additional security enhancements valued at around $31 million. The money was earmarked for video surveillance expansion, radio system enhancement, intercom system upgrades and a new office responsible for security and emergency pre-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

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Caribbean American pushes bill to help 'Dreamers' be U.S. residents, citizens

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Caribbean American Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke last month joined three of her colleagues in introducing legislation aimed mainly at allowing young, undocumented immigrants – known as "Dreamers" – to secure lawful residence in the United States.

The Dream and Promise Act, also known as H.R. 6 in the U.S. House of Representatives, would allow "Dreamers" to secure permanent residence and American citizenship.

Clarke, the daughter of Caribbean immigrants who represents the 9th Congressional District in Brooklyn, New York, said the bill is the 116th Congress's version of the Dream Act that was introduced in 2001. However, she said H.R. 6 includes protections and a path to citizenship not just for Dreamers but also for temporary protected status (TPS) for Haitians, among others, and deferred enforced departure (DED) beneficiaries.

"We need comprehensive immigration reform that protects Dreamers, as well as TPS and DED beneficiaries," Clarke explained last month. "That's why I am proud to be a co-lead on the Dream and Promise Act (HR 6)."

BUILDING BLOCK

The bill was also co-authored by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Lucille Roybal-Allard and Nydia Velázquez.

Clarke

"This bill builds upon the Dream Act, the American Promise Act, and the ASPIRE TPS Act, which I introduced last Congress," Clarke said.

Roybal-Allard said that as a co-author of the original Dream Act she has "seen first-hand the love that our Dreamers have for our country.

"They are our neighbors and colleagues who help strengthen our communities. They are students, scientists, researchers, and small business owners.

"Our Dream and Promise Act recognizes the contributions and patriotism of Dreamers, TPS recipients, and DED beneficiaries by helping them stay in America, pursue a path to citizenship, and keep strengthening our great country," Roybal-Allard said.

Clarke told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)** that the Dream and Promise Act allows Dreamers and individuals with TPS and DED to "contribute fully in the country they love and know to be their home by providing a pathway to citizenship."

She said the legislation would grant Dreamers conditional permanent resident status for 10 years, and cancel removal proceedings, if they have been continuously physically present in the U.S. for four years preceding the date of the enactment of the bill and were 17 years old or younger on the initial date of entry into the US.

EDUCATION

Clarke also said the bill would, among other things, grant Dreamers conditional permanent resident status if they graduate from high school, obtained a general equivalency diploma (GED) or industry-recognized credential, or were in a program assisting students in obtaining a high school diploma, GED or equivalent exam, or in an apprenticeship program.

In order to gain full lawful permanent resident status, Clarke said Dreamers must acquire a degree from a U.S. institution of higher education or complete at least two years in good standing in a bachelor's or higher degree program or in an area career and technical education program at a post-secondary level in the U.S.

For lawful permanent residence, Clarke said Dreamers must also complete at least two years of military service and, if discharged, receive an honorable discharge; or be employed for periods of time totaling at least three years and at least 75 percent of the time with employment authorization.

The Caribbean American congresswoman said the bill also includes a number of provisions for Dreamers, including repealing Section 505 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, which penalizes states that grant in-state tuition to undocumented students on the basis of residency.

AID

Clarke said the bill also allows Dreamers to access federal financial aid; ensure that individuals with conditional permanent resident status are able to access professional, commercial, and business licenses; and permitting eligible Dreamers deported from the U.S. by the administration of President Donald Trump to apply for relief from abroad.

Clarke said the Dream and Promise Act would grant individuals with TPS or DED and lawful permanent resident status and cancel removal proceedings if they have been in the U.S. for a period of three years before the bill's enactment; and were eligible or had TPS on Sept. 25, 2016 or had DED status as of Sept. 28, 2016.

"The bill amends current TPS law to require the secretary of Homeland Security to provide an explanation of a decision to terminate a TPS designation and requires the secretary must provide a report three days after publishing a notice of such termination," Clarke explained.

"This report must explain the original designation and any progress made by a country to resolve the issues leading to TPS designation.

"The secretary also has to describe the qualitative and quantitative methods used to assess whether or not country conditions have improved, which would include addressing any challenges or shortcomings related to the initial designation," Clarke said, adding that the bill also clarifies that an immigrant entering the TPS program will be considered as having been inspected and admitted into the U.S.

- Edited from CMC.

…Congresswoman has deep concern over immigration ruling

NEW YORK – Caribbean American Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke has expressed deep concern over a ruling in the United States Supreme Court, which allows Caribbean and other immigrants facing deportation to be detained even after they have completed their prison terms.

"Stripping immigrants of their right to due process is immoral and unconstitutional, and stands as a direct threat to the 3.07 million foreign-born immigrants who reside in New York City," Clarke, the daughter of Caribbean immigrants, told the **Caribbean Media Corporation** on Mar. 20.

"I am deeply concerned by the grave consequences this ruling will impose upon immigrant families, such as the fear of their indefinite detention and the fear of reporting crimes that make us all unsafe," added the representative for the Ninth Congressional District in Brooklyn, New York, which has a huge concentration of Caribbean immigrants.

"We must protect our immigrant and formerly incarcerated community members from harm, even at the hands of our own government," added Clarke, stating that the Supreme Court's narrow, five to four decision on Mar. 19 now gives the U.S. government the authority to detain Caribbean and other immigrants, even after release from criminal custody.

MANDATE

In its decision, the Supreme Court, in the case of Preap v. Nielsen, overruled a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals' decision that tried to limit which immigrants would be subject to mandatory detention without bond.

The 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) mandates the retroactive detention of immigrants with certain criminal histories, even for minor crimes.

In what is widely seen as a victory for the Trump administration and its hardcore immigration policies, Justice Samuel Alito wrote that immigration law requires the detention of "deportable criminal aliens," even years later. He said, however, the law may be subject to constitutional challenges in individual cases – an issue that was not before the justices in the highest court in the U.S.

- Edited from CMC.

Broward's Caribbean American school boss looks beyond shooting tragedy

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

paredness. Additional measures, such as more school resource officers and stricter enforcement of existing security protocols, have also been put in place.

However, Runcie admitted that nothing will totally erase the pain caused by the shooting tragedy.

"I know that what we do it's never going to be enough because I can't bring back the lives that we lost," he said. "I can't bring them back.

"Those that have been injured, they're going to be living with their injuries, we can't undo those. Those that are suffering emotional distress, they are going to have long-term impacts from that.

"But, we have a responsibility to do all that we can. I believe that we can get to where we need to be much faster the quicker that we understand that we all have to work together as a community in a unified way. That is what our children would expect us to do. That's what we owe them."

Story and photographs of Robert Runcie submitted by Dawn A. Davis, a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.

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Street Address:
9020 SW 152nd Street
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Publisher

MARILYN CHIN
Account Executive

LORNA ASENCOR
Accounting Manager

SABRINA MOSS
Production/Graphic Design

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Are Republicans playing games with Amendment 4 in Florida?

ROGER CALDWELL

"The passage of Amendment 4 was a political, ethical, and moral victory especially, for Blacks, and people of color in Florida. As many different organizations and different individuals take their victory lap, everyone must remember that the battle is not over," as I wrote in a previous article, called "Amendment 4 Has Passed and Implementation Questions Start".

Florida is a red state, and the Republicans control the governorship, Cabinet, Senate and the House of Representatives. Most of the appointees are conservatives and Republicans. Decisions are made with one thought in mind - to remain in power.

In order to remain in power, our leaders have no problem erecting barriers to make it difficult to make changes. Nearly 65 percent of Floridians in the 2018 midterm elections voted to implement Amendment 4. This amendment restores the voting rights to approximately 1.5 million convicted felons who have completed their parole and probation.

CHANGE

Change in America is always slow and incremental. Most Floridians did not expect this amendment to be implemented quickly. But, most Floridians expected the will of people would be honored, and the rule of the law would prevail.

In Tallahassee in 2019, the Republican lawmakers are rushing forward to push a bill that would sabotage Amendment 4, and keep over 80 percent of the 1.5 mil-lion former felons from voting. The bill would require the former felons to pay all their fees and fines, before their rights to vote are restored.

This new bill proposal by the Republicans in Florida's legislature is targeting low-income felons, who cannot afford to pay these fines, because the majority of them don't have a job. This would once again make the constitutional right to vote for many former felons unattainable.

The public radio station in southern Florida WLRN reported that the majority of such fines are never paid. Most convicted felons do not have the resources to pay their fines. Just 19 percent of $1 billion in fines were paid off between 2013 and 2018, the outlet noted. Florida's court clerks' association says that 83 percent of fines are not expected to be paid off.

SABOTAGE

The Republican Party is sabotaging Amendment 4, and disenfranchising the former felons, who are expect-ing to vote. "In the worst tradition of Florida voter sup-pression, some lawmakers want to take the harshest possible line on implementing a constitutional amend-ment that arguably doesn't even require the Legislature to interpret the constitution," noted the Orlando Senti-nel.

The implementation of Amendment 4 is turning into one huge mess, and voting is becoming a privilege, instead of a right. This is not a surprise, because the Florida state government has failed to implement citizen-driven ballots amendments in recent years.

At this time in the Florida legislature, the bill is in subcommittees and the "Voting Rights Restoration Bill" has passed in the House. Basically the bill requires ex-prisoners to pay all court cost in fines, before they can vote. The Senate subcommittee was expected to vote on its version of a "Voting Rights Restoration Bill" and it is very similar to the House bill.

POLL TAX

Many are calling this a new poll tax, and nationally there is outrage and condemnation. Even though there is fierce opposition from the Democrats, the bill is expected to move quickly in the Senate because the Republicans have the numbers.

The political experts and pundits would tell the Democrats that the state is turning purple, but the voting in the Florida legislature is still primarily red. Andrew Gillum and the Democratic Party in Florida have a goal to register one million new Democrats by the 2020 election.

Ex-Senator Bill Nelson lost by 10,000 votes and Gillum lost the governor's race by 33,000 votes. Voting with the numbers on your side is the key to make Florida a blue state. As a voter you have the right to put pressure on the Republicans lawmakers by calling and going to their state and local office. Let them know they are sabotaging Amendment 4 and suppressing the vote for ex-felons.

Roger Caldwell is a freelance contributor for Caribbean Today.

Trump emboldens white supremacists to act

FELICIA J. PERSAUD

Last month, United States President Donald Trump indulged in his favorite "executive" pastime. He took to Twitter to castigate "the **Fake News Media**" for "working overtime to blame (him) for the horrible attack in New Zealand."

What is not "fake news" is that Brenton Tarrant, the 28-year-old man Australian gym trainer accused of the murder of 50 mostly immigrant Muslims as they prayed at their mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand on Mar. 15, wrote in his 74-page manifesto titled "The Great Replacement", that Trump is "a symbol of renewed white identity and common purpose."

That is definitely not "fake news".

Ever since Trump's birther movement, his subsequent xenophobic and racist campaign for president and his administration's continued and targeted anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim policies, white supremacists are rejoicing globally. They no longer feel the need to hide how they feel. They no longer have to wear masks. Now they feel emboldened by the public anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim rhetoric of Trump, ever since he began his campaign with the words: "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best … They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people."

It is not 'fake news' that Trump has made scapegoating and attacking immigrants and Muslims a cornerstone of his campaign and administration.

And: "It's coming from more than Mexico. It's coming from all over South and Latin America, and it's coming probably— probably— from the Middle East … it's got to stop, and it's got to stop fast."

SCAPEGOATING

And that was only the beginning. It is not "fake news" that Trump has made scapegoating and attacking immigrants and Muslims a cornerstone of his campaign and administration.

From the "build the wall" campaign, to banning Muslims from entering the U.S., to caging innocent brown children torn from the arms of their poor immigrant parents to blaming immigrants and Muslims for "fake" crimes against "native-born" Americans, Trump continues to give the white supremacists new fuel for their hate.

Trumpism' is upending decency, diversity.

The fact is that Trump in 2016 did for the white supremacists, the KKK, the alt-right, the Aryan Brotherhood and all racists what the abolition of slavery did in the southern states. It gave them a new opportunity to publicly unleash their hate against a "new" race of people they see as a global "threat" to their white power; a people who they feel are helping to diminish their numbers and make the world "brown" again.

Across Europe, we are seeing the rise of leaders and groups who demonize minorities and immigrants and play on nativist policies.

RISE

Across Europe, we are seeing the rise of leaders and groups who demonize minorities and immigrants and play on nativist policies.

In Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orban has described his country as an "illiberal state" and the anti-Semitic Jobbik party is the country's third-largest.

In Slovakia, neo-Nazis were recently elected to the parliament. In Greece, the Golden Dawn party, which makes use of Nazi symbolism, commands a sizable parliamentary bloc. And Trumpism has now come to Brazil with the election of a far-right President – Jair Bolsanaro.

It is a frightening reality that is hardly "fake news".

What is further from "fake news" is that 50 brown and black Muslims and immigrants in New Zealand are dead because one man believed in the U.S. president's hateful brand of Trumpism, and that these immigrants don't belong in "white" countries.

It is why the number of white supremacists groups in the U.S. are growing while racists on social media are increasingly buying into the bile of hate and celebrating these killings. It is why, in 2017, one year after Trump became president, white supremacists unleashed a killing spree – killing a 34 people domestically in the U.S. The FBI's own data shows that in 2017, 7,175 hate crime incidents were reported across the U.S.

The reality is that hate groups are not just a small group of people, like Trump claims, but a growing terror threat, much like ISIS.

They must be treated and hunted as such or more innocent immigrants and Muslims will lose their lives while Trumpism, white supremacy and hate upsurges, upending diversity and decency with the bile of revulsion.

Edited from NewsAmericas. Felicia J. Persaud is CMO at Hard Beat Communications, Inc., which owns the brands NewsAmericasNow, CaribPRWire and InvestCaribbeanNow.

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They say 'it's a man's world', but why must women make them suffer so?

Some say it's a man's world: That man rules and women are second class and are often disenfranchised.

In many cases it is so, but men also get a raw deal in this life, especially when it comes to dealing with women.

Sure, when a man is wheeling and dealing with his peers in the corporate world, sports, business or any such endeavor, he's usually in control, on top of his game. But take him out of that realm and he's often diminished when it comes to women, as almost everything that he does is just not good enough, not up to scratch.

Truth be told, men do have it hard sometimes when it comes to dealing with women. So, because of this, many guys tend to either try too hard to keep up, can't bother to make the effort or just accept their lot.

TONY ROBINSON

A man will be himself until he meets a woman. At that point, he's now expected to change, adjust to suit her. The irony is, the same traits and characteristics that she found attractive in him, she now loathes.

He used to be a bellicose, bombastic, life of the party guy, chatting to women in a flirtatious yet innocent way. In fact, that's how he met his current spouse. But all that has come to a screeching halt, for that personality is no longer attractive to her.

DNA

It's written in the DNA of men. And yet all that may soon stop.

The reason is, women are crying foul when a man approaches them. No longer will a man be able to see a woman and say, "Hey Baby, how ya doing?' or "What's your number, what's your name?" He is now afraid to make any verbal gesture for fear of being slapped with harassment lawsuits.

"You have a nerve, calling to me, asking for my number."

As for touching, that's definitely a no-no. Even a brush on the shoulder or holding hands can land some men in courthouse.

Women must now be treated with a look-but-don't-say-anything-or-touch attitude.

How can he discern that thin line between a casual approach and harassment? How will he ever find a companion if he can't approach women anymore?

Now I'm not condoning the actions of those disrespectful predatory creeps who prey on women. But when a guy sees a woman who he likes, and makes an approach, he'll now have to think twice. If he's afraid to make the first step, she'll consider him weak, cowardly and ineffective. Yet if he makes a bold approach, she can scream harassment.

'BAD'

Women are always complaining about how men are bad. But women can dish it out too, in their own inimitable secretive style. Usually when a man is "bad" it's pretty obvious, straightforward, plain to see.

Ironically, some women find this trait attractive, and that's why those guys get so many women who are drawn like moths to the flame. But when a woman's bad, she can really turn it up.

Let's take the case of paternity. This is one area that men have little control over and a woman can make him suffer. She doesn't want any financially poor man. Poor suffering men, deceived, duped, discombobulated by these deceptive damsels, denied the pleasures of paternity.

Well, fortunately United States immigration requires DNA testing for permanent residence, a fact that unearthed many a deception.

And so a man goes through life appearing to be strong, yet sensitive and caring, but not too much, having to provide and care for, yet strike a balance for a happy life. And then you wonder if men suffer too.

seido1yard@gmail.com

CARIB Comments

• **"We're doing very well in tourism at this particular time. And the travel advisory which we interpret (should be) one to inform one's citizens to be aware of problems as opposed to initiate fear"** - *Dr. Hubert Minnis, prime minister of The Bahamas, says United States President Donald Trump has promised to "look into" controversial travel advisories issued by his country and affecting several Caribbean destinations.*

• **"The narrative provided by the E.U. Council to support the inclusion of the blacklisted States is grossly misleading and misrepresents the response, in good faith, of our Members since the initial listing in December 2017" -** *the Caribbean community (CARICOM) is not happy with the European Union, as it has blacklisted some member states within the regional body.*

• **"What I have witnessed and experienced over the past several months, and most of the past year, is an enormous amount of misinformation, spin, and intent to essentially, sometimes even create chaotic situations relative to the district and undermine what we try to do"** - *Just over a year after the devastating shooting at a South Florida high school, Caribbean American Broward County Superintendent Robert W. Runcie laments misconceptions which hamper the healing.*

•**"In this business, we have learnt that if the message resonates with individuals, even those individuals who may have what you call a mandate, and if they feel strongly enough about an issue they will actually go against the mandate"** - *Ricky Skerritt explains one reason behind his election as president of Cricket West Indies last month, defeating incumbent Dave Cameron.*

"So we are once again forced to eat injustice and perform the usual contortions to satisfy a new set of unconscionable dictates" – *Belize Prime Minister Dean Barrow is not happy with the decision of the European Union to place his country on a new list of non-cooperative tax jurisdictions.*

• **"When I think that the revolution occurred some forty years ago … I am reminded that the Grenada revolution was, by and large, a uniquely 'youthful' revolution, having been largely masterminded by a relatively young, idealistic, courageous and ideologically grounded leadership"** - *Former St. Lucia Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony looks back at the Grenada Revolution.*

- Compiled from various sources.

APRIL IS NATIONAL MINORITY HEALTH MONTH

National Minority Health Month is a time to bring attention to the health disparities that continue to impact racial and ethnic minorities. At Jackson Health System, we strive to be part of the solution. We understand that knowledge and understanding can inspire a journey toward better health. By promoting awareness in our communities and encouraging others to keep track of their health, together we'll continue to make great strides.

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U.S. promises to 'look into' Caribbean travel advisories

NASSAU, The Bahamas – Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Min-nis says United States President Donald Trump has promised to "look into" controversial travel advisories issued by his country and affecting several Caribbean destinations.

"That is significant to us because we are a tourist destination," Minnis told reporters on his return to The Bahamas last month after attending a two-hour meeting with Trump.

Minnis was joined by the leaders of Jamaica, Haiti, St. Lucia and the Dominican Republic, who met with the U.S. president at his private residence in South Florida on Mar. 22.

Earlier in March Nassau, responding to a U.S. travel advisory on the country, said the "vast majority" of the six million visitors to the country do so without "any incident whatsoever". In a statement, the Ministry of Tourism and Aviation explained that while it noted that overall the guidance to U.S. citizens remained a Level Two advisory recommending caution, "we recommend that travelers to any destination maintain awareness of their surroundings and exercise basic precautions, as they likely would in their home cities and when not on holiday.

"In reality, the vast majority of our six million annual visitors do so without any incident whatsoever," the Ministry of Tourism noted, quoting 2018 figures provided by the Royal Bahamas Police that showed there were "only 43 incidents involving tourists, of which 30 involved U.S. nationals and nearly all were minor offenses.

FEAR

Minnis told reporters that a travel advisory would likely create unnecessary fear that could damage the local economy.

"Eighty percent of our GDP (gross domestic product) comes from tourism," he said. "We're doing very well in tourism at this particular time. And the travel advisory which we interpret (should be) one to inform one's citizens to be aware of problems as opposed to initiate fear.

"So, we brought that point across and the president was very concerned as to how that's impacting us. And I would have explained that. And I also pointed out that out when one looks at the amount of criminal attacks or involvement of the American tourists versus our population (it's) very negligible. That is, we're talking about 0.004 per-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)

State Department warns U.S. citizens to avoid travel to Haiti

U.S. State Department has issued a travel warning for Haiti.

Americans are being warned not to travel to Haiti due to the flare-up of crime and civil unrest in the French-speaking Caribbean nation.

Unrest has made Haiti unsafe, says U.S.

In a statement issued mid-February, the State Department noted: "There are currently widespread, violent, and unpredictable demonstrations in Port-au-Prince and elsewhere in Haiti.

"Due to these demonstrations, on February 14, 2019, the Department of State ordered the departure of all non-emergency U.S. personnel and their family members. The U.S. government has limited ability to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens in Haiti.

Protests, tyre burning, and road blockages are frequent and unpredictable. Violent crime, such as armed robbery, is common. Local police may lack the resources to respond effectively to serious criminal incidents, and emergency response, including ambulance service, is limited or non-existent.

"Travelers are sometimes targeted, followed, and violently attacked and robbed shortly after leaving the Port-au-Prince international airport. The U.S. Embassy requires its personnel to use official transportation to and from the airport, and it takes steps to detect surveillance and deter criminal attacks during these transports," the statement added.

"The U.S. government has limited ability to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens due to reduced staffing and security concerns. The Embassy discourages its personnel from walking in most neighborhoods. The Embassy prohibits its personnel from:

- Visiting establishments after dark without secure, on-site parking;
- Using any kind of public transportation or taxis;
- Visiting banks and using ATMs;
- Driving outside of Port-au-Prince at night;
- Traveling anywhere between 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m.; and
- Visiting certain parts of the city at any time without prior approval and special security measures in place."

WARNING

If you decide to travel to Haiti, the release warned:

- Avoid demonstrations. Do not attempt to drive through roadblocks.
- Arrange airport transfers and hotels in advance, or have your host meet you upon arrival.
- Be careful about providing your destination address in Haiti. Do not provide personal information to unauthorized individuals located in the immigration, customs, or other areas inside or near any airports in Haiti.
- As you leave the airport, make sure you are not being followed. If you notice you are being followed, drive to the nearest police station immediately.
- Do not physically resist any robbery attempt.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)

B'dos launches 'Vision 2020', a 12-month global celebration

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – Barbados has launched "Vision 2020: We Gatherin'", a 12-month global celebration of the Caribbean nation's excellence and a recommitment to a successful future and core values that have defined its people.

"2020 has been designated as the year for Barbadians and those who love the country to come home, reconnect with family and friends, and invest in the rebuilding and development of Barbados," a recent government statement noted.

It stated that the year-long celebrations will be held under the theme "Purposeful Pursuit of Barbadian Excellence". It is designed to reinforce government's mantra of building the best Barbados together.

EVENTS

The statement noted that "Vision 2020: We Gatherin'" will comprise structured events at the national level, which will be co-ordinated by government with input from its social partners.

"However, community groups, churches, educational institutions, entrepreneurs, and regional and international persons with Barbadian connections, among others, will be encouraged to produce other events," the statement added.

"The initiative will begin in the north of the island in January 2020, and move southward every month, allowing each designated parish to showcase its icons, social life and the food for which it is renowned," the statement noted, adding that the parish celebrations will culminate in St. Michael in November and "Vision 2020: We Gatherin'" will climax in December with a Christmas extravaganza.

- Edited from CMC.

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JTB has new deputy marketing director

Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) has appointed a new deputy director of marketing.

Director of Tourism Donovan White last month announced Camile Glenister will take that role.

Glenister has been a marketing communications professional for 20 years, working in product, campaign and strategy development and digital media execution.

"We are pleased to welcome Camile to the Jamaica Tourist Board team," White was quoted as saying in a recent JTB release.

"Given our strong digital push, we believe her appointment is timely and will help us utilize the various technologies with greater effectiveness to meet our desired marketing goals."

Glenister recently served as regional senior manager with responsibility for international marketing within the Caribbean at Scotiabank. Prior to that, she served as Scotiabank's regional senior manager with responsibility for the marketing of credit and debit cards and everyday banking.

She is a graduate of the University of the West Indies with a master's of business administration degree in general management, specializing in marketing and international business management. She holds a certificate in digital marketing from Harvard University.

The JTB is Jamaica's national tourism agency.

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U.S. promises to 'look into' Caribbean travel advisories

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

cent of Americans … which is negligible," Minnis said, adding that some of the information contained in the advisory had been inaccurate.

He said it appears that "the travel advisories are being recycled (and) that some of the information that is on the travel advisory is not pertinent today, because buildings or restaurants that they may have referred to no longer exist. Those buildings may have been destroyed two, three years ago."

- Edited from CMC.

✹

May is Haitian Heritage Month. Come with Caribbean Today as we celebrate this most exciting and eventful time of year, while we salute the wonderful people of Haiti. The Haitian culture is one filled with strength, beauty, and grace. Let us be the conduit for showcasing your tribute to Haitian Heritage Month in this special Issue of Caribbean Today. Have your ad message in front of over 108,000 esteemed readers eagerly awaiting this special edition.

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Caribbean Today

ADVERTISING DEADLINE: APRIL 29, 2019

What you need to know about getting rid of timeshares

It's estimated that at any given time, there are over a million timeshare owners looking to end their timeshare ownership.

Unfortunately, exiting a timeshare is more complex than many people realize.

"Timeshare owners are never more vulnerable than when they've made the decision to end their ownership," says Gordon Newton, president of Newton Group Transfers and author of "The Consumer's Guide to Timeshare Exit".

"The resale market is flooded, resorts have stacked the deck and con artists are waiting to take advantage of your situation."

There are several personal or financial reasons you may want or need to exit your timeshare, and there are several ways to do so, be it via a sale, transfer or cancellation. No matter how you part ways with your timeshare, Newton says it's important to protect yourself by having a better handle on the industry.

INSIGHTS

He offers the following insights to anyone who owns a timeshare:

• The fine print in your timeshare agreements may be

the reason you can't sell it. Many resort developers see the resale market as a direct threat to their revenue stream and have accordingly rigged the system in their favor.

For example, some resorts restrict rights and benefits for owners who purchase their timeshares on the resale market, intentionally devaluing your timeshare while also making it harder for you to unload.

• Only sign an agreement offering you real protections in your timeshare exit.

Specifically, any agent you hire should be aligned with your interests, agreeing in writing to cover all timeshare fees – or legal fees - that arise during the exit process for a flat fee.

• Research your exit company's credentials (through the Better Business Bureau, the state's attorney general, consumer protection agencies and a general internet search) looking for a minimum five-year track record of success. Beware of companies that make it hard for you to research them.

• Be wary of timeshare exit companies boasting "attorneys on staff". Those attorneys will be acting in the best interests of the company, not yours.

• If an exit deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Be wary of phone solicitors telling you someone has a buyer, anyone advising you to stop paying your timeshare mortgage or maintenance fees, "donate your timeshare" programs or anyone marketing a guaranteed timeframe for the exit. These are all red flags.

For more tips and insights, visit myexitguide.com to download a free copy of "The Consumer's Guide to Timeshare Exit".

If your timeshare has become more of a liability than a joy, you're not alone. But don't get burned. Take steps to part ways with your timeshare efficiently, safely and with care.

- Edited from StatePoint.

✹

Bahamas to host Caribbean Travel Marketplace 2020

NASSAU, The Bahamas - Caribbean Travel Marketplace will take place early next year at the newest integrated resort destination in The Bahamas.

Frank Comito, chief executive officer and director general of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), recently announced the 38th edition of event will be held in the Islands of The Bahamas at Baha Mar's Performing Arts and Convention Center from Jan. 21-23, 2020.

The event will be held in collaboration with the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism and the Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA), with the support of the Nassau Paradise Island Promotion Board and Baha Mar.

Produced by CHTA, Caribbean Travel Marketplace brings together hotel and destination representatives, wholesalers and tour operators and online travel agencies. It includes Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) planners and members of the media for appointment-based business meetings.

"We are thrilled to return to The Bahamas and in particular for this opportunity to showcase to the world's travel industry the incredible destination of Baha Mar, and all the rich and diverse offerings of The Bahamas and the Caribbean," Comito said.

✹

State Department warns U.S. citizens to avoid travel to Haiti

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

• Purchase travel insurance and medical evacuation insurance ahead of time.
• Review information on Travel to High-Risk Areas.
• Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to receive Alerts and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.
• Follow the Department of State on Facebook and Twitter.
• Review the Overseas Security Advisory Council report on Haiti.
• U.S. citizens who travel abroad should always have a contingency plan for emergency situations. Review the Traveler's Checklist.

✹

Going Dutch with Aruba's delicious keshi yena

Ingredients

- Scooped edam cheese rind
- 1 lb. chicken breasts
- 1 lb. chicken thighs
- Salt and pepper
- Poultry seasoning
- Minced onion
- 4 quarts water
- 2 tsps. salt
- 12 peppercorns
- 1 or 2 onions
- 1 celery stalk with leaves bay leaf, bruised
- 3 tomatoes, peeled and chopped
- 4 onions, sliced
- 1 large green pepper, chopped
- 1 tbls. parsley, minced, or a few drops tabasco sauce
- 2 tbls. ketchup
- 1/4 cup pimento olives, sliced
- 1 tbls. capers
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 2 tbls. piccalilli
- 3 eggs, reserving about six tbls.
- 1 or 2 hard-cooked eggs

Method

For the chicken filling, rub with the juice of several limes chicken breasts and thighs. Season the breasts and thighs with salt, pepper, poultry seasoning and minced onion. Let stand for several hours, then either arrange the pieces in a shallow baking dish.

Brown the chicken under the broiler and then bake it for one hour at 350 degrees. Debone when cool enough to handle and set aside.

Keshi yena

After the chicken has been prepared, sautee two tablespoons butter, three tomatoes, peeled and chopped, four onions, sliced, a large green pepper, chopped; a tablespoon of parsley, minced, or a few drops tabasco sauce and salt and pepper. Add and stir in well along with two tablespoons of ketchup, a quarter cup of pimento olives, sliced, a tablespoon of capers, quarter cup of raisins and two tablespoons of piccalilli.

Simmer until the tomatoes are reduced - about 20 or 30 minutes. Remove from heat and let mixture cool.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and begin heating water in the bottom of a double boiler. Beat and add to the meat mixture, three eggs, reserving about six tablespoons.

Generously butter a casserole or the top of a double boiler before placing the cheese shell in it.

Spoon three tablespoons of the reserved beaten egg into the bottom of the container. Half fill with the meat mixture and add one or two hard-cooked eggs.

Fill shell to the top with remaining meat and cover with the original cap of the Edam, from which the wax has been removed, or a few slices of cheese. (Never use soft young cheese for keshi yena.)

Drip the remaining three tablespoons of beaten egg over the top of the cheese as a sealer.

Place the lid on the double boiler.

Set the casserole in a pan of hot water or the double boiler top over the simmering water.

Cook for 75 minutes.

Reverse keshi yena on a heated platter and keep warm for the cheese becomes hard and unappetizing if permitted to cool.

- Edited from News Americas.

Why breakfast really is most important meal of the day

Researchers conclude there are many benefits for starting your day with a morning meal.

Breakfast basics - "Breakfast literally means 'breaking the fast'," explains Briana Rodriquez, a registered dietitian with Jenny Craig. "Blood sugar, also known as glucose, powers your muscles and brain. After seen to nine hours of sleep, blood sugar is naturally low and you need to replenish your energy stores."

Why breakfast matters - "When you skip breakfast, you'll likely overcompensate later, eating your largest meal at night because you're extremely hungry. And that's not good if your intention is weight loss," says Rodriquez.

Making breakfast your largest meal of the day, also known as "front-loading", can lead to a healthier weight.

BONUS

A 2013 study published in "Obesity" suggests other health gains in addition to weight loss, such as decreased risk of heart disease and Type 2 diabetes, from eating a good breakfast.

How should your day look? - The quality of food you eat also matters.

- Breakfast and lunch should be satisfying, pro-tein-rich and include a small amount of healthy fats and carbohydrates.

Think: an egg and veggie scramble with a piece of fruit for breakfast or chicken with veggies and pasta alongside a green salad for lunch.

- Dinner should be light and include a lean pro-tein and lots of non-starchy vegetables. Rodriquez suggests decreasing carbs in the evening.

Think: meatloaf with veggies.

- Snacks are an important part of the equation too. Rodriquez recommends snacks under 200 calories, spaced between meals. Choose something with protein and fiber to help keep you feeling full.

Think: a small apple with a teaspoon of nut but-ter, or non-fat Greek yogurt with a handful of berries.

Consider weight loss programs that embrace the science around the body's natural circadian rhythm to help optimize metabolism and accelerate weight loss. Also, look for programs that offer satisfying breakfasts with just the right amount of proteins, carbohydrates and fats.

- Edited from StatePoint.

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~ A CARIBBEAN TODAY SPECIAL FEATURE

Food Allergy Epidemic: An escalating problem

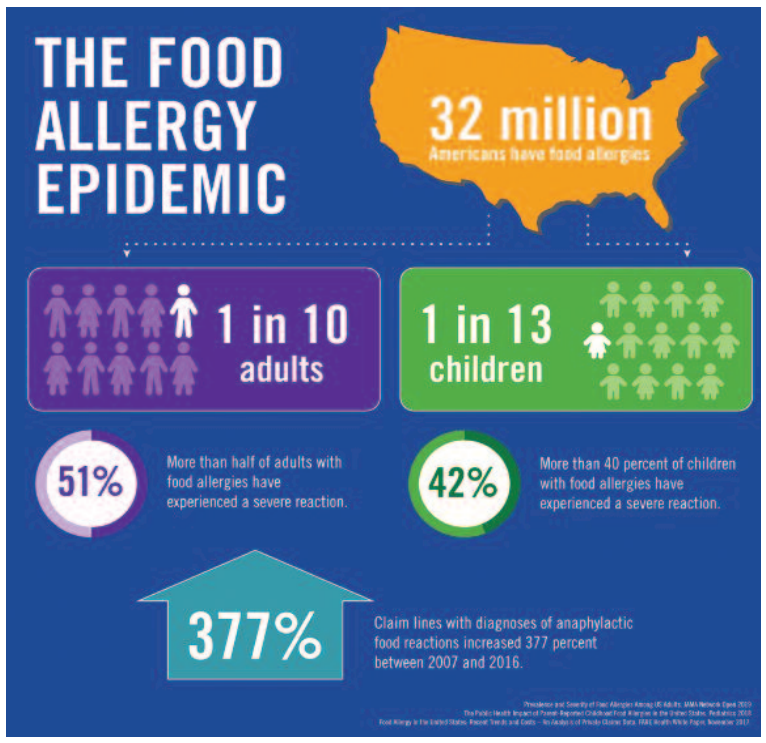
Thirty-two million Americans are now living with food allergies, according to new data published by The Journal of the American Medical Association Network Open and Pediatrics.

This equates to roughly one in 10 adults and one in 13 children (or about two in every classroom).

What's more, over 50 percent of adults and 42 percent of children with food allergies have suffered a severe food allergy reaction such as potentially life-threatening anaphylaxis.

Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE), the largest private funder of food allergy research in the world, recently commissioned a state-by-state report analyzing the rise in diagnoses of anaphylactic food reactions between 2007 and 2016. The results illustrate the gravity of this growing epidemic, with a 377 percent increase nationwide.

Advocates say that the increasing prevalence of food allergies demands action and escalates the need for new treatments and diagnostic tools that save lives and help alleviate the burden of this dis-ease.



To that end, FARE's "Contains: Courage" campaign is seeking to raise money for research and education efforts. To learn more, visit foodaller-gy.org.

Food allergies are at epidemic levels. However, new treatments and greater awareness promise to change the lives of millions of Americans.

- Edited from StatePoint.

South Florida to host medical marijuana conference in April

Cannadayz, a medical marijuana exposition, will be held **April. 13-14** in South Florida.

Presented by CEMG, the expo is scheduled to offer education and networking to medical profes-sionals, patients, caregivers, cannabis enthusiasts, investors or anyone interested in the medical cannabis industry at The Hotel Colonnade, Coral Gables next month.

The expo will follow the recent announcement that Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed a bill that makes smokable medical marijuana legal in the "Sunshine State".

Speakers and panelists include Dr. Javier Canasi, Dr. Michael Mckenzie, Dr. Mark Sabbota and Dr. David Feldbalm.

The hotel is located at 180 Aragon Ave.

For more information, visit ***www.cannadayzevent.com***.

Wellness confusion, lack of support impacts weight loss

If you are like many Americans, you probably read advice about health and wellness everywhere, from news feeds to social media.

But, despite the abundance of information, many are still struggling to reach their weight loss goals.

So, what is the cause of this disconnect?

While many Americans are no longer in the dark about healthy eating – 92 percent believe they know the right foods to eat - more than half still knowingly make poor food choices daily, and two-thirds are currently looking to lose weight, according to a new report commissioned by Jenny Craig.

One challenge contributing to this disconnect is confusing buzzwords that many weight loss programs and products use in their marketing. Today, "wellness" products are popping up everywhere, though 42 percent of Americans say they are unsure how to even define the term.

LEAP

Fortunately, experts say that making the leap from knowing what to do, to actually doing it, can be made easier with the right tools and support.

"Having a science-based structured plan as well as ongoing support increases the likelihood people can find success on their weight loss journey," says Dr. Pamela Peeke, chair of the Jenny Craig Science Advisory Board.

One important area of support, Dr. Peeke explains, is in meal planning. Nearly three in five people spend seven to 14 hours planning and preparing meals each week.

A program that offers nutritionally-balanced, chefcrafted meals can not only help reduce stress (the top cited reason for weight loss struggles) but also free up valuable hours to get more sleep or focus on another area of your overall health. What's more, the report found that nearly nine in 10 Americans (88 percent) believe that having healthy, prepared meals would help them reach their weight-related goals.

Losing weight is not easy.

MOTIVATION

Another critical tool for sustainable weight loss is guidance and motivation.

Unfortunately, less than half of those surveyed say they have adequate support to be at a healthy weight. That is why science-driven, structured weight loss programs offer ongoing, one-on-one support from a personal consultant that can help people stay focused on their goals while learning about portion control and other ways to develop healthy eating habits.

The customized support from a dedicated consultant allows you to personalize your weight loss plan, talk through challenges, track your progress and get the encouragement and guidance you need to help you reach your goal. Learn more about how to achieve your health goals at jennycraig.com.

If you are struggling to lose weight, getting support and straightforward guidance may be able to help you find success.

- Edited from StatePoint.

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K.C., Edwin Allen dominate Jamaica's 'Champs'

GORDON WILLIAMS

KINGSTON, Jamaica - The king has fallen. Long live the queen.

Kingston College's boys ended a seven-year winning streak by Calabar High and the girls of Edwin Allen High extended their title run to six in a row at the 2019 ISSA/Grace Kennedy Boys and Girls Athletics Championship here last month.

K.C. finished the five-day competition for Jamaica's high schools with a tally of 395.5 points, shattering the record total of 368.5 set in 2018 by Calabar, which managed 313 to clinch the runner-up spot.

Jamaica College (232.5) was third, with St. Jago High (106.5) and St. Elizabeth Technical High School (90) rounding out the top five among the boys.

The girls section was much more tightly contested. Edwin Allen showed championship poise to secure 291 points, staving off feisty challengers Hydel High (284).

Holmwood Technical (220), St. Jago (207) and Rusea's High (84) were also among the top five fin-ishers.

GRATIFYING

For K.C., a school that once won the popular "Champs" 14 straight years, victory was particularly gratifying.

"It's sweet," former K.C. star athlete Lennox Graham, who once trained the "Purples" to multiple titles and currently coaches at the University of Texas in the United States, told **Caribbean Today**. "The purple patch is back."

Edwin Allen also relished its win, though it came via a much tougher road, especially on the final day with well over 30,000 spectators crammed into the National Stadium whipped into a frenzy. Head coach Michael Dyke admitted retaining the title "was more difficult" than he thought possible.

For K.C., winning "Champs" 2019 marked the 32nd time the school had triumphed.

"It's big for us," Principal Dave Myrie told Caribbean Today. "I can't even describe the feeling … It's crazy."

FASCINATING

Champs" is widely acknowledged among the brightest assembly of young track and field talent in the world. But an on-campus incident at Calabar last year cast a cloud over the meet. K.C., however, was primed to pounce.

Pinnock

"You could tell it would be different this year," said Graham.

Signs came early and often, although by early afternoon on day four, it became clear Calabar still had fight. However, urged on by its large and vociferous contingent of supporters, K.C. scooped up points in bunches. Among the highlights was Wayne Pinnock returning to break the 110 meters hurdles record after setting the record for the Class I

Davis

long jump. K.C. was pulling away.

Meanwhile, sprinter Kevona Davis of Edwin Allen dominated the 100 and 200 meters in Class II. Teammates and twins Tia and Tina Clayton split the individual sprints and combined on the victorious 4x100 meters relay for Class III to help push their school to final victory.

J.C.'s Christopher Scott dominated the Class III sprint double, as well, while St. Jago's Vashaun Vascianna broke the Class II 110 meters record with 13.26.

Hydel's Ashanti Moore was also outstanding, taking the Class I 100 and 200, while her teammate Cherokee Young dominated the Class I 400 and 800 meters.

✹

Jamaica's Girlz to tackle high ranking World Cup opponents

KINGSTON, Jamaica - International soccer's latest rankings have revealed the Caribbean's lone representative at this summer's women's World Cup are assured tough competition in France this summer.

Jamaica's Reggae Girlz have been placed in a group with Brazil, Italy and Australia. All three nations are rated among the best in the world, according to the most recent ranking issued by FIFA, soccer's governing body, late last month.

Australia maintained its sixth spot from the last ranking, same as Brazil at 10th. Italy moved up one place to 15th.

Jamaica retained its previous ranking, but is mired in the 53rd spot.

NO PROBLEM

However, soccer observers here appeared neither surprised nor worried by FIFA's latest rankings. For many, Jamaica's World Cup qualification was a massive accomplishment. The testing upcoming schedule of matches, starting early June, they claim, is to be expected at the highest level.

"Even before the new rankings, I knew it was incredibly tough for us," said Neville "Bertis" Bell, a former Jamaica youth national coach. "The group has top quality teams. I can live with whatever happens."

Jamaican teams are known for their athleticism. However, the Girlz could be hurt by more tactically seasoned opponents at the World Cup. Still, belief here is the Girlz have enough overseas-based players not to be overwhelmed by the global stage.

"On the day I don't think ranking matters," said Roy Simpson, who manages Jamaica's senior men's team. "If we prepare well and show up on the day, it's who wants it more."

Of more concern for the Girlz is how a recent contract dispute between the Jamaica Football Federation and the coaches has affected the team. Hopefully, Bell said, those problems will be ironed out in time. Added warm-up games for Jamaica at home, in Africa and Europe should also help.

- G. Williams

✹

8 Caribbean teams qualify for soccer's Gold Cup in U.S.

Eight Caribbean teams have qualified to play in the 2019 CONCACAF Gold Cup soccer tournament to be staged in the United States this summer.

The Gold Cup is open to 16 nations from the Caribbean, North America and Central America.

This year's tournament will run from mid-June to July 7.

Leading the Caribbean's charge will be Jamaica, which has played in the final the last two Gold Cup editions - 2015 and 2017, losing both times.

Other participants from the region are Bermuda, Cuba, Curacao, Guyana, Haiti, Martinique and Trinidad and Tobago.

The other teams in the tournament are Canada, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the United States

Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago and United States qualified for the Gold Cup by virtue of having participated in the 2018 FIFA World Cup Hexagonal qualifier round. The remaining Gold Cup participants qualified through the Nations Cup.

For more information, visit ***www.GoldCup.org***.

✹

SPORT BRIEFS

D.R. ref to officiate at U-20 W.C.
The Dominican Republic's Feliz Helpys is the lone representative from the Caribbean appointed to officiate in the Under-20 men's World Cup soccer finals in Poland this summer.

Helpys is one of 42 assistant referees chosen by FIFA, the sport's governing body. The tournament is scheduled to run from May 23 to June 15.

'True Blue' soccer
Alumni of Jamaica College will hold their annual True Blue Weekend Soccer Fest at **2 p.m. April 6** at Vizcaya Park in Miramar, Florida.

For more information, visit ***www.trueblueweekend.com.***

✹

New West Indies cricket leadership sees key roles for Caribbean legends

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – Newly-elected Cricket West Indies President Ricky Skerritt, says he intends to make sure the region's legends have a key role to play in Caribbean cricket development.

Skerritt told CMC Sports that the iconic former players were invaluable resources who needed to be utilised properly in order to get the full benefit from their vast knowledge and experience.

His comments came on the heels of recent controversial remarks by losing three-time incumbent Dave Cameron who said some West Indies legends had not excelled when asked to perform roles within the administration.

Skerritt said during the recent CWI election campaign that he had the opportunity to sit with and listen to legendary former players, whose ideas had informed his own planning.

Former stars like Lloyd, left, and Rich-ards are being invited back.

"One of the places I went to during my regional campaign was to Barbados and to the home of the legends," he said.

"I sat with the acting CEO of the Barbados Legends, Desmond Haynes, I sat with him for over two hours, listening to him, learning from him and then sharing with him some of my thoughts.

"I sat for over half an hour with Sir Wesley Hall … and he gave up valuable commercial time to talk to me."

IGNORED

The region's legends largely felt ignored under the Cameron administration, and threw their support behind Skerritt and running mate Dr. Kishore Shallow for the top CWI spots.

In endorsing Skerritt, former captain Sir Vivian Richards said last month the legends had invested much into the game and also had valuable input. Skerritt, a former West Indies team manager, said CWI would be seeking out advice and expertise from such individuals.

"I have no problem interacting with folks who have been there on the frontline, who understand what takes place even though they may not have played T20 cricket, they know cricket," said the former St. Kitts and Nevis government minister.

"Clive Lloyd was actually chairman of selectors when Jason Holder was chosen – a very young and green captain chosen by Clive Lloyd because he saw in Jason Holder the qualities that he knew were necessary for leadership going forward on the field.

"I have no doubt that we can find a tremendous resourcefulness in the past cricketers."

- Edited from CMC.

✹

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REGGAE ROYALTY RETURNS

Jamaican reggae star Buju Banton drew a huge crowd for his "Long Walk to Freedom" concert last month at the National Stadium in Kingston. It was Banton's first live public show since he was released from prison in the United States where he served several years on drug-related charges.

Reports coming out of the Caribbean island indicate that hundreds of foreigners descended on Jamaica for the show leading to hotels being booked out. "All major hotels in Kingston were full, Airbnb accommodations were also pretty much taken up, as were guest houses across the city and other home sharing residences," Delano Seiveright, senior strategist in the Ministry of Tourism, told RJR News.

Banton's performance, in front of an estimated crowd of more than 40,000, was also viewed as a success. The BBC quoted several artistes as describing it as "legendary."

Caribbean Heritage Month

June is Caribbean History Month, and this year we once again come together for this very special edition. Join Caribbean Today as we celebrate the fantastic strides that we have made and continue to make, as we pay tribute and salute the giants of Caribbean History. This is your chance to not just be a part of a most widely celebrated feature in Caribbean Today, but to be a part of a feature that will have its own special mark in Caribbean History.

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ADVERTISING DEADLINE: MAY 24, 2019

Caribbean Fusion Fest April 28

The diversity of Osceola County, Florida will be celebrated this month through music, art and food at the 28th annual Caribbean Fusion Festival and free health fair in downtown Kissimmee.

The festival, hosted by the Caribbean and Floridian Association, will be held on **April 28** at Lakefront Park.

The festival will be held from **11 a.m. to 7 p.m.** The health fair is from **11 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

For more information, call **407-856-4612**, **407-826-5256** or **407-429-5304**.

✹

Caribbean culture enriches region ~ *T&T minister*

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad – Dr. Nyam Gadsby Dolly, Trinidad and Tobago's minister of community development, arts and culture, is praising the economic value culture brings to the Caribbean region.

Addressing the 27th meeting of the Regional Cultural Committee (RCC) planning the Caribbean Festival of Arts (CARIFESTA) here in August, she said T&T is currently experiencing rigid fiscal constraint, and the innovation and sheer volume of creative entrepreneurs emerging from that situation was extraordinary.

Machel Montano

"In our country, there has been a significant increase in the number of local markets for craft artisans, artists and culinary entrepreneurs throughout the past three years, with an active push towards environmentally sustainable business practices- green practices," Dolly told delegates to the conference late last month.

CARIFESTA XIV will be held here Aug. 16-25 . So far, 19 countries have confirmed their attendance for the region's premier festival.

The organizers have also said that the public can look forward to signal and niche events, four community festivals, the Grand Market hub, Children and Youth Village, workshops and symposia, and the "Super Concert" featuring Machel Montano, Shaggy, Kassav, Calypso Rose and Ricardo Drue.

Shaggy

Dolly said that T&T intends to market CARIFESTA XIV to the world by bringing buyers to the festival, creating spaces for discourse and platforms for developing the various art forms on display.

Calypso Rose

"The success of CARIFESTA XIV will be the success of the Caribbean region, and we in Trinidad and Tobago are determined to deliver this to you," she said.

✹

U.S. stars for St. Maarten Carnival

American artistes Keyshia Cole, Ja Rule and Ashanti are listed among the headline acts scheduled to perform at the 50th St. Maarten Carnival in the Caribbean.

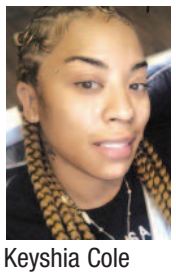
Ashanti

Festivities will officially run from April 20 to May 7. However, the three are expected to take the stage at the Soulful Company concert on April 25.

Ja Rule

"We're so excited to welcome Ashanti, Keyshia Cole, and Ja Rule to St. Maarten," Director of Tourism May-Ling Chun noted in a recent press release to promote the event.

"To have these three artists, all who have impacted the international music scene on such a large scale, headline at the 50th anniversary of our renowned Carnival is a joy and an honor. We cannot wait to see the energy that they bring to the stage."



Keyshia Cole

The three headliners will be joined by two of St. Maarten's young singers and their bands. Local talents Natisha Hanson and Kenyo Baly are expected to accompany the headliners on stage.

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NOTICE TO CITY OF MIRAMAR RESIDENTS REQUEST FOR BOARD/COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS

The City of Miramar is now accepting applications for various advisory boards. Boards and Committees meet, research, report findings and make recommendations to the City of Miramar's City Commission. Applicants must be a Broward County registered voter and a City of Miramar Resident or own a business in the City of Miramar in order to apply.

The following is a list of advisory boards with vacancies:

- Blasting Advisory Committee:
  - Country Club Ranches Community (1 vacancy)
  - Huntington Community (1 vacancy)
  - Nautica Community (1 vacancy)
  - Riviera Isles Community (1 vacancy)
  - Sunset Falls Community (1 vacancy)
  - Sunset Lakes Community (1 vacancy)
- Cultural ArtsPark Advisory Board: (1 vacancy)
- Economic Development Advisory Board:
  - Resident (1 vacancy)
  - Miramar Commerce Park Rep. (1 vacancy)
- Education Advisory Board:
  - Miramar High School Innovation Zone (1 vacancy)
- Firefighter Pension Board: Miramar Resident (1 vacancy)
- Historic Miramar Advisory Board:
  - Historic Miramar Residents (5 vacancies)
  - Non-Historic Miramar Resident (1 vacancy)
  - Historic Miramar Business Owner (1 vacancy)
- Parks & Recreation Advisory Board: (2 vacancies)
- Planning & Zoning Board: (1 vacancy)
- Teen Council Advisory Board: (3 vacancies)

All advisory board members will be subject to the provisions of the State of Florida's Sunshine Law. Applications and additional information may be obtained online at www.miramarfl.gov, or by telephone at (954) 602-3011. Advisory Board Appointments will be made on May 1, 2019, during the Commission Meeting. Thank you for your interest.

Denise A. Gibbs, CMC
City Clerk

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~ A CARIBBEAN TODAY SPECIAL FEATURE

New technology transforming classrooms: What to know

As a parent, you may be wondering how technology in the classroom is being used to provide a constructive learning environment for your child.

Here is a round-up of several new technologies and a look at how each helps educators teach, and students learn:

Better imagery - Students have a better reason to stay engaged than ever before, as better, brighter more versatile projectors are introduced into more classrooms.

For example, Casio's LampFree Ultra Short Throw projectors are designed to generate large images over a very short projection distance so that they work well in classrooms of all sizes. Their optional wireless adapters give educators the ability to control the images from a smartphone or tablet through an app, so that lessons can be more spontaneous and creative.

Events of the day - Whether you're scoping out topics for debate club or bringing civics class to life with real world content, incorporating current events into lesson plans is becoming a cinch, thanks to tools like PressReader, a news aggregator that delivers full issues of thousands of publications to mobile devices, PCs and Macs that are connected to library hot zones.

- Photograph © high waystarz/stock.Adobe.com

Children - and parents - need to keep up advances in technology.

Classroom on-the-go - Thanks to new soft-ware, classroom style learning can take place any-where. One example is Classpad.net, a free, all-in-one web-based mathematics creation and discovery resource geared for K-12 and beyond. Enabling students to learn math at their own pace, new additions to the software include dynamically linked representations, additional types of graphing interactions, improved authoring tools, and more.

Get moving - Even gym class is no exception to the technology upgrades that schools are seeing. Physical education teachers are fusing fun and fitness with such games as Dance Dance Revolution, Just Dance and Wii Sports. Technology is getting feet moving and helping kids improve a sports skill.

- Edited from StatePoint.

5 ways children benefit from creative playtime

When kids pretend to be their favorite superhero, it may look like sheer fun at first glance, but experts say that imaginative play also benefits children in a number of substantial ways.

- Photograph Courtesy of the Genius of Play

Letting a child express his or her imagination can be healthy.

"From building confidence and self-perception to offering children an opportunity to practice communication and language skills, pretend play is vital to child development," says Keri Wilmot, a pediatric occupational therapist and an expert contributor to TheGeniusofPlay.org.

How can creative play help your child thrive? Here are five important benefits, according to The Genius of Play:

• **Enhanced literacy -** Some of the same mental connections that take place when a child is first learning to read are employed in the world of pretend. Whether it's a banana that becomes a phone or a towel being used as a cape, grasping symbolism in the world of play can pave the way for children to better recognize that each letter of the alphabet represents a sound. Encourage kids to use the everyday objects and toys around them to build a world of creativity and fun.

• **Leadership skills -** From a very young age, playtime experiences can have a major impact on the development of children's leadership skills. In the case of superhero play, the act of taking on a powerful persona offers kids an opportunity to assert themselves and gain self-confidence, while creatively constructing

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 19)

~ A CARIBBEAN TODAY SPECIAL FEATURE

The Bahamas seeks reform to prepare for changing global environment

NASSAU, The Bahamas – The Bahamas govern-ment says it has adopted an aggressive policy aimed at restructuring the country's education system, including free tuition at the University of the Bahamas, to ensure the next generation is equipped to deal with a changing global environment.

Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis, in a radio and television broadcast on Mar. 25, said education remains at the "very core of our economic and social development.

"Our mission is to ensure that everyone has access to the educational opportunities they need and deserve, in order to succeed in life and to become responsible citizens," Minnis said in his second "Report to the Nation for 2019".

IMPACT

Minnis said reform of the educational system must impact

every stage of learning from pre-school to university and other education and training agencies.

"We have to think big, and to act boldly to secure our future," he said. "Beginning this September qualifying students will be able to attend the University of the Bahamas tuition-free. We will make more announcements on this at a later date."

Minnis said his administration is committed to expanding access to technical and vocational skill training, for many more Bahamians.

He said the "Bahamas Be Your Own Boss" (BYOB) scholarship is geared towards providing students, mainly between ages 18 and 25, with technical and vocational skills to start businesses and/or secure employment in the business sector.

CHILDREN

Minnis said early childhood education is also being enhanced with the Bahamas Early Start (BES) Project, which he said would fortify the sector by focusing on the equitable delivery of comprehensive, and quality childhood development for all children from the earliest stages of development.

In April 2018, the Ministry of Education introduced the Universal Pre-Primary Education Initiative to key education stakeholders. The initiative will increase access to preprimary education for three and four-year-olds throughout the country.

He said the government has also launched a pilot program to introduce tablets to pre-schoolers in public preschools. Eleven pre-schools on the islands of New Providence, Grand Bahama, Long Island, Andros, Cat Island, and Abaco, participated in the project.

Minnis said a laptop and LCD projector were given to each teacher and an Amazon Fire Tablet, to each student. He said these devices are being used to support the teaching and learning process in preschools, by providing students and teachers with technology that may help to develop and to enhance 21st century learning skills.

UPGRADES

Minnis said that infrastructural upgrades have also taken place at most of the pre-schools, to accommodate the increased demand for wifi and Internet connectivity. The remaining schools will be upgraded by 2020 through the Smart School Initiative.

"We will launch a pilot program at the Anatol Rodgers High School for the use of tablets in high schools," he said. "The pilot will test the efficacy of digital literacy on student achievement at the high school level, and examine student attitudes toward using technology across the curriculum and subject disciplines."

As of Dec. 2018, the Ministry of Education acquired 12,000 digital devices for distribution in the schools and Minnis said that contracts have been signed with the country's two major Internet service providers to install high-speed Internet services, in all government-operated schools.

- Edited from CMC.

Tackling the high cost of student loan debt

Americans are drowning in student loan debt, collectively owing $1.5 trillion.

Rising college costs mean that number isn't likely to drop much in the next few decades.

The average student borrower takes out around $26,000 in loans over the course of a bachelor's degree - debt that's impossible to discharge in bankruptcy, difficult to have forgiven and increasingly unlikely to be fully repaid on schedule.

Here's a look at the costs of that debt and what's being done to lessen the crisis:

The direct cost - New research shows that student debt load is making Americans less likely to buy homes or start families, and more likely to live at home and take jobs just to make ends meet, instead of the more lucrative positions for which their degrees prepared them.

- Photograph © Damir / stock.Adobe.com

Worry over school costs can hurt stu-dents.

Short-term solutions include deferring loans by returning to school, or consolidating or borrowing from private lenders, which ends up making the problem worse. For students graduating into a tight job market whose credit ratings are impacted by the amounts they owe, loan debt can remain their chief financial concern for decades.

The hidden cost - Hidden costs often prevent lower-income students from pursuing the highest-value degrees.

The recent trend of "differential pricing," in which tuition costs are dictated by a student's field of study, has had an effect on enrollment in high-employment fields, potentially scaring off the students who could benefit the most from an in-demand degree.

Easing the crisis - Organizations such as Scholarship America are working to alleviate the cri-sis. As the nation's largest provider of private-sector scholarships, it delivers their most direct impact by giving students funding for higher education - $264 million last year, and more than $4 billion over its history.

- Edited from StatePoint.

5 ways children benefit from creative playtime

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18)

their own story lines. Through play, parents, teachers and mentors can help foster these attributes in children.

• **Movement -** Movement helps children hone their coordination, balance and motor skills. Associating exercise with fun can set a precedent for a lifetime habit. What's more, physical activity encourages better eating and sleeping habits. Be sure your kids have a safe place to play indoors that lets them burn off all their energy. When the weather is nice, take the fun to the backyard or a nearby park, where the possibilities for pretend expand.

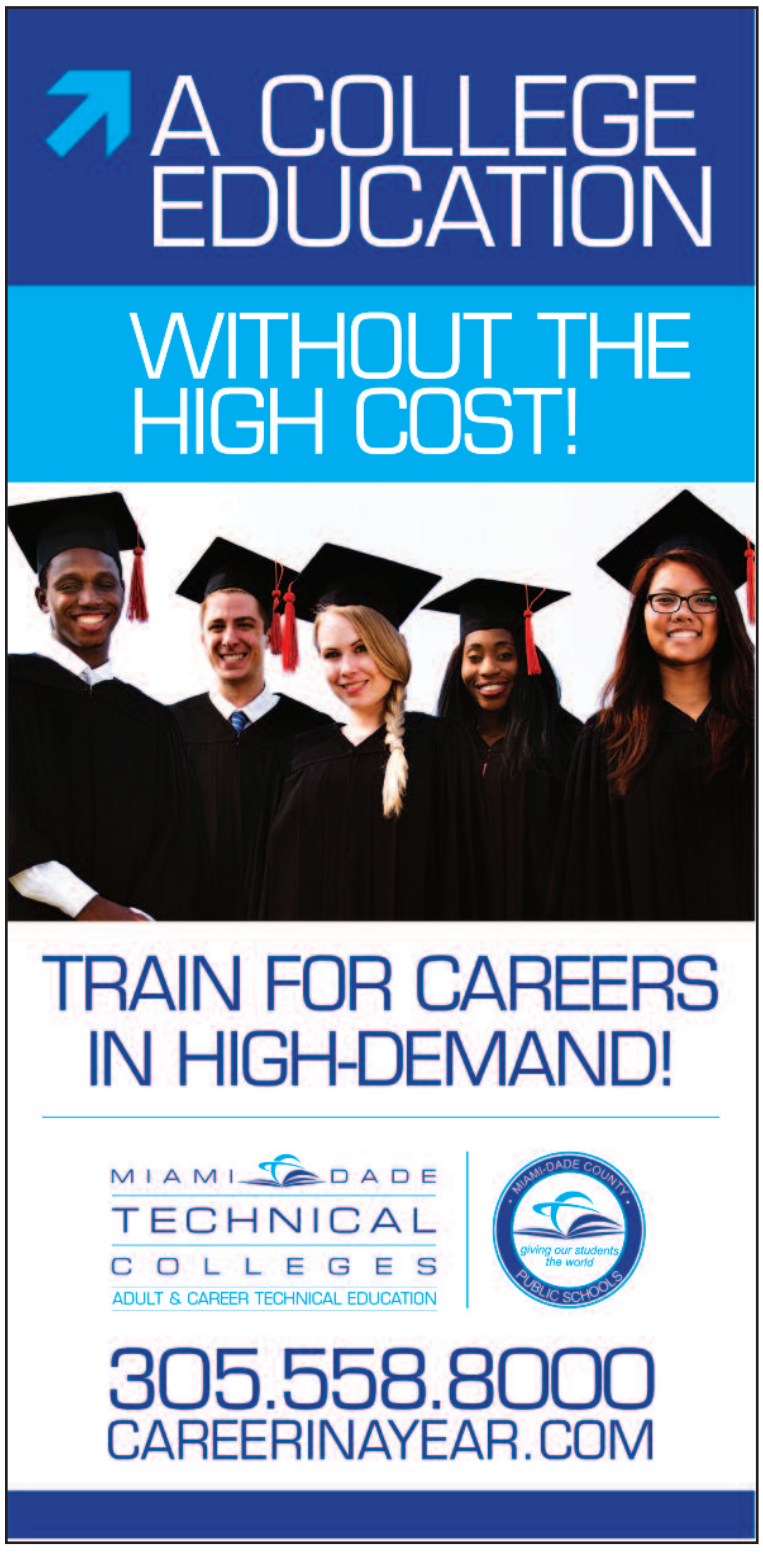
• **Perseverance -** Known as the "Batman Effect", a 2016 study published in "Child Development" found that kids stay better focused on a task when they are pretending to be their favorite superheroes or characters. Through play, you can encourage your children to channel the bravery and perseverance of the superheroes they admire most, giving them the emotional tools needed to thrive in a challenging world.

• **Emotional development -** Role play offers children an opportunity to explore their emotions, both good and bad, while building compassion. Children can channel frustration, anger, fear and triumph into the worlds, characters and storylines they create, learning to manage these emotions in healthy ways.

For more child development tips and play resources, visit ***TheGeniusofPlay.org.***

There may be times when you'd prefer your child finally change out of his or her superhero costume. But by letting kids explore their creativity, you can help them reap the benefits of this type of play.

- Edited from StatePoint.



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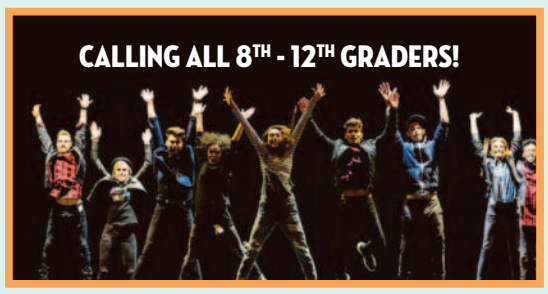

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