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COLLISION COURSE



~ Caribbean nationals who voted against Donald Trump may not yet be ready to eagerly embrace him. But he will be president of the United States. So it's wait and see how much he impacts their lives, page 7



Guy Philippe, a former presidential candidate and recently elected senator in Haiti, has been indicted in the United

States on charges of drug smuggling and money laundering. Philippe was extradited to the U.S. following his arrest in Port Au Prince, page 5.



Jamaica's **Andre Blake** has turned out to be an excellent addition to Major League Soccer. North America's top pro league is expanding, so there should be more opportunities for Caribbean players. Or will there?, page 18.



ON FIRE FOR JESUS

Lady Saw was perhaps Jamaica's best known female dancehall artiste. Raw, suggestive lyrics and unapologetic sexual onstage performances put her on top. But Lady Saw no longer exists. Introducing "Minister" Marion Hall, page 9.

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U.S. to help implement plea bargain system in Jamaica's courts

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. State Department will assist the Jamaican government in introducing plea bargaining to the island's justice system.

Justice Minister Delroy Chuck said the State Department has agreed to make available United States prosecutors and judges who will hold seminars with Jamaica's Office of the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) and judges on how plea bargaining can be an effective tool in making the courts more efficient.

During a visit here last month, Chuck explained that the principle of plea bargain-

ing was a common law tradition which has been utilized in many jurisdictions to reduce the caseload of the courts.

He said the principle allows offenders to take responsibility for their actions, an important pre-requisite for rehabilitation, and save the complainant the trauma of re-living the experience in a pressurized setting. It also aims to save time and resources of the state by avoiding lengthy trials.

UPGRADE

Chuck made his comments as he updated Jamaica's U.S. Ambassador Audrey Marks at the Embassy of Jamaica, fol-



- Photograph by Derrick Scott

Jamaica's Ambassador to the United States Audrey Marks, right, greets her country's Justice Minister Delroy Chuck at the Embassy of Jamaica in Washington, D.C.

lowing a three-day study tour of justice systems here, Maryland and Virginia. He said changes are to be made to the Criminal Justice (Plea Negotiations and Agreement) Act to make the legislation more effective and speed up the pace at which justice is delivered to Jamaicans.

The Act, which was introduced in 2006, and amended

in 2010, allows persons accused of crimes to plead guilty and give testimony or information in return for a reduced penalty. Chuck explained that the amendments, will, among other things, allow for the defense counsel to be a part of the plea bargaining process and negotiate with the prosecutor and judge over sentencing.

"If the accused knows that following a trial he can receive a sentence of 10 or 15 years and he also knows that his defense counsel can bargain with the judge and get five years instead of 10 years, there is a real likelihood that he may accept the plea," Chuck said.

"If there is an agreement, the matter can be dealt with right away."

Chuck said plea bargaining is not intended to "soften" the justice system, noting that sentencing guidelines will be in place to ensure that justice is served. He said there will be an overhaul of the courts in Jamaica to bring them up to First World standard and ensure that justice is delivered in a timely manner.

Marks said she will be engaging Jamaican attorneys in the U.S. to have them work with the Justice Ministry in helping to familiarize members of the Jamaican court system with the concept of plea bargaining.

- Story and photograph by Derrick Scott/JIS.



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Caribbean nationals among 500,000 deported from U.S.

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Hundreds of Caribbean nationals were possibly among nearly half million immigrants deported from the United States in 2016, according to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency.

ICE did not give a precise breakdown of the nationalities of immigrants deported, but to the end of fiscal year 2016 statistics released by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) noted 530,250 individuals were apprehended nationwide and a total of 450,954 removals and returns carried out.

The U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) reported 415,816 apprehensions nationwide, compared to 337,117 in 2015, with ICE noting that 114,434 individuals were arrested last year as compared to 125,211 the previous year.

CLASSIFICATION

ICE noted that last year 98 percent of initial enforcement actions involved individuals classified within one of the three enforcement priority categories. Overall, ICE said



94 percent of removals and returns were classified within a Priority 1 category, and five percent were classified within a Priority 2 category, which comprises "serious and repeat misdemeanants, individuals who unlawfully entered the United States on or after January 1, 2014, and significant abusers of the visa system or visa waiver program".

ICE said one percent of immigrants were classified within a Priority 3 category, who are "individuals issued a final order of removal on or after January 1, 2014."

Less than 0.1 percent of removals and returns involved individuals classified as other federal interests, and less than 0.3 percent had unknown priority classifications, ICE noted.

- Edited from CMC.



Lawmakers urge Obama to build protections for Caribbean immigrants



Obama

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Cities for Action, a coalition of over 100 mayors and county executives from across the United States, is calling on outgoing President Barack Obama to commit to further protections for Caribbean and other immigrants in their communities before he leaves office this month.

In a letter sent late last month to Obama, who leaves office Jan. 20, at least 30 members of the coalition thanked him for his administration's support for immigrant families. They recommended his administration strengthen support for young immigrants with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals by accept-

ing early DACA renewal applications.

The program permits young immigrants who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children - or so called "Dreamers" - to remain in the country without threat of deportation and also to work legally.

PLEA

"As local government leaders throughout the country, we know that immigrants make our communities stronger economically, culturally, and socially," the leaders wrote.

"For this reason, we have enthusiastically embraced the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, expressed repeated support for and defense of your 2014 executive actions on immigration, and worked closely with your administration to promote citizenship and the economic, social, and civic integration of immigrants."

The leaders also asked Obama to commit to "timely processing" by the U.S. Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS) for initial and renewal DACA applications, and to implement addi-

tional privacy protections for DACA holders "to reassure recipients that they will not be punished as a result of coming out of the shadows.

"We encourage you to undertake steps to support the over 740,000 DACA recipients in the U.S.," the lawmakers wrote to Obama, stating that

"DACA has tremendously benefitted our communities by helping our residents thrive and contribute in myriad ways.

"For this reason, we are committed to advocating for the continuation of DACA in the next administration and for legislative relief for Dreamers in Congress," the

leaders noted.

SUPPORT

Additionally, they asked Obama to support immigrants who cannot safely return to their home countries due to conflict, natural disaster or other emergency conditions by (CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Floridian faces 20 years in prison for J'can lotto scam

A Florida resident will in March know her punishment after pleading guilty to involvement in a Jamaica-based fraudulent lottery scam which ripped off people in the United States.

Cassandra Althea Palmer, 33, on Dec. 7 pleaded guilty before United States District Court Judge Marcia G. Cooke in the Southern District of Florida to one count of conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud, according to the Department of Justice (DOJ).

She faces up to 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. She must also pay restitution to the victim.

As part of her guilty plea, the DOJ said Palmer agreed that, had the case gone to trial, the U.S. would have proved "beyond a reasonable doubt" that, "in February 2014, a woman from Worcester County, Maryland, was contacted by an individual in Jamaica and told that she had won a multi-million dollar lottery prize, and that in order to collect her lottery prize, she first had to pay taxes and fees."

The DOJ said the victim did not win a lottery prize and therefore did not collect any winnings.

fraud scheme and agreed with her co-conspirator in Jamaica to participate in the scheme," the DOJ noted, adding that Palmer participated in the fraudulent scheme in a number of ways.

Among other activities, the DOJ said she worked with a co-conspirator in Jamaica, to recruit a friend in Maryland to receive \$7,500 of the victim's money.

"She and her friend kept a portion of the money, and Palmer wire transferred the rest to her Jamaican co-conspirator," the DOJ said.

It said the scam ended when law enforcement officials learned of the fraud. The DOJ said officials set up a sting, in which an undercover police officer posed as the victim and met Palmer's friend at a restaurant parking lot in Maryland. The purpose of the meeting was for the victim to hand over \$32,500 in cash to Palmer's friend in order for the victim to claim her purported lottery winnings.

Law enforcement then arrested Palmer's friend after she received \$32,500 in cash from the officer.

Palmer's sentencing is scheduled for Mar. 22.

KNOWLEDGE

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- Edited from CMC.



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American locked up for cell phone fraud scheme linked to Caribbean

MIAMI, Florida – A United States national has been sentenced to 48 months in prison for his role in a sophisticated global cell phone fraud scheme linked to the Caribbean.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) said that the scheme involved compromising cell phone customers' accounts and "cloning" their phones to make fraudulent international calls to countries such as Cuba, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic with high calling rates.

The DOJ said Edwin Fana, 37, was sentenced on Dec. 23 by U.S. District Judge Daniel T.K. Hurley of the Southern District of Florida.

Fana had pleaded guilty on Aug. 29 to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, access device fraud, the use, production or possession of modified telecommunications instruments and the use

or possession of hardware or software configured to obtain telecommunications services, the DOJ said. It said Fana also pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud and one count of aggravated identity theft.

"Fana received a reduced prison sentence due to his cooperation in the government's investigation," the DOJ said.

CONSPIRACY

According to the plea agreement, Fana and his co-conspirators participated in a scheme to steal access to and fraudulently open new cell phone accounts using the personal information of individuals around the U.S.

Fana admitted that the conspirators then trafficked in the cell phone customers' telecommunication identifying information, using that data, as well as other software and

hardware, to re-program cell phones that they controlled to transmit thousands of international calls to Cuba, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and other countries.

The calls were billed to the victims' compromised accounts, Fana admitted.

In addition, the DOJ said Fana admitted that his role in the scheme included operating a "call site" in his residence in

Miami Gardens.

In Oct. 2012, the DOJ said the FBI executed a search warrant on Fana's residence and discovered about 88 cell phones connected to networking equipment and actively routing calls. Law enforcement seized nearly 11,000 telecommunications identifying numbers from Fana, and he admitted that the scheme caused at least \$1 million in

losses, the DOJ said.

It said Fana is the first defendant to be sentenced in the case. Jose Santana and Farintong Calderon have also pleaded guilty in connection with the scheme, the DOJ said. They are scheduled for sentencing early this year.

- Edited from CMC.



Caribbean criminals nabbed by U.S. in 'Project Shadow Fire'

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency says Caribbean nationals were among a large number of immigrants nabbed in 2016.

During a five-week operation last March, dubbed "Project Shadow Fire", ICE said 1,133 immigrants, including Caribbean nationals, were arrested.

The agency said the sweep included more than 900 transnational criminal gang members and others associated with transnational criminal activity, such as drug trafficking, human smuggling and sex trafficking, murder and racketeering.

'SURGE'

ICE said nationals from 13 countries in Central America, Asia, Europe and the Caribbean were arrested



- File photograph

ICE involved in nationwide sweep.

in "Project Shadow Fire", a "surge operation" conducted under Operation Community Shield. It said 1,001 were charged with criminal offenses, and 132 were arrested administratively for immigration violations.

The arrests were made in

the following six states: Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Kansas and Missouri. Two Belizean nationals were also among 100 immigrants arrested in the Los Angeles area in July.

Those arrested had criminal histories with past convictions for rape, kidnapping, robbery, burglary and other serious criminal offenses, ICE said.

The Caribbean nationals arrested during the operation were citizens from Trinidad and Tobago, Dominican Republic, Belize, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Guyana and Jamaica.

- Edited from CMC.



Lawmakers urge Obama to build protections for Caribbean immigrants

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

"reviewing current Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designations and extending, re-designating, or making new designations as appropriate.

"In particular, we urge your administration to take steps to protect immigrants from countries that recently experienced extraordinary conditions that have made return unsafe, including Haiti and Ecuador," the leaders wrote. "We also ask that USCIS commit to swift processing for TPS applications and re-registrations."

The mayors and county executive also thanked Obama for responding to concerns raised by coalition members, among others, about the "failed, discriminatory National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) program, which created a "special registration" for immigrants from 25 primarily Muslim-majority

countries.

Representatives from a number of cities spoke with White House officials last month, and urged the administration to end NSEERS and continue protections for immigrants with DACA and TPS.

The letter was signed by mayors from cities in Pennsylvania, Texas, Maryland, Alabama, Massachusetts, North Carolina, California, Rhode Island, Illinois, Iowa, New York, Tennessee, Wisconsin, New Jersey, Colorado and Washington.

"Our immigrant residents help make New York City stronger economically, culturally and socially," said New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. "We have benefited from President Obama's actions to protect vulnerable immigrants during his time in office."

- Edited from CMC.



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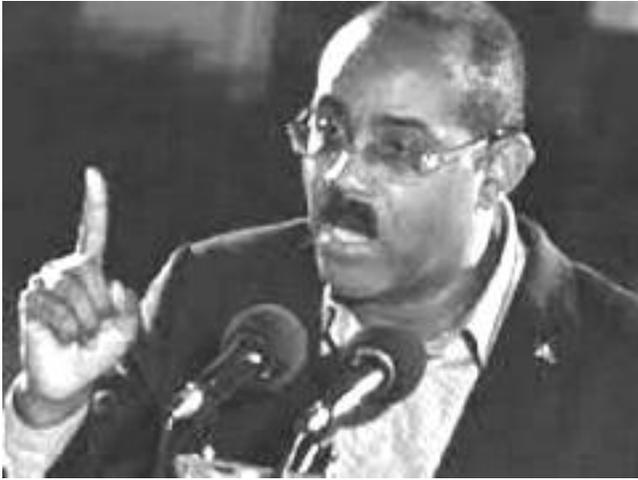
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Antigua P.M. defends citizenship program, despite heavy criticism on U.S. television program

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne has defended the Citizenship by Investment (CIP) program in his country, dismissing a popular United States television program that sought to portray the CIP in the Caribbean as an avenue for terrorists and other criminals to obtain passports to travel freely throughout the world.

“So what are we supposed to do sit back and do nothing? You tell me,” Browne told the CBS program “60 Minutes”, which aired on Jan. 1, insisting that Caribbean countries have put in place the relevant stringent measures to ensure the CIP is truly an investment strategy for regional countries.

But the CBS program, which indicated that the three-year old CIP in Antigua has prevented the government from defaulting on its international loans and has turned the



Browne

Barbuda, other Caribbean countries with CIP programs are St. Kitts and Nevis, Dominica and St. Lucia. Under the CIP, Caribbean countries allow for citizenship in their country if the foreign investor makes a significant contribution to the socio-economic development of the countries.

SYRIA

Browne acknowledged during the program that his country has received applications under the CIP from nationals in Syria where a relative of the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is the island's representative.

“We have had applications from Syria,” Prime Minister Browne told the CBS program, adding “Syria is one of the areas in which we have had some concerns but did not place it on a restricted list.”

CBS quoted Browne as acknowledging that instability breeds opportunity and that besides Syria, nationals from Iran, Pakistan, Libya have benefitted from the CIP. He dismissed a program in Dubai under which a developer is promising Antigua and Barbuda passports to buyers of a condo project.

“You don't believe that?” Browne asked his interviewer, adding “that is not so.”

“They have to go through all the due diligence,” Browne said, with CBS quoting him as saying that all applicants for Antigua and Barbuda citizenship are now screened by U.S. law enforcement agencies.

- Edited from CMC.



economy around, has led to a war of words in Dominica between Opposition Leader Lennox Linton, who also appeared on the CBS program and prominent attorney Anthony Astaphan.

Linton has said he will seek legal advice over the criticism leveled at him by Astaphan, who described Linton's statements on the program as a “malicious campaign to destroy Dominica.”

SCRUTINY

CBS said Antigua and Barbuda “also claims to have the strictest program in the Caribbean” and Browne said anyone applying for citizenship under the CIP has to be on the island in person.

“Our law provides for them to spend at least five days here,” he said, adding “we have made sure at least there must be some face to face contact so we know who these people are.”

“We are looking for high network individuals. People who are established, business people who are well known and to make sure we get the crème de la crème,” Browne told the program.

Apart from Antigua and

U.S. extradites Haitian senator for smuggling

FLORIDA – The United States Attorney's Office (USAO) of Southern District of Florida has released the charges against Guy Philippe, the former Haitian rebel-turned-politician, who was arrested earlier this month in Port Au Prince and extradited to the U.S. a few hours later.

Philippe, 48, was indicted in 2005 on one count of conspiracy to import narcotics; one count of conspiracy to launder monetary instruments and engage in monetary transactions in property derived from unlawful activity and one substantive count of engaging in monetary transactions derived from unlawful activity.

Philippe, who was elected as a senator in the Nov. 20 legislative elections in Haiti, was ordered held without bond during an initial hearing before U.S. Magistrate Judge

Barry L. Garber of the Southern District of Florida. His arraignment hearing was scheduled for Jan. 13.

According to the indictment, from approximately 1997 through 2001, Philippe conspired with others to import more than five kilograms of cocaine into the U.S. The indictment also alleges that, between June 1999 and April 2003, Philippe also allegedly conspired with others to engage in money laundering to conceal their participation in criminal activity, including narcotics trafficking.



Philippe

- Edited from CMC.



Turks and Caicos elects first woman gov't leader

PROVIDENCIALES, Turks and Caicos – Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) last month elected its first ever woman to head a government in the British Overseas Territory (BOT).

Preliminary results released Dec. 16 by electoral officials here showed 45-year-old attorney Sharlene Cartwright Robinson had led her Opposition People's Democratic Movement (PDM) to victory, winning seven of the 10 constituencies.

The election results also meant outgoing Premier Dr. Rufus Ewing was also booted out of Parliament. He later

resigned as leader of the Progressive National Party (PNP).

Cartwright Robinson won the most votes in the at-large candidates' poll, receiving 3,024, while Ewing could only muster 2,234 votes, losing out on becoming one of the five successful candidates.

Another casualty of the poll was former Premier Michael Misick, who is still facing the courts on allegations of corruption. He received 1,629 votes.

- Edited from CMC.



BRIEFS

Ex-Jamaican beauty queen admits guilt

A former Jamaican beauty queen and flight attendant last month pleaded guilty to participating in a drug smuggling operation in the United States. She faces a 10-year prison term for conspiracy to possess and distribute cocaine when she is sentenced Mar. 3.

Marsha Gay Reynolds, a 32-year-old former track star who lived in New York, was arrested after abandoning a suitcase containing 60 pounds of cocaine worth some \$3 million and running from law enforcement officers at Los Angeles International Airport in California.

Simpson Miller out as Opposition leader

Former Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller stepped down as leader of Jamaica's Opposition People's National Party (PNP) last month.

Simpson Miller, 71, decided not to seek re-election when the PNP holds elections in September. She had been under constant pressure after leading the then ruling PNP to defeat in the Feb. 25, 2016 general elections.

- Compiled from various sources.



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FYI/LOCAL



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U.S. Congress passes bill to boost Caribbean relations

Legislation to enhance United States' engagement with the Caribbean passed both the United States House of Representatives and the Senate last month.

President Barack Obama signed it into law.

The United States-Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act (H.R. 4939) is aimed at strengthening relations with the Caribbean by

requiring the U.S. secretary of state and the administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to submit to Congress a multi-year strategy focused on enhancing engagement with the countries of the Caribbean. It puts particular emphasis on energy security, countering violence, expanding diplomacy and providing educational exchange opportunities for citizens of the Caribbean.

Miami-Dade public schools offer job training

Miami-Dade County Public Schools is offering an adult and community education program at Lindsey Hopkins Technical Education Center.

The program was developed to serve of ambitious community members looking for a way to enter the workforce.

For more information, visit **MiamiDade Technical Colleges.com**, **CareerInaYear.com** or call **305-558-8000**.

Online weapons license renewal in Florida

Florida concealed weapon licenses can now be renewed online, according to Commissioner of Agriculture

Adam H. Putnam.

Florida concealed weapon licenses can be renewed by visiting <https://cwrex.fresh-fromflorida.com/>.

License holders can still renew a concealed weapons license via mail, at 41 Tax Collectors Offices across Florida or at one of the department's eight regional offices.

License holders will still be mailed a renewal notice from the department and will need this document to initiate the online renewal process.

National college fair in Miami Feb. 26

Representatives from nearly 200 colleges and universities are scheduled to attend the 2017 Miami National College Fair on

Feb. 26.

They are expected to meet with students and parents to discuss matters such as financial aid, college planning, admission and testing requirements.

The fair, which has free admission, will be held from **noon to 4 p.m.** at the DoubleTree Miami Mart Airport Hotel and Convention Center, 777 N.W. 72nd Ave., Miami, Florida.

Informational sessions will be presented in English, Spanish and Haitian creole.

Students can pre-register at www.gotomyncf.com.

For more information, call the fair's hotline at **305-995-1739** or visit www.nacacnet.org.



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NOTICE TO QUALIFIED FIRMS
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Basketball Properties, Ltd. (the "Manager") will be accepting sealed Statements of Qualifications for:

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
QUALIFICATION OF GENERAL CONTRACTORS FOR MISCELLANEOUS CONSTRUCTION SERVICES AT THE AMERICAN AIRLINES ARENA
RFQ NO. 2017-01

The Manager is requesting Statements of Qualifications from General Contractors to qualify for the purpose of performing Miscellaneous Construction Services on an as needed basis at the American Airlines Arena (the "Arena"). Sealed Statements of Qualifications must be received by **3:00 p.m. on Monday, February 6, 2017, (the "Submittal Deadline")** at Gate 4 of the Arena, located at 601 Biscayne Blvd., Miami, FL ("Gate 4"). The official clock at the Manager's reception desk shall govern. Statements of Qualifications received after this time will not be considered. The Statements of Qualifications will be publicly opened at Gate 4 immediately after the Submittal Deadline.

THE SERVICES

The purpose of this RFQ is to establish a highly qualified pool of general contractors under continuing contracts with the Manager to perform various construction projects at the Arena, which may include, but not limited to, facility renovations and improvements; interior remodeling/refreshing; cabinetry work, locker and bathroom repairs and renovations and other miscellaneous Arena facility maintenance, repairs, end of product life replacements, and improvements on a strict construction schedule (the "Services"). The Manager intends to contract with multiple highly qualified firms to perform the Services, on an as needed basis, and in a timely and efficient manner that enables the Manager to maintain an active sports and entertainment Arena schedule. The initial term of the continuing services contract(s) is anticipated to be for five (5) years. The Services shall be performed according to high-quality standards that will enable the structure to remain a first class facility. The successful firm shall be required to adhere to Miami-Dade County's small business participation measures applicable to the Services and to submit monthly progress reports and compliance documentation to Miami-Dade County's Small Business Development Office.

AVAILABILITY OF RFQ DOCUMENTS

Interested parties may pick up a Request for Qualifications for the Project (the "RFQ") at Gate 4 from **10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**, Monday through Friday. Statements of Qualifications shall be submitted using the form(s) provided in the RFQ.

EXPERIENCE

Firms submitting Statements of Qualifications shall satisfy all of the following:

- Shall have been in continuous business in Miami-Dade or Broward Counties for the past five years;
- Shall have had a Miami-Dade and/or Broward office for a minimum of the past five years;
- Shall have been continuously incorporated for a minimum of the past five years;
- Shall have been in business as a general contractor for a minimum of the past ten years;
- Shall have served as the general contractor and successfully completed a minimum of three projects within the past five years each of which (a) had a cost of \$300,000 or more, (b) were within the United States, and (c) consisted of construction, maintenance and repair,

renovation or refresh of commercial buildings of a size, scope and complexity similar to the Arena;

- Shall demonstrate successful completion of first class facility improvements, repairs, and renovations in a timely manner within expedited time frames; and
- Shall demonstrate the successful construction, or significant renovation or repair of at least one concrete building in South Florida located within a High Velocity Hurricane Zone.

MANDATORY PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE

A mandatory pre-qualification conference will commence promptly at **1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 10, 2017 at Gate 4**. All firms planning to submit a Statement of Qualifications are required to have their proposed project superintendent attend this conference. Failure of a firm, including the firm's superintendent, to be present for the entire conference, beginning at the time stated above and concluding at the dismissal of the mandatory pre-qualification conference by the Manager, shall render a firm to be deemed non-responsive and their Statement of Qualifications shall not be considered for award. Decisions of the Manager shall be final. The official clock at the location of the mandatory pre-qualification conference shall govern.

Statements of Qualifications shall be submitted in accordance with the procedures set forth in the RFQ. Any questions concerning this Notice or the RFQ shall be submitted to the Assistant General Manager, American Airlines Arena by email at RFQSubmissions@heat.com by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 20, 2017.

All firms are advised that the Manager has not authorized the use of the name, likeness or other intellectual property rights of the Manager, the Arena or the Miami Heat and that any such use by unauthorized persons is strictly prohibited to the fullest extent permitted by law.

All firms are advised that the Manager will not supply or sell materials to firms in connection with submission or preparation of Statements of Qualifications.

The Manager reserves the right to reject any and all Statements of Qualifications, to waive any informality in a Statement of Qualifications and to make awards in the best interests of the Manager and the Arena.

FIU to host 26th annual MLK celebration

Florida International University's (FIU) Department of Multicultural Programs and Services will honor Martin Luther King Jr. with a month-long celebration inspired by the late civil rights leader's lifelong dedication to equality and peace.

Among the highlights will be the annual "MLK Commemorative Breakfast", scheduled for **8 a.m. Jan. 13** in the Graham Center Ballrooms at FIU's MMC, 11200 S.W. 8th St. in Miami-Dade.

The keynote speaker at the breakfast will be Charles A. Bonner, author and trial lawyer who has dedicated his career to fighting to end discrimination and state judicial violence.

At 11 a.m., university and student leaders will unveil a new Martin Luther King, Jr. commemorative bust on the lawn between the Graham Center and Green Library. Ysmelio Lopez, from Cimagos Nursery, donated the sculpture to FIU.

Other FIU MLK commemorative celebration events include:

Jan. 12, 1 p.m. - FIU students, faculty and staff will come together for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Bust ribbon-



King

cutting ceremony at the southwestern corner of Academic One (AC1).

Jan. 14, 9 a.m. - FIU students will participate in the MLK Day of Service, volunteering at five service sites in projects such as painting, landscaping and general clean-up.

Jan. 16, 11 a.m. - FIU students, faculty, and staff will participate in the MLK Parade in Liberty City. It will run along N.W. 54th St., from N.W. 10th to 32nd avenues.

Jan. 18, 10 a.m. - "The Youth Forum and Peace Walk" will bring children from schools in Miami-Dade and Broward counties to the Wolfe

University Center Ballroom at FIU's Biscayne Bay Campus for a discussion about achieving success and following Dr. King's ideals. Keynote speaker will be FIU alumna LeToya Stairs, creator and facilitator of "The Problem with Being First" workshop. This event is free and open to the public.

Jan. 19, 6-8 p.m. - Opening reception for MLK@The Frost at The Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum at MMC. This is a series of exhibits from photographer Edward West featuring the lives of black South Africans during the period of societal transformation.

The exhibit runs from **Jan. 19-Mar. 30**. Admission to the museum, exhibit and reception is free and open to the public.

Feb. 2, 9 a.m. - At the MARC Pavilion, Lee Mun Wah will facilitate a seminar titled: "An Unfinished Conversation". The event is free and open to the public.

For more information, contact FIU's Office of Multicultural Programs at **305-348-2436**.

For more events celebrating MLK, turn to page 13.



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READY OR NOT: Caribbean nationals brace for Trump as U.S. president

GORDON WILLIAMS

Large numbers of Caribbean nationals, who claimed to have voted against Donald Trump, may not yet be ready to eagerly embrace him. But they're finally coming to grips with the inevitability of him as president of the United States.

Generally, those in and outside the U.S. have taken a wait-and-see approach regarding how the billionaire businessman will perform in the White House. They're hoping a Trump administration will not disrupt their quest for the American Dream, starting with his scheduled swearing into office Jan. 20.

"Most of the people are going to stay put – watch and see," said Caribbean-born Anthony Bernard, owner of the Miami, Florida-based firm A. Bernard Financial Services, which lists Caribbean Americans among its clientele.

Some have expressed apprehension over what Trump will offer. They cringed during his campaign when he alluded to violence and promised to deport millions of undocumented U.S. residents, including Caribbean nationals. A Trump spokesperson recently made clear the new president would quickly eliminate many of outgoing President Barack Obama's executive orders, possibly including one which protects an estimated 741,000 children who arrived in the U.S. as undocumented immigrants.

Caribbean bids farewell to 2016, a year of turbulence

Politically, 2016 was a mixed year for the region in which several incumbent governments were shown the door.

In St. Lucia's case, Allan Chastanet replaced Kenny Anthony as prime minister. Jamaica also booted its first female prime minister, 71-year-old Portia Simpson Miller, out of office, bringing back Andrew Holness and his Jamaica Labour Party (JLP). Simpson Miller announced she would not seek re-election as People's National Party leader.

In the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI), former Premier Dr. Rufus Ewing also resigned as leader of the Progressive National Party (PNP) following the Dec. 15 elections, which ushered in the territory's first female premier. Attorney Sharlene Cartwright-Robinson led the Opposition People's Democratic Movement (PDM) to its first election victory in 13 years.

Grenadians voted over-

Incoming White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer told ABC's "This Week" program that Trump will "repeal a lot of the regulations and actions that have been taken by this (Obama) administration over the last eight years that have hampered both economic growth and job creation."

Trump also vowed to ban Muslims from the U.S. and even lock up his main election rival Hillary Clinton. He was slow to condemn white supremacists and was also accused of racist comments.

FLEE

Speculation swirled that Caribbean Americans might flee the country if Trump won. Sir Hilary Beckles, chancellor of the University of the West Indies, for example, believes the Caribbean should be on the alert for a flood of returning nationals in the Trump era as president.

"You will witness the return of many Caribbean citizens out of North America and we have to prepare ourselves for return migration," Beckles said in November. "Understand that these are going to be the forces that will be unleashed."

But although heated discussions have been raised, there is no hard evidence mass migration back to the Caribbean is on the immediate horizon.

"Some are concerned and they talk about it," Bernard said, "but they are still here."



Trump

UNNERVED

Yet since the Nov. 8 election, many Caribbean Americans have been unnerved by U.S. intelligence reports of election interference by Russian hackers to support the Republican Trump's winning bid, especially after his now sidelined Democratic rival Clinton won the popular vote by almost three million.

Some of Trump's Cabinet nominees have made Caribbean Americans uncomfortable, including potential Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who once condemned the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). A litany of billionaires with hard line political connections have also been appointed, despite Trump's promise to "drain the swamp" of cronyism in Washington, D.C., and a few well-known war hawks have been sprinkled in as well.

Trump's promise to ramp up U.S. nuclear arsenal has

some dreading another Cold War arms race.

His conduct has also raised eyebrows on other fronts, such as failing to make public his income tax returns, securing millions in campaign funding for his own personal businesses, potential conflicts of interests with his children jockeying for positions in the White House, cozying up to Russia and its leader Vladimir Putin, confronting China, allegations of fraudulent business practices and sexual abuse, and extending an invitation to a Philippines president who confesses to being a killer.

Trump's incessant Tweeting, publicly tangling over seemingly trivial matters, such as his portrayal on a television comedy show, has also been disconcerting, even among supporters. His outbursts have often had to be explained or even walked back by surrogates. Trump's promise to gut "Obamacare", while not slowing the registration of the government-backed health insurance program, has also made many nervous.

SURVIVAL

However, a continuous solid U.S. relationship with the Caribbean is key to the region's survival. So some Caribbean nationals have openly embraced Trump's elevation to the U.S. presidency. Tourism interests, for example, have already publicly called for rallying to the new U.S. government so as not to disrupt the region's lifeblood.

Most Caribbean political leaders have fallen in line following Trump's election, vowing willingness to strengthen ties with the U.S. after his swearing in.

"My Government and I look forward to working closely with you and the members of your administration on initiatives of mutual interest to our countries," Barbados Prime Minister Freundel Stuart wrote to Trump shortly after the presidential election.

"(Grenada is looking) forward to continued strong relations with Washington under the new administration," said Prime Minister Keith Mitchell.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)



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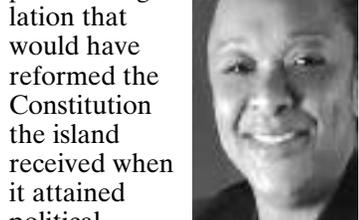
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whelmingly to reject seven pieces of legislation that would have reformed the Constitution the island received when it attained political Independence from Britain 42 years ago. The voters rejected plans to replace the London-based Privy Council with the Trinidad-based Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) as the island's final court, as well as term limits for the prime minister and the appointment of a leader of the Opposition in Parliament.



Cartwright-Robinson

Guyana and Barbados both celebrated 50 years of Independence from Britain in 2016. Prime Minister Freundel Stuart was able to fend off all attempts by the main Opposition Barbados Labour Party (BLP), led by Mia

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

OVERTOWN SALUTE: South Florida city celebrates Obama's legacy in art

DAWN A. DAVIS

This month Barack Obama finishes his final lap as president of the United States. His "send off" has been marked in various ways, including formal balls, tears and church services.

The Historic Lyric Theater Cultural Arts Complex in Overtown, Miami is celebrating the first African American president's legacy with an art exhibition.

Dubbed "Visions of Our 44th President Barack Obama", it features the image of America's 44th president as seen through the eyes of 44 African American artists.

The exhibit was originally conceived and curated by Peter Kaplan, president of Our World LLC, a company focused on exposing and promoting the fine arts. But it was through the collaborative efforts of visionaries from the Detroit-based Charles Wright Museum of African American History, Timothy Barber executive director of The Black Archives History & Research Foundation of South Florida and the Lyric Theater, and Operations and Programming Manager Kamila Pritchett, that made the exhibition happen.

"For this venue with a deeply rooted history to be able to bring in this exhibit that pays tribute to this historic presidency, it puts the

community in the spotlight that it deserves," explained Pritchett.



"Tarred and Feathered" invokes African Caribbean cultures.

"Overtown has been in the spotlight for negative things for many years ... However, this particular exhibit is a draw because more people than not, really love and respect Barack Obama as president."

ATTITUDE

Forty-four life-sized busts of Obama by emerging and established artists grace two floors of ample space at the Lyric Theater, each with the individual touch, attitude and artistic representation of the individual creator. The "mold" used for each sculpture was modeled from an original bronze commissioned by Kaplan.

"Back in 2008 I was working as an art director for an official campaign poster for the Obama campaign ... So, I saw the potential of reaching people through art and having the community at large experience the president from artists' viewpoints," Kaplan said.

He approached New Mexico-born artist Matthew Gonzales, who created the original life-size bust of the



"Barack Obama Bronze" by Matthew Gonzales.

president in bronze. To honor the president respectfully, Kaplan explained, the bust was scrutinized in how it was positioned, character, way it sits on the base, juxtaposition of the shoulders and even the look of the back of the base.

The 44 busts were shown at the first exhibition held at the Charles Wright Museum and in the current exhibit at the Lyric Theater, which was curated by the museum staff.

One piece, titled "Tarred

and Feathered" invokes African Caribbean cultures through the artist Angelbert Metoyer's use of feathers as representations of power, prestige and adornment. However, the tarring of the feathers also brings up certain communities' perception of a black president.

Artist Cory Saint Clair uses airbrush technique to celebrate past leaders and activists that made it possible for there to be a President Obama. Other artists use of paint, coins, dice, paper and words to depict him.

An interactive 3-D video, featuring powerful spoken words by noted artist Carrie Mae Weems, also elicits varying reactions as Obama takes his final bow.

HOPE

"It's perfect timing for the community to be able to embrace him one last time, take time to reflect," said Pritchett. "It's a nice nostalgic walk through his presidency ...

"One of the biggest hallmarks of his first campaign was the idea of hope. This is a community that at one point, people may have seen as hopeless ... And now with development coming in, with the Lyric Theater being reopened and providing jobs for the community, it is reiterating that hope that our organization has been a part of infusing back into the commu-

nity.

"The community feels like this exhibit is theirs, they're working in here, they're greeting people, they are proud to be able to say you don't have to go over the bridge to see something like this. It's well deserved and I hope that it gets the attention while it is here," she added.

Gonzales's original Obama sculpture is being offered for sale at \$10,000 in a limited edition of 250 bronze busts. Twenty percent of the revenue from sales will be donated to the Charles Wright Museum of African American History, which will eventually become permanent home for the exhibition.

"Visions of Our 44th President Barack Obama" will be on display at the Lyric Theater through Feb. 28.

Story and photographs by Dawn A. Davis, a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.



Caribbean bids farewell to 2016, a year of turbulence

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

Mottley, to unseat his ruling Democratic Labour Party (DLP).

Britain's decision in June to exit the 43-year-old European Union also created jitters within the Caribbean. However, Chastanet saw it as an opportunity for the region to "put the survival of our

integration into focus."

Hugh Riley, secretary general of the Caribbean Tourism Organization, said while there has been an increase in tourist arrivals in the



Manning

Caribbean when compared to 2015, but the Canadian market was a concern.

In 2016 revolutionary Cuban leader Fidel Castro died. So too did former Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Patrick Manning.

Meanwhile, Caribbean countries launched a campaign to get women to delay pregnancies for fear that

mothers could give birth to babies with microcephaly, a birth defect that causes an infant's head to be smaller than normal, if they contracted the mosquito-borne Zika virus.

- Edited from CMC.



READY OR NOT: Caribbean nationals brace for Trump as U.S. president

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

St. Kitts and Nevis Prime Minister Dr. Timothy Harris gushed with praise for Trump in anticipation of his impact on the Caribbean.

"Your stirring message of change has energized and electrified the American electorate and changed the political playbook," said Harris.

IMPACT

Rank and file Caribbean nationals, however, may have a different view. In a poll commissioned by the Royal Gazette newspaper in Bermuda, for example, at least 45 percent claimed

Trump will negatively impact the country. Only eight percent believed his impact would be positive, with 36 percent unsure. The majority of Bermudians wanted Democrat Hillary Clinton to win the election, according to the newspaper.

Doubts about Trump were not limited to Caribbean nationals. In a Gallup poll released at the beginning of 2017, only 46 percent of people in the U.S. were optimistic he could properly deal with international crisis. Less than half those polled - 47 percent - trust Trump will be smart in his use of the U.S. military. Forth-four percent think

Trump will be unable to prevent huge scandals in his administration. And, according to the poll, he had the lowest favorability rating of any president-elect.

Trump did receive support from some Caribbean nationals in the U.S., who argued his "outsider" presence in the political arena represents positive change. His record as a businessman gave them hope of a U.S. job boom.

Others were simply unhappy with the alternative. Many Haitian Americans in South Florida, for example, made it clear before the election that they felt betrayed by

Clinton, accusing her and husband, former U.S. President Bill Clinton, of dishonesty in their dealings with Haiti.

Yet most Caribbean nationals in the U.S. appear still wary of Trump. He openly backed police officers when young black men - mostly unarmed - were being regularly killed on America's streets by law enforcement. How Trump will address that, if at all, is one more issue placing them in caution mode.

"We still have to live here," said Bernard. "We'll see."



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Time to deliver, Donald Trump

Dear Mr. Trump:

Soon you will be president of the United States.

As a once-undocumented-immigrant-turned-United States-citizen and immigrant voter, I listened with shock and dismay the verbiage that spewed from your mouth at your election campaign rallies on immigrants and immigration.

I also watched with horror, the response from the many mostly white supporters in your audience at the time to the “deport them all” and “big wall plan”.

You have the entire country to run and I can only hope that you will understand that your immigration plan, as laid bare during your campaign, will not work, especially if, as you say, you are focused on boosting the U.S. economy.

I'm actually encouraged by some of the softer tones you have shown since your election on the issue, especially as it relates to deportation of criminals rather than all undocumented immigrants, and of your indication to work something out for the DREAMERS – those young immigrants who benefited from President Barack Obama's 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, initiative and who must be filled with incredible angst as they wonder if you will deport them.

POWER

Mr. Trump, I have to believe that, as a New Yorker, who has been liberal most of your life, you cannot possibly believe all you have spewed about solving the U.S. immigration crisis. Admit, it was all to fool the alt-right into winning, right?

You now have the Republican Congress in your

pocket. They have to do your bidding as you helped save their butts. It's time now to use this power to be the president no one thinks you can be and make some big waves, like Ronald Reagan. You can do what Obama did not and could not – pass a comprehensive immigration reform plan.

Sure you can keep boosting security of the borders and keeping the criminals out. You don't need to build an actual wall with a big door for that. There is technology that can secure the border too. You should also continue the policy of Obama and keep deporting criminal immigrants.

But what you must ensure you deal with are the undocumented immigrants who have no criminal records and who are hard working and want to build the U.S. They are already contributing “bigly” to the economy. As a businessman who employs immigrant workers you know that.

Ending DACA alone could cause businesses and employers to incur unnecessary turnover costs of \$3.4 billion, according to the Immigrant Legal Resource Center. The Center for Progress says kicking these recipients out of the workforce would cost the nation \$433.4 billion in lost gross domestic product over a decade.

Do the right thing as a liberal-thinking New Yorker Mr. Trump and keep the alt-right in place while pushing an immigrant plan that allows for the non-criminal undocumented immigrants within the borders now to obtain a work permit, a travel document, learn English and pay back taxes.

This is not amnesty, but economics and homeland security 101. Here's to a happy and productive New Year.

Regards,
Felicia Persaud.

Edited from News Americas.
Felicia J. Persaud is CMO at Hard Beat Communications, Inc.



FELICIA J. PERSAUD

No longer raw Lady Saw, Marion Hall is now 'on fire for Jesus'

Lady Saw was perhaps Jamaica's best known female dancehall artiste. Raw, suggestive lyrics atop heavily syncopated beats of the newest “rid-dim” led her to the top of the charts. Onstage performances were unapologetically sexual. But, Lady Saw no longer exists. Introducing “Minister” Marion Hall, claiming to be a messenger of God. *Caribbean Today* freelance writer Dawn Davis caught up her in South Florida at the recent launch of her new gospel album “When God Speaks”. Below is an edited version of that interview.

QUESTION: What motivated you to become a Christian?

ANSWER: God was my motivation. I had a few encounters with Him over the years. The first time was when I was about 19. The other one took place in Florida, maybe around five or six years ago. He has been pulling on me for a while, so it is all about God, it has nothing to do with me.

Q: You are now referred to as Minister Marion Hall. Is this a certified title or a stage name? What is your denomination?

A: I was ordained by the Lord himself. When I was in my house the 14th of December, I heard “Minister Hall, you are now my servant for you have been ministering for me on my behalf.” He spoke to me ... I will be starting Bible school shortly, but as I said I am already ordained by God. A piece of paper does not make you a minister, but I am going through the formal process now. I kept asking God if I should go to Bible school.

But, it came to me when God sent a messenger, through a total stranger, who told me her story of being saved and her intention to go to Bible school. I got my answer. It wasn't for me to figure out until he revealed it to me.

Q: Do you belong to a particular denomination?



Hall

A: The church I got saved in was Emmanuel Apostolic in Jamaica, with Bishop Everton Thomas. I got saved there, but God moved me here to the Faith Center in Fort Lauderdale. It's different from the church in Jamaica ... You come as you are ... and I have learned so much.

Q: What would you say to the people who, for years, followed you in your role as a “slackness” dancehall artiste? Are you now sorry for the role you played in influencing them?

A: No matter what you've done before, once you've given your life to God, the slate is clean. He forgives you ... One of my songs on the album says: “If you haven't been through some things you can't have a testimony”. So, it's my testimony.

... I do regret some of what I sang about, like the raw, raunchy, explicit and when I did things like throw one leg over a man's shoulder and all those crazy things. I used to pray after my performances and beg God for forgiveness. Sometimes I would even cry while at the hotel afterward ... My conscience was killing me, because I know I was a child of God. I grew up in the church.

Q: Why should your former fans believe your “conversion” now, why should they see you as genuine when in the past you promoted yourself as a “genuine” dancehall artiste?

A: It's not about them. When I first got saved I was running away from my own people.

They almost persecuted me, like Jesus ... It was so much, I didn't know how to deal with them, I didn't know who was my enemy. People said some really cruel stuff.

But, the Lord said stay in the Bible. Then I realized, I am having a relationship with God. He is the Holy Spirit. It doesn't matter who like me, what they think about me. If I should fall tomorrow and I say God forgive me, He will. I am obligated to God, not to human beings, because you can never please mankind. It's God who holds the key to heaven's door.

Q: Who are you aiming to connect with today and why should they listen?

A: I used to feed the homeless over the years, and go to the homes for children and abused women. I still do it. And if I am not in Jamaica, I still send money to make sure they are cared for.

Q: Many music artistes have come over to the gospel side of entertainment because it is big business. What makes you different, what motivates you as a gospel artiste?

A: I don't agree that it's big business. I used to make millions of dollars in Jamaica as a dancehall artiste. Now, I am not making anything like that. People will call me for shows, and a lot of people will want to use you in the name of Jesus. Some will come in the name of charity. Some think you should just walk and pick up bottle and sell. They don't realize the amount of money it takes to make an album.

Q: How much, if any, do you think your career as a “slackness” artiste contributes to any negative view of Jamaican/Caribbean entertainment, especially by influencing

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

UNDISPUTED: Jamaica's Bolt is Caribbean's 2016 'Person of the Year'

GORDON WILLIAMS

Fresh faces in prominent places emerged during 2016. Governments changed hands. The political landscape, and even the weather, became increasingly volatile.

But a predictable figure from the Caribbean remained dominant, forcing the world to stand and salute the region.

That's why Jamaica's sensational athlete Usain Bolt is the Caribbean's 2016 “Person of the Year”.

On the biggest stage, Bolt again led the region's demand

for recognition. He completed the unprecedented Olympic “triple triple” by winning the 100 meters, 200 meters and 4x100 meters relay at the 2016 Games in Brazil, repeating the feat accomplished at the 2008 and 2012.

The world noticed. Praises gushed in from astonished political leaders.

“His excellence is an example of the skill and talents which our youths possess and is a beacon of the greatness which beckons those who are willing to make the necessary sacrifices to achieve great heights,”



Bolt received IAAF's top award.

CARICOM, the Caribbean group of nations, noted in a post-Olympic statement on Bolt. Top entertainment figures and athletes from multiple sports chimed in. The IAAF, track and field's governing body, announced Bolt its male “World Athlete of the Year” last month, a vote never in question after his magnificent Olympic performance.

“It's definitely a big deal,” said Bolt, who also won the award in 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012 and 2013.

PRIDE

His accomplishments became a “big deal” for Caribbean nationals at home and in the diaspora. They basked in Bolt's stunning success. Non-Caribbean nationals asked about Bolt. What did he eat? How does he train?

For Caribbean nationals, especially some in the United States who often feel marginalized, it was their chance to

shout and shine. Bolt's victories were their victories. One of their own was undisputed world's best.

Several CARICOM nations, including Jamaica, Haiti and Turks and Caicos Islands, elected new leaders. Other athletes from the region won 2016 Olympic gold, including Jamaica's Elaine Thompson and Omar McLeod, Shaunae Miller of The Bahamas, and Monica Puig from Puerto Rico.

The Caribbean's male and female cricket teams both tri-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

FOOD FETISH: The glorious indulgence of gluttony

Let's eat. Aren't those great words to hear, especially if you conveniently happen to visit some friends on a Sunday evening, say around dinner time?

Most people don't dine formally anymore. What they do is hope for a wedding invitation or a funeral, where they know that food will be aplenty.

So much has been said about food, and yet we hardly hear about the sin of gluttony. Imagine serving



**TONY
ROBINSON**



eternity in Hell for eating too much?

Many - fat, slim, short, tall, rich or poor - are besotted with food. Don't linger too

long at the buffet line, or you'll be told to hurry up or run the risk of being trampled by the herd of wildebeest behind you, eager to eat all

they can.

Has anyone heard the term, "craven choke puppy?" We love to eat and we eat everything. If it moves, we'll eat it. People even took to eating crocodile tails, until the authorities tried to put a stop to it. I even heard that mon-goose was on the menu of some.

CURRY DOWN

Look how Caribbean people love fish head? It's probably the best part of the meal. As for curry goat, our love for it is legendary, and yet many foreigners balk at the idea of eating goat. Jamaicans love goat so much that now we have "invented" curry goat patties, which are incredibly

delicious.

In foreign lands, people have all sorts of food idiosyncrasies. Not so our people. We eat all that we can get. Most of the persons I know who are vegetarians or vegans are always sickly. Every virus, every cold, every flu, every chick, zik and bik V they catch it.

As for dieting and fasting, those never really caught on with us, except for a few uptown people. If you notice, it's always the fattest people who are always carping about dieting. But what it all boils down to is fine dining.

seido1@hotmail.com



No longer raw Lady Saw, Marion Hall is now 'on fire for Jesus'

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

other artistes who have followed your path?

A: I know Lady Saw influenced people like Lil Kim, Foxy Brown, even Rihanna. I was known internationally and I inspired many women who have major names now ... not that I'm happy about my former raunchy side.

But ... that was the only way to get my mother and sisters out of the ghetto. I tried singing straight love songs and so on, but nobody paid me any mind. So, when I saw the guys doing the slackness I tried it and got paid for it. It's not that I wanted to do it. I started out clean.

So, me trying to take care of my family led me to being X-rated to be seen. I became famous or else I would be just another girl singer.

Q: How can you use your faith and celebrity status to make a positive impact on Jamaican society as it grapples with increasing violence?

A: I haven't been in Jamaica for a while. Since I got saved I've been hidden in a corner. Even Jesus himself was missing for a time when he was studying. Like that, the Lord has been teaching me, grooming me.

Now, I am ready. I've been on many stages since I

got saved and have seen many people get into the spirit when I'm performing. I may end up in Jamaica for one show. I'm looking for the right platform. Sometimes I amaze myself at what God does through me when I am onstage. I am anointed and I want to reach the people.

Q: Are religious groups in Jamaica doing enough to stem the tide of violence?

A: My pastor preaches that sometimes religion will mess you up. It's just about people on a whole playing their part and doing good. But, a lot of churches do things for people that are less fortunate.

Q: Will we see Minister Marion Hall leading her own congregation in the future?

A: I am hoping to get a church, but it won't be just a church. I plan to have canteens to feed the homeless. I want to have small workshops for young men to teach them useful skills like furniture making. I want to educate young and abused women, save them.

My church should be a home where I can put up these women. I used to put them up in my home, hide them from danger. So, it's about doing good deeds.

Q: What is the one message you want your audience to take away from this interview?

A: I am so honored to be a part of His flock. I felt like I was one of the sheep that drifted from the fold, but God didn't let go of me.

I can't find words to tell you how happy I am in Him. My God is more than awesome, more than amazing. He is my everything. And, if I had known how sweet it is, that love, that comfort within, I would have accepted Him a long time ago. I am on fire for Jesus.

Photographs for the cover and story by Dawn A. Davis.



UNDISPUTED: Jamaica's Bolt is Caribbean's 2016 'Person of the Year'

umphed the Twenty20 World Cup. The male Under-19s won as well. Barbadian entertainer Rihanna blossomed, with her 2016 album "Anti" soaked with Caribbean flavor, especially the chart-topping single "Work". St. Lucia's Nobel Prize-winning writer Derek Walcott was knighted by Britain's queen.

Yet no Caribbean personality or entity commanded the world stage better than Bolt in 2016. His dazzling show in Brazil surpassed all in terms of global recognition.

TRANSCENDING

It transcended the sports arena and captured global imagination. Children and adults of varying nationalities and cultures copied his signature victory pose. The JFK International Airport in New York shut down temporarily after deafening cheers erupted following Bolt's victory in the Olympic 100 meters. "Watch parties" sprung up and television audiences exploded worldwide whenever Bolt took the track in Brazil. Social media's

buzz reached new levels.

"I Am Bolt", a documentary movie about the star's life, was released worldwide last month. Bolt's image is selling numerous products, including sports gear, automobiles and beverages, in so many countries, it's hard to keep track. It also sold many on the Caribbean.

According to Jamaican-born Donovan Bailey, who won an Olympic gold medal in 1996, Bolt has moved to a "place where no human has ever been."

Bolt is pushing past 30. He's already announced his retirement from the track after the 2017 IAAF World Championships in Athletics in England. Individual world records may now be beyond him. But in 2016, especially during a glorious summer, Bolt lifted the Caribbean brand to a pedestal no other person from the region could come close to claiming.

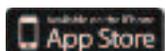
A case for Rihanna as 'Person of the Year' is made on page ...



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Barbadian mega star Rihanna shines diamond bright in 2016

The year 2016 was amazing for Barbadian-born singer-turned-entrepreneur-actress Rihanna. Below are some of her accomplishments:

Robyn Rihanna Fenty proved in 2016 that her roots remain important. As she received the "Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award" at the Video Music Awards at Madison Square Garden in New York City in August,

According to Rolling Stone magazine journalist Brittany Spanos: Rihanna is one of only three "black women" who "radicalized Pop in 2016."

Rihanna paid tribute to the country of her birth and the Caribbean region as a whole, noting the award was for them.

Her "Work", a collaboration single with rapper Drake for her eighth studio album "Anti" (2016), pays tribute to the dancehall and reggae

rhythms of the Caribbean and uses West Indian patois and creole unabashedly in the song, despite the critics calling it "gibberish."

"Work" became the first dancehall song to top the Billboard Hot 100 chart since Sean Paul's "Temperature" (2006). As of last month it had sold 1.7 million copies in the United States.

"Work" again put dancehall music center on the global stage. The collaboration was definitely Caribbean, with the producer being long-time Drake ally Boi-1da, a product of Kingston, Jamaica. The hit number harkened back somewhat to RiRi's breakout single "Pon De Replay".

CHARITY

Rihanna in 2016 also helped the youth in her region though the foundation named in honor of her grandparents, the Clara Lionel Foundation, she launched and awarded scholarships to several Caribbean students. Among the recipients was Destini

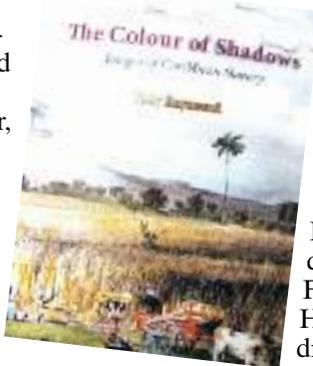
'Colour of Shadows' offers images of Caribbean scars

- **TITLE: THE COLOUR OF SHADOWS: IMAGES OF CARIBBEAN SLAVERY**
- **AUTHOR: JUDY RAYMOND**
- **PUBLISHER: CARIBBEAN STUDIES PRESS**
- **REVIEWED BY: DAWN A. DAVIS**

Trinidadian journalist and scholar Judy Raymond offers a snapshot of life as a slave in the Caribbean during the 19th century.

With documentary images from Richard Bridgens, an Englishman who lived in Trinidad during the period and who was a slave owner, "The Colour of Shadows: Images of Caribbean Slavery" unearths details in vivid hues.

Sprinkled with images of plantation life highlighting the drudgery of harvesting and processing sugar cane, African religious ceremonies and stolen moments of respite, the book outlines how slavery shaped the Caribbean island, much like other islands that make up the region. Contemporary Trinidadian



society still shows remnants of separate societies and classism that can perhaps be attributed to the colonial slave experience. Jamaica and Guyana are other examples.

Writes Raymond: "Slavery has left behind a deeply scarred society and yet few people can identify those scars, except lingering prejudice and mistrust, and economic disadvantages suffered by black people".

NO SUGAR COAT

Raymond does not sugar coat the experience. Bridgens' drawings was her starting point in identifying the development of the island's social attitudes toward the African, who literally built its economy that enriched the English plantocracy.

Perhaps one of the most disturbing images is Figure 3, labeled "Negro Heads..." Among the drawings are male and female African slaves with body tattoos (probably tribal markings), a man with a metal facial mask and a woman with a metal collar. Raymond explains these implements were used as punishment for intoxication and dirt-eating. Bodily scarring were often

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)

... Leads Caribbean's Grammy charge

Barbadian pop star Rihanna will again lead the Caribbean's bid for Grammy Awards this year.

Rihanna has secured eight nominations, same as Drake and Kanye West. Only Beyonce earned more with nine.

The winners of the 59th Grammy Awards will be announced on Feb. 12.

Rihanna, who has already won eight Grammys, has been nominated for "Record Of The Year" with "Work", which features Drake. Challengers in that category include Adele's "Hello", Beyonce's "Formation", Lukas Graham's "7 Years" and "Stressed Out" by Twenty One Pilots.

Her collaboration with



Rihanna

Drake on "Work" also earned a nomination in the "Best Pop Duo/Group Performance" category. For "Needed Me", the Barbadian was nominated for "Best R&B Performance".

Rihanna's "Kiss It Better", co-written by her, Jeff Bhasker, John-Nathan Glass and Natalia Noemi, is among

nominees for "Best R&B Song".

For "Best Urban Contemporary Album", Rihanna's "Anti" earned a nomination and her collaboration with West on "Famous" was chosen in the "Best Rap/Sung Performance". The cut was also nominated for "Best Rap Song".

Ziggy Marley was again nominated for "Best Reggae Album" with his self-titled work. That category also included nominations for "Sly & Robbie Presents ... Reggae For Her", "Rose Petals" by J Boog, "Everlasting" by Raging Fyah, Rebelution's "Falling Into Place" and "Soja: Live In Virginia" by Soja.

✱

Gibbs to who received a scholarship to study genetics at Cornell University. The organization announced it plans to award several people from the Caribbean each year with scholarships ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000, with the amount being based on the student's financial need.

According to Rolling Stone magazine journalist Brittany Spanos: Rihanna is one of only three "black women" who "radicalized Pop in 2016." She recently scored her 21st top five single, tying Elvis Presley's chart record. "Anti" sold over 591,000 rec-

ognized copies in the U.S. and was the third most streamed album of 2016. It also won the award for "Favorite Soul/R&B Album" at the 2016 American Music Awards.

In 2016, Rihanna, 28, turned her social media accounts largely into a sales tool to promote her product endorsement deals with Dior, Puma, Samsung, Stance and Manolo. She was also on set acting, with roles in "Star Trek Beyond", "Bates Motel Season 5" and "Ocean's 8", which hits theaters in June.

Rihanna celebrated her country's 50th anniversary of

Independence on Nov. 30, joining Britain's Prince Harry and the prime minister of Barbados to sing the country's national anthem at the Golden Anniversary Spectacular Mega Concert. She also sent a message on HIV testing on Dec. 1 with a public test alongside the prince.

Edited from News Americas, which named Rihanna its "Person of the Year" for 2016.



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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



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TOP OF THE WORLD



The Caribbean finished one-two at last month's "Miss World" contest. Miss Puerto Rico Stephanie Del Valle, center, was crowned the 66th Miss World. Yaritza Miguelina Reyes Ramirez, left, of the Dominican Republic, was first runner-up. Indonesia's Natasha Manuela was second runner-up.

Guyanese-born 'To Sir With Love' author dies at 104

The Guyanese-born author who wrote the autobiographical novel "To Sir, With Love", which was made into a 1967 feature film starring Bahamascene actor Sidney Poitier and singer Lulu, died last month at age 104.

E. R. Braithwaite, born Edward Ricardo Braithwaite, died in Rockville, Maryland.

The author, teacher and diplomat was born in then

British Guiana on June 27, 1912. He attended Queen's College high school in pre-Independent Guyana and then the City College of New York in 1940.

During World War II, he joined the Royal Air Force as a pilot and later attended the University of Cambridge, earning a bachelor's degree and a doctorate in physics.

After the war, Braithwaite

could not find work in his field and, disillusioned, reluctantly took up a job as a school teacher in the East End of London. "To Sir, With Love", written in 1959, was based on his experiences there. It won an Anisfield-Wolf Book Award and was made into the famous 1967 film.

- Edited from *News Americas*.



'Miss Lou' reading festival

Reading workshops for students and emerging writers will be among the highlights at the 10th annual Louise Bennett-Coverley Reading Festival next month in South Florida.

The festival, scheduled for Feb. 3-4 at the Broward College Library, will be accompanied by the launch of the Louise Bennett-Coverley Heritage Council (Florida) Inc., its new umbrella organization, which is aiming to facilitate scholarships at the Edna Manley College in Jamaica and Broward College in Florida.

According to organizers, this year's festival celebrates a



Miss Lou

decade of honoring the late Bennett-Coverley, best known as "Miss Lou", a Jamaican cultural icon. On Feb. 3, there will be a panel discussion, with the proposed topic "Is Anansi Meck It - Jack Mandora me no choose none - Anancy & Miss Lou".

A cultural extravaganza is scheduled for the following day. Scheduled participants include comedian Owen "Blakka" Ellis, actor and media personality Fae Ellington, poet, actor and musician Mutabaruka, and storyteller Amina Blackwood-Meeks.

The Broward College Library is located at 7300 Pines Blvd., Pembroke Pines. For more information, call 954-201-8834 or 305-613-4365.



'Colour of Shadows' offers images of Caribbean scars

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

used to identify runaway slaves.

Studied closely, a drawing titled "Sunday Morning in the Country", featuring a slave woman and man meeting on the street, speaks volumes. The woman wears a necklace with a cross. The Christian conversion of African slaves was part of the slavery experience and this image and others could be the basis for another piece of research by Raymond on how Christianity was used as a tool of oppression.

The drawing of an African religious ceremony, dubbed "Negro Superstition", deliberately maligns the practice as primitive and offensive, subconsciously branding Africans as heathens needing Christianity. Bridgens's own commentary, that accompanies his drawings, underscore the sentiment of the day.

Bridgens's images also highlight the continuing contradictions of slavery. According to Raymond, the "Protector of Slaves Office" was set up in the Trinidad colony to advocate for their rights.

Apparently to protect slaves from illegal beatings and torture, the image shows slaves waiting in line to have their illegal wounds inspected by their "protectors". Also in the image are iron masks, collars and other implements of torture said to be under the protector's control. Raymond asks: "Why is the office of a man tasked with protecting the defenceless also mandated to regulate instruments of torture?"

EASY READ

Raymond also points out

that, unlike islands like Jamaica and Haiti, slaves in Trinidad did not rebel or fight for their rights en masse.

Perhaps the island's geological formation did not allow it; there was no place to hide. It was not until the official abolition of slavery in the British colonies in 1834 that African slaves started to "breathe", although they were indentured until 1838.

Only 190 pages, this book is packed with painstaking detail, yet Raymond presents it in easy-to-understand language. We learn about the size of the plantation homes, the height of the front doors, the number of slaves on the plantation, details of slave ships.

What also makes this book a pleasure is the writer's use of metaphor and poetic rhythm to describe the sometimes harrowing scenes of daily life: "Slavery was a blood-red thread woven thick and deep through the fabric of English life ... Enslaved workers slept the sleep of exhaustion, stretched out on mattresses of dried cane leaves spread over beds of planks or heaped on a beaten earthen floor—even when they were not working, they couldn't escape the cane".

Raymond tells us that Bridgens was also a civil servant, an architectural and furniture designer. But, it is his drawings of slavery in the 19th century Caribbean context that leaves a lasting impression - good or bad.

Dawn A. Davis is a freelance writer for *Caribbean Today*.



Spring Health



The April issue of *Caribbean Today* will feature a comprehensive examination of how the healthcare industry serves the Caribbean community.

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~ A CARIBBEAN TODAY SPECIAL FEATURE

Deerfield Beach to host multiple MLK events

Multiple events, stretched over four days this month, will be used to pay homage to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the City of Deerfield Beach, Florida.

The scheduled events, to be staged between Jan. 13 and 16 at Oveta McKeithen Recreational Complex, 445 S.W. 2nd St., will include a carnival, games and live entertainment. It concludes on the final day with an awards ceremony and parade, which will begin at 10 a.m.

On Jan. 15, from 5 p.m. to

7 p.m., the choir competition will be held.

The schedule for other entertainment events is as follows:

Jan. 13, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Randy Corinthian and the Jazz Quartet

Jan. 14, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Quinton McCleod

Jan. 16, noon - MLK Jr. Ceremony at the Leo Robb Gymnasium, Oveta McKeithen Recreational Complex.



Tampa stages parade Jan. 16

Caribbean entertainment is scheduled to be part of the 28th annual City of Tampa's Dr. Martin Luther King Day Parade will be held on Jan. 16 in Florida.

The parade will take a two-mile route through East Tampa, beginning at Cuscaden Park and ending at Middleton High School.

It is family friendly and

offers an opportunity for businesses, social and community groups in Tampa to be recognized, while supporting a common cause.

Floats, bands, cars, trucks, motorcycle, equestrian and walking units are expected to be on show.

Cuscaden Park is located at 2900 N. 15th St.



Birthday party at Eastpoint

The community of Eastpoint, Florida will host a Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration from **8:20 a.m. to 10 a.m. Jan. 17.**

The theme of the event, to be staged at the Franklin County School (FCS), 1250 Highway 98, is "You Can Achieve It".

Scheduled speakers are

Silvester Dawson, marshal of the Supreme Court of Florida; and R. Damien Davis, former FCS honor student, class of 2010 president and former FCS Band drum major.

For more information, contact Dolores Croom at dolores-room64@gmail.com.



College scholarships open in black art, essay contests

Jan. 20 is the deadline for entries to be submitted for "2017 Black History Month" art and essay contests open to students in kindergarten through grade 12 in Florida.

Governor Rick Scott and First Lady Ann Scott recently extended the invitation to participate. Three students will each earn a four-year Florida College Plan scholarship based on the results of the contests.

Students, parents, teachers and principals have also been invited to nominate full-time educators in elementary, middle and high schools for the Black History Month Excellence in Education Award.

"Black History Month is a time to honor African Americans who have had an impact on Florida's history," Governor Scott said in a recent

press release announcing the contests.

"I hope all Florida students take this opportunity to learn about the many influential African American Floridians who have shaped the Sunshine State into the best place in the nation to get a great education and job."

The theme for this year's essay and art contests is: "A recognition of the role of African Americans in shaping Florida today". Students are asked to share how African American Floridians have impacted the state's history and culture.

Information about the contests and Florida's Black History Month is available on Florida's Black History Month website

www.FloridaBlackHistory.com



'AGONY' OF DEFEAT



- Edited from photograph by Pete Souza/The White House

United States President Barack Obama, with First Lady Michelle Obama, third left, reacts to losing at the game Rock Paper Scissors during last year's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service event at Leckie Elementary School in Washington, D.C. Obama leaves the White House on Jan. 20.

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TOURISM/TRAVEL



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Norwegian cruises set sail for Cuba in March

Norwegian recently announced it has received approval from the government of the Cuba to operate cruise service to the Caribbean island from the United States beginning March.

All three of the company's brands - Norwegian Cruise Line, Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises - will offer travelers from the U.S. the opportunity to visit Cuba.

The company's first cruise to Cuba will sail from PortMiami on Oceania Cruises' Marina on Mar. 7, with select Caribbean itineraries featuring calls on Havana. Seven Seas Mariner, of the Regent Seven Seas Cruises fleet, is scheduled to call on Havana during two cruises in April. Norwegian Sky will also offer a selection of four-day voyages that will overnight in Havana starting in May.



NCL bound for Cuba.

"This is truly a dream come true for me, and I cannot wait for our loyal guests to experience the sights and sounds of my hometown of Havana and get to know its rich culture and its warm and welcoming residents," Cuban American Frank Del Rio, president and chief executive officer of Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd., noted in a recent press release.

Edited from Globe Newswire.

Tourism key to U.S./Caribbean relations ~ CHTA

CASTRIES, St. Lucia - President of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) Karolin Troubetzkoy says the Caribbean must ensure issues of critical socioeconomic importance are firmly addressed with the United States Congress and the incoming administration.

Troubetzkoy made the comment during her presentation on the impact on the tourism industry of de-risking and correspondent-banking relationships at the just ended 40th Annual Conference on the Caribbean and Central America in Miami, Florida.

The conference was produced by the Caribbean-Central American Action (CCAA) organization.

Underscoring the common interests between the Caribbean and the U.S. and the critical importance of

tourism to the region's socioeconomic development and stability, Troubetzkoy called for a new focus by the region's governments and private sector in support of recent legislation aimed at strengthening U.S. relations with Caribbean countries.



Troubetzkoy

H.R. 4939, introduced by Congressman Eliot L. Engel with Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, would require the U.S. secretary of state and the administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to submit to Congress a multi-year strategy focused on enhancing engagement with the countries of the Caribbean.

The draft legislation, which emphasizes energy security, countering violence, expanded diplomacy, engagement with the private sector, and other priority areas, sets the stage for a new U.S.-Caribbean relationship, declared Troubetzkoy, who met with Engel during the conference.

- Edited from CMC.



SUPPORT

CHTA has joined CCAA in urging the U.S. Senate to adopt the U.S.-Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act of 2016 (H.R. 4939), which has already received bipartisan support in the House of Representatives, and last month moved out of Senate Committee for consideration now by the full Senate.

Caribbean tourism partners to meet in The Bahamas

The Caribbean Travel Marketplace, the region's largest promotional event, will be held Jan. 31 to Feb. 2 at Atlantis Paradise Island in The Bahamas.

Produced by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), in collaboration with The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, The Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association, the Nassau/Paradise Island Promotion Board and the Paradise Island Tourism Development Association, the event is scheduled to feature two days of business meetings that match buyers and suppliers through pre-scheduled appointments.

"These business appointments set the tone for meetings, groups and vacation packaging for the entire year,"

Frank Comito, CHTA's director general and chief executive officer of the regional association, explained in a recent press release promoting the event.

He said Caribbean tourism stakeholders will meet face-to-face with wholesalers from around the world selling Caribbean vacation travel.

Comito said the one-on-one pre-scheduled appointments, which take place in one location within a 48-hour period, drive "an incredible amount of business to the region."

The marketplace is usually attended by tour operators,



Caribbean Travel Marketplace features two days of business. - Photograph contributed

wholesalers and online travel agents. CHTA has added a Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions industry component to the event.



2016: Impressive, but challenging year for Caribbean

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados - Hugh Riley, secretary general of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), says 2016 was an impressive but challenging year for the industry in the region.

Riley pointed to an

increase in tourist arrivals when compared to 2015, which was a record year. He said tourist arrivals have been fueled by strong performances in Europe - mainly the United Kingdom and Germany - and from the United States.

"And we are poised to meet the 30 million arrivals target set two years ago at our State of the Tourism Industry Conference in the United States Virgin Islands," he said.

However, Riley said amidst the year's impressive achievements, the Canadian market was a concern.

"Canada delivered declining numbers ... sparked by the weakening of the Canadian dollar," he explained.

Riley said 2016 was dubbed "The Year of Romance in the Caribbean" and this was a success story. He called 2017 the "Year of Adventure in the Caribbean".

- Edited from CMC.



Giuseppe Fuenmayor, Caracas XI 2013

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~ A CARIBBEAN TODAY SPECIAL FEATURE

Haiti marks 214th anniversary of Independence

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti – Haiti marked the 214th anniversary of its political Independence acknowledging that, after so many years, “we are still unable to feed our people, educate our children, provide care health care to our compatriots and to rebuild the infrastructure necessary for the economic development of our country”.

In his address to mark the anniversary on Jan. 1, interim President Jocelerme Privert said Haiti has a historic place in the shared struggle for Independence in the Western Hemisphere.

“In spite of the accidents of our history which brought us humiliations, the date of 1st January carries for us a particular density of emotions and feelings, through the asperities of the path traveled,” said Privert.

“January 1st find us each year to this pilgrimage to the heart of the spirit in the authentic time of Gonaives the pole of all the patriotic convergences where the ancestors for obvious reasons have chosen to lay the foundation stone of the national edifice.”

Privert acknowledged that for 213 years “our country has faced a series of challenges and conflicts which should no longer frighten the descendants of 1804.

“... The night would be long and the day too short for a complete declination of our needs. We have already tried a



Privert

wide range of forms of government and yet we have tumbled over the decades of the status of Pearl of the Antilles to the shameful label of the poorest country of the Americas,” he added.

RESPONSIBILITY

Privert, who came into office after President Michel Martelly left last February without an elected successor, said that he did not intend to give lessons to anyone on how “we are all responsible, we are obliged to agree, to do our mea culpa so that we move forward.

“We are all Haitian, we must accept with humility that every Haitian has his contribution to bring for the search for the solution,” he said. “We must create a better tomorrow for all our children.

“... Today I ask the Haitian people to sit together. Let us analyze, agree on what is good for the country,

because 2017 is the year when the country has to take a leadership,” he said, adding “for the crisis to end, for the instability to end, we have to be tolerant, we have the ability to listen to the other, to sit together, we can have different positions, but we can find good solutions for the country.”

He acknowledged that it would be a difficult task “to forgive, but we must remember that without forgiveness there would not have been the Archaie Congress leading to the proclamation of Independence.

“Today we are in a delicate situation, the fathers of the nation looks at us, they reproach us, they rebuke us because today, after 213 years of independence we have foreign soldiers on our territory, because the conflicts have reached us and we cannot sit together to manage them.

“... On the eve of handing over power to an elected president my concerns about the future of the country are big, but I know that coming out of the tunnel of poverty and instability is within the reach of citizens who cultivate in the highest degree the love of the common and immortal homeland,” he added.

- Edited from CMC.

**Moise is officially president**

Haiti will finally have a new president when Jovenel Moise is officially sworn in next month.

Moise won the Nov. 20 election, but had to survive a vote re-count by an electoral tribunal in Haiti to confirm his victory after opponents challenged the original results. According to the council, which issued its views earlier this month, the judges ruled there was no massive election day voter fraud. It did, however, identify irregularities after analyzing 12 percent of the ballots.

Moise, a 48-year-old businessman, is scheduled to be sworn in on Feb. 7.



Moise

‘PROGRESS’

In an address to the nation on Jan. 3, hours after the Electoral Court had dismissed the appeal by three political parties challenging the outcome of the presidential election, Moise said “tonight we celebrate a beautiful page of history.

“You have chosen the path of progress, the path of democracy, political stability, the path of national production, the path of development,” he said. “It means the path of a better life for each Haitian.”

Moise defeated 26 challengers in November, winning over 55 percent of the votes. The margin of victory eliminated the possibility of a runoff. Voter turnout was 21 percent of the electorate.

Since Feb. 2016, Haiti has been led by interim President Jocelerme Privert.

**U.S., Venezuela send congrats**

The United States and Venezuela sent congratulatory messages to Haiti on its Independence, with Washington noting that nearly a million people in the U.S. are of Haitian ancestry.

“Our shared pride in that heritage resulted this year in the designation of Little Haiti as an official neighborhood of Miami, Florida,” U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry noted.

“The vibrancy of Little Haiti is a symbol of the community’s advocacy for historic preservation and a testament

to its incorporation into the fabric of U.S. culture and society.

“As Haiti rebuilds from the impact of Hurricane Matthew in the country’s southwest, the United States reaffirms its unwavering friendship for the people of Haiti. We view 2017 as an opportunity to continue to work together in support of the full renewal of Haiti’s democratic institutions and the seating of a new president elected by the Haitian people.”

**D.C. art exhibit captures Independence revolution**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Haitian Revolution has been captured in a new exhibit currently on display in the United States capital.

“To Haiti Let Us Go” features 15 seen silkscreen prints about Toussaint L’Ouverture, the Haitian ex-slave turned

general who led a revolution that ultimately wrested the Caribbean nation from French control and ended slavery.

The exhibit is mounted at the Phillips

Collection. It shows works from late African American painter Jacob Lawrence, who created the series between 1986 and 1997. It’s based on an earlier series of paintings Lawrence executed on the same topic in the 1930s, said Elsa Smithgall, the museum’s curator.

The exhibit closes April 23.

L’Ouverture was born into slavery in 1743 in Haiti. He led a massive slave insurrection on the island against white planters in 1791. Three years later, the French



One of Lawrence’s prints.

National Convention abolished slavery in France and in all of its colonies. But Napoleon Bonaparte sent troops to invade Haiti the next year in a failed attempt to restore French control and slavery to the country. The Haitian Revolution persisted until after the Haitians defeated Napoleon’s army at the Battle of Vertieres in 1803. The following year, Haiti became an independent state.

- Edited from CMC.



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LINKAGES: Caribbean benefits from U.S.-funded anti-HIV project

A new project, aimed at reducing the spread of HIV and improving health care for key populations most at risk of and already living with HIV in select Caribbean countries, was launched last month.

The LINKAGES Project – Linkages across the Continuum of HIV Services for Key Populations Affected by HIV – focuses on at-risk populations in The Bahamas, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname. It is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS



Relief (PEPFAR).

LINKAGES, a five-year cooperative agreement, is the largest global project dedicated to key populations. The project is led by FHI 360, in partnership with IntraHealth International, Pact, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It was

launched in Trinidad and Tobago in collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Health, and the Family Planning Association.

'PASSION'

"LINKAGES is about passion, partnership and re-thinking the way we address HIV, with the end goal that all members of key populations in the Caribbean and globally will have access to comprehensive health care services and enjoy a high quality of life," said Hally Mahler, LINKAGES director, Washington D.C.

LINKAGES partners with governments, communities and key populations in an effort to provide support and reduce HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

A U.S. Embassy statement in T&T noted that through funding and technical

support, LINKAGES will share tools and strategies drawn from decades of global experience and adapted to local needs and conditions.

- Edited from CMC.



New Year's resolutions to boost immunity

This New Year, focus on supporting a strong immune system for a happy and healthy 2017.

"Building a strong immune system can improve and even extend your life," says Dr. Larry Robinson, vice president of Scientific Affairs, Embria Health Sciences, a manufacturer of ingredients that support wellness and vitality.

For a healthier year, Robinson and the experts at Embria are encouraging people to toast to these great health and wellness tips:

Be social - It's easy to hole-up during these cold winter days, but it's not good for your health or immune system. Research shows that people that have more human interactions are better at combating cold weather challenges. So make sure to chat with your co-workers during the day and make plans with your friends after work. Not only will this boost your immunity, but social activities may also



Exercise helps.

Photograph(c) luckybusiness - Fotolia.com

help reduce stress and depression.

Supplement - While a well-balanced diet of fruits, vegetables and whole grains can support good health, getting the proper vitamins and nutrients in sufficient quantities every day can prove challenging. Consider resolving to offer your immune system targeted

support with a supplement designed to boost healthy immune function.

Rest and relaxation - Rest and relaxation can go a long way toward supporting good health. Ongoing sleep deficiency is linked to a number of major health problems and can impair the way your immune system responds, according to the National Institutes of Health. What's more, too much stress can compromise immune response.

So whether it's spending time with friends, going to yoga class or taking a bath, make sure your schedule includes time for both sleep and for stress-reducing activities.

- Edited from StatePoint.



Give thanks for a Caribbean salad

MINNA LAFORTUNE

Thanksgiving Day may have passed, but there's always time for a great meal you can share with friends with family.

The Caribbean flavors I am thinking of incorporate are jerk seasoning, mango/pineapple and coconut cocktails. It's my recipe for a Caribbean salad.

Ingredients

- 1 lb. beets (roasted and sliced)
- 2 cups cubed mango
- 1 cup pineapple (cubed)
- 2 bunches of watercress
- 1/2 lb goat feta cheese
- 1 small red onion (minced)

- 1/2 cup of cranberry raisins
- 1 oz. olive oil
- 1 oz. cider vinegar

Method

Roast and slice beets. Wash and cut the watercress in small pieces. Combine all the ingredients, except the oil, vinegar and goat feta cheese.

Allow the mixture to sit in the refrigerator for at least two hours. Just before serving, add the oil and vinegar and gently mix in the salad.

Serve each guest separately on individual salad plates. Break the goat feta cheese in small pieces.

Sprinkle the pieces over each individual's salad.



Caribbean Salad

Edited from News Americas. Minna LaFortune is a Caribbean caterer and also president of the Society for the Advancement of the Caribbean Diaspora.



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MLS expansion opens doors wider for Caribbean soccer players

~ But quality must improve or risk shut out

GORDON WILLIAMS

The window of opportunity Major League Soccer's (MLS) expansion promises Caribbean players could close rapidly if the region's talent doesn't improve dramatically.

When MLS 2017 kicks off in March, two new teams will join, bringing the total to 22. At least six more could be added in later seasons. Expansion has given rise to hope of increased chances for Caribbean players to join North America's top professional league.

Sources familiar with MLS agreed additional clubs is an indication of the league's growing wealth. There's more money available to pay players. But players from the Caribbean, widely viewed as rough talent at a cheaper price, could find opportunities drying up as clubs are able to afford more seasoned professionals, especially those with established reputations, who could immediately boost revenues through ticket and memorabilia sales.

"The expansion opens a few more doors for players in general; the player pool increases," explained Ryan Mattis, a Jamaican-born player agent based in the United States.

"But because there is a big diversity of MLS players, it now becomes more difficult (for the Caribbean player). Clubs have more money to spend so now they will be looking to broaden the search to other regions."

DILEMMA

To compound the dilemma for those born in the Caribbean, most are counted as foreign players. MLS rules limit the number of club roster spots for players not citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. or Canada.

In addition, there is a perception that Caribbean players have not lived up to on-the-field expectations in recent years. At least 20 Caribbean-born players, spread over 11 teams, were on MLS rosters at the end of the 2016 season. Several have been key contrib-



Blake is one Caribbean player who has made an impact.

utors to clubs' success over the years, including helping teams win the MLS championship. The two teams in last month's MLS final featured rosters with at least three Caribbean-born players.

But some recent high profile selections in the MLS SuperDraft have had limited impact. In 2014, for example, three Caribbean players were chosen in the top 10. Only Jamaican Andre Blake has played regularly. In 2015, a top three pick from the Caribbean failed to cement a first team place with his MLS club. Last year, a top five pick saw limited action in the league.

The general failure of Caribbean national teams, with only Trinidad and Tobago still with a chance to qualify for World Cup 2018, has also amplified doubts.

"The (Caribbean) player has dropped," admitted Damani Ralph, another Jamaican-born, U.S.-based agent.

BAD RETURNS

Ralph acknowledged clubs have been disappointed after investing heavily in some Caribbean players.

"It's a concern," he said. "Youngsters are just not progressing."

Overall, the technical ability, athleticism and speed of the Caribbean player are coveted. Most of the blame for under-performance is linked to sub-standard soccer development in

the region, which leaves players behind in areas such as tactical awareness and physical fitness.

"I think (Caribbean players) are falling down due to the lack of preparation of the players," Ralph said. "It's the attitude. That's where we are failing in the Caribbean."

Caribbean players, however, are still being recruited. Expansion club Atlanta United F.C., for example, made T&T's Kenwyne Jones a marquee signing for its first season in 2017. In recent years, the league has expanded its annual combine, a trial mainly for players coming out of U.S. colleges, to include the Caribbean. There are no guaranteed places for players from the region even as MLS grows, however, unless they can step up their game.

"The Caribbean is just a piece of the market," said Ralph. "So MLS is growing, so

the talent out of the Caribbean must keep pace."

West Indies cricketers may play Pakistan in Florida

Florida could again host the West Indies if plans for the Caribbean's cricket team to play Pakistan in late March can be finalized.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) is willing to play two Twenty20 internationals in Pakistan between Mar. 11 and 15, once adequate security could be guaranteed. If that tour goes ahead, the PCB would confirm a WICB request for the two countries to play two T20 games in Florida later in the month.

The West Indies recently played a full series of three T20s, three one-day internationals and three Test matches against Pakistan, but all games

were scheduled in the United Arab Emirates.

The PCB had requested the limited overs games be played in Pakistan, but the move was turned down by the WICB.

No major Test-playing nation has toured Pakistan since 2009 after a bus carrying the Sri Lankan Test team was attacked by militants. Several players were injured and police officers killed.

The security situation has remained volatile. Last March, a suicide blast killed 69 people and injured over 300 people in Lahore, while two months ago, an explosion in south-western Pakistan killed nearly 50 people.

SPORT BRIEFS

New date for U.S. v. T&T soccer qualifier

The United States Soccer Federation has announced June 8 as the new date for its 2018 FIFA World Cup qualifying match against Trinidad and Tobago, a day earlier than previously scheduled.

Jamaica's Atkinson wins world swimming title

South Florida-based Jamaican Alia Atkinson won the gold medal in the 100 meters breaststroke at the recent Short Course World Swimming Championships. Atkinson also earned silver in the 50M breaststroke and bronze in the 100M individual medley.

MLS scouts young Caribbean soccer talent

Young Caribbean soccer players hoping to make it to the profession-

al level in North America will get their chance when they are invited to the Major League Soccer Combine Jan. 7-12 in the United States.

Adams is new West Indies director of cricket. Former West Indies captain Jimmy Adams has been named the region's new director of cricket. He replaces Englishman Richard Pybus.

Caribbean nations target U-17 World Cup

Several CARICOM countries are set to compete in the final round of qualifiers for soccer's Under-17 World Cup beginning in April.

Among the 12 finalists for the CONCACAF Championship are Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica and Suriname. The other teams are United States, Canada, Curacao, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Costa Rica and

host Panama.

Bolt wins IAAF top honor again

Jamaica's sprint superstar Usain Bolt captured the men's IAAF World Athlete-of-the-Year award for a record sixth time last month, as he was rewarded for outstanding performances at last summer's Olympic Games.

T&T gets new national soccer coaches

Belgian Tom Saintfiet has been appointed head coach of the T&T men's national soccer team. Former Italy striker Carolina Morace has been named to lead the women's side. Saintfiet replaces Stephen Hart.

- Compiled from various reports.

FIFA ranks Haiti top Caribbean soccer nation for 2016

Haiti emerged the highest rated country from the Caribbean in both male and female categories based on the final 2016 ranking by soccer's governing body FIFA announced last month.

Among the men, the French-speaking nation was ranked 73 and was one of only five Caribbean nations to make it into the top 100. The others were Jamaica (77), Trinidad and Tobago (78), St. Kitts and Nevis (80) and Antigua and Barbuda (93).

Cuba suffered the biggest

points and ranking drop by a Caribbean country in 2016, plunging 26 places to 151.

FIFA rated Argentina the top team in the world, followed by Brazil and Germany. The United States was ranked 28 and Curacao 75.

The other Caribbean/CARICOM nations ranked in the top 200 in the male category were: Dominican Republic (128); Guyana (132); Puerto Rico (144); Suriname (150); Barbados (155); Grenada (158); Aruba (160); Belize

(163); Dominica (174); St. Lucia (177); St. Vincent and the Grenadines (179); Bermuda (187); U.S. Virgin Islands (195); Montserrat (199); and the Cayman Islands (200).

Haiti was 63rd in the women's category. Other Caribbean nations earning top 100 rankings were Jamaica (65); Guyana (79); Cuba (88); Dominican Republic (93) and Puerto Rico (100).

The U.S. is the top rated women's team.

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