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The "Fyre Festival" in The Bahamas promised top-notch entertainment for high rollers. Instead it flamed out. Rapper Ja Rule, one of the organizers, is feeling the heat and the host nation is distancing itself from the flop, page 14.



Super sprinter Elaine Thompson anchored Jamaica's teams to victory at the Penn Relays and IAAF World Relays, among many wins scored by the Caribbean at the prestigious track and field meets, pages 17 and 18.



BYE, BYE BOLT

~ Legendary Jamaican sprint superstar Usain Bolt has announced plans to leave international track in 2017. His legacy in the sport and elsewhere is already being heavily debated, including in his homeland where it all started, page 7.

100 DAZE



~ The end of April marked the first 100 days that Donald Trump has been president of the United States. His administration has already been plagued by scandals, broken promises and failure to pass major legislations. Caribbean Americans are watching, page 9

IT TAKES A VILLAGE



~ A touching personal experience brought Juliet Holness, wife of Jamaica's prime minister and member of Parliament, closer to the plight of children and the need to protect them. It's become her life's work, page 16

HAITIAN PRIDE



~ Marleine Bastien, left, and Jean Monestime, are Haitian Americans who have become stalwarts in the South Florida community. It is their hope to better the lives of their compatriots and others, but they have concerns, pages 21 and 23.

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NEWS



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Trump's demand for H-1B visa reform may slash jobs for Caribbean nationals

GORDON WILLIAMS

Thousands of highly skilled job-seeking foreign nationals, including many from the Caribbean, may find themselves denied visas to work in the United States under a new directive issued by President Donald Trump.

Trump last month signed an executive order, under the theme "Buy American, Hire American", which could slash the number of H-1B visas issued by the U.S.

H-1B visas allow companies to hire workers from outside the U.S. to fill needs for highly skilled positions when qualified Americans cannot be found. The president has criticized the system as unfair in some respects and vulnerable to abuse.

Among the complaints is that some American companies "flood" the system with H-1B applications and then outsource the successful applicants to firms, which may deprive Americans a chance at those jobs or replace jobs held by Americans.

'LOTTERY'

Trump's order directs



Trump

responsibility to various government department heads, such as the secretary of labor, to suggest changes to the H-1B program. The president also disagrees with the current "lottery" system which decides which petitioner gets to fill the job openings.

"Right now, H-1B visas are awarded in a totally random lottery - and that's wrong," the president said last month while in Wisconsin, where the executive order was signed.

Each year, the U.S. allots 85,000 H-1B visas. Some 20,000 of those are given to applicants who hold a master's degree. Hundreds of Caribbean nationals have applied for H-1B visas over

the decades the program has been in place.

This year's application process began early last month. Within five days 199,000 had been received. However, that marked the first time in five years that less than 200,000 had been received, a possible indication that skilled workers are losing interest in American jobs.

LONG TERM

Despite Trump's vow to overhaul the H-1B program, he did not publicly set a deadline for the reform. Experts believe actual changes are still some distance away.

"Although released with ceremonial flair, the order will have no immediate impact on H-1Bs," Betsy Lawrence, director of government relations for the American Immigration Lawyers Association, told CNNTech.

"Many of the changes to the H-1B program contemplated by the administration would require legislative action or rulemaking and would take time to go through the necessary processes."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

U.S. extradition path cleared for Antigua commission ex-boss

The way has been cleared for the extradition of Leroy King, the former head of the Financial Services Regulatory Commission (FSRC) in Antigua, who has been accused involvement in the multi-billion dollar Ponzi scheme that was operated by former businessman R. Allen Stanford.



King

The decision was handed down in an Antiguan court on April 21 by Justice Darshan Ramdhani, who said that after reviewing King's arguments he saw no reason why King's

claim for constitutional relief or the application for leave should be allowed.

On June 24, 2009, the United States made a request for King's extradition to face trial on 11 fraud related crimes.

Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Anthony Armstrong argued against King's appeal on behalf of the U.S.

King has been accused of helping Stanford in exchange for \$100,000 in bribes. The charges against him include wire fraud, mail fraud and conspiracy to obstruct investigations.

- Edited from CMC.



Bahamas general elections May 10

NASSAU, The Bahamas – Prime Minister Perry Christie has announced May 10 as the date for the general elections in The Bahamas.

The announcement came as the Parliament was dissolved last month, paving the way for the vote.

"It is now left to you, the citizenry of our beloved nation to decide who will fill those seats in the next House of

assembly," Christie said.

Christie led the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) to victory in the 2012 general elections, defeating the then ruling Free National Movement (FNM) for control of the 41-seat Parliament.

The Democratic National Alliance (DNA) also contested the elections, but failed to win a seat.



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CONSULTATION: Caribbean diaspora begins dialogue on U.S. relations

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Institute of Caribbean Studies (ICS) says an alliance of Caribbean diaspora community and business leaders that it assembled has met with officials in the United States Department of State in providing “input into the construct of future U.S.-Caribbean relations and the role of the diaspora in contributing to the process.”

ICS Jamaican-born President Dr. Claire A. Nelson said these consulta-

tions followed up meetings held Feb. 28 “to identify a mechanism to provide for ongoing consultations between the administration and the Caribbean diaspora in the United States.

“At the center of the discussions is the United States-Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act of 2016, which was signed last December by (then) President Barack Obama and which provides for the identification and implementation of specif-

ic initiatives and programs to enhance America’s relations with the Caribbean at both the multilateral and bilateral levels,” Nelson said, adding that the Act identifies nine broad areas which the U.S. State Department and the U.S.

Agency for International Development (USAID) are mandated to address, and to provide recommendations and a proposed plan of action to the U.S. Congress by June this year.

‘NON-PAPER’

“ICS has prepared a ‘non-paper’, which it submitted to the State Department, and which formed the basis for the dialogue,” Nelson said. “The document received input from



Nelson

diaspora leaders across the United States, representing organizations whose membership are made up of Caribbean Americans from every Caribbean nation.”

Nelson said input for the “non-paper” was also garnered from consultations with organizations in the Caribbean region, including private sector organizations

and the Caribbean community (CARICOM) Secretariat in Georgetown, Guyana.

She said the round-table dialogue addressed issues under three broad themes: Diplomacy and security; economic development; and education and health.

- Edited from CMC.



Caribbean, Latin America enjoy remittance growth



Money is flowing into the region

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Caribbean nationals in the United States diaspora appear to be keeping their end of the bargain to support those back home while the efforts of others fall off.

According to the World Bank, the Caribbean and Latin America was the only region to record growth in remittances in 2016 despite overall global decline.

On April 22, the Washington, D.C.-based financial institution said

regional growth was estimated at \$73 billion, an increase of 6.9 percent over 2015.

“Remittance senders took advantage of the strong U.S. labor market and beneficial exchange rates,” the World Bank noted.

In 2017, the World Bank projected remittances to the region to grow by 3.3 percent to \$75 billion.

FALL

But remittances to developing countries fell for a sec-

ond consecutive year in 2016, a trend not seen in three decades, according to the latest edition of the Migration and Development Brief, released by the World Bank during its spring meetings.

The bank estimated that officially recorded remittances to developing countries amounted to \$429 billion in 2016, a decline of 2.4 percent over \$440 billion in 2015.

Global remittances, which include flows to high-income countries, contracted by 1.2 percent to \$575 billion in 2016, from \$582 billion in 2015.

The Bank said low oil prices and weak economic growth in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and the Russian Federation are taking a toll on remittance flows to South Asia and Central Asia, while weak growth in Europe has reduced flows to North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa.

- Edited from CMC.



Trump's demand for H-1B visa reform may slash jobs for Caribbean nationals

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

The H-1B visa allows foreigners to work in U.S. temporarily, although companies are allowed to apply for permanent residence for those

employees.

Legislation to reform H-1B program had been in the works prior to Trump’s announcement. Among them is changing the lottery system

to one where foreign nationals applicants educated in the U.S. would be given preference.



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Bermuda accuses U.S. clinic of 'secret' fraud pact with ex-premier

BOSTON, Massachusetts – The Bermuda government has ratcheted up its claims against a health clinic here by accusing it in its latest court submission of hatching a “secret pact” with Dr. Ewart Brown, the island’s former premier, for “a calculated fraud on the people of Bermuda”.

The documents were filed last month to counter the Lahey Clinic’s request for the United States court to halt divulging extensive evidence spanning its 20-year relationship with Brown, in the latest round of Brown the government’s racketeering lawsuit against the Massachusetts medical facility.



Lahey responded with a statement attesting its 25-year record of providing “high-quality care to the people of Bermuda” and expressed dismay at what it called a politically motivated misrepresentation.

Lahey has already called for the Massachusetts district court to dismiss the case, as well as requesting a stay of discovery.

ADMISSION

But the Bermuda government maintains that in calling for the lawsuit to be thrown out, Lahey admitted to a “pact”, dated Jan. 1, 2001, that not only held Brown to assist in securing the Bermuda market, but prohibited him from acting in the interests of its competitors.

That agreement, along with a second with Brown’s medical clinic, “more than doubled his government salary as Premier”.

“Simply put, Lahey is free to hire consultants to help it develop business in Bermuda, but not if those consultants are foreign government officials retained to secure an improper advantage over its competitors”, the Bermuda government added.

DENIAL

Brown, 70, who was premier between 2006 and 2010 under the previous Progressive Labour Party administration, has roundly dismissed all allegations of impropriety. Speaking last month during a radio interview in Bermuda, Brown admitted his working relationship with Lahey.

“I would introduce them to whoever they would want to be introduced to,” Brown told a caller. “But I never put them in a position of advantage.”

Brown also dismissed any

suggestion that Lahey might settle the case, telling another radio station: “I would be totally shocked if Lahey Clinic settled on a suit where it is being accused of racketeering.”

“FIGHT”

“They are going to fight like my wife (Wanda) and I are going to fight — to the last

cent and the last breath.”

The Bermuda government has argued that the deal, disclosed “only in response to Bermuda’s allegations”, shows 20 years of concealed payments of “millions of dollars in bribes”. The agreement started with \$125,000 a year, according to the government’s case, but rose substantially to

more than double the salary of \$200,000 that he received when he assumed office as premier in 2006.

It is claimed that Lahey subsequently merged its deals with Brown and with Bermuda Healthcare Services — with the non-disclosure stipulations called “a clear act to conceal the form and extent of the

Lahey-Brown relationship from public view”.

Lahey’s statement underscored the clinic’s history as the first to bring highly-trained specialists to Bermuda to provide care “where it is more convenient and lower cost”.

- Edited from CMC.



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NEWS



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U.S. Justice Department, Miami company settle case discriminating against Caribbean nationals

MIAMI, Florida – The United States Department of Justice (DOJ) last month said it had reached an agreement with a Miami-based company over claims that the company discriminated against work-authorized Caribbean and other immigrants when verifying their work authorization.

The DOJ said the agreement was reached with Brickell Financial Services Motor Club, Inc., otherwise known as Road America Motor Club, Inc. (Road America), resolving the department's investigation into whether the company violated the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).

The department concluded, based on its investigation, that Road America routinely requested that lawful Caribbean and other permanent residents show their permanent resident cards to prove their work authorization, but did not request specific documents from U.S. citizens.

Lawful permanent residents often have the same work authorization documents



Permanent residence guarantees right to work in U.S.

available to them as U.S. citizens and may choose acceptable documents other than a permanent resident card to prove they are authorized to work, the DOJ said.

The government agency also said the investigation further revealed that Road America required lawful permanent resident employees to re-establish their work authorization when their permanent resident cards expired, even though U.S. federal rules prohibit this practice.

PROTECTION

The anti-discrimination provision of the INA prohibits

employers from subjecting employees to unnecessary documentary demands based on the employees' citizenship or national origin, the DOJ said.

"When verifying the work authorization of employees, employers may not erect unnecessary barriers based on employees' citizenship or national origin," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Tom Wheeler of the DOJ's Civil Rights Division.

Under the settlement, the DOJ said Road America will pay a civil penalty of \$34,200 and pay \$1,044 to compensate an unidentified worker who lost wages due to its unfair documentary practices.

The DOJ said Road America has also agreed to post notices informing workers about their rights under the INA's anti-discrimination provision, train their human resources personnel and be subject to departmental monitoring and reporting requirements.

- Edited from CMC.



World's oldest person? It's a Jamaican - 117

A Caribbean national can now claim to be the world's oldest person.

Jamaican Violet Brown, 117, was born Mar. 10, 1900. She may have inherited the title following the death of Emma Morano, an Italian who died last month at age 117 years and 137 days.

Brown, who lives in the parish of Trelawny, is known as "Aunt V". She credited her diet for longevity, including eating plenty ground provisions and fruits such as oranges and mangoes. She said she does not drink rum or eat pork and chicken, but favors fish and mutton.

Her 97-year-old son Harold Fairweather died last month.

CONGRATS

Brown received a congratulatory Twitter message from Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness.

When Brown was born Jamaica was still part of the British West Indies.

"Unless a surprise candidate comes out of the trees, she is the oldest living Victorian," Robert Young, director of the Los Angeles-based GRG's



Brown

Supercentenarian Research and Database Division, was quoted by the AFP news agency last month.

Morano was the last known survivor of the 19th century. According to Young, the world longevity record is held by the late French woman Jeanne Calment, who died at 122 in 1997.

Brown is classified as a supercentenarian, which is someone who has lived to or passed age 110. It is believed that between 300 and 450 living supercentenarians are in the world.

- Photograph from Jamaica Observer.



Bust of Sir Lynden Pindling enters OAS 'Hall of Heroes'

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Organization of American States (OAS) has incorporated a bust of Sir Lynden Pindling, former Bahamian prime minister and national hero, to its "Hall of Heroes".

The OAS said the incorporation took place at its headquarters here in a ceremony that was attended by senior Bahamian officials, including the Attorney General and Senator Allison Maynard Gibson; Consul General of The Bahamas in Washington Paulette Zonicle; and Dame Marguerite Pindling, governor-general and wife of the late Sir Lynden.

The ceremony was also attended by Obafemi Pindling, director of the Sir Lynden Pindling Foundation and son of the former prime minister; Ambassador Elliston Rahming, permanent representative of The Bahamas to the OAS; Eugene Newry, Bahamas ambassador to the United States; OAS Assistant Secretary General Nestor Mendez' and representatives from other OAS member countries.

"The everlasting legacy that this great Caribbean son



Sir Lynden's bust on display at OAS.

has left in the lives of the people a small island state like The Bahamas," said Rahming, noting Sir Lynden's socio-economic contributions and role in The Bahamas's Independence.

Rahming also recalled the role the former prime minister played in the liberation of the former President of South Africa Nelson Mandela.

Mendez also spoke about the life and heritage of Sir Lynden, highlighting his achievements and contributions in the educational, multi-lateral, economic, political and legal realm.

- Edited from CMC.



SALUTE TO THE BAHAMAS

In June, Caribbean Today will spotlight the Bahamas—3000 islands, cays and inlets located in the Atlantic Ocean. With a population of over 385,000 people, this nation continues to influence its Caribbean cousins and The United States mainland, Florida in particular. The Bahamas is located in the same island chain as Cuba, Hispaniola (Dominican Republic and Haiti) and is one of the richest countries in the Americas per capita. Come with Caribbean Today as we focus on the great people of The Bahamas and learn of their contributions to the Caribbean region and the U.S. Let us show you why the land of the conk thinks life is better in The Bahamas.

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BYE, BYE BOLT: Jamaican sprint legend exits global track stage in 2017

GORDON WILLIAMS

KINGSTON, Jamaica – Even in the mad explosion of fan euphoria that engulfed this year's Boys and Girls Championships here, fans still acknowledged Usain Bolt's National Stadium entrance on April 1.

"Champs", widely acknowledged as the biggest high school track meet in the world, is where, well over a decade ago, the general public first caught sight of Bolt. Today his image looms large over the sport, commanding global attention and respect.

Bolt has repeatedly shattered world records and won gold medals on track's biggest stages since his high school days, all while exhibiting flamboyance – some call it arrogance – and a signature pose which has branded him a superstar. Last summer he immortalized himself with an unprecedented third straight Olympic triple double victory – 100, 200 and 4x100 meters relay. Today, the name Bolt has become synonymous with speed – and not just in track.

"I was running so fast," James Harden, an all-star guard with the Houston Rockets of North America's National Basketball Association (NBA), said recently, "... I felt like Usain Bolt."

"I'm gonna get Usain Bolt if I want speed," said former National Football League (NFL) great Shannon Sharpe on his television show "Undisputed".



Bolt strikes a winning pose.

EMBRACE

Most of the world has embraced Bolt. His image is plastered everywhere, from underground train stations in China and England, to roadside billboards in Russia and Australia. He's pitching watches, cars, drinks and sportswear in the United States. Bolt's Twitter and Facebook accounts attract nearly five million and 20 million, respectively.

In Jamaica, he's an unofficial national treasure. Attention inevitably spikes upwards anywhere Bolt shows up.

"We don't have anything to say accurately," Claire Grant, general manager for Television Jamaica, told **Caribbean Today**. "But we can say whenever Bolt is present people will watch."

The globe retains a huge Bolt appetite, even after a teammate tested positive for a banned substance causing him to lose an Olympic relay gold.

"Usain Bolt is a star, all around the world," said Erica Hideshima, a television producer from Brazil who in late March "flew 10 hours just to be here (in Jamaica) to see him for 10 minutes ... He's a hero."

FAREWELL

Yet inevitability is sinking in. Bolt has announced he's leaving track in 2017. Soon, like the ominous "whoosh" heard by Trinidad and Tobago's Richard Thompson as Bolt blasted by him in the 2008 Olympic 100 meters final, he will be gone from competition. The IAAF World Championships in

London, England this August is likely the 30-year-old's last time racing in Jamaica's colors – and carrying Caribbean hopes – at a major international meet.

Yet, although Bolt may be leaving track, it's unlikely the sport – and world – will forget his impact anytime soon.

"Bolt transcended the sport and brought it to a new level and people's interest followed," explained Lennox Graham, a former Jamaican track athlete who coaches at Johnson C. Smith

University in the U.S. "It now seems more attractive since Bolt."

Graham is correct, but only partially. Bolt sparked more than a passion for track. According to Tourism Minister Ed Bartlett, he has dramatically raised Jamaica's profile as a destination. People now visit Jamaica to see where Bolt grew up, what he ate, where he played. The entire Caribbean also claimed him, lifting pride and spirits in the region. So too the diaspora.

INTEREST

Outsiders, like American college scouts, swarmed to Jamaica as the phenomenon of Bolt gathered momentum.

"As far as recruiting, more people are interested in

the sport," Graham said. "It was seen as more attractive. I think initially the effect was Jamaicans wanting to be like Bolt."

Bolt's success also led to a re-thinking of track. Like their hero, the cream of Jamaica's track and field talent became more eager to embrace training at home.

Yet it took a while, according to observers, for even Bolt to understand how big his talent would become. He still holds the record for the 200 meters Class I boys (ages 16-19) at Champs. Yet acclamation that Bolt could become really special arrived earlier, in 2002, at the IAAF World Junior Championships here. Bolt tore up the field to take the 200 meters.

"At the time he didn't seem to understand his talent," Graham recalled. "He was just fun loving. But then he ran phenomenally at 15 years old."

HIGHER STAKES

Jamaica's track and field reputation was well established over half century before Bolt arrived. The likes of Arthur Wint, George Rhoden and Herb McKenley had seen to that. But Bolt raised the bar – considerably – for a nation and a region.

"He has assisted greatly in the rise of Jamaican athletes in the world," explained Garth Gayle, general secretary of the Jamaica Athletics Administrative Association

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

NYC honors Jamaican-born legislator for promoting Caribbean pride

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Bill deBlasio has bestowed special honor on Dr. Una S.T. Clarke, the first Caribbean-born woman to be ever elected to the City Council.

deBlasio also praised her Brooklyn-based Progressive Democrats Political Association (PDPA) at a gala ceremony commemorating the 25th anniversary of the group that was founded by the Jamaican-born Clarke.

"You did something powerful that will help everyone," said the mayor, after reading part of a New York City proclamation.

Prior to bestowing the honor, deBlasio described PDPA's 25th anniversary as "extraordinary," stating that the organization has the ability to reach many.

"There was a time when many doubted PDPA," he said. "I had the honor to serve as Yvette's (Congresswoman

Yvette D. Clarke who is Una Clarke's daughter) campaign chair. So, I wanted to be here to celebrate, because everyone in this room has made a profound difference. And I must tell you, I wouldn't be mayor of New York City if it wasn't for PDPA. I want to congratulate PDPA."

CITATION

New York State Assemblywoman Diana Richardson, representative for the 43rd Assembly District in Brooklyn and the daughter of Caribbean nationals, also dispatched a state citation to PDPA, read by PDPA Vincentian-born President Veronica Phillips. PDPA, in turn, honored 14 community figures during the four-plus-



deBlasio reads from the proclamation as Clarke looks on.

hour-long gala celebration.

"We have come to celebrate our silver jubilee, our 25th year, as a strong political movement within central Brooklyn," said Dr. Clarke, who hails from the Jamaican parish of St. Elizabeth. "We

honor those early pioneering members who had faith in the future of our central Brooklyn community.

"They were the bold ones who endorsed me for my first New York City Council campaign, thus laying a solid foundation upon which we have built a movement."

POLITICAL

She said PDPA has become "a strong political movement, which has conducted many successful campaigns," elect-

ing not only Yvette D. Clarke, but also other federal, state and city officials, including judges and community leaders.

"We have never intended to be a social club but a political organization, so that our

people can see their potential and understand their participation in the political process as full citizens of the United States," said Dr. Clarke. "So, these 25 years have been a great and fruitful journey, and we look forward, with you the next able generation, to another 25 years of effective service."

Haitian-born Brooklyn Councilman Dr. Mathieu Eugene, representative for the 40th Council District, said he had no "clue about politics" until he met Dr. Clarke.

"I joined PDPA because I wanted to be part of an organization, where you can learn about politics," said Eugene, the first Haitian to be elected to New York City Council. "It was first by the grace of God, then it was by the PDPA."

- Edited from CMC.



FEATURE



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WAKE UP, TURN LOOSE: 'Kaya' proving much more than a high

DAWN A. DAVIS

Last month's "Kaya Fest 2017" in Miami marked the culmination of a two-day celebration put on by the family of late reggae icon Bob Marley in recognition and education of the cannabis plant's qualities.

Popularized in song on the 1978 Bob Marley and the Wailers album "Kaya", the herb has been at the center of legal battles with many demanding full legalization while opponents rail against it as damaging to health.

The event started with a cannabis symposium at the History Miami Museum, dubbed "Education Before Recreation", that brought together doctors, educators, product producers, lawyers and activists. Hosted by Bob and Rita Marley's granddaughter Donisha Prendergast, presentations highlighted scientific evidence for the efficacy of medical marijuana in humans and animals.

MOVING

However, perhaps the most moving voice was that of a mother whose five-year old son's life has dramatically improved with the use of a key cannabis extract.

Jacel Delgadillo's son Noah, started having seizures at three months old. He experienced them up to 500 times



Delgadillo

a day, some lasting 30 minutes. Noah was eventually diagnosed with Dravet Syndrome, a rare and chronic form of epilepsy. In and out of hospitals, he received up to 14 types of medication a day. Managing his diet, allergies, and medications became a full-time job.

"With medications we know there are side effects," Delgadillo explained. "... When he was three years old one of the medications caused drug-induced lupus, which led to major dental surgery to remove most of his teeth."

After years of experimenting with medications, Delgadillo met several women who found relief for their children's severe illnesses using extracts from the cannabis plant. The women formed a group to educate and bring awareness to the health benefits of the plant. CannaMoms became official in 2014 with a mandate to "tell the stories of



Doraiswamy

their own children's journeys, while educating the public on the medicinal benefits of cannabis in order to create changes in the laws and in healthcare," Delgadillo explained.

"... When I first started trying cannabis for my son, it was the first time he didn't have a string of seizures in one day."

She administered a cannabis extract known as CBD, then started him on a doctor-supervised Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) extract, along with only three out of the 14 medications he used to take. Today, at age five, she reported marked improvement.

"He's screaming now," Delgadillo said. "He didn't have a voice at all before ... The fact that he is screaming and standing up on his own means the world to me."

BENEFITS

CBD (Cannabidiol) is a naturally occurring extract of the cannabis plant that is non-psychoactive and used in the treatment of health issues such as cancer and epilepsy. THC is an extract from the herb with psychoactive effects. However, if used in controlled doses and under supervision, they can be beneficial, as in Noah's case.

According to Dr. Murali Doraiswamy, a brain health researcher at Duke University, the field of medical marijuana has been completely biased for the past 40 years. He explained that the sole congressional mandate of the National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA), created in the 1970s, was to study the negative aspects of substances like marijuana.

"So something like 25 billion dollars has been spent solely to show that there are bad things happening," explained Dr. Doraiswamy. "... It has been almost impossible to get funding to look into the beneficial aspects of marijuana."

CHANGE

But the tide is changing said Doraiswamy, revealing that the Institute of Medicine, within the Washington, D.C.-based National Academy of Sciences, published a report in January on the health effects of cannabis and cannabinoids. The report "found evidence to

support that patients who were treated with cannabis or cannabinoids were more likely to experience a significant reduction in pain symptoms. For adults with multiple sclerosis-related muscle spasms, there was substantial evidence that short-term use of certain "oral cannabinoids" – man-made, cannabinoid-based medications that are orally ingested – improved their reported symptoms. Furthermore, in adults with chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, there was conclusive evidence that certain oral cannabinoids were effective in preventing and treating those ailments ... The committee found evidence that suggests smoking cannabis does not increase the risk for cancers often associated with tobacco use."

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



BYE BOLT: Jamaican sprint legend exits track stage in 2017

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

(JAAA), which governs the sport in the Caribbean island. "With a fit Usain Bolt at any championship we can challenge the world in sports and maintain such dominance."

Longtime track and field experts saw it coming. Analyst Hubert Lawrence recalled his

acknowledgement that "Bolt was fast" during the 2001 CARIFTA Games when he anchored the boys under-17 4x100 relay team.

"He fumbled the baton and he ran like the dickens to get Jamaica back in contention," Lawrence said. "That got my attention. His

attempt to recover lost ground showed he had high speed, acceleration ... I thought to myself, 'I better watch this guy'. The next year at the World Juniors he became Usain Bolt."

He also became the athlete who changed the face of athletics. Races on the profes-

sional circuit end with whichever event Bolt is running. He transcended athletics to celebrity, appearing on global television shows and at pro sporting events outside track. He's been made a Jamaican ambassador. Mostly, he sells tickets.

"He was box office now," said Lawrence.

A few years ago at Penn Relays in Philadelphia, a huge draw for thousands in the Caribbean diaspora, Bolt anchored Jamaica's 4x100 team. There was plenty top events left on the popular relay carnival's program afterwards. But the crowd had seen Bolt. They had seen enough.

"Many people left the stadium after Bolt ran," said Lawrence.

Now, as Bolt walks away from track in 2017, taking his giant shadow, many are wondering how much of track and field's popularity will depart with him. The absence of one man will become track's biggest story.





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Caribbean diaspora 'leaders' brown-nose President Trump

The disparity has always been huge in how Latin American leaders stand up for their diaspora versus their Caribbean counterparts. It's almost like Jesus and the money changers!

Latin American leaders recognize the importance of their diaspora and have always recognized immigration as important to these masses. As such, they have used every opportunity – whether it's meeting with a sitting United States president or others in the administration or U.S. Congress – to speak up and speak out on this hot button issue.

Contrast that with Caribbean leaders, who recognize their diaspora when it is convenient and have rarely spoken up on the issue of immigration that affects many of their nationals in the U.S. That attitude continues even as the Donald Trump administration moves to deport more and more Caribbean and Latin American immigrants from the U.S.

SILENT

In January, during the annual CELAC – the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States – summit in the Dominican Republic, Latin American leaders slammed Trump while their Caribbean community (CARICOM) counterparts stayed silent.

"We have to protect ourselves from the aggressive policy of persecuting migrants," Ecuador's President Rafael Correa said as he arrived in Punta Cana.

His comments were echoed by many others in Latin America and even from Cuba and the Dominican Republic, but none from CARICOM.

The silence continues as thousands of Caribbean immigrants – undocumented and "green card" holders who have committed petty crimes – cower in fear of being arrested, detained in a detention center far from their family and then deported. Some are afraid to go to work, a restaurant, a store or even a social outing for fear that U.S. Immigration Customs and Enforcement agents will nab them, ship them off to a detention center and then

deport them.

Instead, some Caribbean "leaders" who have little if any interaction with these migrants they are paid taxpayer dollars to represent, have decided it's better to brown-nose with the Trump administration rather than speak up for the issues of real importance to their nationals and the Caribbean immigrant diaspora.

NAUSEATING

On April 10, 2017, I came across a headline from a regional Caribbean news site that screamed: "Trump reinforces bond between Jamaica and the United States". In the article, the writer Derrick Scott claimed that Trump told Jamaica's U.S. Ambassador Audrey Marks, at the White House, that he looks forward to working with the Jamaican government administration on "bilateral and regional issues."

No details on what these "bilateral and regional issues" are, but the article added that "Trump and the ambassador in their exchange underscored the strong bond of friendship that has existed over the years between the people Jamaica and the United States noting the contribution of Jamaica in many spheres of American life."

The article also nauseatingly mentions that the envoy took the opportunity to invite Trump to visit Jamaica. Not sure what the reaction of many Jamaicans to that will be, but that's another story for another day.

Of concern was that not once in the entire article was the issue of immigration mentioned or the concerns of Jamaicans in the diaspora, including the threat of deportation hanging over their heads. These are some of the same Jamaicans who have contributed to the "many spheres of American life" as cited by the ambassador.

XENOPHOBIA

Perhaps, the Jamaican representative, in an attempt to ensure Jamaica pops up on the radar of Trump, felt it necessary to brown-nose the xenophobe in the White House by conveniently ignoring the hot button issue of immigration and deportation that threatens her nationals. Instead, she chose to speak of trade, even though Trump has made it clear his "America First" policy.

Further, the reality is that

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)



FELICIA J. PERSAUD

100 DAZE: Trump's rollercoaster ride as U.S. president

GORDON WILLIAMS

PHILADELPHIA, Pennsylvania - As April 29 drew closer, marking the first 100 days of Donald Trump's term as United States president, scrutiny on his performance ramped up appreciably, especially among Caribbean nationals in the U.S.

Trump's 2016 election campaign was laced with grandiose promises to "make America great again". Pledges included repealing and replacing Obamacare, overhauling the American tax and immigration systems, and building a wall on the U.S.-Mexican border.

His administration hit even closer to the Caribbean community following an announcement that remittances from the U.S. to the region - a vital support tool - could soon be subject to additional fees which Trump hoped to help fund the wall.

As the 100 days mark loomed, the 45th U.S. president had signed a record number of executive orders - over 30. However, he failed to deliver significant legislative accomplishment leading up to the symbolic mark.

Instead, Trump's efforts on immigration, including travel bans, have been repeatedly blocked by U.S. courts. Plans for the wall have been shelved.

Trump's tax plan pitch rat-



Trump, left, met Jamaica's Ambassador to the U.S. Audrey Marks last month.

led even his own party. It offered massive cuts for the rich, with no concrete plans on how to avoid adding billions of dollars to the U.S. deficit. Meanwhile, he adamantly refused to release his own tax returns - a tradition for American presidential candidates - as promised during the campaign.

UNFAVORABLE

Precious little of what Trump pledged to Americans came to fruition by April 29, although his party held the majority in both Houses of Congress and occupied the White House. Broken promises are scattered everywhere.

Meanwhile, his favorability ratings have plummeted - to the low 40 percent - the worst of any new president so early in his term.

That didn't stop the president's bombastic approach. Rants on Twitter, prominent during the election campaign,

continued. Trump even accused former President Barack Obama, widely admired in the Caribbean community, of spying on him, a charge which was proven blatantly false.

Trump warred with the media, threatened military action on multiple overseas fronts, bombed a Syrian airbase, annoyed allies and agitated enemies of the U.S.

Scandals followed.

National security adviser General Michael Flynn was forced to resign after only a brief stint on the job and could face criminal prosecution over his ties with Russia. Other Trump allies are under investigation over the same issue.

NEPOTISM

Trump then muddled the line between nepotism and merit by drafting family members - son-in-law Jared Kushner and daughter Ivanka Trump - into his administrative inner circle. He then backed off some of his most lofty demands as the reality of politics confronted his do-it-my-way style. His bullying bark has so far proven more potent than his bite.

Meanwhile, Trump's ready use of "alternative" (CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

When your best friend is your worst enemy

Being betrayed by someone who you trusted as your friend and confidante is akin to treason. Nothing is worse than treason.

That's why the crime of treason was punishable by death in many countries. In this case it's not treason of the national kind, but of the personal type - the best friend fraud (BFF).

It's been said that only your best friend can really hurt you, as the betrayal cuts deeper than any physical wound could. So be cautious of the BFF.

I saw this true crime story on television, where a young couple tried desperately to have a baby. The husband was in the army and she was a stay at home wife. After three miscarriages, the thoughtful husband decided to have a vasectomy, as he didn't want his wife to get pregnant again and possibly have another miscarriage, which could prove to be fatal. He went away on a mili-



tary course and left his beautiful wife in the care of his best army friend, to keep her company.

REVELATION

His best friend, who he used to confide in, marched



TONY ROBINSON

really close to the wife and got her pregnant. When the hubby returned from his mission he detected a change in his wife's personality and told his BFF that he thought she was having an affair. It was only after she ended up in the base hospital suffering from pregnancy complications that the story unraveled. So she had to confess.

Needless to say, he flew

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

VIEWPOINT



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100 DAZE: Trump's rollercoaster ride as U.S. president

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

facts" - many blatant lies - have been widely blasted by pundits. The general public, except for his political base, is rapidly losing trust in him. Comedians have made Trump fodder for ridicule, turning the spotlight on an administration seemingly stumbling through a mass of incompetence.

But for Caribbean nationals in the U.S., the majority

who reportedly supported Trump's opponent Hillary Clinton in the election, the Era of Trump has been no laughing matter. Many fear his anti-immigrant backlash, with its threat of mass deportations. Opponents loathe Trump's views, some branded as racist and sexist.

Late last month, at the 123rd running of the Penn Relays here, one of the largest

gatherings of Caribbean nationals in the U.S., track and field wasn't the only thing on their mind. The rise of Trump had spawned mixed reactions. For some, the jury is still out on the president.

"It's kind of early, because we need to see (Trump) fulfill some of his promises," said Jamaican American Vincent HoSang, chairman and president of

Royal Caribbean Bakery, which supports Caribbean teams at the Penn Relays.

"I'm in favor of him up to a certain point, (but) he's very erratic. He's not calm, but he's the guy who if he said he's gonna do something he's gonna do it."

Others, such as South Florida-based Jamaican American freelance journalist Ed Barnes, offered blunt advice.

"One of the the things (Trump) has to do is, for himself and those around him, is

to get to understand the Caribbean community," said Barnes. "I don't think he has done that. And they are jumping off on something that I believe will come back to haunt them."

As April wound down, Trump made a stunning admission.

"I thought it would be easier," said the businessman-turned-president.

That alarmed the world. For Caribbean Americans, it could be even more terrifying.



When your best friend is your worst enemy

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

into a rage when he discovered that it was his BFF who betrayed him, killed him, cut off his head and delivered it in a bag to his wife while she was still in the hospital.

Tales of best friends moving in and hooking up with their friends' spouse are common. It's the stuff of which legends are made, songs sung, poetry recited, prose penned, and movies produced.

"My best friend ran off with my husband, OMG."

How often have we heard that?

STUCK RECORD

Why is it always the best

friend who takes away your man? The answer is simple. The best friend knows all about you. The best friend assesses all that her friend is telling her and reaches her own conclusions.

To add to that, BFFs are like predators, as they see what they want and move in for the kill when the time is opportune. It has occurred throughout history.

More females do it than men.

SHORT TERM

For that same reason, women cannot remain true friends for long. There are exceptions yes, but usually the

friendship is shattered forever because of what one did or said, or was thought to have said.

The best friend sees her friend's relationship from an objective distance and is also intimately involved via the utterances of her BFF. She hears the praises and hears the complaints. She also sees the man over a period of time and realizes that he's a good catch.

That's the danger of exposing your man to your BFF too much. If you want to keep your man and your best friend, keep them apart.

seido1@hotmail.com



Caribbean diaspora 'leaders' brown-nose President Trump

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

most of the region's foreign direct investment comes not from U.S. trade, but from remittances from its diaspora and tourism.

Following on the heels of that story came another that claimed "Caribbean diaspora leaders" have begun dialogue on U.S.-Caribbean relations with the Trump administration. Few have heard of these self-appointed so-called "leaders" of the Caribbean diaspora mentioned in the article, and again, the focus seemed to be on everything except the issue that could have the most impact on the Caribbean region.

CURRY FAVOR

Thousands more could be deported back to the region, creating serious security and economic problems and adding to the woes already experienced by the islands of the Caribbean. This includes a significant drop in the remittances and tourism dollars to the region and a further spike in crime.

But the so-called leaders, intent it seems on currying favor with El Trumpeto and his band of merry millionaires and billionaires, feel the

issues of importance are "diplomacy, security; economic development, education and health."

And so a "white paper" was presented to an administration that does not give a damn about the health, education or economic empowerment of its own low-income and middle-class that it's laughable to think it will give a damn about a region with little to no economic wealth and millions of black and brown natives.

It's time the so-called leaders of the Caribbean and its diaspora quit focusing so much on perfecting the art of brown-nosing that they lose touch with the masses and forget what the real issues they should be standing up for are.

Or, worst yet, forget that there is now a xenophobe in the White House to whom brown and black means simply less than!

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



Jamaica at 55

On August 6, 2017, the island of Jamaica marks the 55th Anniversary of its independence as a sovereign nation. Caribbean Today invites the business community in Jamaica and the United States to celebrate this significant milestone.

OUR INDEPENDENCE SUPPLEMENT!
Jamaica at 55 ~
to be published in July 2017, will pay tribute to Jamaica's history, culture, growth and development including the achievements and global contributions of a remarkable people. Promote your products and services in this 28-page keepsake edition, to be distributed widely throughout Florida, New York, Atlanta, and the Caribbean.

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Florida health department offers help to teens at risk for suicide

A coalition of advocates from Florida schools, health care and community organizations is mobilizing to address the continuing rise in teen suicides.

The latest effort was a recent "Suicide Prevention Symposium" for those who work with teens. The aim was to educate participants about the extent of the problem, causes and resources available to help at-risk teens.

About 300 people attended the all-day session.

"The response from the community was very positive,"



- File photograph
Depression can lead to suicide.

said Dr. Paula Thaqi, director

of the Florida Department of Health (DOH) in Broward County. "We're trying to take action on a real problem facing families."

The symposium was organized by several agencies, including DOH-Broward, Broward County Public Schools and the Children's Services Council.

RISE

Last year, 10 Broward teens between ages 14 and 17 years old committed suicide, up from two to five per year

over the past decade. In addition, a survey of about 1,500 high and middle school students in 2015 found that 3.5 percent (4.3 percent of girls) were injured attempting suicide, up from 2.2 percent in 2007.

About 14 percent of them (16.5 percent of girls) made a plan to commit suicide, highest since the 1990s. More than 30 percent (38 percent of girls) reported feelings of sadness and hopelessness for at least two weeks.

REASONS

Reasons for the increased anxiety among teens range from family problems, caused by the economic downturn, to

pressure to succeed, concerns over appearance and bullying.

Lesbian, gay and bi-sexual students, as well as Hispanic teen girls are at elevated risk for suicidal thoughts, said Charlene Grecsek, coordinator of the Network for Students with Emotional / Behavioral Disabilities at Broward public schools.

Warning signs of potential suicides include self-injury, withdrawal, loss of interest in friends and activities, change in eating habits, change in behavior, inability to enjoy life and decline in school grades, said Beth King, assistant professor at Florida Atlantic University.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)

SIGHT SEEING: 5 tips to keep your eyes healthy

Want to improve your wellness? Start with your eyes. Here are five ways to help keep your eyes, vision and body healthy.

Get an eye exam -

An annual trip to the eye doctor is critical for the entire family to ensure healthy and sharp vision. But did you know your visit to the optometrist is important to your overall health too?

A routine eye exam can



© UBER IMAGES - Fotolia.com
Regular tests keep eyes healthy.

potentially detect signs of chronic diseases like diabetes,

high cholesterol, and more. Because many symptoms of health conditions often don't appear until damage has occurred, eye exams are a powerful, preventative health tool to keep tabs on what's happening in your body.

An eye exam is a small investment for your eyes and body that's well worth it, and a vision plan can help you keep the cost down. To search for a vision plan, visit

vspdirect.com.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)

Miami-Dade Parks offers program to battle arthritis

MIAMI, Florida — In observance of Older Americans Month, the Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department has teamed up with the National Recreation and Parks Association to encourage older adults who suffer from arthritis to make regular exercise a priority in their healthy-living routine and start enjoying the benefits.

According to the Arthritis Foundation, exercise is key to reducing joint pain and fatigue associated with arthritis and can help strengthen muscles, increase flexibility and boost mood and overall sense of well-being.

Starting May 1, Miami-Dade Parks will kick off its new Arthritis Intervention Program, offering the follow-

ing free activity classes, especially for arthritis patients:

- Walk With Ease - Walking group; meets three times a week for six weeks.
- Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program - Water exercise class; meets twice a week for six weeks.
- Active Living Every Day - Personalized healthy-lifestyle planning; meets once per week for 12 weeks.

Classes will take place at select Active Older Adults Recreation Hubs and pools. Advanced registration at class location selected is required.

For more information, call Allan Tavss, program coordinator, at **786-372-9701** or visit the Miami-Dade Parks' Rx4Health Program web page.



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Sleep Apnea Screenings
Memory Screenings
Stroke Risk Assessments
Pharmacy Consults

10:30am - 11am
Stroke: Signs and Symptoms
Ridwan Lin, MD, PhD
Interventional Neurology

HEALTH



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COUNTER-PUNCH: Jamaica to introduce HPV vaccine in cancer fight

KINGSTON, Jamaica – The Jamaica government says it intends to introduce a human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine this year in the fight against cervical cancer.

“A study in the United

States revealed that within four years of the vaccine’s introduction, HPV decreased by over 50 percent among females aged 14 to 19. This is very good news for the fight against cervical cancer,”

Health Minister Dr. Christopher Tufton said recently.

In his message at the launch of the Jamaica Cancer Society’s fundraising initiative “Relay for Life” last month, Tufton said the vaccine is one of several interventions by the Ministry of Health to reduce



cases of cancer among the population. He said an improved public health system

should decrease delay in the screening, diagnosis and treatment of persons living with cancer.

Cancer accounts for 23 percent of deaths here. The most common cancers in Jamaica are prostate, lung and colorectal in men; and breast, cervical and colorectal cancers in women. Prostate and breast cancers are the leading cause of cancer-related deaths.

- Edited from CMC.



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SIGHT SEEING: 5 tips to keep your eyes healthy

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

Eat an eye-healthy diet - You probably know carrots are good for your eyes, but so are dark leafy greens such as spinach, kale and collard greens.

Eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables for a hefty punch of key vitamins, and a vision protecting-substance called lutein.

Quit smoking (or never start) - Smoking cigarettes has many well-known associated health risks, such as cardiovascular problems and cancer. Did you also know that smoking can contribute to the cause of many vision problems?

Research links smoking to an increased risk of developing age-related macular degeneration, cataracts and optic nerve damage, all of which can lead to blindness.

Maintain a healthy weight

- Weight is a contributing factor for your overall health as well as your eyes.

Conditions such as obesity and diabetes can lead to vision problems, like cataracts. By eating healthy portions and exercising regularly, you can reduce your risk.

Protect eyes from blue light - Much of our days are spent with our faces glued to devices like smartphones, computers and televisions. Those digital screens emit high-energy blue light, which causes digital eye strain that leads to headaches, blurred vision, dry eyes, and even

neck pain.

Ask your eye doctor about the best options to help you reduce eye strain, including using lenses with coatings that reflect and absorb blue light. You can also follow the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, spend 20 seconds looking at something at least 20 feet away.

With a balanced approach to preventative care, you can help keep your eyes and body healthy.

- Edited from StatePoint.



New initiative to help curb Guyana's suicides

GEORGETOWN, Guyana – Health authorities say they have developed a tool that will help detect persons indulging in self-harm as Guyana, with one of the highest suicide rates in the world, initiates new measures to deal with the situation.

Guyana is reported to have the highest suicide rate per capita in the world. Figures show that there are 44.2 suicides per 100,000 people in the country, compared to the global average of 16 per 100,000.

The Mental Health Unit of the Ministry of Health said it has recognized that the rate of self-harm, classified as attempted suicide in Guyana, is more than double the rate

of actual suicide cases. It said self-harm is the deliberate self-inflicted injury to an individual which is typically a manifestation of a psychological or psychiatric disorder.

As a result, the Mental Health Unit said it will be embarking on a measure to reduce or even eliminate the instances of attempted suicide and self-harm. The unit will be implementing a self-harm screening tool that will identify and counsel persons who have attempted suicide or practiced self-harm.

The screening toll is a questionnaire which will aid in the fight against suicide.

- Edited from CMC.



Florida health department offers help to teens at risk for suicide

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

What to do? Encourage teens to talk about what bothers them. If they won't talk to you, take them to talk to a friend, relative, teacher, counselor, faith leader or anyone they trust.

“Don't ignore it,” said King.

One resource is the Teen Hotline at Broward, 211.

For more information, call Maureen O'Keeffe at DOH-Broward, 954-467-4700 Ext.

3014 or e-mail her at Maureen.OKeeffe@flhealth.gov

Edited from article contributed by Bob LaMendola, Florida Department of Health in Broward County.



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U.S. issues Zika warning for travel to Caribbean

More than three dozen Caribbean countries, including the United States territories of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, remain on the travel advisory issued by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

On Mar. 10 the CDC updated its travel advisory for the islands. The countries are on the list as a “Level 2” alert, which advises travelers to “Practice Enhanced Precautions”.

The advisory could put a dent in Caribbean tourism numbers from the U.S. this summer. Countries still on the travel advisory list are: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Curaçao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana,

Guadeloupe, Haiti, French Guiana, Jamaica, Martinique, Montserrat, Puerto Rico, Saba, St. Barthelemy, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Martin, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, St. Eustatius, St. Maarten, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The CDC says mosquitoes in those countries are infected with Zika virus and are spreading it to people. They are urging pregnant women, or those trying to become pregnant, to avoid travel to the countries on the list and warning travelers who do travel to the region to use condoms or not have sex during their trip since sexual transmission of the Zika virus is possible.

- Edited from News Americas.



U.S. penalizes Dynamic Airways

Dynamic International Airways, which provides services from the United States to the Caribbean, has been ordered by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to pay penalties of \$120,000 following an incident last year in which several passengers were stranded in North Carolina and New York.

The DOT said the airline cancelled several flights and failed to notify passengers in a timely manner and refund them.

“Failure to comply with this cease and desist provision may subject Dynamic International Airways, LLC and its successors and assignees to further enforcement action,” the DOT warned the airline last month.

While the destinations were not named by the DOT, the authority said the complaints received were from passengers who used the airline to and from destinations outside the U.S.

IMPACT

Earlier this year, the

CAL to set to take off for new SVG airport

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent – Trinidad-based Caribbean Airlines (CAL) is scheduled to operate flights between the Piarco International Airport and the new Argyle International Airport (AIA) here, it was announced recently.

AIA spokesperson Tabia Matthews, in a press statement, noted that the scheduled flights will operate on Fridays and Sundays and will offer passengers “connections to their other North American destinations.”



Florida cruise group praises Jamaica for tourist harassment reduction

KINGSTON, Jamaica – The United States-based Florida Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) has hailed Jamaica’s success in significantly reducing visitor harassment, saying it augurs well for future relations.

A government statement issued following a three-day fact finding trip to the island by a FCCA team, led by President Michelle Paige, quoted her as saying that Jamaica has done a tremendous job in tackling the problem head on, noting that there were clear signs that guests could move about freely without fear of being followed or badgered.

“What we have seen ... during our visit to the main ports and also to some of the attractions has been truly amazing,” Paige said, adding that “Jamaica, with all its natural beauty and wonderful people, has always been a very popular destination.”

PROBLEM

“The problem is that a lot of the guests have either been complaining or have been reluctant to experience the product because of some of the things they had to go through. That was a major turnoff and certainly was bad for business,” she added.

Paige also said that this

threatened to derail the special relationship the FCCA has shared with Jamaica for over five decades. Cruise officials, she indicated, remain unconvinced that the situation had changed, despite representation made by a high powered delegation, led by Jamaica’s Prime Minister Andrew Holness, which visited Miami months ago.

“So we decided to come and see for ourselves,” she said. “... We can safely say that we are leaving more impressed than we have ever been.”

- Edited from CMC.



Sunrise Airways to fly Haiti/Orlando route in October

Haiti-based Sunrise Airways has announced its intent to launch a nonstop service between Port-au-Prince, Haiti and Orlando, Florida beginning in October.

“For us, as an airline, and more importantly for the sizable Haitian community living

in the Orlando area, these new flights are a tremendous development,” Philippe Bayard, Sunrise Airways president, noted in a recent press release.

The new scheduled service is subject to government approval, but seats are pro-

jected to be available for bookings by mid-June.

“No longer will travel to Haiti require a trip to Miami first,” Phil Brown, executive director of the Greater Orlando Aviation Authority, noted in the release.





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EAT TREAT: Miami dials up 'Caribbean305' food fest

MIAMI, Florida - Flavors from more than a dozen Caribbean nations are expected to simmer together at "Caribbean305", a culinary

and cultural celebration to be held **8 p.m. June 3**, at Jungle Island her.

Presented by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism

Association (CHTA), Caribbean305 is part of the launch of South Florida's celebration of "Caribbean American Heritage Month".

"This newly refreshed event highlights the artistry of Caribbean cuisine and attracts our top chefs, bartenders and mixologists," Frank Comito, CHTA's director general and chief executive officer, explained recently in a press release issued to promote the event.

According to the promoters, Caribbean305 will feature culinary professionals from 16 Caribbean nations, plus United States and British territories. They include Anguilla, The Bahamas, Barbados,

Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, St. Martin, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"This is a foodie's ultimate dream and the perfect festival for anyone with Caribbean roots looking for a taste of home," Comito added.

For more information, visit www.caribbean305.com.



Delightful bread pudding for festive occasions

MINNA LAFORTUNE

One of my favorite things about festive occasions is the desert offering.

The varieties vary, which often makes it difficult to choose what to eat. I will share my recipe for bread pudding.

Ingredients

- 1 loaf hard dough bread (any other crusty bread will do)
- 1/2 cup melted butter
- 3 eggs (beaten well)
- 4 cups whole milk
- 1/2 - 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2 cups raisins soaked in rum

Method

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Grease a nine-inch round Pyrex baking dish with butter.

Pour the whole milk in a deep mixing bowl. Mix in eggs, melted butter and vanilla. Break up the bread into small portions.

Combine the bread, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, raisins, in the mixing bowl with the liquids. Mix thoroughly until mushy. Pour into the baking dish. Pour mixture in the baking Pyrex dish.

Place in the oven and bake for an hour and 15 minutes.

You can test if it is baked by inserting a small knife in the middle until it comes out clean.

Serve warm or cool. This dessert is best served with



Bread pudding

rum and raisin ice cream or with whipped cream and rum.

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



Big names for Palm Beach Caribbean jerk festival

Well known Jamaican artistes, including Taurus Riley, Agent Sasco, Wayne Wonder and Half Pint are being promoted among the main attractions for this month's Palm Beach Jerk and Caribbean Culture Festival in South Florida.

The festival, described as a way to honor the cultural richness, heritage and flavor that Caribbean jerk seasoning lends to food and traditions, is scheduled for **2 p.m. to 10**

p.m. May 29 at the at the South Florida Fairgrounds, 9067 Southern Blvd. in West Palm Beach.

It will also include culinary personalities competing in the kitchen and a "Kids Zone", plus a "Jerk Explosion Party Pavilion", featuring disc jockeys and a dance contest.

For more information, visit www.palmbeachjerkfestival.com or call 866-232-0001.



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Jamaica's first lady makes protecting children top priority

DAWN A. DAVIS

The plight of children scarred by sexual abuse and people working to fight the scourge were the focus of a gala event in South Florida last month.

The Protect The Children Gala galvanized the Female Development World Organization (FDWO) and the Kiwanis Club of Lauderdale. The FDWO's outreach campaign dubbed "Nuh Guh Deh" was created to target communities and raise voices over what is often seen as a taboo subject.

Among those addressing the issue is Juliet Holness, a member of Parliament in Jamaica and wife of the prime minister.

"Our children are hurting, our children are in crisis," said Holness, the gala's guest speaker who was presented the Rita Marley Ambassador Award for service to Jamaica's children and community development. Marley was in attendance.

"Many of the world's children are living in fear because of violence. They're on the battlefield of war and famine. They are prevented from qual-

ity education and many are sold into human trafficking. Many are physically abused, sexually abused and exploited and, worse yet, emotionally abused ... So many more live in absolute poverty."

ACTION

Holness quoted UNICEF statistics which claim that 160 million children will live in extreme poverty by 2030, while 60 million of primary age will drop out of school, losing educational opportunities.

"Those projections are what will happen to our children if we sit, if we stand down, if we watch and do nothing," explained Holness.

She emphasized that family, education and opportunity are the core values that will help build the right environment for Jamaica's children. Holness said she grew up in Spanish Town as part of a family which understood the value of caring for the next generation.

"That's why I am passionate about securing the future of our children," she said.

Holness believes successive Jamaican governments had failed to implement an



Holness

adequate system to protect children. A personal experience, she explained, enlightened her to the problem. Holness recounted her habit as a working mother, always hurrying her toddler to get ready for school.

"One morning my oldest son, four years old then, said 'mommy you're always hurrying, you don't have enough time for me'. I listened and the

tears started flowing down my face," she said.

NUCLEUS

Holness said she decided to invest more time in her family, which served as the nucleus of her work to save children.

"Sometimes you do have to take some tough decisions," she said. "And that kind of decision-making continues to be crucial to our daily, monthly, annual scheduling for myself and Andrew (her husband). It isn't easy, but it is imperative and we must lead by example."

Holness begged the community to be aware of threats to the physical and mental health of their children that could come from family members and friends, plus unsupervised exposure to social media.

"These influences numb

the sensibilities of our children and blur the lines of right and wrong," she warned. "They grow to accept abnormal as normal and often abusive behavior as a sign of strength."

To tackle these issues, Holness launched the Save our Boys and Girls Foundation with a mission of improving the lives of children while focusing on boys, who she said are often neglected.

"As the mother of two boys and a world citizen with an appreciation for how we are all connected, I am committed to stamping (out) the scourge of violence of all forms against our children," she said.

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



Local FYI

p.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays, will give applicants a chance to file for United States citizenship and determine if they qualify for a fee waiver.

The clinics will be held at the offices of the South Florida AFL-CIO, 4349 N.W. 36th St. in Miami Springs.

To schedule an appointment, call Blanka at **305-615-2673**.

'Going Global' workshop, career expo

How to expand import/export business will be the focus of a free "Going Global" workshop and career expo this month in Miami.

Miami-Dade County Commission Vice Chairwoman Audrey M. Edmonson, in conjunction with the Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources Office of Economic Development and International Trade, will present the program from **8 a.m. to noon May 9** at the Audrey Edmonson Transit

Village Sandrell Rivers Theater, 6101 N.W. 7th Ave., Suite 79.

For more information, contact Elizabeth Moss at oedit@miamidadegov.

Preventing mosquito bites

Mosquito season is expected to be busy this year. Before the summer rains begin, be sure to remove all standing water and containers that can hold water whenever possible.

For more information, visit broward.org/ZapZika.

National Hurricane Preparedness Week

Hurricane Preparedness Week, **May 7-13**, is a reminder to residents to prepare now for the upcoming hurricane season, **June 1 to Nov. 30**.

For more information, visit broward.org/.

- Compiled from various sources.



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EMPOWERING WOMEN



- Photograph by Dawn A. Davis

Donna Parchment Brown, Jamaica's political ombudsman, was the guest speaker at the third annual Women Empowerment Conference staged by the Jamaican Women of Florida recently. The conference celebrated accomplishment, education and leadership. Brown lauded women for their contribution to society.

Jamaica leads Caribbean championship charge at 2017 Penn Relays

GORDON WILLIAMS

PHILADELPHIA, Pennsylvania - Caribbean athletes once again turned in superb performances at the Penn Relays, with Jamaica leading the region's championship charge at the 123rd annual staging of the prestigious track and field meet here April 27-29.

Buoyed by weather typical of a Caribbean summer, plus rousing support from a large throng of compatriots among nearly 109,000 fans who showed up over three sun-kissed days, the region's athletes showed outstanding form at Franklin Field stadium.

Jamaica again proved the major Caribbean force, gobbling up numerous titles at both school and international levels. The nation won three of six "USA vs. The World" events, to share honors with the host nation. All the international events were hotly contested between longtime rivals Jamaica and U.S.

"It is always exciting," Natasha Hastings, who ran for the U.S. team which finished second to Jamaica in the women's 4x400 meters relay on April 29, accurately predicted a day earlier.

Hastings could not overhaul Janieve Russell, who



Christiana Williams, right, hands the baton to teammate Kerron Stewart on the way to Jamaica's victory in the 4x100 meters, "USA vs. The World".

anchored a team which included Stephenie-Ann McPherson, Shericka Jackson and Dawnalee Loney. Jamaica clocked three minutes 28.32 seconds, the U.S. 3:29.30.

RELISH

Earlier, Jamaica, led by a blistering anchor leg by 2016 Olympic Games double gold medal winner Elaine

Thompson, smashed the opposition in the women's 4x100 meters, winning in 42.25 seconds, ahead of U.S. Red (42.42) and U.S. Blue (42.90). Thompson has relished her new role as the latest Jamaican sprint sensation.

"For me to lead the squad as a female athlete, it feels good," she said the day before the race.

Thompson anticipated the massive crowd support, typical at "Penns" when the U.S. and Jamaica clash.

"They give us the vibes to go out there and run," she said. "I feel like I'm at home."

- Photograph by Track Alerts

Florida to host Caribbean Premier League cricket in 2017

The Caribbean Premier League (CPL) will once again stage matches in the United States during the upcoming campaign, organizers announced last month.

Six games were successfully staged at the Central Broward Stadium in Fort Lauderdale, Florida last year, marking the first time fixtures in the tournament had been played outside the Caribbean. Damien O'Donohoe, chief executive of the CPL, said last year's success had been a deciding factor in once again scheduling games for the Sunshine State.

"In excess of 30,000 fans packed our American leg of matches in 2016, with over half of those attendees traveling south from New York and as far west as Texas and Los Angeles," O'Donohoe said.

"Tourists who attended these matches also spent more than \$4.75 million in the local economy.

APPETITE

"This indicates a huge appetite for the game across North America and we welcome the opportunity to play our part in USA cricket's



Top Caribbean players will again compete in Florida.

future plans. We have committed to a community outreach program to ensure the impact of the Hero CPL goes beyond the field of play," he added.

"The USA provided many highlights last year and we believe the quality of cricket on the field, coupled with the party off it, will generate even greater interest for the upcoming season."

The decision to host games in Florida was an attempt by organizers to expand the base and reach of

the tournament. According to numbers released by CPL recently, the leg of the tournament generated \$12.5 million and captured a television audience of 12.7 million.

In its fifth year, the CPL is scheduled to run from Aug. 4 to Sept. 10, and will also be played at traditional venues in Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, St. Lucia and St Kitts.

- Edited from CMC.



Jamaican-born Olympic bronze medalist dies in motorcycle crash

Germaine Mason, a Jamaican-born Olympic high jump silver medalist for Great Britain, was killed in a motorcycle crash last month. He was 34.

Mason won a bronze medal at the 2003 world indoor championships representing Jamaica. However, in 2006, he decided to represent Great Britain. He was eligible



Mason

to make the switch because his father was born in England. Two years later Mason finished second at the Beijing Olympics behind Russian Andrey Silnov.

Jamaica Prime Minister Andrew Holness sent out the following Twitter message: "Our sincere condolences to the entire sporting fraternity."

British Olympic champions Dame Jessica Ennis-Hill, Denise Lewis and Linford Christie also paid tribute.



Jamaican-born NFL star no-show for White House

Patrick Chung, a Jamaican-born National Football League player, was among 30 members of the 2017 Super Bowl champion New England Patriots who skipped an invitation to the White House offered by United States President Donald Trump last month.

Chung, who wore number 23, was a no-show along with the team's quarterback Tom Brady.

Chung was born in Kingston. His father was a music producer for Chung's

mother Sophia George-Chung, a Jamaican reggae star with a top 10 hit in the mid-1980s named "Girlie Girlie". The professional player is an alumnus of Rancho Cucamonga High School in Rancho Cucamonga, California and the University of Oregon.

Chung recently signed to a one-year, \$5.7 million extension contract with the Patriots which will keep him with the team through the 2018 season.

- Edited from News Americas.



SPORTS



www.caribbeantoday.com

TOP GEAR: Jamaica, The Bahamas strike gold at 2017 World Relays

Jamaica and host The Bahamas earned the only gold medals for the Caribbean at the IAAF/BTC World Relays Bahamas 2017 staged last month in Nassau.

Jamaica won the 4x200 meters for women, while The Bahamas closed the meet with victory in the mixed 4x400.

When the dust settled after two days of competition at Thomas A Robinson Stadium, the United States emerged with its third straight "Golden Baton Award", symbol of overall supremacy at the championships, which is held every two years.

The U.S. finished on 60 points, ahead of second-placed Jamaica on 39. Australia finished third on 24. Other Caribbean teams picked up points, including Trinidad and Tobago, fifth (17 points); The Bahamas ninth (15); Barbados 14th (seven); Cuba 18th (four); British Virgin Islands 21st (two) and Antigua and Barbuda 24th



Jamaica's winning women's 4x200 meters team, from left, Jura Levy, Shericka Jackson, Sashalee Forbes and Elaine Thompson, shows off its gold medal.

(one).

Points were allotted based on places in which a team finished an event, with eight going to winners and one for finishing eight.

GLORY

Caribbean glory was

spread over two days. On the first day Jamaica's team, anchored by double Olympic

sent supporters into a cheering frenzy by winning the mixed 4x400 meters, an event

Games sprint gold medalist Elaine Thompson, smashed the field in the women's 4x200 in a new championship record one minute 29.04 seconds. Other team members for the final included Jura Levy, Shericka Jackson and Sashalee Forbes.

That same day, Barbados finished second to the U.S. in the men's 4x100 meters.

The following day, The Bahamas

which features two female and two male runners on each team. The Bahamian quartet included Shaunae Miller-Uibo, reigning women's Olympic 400 champion, plus Steven Gardiner, Anthonique Strachan and Michael Mathieu. The winning time was three minutes 14.42 seconds. The U.S. finished second and Jamaica third.

Also on the final day Jamaica finished third three times, behind the U.S. and Poland in the women's 4x400, behind the U.S. and Botswana in the men's 4x400 and behind Canada and the U.S. in the men's 4x200. Jamaica's women finished second to Germany in the 4x100.

Each winning team received \$50,000.



RECORD RUN



Members of Jamaica's under-18 4x100 meters relay team celebrates after winning the event in record-breaking style during their country's dominant performance at last month's CARIFTA Games in Curacao. The meet matches the best of the Caribbean's youth track and field talent.

Jamaica leads Caribbean championship charge at 2017 Penn Relays

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17)

Headley emerging on top with 13.00 meters.

Holmwood Technical's team of Delverna Bromfield, Brittney Campbell, Nicolee Foster and Chrisanni May captured the 4x800 meters

COA in 8:48.15 as the Jamaican high school girls ramped it up. In the 4x100 meters, they swept the top four spots with Edwin Allen's team of Kevona Davis, Kasheika Cameron, Shellece Clark and Patrice Moody setting a new meet record of 43.96 seconds.

In the high school girls 4x400 COA, Hydel beat all comers in a new record time of 3:33.99 seconds.

BOYS EXCEL

Jamaica's male students were not to be outdone, finishing one-two in the high school discus. Roje Stona of St. Jago won with 64.86 meters. St. Jago's Lushane Wilson was victorious in the high jump with 2.12 meters. Carlington Moulton from the University of West Indies, Mona Campus, won the college men's high jump, also

clearing 2.12 meters.

Jamaica's G.C. Foster won the college men's 4x100 COA as Colin King, Everton Clarke, Romario Williams and Chaddick Hinds clocked 38.94 seconds.

Calabar High of Jamaica shattered the meet record in the high school boys 4x100 COA. The team of Tyreke Wilson, Christopher Taylor, Michael Stephens and Dejour Russell won in 39.00.

Jamaican schools also landed the top three places in the boys 4x800 meters, with St. Elizabeth Technical winning impressively in 7:33.27 seconds.

Calabar returned with a vengeance in the 4x400 as the team of Anthony Carpenter, Aykeeme Francis, Malik James-King and Taylor smashed the meet record with 3:08.59.



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RISE FROM ASHES: Haiti's National Palace to be rebuilt ~ *president*

A project has been launched by President Jovenel Moise to rebuild the presidential palace in Haiti that was destroyed by a devastating earthquake in 2010.

Moise, in a statement issued last month, said the new palace will be built on the same location.

"For many, the post-earthquake reconstruction has not begun as long as the National Palace has not been rebuilt," said Moise in an address from the temporary presidential residence on the grounds of the collapsed palace.

The president also said that he has established a committee of engineers and architects to oversee the project and the construction will begin before the end of 2017.

Moise, who assumed office in February, also said



The presidential palace was ruined by earthquake.

- File photograph

the facade of the palace should look the same, but the interior would be adapted to the needs of a modern presidency.

The cost of the project is yet to be estimated.

More than 250,000 people were estimated to have been

killed, 300,000 injured and more than 1.5 million left homeless after the magnitude 7.0 quake on Jan. 12, 2010.

- Edited from CMC.



Art spotlights gentrification of Little Haiti

A solo exhibition by artist Eddie Arroyo, focusing on the gentrification of the neighborhood of Little Haiti in Miami, will be open **6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. May 6** at the Haitian Heritage Museum in South Florida.

According to a press release announcing the event, Arroyo adopts a future realist approach to document commercial buildings, which will soon be replaced by new development - chronicling the loss of community's cultural,

social, and economic fabric. lives and works in Miami.

The event is being held to celebrate Haitian Heritage Month and Miami Museum Month.



Haiti senator, ex-cop pleads guilty in U.S.

Former Haitian rebel leader-turned-politician Guy Philippe last month pleaded guilty to a drug money laundering charge in the United States.

However, the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) in Haiti has failed to decide on Philippe's political future.

The deal between U.S. law enforcement authorities and Philippe could result in the former police officer avoiding a potential sentence of life in prison for cocaine trafficking.

Under the plea deal, the recommended prison sentence

seat vacant, there are several alternatives that could be looked at,

including a new by-election in Grand'Anse, which will entail costs or replacing Philippe with Sorel Jacinthe, the second person with the highest votes in the area.

However, he made it clear that in all cases the CEP must await the verdict of the American justice system before acting.

On April 24, Philippe admitted in court that, as a high-ranking Haitian police commander in the city of Cap-Haitien, he accepted between \$1.5 million and \$3.5 million from drug smugglers from 1999 to 2003. Prosecutors said Philippe and other police officers took the money in exchange for ensuring safe passage for cocaine shipments



Philippe

The deal between U.S. law enforcement authorities and Philippe could result in the former police officer avoiding a potential sentence of life in prison for cocaine trafficking.

for Philippe is nine years and the drug trafficking charge would be dropped. He also faces a \$1.5 million fine at a sentencing hearing scheduled for July 5.

UNSURE

CEP Executive Director Uder Antoine said that the Council has not yet decided what decision to take regarding Philippe, who was elected as a senator in last November's elections in Haiti. The electoral decree is silent on the procedures cancelling the election of an elected senator who has not yet taken an oath, Antoine said.

He said while the CEP does not intend to leave the

Prosecutors said Philippe and other police officers took the money in exchange for ensuring safe passage for cocaine shipments from Colombia and other countries that went through Haiti on their way to Miami and other U.S. destinations.

from Colombia and other countries that went through Haiti on their way to Miami and other U.S. destinations.

- Edited from CMC.



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MARLEINE BASTIEN: Activist charts course for social justice

DAWN A. DAVIS

Marleine Bastien has been an activist for social justice and human rights most of her life.

In her native Haiti as a teenager, she fought for the right to access education, risking possible backlash from the then oppressive Duvalier regime. Bastien knew then what her life's work would be.

"It started in my native land when I sprung to action to protest an edict that we (students) could no longer study under lampposts," she recalled. "We were interviewed by the famous journalist Konpe Filo on his very progressive and popular radio show 'Haiti-Inter' ... We spoke with passion and I

found my voice."

Bastien comes from a family of activists. Her father built a school in their village and, as a result, was targeted by the despotic government. But even after being arrested he remained determined to educate the youth. Her grandmother was also an activist.

GREATER GOOD

Bastien said she was taught early the importance of contributing to the greater good. After witnessing atrocities



Bastien

ties in Haiti, her resolve became more fierce.

"When I arrived in Miami in 1981, two days later I volunteered at the Haitian Refugee Center," she explained. "My father intro-

duced me to the late Father Gerard Jean-Juste, who ran the center, and said this is my daughter, put her to work. And, I've been in the struggle for immigrant rights and human rights since."

Bastien has earned respect.

"My parents are proud," she said. "They see what I do as an extension of their work in Haiti. Their work was not in vain."

COURSE

As executive director of Fanm Ayisyen nan Miyami (FANM), Bastien represents the Haitian American and other ethnic communities in immigration rights, HIV-AIDS education, breast cancer awareness and domestic violence. FANM means

Haitian Women of Miami. However, Bastien is fighting for all genders, including the LGBT community.

Bastien charted a course through continued community outreach and activism. She spent five years at the Haitian Refugee Center helping refugees apply for political asylum and locating their family members. She then decided to become a social worker and earned a master's degree in the field at Florida International University.

Bastien spent a decade gaining clinical experience as a medical social worker. In 1991 she officially created FANM with the mandate to tackle the human rights and social injustice issues that

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 23)

U.S. Temporary Protected Status for 60,000 Haitians in limbo

FELICIA J. PERSAUD

Mark July 22, 2017 on your calendar. It is the day the 18-month extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) granted to qualified Haitian immigrants under the administration of former United States President Barack Obama administration will end.

The fate of some 60,000 Haitians will be in limbo, much like the DREAMERS under the Obama Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

So will current U.S. President Donald Trump extend TPS based on the many Haitians who switched sides and supported him during his campaign? Or will he flip-flop and throw them under the bus, much like he has been doing to his base in backtracking on many of his campaign promises?

Neither Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly or the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has – up to press time – made any disclosure on what will happen with this program, which some ultra-conservative supporters, including Judicial Watch, have called "temporary amnesty for illegal aliens."

REFUGE

The TPS for Haitian immigrants was originally granted after the devastating earthquake in the Caribbean nation in 2010. Then Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano granted an initial 18-month immigration relief to Haitian nationals who were in the U.S. as of Jan. 12, 2010.

The program provided temporary refuge for Haitian nationals who were in the U.S. and whose personal safety would have been endangered



Haitians want Trump to keep his promise.

by returning to Haiti. It allowed for qualified immigrants who applied using Form I-821, Application for Temporary Protected Status, and Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization; paid the necessary fees and completed a background security screening, to obtain a one-year Employment Authorization Document (EAD) that allowed them to work and also travel out of the country.

Since 2010, the program has been extended continually, allowing for those TPS Haiti beneficiaries who re-register during a 60-day period to receive a new EAD for one year. This July 22, 2017, the EAD and temporary legal status will run out again.

TRUMP'S CALL

It will be then up to the Trump administration to either save these Haitians or allow them to be deported back to Haiti.

So far, Haitian American leaders have been mounting a campaign to lobby Trump for another TPS extension.

Recently, FANM Ayisyen – Haitian Women of Miami – and other groups held a press conference in Miami's Little Haiti neighborhood.

"This is a real crisis for our community," FANM Director Marleine Bastien was quoted as saying. "People are scared to death."

Some are clinging to what Trump told them during his campaign last September as he courted Haitian immigrant voters at the Little Haiti Cultural Center in Miami.

"I really want to be your greatest champion," he said then. "I will be your champion, whether you vote for me or not."

Former Haiti Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe, who supported Trump over Hillary Clinton, is among those clinging to those words.

"Donald Trump came to Little Haiti, and he said that he would be the best president for

Haitians," said Lamothe, of the Dr. Louis G. Lamothe Foundation to aid rural Haiti, recently. "Haitians take him at his word."

TRUST

But can they?

So far Trump has done a lousy job of delivering on his campaign promises – the exception being his hard line immigration plan, as the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency increases sweeps in immigrant communities, detaining and deporting more immigrants out of the country and as the Department of Justice pushes for faster deportation of criminal immi-

grants via video hearings.

That immigration hard line stance should indeed cause Haitians to worry. But the reality is they should have known better than handing off their vote to a man that has absolutely no interest in Haiti or Haitians.

Now the gullibility of some may be the downfall of others.

- Edited from News Americas. Felicia J. Persaud is CMO at Hard Beat Communications, Inc. which owns the brands NewsAmericasNow, CaribPRWire and Invest CaribbeanNow.



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MINUSTAH to end in 2017

UNITED NATIONS – Sandra Honoré, head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission (MINUSTAH), said the mission will cease operations in Haiti within six months.

Addressing the United Nations Security Council last month, Honoré said progress achieved during the past 13 years in Haiti's stabilization process is notable and it "is therefore timely to reshape the partnership among the international community, the United Nations and Haiti with a view to ensuring the sustainability of this progress."



Honoré

"It is with this in mind, that the secretary-general has recommended the closure of MINUSTAH in six months from now and the establishment of a smaller peacekeeping operation with concentrated focus on the rule of law and police development, with strong good offices and human rights monitoring

roles," she added.

The U.N. mission, established in June 2004 by a U.N. Security Council resolution, succeeded a multinational interim force (MIF) after then President Bertrand Aristide departed Haiti for exile in the aftermath of an armed conflict, which spread to several cities across the country.

In Jan. 2010, the U.N. Security Council, by resolution, endorsed the secretary-general's recommendation to increase the overall force levels of MINUSTAH to support the immediate recovery, reconstruction and stability efforts in Haiti.

Following the completion of presidential elections in 2011, MINUSTAH has been working to fulfill its original mandate to restore a secure and stable environment, to promote the political process, to strengthen Haiti's government institutions and rule-of-law-structures, as well as to promote and to protect human rights.

- Edited from CMC.



DANCE MARATHON



- Photograph by The Darkroom, Baltimore Sun

A dance celebration to mark Haitian History Month will be held on **May 6** in South Florida. The "Unity Dance Marathon", being staged by FANM, Florida Immigrant Coalition and South Florida Voices for Working Families, will be staged at the Little Haiti Cultural Center, 212 N.E. 59th Terrace in Miami. Registration begins at 8 a.m. and workshops at 9 a.m.

Haitian migrants stuck in Mexico after U.S. refuses them entry

Some 4,000 Haitians are still stuck in Tijuana, Mexico after failing to benefit from a special humanitarian parole to enter the United States last September, according to Haitian actor Jimmy Jean Louis.

Jean Louis visited some of the shelters housing Haitians with actor and writer Rainn Wilson and posted the pictures with a call to action on his Twitter account last month.

A photograph posted by Jean Louis showed hundreds of migrants at the Iglesias Quadrado sleeping on the floor in a crowded room.

Thousands of Haitians crossed South America by car, bus, boat and walking to get to Mexico. From there they hoped to get into the U.S. following Hurricane Matthews, which killed more than 500 people and left 1.4 million homeless in Haiti in October.

OPPORTUNITY

Following the hurricane, the administration of then U.S. President Barack Obama announced it would stop deporting Haitians from inside the U.S. This led to thousands of Haitians trying to enter the U.S. by traveling through Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Guatemala. They ended up in Mexico, where they hoped for an asy-



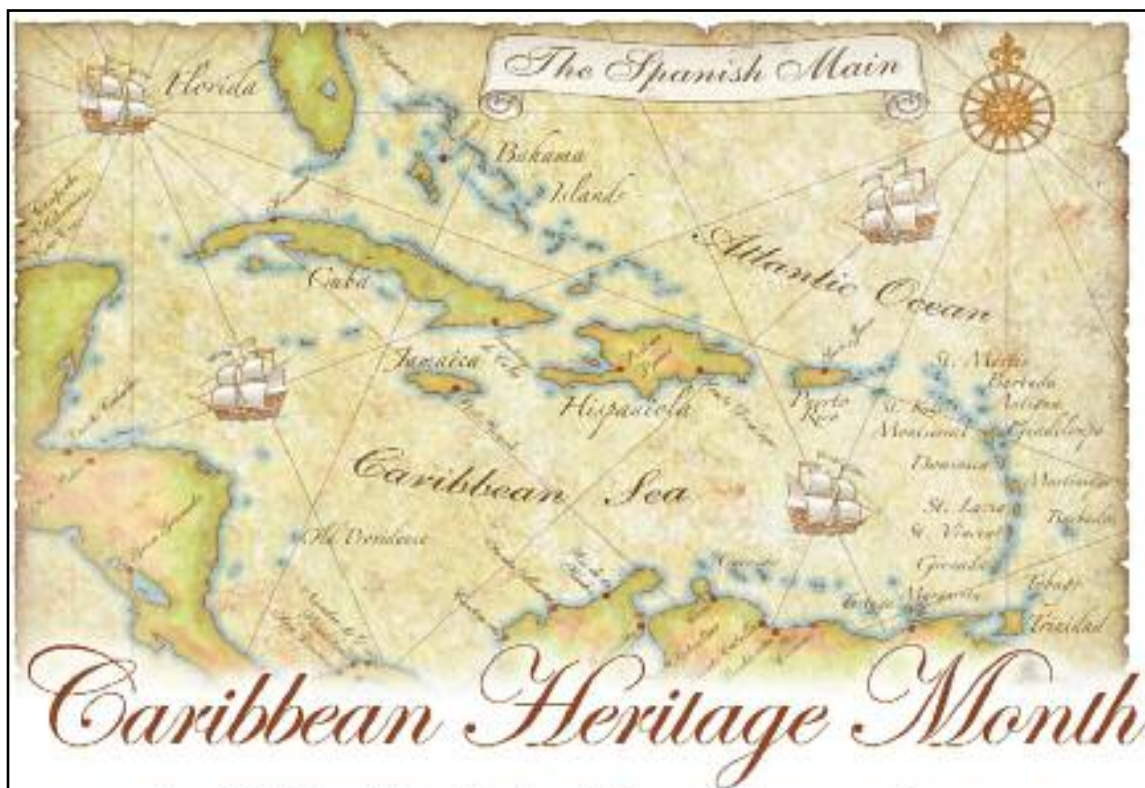
- Photograph posted by Jean Louis shows migrants at the Iglesias Quadrado.

lum appointment with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency or attempt to cross the border on their own.

With a new administration in power in the U.S., which has expressed its intent to be tougher on immigration, it has become more difficult for Haitians to enter, forcing some to be stuck in limbo in Mexico.

The Mexican government stopped funding the shelters in February and church groups, including the Templo Embajadores De Jesus, SO.S. Migrante Adopt a Shelter and the San Diego non-profit Border Angels, have been collecting donations to help the 38 Tijuana shelters feed the mostly Haitian migrants and refugees.

- Edited from News Americas.



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JEAN MONESTIME: From 'Dreamer' to Miami-Dade commissioner

DAWN A. DAVIS

Jean Monestime, the first Haitian American to serve as Miami-Dade County commissioner, represents a culturally diverse community that encompasses parts of the City of Miami, North Miami Beach, Opa-locka, Hialeah and unincorporated areas of Liberty City, Biscayne Gardens and North Dade Central.

The make-up his locality is almost equal parts Haitian American, African American, Caucasian and Asian. So heterogeneous is his constituency, Monestime refers to it as "the United Nations of communities."

Monestime, a former Miami-Dade public school teacher, city councilman, vice mayor and community leader easily won the District 2 seat in 2010 and 2014.

His membership in organizations such as the Haitian-

American Grassroots Coalition, African-American NON-GROUP Coalition, the North Miami Community Redevelopment Agency and others has also given him

"Creating wealth involves three things, family, business and real estate. Part of creating wealth is about creating greater access for residents toward home ownership."

insight into issues, concerns and achievements among residents. Monestime said residents' primary concerns include "quality of life, financial wellbeing, jobs, housing and youth development."

RESOLUTION

Under his leadership the commissioner created a resolution that allows juvenile first offenders to receive citations rather than criminal records that would follow them through life. Monestime claims to have helped raise funds for 1,300 summer jobs and his mantra is to "focus on youth development," working to build self-esteem and



Monestime

inspire the next generation.

"Creating wealth involves three things, family, business and real estate," said Monestime. "Part of creating wealth is about creating greater access for residents toward home ownership."

As a real estate executive and Haitian-born, Monestime knows the value most Caribbean nationals place on home ownership and stability. He and his team crafted legislation to increase home ownership in his constituency

through a special housing fund.

But some Haitian nationals do not have piece of mind laying down roots in the United States. Based on immigration policies of the new U.S. administration under President Donald Trump, the issue is now in focus. Noting the fears and uncertainty, Monestime sponsored a Miami-Dade legislative resolution imploring Trump to extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Haitian nationals, which expires in July.

and later an elected advocate for rights and justice and could be viewed as a poster boy for immigrant success in the U.S.

"What I would say to those who are worried about their status is, you have an advocate who is fighting for you," said Monestime. "(I am) an advocate who was in your shoes, one that has the ability to work toward a solution."

May is Haitian Heritage Month and Haitian Flag Day. Monestime is urging Haitian-

"What I would say to those who are worried about their status is, you have an advocate who is fighting for you. (I am) an advocate who was in your shoes, one that has the ability to work toward a solution."

DACA

Another topical discussion is the possible termination of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) executive order issued by then President Barack Obama in 2012. It gives immigrant youth - "Dreamers" - a reprieve against deportation. Monestime, a "Dreamer" himself, came to the U.S. more than 30 years ago. He became a citizen advocate

born constituents to be inspired by their proud Haitian culture, continue to believe in family and honor those in the wider community.

"Remember, your culture is your brand," he said.

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



End temporary protection for Haitians ~ USCIS boss

WASHINGTON, D.C. - James McCament, acting director of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), has issued a recommendation that the U.S. end temporary protections by next January for 50,000 Haitians who were allowed to remain in the U.S. following a series of natural disasters that crippled the French-speaking Caribbean nation.

In a letter, a copy of which was obtained by **USA Today**, McCament said that conditions in Haiti have improved enough to end Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians.

The administration of former U.S. President Barack Obama first offered TPS

to Haitians following the devastating 2010 earthquake.

The protection was extended several times, with the latest set to expire on July 22.

The report noted that McCament proposed an extension to January to allow for a "period of orderly transition," but said the program should not be extended beyond then.

However, that a final decision on the Haitians' fate rests with U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary John Kelly. According to spokesman David Lapan, Kelly had not made that decision up to press time.

- Edited from CMC.



Little Haiti Cultural Complex to host multiple events

The City of Miami's Little Haiti Cultural Complex (LHCC) will be the site for more than a dozen exhibitions and events during May, Haitian Heritage Month.

Of these events, three are produced by LHCC - "Ayisyen Mwen Ye", an exhibition in its art gallery; "Caribbean Market Day", featuring local arts, goods, food and entertainment; and "Sounds of Little Haiti", a free outdoor musical concert. "Ayisyen Mwen Ye" will

showcase the works of a new generation of Haitian and Haitian American artists alongside other artists. It pays homage to the wisdom of the elders by drawing upon the tradition of Haitian proverbs, which form a connecting thread between past, present and future.

The free exhibit will run from May 5 to June 30, with a special reception at 5 p.m. May 18, Haitian Flag Day.

There will also be the following free special

events: Zakafest, a family-friendly Haitian roots and folklore music festival on May 6; and the Little Haiti Book Festival, two days of exposure to Caribbean writers, booksellers and performers, as a part of Miami Book Fair's ReadCaribbean program, May 27-28.

For more information about events at LHCC, including specific dates and times, call **305-960-2969** or e-mail **LHCC@miamigov.com**.



MARLEINE BASTIEN: Activist charts course to social justice

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21)

plague the Haitian American community.

GENTRIFICATION

Among the biggest problems is a fast-moving gentrification "epidemic" in Miami's Little Haiti neighborhood, where many Haitian nationals have called home for years. In one example, an area once called Sabal Palm Court,



Bastien

rebranded as Design Place, is under massive redevelopment.

"Sabal Palm used to have 100 percent Haitians living there, including Father Gerard Jean-Juste," said Bastien. "But now the area is completely gentrified. Now there are no

Haitians there. Instead there is a billion dollar residential complex."

Bastien insisted Little Haiti must be saved. She lambasted the government for creating policies that discriminate against dark skinned newcomers.

"Ever since the black masses of refugees started to come, there have been discriminatory policies aimed at excluding them without giv-

ing them the basic right of due process, which is wrong," Bastien explained. "... At FANM we're not only fighting for us, we are fighting for our immigrant families because we are all in this together."

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



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