

Caribbean Life

email: caribbeanlife@cnglocal.com

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classified
section**



Canadian economic aid for the Caribbean

By Nelson A. King

Canada's Minister of International Cooperation Beverley J. Oda, announced on Feb. 10 her country's support for local economic development in the Caribbean to the tune of CAN\$20 million.

Through a Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funded project, Oda said the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) will assist local Caribbean municipalities build and strengthen their local economies.

She said the Caribbean Local Economic Development (CARILED) *Continued on page 4*



Bridging The Gap

Members of Tutor Our Children, NY rally to preserve funding for after-school programs for 90,000 low-income students statewide trapped in failing schools. See page 3. Photo by Marcia Maxwell.

ATTACK ON THE PRESS

Trinidad PM condemns police

By Bert Wilkinson

No one, including expatriate Trinidad and Tobago Police Commissioner Dwayne Gibbs seems to know exactly why a bat-

tery of police officers invaded the offices of Trinidad's Newsday newspaper in Port of Spain last week, spent several hours *Continued on page 4*

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Bahamas

Despite the region spending millions of dollars to secure airlift to the Caribbean, ticket prices are still too high and remain insufficient to sustain the industry, according to Josef Forstmayr, president the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA).

He was at the time addressing at the opening of Caribbean Marketplace at the Atlantis Resort on Paradise Island in the Bahamas.

Forstmayr estimated in 2010 the Caribbean governments "collectively paid \$45 million - only to find that our airlift is still inadequate and way too expensive for our visitors."

The CHTA president noted intra-Caribbean tourism "once represented 13 percent of the region's tourism, as much as Canada, The combined population of Caribbean countries is 40 million."

Bahamas

Authorities in the Bahamas say a 26-year-old U.S. tourist died aboard a Carnival cruise ship and the cruise was delayed pending the investigation.

Police said in a statement that a man from South Carolina apparently jumped from one floor to another aboard the Carnival Fantasy that had docked in Nassau recently. He was declared dead at the scene.

Carnival issued a statement saying the guest apparently fell.

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Fast Caribbean ferry service

By Azad Ali

A fast ferry service between the Eastern Caribbean islands is soon to start sailing.

This was revealed by Trinidad and Tobago Transport Minister Devant Maharaj who told a post Cabinet news conference at the Diplomatic Centre, Port of Spain recently that the company managing the service, Fast Caribbean Ltd., has agreed to provide 100,000 seats per year at a special price of \$10 a ticket but the average price for citizens of T&T would be between \$25 and \$35 a seat.

The ferry will also transport goods.

Maharaj said a Cabinet appointed team is in negotiations with the company to set up the ferry service.

He stressed that the initiative was a private sector one and that government would be putting no cash in the service.

He said the fast ferry proposal, which the team would be reviewing proposes to launch the service in 2012 and it would be based in Port of Spain.



T&T Foreign Affairs Minister Suruj Rambachan.

AP Photo/David Karp

Phase one of the service, he said, would offer trips to the islands of Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia and Barbados.

Maharaj said Fast Caribbean Ltd, Barbados-based consortium, will charter from owners Montrose Global a 112-meter wave piercing catamaran similar to those operating on the Trinidad to Tobago route.

The minister said a minimum capital start up of \$12 million was required for the service.

But he noted that the private sector team was proposing to raise \$20 million.

The catamaran would leave Port of Spain at 6:00 a.m. and arrive in Barbados (the last stop on its route at 6:00 p.m.)

Maharaj said once commercially viable in

phase one of the project, additional routes will be added.

Foreign Affairs Minister Suruj Rambachan said the ferry would help promote tourism, while Trade and Industry Minister Stephen Cadiz said it would bring cheaper freight charges for business in the region.

Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar first announced its intention to have a ferry service linking Trinidad and Tobago and the Eastern Caribbean in September last year and invited proposals from suitable investors in October 2011.

Five companies responded and Fast Ferry Caribbean Ltd was selected.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves has welcomed the plan for a ferry service to the four southern Caribbean islands.

He said he does not see the initiative competing with either Caribbean Airlines Ltd or Liat, However, he said it provides an opportunity for the discussion on one Caribbean air carrier.

Trinidad economy 'turning the corner'

By Nelson A. King

After concluding Article IV consultation with government authorities and other officials in Trinidad and Tobago, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) says "there is concrete evidence" that the twin-island republic's economy is "turning the corner."

Judith Gold, head of the IMF mission, which visited Trinidad and Tobago from Feb. 1-10, said on Feb. 10 that economic growth will resume in 2012, "notwithstanding the ongoing technical disruptions in the energy sector."

She said real economic activity is projected to increase by 1.7 percent in 2012, "as private sector credit expansion gains momentum; the resolution of a large failed insurance company (CLICO) proceeds; the faster pace of government investment continues; and energy production returns to normal, as the maintenance work is completed while energy prices remain high."

Still, the mission head said there are downside risks to the forecast, stemming from the global economic environment, uncertainty in gas prices, and possible delays in the implementation of the public sector investment program.

"The economic slowdown that began with the global financial crisis has been more profound and lasted longer than anticipated," said Gold, adding that the economy is estimated to have contracted by 1.3 percent in 2011, after recording no growth in 2010 and a significant decline in 2009.

She said ample buffers, including savings in the Heritage and Stabilization Fund, low public debt, and high international reserves, have cushioned the impact of the crisis, including the failure of CLICO.

Gold said while unemployment has increased during this period, it remains low at 5.8 percent.

She said inflation, despite its recent resurgence, due to volatility in food prices, also remains moderate at 5.3 percent.

Top cop on trial for rape, buys time

By Bert Wilkinson

Facing a criminal charge of rape, embattled Police Chief Henry Greene has secured a temporary court order barring junior officers from charging him as he challenges the recommendation from the state prosecutor's office to indict him on the felony charge, saying the evidence in the complaint is too weak to secure a conviction.

Greene, through a battery of lawyers on Tuesday, Feb. 10, was able to persuade Chief Justice Ian Chang to hold off the charge until Feb. 20, when the court hears the motion for a second time.

Government last month asked Greene, 57, to step aside while it investigates a complaint from a 34-year-old married mother of two that he took her to a

city hotel and raped her after she had approached him for help in a separate police matter.

If he is indeed charged, he would be the first commissioner and highest ranking member of the disciplined services to be hauled before the courts on a charge of such a nature. It will also signal his certain dismissal from a force he has served since the 1970s.

Greene made it clear in his arguments presented to the court on Tuesday that the sex was consensual and followed social time together before when the two had "beverages" at senior police officers club and later went to the motel consensually.

His lawyers want the court to rule that the chief state prosecutor should "quash her advice" to local



Commissioner Henry Greene. File photo

police that he should be charged with the offence saying that "the applicant ought not to be prosecuted for the offence as the realistic prospect of conviction' was not met."

The scandal has stunned the Caribbean trade bloc nation and the case has attracted widespread coverage on a daily basis.

In 2006 on the day he

became chief, the US government revoked his visa, suggesting that he had benefited directly from the drug trade, charges he has denied.

Several senior current and former officers with whom Greene served over the decades, including predecessor and legislator Winston Felix, recall several less than consensual sexual encounters Greene has had with junior female ranks, many of whom have remained quiet because of the shame and embarrassment.

It is unclear whether any of them will step forward to give evidence on behalf of the woman if he is charged. Lawyers say the effort to prevent the charge being instituted is rather novel and look forward to the final court ruling.

Gloomy outlook for Caribbean economies

By Nelson A. King

The director of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Western Hemisphere Department, Nicolás Eyzaguirre, has warned that weaker world growth will adversely affect economic activity in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Eyzaguirre said in Washington on Feb. 14 that the IMF has "sharply marked down" its forecast for world growth, "and it now expects a mild recession in the euro area."

Concretely, the Fund expects the world economy to grow by just 3.25 percent in 2012, three-quarter percentage points lower than its September forecasts, Eyzaguirre said.

"As for Latin America and the Caribbean, a weaker world economy and softer commodity prices translate into a gloomier outlook," he said.

"We've marked down our growth forecasts for the region as a whole by about 0.5 percent for this year. The overall markdown for Latin America is a bit smaller than for the globe, because much of the region's economies still enjoy good domestic momentum and stable financial systems," he added.

Moreover, Eyzaguirre said commodity prices remain "well above their long-term trend," despite the recent decline, stating that external financing remains "relatively cheap and readily available."

He said while global uncertainties have "sparked volatility in capital inflows, we have yet to observe a reversal.

"But to be sure, there is a lot of variation in our forecast revisions within the region," said IMF director, cautioning that growth in the Caribbean "will continue to lag, held back by weak tourism flows from advanced countries and high public debt.

"But let me emphasize, the outlook for the region hinges on policy action in Europe. Policymakers there need to intensify their efforts to contain the crisis, and put an end to the rise in sovereign spreads and the cutback in bank lending that threaten the global economy in 2012," he said.

Eyzaguirre said these efforts should be supported by "appropriate" policy actions elsewhere in the advanced and emerging world.

Otherwise, he warned that world growth in 2012 could be some 2 percentage points lower, "dragging down commodity prices and heightening financial strains.

"For our region, this would mean more sluggish exports, worse terms of trade, and tighter borrowing conditions," he said.

Eyzaguirre, therefore, urged regional policymakers to take action on three fronts.

Firstly, he recommended that they rebuild fiscal buffers, to maintain fiscal credibility and prepare for a further deterioration in global conditions.

Secondly, he urged that policymakers be ready to ease monetary policy, "where strong institutions and low inflation would permit it. Watch financial systems closely for signs of stress."

Lastly, Eyzaguirre recommended that regional policymakers maintain flexible exchange rates, stating that IMF research shows that "these buffer shocks, particularly from commodity prices."

Caribs as XLVI pioneers

By Vinette K. Pryce

"The key thing is to remember this: that all things are possible for those who believe. And we always believed, we always knew we *could* get here." -- Giants head coach Tom Coughlin said at City Hall.

The Superbowl-winning Giants coach may have been making a statement relevant to every athlete; however, the poignant message might have resonated most on Caribbean nationals who shared the victory and comprised the championship team.

Among the Big Blue champions, Kevin Booth a 320-pound New York-born Jamaican represented. Although he was not born on the island, the guard and offensive lineman for the New York Giants boasts roots from Jamaica. Both his parents Charles and Patreca Langley-Boothe hail from the parish of Clarendon.

The tourist board of Puerto Rico could not have had a better promoter than Victor Cruz who may be forever known as Mr. Salsa. During the deciding game in Indianapolis the wide receiver had fans, young and old mimicking his trademarked Latin dance steps each time the Giants made a touch-down.

And 6ft 4in, 328-pound, Linval Joseph hails from St. Croix. The 23 year-old, defensive tackle for the team made history for the Virgin Islands by being first from his country to play in the Superbowl. Joseph skipped his final year at East Carolina University to enter the National



New England Patriots Vince Wilfork #75 in action against New York Giants Kevin Booth #75 at Super Bowl XLVI on Sunday, February 5, 2012 in Indianapolis, IN. The Giants defeated the Patriots 21-17.

(AP Photo/Gregory Payan)

Football League. He signed a four-year deal earning \$4.1 million. The contract also includes a guarantee of making 2.5 million.

They were among the players New York City showered with love and ticker Tuesday as they rode through the Canyon of Heroes cheered by millions of adoring fans.

Afterwards at City Hall they joined

teammates to shout: "We got a ring."

As the nation watched live, television coverage, friends and family members from the region cheered the milestone achievement.

Either way, Superbowl XLVI will be remembered for representation on both teams from Caribbean nationals born in Spanish, French and English countries in the region.

Campaign to save after-school tutoring

By Marcia Maxwell

Parents rallied on the steps of City Hall Wednesday, Feb. 8 to call on the New York State Board of Regents to save free after-school tutoring by carving out a waiver for Supplemental Education Services (SES). The New York campaign for Tutor Our Children coordinated the rally, which was led by Adrienne Nyamsi, director and the Rev. Takarkah Robinson, founder and CEO of The Brooklyn Anti-Violence Coalition.

Almost 90,000 low-income students trapped in failing schools across New York State receive free tutoring services to help bridge the achievement gap. New York State is in the process of applying for a full waiver from various requirements of the No Child Left Behind law. If this materializes, all SES funds which -- in addition to providing underprivileged students with free tutoring, also engage parents by giving them an opportunity to choose the supplementary educational services best suited for their children, will be eliminated.

The Board of Regents was sched-



Adrienne Nyamsi, director of the New York Campaign for Tutor Our Children, the Rev. Takarkah Robinson, founder and CEO of The Brooklyn Anti-Violence Coalition and members of the coalition are accompanied by parents at the of the coalition at the City Hall rally.

Photo by Marcia Maxwell.

uled to decide Monday, Feb. 13, whether to approve the state's waiver application.

The Tutor Our Children New York coalition was formed to protect Supplemental Education Services for 87,500 New York students in need. The coalition includes parents, con-

cerned community-based organizations and tutoring service providers across the state working to protect free after-school tutoring for needy children in low-performing schools. There are currently 39 coalition members, and the number continues to grow.

Pols upset over police raid

Continued from cover

searching computers, files and other company property before carting away computer hard drives and flash drives, as well as other material in a move that shocked all across the island's political divide.

The hitherto unprecedented move forced the administration of Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar to condemn the action of the police, distance itself from passing any orders to the effect and to demand explanations from the already beleaguered police chief, under fire for a series of administrative gaffes including the force's inability to stem gang-related murders.

"The execution of a search warrant on a media house by police officers is an extreme act," said a clearly embarrassed office of the prime minister. "As such, it must be proportionate to the nature of the offence under investigation and the circumstances of alleged crime. The government does not know what prompted such

strong action but expects a mature, disciplined, professional and responsible use of force by the police in the execution of their duties," Persad-Bissessar said.

That it is the second time in weeks detectives had invaded a newsroom stunned nearly everyone in the media fraternity across the Caribbean, triggering widespread condemnation and calls for the head of the police chief and explanations as to why police had felt compelled to violate the newsroom of a media house in a non-criminal matter.

Opposition PNM leader Keith Rowley said the action of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service in this matter, was "hopelessly misguided and an abuse of the rights of citizens to know what is being done to them and in their name."

"If this is allowed to become an acceptable way of doing investigations in this country, then the very essential freedom of the press which is enshrined in our Constitution will be effective-

ly destroyed and the population will be at the mercy of the Executive, which would always want to keep embarrassing information from the knowledge of the public."

Prakash Ramadhar, leader of the minority opposition faction, COP said the police action "is an atrocious attack on the freedom of the press, and we must all be vigilant to ensure that this is not repeated in the almost callous way it has been."

"If you don't have confidentiality of your sources you have nothing," he added. "And this is an arrow in the heart of the responsibilities and authority of the media."

At center of issue is the belief among members of the national integrity commission that reporter Andre Bagoo had had an inside track to commission members, allowing him to carry newspaper stories based on leaks from commission insiders.

Frustrated with the continuing reportage, police obtained search warrants and brushed aside internal

security to carry out their search, seize property and later took Baggo to his city home to conduct a further search and confiscation of private property.

Both PNM and COP opposition groups also demanded answers from the police high command in 24 hours, while the umbrella Trinidad-based Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM) said the "actions of the police reek of intimidation and can be interpreted as an attempt to put a damper on media efforts to get to the bottom of a matter of great public interest and concern." Additionally, it said that "we are not comforted by government claims of ignorance in the face of this threat to press freedom in Trinidad and Tobago and call on the administration to clearly state its specific position on the actions of this arm of the national security infrastructure."

Again, as condemnations continue to pour in, the country's top cop said he had no prior knowledge of the raid.

Support for Carib economic growth

Continued from cover

project will help to "improve local communities, establish business environments to support small and medium-sized enterprises.

"Canada's local municipalities not only work to provide Canadians with safe, vibrant and prosperous communities, for 25 years they also shared their expertise with other in developing countries around the world," Oda said.

"Canadians can take pride in the membership of the FCM and in the work they will undertake to help local Caribbean communities strengthen their local economic development and increase business opportunities in 6 different countries," she added.

The Canadian Minister of International Corporation said CARILED will support up to 50 local governments and agencies,

which, in turn, "will reach up to 500 small enterprises in six countries.

"By working directly with local governments, local authorities, and a wide range of stakeholders, this project will use local resources and create new jobs, stimulating local economic growth," she said.

The announcement took place at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' annual Sustainable Communities Conference, in Ottawa, Canada, with the participation of the FCM President, Berry Vrbanovic, and the High Commissioner of the Bahamas and Dean of the CARICOM Diplomats, Michael D. Smith.

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Harriet Tubman, conductor of the Underground Railroad

In celebration of Black History Month, 10 direct descendants and family members of historic icon Harriet Ross Tubman, including Charles E.T. Ross (great-great-great nephew) and Valery Ross Manokey (great-great niece/oldest living descendant on eastern shore) visited The Presidents Gallery by Madame Tussauds <<http://www.madame-tussauds.com/washington/>> to help unveil a new wax likeness of the renowned abolitionist and conductor of the Underground Railroad at the attraction, 1001 F St. NW (corner of 10th and F Streets, Washington, DC.

“Harriet Tubman was an incredible woman whose accomplishments and contributions played a pivotal role in the history of the United States, cementing her status as a true American icon,” said Dan Rogoski, General Manager of The Presidents Gallery by Madame Tussauds. “We are honored to have Harriet Tubman’s descendants with us today for the unveiling and induction of her wax figure into our expanding Presidents Gallery — an interactive journey through America’s history.”

Harriet Tubman (born Araminta

Ross, calling herself Harriet later in life) was an African-American abolitionist, humanitarian and spy for the Union during the U.S. Civil War. After escaping from slavery, into which she was born, she reportedly freed more than 300 slaves via the elaborate network of safe houses known as the Underground Railroad. Tubman was born in Dorchester County, M.D., an area from which many of the descendants and family members attending the event currently reside, including Charles E.T. Ross and Valery Ross, who live in Cambridge, M.D.

“We are ecstatic and overjoyed to see Aunt Harriet being celebrated and receiving recognition for her contributions to humanity, which is long overdue,” said Charles Ross.

The additional family members who attended the event include: Bernice Ross Carney, Betty Ross and Peggy Ross (great-great niece’s and also Valery’s sisters); Judy Ross, Patricia Ross Hawkins, Elizabeth Ross Stanley and Ernest D. Ross (great-great-great nieces and nephew); and Jackie Ross Henry (great-great-great-great niece).

Children from Washington



Members of the Tubman clan at Madame Tussauds in Washington D.C. The President’s Gallery by Madame Tussauds;

of photographs and when available, hours of video footage. Of course in some cases, the artists do not have the luxury of photographs or videos (as with the Tubman figure) and need to rely on historical accounts, even paintings.

The Presidents Gallery by Madame Tussauds is a fully interactive, full-sensory experience, where visitors are able to touch, see and hear major historical events and celebrities in a way unlike any other Washington D.C. attraction. The attraction showcases wax figures of some of the world’s most recognized icons, including: international superstars Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt; superstars Michael Jackson, Britney Spears, Jennifer Lopez, Rihanna and Tyra Banks; as well as all 44 U.S. Presidents, featured in the recently-launched U.S. Presidents Gallery. Madame Tussauds is located on the corner of F and 10th Streets, NW, within walking distance of the National Mall and the White House. For more information, visit www.madametussaudsdc.com <<http://www.madametussaudsdc.com>> or call 202-942-7300 or 888-WAX-INDC.

D.C.’s Harriet Tubman Elementary School were also on-hand to witness the unveiling of the figure of the historic woman for whom their school is named.

Madame Tussauds studio artists in London worked tirelessly to create this entirely new wax figure of Harriet Tubman. The figure-making process is incredibly intricate taking anywhere from three to six months from

start to finish. For example, artists insert each strand of hair individually; creating just the head of the wax figure can take up to five weeks alone. Materials such as red silk are used to create the veins on the eyeballs and it can take technicians almost four days to make a set of teeth. In order to make the figures as lifelike as possible, Madame Tussauds artists study hundreds

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Grenada airport remains open despite Taiwan's squeeze

The government of Grenada has assured its citizens and visitors to the island that the Maurice Bishop International Airport (MBIA) will remain in full and effective operation.

This assurance came following a U.S. court order for airlines and ships doing business with Grenada to pay their fees due to Grenada into a special account in the U.S.

This situation arose as result of the EXIM Bank of Taiwan obtaining judgment against the government of Grenada for outstanding loans in a suit filed in the United States.

Information Minister Senator Glen Noel on Monday said the administration will make the necessary financial arrangements for the Grenada Airports Authority to ensure the facility remains

open to daily traffic.

"The government will do whatever is necessary to ensure the airport remains operational. The MBIA is vital to our economy and we will ensure that the daily operations of the facility are not compromised," Senator Noel said.

He said, while it is a fact that the airlines servicing Grenada have been directed to pay monies due to the Airports Authority into a special account, the government of Grenada will act "promptly and decisively," to ensure that the Authority continues to service the airlines, visitors and the travelling public.

The government is expected to give a complete update on the status of efforts aimed at bringing a resolution to the debt with EXIM Bank of Taiwan, during the pres-

entation of the 2012 budget in March.

The Grenada Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation in a release states, "The St. George's Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation is working with other government departments, particularly the Attorney General's Chambers and the Ministry of Finance, to arrive at a solution to the current financial difficulties being experienced by the Grenada Airports Authority (GAA).

The Taiwanese have made a claim for all monies owing to the government of Grenada and its agencies to be paid against the loan. Consequently, a request was made to airlines operating on the Grenada route to pay monies owed to the Grenada Airports Authority to the Taiwanese.

An escrow account has

been established, and carriers such as Virgin Airlines, British Airways, and Delta Airlines have begun to deposit monies owed to the Airports Authority into the said account. This has placed the Airports Authority in a very precarious financial position.

"Mr. Rodney George, chairman of the Grenada Airports Authority, has alerted us in the government about the situation facing our airport. The Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation will continue to work with other government departments to ensure this matter is resolved quickly and does not severely disrupt airport operations, which would directly impact the economy at a time when it can be least afforded.

U.S. govt responds to Buju's appeal

MIAMI (AP) — The U.S. government says plenty of evidence supports a federal jury's conviction of Jamaican reggae star Buju Banton on cocaine conspiracy and trafficking charges.

Banton, whose real name is Mark Myrie, is appealing the February 2011 conviction. Defense attorney David O. Markus says his client was relentlessly pursued by a government informant, resulting in improper entrapment.

Federal prosecutors filed their response Friday in Atlanta's federal appeals court.

Prosecutors say Banton's words and actions, in recorded conversations and a videotaped meeting in a Sarasota, Fla., warehouse where Banton tasted some cocaine, revealed the singer "eagerly brokered" a drug deal between a friend and undercover government agents.

They also asked the appeals court to reverse a judge's decision to toss a related gun charge.

Banton is serving a 10-year prison sentence.



Buju Banton.
AP Photo/Yesikka Vivancos

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Useful information about home purchasing

By Rick Razak

They told you, you couldn't until they saw you walking into your brand new home with your family.

There is no other time like the holidays; there is goodness in the air knowing that you will be in the company of your family and friends. Some families openly talk about their goals for the new year, while other families are a bit more reserved, however they may openly share with enthusiasm that in the coming year they hope to purchase a new home with a huge backyard space for the children to play in the summer months.

In some families this will be met with cheers and words of encouragement, but this is just the beginning. The road ahead is long but with the right people in place the journey will be smooth and fast. Purchasing a home is a big investment and it must be treated as an investment. The decision will remain tied to you and your family for 15 or 30 years which is the usual length of most mortgages today, so it is important that the process is treated with a great deal of care and it is not rushed and the due diligence is done.

Many times a family would see an open house sign on Sunday at the head of a wide, beautiful tree-lined block and decide to have a look at the property hoping that the real estate broker will guide them through the process. And relying completely on the good faith of the realtor is one of ways to start the home shopping process, however there is a better and simpler approach that gives you the up-and-coming homeowner more control over the process and at the

same time makes the real estate broker's job much easier.

The first step would be to see your banker, a loan officer in your local mortgage bank. The reason you must see the mortgage banker before meeting with the real estate broker is to get pre-approved or qualified to make your home purchase. The banker will ask you some very personal financial questions before arriving at a decision of how much money you are qualified to borrow. In addition to all the financial questions; at the time of making the appointment to see the banker or loan officer, you will be asked to bring with you to the appointment a list of documents. For example: tax returns for the past two years, a recent pay stub, proof of funds and a few other documents.

At the end of your meeting with the banker, you should know what your credit scores are and how much money you are qualified to spend once you decided on the property you will be purchasing. The banker will give you a pre-qualification letter with the amount you are qualified to borrow. For example: let us say you are qualified for \$700,000, you can begin shopping for homes up to that amount.

With the pre-qualification in hand, the Real Estate Broker will leap at your feet to show homes of your choosing, because the broker knows you are qualified to buy and you are not wasting his time, and he is not wasting yours. The goal is to present yourself to your local neighborhood real estate broker as a prepared and qualified homebuyer ready to do business.

Please send your questions or comments to rickthebanker@gmail.com

Letters to the Editor are welcome from all readers. They should be addressed care of this newspaper to Kenton Kirby, Editor, Caribbean-Life Publications, 1 MetroTech Center North, Brooklyn, New York 11201, or sent via e-mail to caribbeanlife@cnglocal.com All letters, including those submitted via e-mail, MUST be signed and the individual's verifiable address and telephone number included. Note that the address and telephone number will NOT be published and the name will be published or withheld on request. No unsigned letters can be accepted for publication. The editor reserves the right to edit all submissions.

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Contributing Writers: Azad Ali, Roderick J. Broome, Fabian Burrell, Robert Elkin, Patrick Horne, Nelson King, Tequila Minsky, Donna Lamb, Vinette K. Pryce, George H. Whyte, Tangerine Clarke, Bert Wilkinson, Lloyd Kam Williams
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Continuation of Payroll Tax Cut

U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) joined 13 of her Senate colleagues to urge the conference committee negotiating the Temporary Payroll Tax Cut Continuation Act to renew federal unemployment insurance provisions through the end of the year without new barriers to participation or new burdensome requirements for states.

This assistance is a lifeline for New Yorkers who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own so they can continue to make ends meet," Senator Gillibrand said. "Not only is this assistance critical for families that depend on it, but also has a positive effect on our economy. We need to extend this vital assistance to make sure these families aren't cut off and left out in the cold."

Millions of Americans rely on the federal-state unemployment insurance system to cover their most basic needs while looking for a new job. The Senators call for a full continuation of the federal provisions while the national unemployment rate remains high. The Senators also object to proposals that would implement demeaning requirements on those seeking unemployment insurance such as mandatory drug testing.

Americans on unemployment insurance receive benefits that average \$300 dollars a week to pay for basic necessities while they search for a new job. Nearly 13 million people remain unemployed nationwide and approximately four people are looking for work for every job opening in the economy.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that unemployment insurance assistance is among the most effective measures to fight the economic recession. In fact, each dollar invested in unemployment assistance doubles its economic return as families who rely on this assistance spend it immediately on basic necessities.

Signers of the letter include Senators Merkley (D-OR), Harkin (D-IA), Akaka (D-HI), Levin (D-MI), Stabenow (D-MI), Wyden (D-OR), Brown (D-OH), Lautenberg (D-NJ), Blumenthal (D-CT), Whitehouse (D-RI), Franken (D-MN), Udall (D-NM), and Menendez (D-NJ).

The full text of the letter is as follows:

"Dear Senate Members of the Conference Committee on the Temporary Payroll Tax Cut Continuation Act:

"We write as supporters of our fed-

eral-state unemployment insurance system who believe that the federal unemployment insurance provisions should be renewed without new barriers to participation or new burdensome administrative requirements for states.

"The federal-state unemployment insurance system has worked as it was intended during this difficult recession – replacing some of the lost wages of laid-off workers while also supporting local economies deeply affected by the high unemployment rate. The small amount of benefits provided, which is earned and accumulated through prior work and averages about \$300 a week, covers only the most basic of needs. Yet, this important safety net ensures that some of our most vulnerable citizens are able to stay in their homes and focus on finding new jobs.

"The unemployment insurance system also directly injects cash into hard-hit communities. The unemployed quickly spend the benefits they receive, and the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has estimated that every \$1.00 provided in unemployment benefits generates as much as \$1.90 in economic growth. The labor market is still struggling from the effects of the financial crisis and subsequent recession, and now is not the time for Congress to reduce benefits.

"Additionally, we have serious concerns regarding proposals that would undermine the unemployment insurance system by diverting dollars away from the dedicated unemployment insurance trust funds. Since its enactment during the Great Depression, the federal-state unemployment insurance system has provided benefits to Americans based only on their work history and commitment to finding a new job. Benefits should not be predicated on whether an unemployed American has a high school degree or has passed a drug test.

"The value provided by our federal-state unemployment system to affected Americans, their communities, and the broader economy has long been recognized on a bipartisan basis. Moreover, members of Congress have a moral obligation to assist our fellow Americans who are struggling to find work through no fault of their own. We urge the Committee to extend the federal provisions through the end of the calendar year without reducing benefit levels or making other wholesale changes to how the program is administered and who qualifies for support."

About calling it dumb when it is

By Les Slater

Sometimes we try too hard to convince folks where we're coming from about this or that matter. A case in point being the recent appearance of Mitt Romney before a conservative gathering in Washington, he attempting, in pathetic fashion, to impress upon the assembled right-side believers that he is genuinely of their ilk. In a speech in which "conservative" was intoned more frequently than an observer might compute, Romney mentioned at one stage how "severely" conservative he was. But, enough of that. The Republican presidential nomination melodrama is hardly our focus here. In a world far removed from Romney et al, they're counting down, in Trinidad and Tobago and elsewhere, to the annual Carnival. On the seasonal calendar in Trinidad, a major precursory activity in heading toward the two-day revelry windup continues to be the steel band Panorama contest. Last Sunday, two contributions from regular columnists of the Trinidad Express centered on the Panorama.

One writer, Raffique Shah, jumped all over a bone-headed idea the Panorama organizers thought to add to the event, in which, for a pretty handsome fee, patrons were allowed admission to a "party" enclave within the event complex -- complete with deejay music and all the trimmings -- while the Panorama competition was taking place. That the masterminds of Pan Trinbago, the umbrella steel band body and Panorama organizers, evidently saw in this innovation a stroke of brilliance gives one pause. And Shah's puzzlement was only to be expected, as he wondered whether some malady had befallen those who gave sanction to a gimmick that was so innately mindless.

Of the other columnist weighing in on the Panorama, Martin Daly, it needs be said that his bona fides as an advocate for steel band culture seem beyond reproach. He has rhapsodized often and passionately about steel band music as one of

Viewpoint

our great artistic treasures. None of which exempts him from our "trying too hard" reference here. Inexplicably (for a die-hard pan music lover), Daly's comments about the organizers' novelty feature in the Panorama proceedings numbered him unapologetically with the perpetrators. It's difficult to fathom how a proclaimed rock-solid affinity with the pan culture could accommodate rationalizing stuff that so flies in the face of that culture's better aspirations. For good measure, Daly was even defensive about another of the organizers' perplexing programming moves, namely, scheduling 49 bands to perform on the day of the Panorama semi-finals.

Look, it became obvious not years but decades ago that the Panorama event had evolved to much more than a steel band competition. To its credit, the Panorama developed this magnetism which made it the quintessential "Be there!" activity surrounding Carnival, even as the steel bands' role in the culminating masquerade waned to a shadow of their former prominence. Panorama came increasingly to be referred to, in colloquial Trinidadian parlance as a big "lime." Inescapably aligned with that reality is that a hefty chunk of the throngs gathered for Panorama at Port of Spain's Queen's Park Savannah (no different in back of the Brooklyn Museum Labor Day Saturday) are folks for whom the least of their interests is what musical package the bands unwrap on stage. If Daly, Panorama's organizers and anyone else aren't by now hip to this, they're woefully out to lunch.

But that social dynamic about the Panorama goes to the core of the wrong-headedness of Pan Trinbago's thinking that cultivating an independent party space within its premier pan event was indicative of sound planning. Doing

so was clearly feeding into the mindset of that element for whom the "pan" in Panorama is definitely not the foremost consideration. That this would not have been instantly recognized for what it was is, again, a worrisome commentary about those calling signals for Panorama and the steel band movement overall.

Word subsequently coming from the Pan Trinbago hierarchy, in the way of justification for the strange soca-party-in-Panorama promotion, was that it was in pursuit of the organization's ambitions toward self-sufficiency. Certainly an objective there with which few could argue, especially given the dependency syndrome that has long been the organization's Achilles heel. But in the face of the silly Panorama party idea emerging as the leadership's collective wisdom for an assault on the fiscal challenges, we can only hope that, "What else you got?" elicits something of a pleasant surprise.

One other Trinidad Express contributor who also addressed the dicey Panorama semi-finals situation, along with other issues steel band related, seemed not to harbor expectations of greater substance. Keith Subero, on the question of Pan Trinbago possessing the management wherewithal to adequately take care of business, didn't mince matters. And citing an earlier affiliation with the organization would conceivably have lent weight to his observations about the limits of its capabilities, once the present model of steel band people themselves running the shop remains in place.

Subero will likely be pilloried by the Pan Trinbago leadership. Raffique Shah likewise, for his well placed jabs. But this is about witnessing nonsense and forthrightly identifying it as such. This, ultimately, is constructive. By contrast, Martin Daly's credentials as a crusader in good standing for steel band music will in no way be enhanced because he chose to pussy-foot around some action orchestrated by the lords of the pan world that was just plain dumb.



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Touro College honors C. Virginia Fields

Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine (TouroCOM) honored former Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields, president & CEO of the National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Inc. (NBLCA), at an event on Tuesday, Feb. 7, at the Harlem medical school in commemoration of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

The New York City Council presented a proclamation to Ms. Fields and TouroCOM gave her an award for her leadership in fighting HIV infection and AIDS through her leadership of the NBLCA.

In the United States, where the epidemic began in 1981, more than 1 million are living with HIV/AIDS with approximately 28 percent unaware of their infection. African-Americans are most affected.

"On behalf of the city and of TouroCOM, we are extremely proud to recognize the hard work and



From left, Rev. Cohen, C. Virginia Fields and Dean Robert Goldberg.

dedication Ms. Fields has demonstrated in raising awareness of HIV infection and AIDS and paths to treatment and prevention," said Robert Goldberg, D.O., dean of TouroCOM.

"As millions fight this epidemic worldwide, including many in our own community in Harlem, it is a privilege on this national day of awareness to extend our gratitude and in so doing, further educate our community about what needs to

be done to stem this crisis."

Ms. Fields was one of several community leaders and TouroCOM faculty members who addressed a gathering of medical school students, staff and community members about HIV/AIDS and the importance of education, testing, and treatment.

In expressing her gratitude, Ms. Fields spoke directly to the students in the audience, reminding them that they can play

a crucial role in reducing HIV/AIDS as they enter the workforce.

"Patients will listen when there is trust and when they believe you have their best interests at heart. We need you as students and instructors to raise the conversation even if they don't," Ms. Fields said. "You're in a pivotal position to help patients know how to remain [HIV] negative and what to do if they are positive. We need everybody in this fight."

Esquire Anthony, D.O., an instructor in primary care at TouroCOM, presented an overview of the crisis with statistics from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) showing that HIV infection/AIDS is a global pandemic with cases reported from virtually every country in the world.

In 2009, the latest year for which data is available, 33.3 million were living with HIV - 95 percent of whom were residing in low and

middle-income countries, 50 percent of whom were female, and 2.5 million of whom were children under 15 years of age. In 2009, 2.6 million people became newly infected and 1.8 million deaths were attributed to HIV/AIDS, according to the data presented.

According to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the city is home to the largest number of persons living with HIV/AIDS in the U.S., with 110,000 New Yorkers known to be living with HIV/AIDS. There are also an estimated 21 percent additional HIV positive New Yorkers who are not aware of their status and could be unknowingly transmitting the virus to others, according to the city, which says Black New Yorkers, who make up 25 percent of the city's population, comprise the greatest proportion of residents living with HIV/AIDS, at 45 percent.

The Health Department announced recently that

new HIV data shows a 41 percent drop in deaths among black persons living with HIV/AIDS between 2001 and 2010. Still, blacks disproportionately accounted for almost half of all new HIV diagnoses in 2010, a figure the city said has remained almost unchanged for the past five years.

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Know the signs of heart failure

It's possible you or a loved one could be suffering from one of the most common and often misdiagnosed heart conditions, and not know it. According to the Heart Failure Society of America, five million Americans are affected by heart failure and many more may have the condition but are unaware. February is National Heart Health Month and it's a great time to learn about heart failure and its symptoms, and what to do to stay heart healthy. Heart failure occurs when the heart is unable to pump enough blood. Blood can back up in areas of the body and vital organs eventually shut down.

Common Causes

The most common cause of heart failure is coronary artery disease, a narrowing of vessels that deliver blood to the heart, therefore reducing oxygen levels and impairing the heart's functionality. Other contributors include infection in the heart muscle, valvular heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes and age. Adults over 65 are more at risk, as well as those with a history of heart attack or cardiac arrest.

Know the Symptoms

Heart failure symptoms vary by age, population and gender, and can start gradually or suddenly. Common



symptoms include shortness of breath while active or at rest, fatigue, persistent coughing, heart palpitations, and swelling of the ankles, feet or abdomen. Symptoms become more prominent as the condition advances. Men typically have a higher incidence rate, but it is common for women to downplay symptom severity, leading doctors to under-treat them. "It's important to report any symptoms or changes in health status to your physician, no matter how minor you

feel they may be," says Dr. Kevin R. Campbell, a cardiac electrophysiologist who cares for a large population of heart failure patients at Wake Heart & Vascular in North Carolina. "You may not see a correlation between symptoms, but they can signal worsening heart failure to a physician which could be life threatening."

Reduce Risks

Simple lifestyle changes can help reduce your risks. Daily exercise, a diet high in fruits, vegetables, whole grain and low-fat proteins, quitting tobacco, and regular health screenings are all helpful. When lifestyle changes aren't enough, medicine may help treat symptoms and prevent heart failure from worsening. In some cases, a medical device may help improve a patient's quality of life. "Heart failure is the most common cause of hospitalization for patients over age 65 in the U.S. and is the first-listed diagnosis in more than 875,000 hospitalizations each year," said Dr. Mark Carlson, chief medical officer in the Cardiac Rhythm Management Division at St. Jude Medical. "Current device therapy and future devices will improve quality of life for patients, and address an important clinical and health economic problem."

Courtesy of State Point Media

Great tips for Heart Health Month

For most people, February conjures up images of red hearts, candy and messages to loved ones. But, did you know February is also American Heart Month?

Now is a great time to focus beyond Valentine hearts and pay attention to your actual heart.

As the leading killer of Americans, cardiovascular disease affects one in three people in the U.S. -- approximately 81 million people. And, the American Heart Association predicts that this number will increase to 116 million people, or 40.5 percent of Americans, by 2030.

Thankfully, there are simple steps you can easily incorporate into your day-to-day life that can make a big difference, according to Susan J. Crockett, PhD, RD, FADA and leader of the General Mills Bell Institute of Health and Nutrition.

"Genetics does play a role in cholesterol and overall heart health," says Crockett. "While being aware of one's family history is certainly important, there are lifestyle changes you can make and foods you can eat as part of an overall healthy diet that can decrease the risk factors for heart disease and

may help lower cholesterol."

There are several ways people can begin to make a difference in their personal heart health and cholesterol levels, according to Crockett. To help make your lifestyle more heart-healthy, try to remember Crockett's "HEART" tips.

- **Have a list:** Keep a running list of health to-dos, such as regular cholesterol and blood pressure screenings, as well as questions for your physician. Find out and jot down foods you can eat to lower cholesterol and other ways to take care of your heart.

- **Eat more of the "good stuff":** Be conscious of what you are eating and make an effort to incorporate heart healthy foods into your diet. For example, fruits, vegetables, whole grain, and low-fat dairy are all good choices for a heart healthy diet. Eating more fish like salmon, which contains omega-3 fatty acids, may also help reduce the risk of heart disease.

- **Aim for more whole grain oats:** When making food choices, look for whole grain oats or whole grain oat cereal that contains beta glucan, like Cheerios. Beta glucan is a natural soluble fiber found in oats that helps



reduce bad cholesterol. To reduce the risk of heart disease, you need three grams of soluble fiber daily from whole grain oat foods as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol.

- **Run, walk, skip, jump:** However you choose to exercise, just make sure it is a part of your daily routine.

- **Try healthy swaps:** Healthier options are out there, so make the switch. Taking a few moments each day to make heart healthy decisions can make a significant difference in your future.

Courtesy of State Point Media



Doctor, Doctor Questions Often Asked

By Herbert Okun, M.D.
Diplomate American Board of Urology

Prostate operation without the knife

By Herbert Okun, MD

"It's like having a prostate operation but "without" the operation." That's the way many patients, who had experienced the TherMatrx microwave thermotherapy treatment of their enlarged and symptomatic prostates expressed themselves. They had been prepared to undergo surgery in the hospital with anesthesia as treatment and were fully aware of the surgical risks and the need to wear a catheter after the operation. The microwave treatment made all that unnecessary.

There is still a need for prostate surgery for the benignly enlarged and symptomatic prostate for which microwave therapy is unsuitable. As an example, men with very large benign prostates, whose measured size exceeds 100 cm³, are not considered good candidates for this minimally invasive procedure.

However, the great majority of patients who are suffering with any combinations of the typical symptoms of a weak stream, pushing, frequency, incomplete emptying, intermittent flow, urgency and sleep interruption will have prostates less than 100 cm³ in size and will most often be excellent candidates for microwave thermotherapy. Of course, before any surgical procedure, whether TURP or LASER and before any minimally invasive procedure, such as microwave thermotherapy is used, patients should be given the opportunity to benefit by using medical treatment usually consisting of a combination of two drugs: one to shrink the glandular portion of the prostate and another to relax the muscles in the prostate.

Some patients are

happy and satisfied to continue these drugs for a lifetime or as long as they remain effective and not causing any adverse side effects or drug interactions with other medications the patient may require. About half wish to stop the medications because of such side effects as erectile dysfunction, interference with orgasm and ejaculation, painful breast swelling, blurring of vision and tiredness. For these men, TherMatrx microwave thermotherapy offers an excellent alternative to surgery without all of surgery's associated risks and hazards.

When prostate surgery is performed, whether by an open surgical operation, TURP or LASER, the neck of the bladder is opened to permit the free flow of urine out of the bladder. However, the consequence of leaving the bladder neck open is that thereafter, during sexual activity, at the time of orgasm and ejaculation, when the bladder neck normally contracts, it cannot. Forceful spasmodic contractions of the pelvic muscles increase the pressure on the ejaculate within the prostatic urethra and like any fluid; it takes the path of least resistance, back up through the open bladder neck into the bladder. There it mixes with urine and awaits the next urination to leave the body. This process by which semen goes in a reverse direction on orgasm is called "retrograde ejaculation." This does not happen as a result of microwave thermotherapy. That is why so many men consider the microwave treatment to be like having a prostate operation but "without" the operation.

Question? Call Dr. Okun at 718-241-6767

A Healthy Heart Starts with You



Throughout the month of February, the Montefiore Einstein Center for Heart and Vascular Care will offer free educational lectures, heart health counseling and screenings to check your blood pressure. Protect your heart from disease, and learn how to take better care of yourself.

Upcoming Blood Pressure Screenings

Tuesday, February 21

Cardiology Associates, 9:00 am – noon
2711 Henry Hudson Parkway
Bronx, NY 10463

Wednesday, February 22

Cardiology Associates, 9:00 am – noon

Tuesday, February 28

Monroe College, 8:30 am – 2:30 pm
434 Main Street
New Rochelle, NY 10801

Upcoming Health Seminar

Tuesday, February 28

Heart Month Lecture Series
Monroe College, 1:00 pm

For more information about heart month events, please call 1-800-MD-MONTE or visit www.montefiore.org/heartmonth



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Continued from page 2

Officials did not release his name or home town.

The ship had departed Charleston, South Carolina for a five-day Bahamas cruise.

Barbados

The brother of Opposition Leader Owen Arthur, a former candidate for the main opposition Barbados Labor Party (BLP) was recently remanded in prison on ammunition charges.

Richard Seymour Arthur, 50, was taken before a magistrate in the Bridgetown court charged with having 102 rounds of ammunition on Jan. 31, without permission and in breach of the Firearms Act.

He was not required to enter a plea to the indictable charge and was remanded to jail by Magistrate Barbara Cooke-Alleyne.

He is due to reappear in court on Feb. 27.

His attorney Randall Belgrave said he would be applying to the High Court for bail for his client.

Arthur contested the St. Lucy seat, next door to his brother's constituency of St. Peter in the 2003 general election and lost.

Grenada

An inmate facing a murder charge has been found hanging in his cell, Grenada's Prison Commissioner Don McKenzie said.

He said that Joel Lendore's body was lifeless when found recently in his cell.

The prison chief said it appears that Lendore died from an apparent suicide.

Lendore was a former athlete who represented the tiny Grenadian island of Carriacou in cricket, soccer and track and field. He was accused of killing his wife in 2009 by slashing her throat.

A coroner's inquest will be undertaken to determine the cause of Lendore's death and whether or not someone should be held responsible.

Haiti

Haitian authorities will rule soon on whether the prosecution of former dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier moves to trial or gets dropped, the investigating judge Carves Jean said.

The announcement came after a closed hearing during which he admonished the former dictator known as "Baby Doc" for violating the terms of his conditional release by leaving the capital at least twice in recent weeks.

Jean said he told Duvalier that, "he'll be going straight to the national penitentiary" if he leaves again without authorization.

Since he made an unexpected return a year ago, Duvalier has traveled the

country and had been spotted dining with friends at high-end restaurants in the capital. He recently delivered a commencement speech to law school graduates in the coastal city of Gonaives and attended a memorial for quake victims outside the capital last month.

The defense argues that Duvalier is free to go where he pleased because no law exists to restrict his movements.

Jamaica

United States Secretary of State Hilary Clinton has congratulated new Jamaican Prime Minister Portia Simpson-Miller on her recent election victory.

Clinton spoke of "warm" relations between Jamaica and the U.S. and offered to get a team together to visit Jamaica to explore areas of potential assistance, including security, education and poverty reduction.

According to the Prime

Minister's office, Simpson-Miller thanked Clinton for the offer, saying those areas would be of great help to Jamaica.

She also said that the women of the world drew inspiration from Clinton's "strength and achievements."

The telephone call followed a similar one from U.S. President Barack Obama in her first week in office.

Suriname

Suriname is reporting a dengue outbreak.

The Health Ministry said recently that more than 300 dengue cases have been reported in the South American country of 491,000 people. Among those affected was Parliament Speaker Jennifer Simons. She was hospitalized recently and has since been released.

Dengue is a mosquito-borne disease that can cause fever, headache and

pain in muscles and joints and be fatal. There is no vaccine or specific treatment for it.

Trinidad

January was a bloody month in Trinidad and Tobago as police recorded some 38 murders in 31 days.

While there were nine killings less last month, compared to January 2011, police officials admit it is still worrying statistics.

However, the police say they are committed to the fight against crime.

While statistics of 38 murders in 31 days are alarming, police figures show that the January 2012 slayings are lower than those recorded last January when 46 people were killed.

For January, the Port of Spain Division recorded the highest number of murders with 10 killings.

Compiled by Azad Ali

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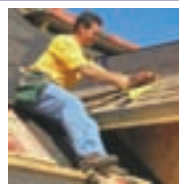
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Shopping For a Contractor

Once you make a decision to do some work on your home, the next step is to call in some contractors for estimates and ideas. Most homeowners don't think they need to have their wits about them until the salesperson is sitting in front of them. That's a big mistake. So what is the right way to go about this often overwhelming process? How do you know if you've let the right contractor into your home? Here are a few tips to help make your home improvement projects as successful and worthwhile as possible.

Before you call anyone in for an estimate, there are some very important decisions to make. Are you the type of person who wants to deal with an established reputable company with a place of business (which will cost a little bit more money), or are you the type of person who wants to be your own general contractor and hire someone that works out of his truck or home (which should be less expensive)? There are numerous different types of contractors out there, but only one is right for you.

The truth is, you should only be comparing apples with apples. If you call in the largest construction company you can think of, a mid-sized local establishment, and your cousin's friend Johnny, you haven't accomplished anything. You're pricing three different quality products and three different levels of service. Remember, a guarantee is only as good as the company that issues it. Just because something is cheaper doesn't necessarily mean it's the better deal.

If you know your cousin's friend is not what you want because you don't want to deal with a pickup truck contractor, and the high prices of the national chains leave you questioning if the product is really worth the price, you should be calling in three local, established companies. Not only do you get an accredited company you can trust, but their prices will be much more reasonable. You can really compare prices and products on a level playing field. These midsized companies can be found in local papers, local television commercials, radio station ads, or by word of mouth. Just be sure to visit the company's showrooms. With a little bit of deception, many pickup truck contractors can seem like a midsized company.

Once you've found your local companies, make sure you get all the quotes in writing so that you can refer back to the estimate if you have any disagreements when the work is being done. It is also a good idea to check with your local Better Business Bureau and Consumer Affairs. They will not only tell you if the contractor has a lot of complaints, but will tell you how long they have been in business under that company name. Lastly, when dealing with salespeople, the best piece of advice is always "trust your instincts."

Written by: Steven J DiMare
Chief Executive Officer
Unified Window Systems, Inc.

Soul Train Don dies leaving 'love, peace & soul'

There was a time when few television programs showcased the talents of African-Americans.

While nightly viewers of the popular Johnny Carson Show were bombarded with any number of white, dancers, comedians, poets, mimes, jugglers, musicians, acrobats and circus acts introduced by the host, only the most accomplished Blacks were invited for national exposure.

Dick Clark provided a similar opportunity to teenagers with an attempt at integrating "American Bandstand" with a handful of African-Americans.

Simultaneously, decades of Sundays were reserved for the Ed Sullivan Show and the variety spectacle that almost immediately spiraled unknowns into a sphere that encompassed the globe. And while those shows occasionally featured African-Americans, not a single television variety show focused primarily on the myriad of talented individuals residing through-



Inside Life

By Vinette K. Pryce

out the nation's Black communities.

Not until Ellis Haislip spotlighted the all-encompassing "Soul" on a local PBS Channel.

Later Don Cornelius narrowed the field with entertainment but opened the lens to a national program called "Soul Train."

Born Sept. 27, 1936 in Chicago, Cornelius first distinguished himself with Black radio audiences working at the historic WVON radio station.

There he highlighted the music of numerous Black entertainers, including James Brown, Aretha Franklin, The Jackson Five, the Main Ingredients, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, Gladys Knight and many others.

The show opened with an animated, smoke-spouting, chugging locomotive

that signaled the dawn of a new era and broadened the spectrum of America's rainbow reality.

Nationalized from Los Angeles, California in 1971, the show had been a local Chicago hit when Cornelius took it to Hollywood.

The theme, producer Kenny Gamble of Philadelphia International said was enhanced from a whistle and instrumental to a musical chord sung by the Three Degrees.

What many of us now know is that the serious-minded, Afro-wearing, Cornelius was reluctant to change the theme. According to Gamble, he was apprehensive to surrender the winning soundtrack. However, when the recording by the Three Degrees launched "The Sound Of Philadelphia,"



The late Don Cornelius with Vinette K. Pryce.

Photo courtesy of Vinette K. Pryce

'Don called me and said I messed up.'

The hit track was another successful aspect in the history of the trailblazing presentation.

That Cornelius single-handedly internationalized African-Americans in a positive and unprecedented fashion became evident when Europeans, Latin Americans, Asians and whites in America vied to be included.

The show introduced

Caribbean artists and their reggae music. He and Bob Marley's manager were long time friends. But who in Los Angeles did not know Don Taylor? Taylor supported Cornelius' brainchild and at many awards presentations at the Shrine, would hold court with the likes of Danny Sims, and other record company elites. On occasion, groups such as Third World would make appearances. Later on a category dedicated to reg-

gae was added to the roster of achieving Black talents.

Cornelius shone his spotlight on Asians, as well as others wanting to showcase talent ignored on other mainstream outlets.

His business acumen enabled him to convince Sears & Roebuck and George Johnson who made Ultra Sheen and other products to initially back his proposition is nothing short of genius.

Where Afro hairstyles were considered revolutionary, militant and intimidating to whites, Cornelius placed "bushy, nappy hair" in homes to promote the biggest and boldest hairstyles of the era.

There was no negative association to his 'Gang.'

The Soul Train Gang was the most admired, fashion-savvy assembly in the entire United States. Each week they would line up, face a camera capturing their creative body movements and many would set the trend for America's next dance craze.

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Kam Williams – Page 23

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Five great days of Black Theatre

By Joan H. Allen

The Harlem Theatre Arts Festival (HTAF) debuted in Harlem with 5 Great Days of Black Theatre.

HTAF, a groundbreaking creative partnership established to produce, promote and document the works of Black playwrights and artists debuted Thursday, Jan. 26 at the Dwyer Cultural Center in Harlem with an incredible series of notable Black plays and readings.

Founded by Arts & Entertainment Alliance President Joan H. Allen in association with world-reknown Broadway and Off-Broadway producer Voza Rivers, and award-winning National Black Theatre producer Jackie Jeffries, the plays were presented at three of Harlem's leading cultural institutions - the Dwyer Cultural Center, Paison's Firehouse and at



Brian Webster (left) portrays Colin Powell and Michael Chenevert, a soldier, in Lawrence Holder's "The General" at The Harlem Theatre Arts Festival.

Dr. Barbara Ann Teer's National Black Theatre – all in Harlem!

The HTAF's first venture featured Pulitzer Prize-winning Lynn Nottage's play, "Poof," the story of a housewife, coming to the

Continued on next page

From The Front Porch

Renee and Spotlight on Festivals present a special performance of "From The Front Porch" at the Jan Hus Theatre – 351 East 74th St. (between 1st and 2nd avenues) on Feb. 29, starting at 8:00 p.m.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the Homeless Outreach and Advocacy Program of Jan Hus Presbyterian Church and neighborhood.

Renee Flemings takes us back to the Alabama of her youth with her one woman show and promises "ice cold RC cola, canned sliced peaches...love life... rhythm and blues.....From the Front Porch."

This musical memoir



Renee Flemings.

has had successful runs at the Triad Theatre as well as the Greenwich Street Playhouse and has garnered raves: "Breathtaking.... inspiring" Stage Pages; "Amazing" Theatrescene.

Continued on next page



JAZZPORA

Buyu Ambroise releases his third CD

By Tequila Minsky

"I wanted to do something located more in the jazz idiom," says Buyu Ambroise on how his third CD, "Jazzpora," differs from his last ones. With the core Blues in Red Band—his musical companions

since the first CD, Ambroise reveals his musical influences: Haitian, African and North American, places Ambroise has called home.

Lou Rainone is on keyboard, Paul Beaudry-bass, and Markus Schwartz, a "militant" Haitian

percussionist, is one who ensures that a Haitian presence through rhythms is in the fabric of the music. Many guest musicians add to the breath of this CD. Ambroise underscores that Willie Martinez,

Continued on next page

TOP OF THE CHARTS

TOP 10 SINGLES



- 1 **We Found Love**
Rihanna Feat. Calvin Harris
- 2 **Set Fire To The Rain**
Adele
- 3 **Good Feeling**
Flo Rida
- 4 **It Will Rain**
Bruno Mars
- 5 **The One That Got Away**
Katy Perry
- 6 **Domino**
Jessie J
- 7 **Ni**as in Paris**
Jay Z Knaye West
- 8 **Turn Me On**
David Guetta Feat. Nicki Minaj
- 9 **Moves Like Jagger**
Maroon 5 Feat. Christina Aguilera
- 10 **Without You**
David Guetta Feat. Usher

TOP 10 ALBUMS



- 1 **Born To Die**
Lana Del Rey
- 2 **21**
Adele
- 3 **Celebration**
Madonna
- 4 **Old Ideas**
Leonard Cohen
- 5 **Take Care**
Drake
- 6 **Making Mirrors**
Gotye
- 7 **Strength To Survive**
SOJA
- 8 **Stronger**
Kelly Clarkson
- 9 **Bangarang (EP)**
Skrillex
- 10 **Drive**
Soundtrack

Presented by
verizonwireless

Ambroise's musical memoir

Continued from previous page

drums and percussion on seven tracks, adds hues of Latin music to the collection.

Ambroise composed half of the 12 cuts, inspired by people he knows, his son, his two daughters, a woman he admires. "Just in Caze" (just in case), the second cut, features Jean Caze on trumpet in a long solo, a piece written with him in mind.

The multi-genre musician, talented Melanie Charles, sings in Kreyol with an English intro on "En Vacances," the third cut. It's the only piece with vocals on the album. "Haiti is a singing culture and another way to connect musically with the audience," says Ambroise. "I'm inclined to use more vocals in the future."

The "soft" CD release and performance at Five Myles Gallery in Crown Heights wrapped up ArtQuake a month-long exhibition/installation paying tribute to those who perished during the earthquake and included workshops and other events. Included in the exhibition were 10 original prints that make up the ArtQuake portfolio (available for sale, individual prints, too, with proceeds of sales going to Haiti. The month of events were in collaboration with Haiti Cultural Exchange.

In late October in Haiti, Ambroise performed with electronic percussionist Val Jeanty for the first time. "She brought a sound that became new parameters for the band," he said.

One of their two performances was on the grounds of Sans Souci, the extraordinary ruins of the palace of Henri Christophe. Ambroise was practically speechless about the experience,



Alice Backer enjoys the music, leaning against the wall exhibiting Art Quake prints, part of a portfolio of prints whose proceeds will go to Haiti.
Photo by Tequila Minsky

"How can I find words to express how I felt? There you can hear, smell and visualize history unfolding. It renewed my sense of being Haiti and I'm so proud." People traveled from Cape Haitien and flew from Port-au-Prince to partake of the first time ever a band was part of a public performance on the grounds of Sans Souci.

The name of Buyu Ambroise's just released CD, "Jazzpora," references Haitians living in the United States, in the Diaspora (a word that means scattering of language, culture or people). Sometimes a similar sounding term, "djaspora," flung from homeland Haitians about their U.S. kinsmen is used very disparagingly. The saxophonist wants to confront this conflict in his CD. By choosing this name, he says, "I would like to change the dialogue and begin to say we (those living in the U.S.) are part of the same people."

Flemings one woman show

Continued from previous page

com and Producer Frank Calo adds "Renee Flemings can not only make each and every character she plays distinct and riveting but her choice of songs and amazing blues vocals make you wonder when this woman will be snatched up and skyrocketed to fame!"

Renee' Flemings' previous plays include Strange Weather (readings at Roundabout Theater Company; Centenary Stage, NJ; Run of the Mill, Baltimore and New Professional Theater Company), The Jam (Genesis Play Festival at Crossroads Theater, NJ).

Her other plays have been produced at Manhattan Theater Source, Spotlight On and HERE. As an actor her most recent credits include Law & Order: SVU; Macbeth and Sonny's Blues. As a member of the blues/rock band, Renee' and the Derelicts she has performed at Terra Blues, Harlem Tavern and Dinosaur BBQ.

The musical trio that accompanies Renee consists of Mario Sprouse on key-

boards as well as the evening's musical director; Paul Bauman on guitar and Sal Carolei on blues harp.

Musical Director Mario E. Sprouse has a distinguished career as musical arranger/conductor and producer for over 30 jazz and pop records for jazz legends such as Carmen McRae and Grover Washington, Jr. He was also the musical assistant for late, legendary, modern Renaissance man Gordon Parks for 20 years as well as being the music supervisor for three Parks films and producing his first CD of original classical music to accompany his new book "A Star for Noon."

Sal Carolei (blues harp) has played with legendary Mississippi blues man, Floyd Lee; Detroit rock diva Eliza Neals as well as playing with Renee' Flemings' the the NYC based blues band, Renee' and the Derelicts. Paul Bauman (guitar) is a veteran of the NY music scene having performed in countless venues and toured the U.S. and U.K. He is currently taking part in the Battle of The Boroughts: Manhattan.

Black theatre

Continued from previous page

end of her rope with her abusive husband; mZuri's "The Fannie Lou Hamer Story," a powerful portrayal of a woman who defined the term "freedom fighter;" and Karimah's "Accept 'Except,'" the meeting of two 19-year olds running from the law, one in 1712, the other in 2012.

In addition to works by these award-winning playwrights, directors and actors, a free reading of Ajani Jackson's "Portrait of An Earl," the story of an aged jazzman who is haunted by failure; and, Laurence Holder's "The General," which delves into the mind of Colin Powell as he is confronted by the highlights of his life.

For its inaugural run, the HTAF honored three "Champion for Change" Award recipients. Rev. Al Sharpton, founder of the National Action Network (NAN) received an HTAF Award at the presentation of "Accept 'Except.'"

NAN is one of the leading civil rights organizations in the Nation, with chapters throughout the U.S. Founded in 1991, NAN works within the spirit and tradition of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to promote a modern civil rights agenda that includes the fight for one standard of justice, decency and equal opportunities for all people regardless of race, religion, national

origin, and gender.

The HTAF second Award recipient Council Member Inez Dickens was presented with the "Champion for Change" Award at "The Fannie Lou Hamer Story."

A lifelong resident of the 9th Council District that includes Central Harlem, Morningside Heights, parts of the Upper West Side and part of East Harlem, Ass't Deputy Majority Leader, Inez Dickens is highly respected as a tireless fighter for basic civil and human rights, justice, equity, inclusion and diversity. She is committed to improving the quality of life for everyone in her community and in the City of New York.

Moreover, for over 30 years beginning as a student activist at the side of her father and mentor, the late Harlem businessman and NYS Assemblyman, Lloyd E. Dickens, Council Member Dickens has taken an active role in economic development, small business with a focus on minority and women owned business enterprise, and political landscape of New York's celebrated village of Harlem.

The HTAF third "Champion for Change" Award honored wife, mother, philanthropist, actress, singer, and upcoming reality star, Dhonna Goodale with the HTAF Champion of Change Award at the presentation of "Poof."



Joan H. Allen, founder, The Harlem Theatre Arts Festival (left) with Playwright Karimah holding the "Key to the City" at the presentation of her play, "Accept 'Except'" at The National Black Theatre.

Photo by Seitu Oronde

Strange bedfellows in this universal spy thriller

"Safe House"
Excellent (4 stars)
Rated R for profanity and pervasive graphic violence.
In English, Afrikaans and Spanish with subtitles.
Running time:
115 minutes
Distributor:
Universal Pictures

By Kam Williams

Tobin Frost (Denzel Washington) is a veteran CIA Agent who has been on the run for close to a decade since being suspected of selling military secrets to America's enemies. By contrast, straitlaced Matt Weston (Ryan Reynolds) is

a newcomer to the Agency who's just been itching for some action. Unfortunately, he's been stationed in South Africa for months where he's only been assigned to maintain a backwater safe house that's never been needed for a clandestine operation.

Until now. The pair's paths cross soon after Frost decides to come in from proverbial cold in Cape Town because an army of assassins is closing in on him. The renegade spy surrenders himself at the U.S. Consulate which in turn is directed by top CIA brass to deposit him with Weston for debriefing.

However, all hell breaks loose right after the team of interrogators arrives, when the safe house unexpectedly comes under attack



Denzel Washington as Tobin Frost and Ryan Reynolds as Matt Weston in Safe House.

by a bunch of gun-toting, bloodthirsty mercenaries. Frost and West barely escape with their lives out the back door while all the rest of the CIA agents perish during the siege. With no idea why the supposedly secure loca-

tion had been compromised or whether there's anybody whose word they can trust, the rookie and the rogue suddenly realize their very survival depends on mutual cooperation.

That is the intriguing point

of departure of Safe House, a riveting, espionage thriller featuring non-stop action and an ever-escalating, high body count. The film might best be described as a compelling cross of *The Bourne Identity* (2002) and *Taken* (2008), given the former's "spy on the run desperate to clear his name" theme and the latter's wanton slaughter and impatient sense of urgency.

The movie marks the English-language directorial debut of Sweden's Daniel Espinosa, who must be credited for coaxing yet another vintage outing from two-time, Academy Award-winner Denzel Washington (for *Glory* and *Training Day*). In addition, he simultaneously allowed romantic comedy regular Ryan Reynolds

to prove himself capable of playing more the handsome hunk opposite the blonde-of-the-moment.

The talented co-stars not only acquit themselves well in the convincingly-choreographed fight sequences, but their credible chemistry cultivated during downtime enables the audience to forgive the periodic holes in the picture's Swiss cheese script. They are helped immeasurably in that endeavor by equally-powerful, support performances on the part of several consummate thespians, including Oscar-nominees Vera Farmiga (for *Up in the Air*) and Sam Shepard (for *The Right Stuff*) as well as Brendan Gleeson and Ruben Blades.

Independent & Foreign Films

Circus (Unrated) Columbia Midlife-crisis drama, set in Bosnia in the early Nineties, shortly before the outbreak of the civil war, about a successful businessman's (Miki Manojlovic) scandalous return home from Germany accompanied by a flamboyant mistress (Jelena Stupljanin), much to the chagrin of his estranged wife (Mir Furlan) and teenage son (Boris Ler). With Milan Strljic and Almir Mehic. (In English and Croatian with subtitles)

Jess + Moss (Unrated) Coming-of-age drama about the sexual awakenings experienced by a couple of kissing cousins (Sarah Hagan and Austin Vickers) over the course of a steamy summer in the tobacco fields of Western Kentucky. With Marie Coleman, Don Fleming, Haley Strode and Haley Parker.

Michael (Unrated) Disturbing drama chronicling the five-month ordeal of a 10-year-old boy (David Rauchenberger) who is kidnapped and repeatedly raped in a soundproof basement by a pedophile (Michael Fuith) passing as a pillar of the community. With Christine Kain, Ursula Strauss and Victor Tremmel. (In German with



Kam's Kapsules

By Kam Williams

subtitles)

On the Ice (R for profanity, violence and drug use) Alaskan crime thriller set in a tight-knit community where a couple of teenagers (Josiah Patkotak and Frank Qutuq Irelan) cover up the killing of a friend (John Miller) by claiming he died in a seal-hunting accident. Support cast includes Adamina Kerr, Sierra Jade Sampson and Teddy Kyle Smith.

Putin's Kiss (Unrated) Agitprop expose' chronicling the gradual disillusionment of Vladimir Putin protégé Masha Drakova, a Russian teenager who finally wised up to the fact that she was being used by the Kremlin after the vicious attack of an opposition journalist by government goons. (In Russian with subtitles)

Thin Ice (R for profanity, and brief violence and sexuality) Fargo-inspired crime comedy, set in Wisconsin in the dead of winter, about an insurance agent (Greg Kinnear) who finds himself framed by an unstable locksmith (Billy Crudup)

in the theft of a retired farmer's (Alan Arkin) rare violin. Supporting cast includes Bob Balaban, David Harbour and Michelle Arthur.

Undeclared (Unrated) Oscar-nominated documentary recounting how Memphis' Manassas High School football coach Bill Courtney turned around his team's fortunes by employing a tenderhearted, tough-love regimen.

Big Budget Films

Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance (PG-13 for profanity, intense violence and disturbing images) 3-D Marvel Comics sequel finds stuntman-turned-demon hunter Johnny Blaze (Nicolas Cage) emerging from his self-imposed exile to protect a woman (Violante Placido) with a young son (Fergus Riordan) from the devil incarnate (Johnny Whitworth). Cast includes Ciaran Hinds, Idris Elba and Christopher Lambert.

The Secret World of Arriety (G) Another ani-

mated adaptation of *The Borrowers*, Mary Norton's children's classic about a family of 4" tall wee people who live unnoticed beneath the floorboards of a house. Voice cast features Amy Poehler, Carol

Burnett, Bridgit Mendler, Will Arnett and David Henrie.

This Means War (PG-13 sexuality, violence and profanity) Spy vs. spy comedy about a couple of CIA Agents (Chris Pine

and Tom Hardy) who go from being best friends to sworn enemies after discovering that they're dating the same woman (Reese Witherspoon). With Chelsea Handler, Angela Bassett and Til Schweiger.

"SAFE HOUSE" IS THE MOST INTENSE THRILLER SINCE 'THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM'!
 Max Evry, ComingSoon

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SUN KULCHA

COMMUNITY EVENTS

SATURDAY, FEB. 18

Motown Queensboro Performing Arts Center presents Las Vegas Tribute to Motown featuring the music of The Temptations, The Supremes & The Four Tops, 8:00 p.m. at Queensboro Community College, 222-05 56 Ave., Bayside. Buy tickets online at www.visitqpcac.org or at the box office at (718) 631-6311, Monday-Friday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Tap & Jazz Circuit Productions' Susan Gold-better presents Tap & Jazz Masters featuring Broadway dancer & performer Calvin Booker & Friends at The Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. For information & directions, call (718) 735-4400.

Mardi Gras Sts. Simon & Jude Church presents the 2012 Family Mardi Gras Celebration featuring a hot buffet dinner, hot & cold beverages & dessert in the church's lower level, 185 Van Sicklen St. at Ave. T, between Van Sicklen & Lake streets, Gravesend, Brooklyn. All encouraged to wear festive costumes. Doors open 6:00 p.m. Tickets on sale in the church lobby after weekend masses. For tickets & general information, call (718) 375-9600, Mon.-Fri., 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

MONDAY, FEB. 20

J@LC J@LC presents Eric Reed & The University of Wyoming Jazz Ensemble, 7:30 p.m. & 9:30 p.m. at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, 5th Fl., Frederick P. Rose Hall at Lincoln Center, Broadway @ 60th St, N.Y. For tickets & information, call (212) 258-9595 or visit jalc.org.

TUESDAY, FEB. 21

J@LC J@LC presents Cyrus Chestnut Quartet, Tues. - Sun., 2/21-26, 7:30 p.m. & 9:30 p.m. plus 11:30 p.m. on Fri. & Sat. at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, 5th Fl., Frederick P. Rose Hall at Lincoln Center, Broadway @ 60th St, N.Y. For tickets & information, call (212) 258-9595 or visit jalc.org.

Jazz Meets Flamenco J@LC presents Jazz Meets Flamenco featuring jazz guitarist Doug Wamble accompanied by tap dancer Jason Samuels Smith & flamenco guitar virtuoso Nino Jesele accompanied by flamenco dancer Juan De Juan, Friday & Saturday, 2/24 & 25, 7:30 p.m. & 9:30 p.m. in The Allen Room at Frederick P. Rose Hall, Lincoln Center, Broadway @ 60th St., N.Y. Tickets can be purchased thru jalc.org or CenterCharge, (212) 721-6500 or at the Lincoln Center Box Office.

SATURDAY, FEB. 25

People's Voice Cafe People's Voice Cafe presents a great night of music, dance, magic, comedy & storytelling featuring James Cannings,



Food Stamp Outreach

Find out if you are eligible to receive Food Stamp benefits! A representative from the NYC Human Resources Administration will be available to assist you with eligibility pre-screening & to answer any questions every Tues. & Wed., 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at Community Board 12, 4101 White Plains Road at 229 St., Bronx. For more information, call (718) 881-4455.



Financial Coaching

We all have goals - paying off bills, saving for a home, improving our credit score, etc., etc. The Financial Capabilities & Coaching Program is a personal approach to help reach goals. For more information, call the Neighborhood Housing Services of East Flatbush at (718) 469-4679.

NYC Streetsingers & Pearls of Wisdom Storytelling, 8:00 p.m. - 10:30 p.m., at the People's Voice Cafe, Community Church of N.Y., 40 East 35 St., between Park & Madison avenues, N.Y. For information, call 212-787-3903.

Fashion Show The People of the Sun Middle Passage Collective will hold a Fashion Show & Annual Fundraiser for the Tribute to Our Ancestors of the Middle Passage & honoring Dr. Michael Wiltshire, principal, 6:30 p.m. at the Medgar Evers College Auditorium, 1650 Bedford Ave., Brooklyn. For information contact Akeem at (718) 270-4902.

Community Cafe The Eastern Queens Alliance, Inc. invites you to participate in its Community Cafe, a neighborhood conversation about life in Southeast Queens featuring the topic combating the youth violence epidemic, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at York College, CUNY, Faculty Dining Room, 94-20 Guy R. Brewer Blvd. Breakfast served. To RSVP & for information call (347) 824-2301 or visit info@easternqueensalliance.org.

Children's Program

The Mount Carmel Worship & Outreach Center, 788 East 46 St., between Clarendon & Ave. D, Brooklyn, is offering a children's tutoring/computer training program, standardized test preparation & job skills training program, Saturdays, 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. For registration details, call (971) 609-0909.



ONGOING

Black History Month The African Burial Ground National Monument is celebrating Black History Month with an array of activities throughout the month of February at 290 Broadway, Lower Manhattan, close to Foley Square & just north of City Hall. The visitor center is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. All activities are free & open to the public. Reservations are required & can be made by calling (212)737-2019 or visit www.nps.gov/afbg for schedule of events.

Improv Comedy The Magnet Theater, 254 W. 29 St., ground floor, between 7 & 8 avenues, N.Y., presents a variety of performances & special events, throughout the month of February, by improv masters & visiting international artists, Monday - Sunday, 6:30 p.m. - midnight. A detailed schedule & description of each night's line-up can be found at www.magnettheater.com. Ticket prices vary; reservations are recommended & can be made by calling (212) 244-8824.

Free Tax Preparation The Bethex Federal

Credit Union is offering free tax preparation every Wednesday, 12 noon - 7:00 p.m. & Fri., 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., at Bronx Independent Living Services, 4419 Third Ave, Ste. 2C, Bronx. For more information & necessary paperwork, call (718) 515-2800 ext. 111 or for an ASL interpreter, call & make appointment with Ms. Saldana at (866) 882-3244.

Free Tax Help The Brooklyn Cooperative Federal Credit Union & the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program will be offering free tax help to low- to moderate-income residents of Bedford Stuyvesant & Bushwick. In addition to providing free, high-quality tax preparation, the program gives Central Brooklyn residents an opportunity to open credit union accounts. For more information, call (212) 505-EITC (3482).

Adoption "You Gotta Believe!," a community based older child adoption agency is looking for families (regardless of age, marital status, gender or income) who would be willing to provide love & nurturing to a child in the foster care system. Classes held on Wednesdays, 6:00 p.m. at St. Paul's Church, 2801 W 8 St., in Coney Island & Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. at Church of the Holy Redeemer, 2424 Linden Blvd. in East New York. For information, call (718) 372-3003.

Foreclosure Prevention If you're interested in obtaining a modification or just concerned about your mortgage, come in for free services, counseling & assistance every Tuesday at 2:00 p.m. Open House sponsored by NHS of East Flatbush. To RSVP or more more information, call (718) 469-4679.

Home Improvement Did your roof collapse? Does your boiler need replacement? Do you need major repairs done? NHS of East Flatbush can assist you. Ask about the 5-3-5 program & Emergency Repair Program. For more information on Home Improvement Programs call (718) 469-4679.

Winter Aches & Pains Jamaican Fountain Pimento Oil is an all natural, chemical & preservative free herbal medication that relieves sore muscles, stiff joints, nerve damage, circulation issues, fluid retention amongst a host of other ailments. Call Sandra at (866) 223-2414 to book a free massage appointment for your place of worship, senior citizens group or nursing home. For more information, visit www.pimentooil.com.

Tai Chi Stop. Breath. Relax. Join Tai Chi Easy, a wellness practice combining Tai-chi, Qigong, meditation & Chinese healing, taught by Daniel Weicher, certified teacher in Integral Qigong & Tai Chi, every Sunday, 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. at the Moore Street Market, 110 Moore St., entrance on Humbolt St., Brooklyn. Donations are appreciated. Call (914) 673-6016 for information.

Vendor Registration Black Christmas 2012, A Holiday Season with a Purpose, will be held on Saturday, Dec. 8, 2012, at the Hotel Pennsylvania in Manhattan. For details & fees on early, regular & late vendor registration call Norman Cole at (212) 714-4531.

Compiled by Ida Eisenstein

Harlem Scientology Church ordains its first minister

Verlene Cheeseboro, director of Public Affairs of the Church Of Scientology Harlem was ordained as a minister on Sunday, Jan. 29, 2012.

Pastor Rev. Phyllis Mack performed the ceremony during Sunday services, enabling Cheeseboro to carry forth the message that Scientology, the study and handling of the spirit in relationship to itself, others and all of life, offers a pathway to greater freedom by giving the individual the data to solve his own problems, accomplish his goals and gain lasting happiness.

The ordination, the first for the Church of Scientology, was conducted during Sunday Services in which parishioners and non-parishioners alike took part.

Reverend Cheeseboro, was given the honor of closing the services by reading the Scientology Prayer For Total Freedom.



Rev. Phyllis Mack (right) completing the ordination of Rev. Verlene Cheeseboro.
Photo courtesy of V. Cheeseboro

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ACROSS

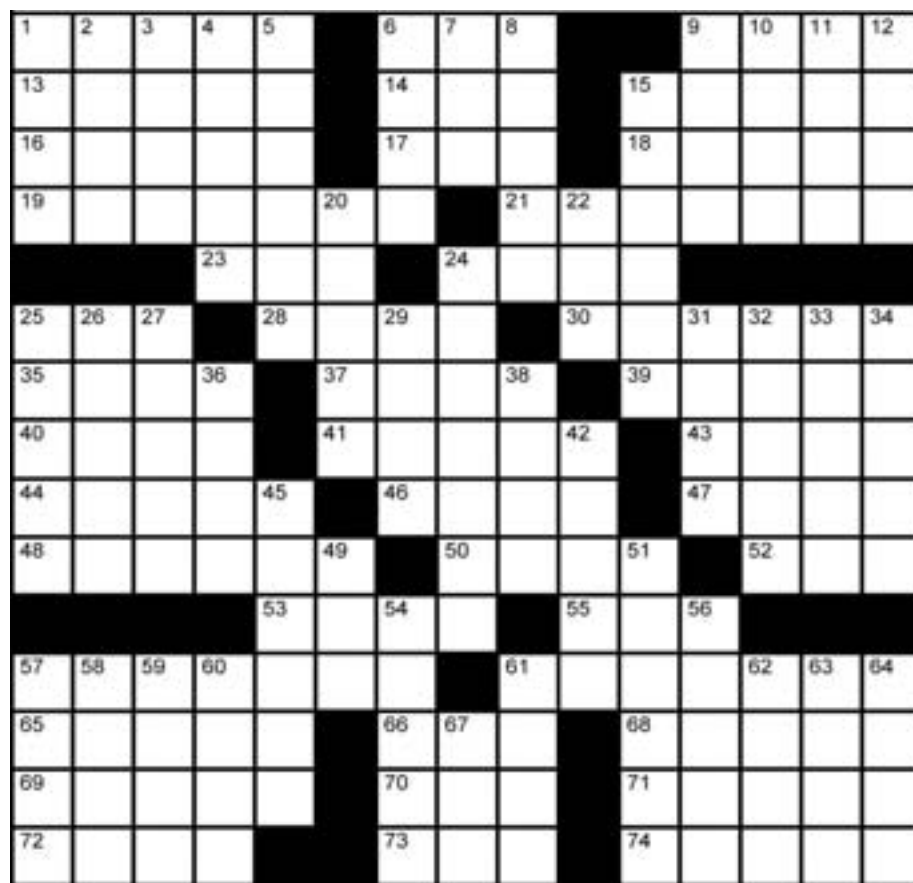
1. Desert survivors
6. Orlando Bloom in "Lord of the Rings"
9. Type of ski lift
13. German destroyer
14. "To Kill a Mockingbird" recluse
15. Bob and _____
16. Civil rights marches started here
17. Clingy plant
18. Galactic path
19. *Grammy Awards venue sponsor
21. *Bruno Mars' hit
23. Between "ready" and "fire"?
24. Marie Antoinette's hairstyle
25. "Time," e.g.
28. Surrender
30. Total bore, Yiddish
35. One on a list
37. Less than average tide
39. "Queen of Mean"
40. Head of hair
41. Old European coin
43. Panache
44. Homer's classic
46. Causes a pucker
47. Pluribus
48. Treating place
50. Fan reaction
52. Indicates maiden name

53. Don't do it when someone's down
55. *AC/DC won their first Grammy for "___ Machine"
57. *Nominated comedian
61. *2012 Grammy Awards host
65. Binary digits code
66. Ryder Cup team
68. Icy hut
69. Heard by Horton
70. Cow chew
71. Dissociative state
72. Evil side of Dr. Jekyll
73. Author of "The Star-Spangled Banner"
74. "The Second Coming" poet

DOWN

1. Spew profanities
2. Aid and _____
3. Jolt, e.g.
4. Home to Buccaneers
5. Right-leaning characters
6. Goes with flows
7. *___ Rawls, Grammy-winning soul singer
8. Forfeit
9. Type of seabird
10. Bottle to a baby?
11. Like a devoted fan
12. Network of nerves
15. Full of grief
20. Make corrections

22. ___-D.M.C.
24. NBC's logo
25. Will Ferrell as G. W. Bush, e.g.
26. "___ costs"
27. Mozart and Einstein, e.g.
29. ___ ex machina
31. Often precedes "necessary"
32. Baseball Hall of Famer Ryan
33. Foolish
34. *Recipient of most 2012 Grammy nominations
36. *Taylor Swift's hit
38. *Musicares Person of the Year
42. Type of fishing net
45. Tiny antelope
49. Formerly OSS
51. Assuage or conciliate
54. Hen's call
56. Scallywag
57. Done in loads
58. *Grammy of sports
59. Froze, as in kicker
60. Basmati, e.g.
61. *Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta's title
62. Soviet gymnast Korbut
63. Oaf
64. They're average?
67. Famous T-Rex



Answers in Classified Section

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'West Indies selectors ought to start preparing players now, to field the best team for the Australia series beginning March 16.'

- Eyes on Cricket, Page 29

Red Bulls sign goal keeper Ryan Meara

By Patrick Horne

The New York Red Bulls announced last week that it signed Crestwood (N.Y.) native and former Fordham University standout goalkeeper Ryan Meara.

"Ryan is a talented, young goalkeeper who we think can develop into a solid contributor," said New York Red Bulls General Manager and Sporting Director Erik Soler. "We are happy to sign him to his first professional contract and are also content to bring in another local player to the first team."

Meara was drafted 31st overall in the 2012 MLS SuperDraft. He recorded 31 shutouts in 74 appearances and in 2011, posted a .862 save percentage, which was sixth overall in the NCAA Division I. Meara was one of two new goalkeepers that will be a part of the 2012 Red Bulls; the club also recently signed Jeremy Vuolo, 25, from Downingtown (PA), who spent the past year with Finnish club AC Oulu after a year at Syracuse University.

"After doing extensive scouting, we believe that Jeremy has a very bright future

Continued on next page

Uniondale H.S. track champs

By Robert Elkin

The track and field coaches at Uniondale High School are very proud of the efforts turned in by the athletes in the Section VIII or Nassau County championship meet in winning their 30th overall championship.

It was teamwork, led by Nyder Chardonette, a native of Haiti, in the 55-meter high hurdles with a winning time of 7.82 in the semi-final round and 7.79 clocking in the finals, and by running an opening leg of the third place 1600-meter relay team during his last year at Uniondale High. Chardonette thus defended his title in the hurdles.

A two-sports athlete, Chardonette helped to pace Uniondale to the team crown and in the process earned all-County honors as he heads into the State meet and then

Continued on next page

KIRANI MAGIC

Grenadian runner secures another first



Kirani James leads the pack in the Men's 400 Meter Dash with a time of 45.96 seconds at the 2012 New Balance Grand Prix at the Reggie Lewis Track & Athletic Center in Roxbury, Massachusetts.

By Kevin Williams

World champion Kirani James of Grenada won the men's 400 meters in 45.96 seconds — the fastest in the world so far this year in the New Balance Indoor Grand Prix in Boston on

Saturday night.

American Josh Scott was second in 46.54; 3, Renny Quow, Trinidad & Tobago, 46.70; 4, Tabarie Henry, Virgin Islands, 46.88; 5, Michael Tinsley, United States, 47.38 and 6, Johnny

Dutch, United States, 48.86.

During the celebration of Grenada's 38th anniversary of Independence on Saturday at the Grand Prospect Hall in Brooklyn, Prime Minister Tillman

Continued on next page

Racism must be booted from soccer

By Patrick Horne

The issue of racism in soccer has raised its ugly head again, this time in the English Premier League last Saturday when Uruguayan Luis Suarez, who plays for Liverpool Football Club, failed to shake Patrice Evra's hand before kick-off of a league encounter against host Manchester United at Old Trafford.

Suarez was playing in his first game for Liverpool after an eight-game ban by the English Football Association for racially abusing Evra, who is Black, during a game between the teams at Liverpool last October. Both players had agreed with their respective coaches to shake hands before Saturday's game, a customary gesture of good sportsmanship before all soccer games throughout the world, and in this case, an opportunity to put this incident to rest - an incident that embarrassed English football and Liverpool. Instead, Suarez's refusal to shake hands - even as Evra attempted to - showed disrespect for his manager, the Liverpool Club and the game. More importantly, it was an opportunity lost to support the efforts of many to 'red-card' racism in soccer.

What probably brought the issue to this point was the failure of Liverpool Coach Kenny Dalglish and the club, to issue a statement at the time of the initial incident, condemning racism in the game. The statement would have made their position on racism in soccer clear and sent a strong right message to Suarez and the soccer



Manchester United's Patrice Evra, right, attempts to shake hands with Liverpool's Luis Suarez, left, during their English Premier League soccer match at Old Trafford Stadium, Manchester, England, Saturday, Feb. 11, 2012.

Photo/Jon Super

world; instead, Dalglish's misguided efforts to support his player led to T-shirts being printed with slogans of support for Suarez that were worn by Liverpool players at practice that indicated blind support for the accuser. It was the wrong message sent to Suarez and the soccer world. Liverpool eventually issued a statement condemning the player's unsportsmanlike conduct last Saturday, and Suarez also issued an apology, eventually, but this was all too late.

Even after Saturday's game, Dalglish failed to address the issue when confronted by reporters. He claimed that he did not see the no-handshake, but whether he had

seen the incident or not, he was aware of the situation and should have issued a statement condemning the player's unsportsmanlike conduct. Dalglish didn't seem to grasp the idea that Suarez's action tarnished the 'beautiful game' at a time when players and administrators are expending energy to give racism in soccer the boot. The coach failed to realize that he has a job to defend the game, which allows him to continue to make a very good living, the reputation of Liverpool Football Club, where he played, and English soccer. Racism will not be booted from the game until players, coaches and administrators are relentless in their efforts to do so.

The English Football Association did its part by suspending Suarez after a thorough investigation. It went further recently in stripping Chelsea defender John Terry of the English captaincy because of a pending court appearance by the player to answer charges that he racially abused and another Premiership player, Anton Ferdinand of Queen's Park Rangers, during a game last December. The English - who pride themselves as the modern inventors of the game and who recently condemned FIFA president Sepp Blatter for being complacent in helping to stamp out racism from the game when Blatter misguidedly state that racist remarks could be settled by a handshake - cannot afford to be viewed as complacent in handling these racist incidents in the English game.

Uniondale track legacy

Continued from previous page

the outdoor or spring track and field season.

"It's a great honor to add on to the legacy here at Uniondale," said Assistant Coach Elijah Blue. "We have a lot of good kids (who) work hard for us. I'm very proud of all of them."

And Chardonette, a versatile athlete leads the way in his senior year as he is graduating come June, thus stepping up to another level of competition.

"Chardonette looks great, and had a performance well done," said Blue. "He's a great kid and a great competitor. Everybody around likes him. He's very personable, always congratulating other guys. His progress has been tremendous. And he plays soccer in the fall."

In fact, Chardonette, a forward on the booter squad, became the first high school soccer all-American athlete in the school's history last fall. He has been playing it for most of his life.

"He was real pleased and very happy about being an all-American," Blue went on during the Section VIII track meet at St. Anthony's High School in Huntington. "Also he's a pretty humble kid. After getting that honor, he focused more on his track. His goal is to get All-American (honors) in track, as well."

Chardonette, who is among the top hurdlers on Long Island, started running when he attended middle school in Uniondale, but did not take it seriously at the time. He has since progressed tremendously.

In addition by playing soccer made him still quicker. Some sports such as football or soccer plus indoor and outdoor track could be very helpful to the athlete, especially on the high school level.

"It (plus a little weight training) actually helps prepare the kids with a lot of exposure," continued Blue, who ran at Uniondale and then at New York Tech college. "One (sport) helps the other."

"Soccer helps an athlete more for running than does football, because the athlete is constantly running (in the former sport)," said Freeport's Jonathan Greenwood, winner of the 600-meter run in the County meet in 1:22.46.

Freeport finished with 29 points good for sixth place in a field of 24 scoring high schools.

Chardonette will continue with soccer in college but is unsure that he will do both sports on the next level. He hopes to stay in the immediate area for college. If he has a choice of the two sports, he would go with soccer. He likes everything about soccer.

WICB announces Digicel Series schedule

By Azad Ali

The West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) announced the schedule for the Digicel Series 2012 and the picturesque Arnos Vale Cricket Ground in Antigua will host the first three One-Day Internationals (ODIs) when West Indies meets Australia in March and April this year.

The series include a total of five ODIs, two Twenty20s and three Test series and will be hosted in five countries.

The Tests will be played at Kensington Oval, Barbados, Queen's Park Oval, Port of

Spain and the Guyana National Stadium.

The last two ODIs and the first Twenty20 will be played at the Beausejour Cricket Ground in St. Lucia while the second Twenty20 will be contested at the Mecca of cricket in the Caribbean-Kensington Oval, Barbados.

Digicel Group Director of Sponsorship Karl Donnelly said, "As proud sponsor of West Indies cricket, we are excited to be hosting one of the top teams in the world as part of the Digicel Series 2012, in what is sure to be an excellent tour."



Digicel Group Director of Sponsorship Karl Donnelly. Photo courtesy of Digicel

Next step: 2012 London Olympics

Continued from previous page

Thomas made the announcement of James's victory and the audience reacted with great applause.

Thomas said at age 38, "we have gained the world's attention and admiration as a world player in athletics, with two finalist and a

400M world champion in Kirani James. I can still recall our collective pride and spontaneous celebration. We applaud our athletes' efforts and commend their success."

James who became a world champion last year will be making a run for top honors at the 2012 London

Olympics. He is also representing the Caribbean's LIME telecommunications company.

LIME, the Caribbean's largest cellphone provider, announced recently that James had signed a three-year deal to represent the company in the Caribbean.

Red Bulls

Continued from previous page

ahead of him and can compete at the MLS level," said Soler. "He had a very good year playing professionally in Finland and brings many great attributes to the table. We expect that he will compete for a starting spot this year."

The Red Bulls open the 2012 regular season on Sunday, March 11 at FC Dallas' Pizza Hut Park at 3:00 p.m. The home-opener will be on Sunday, March 25 versus the Colorado Rapids at 4:00 p.m. at Red Bull Arena.

Spinners dominate regional tournament

Spinners from the various teams in the Regional Four-Day Cricket Tournament dominated the second round of the competition.

Nikita Miller, the left-arm spinner from Jamaica, picked up match figures of 10 wickets for 49 runs against Barbados at Sabina Park in Jamaica.

Miller grabbed 5 for 25 in the first inning and came back in the second inning and picked up 5 for 24 from (17.5 overs). Jamaica scored 287 and 162. Barbados scored 157 and 172, losing by 120 runs. Barbados pacer Kemar Roach bowled fiercely picking up 5 for 31 from 19 overs.

Ryan Austin Wrecks Leewards

Colleges and Combine Campuses spinner Ryan Austin picked up 5 for 51 in 10.5 overs. The CCC defeated the Leewards within two days by an inning and 15 runs.



Eyes on Cricket

By George H. Whyte

Veerasammy Permaul 6 for 91 Against the Windwards

Guyana Captain and left-arm spinner Veerasammy Permaul picked up six wickets for 91 runs in the Windward Islands' first inning, total of 252 runs. Guyana were bowled out for 138 runs in their first inning giving the Windwards first inning points and a lead of 114 runs.

Deonarine, Barnwell and Fudadin Struck Back Heavily

Three half-centuries from Guyanese batsmen gave Guyana a respectable second innings total of 294

runs. Narsingh Deonarine 84, Christopher Barnwell 75 and Asad Fudadin 51.

Windward Islands Defeats Guyana by 5 Wickets

Devon Smith and Johnson Charles put on a partnership of 105 for the second wicket, taking the honors away from Guyana. Chasing 181 to win, the Windward Islands reached 183 for 5 with 23-year-old Johnson Charles scoring 66, Devon Smith 43 and Andre Fletcher 41 not out.

Strong Squad Needed for Aussies Visit

Australia begins its tour of the West Indies from March 16 to April

27. Five Digical One-Day Internationals, three Digical Test-matches and two Digical Twenty20 Internationals are scheduled. West Indies selectors have the task of selecting the best possible teams to compete. Regional batsmen have the responsibility of getting themselves in the best possible form in preparation for the tough games ahead.

Trinidad & Tobago batsman Adrian Barath will be playing a major role for the West Indies at the top of the order. At this stage, it is unknown who will accompany Barath in the opening position in the Test matches.

The Indian Premier League is a major concern because Darren Bravo and Sunil Narine may miss most of the Australian matches after they were offered contracts. West Indies selectors ought to start preparing their players early.



Jamaican left-arm spinner Nikita Miller.

AP Photo/ Eranga Jayawardena



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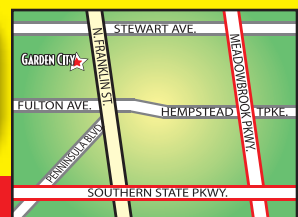
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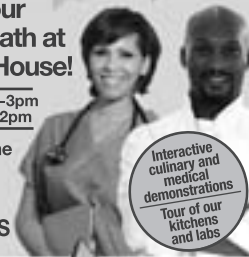
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Probate Citation

File No. 2011/4133
SURREGATE'S COURT-
KINGS COUNTY SUPPLE-
MENTAL CITATION THE
PEOPLE OF THE STATE
OF NEW YORK, By the
Grace of God Free and
Independent
TO: Pascal Cassamajor
and any and all unknown
persons whose names or
parts of whose names,
and whose place or plac-
es of residence are un-
known and cannot, after
due diligent inquiry, be
ascertained, distributees,
heirs at law and next of
kin of said Pascal Cas-
samajor and if any of the
said distributees, heirs at
law or next of kin of Pas-
cal Cassamajor deceased
be dead, their legal rep-
resentatives, their hus-
bands or wives, if any,
distributees and succes-
sors in interest whose
names and/or places of
residence and post office
addresses are unknown.
A petition having been
duly filed by Cecil Philan-
thrope who is domiciled
at 1642 Prieur Street,
Montreal, Canada H2C
1M4.
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TO SHOW CAUSE before
the Surrogate's Court,

► LEGAL

Kings County, at 2 John-
son Street, Brooklyn,
New York on March 13,
2012 at 9:30 a.m. in
room 319 why a decree
should not be made in
the estate of Gerard Cas-
samajor lately domiciled
at 361 Eastern Parkway,
Brooklyn, New York ad-
mitting to probate a will
dated April 21, 2011 as
the Will of Gerard Cas-
samajor, deceased, relat-
ing to real and personal
property, and directing
that Letters testamentary
issue to: Cecil Philan-
thrope
Dated, Attested and
Sealed 1/30/12
HON. MARGARITA LOPEZ
TORRES Surrogate
Doreen A. Quinn Chief
Clerk
Attorney for Petitioner:
T.W. Lewis & Co., LLC
370 Seventh Avenue,
Suite 720 New York, NY
10001
212-785-7600
[Note: This citation is
served upon you as re-
quired by law. You are
not required to appear. If
you fail to appear, it will
be assumed you do not
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