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Climate change worries

By Desmond Brown

CODRINGTON, Barbuda (IPS/GIN) -- Local scientists are warning the tiny 62-square-mile island of Barbuda is becoming one of the most vulnerable spots on earth to the consequences of climate change.

"We are small, we are flat... and if the climate change predictions come true, especially with respect to sea level rise, you are looking at potentially a third of the island being not available for the sort of things we are using it for

Continued on Page 4

HANGING IN THE BALANCE

New Mexican Image

By Carey L. Biron

Ahead even of his Saturday swearing in, last week, Mexican President-elect Enrique Pena Nieto met in Washington on Tuesday with President Barack Obama to lay out a vision for a new bilateral relationship based more on economics and less on security issues.

Speaking with President Obama, Pena Nieto noted that the two leaders share a "very important vision ... of creating more jobs". The president-elect, who won his seat in July, also noted that a modernising Mexico has "the opportunity to grow ... (and) to integrate North America, to be

Continued on Page 6



Barbados Turns 46

Renee Cutting, left, of Young Bajan Professionals Society prepares to present the Member of the Year Award to Maria Watson at Resorts World Casino in New York City last weekend, as the group celebrated another historic anniversary. See Page 3.

Photo by Clyde Jones.

Carib Fears Of EU Aid Cut-Off

By Bert Wilkinson

The Caribbean trade group Monday said it is opposed to plans by the European Union (EU) to amend the criteria used for disbursement of development aid, saying nearly all of its members, barring finance-starved Haiti will largely be disqualified from accessing concession aid loans if the European Parliament approves the new system.

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretary General Irwin LaRocque told a regional forum in the Dominican Republic that the new so-called process of "differentiation" will see the EU looking at economic indicators like gross domestic and gross national products to determine which countries should still qualify for development aid while ignoring age-old vulnerabilities like hurricanes and other national disasters.

He described the new EU approach as "disquieting", arguing that if the policy is applied without considering other factors "this will have a negative impact on certain programs and the levels of assistance to some of our member states" currently getting financial assistance from the European Development Fund (EDF).

The issue is to be discussed in detail when leaders of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of former European colonies meet

Continued on Page 4

CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP

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THE NEWS FROM BACK HOME

Barbados

Barbados Prime Minister Fren-duel Stuart has reassured Barbadians that the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) will not be privatized.

“Under the Fren-duel Stuart administration there will be no privatization. Whatever influences are out there in the broadcast environment, the government of the day must have a say in setting the tone for what people see and what they hear,” he said during the recent St. Michael East and Central Branch meeting at Springer High School.

“We believe that there is a role for the government, the role of the state in certain areas of this economy and we believe that there is a role for the private sector, in certain areas of the economy. However, we are not getting rid of the CBC. Other players are coming into the market but CBC belongs to the government, like how the Transport Board also belongs to the government,” he pointed out.



Guyana

The Malaysian news agency has reported that a container from Guyana was intercepted with cocaine in coconut milk and that a Nigerian drug syndicate is believed to be behind it.

Bernama reported that Bukit Aman Narcotics CID Director Datuk Noor Rashid Ibrahim said the tactic was foiled by the Selangor Customs Department after detaining the ship carrying a container of cargo in which a section contained drugs worth RM22 million.

“Based on information from the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (USDEA), the ship which arrived on Nov. 12 at Port Klang was filled with 980 cartons of cans containing coconut milk and pieces of pineapple.



“Sixteen cartons comprising 384 cans of coconut milk were identified as mixtures with 400 grams of cocaine in each can by the Chemistry Department,” he told a media conference, according to Bernama.

He said the container which originated from Guyana was to be



Rastafarian in Jamaica

White-robed Rastafarian Priest Forrester motions towards the ocean below where he believes that big ships will someday arrive to carry the descendants of African slaves back to Africa, at the isolated hilltop Bobo Ashanti commune in Bull Bay, Jamaica. More people are joining Jamaica’s homegrown Rastafarian religion some 80 years after it was founded by the descendants of African slaves in response to black oppression on the Caribbean island. See page 27.

AP Photo/David McFadden

sent to Mozambique with South Africa as a transit point to transfer the container into another ship.

Haiti

Haiti’s government has warned a group of soldiers that it will not tolerate any action aimed at disrupting law and order amid concerns the former soldiers were planning more public action to support calls for the establishment of a military in the French-speaking Caribbean Community (CARICOM).



A statement from the Ministry of Defense said it had word that the former soldiers were preparing to mount new public demonstrations, trying to pressure President Michel Martelly administration so they could “obtain undue privileges.”

In the past, the former soldiers and their supporters have paraded in public with mismatched camouflage uniforms, with some of them also carrying rifles and pistols.

The soldiers have been calling on President Martelly to honor his campaign pledge to restore the army that was disbanded in

1995, but the international community has warned that an army would not be in the best interest of a country still recovering from the devastation caused by a powerful earthquake in 2010 that killed an estimated 300,000 people and left more than a million others homeless.

Jamaica

The Jamaica Home Circuit Court has temporarily lifted the curfew order that was imposed on murder accused Ninja Man, whose real name is Desmond Ballentine. The waiver will expire on Jan. 7 next year.

Previously, a term of his J\$2 million bail condition was that he be at home between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. each night. But when the matter was raised in court recently, his lawyer Valerie Neita Robertson told Senior Judge Gloria Smith, that despite the variation in the bail condition, the restriction was affecting the earning potential of the artiste especially for the festive season.



The judge then decided to lift

the order. The trial of the murder case against Ninja Man was also put off to May 13 next year.

St. Lucia

St. Lucians will soon benefit from a further reduction in the electricity tariff.

St. Lucia Electricity Services Ltd. (Lucelec) has announced that the pending reduction comes as early as US\$300,000 is being made available by the light and power company for redistribution to customers, in accordance with the requirements of the Electricity Supply Act.



Under the Electricity Act, as amended in 2006, Lucelec is required to set aside 50 percent of profits above the company’s allowable rate of return each year to be redistributed to qualifying customers.

Electricity customers are identified by the Electricity Supply Act as “industrial and hotel consumers” and “consumers or groups of consumers in need of special protection” as determined by the minister of finance.

Lucelec communications officer Roger Joseph explained that the funds are distributed equitably among all qualifying customers and reflected as a reduction in the price the customers pay per unit each month until the poll of funds is used up.

Based on Lucelec’s financial performance for 2011, qualifying customers have been receiving a tariff reduction of approximately half a cent per unit each month.

The additional funds will effectively reduce what qualifying customers pay for electricity by nearly two cents per unit for the remainder of the year.

Trinidad

BP Trinidad and Tobago (BPTT) announced recently it had discovered an estimated one trillion cubic feet of gas off the coast of Trinidad and Tobago, doubling the estimated gas in place in the Savonetta gas field to two trillion cubic feet.

BPTT made the announcement during a recent meeting in London, which was attended by T&T’s Energy Minister Kevin Ramnarine and T&T’s High Commission to London, Garvin Nicholas and other BP representatives.



The gas well discovered began production in October 2012, and if successful the two additional development wells are also expected to be brought into production over the next 18 months.

BPTT President Norman Christie said: “This is exciting news for both bPTT and the industry since this represents the largest discovery for BPTT since 2005.”

Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar said the Savonetta 4 discovery will no doubt aid the arrest in the decline of natural gas reserves.

In a statement, she said: “We are advised that this is BP’s largest discovery in Trinidad and Tobago in seven years and the largest discovery of natural gas in Trinidad and Tobago since 2007. This discovery augurs well for confidence in the Trinidad and Tobago economy.”

Barbados

The International Monetary Fund managing director Christine

Continued on Page 16

Antigua faces stark environmental realities

By Desmond Brown

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua, Dec. 4, 2012 (IPS/GIN) - Tourism-dependent Antigua may have been spared the ravages of superstorm Sandy, but the island is nevertheless feeling its effects on environmental, political and economic fronts.

The country is preparing for a drop in visitors from the United States, a key source of tourists for Antigua. Tourism Minister John Maginley pointed to the importance of the northeastern states of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, which were hit hard by Hurricane Sandy and which he called "the destination's largest source market in the United States".

University of the West Indies (UWI) Professor Norman Girvan has suggested that the economic impact of Sandy could be as bad as that of the terrorist attacks in the United States on Sep. 11, 2001. "We will see a downturn...from now until January and February," he said. "I think the initial impact will possibly be as great as 9/11, but in terms of the long-term effects it is too early to tell."

Local officials say Sandy, which brushed Antigua on Aug. 22 as a tropical storm, has served as a wake-up call for the country, blowing the topic of climate change back to front and center.

"Events like Hurricane Sandy tend to bring our focus back," Diane Black-Layne, chief environmental officer in the environmental division of the government of Antigua and Barbuda, told IPS. "There are a range of adaptation measures that have to take place."

"We now have to adjust to a new world or to a new norm...every single country will experience extremes in weather fluctuations at a frequency that is unprecedented," she added. Although many remain skeptical about climate change, Black-Layne said she was pleased to see that the Antigua and Barbuda government is taking steps to prepare the island.

She pointed out that in the Land Use Plan recently passed by Parliament, "climate change issues have been taken into consideration." She added, "In a few years when we are reviewing applications for development, especially on the coastline or in flood prone areas, we will have to take climate change into consideration."

"If you think you can go to a minister and the minister would tell you, 'Yes, build whatever you want, wherever you want,'" she warned, "the sea will come and take away your building or insurance companies will not insure you."

In July, Agriculture Minister Hilson Baptiste announced that the government intended to join with the Nature Conservancy, a global climate change organisation, to take advantage of its debt-for-climate-adaptation swap. The body is expected to pay off Antigua and Barbuda's debt of 18 million U.S. dollars to Brazil in exchange for the country's involvement in coastal zone management.

The government has until the end of 2012 to put its proposal in writing and submit it to the Nature Conservancy.

Signs of change

Brian Cooper, a British scientist who moved to Antigua in 1986, told IPS he has been observing stronger rainfall and other signs of a changing climate on the island over the past few years.

Continued on Page 6

Independence double celebration for N.Y. Bajans



Soca Monarch/King — Mikey performing.

Photo by Clyde Jones

By Clyde Jones

Barbadians in New York City commemorated their country's 46th anniversary of independence in grand style, starting with a double celebration on Dec. 1&2.

They attended a sophisticated awards presentation and dance at Resorts World Casino New York City sponsored by the society of young Barbadian professionals (YBPS) and the annual service of thanksgiving Sunday, Dec. 2 at the Bedford Central Presbyterian Church, 1200 Dean St. in Brooklyn.

In her welcoming remarks



Members of the YBPS committee left: Vicki Cutting, Maria Watson, Janice Franklin Linda Myers and Renee Cutting

at the Resorts World Casino, Renee Cutting, co-founder of YBPS said many Barbadian organizations were "proud to join forces to host the affair," with the proceeds aimed at "benefitting families in our community who have been severely effected by superstorm Sandy."

Also in attendance at the affair were Barbados Consul General Lennox Price and

Mrs Price, songwriter and music producer David Pilgrim, as well as Junior Perry, president of the Council of Barbadian Organizations.

Highlight of the evening was the presentation of awards to members of the community who have made significant contributions to those in need. Maria Watson, co-chair, YBPS received a special acknowledgement: the

Member of the Year Award.

Batch Productions, along with the 2012 Barbados Party Monarch and King of soca Michael "Mikey" Mercer provided entertainment for the evening.

In his remarks, Consul General Price expressed his sincere gratitude for the "wonderful job" done by the organizers of the anniversary tribute.

U.S. teacher helps build school in Dominican Republic

By Steve Esack

The (Allentown) Morning Call

ALLENTOWN, Pa. (AP) - Erich May was a newspaper reporter in rural Clearfield County, a cabinet maker in the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and a high school English teacher in affluent Centre County before trying his hand at urban education in Allentown.

"Urban education is not for the faint of heart," said May, supervisor of instruction at Trexler Middle School. "Challenges spring from poverty."

Since taking the job in Allentown last year, May, like a lot of his fellow educators, has tried connecting with the

district's student population, about 88 percent of whom are poor and 66 percent of whom are Hispanic. He's been practicing Spanish and learning the customs of their native culture.

"I hear Spanish in the hallways," he said.

Now, the 38-year-old will take his quest for understanding to another level when he travels to the Dominican Republic to help build a school in a place that happens to be the hometown of Trexler sixth-grader Job Rodriguez, 10.

"It is a very nice place," Job said. "It is a beautiful place."

Constanza is a farming community nestled in one of the fertile valleys of the

rugged highlands and mountains of the Caribbean nation on the island of Hispaniola.

"I'm told the only time I am going to see the beach is from the plane," May said.

May will help with concrete work and building classrooms in the charitable construction project that began last year and is known as Lifetouch Memory Mission.

The mission is being run by the National Association of Secondary Principals, the American Association of School Administrators, and the National Association of Elementary School Principals in partnership with the school yearbook company, Lifetouch. May's weeklong trip will run through Dec.

11.

May said when he saw an ad looking for volunteers for the trip, he applied online, thinking it would be a good learning experience for himself and Trexler students. Months passed and he forgot about the application.

Then a letter arrived in the mail. He'd been selected.

"I thought, 'Oh my gosh, what's Holly going to say?'" May said.

Holly, his wife and mother of 5-year-old Henry and 3-year-old Owen, said go.

"I was just really excited for him," she said. "I thought it was a good opportunity."

So did his bosses, who did not mind when he asked for vacation time.

Development

Continued from cover

in Equatorial Guinea from Dec. 10 to discuss aid and trade relations with the EU.

LaRocque said the proposed arrangements “will cast a shadow” over relations with the EU as these had “matured and broadened to the benefit of both parties.”

The bloc is known to complain bitterly about the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) using similar criteria to “graduate” some of the more prosperous member states like, Trinidad, Barbados, the Bahamas and Antigua from concession loans. Now the region fears that the EU is on the same track but the EU is contending that the new system will ensure money goes to the poorest of the poor rather than to nations which could fend for themselves.

Both the EU and CARICOM have in recent weeks waged a public relations campaign against the EU’s plans, as its parliament debates the issue and as fears mount that all the traditional concessions dating back to the colonial era are being slowly but surely chipped away by the ACP’s former colonizers.

Barbudans fear increasingly hostile climate

Continued from cover

right now,” marine biologist John Mussington told IPS.

Worsening the problem is the long-time practice of sand removal from the island, he says.

“You have land, sand and water, and when you take sand out of the system, sand will move from somewhere else to replace that which is moved. So the amount of sand which has been taken out of Barbuda over the years has impacted our shoreline.

“We already have accelerated erosion taking place because of the sea level rise, and added to that you are taking sand out of the system so what you find happening, that beautiful beach that stretches all the way from the north come around to the south, most of those areas where 10 years ago you had grape trees and coconut trees, they are just not there anymore and you are actually seeing the collapse of the vegetation into the water,” he added.

In July 2011, Barbuda renamed a three-mile stretch of beach after the late Princess Diana of Wales, who was a frequent visitor. Mussington says the island could well lose that very beach, along with others that attract tourists and

boost economic growth.

“You experience the sea level rise which is being predicted, and one of the ways in which the shoreline responds to that is that the shoreline will move so the beaches will recede closer to the solid land,” he told IPS.

“The low-lying area which is created by all that sand being excavated, now potentially is an area that becomes flooded with every storm. The last serious ground swell we had three years ago was sufficient to flood the entire area for quite a few weeks.”

Dr. Brian Cooper, who heads the Antigua and Barbuda Environmental Awareness Group (EAG), said both islands have been experiencing their share of extreme weather conditions – one of the consequences predicted by climate change scientists.

Dr. Cooper told IPS extremes of weather inflict human trauma, cause economic damage and destabilize agriculture.

“We need first of all to look at our agriculture and our food supply, because the way the world is going, the way the population is increasing, and if these predictions about climate change come about, a lot of the world’s food-

producing areas are probably going to be affected,” he said.

“I think we need to take our own food production very seriously and that to me means we ought to be looking very, very critically at the agricultural land we are putting into housing,” he said. “I think too much of that has happened already.”

Dr. Cooper also said the country needs look at the water supply for agriculture because if droughts are going to be serious and prolonged, this would affect food production.

“We have desalination but the cost of desalinated water is really not amenable to wide-scale use for agriculture and we’ve done very little to look at increasing our other sources of surface water or ground water, and ground water itself is likely to be affected by rising sea levels because all our well-fed areas are very close to the coast,” he said.

He pointed to recent floods in Russia and Pakistan, and weather extremes in the United States and Canada as clear evidence that climate change is real and happening now.

“It’s really falling in line very much with what was predicted...

we get extremes of weather anyway, things go in cycles, you have various climatic cycles coming together and giving you exceptional weather conditions, but all those things are exacerbated by the increase in CO2 in the atmosphere, at least that is what the climate change scientists are more or less unanimously agreed on,” Cooper said.

Dale Destin, a climatologist at the Antigua and Barbuda Meteorological Service, told IPS that over the past two years, the country saw a period of wet conditions that has now transitioned into what may become a mild drought.

“These things would generally happen in cycles but with climate change some of these observations become more extreme,” he said.

Mussington said despite the grim predictions, climate change need not be a death sentence, adding that Small Island Developing States like Antigua and Barbuda have to adapt.

However, he laments that the adaptation issue is not being taken seriously and is absent from policies governing certain critical areas.



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New Mexican Image

Continued from cover

participating in this part of the world.”

Indeed, ahead of his six-year term, Pena Nieto is laying the groundwork to turn global attention away from the image of his country as crime- and drug-infested, and instead to focus on Mexico's four-percent growth rate, one of the strongest in the region and well above the global average, including that of the United States.

Ahead of closed-door discussions, President Obama conceded the new dynamic.

“I know the president-elect is also interested in ... a discussion about both regional and global issues,” Obama said, “because Mexico has become not simply an important bilateral partner, but is today a very important multilateral, multinational leader ... not only on regional issues, but also on global issues.”

There is much to support greater economic ties between the two countries, which already sustain trade

worth a half-trillion dollars a year. According to a new policy brief from the Mexico Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, a nonpartisan Washington think tank, Mexico is the second largest market for U.S. exports.

“There's a reason for putting the economic issue back in the spotlight, and it has to do with making tangible progress on issues of importance – jobs, exports – in both countries,” Christopher Wilson, a co-author of the Mexico Institute brief, told IPS.

“That's not leaving aside immigration or security, which will stay important pieces. But the president-elect is clearly trying to change the narrative to one of more complexity – beyond the image of drugs and illegal immigration.”

Further, Wilson suggests, “Changing the tone of the relationship, focusing on opportunities rather than challenges, could also facilitate progress on other sticky

issues, including security and immigration.”

Calderon Turnaround

“Few countries will shape (the United States') future as much as Mexico,” the brief suggests, noting that the bilateral relationship has already started to change.

For one, there now seems to be a crystallising understanding by officials on both sides of the border that the U.S.-funded “war on drugs” has been a failure. Pena Nieto ran on a campaign of repudiating the costly and incredibly bloody anti-drugs assault launched by his predecessor, Felipe Calderon, which resulted in the deaths of some 60,000 to 100,000 Mexicans.

The president-elect stated instead that he would focus on working to reduce the violence that has wracked Mexican society over the past half-dozen years. He has said he would refocus funding on the police over the military and reorganise the decentralised security forces back under the Interior Ministry.

Saddened by the slow pace of world response

Continued from page 3

“Certainly we've witnessed a renewed intensity and frequency of storms. We have seen what I think has been quite a departure from what we've experienced before, that many of the storms have very far-flung rain bands which are often a great distance from the centre of the storm,” he said.

“In the case of [Hurricane] Omar in 2008 we didn't feel anything much of it until after it had passed... [when] we we got this rain band, which didn't last very long but it dumped a tremendous amount of rain in the south of the island. There was tremendous flooding in the Body Ponds Valley and Bendals Village was cut off for a while because water was flowing over the bridge going into Bendals by several feet.”

“We had the same thing

with [Hurricane] Earl in 2010, a tremendous burst of rain that had similar effects,” Cooper added.

A local resident, Winston Derrick, now in his sixties, pointed to the destruction of a road, which he said had existed since his childhood, as clear evidence of the effects of climate change. Just days ago, he tried to drive from Sweetes Village to Bendals Village but could not, he said. “The road has become impassable. It's all washed out.”

Cooper said a combination of Earl and Omar washed out the road, with which he too is familiar.

“That is the result of some of the torrential rainfall that we have been having particularly in the southwest part of the island. I've been living in Sweetes for about 10 years and I used to drive down that road and I can't drive

there now,” he said.

But despite all the evidence, Dr. Cooper said people are still not taking climate change as seriously as they should.

“Most of it is too far away,” he said. “I think when we had that series of hurricanes people were beginning to think, ‘Okay, what's happening?’ But it is also difficult for...scientists to pick up changes that happen over a long period of time,” he told IPS.

Black-Layne disagreed. “It is frightening when you have to listen to the science and the projections,” she said, especially when one has children who will be affected by these changes. “To some extent you are saddened by the slow pace in which the world is reacting,” she added. “It's terrifying what is happening and what is going to happen.”

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Caribbean votes for Palestine state

By Nelson A. King

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) states on Nov. 29 voted overwhelmingly with the rest of the world to grant Palestine Non-Member Observer State status at the United Nations.

They also expressed the urgent need for the resumption of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians leading to a permanent two-state solution.

The resolution on the status of Palestine in the UN was adopted by a vote of 138 in favor to nine against, with 41 abstentions, by the 193-member General Assembly.

Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago voted in favor.

While no CARICOM-member state voted against according to Palestine Non-Member Observer State status, three CARICOM states – Bahamas, Barbados and Haiti – abstained.

Other nations that voted against the accord were Canada, Czech Republic, Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Panama, Palau and the United States.

Equatorial Guinea, Kiribati, Liberia, Madagascar and Ukraine were absent for the vote.

Jamaica said it voted in favor of the resolution based



Raymond Wolfe, Jamaican Ambassador to the UN. www.unmultimedia.org

on a “firm commitment to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East region.

“Such a peace could only be brought about by a negotiated settlement,” said the island’s UN Ambassador Raymond Wolfe.

He said Jamaica sought a balanced approach to the issue, which recognized, among other things, Israel’s right to exist.

In its view, Jamaica said the granting of Non-Member Observer State status to Palestine was on the same level as the status afforded to the Holy See delegation, noting that it was not equivalent to membership in the United Nations.

“The moment has arrived for the world to say clearly: enough of aggression, settlements and occupation,” said Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority, as he called on the 193-member body to “issue a birth certificate of the reality of the State of

Palestine”.

He charged that following Israel’s “latest aggression against the Gaza Strip,” the international community now faced “the last chance” to save the long elusive two-state solution, adding: “the window of opportunity is narrowing and time is quickly running out.”

“We did not come here seeking to delegitimize a State established years ago, and that is Israel; rather we came to affirm the legitimacy of the State that must now achieve its independence, and that is Palestine,” Abbas told the General Assembly before the vote.

He said the world was being asked to undertake a significant step in the process of rectifying the “unprecedented historical injustice” inflicted on the Palestinian people since 1948.

“Your support for our endeavor today will send a promising message – to millions of Palestinians on the land of Palestine, in the refugee camps both in the homeland and the Diaspora, and to the prisoners struggling for freedom in Israel’s prisons – that justice is possible and that there is a reason to be hopeful and that the peoples of the world do not accept the continuation of the occupation,” Abbas said.

Israel’s Ambassador to the UN, Ron Prosor, said his delegation could not accept the resolution.

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One-man picket protest

By Tequila Minsky

Raglan George, executive director of DC 1707, which represents Childcare Local 205/95, can be seen every Monday outside of City Hall, a one-man picket. Supporters frequently join him.

George is protesting Mayor Bloomberg's recently implemented EarlyLearn early childhood education program. This "untested program," George asserts, puts in jeopardy long-running NYC subsidized day care and Head Start programs that did not receive EarlyLearn awards and do not have funds to continue. "He's taken the childcare program and tried to fix it when it wasn't broken."

"EarlyLearning does not work; the mayor should take a look at it," George says. "Working parents, who feed the economy, need affordable daycare."

Many of these centers are shuttering because they did not receive EarlyLearn awards or they do not have the funds to remain open.



At New York City Hall protesting defunding of day care centers in New York City, a one-man protest. Raglan George, executive director of DC 1707 demonstrates every Monday from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at City Hall. Here, he is joined by supporters, on his right Mike Goodwin, international president, OPEIU, AFL-CIO (Office & Professional Employees Union).

Photo by Tequila Minsky

George believes that the direction the Mayor is going will destroy working families.

According to DC 1707, prior to Hurricane Sandy, EarlyLearn has caused more than 60 day care and Head

Start centers to close, therefore contributing to the elimination of almost 1,000 jobs and thousands of children's slots, forcing working families in all five boroughs to scramble for affordable and safe child care.

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Not so Sunnyside in Queens, New York

To The Editor:

The Fair Housing Justice Center (FHJC), along with Emery Celli Brinckerhoff & Abady LLP (ECBA), announced the filing of a lawsuit today in federal district court against a New York landlord and the superintendent at a large building with over 100 rental apartments located in Sunnyside, Queens for racial discrimination against three African Americans who inquired about rental apartments in the defendants' building.

The lawsuit alleges that the superintendent of the building, located at 41-41 46th Street and owned by NASA Real Estate Corporation, engaged in racial discrimination by lying to the African Americans, claiming that no apartments were available for rent, and refusing to show them apartments in the building. In contrast, the superintendent showed the same, vacant one-bedroom apartment to white individuals, some of whom arrived less than an hour after the African Americans to inquire about available apartments. The superintendent told the white individuals, "I chose the people. . . . You look like nice people, that's why I show you." He described the building as one made up of "choice people. Not everybody."

Discrimination in the area is likely systemic. According to the 2010 Census, fewer than 2% of all rental housing units in this area of Sunnyside, Queens are

occupied by African-American households. In contrast, African-American renters comprise 18% of all renter households in Queens and 27% of all renter households in New York City.

Over the past few years, FHJC systemic testing investigations have uncovered discriminatory practices by housing providers in New York City and surrounding suburban areas. "Testing is the only investigative tool capable of comparing and documenting how similarly qualified renters of different races are being treated in the housing market," according to FHJC Executive Director Fred Freiberg. "Individual renters are often unaware that discrimination is occurring. If housing discrimination is not detected, it is not reported. Yet, these odious practices restrict housing choice and perpetuate residential segregation."

The FHJC's testing has uncovered or documented race discrimination in New York City or the surrounding suburbs that led to over \$2 million in damages and extensive injunctive relief affecting thousands of housing units. For example, earlier this year, the FHJC settled a case for \$225,000 against landlords who allegedly engaged in racial discrimination in apartment buildings located in Brooklyn neighborhoods with a similar racial composition. "Regrettably, race discrimination in housing remains one of the rawest

Continued on page 12

A corporate tax structure in need of urgent reform

By Nicole Tichon

There's been a lot of talk about what we can't afford as a nation and who is getting what "gift" or which free ride. When President Obama recently met with CEOs and chatted with Jamie Dimon, we should hope he issued a stern warning that legal tax avoidance games played by banks and multinational corporations are on the chopping block. After all, free enterprise isn't free.

In the coming weeks there will be pivotal conversations about how and where to tax corporations and how to reform our corporate tax system. Don't believe the hype that these issues are too complicated. They're not. If you paid more than 1.9 percent in income tax, you paid a higher rate than Apple. Period.

Both political parties need to combat the damaging effects of the offshoring of jobs and revenues. Our current system drains our Treasury and threatens basic services and national security.

Citizens get it. According to a new poll by Hart Research, "84 percent of voters approve of increasing taxes on the profits American corporations make overseas, to ensure that they pay the same taxes on those as they do on domestic profits."

These issues were put on the national stage because of a presidential candidate who uses offshore accounts, and by the reporting of tax shell games by Apple, Google, Starbucks, Microsoft and General Electric. Now, in the U.K., Amazon, Starbucks and Google are being questioned by the government for shady tax practices.

The Obama administration and Congress need to correct

a flawed system that has fostered legal tax avoidance and raised the ire of progressives and conservatives alike.

Who can defend companies making record profits skipping out on their tax bills? Who can honestly keep holding up the disingenuous argument that multinational corporations in the U.S. pay the highest rate in the world when the fact is, it just ain't so? Consider: According to the Congressional Budget Office, the average tax rate corporations pay on domestic profits in the U.S. is about 12 percent.

Moving forward, we'll hear lofty-sounding ideas about broadening the base, lowering the rates, closing loopholes, and more technical ideas about moving to a territorial system of taxation.

Let's start with the former: The loopholes that need to be closed are those that enable corporations to pay extraordinarily low tax rates or no tax at all by shifting profits, patents and headquarters offshore. These cost us \$100 billion per year.

With respect to the latter, lawmakers are in danger of making a bad situation worse. A territorial system would be tantamount to a permanent tax holiday for corporations. Under this system, companies would not have to pay U.S. federal income taxes on foreign earnings when they bring the profits back to the United States. These "foreign" earnings include the money that companies such as Google pay themselves for their own products or patents conveniently parked offshore.

Powerful special interests and CEOs have already lined up money, lobbyists and their media machine to lull lawmak-

ers and citizens into believing they're the grownups at the table and know what's best. They don't. Instead, they benefit from a system rigged for their interests. And now they want more, at your expense.

Decisions made about taxation will have long-term and profound effects. It's not fair to continue to ask taxpayers to sacrifice, while failing to collect existing tax revenue from corporations making record profits.

Free enterprise isn't free. The nation's budget situation may be reason enough to close these loopholes, but the ramifications go much further. American corporations that benefit from the work force, infrastructure, courts, markets and national security of the United States shouldn't be allowed to avoid their responsibilities.

Former U.S.-based corporations that have benefited from U.S. government research and development dollars and do the majority of their business in the U.S. should not be allowed to simply call a post office box in the Cayman Islands or an empty law office in Switzerland their "headquarters."

Congress needs to close offshore tax-dodging loopholes and make large corporations pay taxes in the same country that provides them with the benefits and legal protections that make it profitable to operate in the United States in the first place.

Nicole Tichon is executive director of Tax Justice Network USA and director of the Financial Accountability and Corporate Transparency coalition.

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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@cnglobal.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.

Stepping over the gun violence issue...yet again

It is a somewhat noteworthy sequence that soon after some big players in the power-and-influence game got their comeuppance at the polls, there's been attention drawn to another of the self-assured "untouchables" of power wielding, albeit via a tragic circumstance in the world of sports. The unfortunate murder-suicide involving pro footballer Jovan Belcher and his girlfriend brought in its wake the gun violence issue, which bubbles up whenever there's a headline-making incident to remind us, fleetingly for sure, that the gun ownership matter is still there, still unaddressed, thanks to those high-rolling influence traders.

The catalyst for this latest focus on guns being used in senseless acts of violence was NBC broadcaster Bob Costas who devoted a commentary last Sunday evening to the tragic turn of events thrust upon the Kansas City Chiefs as a result of Belcher's actions. Costas quoted sports writer Jason Whitlock who had written that had Belcher not owned a firearm, he and his girlfriend would be still alive. That, of course, is conjecture. But the eruption of controversy that followed Costas' remarks became perhaps

more of a front page news nugget than what prompted the comments he made.

As one would expect, most of the braying about Costas having used an inappropriate forum (halftime of a football game) to say his piece, or critical of his point of view, came from the usual apologists for the status quo on guns – people unalterably opposed to even basic, common-sense controls being imposed on the accessibility of firearms. Quite absurdly, the anti-Costas frenzy extended to a TV discussion on one network of whether Costas should be fired.

One immediately saw, overhanging all this palaver, the ogre of the gun lobby's major players – the NRA and its big-money cronies in the firearms industry. They didn't have to weigh in on the larger issue to which Costas had linked the deaths of those two young people. They had for so long so effectively done the demagogue bit on guns and the travesty of considering gun-control legislation, they could rest comfortably that there were surrogates enough to quell any mini uprising in the bleeding-heart ranks.

But just as the great financial fix now required in Washington will

Viewpoint

By Les Slater

likely provide insight into how many Republicans are ready to declare themselves no longer beholden to Grover Norquist and other nut-job advocates of no tax increase, regardless of whatever, so too does one hope for a lightning bolt on the firearms front that sets in motion a reversal of the intimidation that has cowed lots of seemingly well-meaning folk. Fear of the gun lobby's wrath has reduced many a progressive or moderate to absolute silence on the gun issue. It's been an unhealthy shackling of public officials that, like Norquist's tax noose on Republicans, cries shame on their collective wimping out. Nothing has more dramatically demonstrated the lily-livered ways of Washington on the gun issue than that shooting rampage in Arizona a couple of years ago that invaded the very halls of Congress, Rep. Gabby Giffords suffering incapacitation that would halt her career in public life, even as other victims paid

with their lives. Congress remaining largely unmoved even by this assault on its own institution said it all; loss of a moral compass in Washington was never more clearly telegraphed.

What's been downright scary in this debate on gun violence is the unobstructed path to zero opposition that the pro-gun element has been able to carve. There was juice enough in 1994 -- notably aided by the active involvement of Jim Brady, wounded in the Reagan assassination attempt – to get an assault weapons ban passed in Congress. Ten years later when the ban was up for renewal, the dynamics had so changed that serious discussion of Congress following through and doing right became a non-starter. This, mark you, had to do with removing restrictions on the acquisition of assault weapons, items whose open-market availability no civilized society should countenance.

There have been some few who have dared to buck the tide of surrender. Long Island's Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, whose life was personally touched by gun violence, has been a tireless crusader and has publicly criticized her Congressional col-

leagues' spinelessness in not standing up to the NRA. And to his credit, Mayor Michael Bloomberg has been unfailingly resolute in his advocacy of strict gun control laws. Bloomberg was moved to assail what was practically a non-inclusion of gun control in the recent presidential debate that centered on domestic matters. But such scant opposition amounts to odds the NRA and those in bed with them would take any day of the week.

We are, however, in the down-draught of an election that some believe to have been transformative. The wackos ran a right-wing extremist to challenge a "too moderate" Senator Richard Lugar in a primary in Indiana and wound up losing the seat to Democrats in November. Another extremist tried to knock off the Democratic incumbent senator in Missouri and failed. The Republican brass swear they had the presidency figured to be securely in the bag for Mitt Romney. Maybe we aren't done yet with this succession of "sure things" on the right that turn out not quite so. And maybe, to the NRA's chagrin, the timing could prove right, after all, for gun proliferation getting, via Bob Costas, that front-burner play it deserves.

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LETTER

Continued from page 10

forms of racism in this City and the nation. We are dedicated to eradicating it," said Elizabeth Saylor, one of the attorneys for the plaintiffs.

This lawsuit seeks injunctive relief to stop the discrimination and ensure future compliance with fair housing laws, as well as compensatory damages, punitive damages, and attorneys' fees and costs. The FHJC and three testers are represented by Elizabeth Saylor, Diane Houk, and Vasudha Talla of ECBA.

FHJC is a New York City-based non-profit organization dedicated to eliminating housing discrimination, promoting open and inclusive communities, and strengthening fair housing enforcement. Individuals who encounter illegal housing discrimination are encouraged to call the FHJC for assistance at 212-400-8201.

Ravana Tsang
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Antigua PM receives UN Visionary Leadership Award

By Nelson A. King

Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer on Monday received the South-South and Triangular Visionary Leadership Award in a ceremony held at the headquarters of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in Vienna, Austria.

The Visionary Award is given annually to leaders from countries and institutions that focus primarily on the development of the global South who, through their actions, have placed the cooperative spirit center stage in international efforts to improve the human condition, according to an Antigua government statement.

Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the United Nations, Dr. John W. Ashe, accepted the award, on the first day of the 5th Annual Global South-South Development (GSSD) Expo 2012, on behalf of Spencer, who could not attend the ceremony.

"I am pleased and honored to be given this prestigious award, whose significance is seen in the goals developing countries have

strived to achieve through the multitude of South-South alliances that have been formed over the years," Spencer said in the statement.

"I would like to thank the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation for this singular honor, which recognizes leaders who have used South-South cooperation as a uniting framework to foster economic integration, the formation of negotiating blocs during multilateral negotiations, political alliances, sharing of knowledge, experience and technology, cross-sectoral collaboration and in advancing cultural exchanges," he added.

The award ceremony was part of the five-day GSSD Expo 2012, which ran from Nov. 19-23.

This year's expo, a U.N.-sponsored forum and the fifth one of its kind, has over 30 organizations, agencies and institutional partners.

It will highlight the dual themes of sustainable energy and climate change and showcase more than 30 practical, successful interventions in the field that have raised

Continued on page 24



Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer.

AP Photo/Frank Franklin II

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CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP

Continued from page 2

Lagarde has suggested to Barbadian authorities that a devaluation of the Barbados dollar would make the country's tourism more competitive and help its economy to grow.

According to a recent press statement issued by the Central Bank of Barbados (CBB), this suggestion was made to the bank's governor Dr. DeLisle Worrell when he attended a recent breakfast meeting with the IMF and the president of the World Bank.



However, the island's chief economist shut down the IMF's head suggestion, pointing out in the statement, "To most of us in the Caribbean, it does not seem rational to impoverish yourself to grow your economy. To us, it is obvious that is what devaluation implies."

Haiti

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter recently visited Haiti to help build homes in a town hit by the devastating January 2010 earthquake.

Carter and his wife Rosalynn led a mission of hundreds of Habitat for Humanity volunteers in the south-western town of Leogane. The town was the epicenter of the earthquake.



Many people there still have no home or live in terrible conditions. The former president and former first lady took an active part in the

construction of 100 one-room houses on about 14 acres of land. Families will get to live in the homes rent-free for five years and then will have to pay a modest annual rent to the government.

Trinidad

The Trinidad and Tobago Government has removed the 15 percent Value Added Tax (VAT) from more than 4,000 selected food items.

Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar said the VAT removal was just one of the measures to help reduce food prices.

She also promised to remove the CARICOM duties on food as part of the ongoing bid to reduce prices.



Persad-Bissessar said the duty removal is a matter, which would affect CARICOM's Common External Tariff (CET).

"Down the road, items like rice, flour and sugar are already zero-rated but because of the duties on them they tend to impact heavily on the consumer, but those are long-term measures, this was a short-term measure," she said.

The prime minister said the next step would be for the Ministry of Legal Affairs and the Prices Council to keep monitoring so that this is not a one-shot and by tomorrow the prices have gone up again. The removal of VAT took place from Nov. 15. Alcohol has not been zero-rated.

Compiled by Azad Ali

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Appliances sells televisions, computers, laptops, tablets, car audio equipment, refrigerators, surveillance cameras, and more. Its been in business for 20 years, so you can shop with confidence, knowing it will be around, should you have to exchange anything after the holidays.

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Manny Santos, manager of the Queens store for two decades. “We’re a mom and pop shop.”

Universal Electronics and Appliances [170-08 Jamaica Ave. between 170th and 171st streets in Jamaica, Queens, (718) 725-1335] and [1170 Fulton St. between Bedford and Franklin avenues in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, (718) 230-1214]. Open seven days a week, 10 am-8 pm.



The gift of this ‘Weis-man’

If you need more than decorations to spruce up your home for the holidays, visit the wise men at Weisman Home Outlets.

The family-owned business has been around for more than 70 years, supplying everything to renovate the home at discounted prices. There’s a large selection of kitchen cabinets in shades such as brandy wine, oak, white, merlot, chestnut maple, and toffee. Variety like this is sure to complement any color scheme. Affordable kitchen modeling is available.

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have something in mind or you’re open to suggestions, Weisman Home Outlets can help. The company believes in old-style customer service, guiding you step-by-step. When you shop at Weisman, your home can sparkle all year round.

Weisman Home Outlets [63-27 Metropolitan Ave. off Fresh Pond Road in Middle Village, Queens, (718) 497-0212]; [218-01 Merrick Blvd. off Springfield Boulevard in Springfield Gardens, Queens, (718) 723-

4000]; [1175 McDonald Ave. between Avenues I and J in Borough Park, Brooklyn, (718) 377-8871, www.WeismanHomeOutlets.com].

Brooklyn and Middle Village hours: Mondays – Wednesdays, 8 am-6 pm; Thursdays, 8 am-8 pm; Fridays, 8 am-7 pm; Saturdays, 9 am-6 pm; and Sundays, 10 am-5 pm. Springfield hours: Mondays – Wednesdays, 8 am-6 pm; Thursdays, 8 am-7 pm; Fridays, 8 am-6 pm; Saturdays, 9 am-6 pm; and Sundays, 10 am-5 pm.

Roll out the barrels

Every celebration calls for beer and soda. Stock up in advance, so you don’t run dry.

Roger’s Beer and Soda Distributor makes it easy to shop for all your holiday needs. The store has a large selection of imported and domestic beer, as well as craft beer. Bring a bit of Caribbean sunshine to the festivities with some Red Stripe from Jamaica. Or, have a Feliz Navidad with some Vitarroz Malta. You’ll also find Heineken, Budweiser, Guinness Stout, Corona, Becks, Red Bull, and more. Many soda brands and bottled water are also in stock.

The store is a redemption center, so when the party’s over, bring all the empty cans and bottles back for a refund of your

deposit. Roger’s Beer and Soda Distributor is a family-owned and -operated business that has served the community for 45 years. During that time, they’ve hired many locals, sponsored sports teams, participated in block parties and other neighborhood functions.

Roger’s Beer and Soda Distributor [4517 Glenwood Rd. between E. 45th and E. 46th streets in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, (718) 287-0797]. Open Mondays through Thursdays, 10 am-7:30 pm; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 am-8 pm; and Sundays, noon-6 pm.



Practical presents

Sometimes the most appreciated gifts are the most practical ones.

Almac True Value Hardware is the place to buy gifts that will be used. The shop carries small appliances, automotive accessories, hand tools, sporting goods, and other meaningful items. If you’re not sure what you want, ask for help. Still don’t know? A True Value gift card makes a much-appreciated present.

In 2008, New York Magazine named Almac the “Hardware Store of the Year,”

and one of the reasons was because of its outstanding customer service. If there’s work to be done at your home before the holidays, ask about services such as carpet cleaning, handyman maintenance, and locksmith workmanship. Ready to deck the halls of your home with boughs of holly? Almac True Value Hardware carries seasonal decorations so you can bring the spirit of the holidays to your doorstep. Should you be ready to paint a room or two before guests arrive, the



shop is a certified paint center.

Almac True Value Hardware [2 Newkirk Plaza at E. 16th street in Flatbush, Brooklyn, (718) 434-1736, www.AlmacHardware.com]. Open Mondays through Fridays, 8:30 am-7 pm; Saturdays, 8:30-6 pm; and Sundays, 10 am-5 pm.

Venezuela chocolate king thrives despite controls

By Ian James

CANO RICO, Venezuela (AP) - Cacao pods ripen to colors from bright yellow to crimson in the forest-shaded plantations of Venezuela, where some of the world's finest chocolate is born.

The crop is transformed into gourmet bars that sell briskly in Venezuela and are exported to the United States, Europe and Japan by the country's premier chocolate maker, Chocolates El Rey, or The King. As the company has won success and international acclaim, though, it has also had to cope with difficulties brought on by President Hugo Chavez's socialist government.

El Rey's growing business illustrates how some entrepreneurs are managing to hold on and even thrive in Venezuela despite more government regulations and state takeovers of companies and farmland. Producers of crops such as coffee and sugar have struggled in the face of price controls and cheap imports.

El Rey used to go through just four bureaucratic steps to export its chocolate. Now, owner Jorge Redmond says the list of requirements has grown to more than 50.



In this photo taken Nov 15, 2012, owner of Chocolates El Rey, Jorge Redmond speaks during an interview in Caracas, Venezuela. AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos

Some cacao plantations have been taken over by the government, and while those seizures haven't affected El Rey, the company suffered a major setback a decade ago when its model farm was overrun by squatters. Those who took the land planted corn and cut down towering mahogany and saman trees.

El Rey's attempts to get the farm back have been fruitless, and Redmond acknowledges feeling worried about the possibility of

one day being targeted for expropriation by the government. Still, he remains optimistic about cacao and plans new investments to increase output at the company's plant, which is already churning out 3,000 tons of chocolate a year. El Rey has a workforce of more than 200 employees, and plans to increase its exports.

"We're going to stay here and fight it out. We're not giving up. And I think most other companies are

going to do the same," said Redmond, who has been leading El Rey for nearly four decades as its majority owner and president. "You have to keep working. My philosophy is that we're going to last longer than the government."

Chavez, for his part, has talked about harnessing Venezuela's potential in cacao and increasing exports. His government has already established the Venezuelan Cacao Socialist Corporation, which has

invested in several processing plants.

Redmond said officials from the state company explained in a private meeting with buyers in November that the company plans to buy about 2,000 tons directly from growers in the region of Barlovento, east of Caracas, and then divvy it up in the industry.

"We were very clear ... that we're only going to buy what suits us," Redmond said at his office in Caracas, which is decorated with wooden cacao pods and smells of chocolate.

Redmond's company has found a winning strategy by paying more for quality cacao, providing assistance to small farmers and marketing its chocolate in Venezuela and around the world.

Some of the aromatic cacao comes from independent farmers in Barlovento, where the lush coastal forests sprout with moss and bromeliads along with pea-sized cacao blossoms.

Lifelong grower Pablo Planchar said he is thankful to El Rey for the higher prices it pays for each burlap sack of cacao. He's also grateful that the company has provided equipment for pruning trees and special boxes made of apamate

wood where he ferments his cacao.

The cacao is then spread out and raked on a concrete patio for sun-drying, where a sliding metal roof installed by El Rey helps keep the crop dry when it rains.

"It's the institution that has helped us the most," Planchar said of the company.

On a recent morning, Planchar and six other men squatted among the trees, cracking open the cacao pods with machetes and scooping out clumps of white pulp and seeds with their fingers.

"This one's ready. Look at the color," Planchar said, cradling a golden yellow pod in his hands. While they worked, he and the other men smoked cigars and passed around a bottle of homemade liquor made from local plants and spices.

Planchar said he can earn the equivalent of \$465 a month, and he hopes for higher prices and more assistance of the sort El Rey is providing, as well as credit. His typical earnings are less than the minimum wage of \$476 for those with regular full-time jobs, and as a result many independent farmers do other work to make ends meet.

SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES

Small Business Energy | SmallBusinessEnergy.com

www.smallbusinessenergy.com/NewYork
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NYC Small Business Resource Center | The New York Public Library

smallbiz.nypl.org

Small Business Services - Empire State Development New York

www.esd.ny.gov/smallbusiness.html

Small Business - Business First - New York State

www.nyfirst.ny.gov/ResourceCenter/SmallBizMenu.html

2012 New York, NY Small Business Resource

www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/files/resourceguide_3135.pdf

Business Resources: Internet Bibliographies: New York State Library

www.nysl.nysed.gov/reference/busref.htm
Selected business-related web sites compiled by staff at the New York State Library for use in response to reference questions.

Start a Business in New York - Resources for New York Small Businesses

manhattan.about.com/od/careersjobs/a/nysmallbusiness.htm
Find resources and advice on starting a

business in New York City. Get information on New York business licenses and incorporation, free NYC resources for starting a business.

Your Money New York - Help and Resources for Small Businesses

www.yourmoneyny.com/helpresource/smallbusiness/index.php
This section of Your Money New York is designed to help small business owners - and New Yorkers interested in starting a small business.

Small Business Resources - The Business Council of New York

www.bcny.org/inside/smallbusiness.htm
Capital Business Blog - Read about the issues. Visit www.nyfirst.ny.gov to learn what New York State can do for businesses.

Resources for Businesses in New York City - bfindapc.com

www.bfindapc.com/...business-resource.../resources-for-businesses-i
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Small Business Resource Guide - New York - HUD

www.hud.gov/offices/osdbu/resource/guide/local/newyork.cfm
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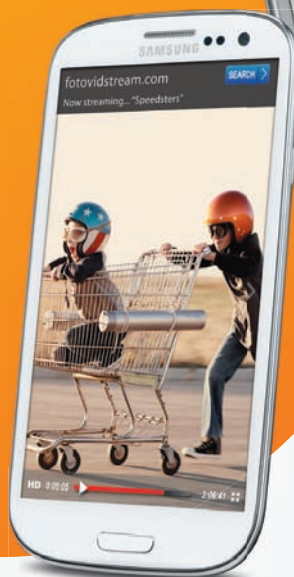
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Ask the expert: How to get a good night's sleep

HEALTH

(StatePoint) According to the National Sleep Foundation, if you have trouble staying and falling asleep at night, or you wake up feeling unrefreshed in the morning, you may be suffering from insomnia.

Almost everyone has trouble sleeping every so often, but for many Americans having a hard time getting to sleep or waking in the middle of the night is a significant problem.

To help, board certified sleep specialist Dr. Russell Rosenberg, chairman of the National Sleep Foundation, offers answers to some questions about insomnia:

What is insomnia?

Insomnia involves difficulty getting to sleep, staying asleep, waking too early, trouble getting back to sleep or lack of refreshing sleep, as defined by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

Are the symptoms of insomnia the same for everyone?

Insomnia may affect people differently. Some complain of waking up in the middle of the night and having trouble falling back asleep, while others have trouble initially getting to sleep.

What can I do to help me fall

asleep at night?

Establish a regular bed and wake time. Create a sleep-conducive environment that is dark, quiet and comfortable. Allow time at night to "wind down" before climbing into bed. Doing work, watching TV and using the computer, both close to bedtime or in the bedroom, can hinder your ability to fall asleep. Avoid violent shows and news reports before bedtime as they can be agitating.

If I wake up in the middle of the night, what are some tips to help me fall back to sleep?

If you wake up in the middle of the night and stay in bed, don't stare at the clock. Also, do not watch TV, use your computer or cell phone, because use of these technologies can stimulate your brain and make it harder to fall back to sleep. Avoid drinking beverages containing caffeine or alcohol. Most importantly, you should try to relax.

What can I do during the day to help my insomnia?

Good daytime habits may help



It is important to get a good night's sleep.

Photo by stefanolunardi - Fotolia.com (c)

with both types of insomnia. "I tell my patients to avoid caffeine after lunch," stresses Rosenberg. Also, get regular exercise but avoid rigorous exercise close to bedtime and always check with your doctor before starting any exercise regimen.

If those suggestions don't help, what else should I do?

You should speak with your healthcare professional if you are having trouble sleeping. He or she can determine whether or not you suffer from insomnia and if treatment is needed.

Where can I learn more about insomnia?

For more information regarding insomnia, visit the National Sleep Foundation website at <http://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/sleep-related-problems/insomnia-and-sleep>.



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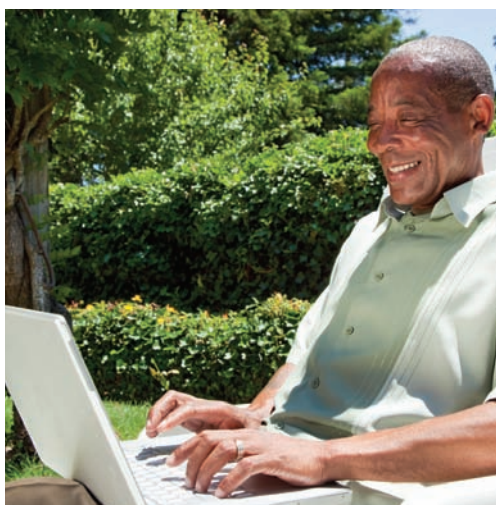
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Honored African endorses Ethiopian dam

The widow of the late Robert "Bob" Marley recently accepted a special African Diaspora award in Lilongwe, Malawi at the 7th Annual Living Legends Banquet.

Attended by President Joyce Hilda Banda, the event was hosted by the African Communications Agency (ACA).

"Rita is one woman who is very proud to be African," Dr. Erieka Bennett, ACA president/founder said. "She lives in the Bahamas, Jamaica, Ghana and Ethiopia, but she has schools for needy African children in Ghana."

"I'm very proud to be African, and it's very nice to be here with so many nice people in community as one people," Marley said.

The Living Legends Banquet annually honors various outstanding individuals by looking at how well they have represented the African Diaspora.

As Ethiopia stands precariously isolated by neighbors in the region due to



Inside Life

By Vinette K. Pryce

its effort to build a water reserve they named the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, while on the continent the reggae singer joined forces with advocates to promote, support and help raise funds for its construction.

The death of Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi this summer, who took power in 1991, prompted her visit to the capital city of Addis Ababa.

Throughout his leadership he lobbied for the construction of a massive 6,000-megawatt hydroelectric dam on the Nile River.

The cost he said would be five billion dollars. He proposed 2017 as the completion date.

Throughout his presidency, Meles built seven small dams on the Nile. But with

construction of this GERD, opposition has heightened to include threats by Egypt's military regime.

An observer claimed: "Cairo fears that once the dam is completed in 2017, it will take two to three years, depending on rainfall, to fill up the 67 billion cubic meter reservoir, which could reduce the amount of water that flows into Egypt by 25 percent."

"After the reservoir fills up, there is no guarantee that Egypt will maintain its present share of the water, and Ethiopia is already planning multiple agricultural projects on Nile tributary rivers flowing from the Ethiopian highlands."

Marley is alleged to have admired Meles for his vision of lifting Ethiopia out of abject poverty, an aspiration



Mrs. Rita Marley (left) and Dr. Erieka Bennett.

she reportedly shares.

Briefed on her visit by her Ethiopian representative Dr. Desta Meghoo, the celebrated matriarch received pertinent information related to opportunities and challenges posed by construction of

the massive structure.

Afterwards, she expressed solidarity with Ethiopia's mission to improve standards in Africa.

"We can look forward to electric power that will benefit millions of Ethiopians

and help neighboring countries too," Marley added.

"We have to do this. We have to do this with Ethiopia, for Ethiopia, for Africa. This is about African unity."

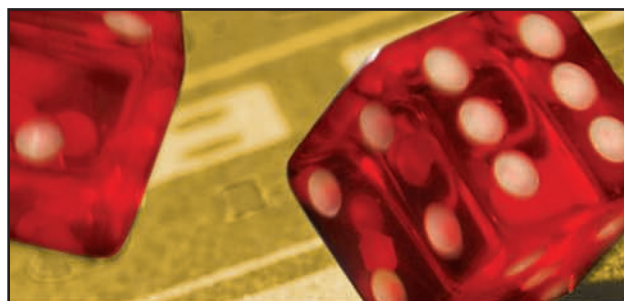
The reggae singer and mother said she is committed to support the nation that spawns the Blue Nile.

It was then that she announced the launch of Africa Unite Ring Back Tone; fine art and photographic exhibition and a black tie banquet.

"Africa Unite" marked an historic occasion in 2005 when Ethiopian led a global birthday celebration for Robert "Bob" Marley. Staged in Addis Ababa, millions packed into Meskel Square to show solidarity with the words and message of the reggae icon.

"How good and how pleasant it will be, before God and man, to see the unification of all Africans..."

The widow re-stated from lyrics penned in song by her famous husband.



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ENTERTAINMENT

Classical guitar quartet at Lehman

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts celebrates its 32nd holiday season with the heralded classical guitar quartet - The Romeros - on Sunday, Dec. 16, 2012 at 4:00 p.m.

The Romeros, also known as "The Royal Family of the Guitar," are continuing their legacy of guitar artistry spanning three gifted generations over 50 years. The quartet will perform with Concerto Málaga, The Spanish String Orchestra, conducted by Massimo Paris.

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts is on the campus of Lehman College/CUNY at 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West, Bronx, N.Y. Lehman Center is accessible by #4 or D train to Bedford Park Blvd. and is off the Saw Mill River Parkway and the Major Deegan Expressway. Low-cost on-site parking.

The Romeros quartet originated in Málaga, Spain.

There, legendary guitarist, Celedonio Romero, introduced his three sons, Angel, Celin and Pepe, to the beauty of the instrument by the very early ages of two or three. Each son made his public performance debut by age seven. The family emigrated to the U.S. where the father and his then-teenaged sons began performing together professionally as a classical guitar quartet, a configuration seldom heard outside the flamenco genre. On worldwide stages, they attracted attention and acclaim, first for their unique relationship as guitarists, then for their virtuosity. The New York Times noted that "Collectively, they are the only classical guitar quartet of real stature in the world today; in fact, they virtually invented the format."

Numerous composers, including Joaquin Rodrigo, Frederico Moreno, Morton

Continued on Page 24



The Hon. Una Clarke, Consul General Herman LaMont, Luciano, The Hon. Yvette Clarke, Sharon Gordon

Photo by Marjorie Flash

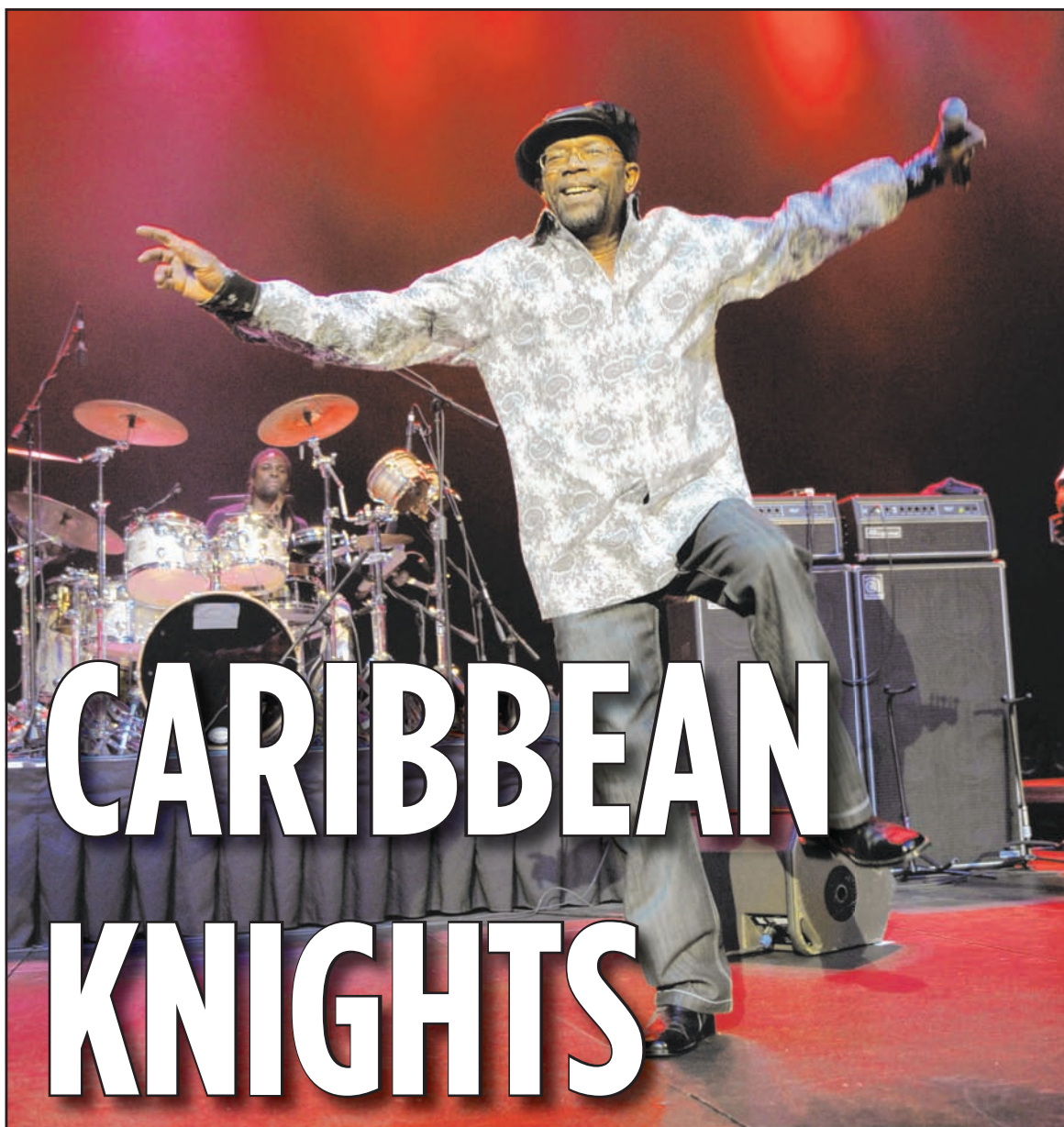
Luciano energizes Culture Salute crowd

By Marjorie Flash

This year's Reggae Culture Salute presented by the Coalition to Preserve Reggae (CPR) proved to be as gratifying as it

had in prior years. Luciano's highly-energized performance conveyed a clear message that he was back.

Continued on Page 24



Beres Hammond performs at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino's Hard Rock Live in Hollywood, Florida.

Jeff Daly/PictureGroup via AP IMAGES

Sounds of Reggae at Barclays Center

By Vinette K. Pryce

A quartet of internationally acclaimed, male, reggae recording artists will launch a presence of Caribbean music at Brooklyn's Barclays Center on Dec. 12 and kick-off the inaugural staging of concerts that represent the region.

British reggae singer Ali Campbell, Beres Hammond, Maxi Priest and Shaggy are slated to debut the

"Sounds of Reggae" showcase that will establish the first ever Caribbean concert at the newly-established entertainment landmark. "I'm excited to bring to the diverse neighborhood of Brooklyn, my second home, a piece of Jamaica's rich heritage and culture," Shaggy stated.

The event will also mark Jamaica's 50th anniversary of independence

and add to the year-long observance which began last January.

"This truly is a once in a lifetime opportunity to share the stage with such a talented group of reggae artists brought together to celebrate Jamaica's 50 years of independence," Shaggy added.

A Grammy winner in 1996, that year Shaggy ruled the charts with

Continued on Page 24

TOP OF THE CHARTS

TOP 10 SINGLES



- 1 **One More Night**
Maroon 5
- 2 **Diamonds**
Rihanna
- 3 **Die Young**
Ke\$ha
- 4 **Locked Out Of Heaven**
Bruno Mars
- 5 **Let Me Love You**
Ne-Yo
- 6 **Some Nights**
Fun.
- 7 **Too Close**
Alex Clare
- 8 **I Cry**
Flo Rida
- 9 **Adorn**
Miguel
- 10 **Don't Wake Me Up**
Chris Brown

TOP 10 ALBUMS



- 1 **Unapologetic**
Rihanna
- 2 **The World From The Side Of**
Phillip Phillips
- 3 **Rebel Soul**
Kid Rock
- 4 **The Truth About Love**
Pink
- 5 **The Lumineers**
The Lumineers
- 6 **Night Visions**
Imagine Dragons
- 7 **Red**
Taylor Swift
- 8 **Take Me Home**
One Direction
- 9 **Celebration Day**
Led Zeppelin
- 10 **Woman To Woman**
Keyshia Cole

Presented by

verizon wireless

Guitar

Continued from page 23

Gould, Lorenzo Paloma and Francisco de Madena, have been influenced by The Romeros to develop works for guitar quartet with symphony. The diversity and richness of The Romeros repertoire is reflected in a discography that includes *An Evening of Flamenco Music: The Romeros*, *The Royal Family of the Spanish Guitar*, *Baroque Concertos and Solo Works*, *Koenige da Gitarr*, and the recent release of *Christmas with Los Romeros*.

The Romeros have made many television appearances, including the *Tonight* and *Today* shows and the PBS "Evening at the Boston Pops." The quartet has been the subject of a KPBS/PBS documentary, "Los Romeros: The Royal Family of the Guitar" as well as a German documentary, "Los Romeros: Die Gitarren-Dynastie." Since the death of Celedonio in 1996, the quartet members are his sons, Celin and Pepe (knighted by Carlos I of Spain), and his grandsons, Celino and Lito. In 2007, the GRAMMY Recording Academy President's Merit Award was presented to The Romeros in honor of their artistic achievements. Their performances this year are dedicated to founder, teacher, father and grandfather, Celedonio Romero, in honor of the 100th anniversary of his birth.



The Romeros.

Luciano

Continued from page 23

Backed by the multi-talented Anthem Band which included members from Japan, Haiti, Guyana and Trinidad, Luciano dug deep in his treasure chest to deliver some soulful, spiritually uplifting hits to an eager and excited audience hanging on to every note. A riveting dance routine by eight-year-old Douglas Baldeo, on his way to being the next Ben Vereen, got everyone's attention.

The roots and culture show kicked off with well-received performances by Nyabinghi drummers Ark Angels, Tayazawan from Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica's Major Daps, Sister Cindy and Major One. Roots reggae artist Ossie Dellimore, who hails from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, with his band Soldiers of Justice gave an enjoyable set of conscious roots music reminiscent of Bob Marley's style.

Luciano, already honored with multiple awards, was presented with a Congressional Proclamation -- the highest honor that the U.S. Congress bestows on an individual, by U.S. Rep. Yvette Clarke. Jamaica Consul General Herman LaMont, and the Hon. Dr. Una Clarke.

CPR president Carlyle McKetty also



Luciano performs at Culture Salute 2012 Photo Credit: Marjorie Flash

presented Luciano with the organization's highest honor, the Pinnacle Award, for his years of dedication, consistency and commitment to spreading the positive message of roots reggae music.

At the end of the award ceremony, a surprised and speechless Sharon Gordon was also presented with a Congressional Proclamation for the many years of dedicated service and commitment to CPR's preservation of reggae music.

Caribbean Knights

Continued from page 23

his "Bombastic" release. Grammy-nominated Campbell was the voice of British reggae band UB40 for 30 years.

Along with his brother Robin, the pair enhanced the eclectic union that comprised reggae-focused musicians from Yemen, England, Scotland, Jamaica and Ireland. When Campbell exited the group in 2008 to go solo, his brother Duncan replaced him as front man for the group which has been dubbed the most successful reggae band in the world.

Priest, also a Britain-based, Grammy-nominated reggae talent is slated to add pop renditions from his catalogue of hits.

In 2002, the illustrious Grammy award eluded Hammond. However, the singer is reportedly revered in his homeland and remains a popular talent on the Caribbean circuit. The knights of reggae will introduce the hard-driving beat

to patrons of reggae and pop music attending the Brooklyn mecca which opened three months ago and already has hosted music of many genres. Heavily promoted throughout the summer, this concert will aid in providing funds to the American Foundation for the University of the West Indies (AFUWI) with partial proceeds donated to this cause.

On Dec. 17 "Caribbean Fever" will infiltrate the arena with soca and calypso, the dominant sounds from the eastern Caribbean. Slated for the debut feature are: Trinidad & Tobago's Machel Montano, Barbados' Allison Hinds, Doug E. Fresh, Slick Rick and Mr. Vegas. "We are proud to host the Caribbean Fever Music Festival at the Cushman & Wakefield Theater at Barclays Center, as we continue to offer a variety of entertainment that reflects the diverse tastes within Brooklyn," Sean Saadeh, vice president of programming for Barclays Center said.

Crime victim turns vigilante in revenge flick

“Universal Soldier 4: Day of Reckoning”

Very Good (2.5 stars)

Rated R for profanity, graphic sexuality, frontal nudity and pervasive gruesome violence

Running time: 113 minutes

Distributor: Magnet Pictures

By Kam Williams

John (Scott Adkins) was sadistically beaten with tire irons and left for dead by three assassins dressed like ninjas during a home invasion. When he came out of his coma nine months later, all he could remember about the attack was how his wife and daughter had been murdered right in front of his eyes by a creep who had the nerve to taunt him.

In fact, their assailant, Luc Deveraux (Jean-Claude Van Damme) even had the temerity to remove his mask and show his face. As he recovered from his wounds, John

realizes he doesn't have much to live for with his family gone. So, he decides to take the law into his own hands, rather than wait for the police to bring the perpetrators to justice.

That is the deceptive point of departure of “Universal Soldier 4: Day of Reckoning,” a high body-count splatterflick ostensibly revolving around an embittered vigilante bent on revenge, ala Charles Bronson in *Death Wish*. Directed by John Hyams, the film is the fourth in a grisly franchise launched way back in 1992.

The plot thickens while John is searching for Deveraux, when he finds himself being relentlessly hunted by a mysterious figure (Andrei Arlovski).

Furthermore, getting to Deveraux proves easier said than done, since he is protected by an army of rogue Universal Soldiers in his capacity as high priest of the Unisol Church of Eventualism.

Previously, these liberated



Dolph Lundgren in Universal Soldier: Day Of Reckoning.

Photo courtesy of Magnet Releasing

Unisols had been remote-controlled sleeper agents, operating under the thumb of the government like latter-day Manchurian candidates. But trust me, trying to sort out this complicated storyline isn't

worth the time, since just about everybody is about to get gutted or have his head lopped off.

Appreciation of this installment doesn't depend on any knowledge of what's transpired in the earlier

episodes, since this bloody free-for-all is designed for that demo of film fans with an insatiable appetite for gratuitous gore. So gruesome, it makes Peckinpah look like Winnie the Pooh.

Independent & Foreign Films

The Art of Flight (PG-13 for profanity) Snowboarding documentary showcasing the death-defying exploits of Travis Rice and other daredevils as they risk avalanches and accidents while exploring uncharted mountains all around the world.

Bad Kids Go to Hell (R for profanity, sexuality, violence and drug use) Dark comedy about a half-dozen students at an elite prep school who start falling victim to horrible accidents while serving detention. Starring Judd Nelson, Ben Browder, Ali Faulkner and Chanel Ryan.

Buffalo Girls (Unrated) Child abuse documentary taking an intimate peek into the boxing careers of 8 year-old Stam Sor Con Lek and Pet Chor Chanachai, female prizefighters who support their families while pursuing Thailand's Flyweight title. (In Thai with subtitles)

Cheerful Weather for the Wedding (Unrated) Cold feet comedy about a bride-to-be (Felicity Jones) worried that she's about to marry the wrong man who keeps both her fiance (James Norton) and her ex (Luke Treadaway) in suspense on her wedding day. With Ellie Kendrick,



Kam's Kapsules

By Kam Williams

Mackenzie Crook and Elizabeth McGovern.

Deadfall (R for profanity, sexuality and graphic violence) Crime caper about a brother (Eric Bana) and sister (Olivia Wilde) who decide to go their separate ways in the wake of a casino heist gone bad. Ensemble cast includes Sissy Spacek, Kate Mara, Kris Kristofferson and Treat Williams.

Delhi Safari (PG for violence, menacing action, suggestive content, crude humor and mature themes) Bollywood-produced, animated adventure about a protective mother leopard (Vanessa Williams), her cub (Tara Strong), a monkey (Carlos Alazraqui), a parrot (Tom Kenny) and a bear (Brad Garrett) forced to flee the forest for help when real estate developers leave their natural habitat on the verge of destruction. Voice cast includes Jane Lynch, Jason Alexander and Cary Elwes. (In Hindi and English with

subtitles)

The Fitzgerald Family Christmas (Unrated) Edward Burns wrote, directed and co-stars in this dysfunctional family drama about the emotional strain experienced by seven siblings when their long-lost father (Malachy McCourt) returns home for the holidays after having walked out on them and their mom (Anita Gillette) a couple of decades earlier. With Connie Britton, Heather Burns, Noah Emmerich and Kerry Bishe'.

Flying Lessons (R for profanity and sexuality) Prodigal Daughter drama about a young woman (Maggie Grace) who returns home for the first time in years to repair relationships with her alcoholic mother (Christine Lahti), an ex-boyfriend (Jonathan Tucker) and an Alzheimer's patient (Hal Holbrook). With Cary Elwes, Joanna Cassidy and Rick Gonzalez.

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SUN KULCHA

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Saturday, December 8

CHRISTMAS CAROLING: Bronx Terminal Market is kicking off the holiday season with an exciting celebration for the entire family. Join caroling by The Bronx Opera. There will be free hot chocolate courtesy of Applebee's, Home Depot's Kids Workshop, Coca-Cola beverages, samples and raffle giveaways! Also pick up Bronx Terminal Market's Official Holiday Shopping Guide for a list of the hottest gifts of the season and tons of promotions and offerings exclusively available at Bronx Terminal Market stores and restaurants. Located at 610 Exterior St., Bronx, N.Y.

Sunday, December 9

CHRISTMAS PARTY: United Progressive Brotherhood & Praise International Worship & Deliverance Center will host a children's Christmas party between 3:00-6:00 p.m., located 590 Livonia Ave. between Georgia & Sheffield, Brooklyn, New York 11207. Toys for kids 1-10 years.

Monday, December 10

ARTS: The multi-talented Alex DeSuze returns to the Indian Road Café to host the "No Name Uptown Cabaret Second Monday" monthly singers showcase. DeSuze, whose background includes acting, directing and singing at venues throughout the NYC-metro area, will be joined by guest musical director Marilynn Seits. The show starts at 7:30 p.m. but sign-up starts at 6:45 p.m., no cover, no minimum and for additional information, call 212 942-7451. For more "No Name" information, go to <http://www.nonamenyc.com>.

Wednesday, December 12

ARTS: Memory Arts Café is a series of free art events for people living with Alzheimer's disease, their caregivers and the general public and is co-produced by New York Memory Center and the Alzheimer's Poetry Project. This special holiday season Memory Arts Café will highlight the artists of the New York Memory Center in performance. Free & open to the public. Join our artists as they lead the audience in the creation of a new work featuring music, dance, poetry and collage. Champagne and desserts will be served 199 14th St. at 4th Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215 (Take the R to Prospect Ave.) For info: call (718) 499-7701 or visit alzpoetry.com.

Thursday, December 13- Saturday, December 15

ARTS: Greeting friends, family, and theater enthusiasts, Gilli, is a portrait of a family in the midst of a breakdown. It chronicles a year in the life of the Fletchers as they deal with the fallout from the mental incapacitation of their shining star. The performance



FINANCIAL COACHING: The NHS of East Flatbush is offering The Financial Capabilities and Coaching Program focusing on helping you reach your goals such as paying off bills, saving for a home, improving credit scores and more. For more information, call (718) 469-4679.



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 and to answer any questions every Tuesday and Wednesday, 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.

takes place at The Actors Fund Arts Center: 160 Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201 (between Smith St. & Hoyt St.). Tickets are available at:

WEBSITE: <http://aduri.brownpapertickets.com> Box Office: (800) 838-3006

Friday, December 14

ARTS: Jazz song stylist Paulette McWilliams has recorded and toured with some of the world's greatest musical artists, such as: Quincy Jones, Luther Vandross, Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston, among others, and in commercials as a jingle specialist. Now, she is sharing her dynamic voice and solo work in two musical concerts, Telling Stories (also the name of her critically-acclaimed album) with The Nat Adderly Jr. Quartet on Friday, Dec. 14, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. and at 9:00 p.m. at Aaron Davis Hall, City College of New York (Convent Avenue and West 135th Street on City College' campus) New York, N.Y. 10031. For more information and ticket sales visit: www.adhatccny.org or call Aaron Davis Hall Box office at 212.650.6900.

TAI CHI: Stop. Breath. Relax. Join Tai Chi Easy, a wellness practice combining Tai-chi, Qigong, meditation and Chinese healing, taught by Daniel Weicher, certified teacher in Integral Qigong and 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.



Ongoing

Tuesday, December 4 - Sunday, December 30

MUSEUM EXHIBIT: The Louis Armstrong House Museum is offering a special 40-minute, guided interpretive tour. The Historic Holiday House tours beginning Dec. 4 -Dec. 30 with regular museum admission. The Historic Holiday House Tour is the only preserved home of a jazz legend in the world, all of the furnishings are original. The Louis Armstrong House Museum is located at 34-56 107th Street in Corona, New York. Admission is \$10.00, \$7.00 for seniors, students and children and free LAHM members and children under four. Groups with reservations enjoy a discount on admission.

QUEENS SICKLE CELL: The Queens Sickle Cell Advocacy Network, 207-08 Hollis Ave., Queens Village, N.Y., presents a Parent to Parent Support Group meeting every first Monday of every month, 7:00 p.m. For directions and registration, call (718) 712-0873 or email Qscanorg@verizon.net.

FAIRWAY MARKET SHUTTLE: Fairway Market is now offering a free group shuttle bus to its Red Hook, Brooklyn store at 480-500 Van Brunt St., Mondays thru Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. For pick-up reservations for groups of 10 or more, within a five-mile radius of the store, call Viola Williams or Marcy Rosenblum at (347) 750-1251. There will also be pickups on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. at 589 Prospect Ave., between 11 and 10 avenues. All seniors get a five percent discount in the store. Each group will have an hour and a half to shop and/or enjoy a bite to eat in the picturesque cafe by the waterfront.

FARMERS MARKET: Seeds in the Middle is sponsoring The Crown Heights Farmers Market offering fresh fruits and vegetables, including calaloo and Caribbean favorites and accepting EBT, WIC, Snap, FMNP, Health Bucks, and Fresh Connect. The market will be operating every Thursday from 12 noon to 7:00 p.m. at Hamilton Metz Park at Albany and Lefferts avenues, Brooklyn. For more information, visit www.seedsinthemiddle.org

COMPUTER TRAINING: Mount Carmel Worship and Outreach Center is holding adult and children computer training programs, 10:30 a.m. 12:30 p.m. or 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Call (917) 609-0909 for registration details.

REVERSE MORTGAGE COUNSELING:

Are you a senior homeowner struggling to make ends meet? A reverse mortgage may be an answer. NHS can help determine if this is the best option for you. All programs discussed are backed by the federal government. For information, call (718) 469-4679.

FORECLOSURE SERVICES: Are behind in your mortgage or seeking a modification? The Flatbush Development Vcorp, NHS of East Flatbush and the Center for N.Y.C. Neighborhoods are offering free services and assistance. Referrals for free legal assistance are also available. To schedule an appointment, call (718) 469-4679.

HOME IMPROVEMENT: Did your roof collapse? Does your brolier need replacement? Do you need major repairs done but lack the finances? NHS of East Flatbush can assist you. For information on home improvement programs, call (718) 469-4679.

Compiled by Natalie Y. Henry

Stagnation or growth in the Rasta movement

By Vinette K. Pryce

Eighty years after a segment of Jamaica's African population mobilized to peacefully protest colonial oppression and distinguish themselves separately as Rastafarians, allegedly, the lifestyle is gaining traction and may have recruited many more followers in the 21st century.

According to the Associated Press, "more people are joining Jamaica's home-grown Rastafarian religion..."

A report in the Jamaica Observer agreed with this position stating that "The Rastafarian faith is indeed rising in Jamaica, where new census figures show a roughly 20 per cent increase in the number of adherents over a decade, to more than 29,000."

That figure was disputed by Jalani Niaah, a lecturer at the University of the West Indies and expert in the Rastafarian movement.

Niaah reportedly stated that the true figure may be closer to eight to 10 per cent and represents "a tiny sliver of the mostly Christian country's 2.7 million people, population."

He attributed the disparity to the fact

"many Rastafarians disdain nearly all government initiatives and not all would have spoken to census takers."

While both media entities focused on the Bobo Ashanti commune in Bull Bay, Jamaica -- who differ from other Rasta sects in the belief that their founder, King Emmanuel Charles Edwards was the Black incarnation of Jesus Christ -- Rastafarians living off the island claim the opposite and contend the report does not fully represent the various communities that comprise the total Rastafarian sect.

Here in New York, Rastafarian advocate Paul "Jah Paul" Haughton agrees that in some areas of Jamaica there are some progressive movements.

He told Caribbean Life that "in New York, Rastas are stagnant."

"There is no progressive move," the avowed 'Honorebel Rastaman' asserted.

"It has become a party thing...there is nothing concrete...it's all about reggae... very commercial."

Haughton said on significant dates such as -- Ethiopian Christmas, the birthday anniversary of Marcus Garvey, anniversary of the coronation of Emperor Haile



In this Nov. 19, 2012 photo, Rastafarian priests, Xavier, left, Morant, center, and Forrester, examine documents in the office of the isolated hilltop Bobo Ashanti commune in Bull Bay, Jamaica.

AP Photo/David McFadden

Selassie I -- there is hardly ever any commemoration.

"People just grabbing at red, gold and green and reggae," Haughton said.

"And the church and state doing better because at least they have places to meet and reason."

Back on the island, the belief is that "its contemporary appeal is particularly fascinating to young men, especially in the absence of alternative sources for their development."

The Rasta movement's growing appeal there is attributable to its rejection of Western materialism, the scarcity of opportunities for young men in Jamaica and an increasing acceptance of it.

"For the Black Nationalist Bobo Ashanti commune, the Rastafarian faith is a transforming way of life, where Rastas strive to live a frugal existence uncomplicated by binding relationships to "Babylon" -- the unflattering term for the Western world," Niaah added.

Guyana's singing diva-Pamela Maynard silenced



Pamela Maynard during a performance in Brooklyn, New York.

Photo by Tangerine Clarke

By Tangerine Clarke

Pamela Maynard was compared to the likes of R&B super stars Patty La Belle and Diane Warwick. The Guyanese-Canadian songstress brought her star-power style to every stage, where she got down on her knees to sing her soul out during thrilling performances.

Sad to say, the melodious voice of this brilliant singer was silenced on Sunday, Nov. 25, after a long bout with breast cancer.

Maynard was a multi-talented artiste and a musical genius in the Caribbean community. Born into a music dynasty, her mother Mavis Maynard, a singer/writer inspired Pamela to shine on the Guyana music scene writing her daughter's first hit single "Lost, Lonely and Helpless"

Her father's local sound-system that fueled her love of music and gave her firm grip on her musical career also motivated her to become versed in other gen-

res such as Reggae, Gospel, Calypso, Jazz and Soca.

At age 15, Maynard performed for visiting dignitaries that included former Cuban President Fidel Castro.

Some of her most memorable performances were with musical greats, Ben E. King, the Platters, the Drifters and Ray Charles. A true Caribbean woman, the Diva sang alongside reggae artists such as Jimmy Cliff and John Holt and brought fans to their feet when she performed with Byron Lee and the Dragonaires.

Maynard was a singing sensation among vocalists like Boris Gardner, Sid and the Slickers, Yoruba Singers and Aubrey Mann. She performed with the Smallman Band, and calypsonian giants Lord Kitchener, the Mighty Sparrow, Shadow, Baron and Eddy Grant.

A former member of the Guyana Defence Force, Maynard showed true grit staying in the entertainment

industry for more than forty years. She starred in a movie of her own life, and later entertained the Barbados elite for 10 years gigging at hotel resorts, before she teamed up with the Troubadours in Trinidad.

Always dressed to the hilt, sporting long colorful fingernails, Maynard performed alongside Lord Shorty's on his Canadian concert tour, and went on to

win numerous awards that include the JetStar Award, the Music Volks Award in Germany a Reggae Award, best Calypso and best Gospel Awards in Canada among others.

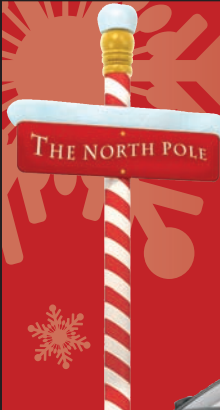
The Guyanese community said they would especially miss Maynard's special performances she put on to entertain citizens at the Guyana Consulate in Ontario, Toronto.

PM receives award

Continued from page 12
living standards and promoted sustainable growth and prosperity in developing countries, the statement said.

It said these "Southern-grown development solutions" range from renewable energy to energy-efficient technologies; green economy pathways; energy access and climate change;

social protection, job security and economic empowerment in energy sectors; restoring and rehabilitating degraded habitats and ecosystems services; food security, agricultural productivity and the conservation of agriculture; protection of health, well-being and livelihoods of vulnerable populations, among others.



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\$0 Down, \$0 1st Month Pymt,
\$0 Security Deposit, \$0 Due at Signing
 TT Pymnts: \$11,439, Residual: \$11,262.
Requires dealer contribution of \$316.80,
 which could affect final negotiated transaction.

2013 Passat S
LEASE FOR
\$219*
 PER MONTH
 MSRP: \$21,640
 42 month lease term. Manual 5 Spd.
 10k miles/year, Stk # 106468
\$0 Down, \$0 1st Month Pymt,
\$0 Security Deposit, \$0 Due at Signing
 TT Pymnts: \$8,979, Residual: \$12,932.
Requires dealer contribution of \$2,712.87,
 which could affect final negotiated transaction.

2013 CC Sport
LEASE FOR
\$319*
 PER MONTH
 MSRP: \$33,000
 42 month lease term. Manual 5 Spd.
 10k miles/year, Stk # 106469
\$0 Down, \$0 1st Month Pymt,
\$0 Security Deposit, \$0 Due at Signing
 TT Pymnts: \$13,079, Residual: \$16,617.
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SPORTS



Los Angeles Galaxy's David Beckham, right, of England, holds up the trophy as he celebrates the team's 3-1 win in the MLS Cup championship soccer match against the Houston Dynamo in Carson, Calif., Saturday, Dec. 1, 2012.

AP Photo/Jae C. Hong

Perfect end

By Patrick Horne

The confetti rained on the Home Depot Center last Saturday afternoon and made it a very colorful sight; watching the fireworks, you could almost smell the smoke; and then there were the signs that hung around the field, "Thank You Beckham," "We Love You Beckham." This all topped off a fitting MLS farewell to Los Angeles Galaxy star, David Beckham, who moments before in his last MLS game led his team to a second straight MLS Cup and

Continued on Page 30

World Athletes

By Joseph Wilson

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Usain Bolt won the IAAF World Athlete of the Year award for the fourth time Saturday after defending his 100- and 200-meter gold medals at last summer's Olympic Games in London.

The Jamaican sprinter, who beat out American hurdler Aries Merritt and Kenyan runner David Rudisha, had previously won the award in 2008, 2009, and 2011.

"For me this is a great honor to win a fourth time. I really worked hard and I was really focused this year. This season

Continued on Page 30



HOT STREAK

St. John's guard D'Angelo Harrison (11) in action against Cincinnati in an NCAA college basketball game in Cincinnati.

AP Photo/AI Behrman

D'Angelo Harrison off to a tremendous start

By Robert Elkin

Last season, all eyes were focused on St. John's University freshmen D'Angelo Harrison and Mo Harkless. The latter decided that he was ready for the pro-game and entered into the National Basketball Association draft. Thus Hark-

less departed the college scene and left behind him three years of college eligibility. Some basketball experts felt that he should have at least stayed in college for his sophomore season.

Harrison returned for his second year along with Phil Greene, God'sgift

Achiuwa, and Sir'Dominic Pointer. Add to this list a number of other lettermen and newcomers. Now they must all gel into one unit.

After eight games, they have a 6-2 successful start and are preparing for a clash

Continued on Page 30



Seton Hall's Jordan Theodore (1) dribbles the ball as St. John's Phil Greene (1) tries to block his path during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game in Newark, N.J., Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2012. Theodore had 16 points in Seton Hall's 94-64 win. (AP Photo/Mel Evans)

Mel Evans

D'Angelo Harrison off to a tremendous start

Continued from page 29

against Fordham University Saturday night at Madison Square Garden for a 7:00 p.m. tip off.

Harrison, a pre-season all-Big East Conference second team player, is off to a tremendous start. After scoring 27 points against Murray State, a non-league opponent, in their third game of the season, Harrison tallied two 20-point

contests and 26 on eight for 13 from the field, and three for six from three-point range and grabbed six rebounds against the University of South Carolina.

Harrison is definitely a bright spot for the Red Storm.

"He's making some progress," said Steve Lavin, who is in his third year as head coach of the Johnnies. "(Overall) we have some nice pieces, depth,

and speed. We can become a better rebounding team than we are.

"Our strengths are depth, speed and quickness, (and individual it is Harrison). He's as highly skilled as anyone in the conference. His skill and talent are tied together. And his floor game and judgment are excellent. He is a prolific scorer."

After eight games, the 6'3" Harrison, who is averaging around 20 points a

game, is among the team leaders in free throw percentage, three-point field goals percentage, and point and defensively in steals. He is also among the league leaders for various offensive categories in the league.

"He is making good choices in terms in his run game, where he is taking it all the way, the mid-range game, as well as the deep or three point game," continued the coach.



From left to right: Prince Albert of Monaco, Jamaican athlete Usain Bolt, US sprinter Allyson Felix and IAAF (International Association of Athletics Federations) President Lamine Diack pose for the media during an event marking the centenary of the IAAF (International Association of Athletics Federations), in Barcelona, Saturday, Nov. 24, 2012.

AP Photo/Manu Fernandez

IAFF athletes of year

Continued from page 29

I am back, that means I was one of my toughest. I had my ups and downs, even though we don't like to talk about them," said Bolt, who thanked his coach and the fans at the Olympics.

"The London games were magnificent. Fans were there in the stadium from 10 in the morning. I had never seen anything like that."

Sprinter Allyson Felix of the United States took home the women's award.

In 2003, Bolt and Felix won the Rising Star awards for the most promising young athletes of the year.

"Nine years ago I was here with Allyson, now

I am getting old, which is slightly worrying," said the 26-year-old Bolt. "But I will continue to work hard."

Felix won the 200-meter gold medal in London after settling for silver four years earlier in Beijing.

"My biggest defeats have come at the Olympic Games. After Beijing I was devastated, I had worked as hard as possible but I came up short," she said. "But I decided to rededicate myself even harder and it was a blessing in disguise. I was able to work harder than ever before and finally it all came together."

Beckham finale

Continued from page 29

its fourth overall. The Galaxy had defeated the Houston Dynamo, 3-1, to win the 2012 MLS championship.

A teary-eyed Beckham, who now leaves MLS after six years, four MLS Cup appearances and two championships, told reporters after the game that the Galaxy and MLS will continue to be a "special place to me," he said that he was "thankful to be a part of the Los Angeles Galaxy" as the 30,515 fans at Home Depot Center cheered in agreement.

Beckham was subdued for most of the game in his last outing for the Galaxy. He played from deep in his

team's defensive third but still was able to deliver and few of his trademark long and dangerous passes to his favorite recipients, Robbie Keane and Landon Donovan; one such pass found Keane streaking down the left side, which Keane latched onto, dribbled into the penalty area to set up Donovan, who missed an open goal from inside 12 yards.

Beckham's slow start was the result of the very aggressive Dynamo team, which took the field in positive gear and took the game to the home team. Houston outplayed Los Angeles in the first half and kept the pressure on, which led to



Los Angeles Galaxy's David Beckham, top center, of England, poses with his sons, from left, Brooklyn, Romeo and Cruz after the Galaxy's 3-1 win in the MLS Cup championship soccer match against the Houston Dynamo in Carson, Calif., Saturday, Dec. 1, 2012.

AP Photo/Jae C. Hong

Calen Carr's goal in the 44th minute; the striker stormed down the right side, held off

Galaxy defender Tom Meyer and beat Josh Saunders at the near post with a shot that

shook the roof of the net for a Dynamo, 1-0, halftime lead. Unfortunately for Carr, he sustained an injury in a collision with Galaxy defender Omar Gonzalez and was limited to just a few minutes in the second half.

The contest turned out to be a game of two halves: the first half belonged to the Dynamo, but the second was all Galaxy. Gonzalez reflected on the subdued Galaxy locker room at half time when he said, "Everyone knew we would get a goal, and once we do, we'd win." It was the mantra of the 2012 Galaxy; this was a team that got off to a miserable start and lingered at the bottom of the Western Conference for most of the season; in hindsight, the season struggles emboldened the

Galaxy, which put together a late season surge that saw it squeeze into the playoffs as the fourth seed among five and never looked back.

In the 60th minute on Saturday, Gonzalez climbed above Houston defender Kofie Sarkodie to head home Juninho's 36-yard free kick for the equalizer and the turning point in the game, which led to his MLS Cup MVP award; five minutes later, Dynamo midfielder Ricardo Clark was whistled for a hand ball in the penalty area, and Donovan, who along with Jeff Agoos and Brian Mullan are the only players to win five MLS Cup titles, registered his record 22nd MLS postseason goal and his 146th overall, from the penalty spot to score the winner as he did a year ago.

Bangladesh gains momentum in ODI Series

Bangladesh won the first and second One-Day International matches in a convincing manner outplaying the West Indies in every category. Bangladesh emerged in the One-Day International series looking fully prepared and equipped after losing the Test series 2-0.

Bangladesh gave a good showing in the Test series particularly with their batsmen but the West Indies fast bowlers Fidel Edwards and Jino Best came back with some super, speedy spells that uprooted the Bangladeshi batting causing the home team to fall apart.

Bangladesh Wins First ODI by 7 Wickets

West Indies scored 199 runs all out in 46-5 overs with Sunil Narine scoring 36, Chris Gayle 35, Darren Bravo 35 and Ravi Rampaul 25.

For Bangladesh Sohag Gazi picked up 4 wickets for 29 runs and Abdur Razzak 3 for 39. Bangladesh scored



Eyes on Cricket

By George H. Whyte

a whopping 201 runs for 3 wickets from 40.2 overs. Jamim Iqbal scored 58, Naeem Islam 50 and Nasir Hossain 28.

Bangladesh Wins Second ODI by 160 Runs

Bangladesh scored a swashbuckling 292 runs for six wickets off 50 overs in the second ODI match against the West Indies.

Anamul Haque scored 120 runs in fascinating style. Musfiqur Rahim 79 and Mominul Haque 31.

West Indies team was bowled out for 132 runs from 31.1 overs. Abdur Razzak took 3 wickets for 19 runs and Sohag Gazi 3 for 21.

ICC Test Batting Rating

MJ Clarke - 890, S Chan-

derpaul - 879, JH Kallis - 855, KC Sangakkara - 848, HM Amla - 845, AN Cook - 835, KP Pietersen - 788 and AB de Villiers - 782.

West Indies Weak Areas

In spite of the young, vibrant squad Bangladesh exposes in the One-Day International Series, it is the weak areas of the West Indies that the home team is using to capitalize and gain honors. It is a tactical move by the Bangladeshi bowlers and batsmen that gave them back to back victories.

West Indies Captain Darren Sammy ought to do something different in order to win the ODI. The wickets are flat and if Bangladesh can score 292 why the West Indies can-



Bangladesh's Abdur Razzak, second right, celebrates with teammates the dismissal of West Indies' Darren Bravo, left, during the second one day international cricket match against West Indies in Khulna, Bangladesh, Sunday, Dec. 2, 2012.

AP Photo/A.M. Ahad

not get in the runs spree as well?

he West Indies team has to modify its strategy and

take the initiative early. Losing by 7 wickets and on a second occasion by 160 runs seem unaccept-

able under those conditions especially considering the overall strength of the West Indies team.

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ACROSS

1. Muslim woman's headscarf
6. Found on a keyboard
9. *What mommy gave Santa
13. Idealized image
14. Beatle bride
15. "Saturday Night Fever" music
16. Yo-Yo Ma with a cello, e.g.
17. Like sashimi
18. Team event in track
19. **"Away in a _____"
21. Number of football players on field per team
23. Zeus, e.g.
24. Dog pest
25. Boozer
28. Red Cross supplies
30. Like Tinkerbell
35. Absent soldier
37. Like Civil War reenactment battle
39. **"_____ Baby"
40. Down in the dumps
41. Up and about
43. Tranquil scene
44. Officially allowed
46. Hokkaido people
47. Calm by deception
48. Like Thai cuisine, e.g.
50. Eye amorously

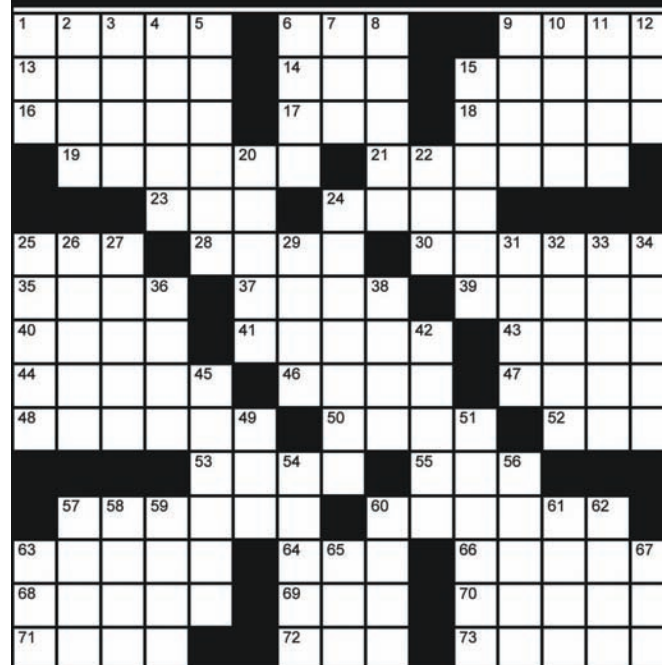
52. Bro's sibling
53. Used for drying
55. Inflated feeling
57. Cream cheese on a bagel, e.g.
60. *Pipe smoker
63. Fictional cemetery dweller
64. Be in the red
66. In an unfriendly manner
68. *Seen with Santa
69. *Given name of famous crooner
70. Ranees's wrap
71. Blouses
72. Ottoman officer title
73. Heavy walk

DOWN

1. That guy
2. Mosque V.I.P.
3. Cup of Joe
4. Maturing
5. Double-drums
6. Millimeter of mercury
7. RNs' org.
8. B in IBS
9. Chicken _____
10. _____ of Man
11. PET or CAT
12. _____ sauce
15. **"I'll be home for Christmas, if only in my _____"
20. Swelling

22. **"Mele Kalikimaka" wreath
24. Dissenting clique
25. **"Santa Baby, slip a _____ under the tree, for me"
26. Young hooter
27. Often describes luck
29. Parks on a bus
31. Jack and Jill's water jug
32. River in India
33. Credit card reader writing tool, pl.
34. *They are decked
36. With little fat
38. *Wenceslas' title
42. Olden days disciplinary tool
45. Probable
49. Jason Bourne's enemy
51. Altruist's opposite
54. Parkinson's drug
56. Grouchy Muppet
57. Used to frighten something away
58. Partner of circumstance
59. Goes with eggnog, pl.
60. Greek salad cheese
61. Novice
62. Original matter
63. Greenwich time
65. Tail move
67. Uh-huh

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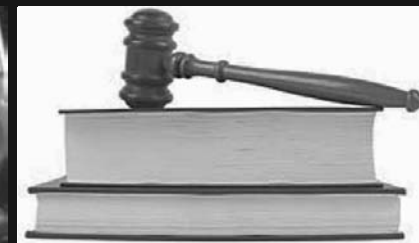


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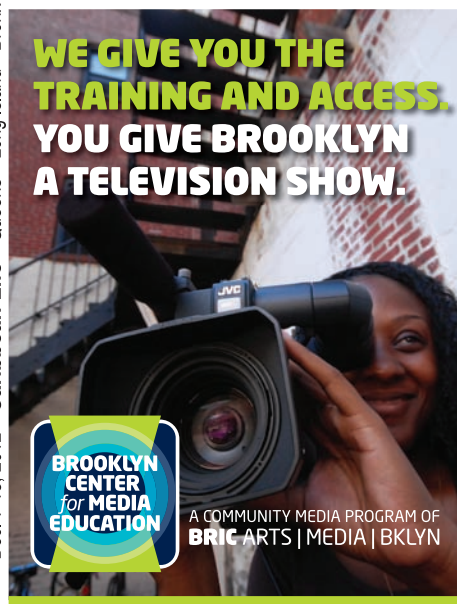
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