



Assemblywoman Rodneyse Bichotte (L) with former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.
Office of Assemblywoman Rodneyse Bichotte

HARD TIMES AHEAD

Suriname economy in a tailspin, seeks int'l funding

By Bert Wilkinson

A few years ago when international prices for oil and gold were high, the economy of Dutch-speaking Suriname was at its healthiest since the 1970s, with Central Bank foreign reserves topping \$1B, foreign direct investment in bauxite and the hotel sectors peaked and hope for the future abounded.

Now with rates for the Car-

ibbean Community member's two main exports tanking, the economy is in the kind of tailspin that has not been seen since the 1980s when the military toppled the elected civilian administration and tried to run the country with handpicked favorites.

Today Suriname's only avenue for economic hope and salvation appears to lie with inter-

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Pols troubled by mass voter 'roll purging'

By Nelson A. King

As Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump struck up decisive victories in Tuesday's New York Primaries, several area politicians have expressed concern over what they described as mass voter "roll purging."

"On a day when all of Brooklyn should be celebrating incredible voter participation at poll sites across our borough, I am troubled over the tens of thousands of our neighbors who have been inexplicably purged from the voter

rolls," said a furious Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams.

"We cannot abide any obstacle that advances the perception or reality of voter disenfranchisement," he added,

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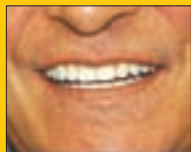
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Justice Sylvia G. Ash, Judge Sylvia Ash

Carib judge appointed to State Commission

By Nelson A. King

Chief Judge of New York State, Janet DeFiore, has appointed Caribbean-born judge in Brooklyn to be a member of the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct.

Judge DeFiore, on April 1, appointed Justice Sylvia G. Ash, who was born in Trinidad and Tobago to a Grenadian mother and Vincentian father, to the 11-member Commission.

Justice Ash, a judge of the Kings County (Brooklyn) Supreme Court in the 2nd Judicial District of New York, is the only African-American and one of two women on the commission.

"I am very honored that the chief judge has seen fit to place her trust and confidence in me to take on this very important and challenging responsibility," Judge Ash told Caribbean Life in an exclusive interview. "And I pray that God will give me the wisdom and clarity of judgment to rise to the occasion."

The members on the commission are appointed by six different officers of government: Four are appointed by the governor; Three by the chief judge; and one each by the speaker of the Assembly, the minority leader of the Assembly, the president of the Senate (Majority Leader) and the minority leader of the Senate.

The commission was created in 1978 in the Judiciary Article of the Constitution (Article 6, Section 22). Its enabling statute is the Judiciary Law (Article 2-A, Sections 40-48).

Ash said the commission is the sole state agency responsible for "receiving, initiating, investigation and conducting evidentiary trials with respect to complaints of misconduct or disability against judges and justices of the New York State Unified Court System," which comprises about 3,500 judges and justices.

The agency's sole mission is to dispose of complaints that judges have engaged in misconduct, Ash said.

GAC donates 200 pairs of shoes for Guyana's underprivileged children



First Lady, Mrs. Sandra Granger, and Mrs. Sita Nakgamootoo were presented with Essex County, NJ Board of Freeloaders Resolution Plaques from Lady Ira Lewis, and Guyana Consul General, Brentnold Evans while other honorees and guests look on.

Photo by Tangerine Clarke

By Tangerine Clarke

The Guyana Action Committee (GAC), on April 10 lived up to its name when the non-for-profit put on an action-packed Pre-50th Independence Anniversary Brunch, and carried out its charitable motto by presenting First Lady of the Republic of Guyana, Mrs. Sandra Granger, and Mrs. Sita Nagamootoo, wife of First Vice President, Moses Nagamootoo, with 200 pairs of shoes for Guyana's underprivileged children, as part of President David Granger's humanitarian initiative.

The evening began with a serenade by saxophonist Sou Flantis to welcome the wives of Guyana's politicians, to celebrate the Republic's upcoming Golden Jubilee on May 26.

The women, who ended a weekend of activities that included an Awards Gala, and conferences in Queens and Brooklyn, graciously accepted Resolution plaques from Consul General of Guyana, New York, H.E. Brentnold Evans, and Guyana Heritage Committee president, Lady Ira Lewis, on behalf of the County of Essex, New Jersey Board of Chosen Freeholders, and President Britnee N. Timberlake.

Granger thanked GAC, and praised members for their steadfast commitment to charitable causes, and the donation of footwear to outfit children in the hinterland areas of Guyana.

Nagamootoo was vocal about Guyanese uniting for the common cause — their country, and called on nationals to band together as Guyanese first,

not race.

GAC also honored members of the community whose work has affected the lives of others. Community Service Awards went to: Beryl James, retired residential counselor of the Boys Hope Girls Hope Boarding Program at Catharine McAuley High School in Brooklyn, Erwin Edwards AKA Sou Flantis, Ex- Guyana Police Force Band member and noted saxophonist, and Ten-year old Kaeli V. Ferguson, designer of a "balloon powered car" and #1 winner of the 5th grade Science Fair.

Others included Kevin L. Smith, an Albany businessman, who established the Golden Grove, Guyana Youth Center, a gym for young and old, an ice cream parlor and a rental vocational home in his village.

Oswald Bob, cultural enabler, professional videographer and photographer also received an honor, as well as, Samantha Dow-Hankerson, adjunct professor, former councilwoman, certified etiquette specialist, and mentor, and Trevlyn O. Headley, New York police officer, pallbearer and color guard for the NYPD Ceremonial Unit.

The evening, punctuated by Guyana's rich cultural heritage, and love of country, included performances by Soca King, Adrian Dutchin of "I Am a Guyanese" fame, Terry's One Man Band. Presentations by little dancer, Timothy Bobb and Brown Belt NinJa Kale Ferguson capped off the glimpse of Guyana's upcoming Golden Jubilee.

Fiftieth Independence Anniversary



President of GAC Errol Lewis presents a Community Service Award to 10-year-old Kaeli V. Ferguson, winner of the 5th grade Science Fair for designing a "balloon powered car" at P.S 770 in District 17.

Photo by Tangerine Clarke

memorable items that were on display at the event, could be viewed at www.bonelenterprises.com.

Caribbean

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) says it will be offering technical cooperation to support pilot studies of new mosquito control technologies in the Americas, including the Caribbean, as part of its response to the Zika epidemic.

The Zika virus was first detected in Brazil in 2015 and has spread to 33 countries and territories in the Americas.

According to PAHO, new tools being developed to combat the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito that transmits Zika virus include the Wolbachia bacteria and genetically modified mosquitoes.

"Since these mosquitoes live in and around houses, it will take a concerted effort with participation of the community to reduce the number of mosquitoes in the Americas," PAHO said.



PAHO said the World Health Organization (WHO) Vector Control Advisory Group has recommended the carefully planned pilot deployment of new tools, accompanied by rigorous independent monitoring and evaluation.

It said the WHO group examined new vector control technologies and recommended starting studies regarding the future implementation of some of these technologies for controlling the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito.

Antigua

The Antigua & Barbuda government has handed over five acres of land near the Marble Hill main road, worth \$2 million to the People's Republic of China (PRC) for the construction of an embassy.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Charles "Max" Fernandez and Chinese Ambassador to Antigua & Barbuda Ren Gongping signed the land certificates in the presence of a visiting delegation from China and a delegation from Antigua & Barbuda, signifying the start of the construction of the state-of-the-art building.



Prime Minister Gaston Browne who



Caribbean, China consult in Barbados

Maxine Pamela Ometa McClean, foreign minister of Barbados, co-chaired the Caribbean-China consultation held in Barbados.

Associated Press / Jason DeCrow

was at the signing ceremony, noted that this is the first time that Antigua & Barbuda has been able to give something to the PRC in return for its continuous assistance.

"We have virtually always been at the receiving end of this relationship and for the first time in 33 years we're now at the giving end," he said.

Barbados

The Caribbean-China consultation recently held in Barbados was highlighted as an excellent opportunity for Caribbean countries to explore ways in which they could cooperate to address various challenges.



Barbados Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator Maxine McClean, made the declaration at the

opening ceremony of the consultations.

According to her, many of the countries in the region had not yet recovered from the "catastrophic" economies crisis that started in 2008 and were still experiencing slow or negative economic growth.

McClean, who co-chaired the meeting with China's Vice Foreign Minister Wang Choa further outlined shared concerns between the Caribbean and China.

The minister also stated that the talks would further strengthen the relationship between China and the Caribbean.

According to her, China was a good partner in the region and had funded projects in several sectors including tourism, education and agriculture.

Dominica

Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus Dr. Luzzi Longworth says the English-speaking Caribbean is facing a problem in education because of low registration in tertiary institutions of learning.

She made the observation while addressing a press conference at the UWI Open Campus Dominica, auditorium recently. She said the English-speaking Caribbean by all of the statistics is at the bottom of the pile when it comes to the number of persons of the eligible age being registered in tertiary education.

"Even countries in South America have higher enrollment rates in tertiary



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Suriname in tough IMF deal



Suriname's President Desi Bouterse, re-elected to a second, five-year term, delivers his inaugural speech in Paramaribo, Suriname, Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2015.

Associated Press / Ertugrul Kilic, file

Continued from cover

national multilateral financial agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and banks of similar ilk.

In the past week, the administration of President Desi Bouterse announced a tough deal with the IMF to borrow nearly \$500M on a two-year standby arrangement with the fund as foreign reserves have dried up, the exchange rate for the Surinamese dollar is devaluing daily and as companies consider laying off hundreds of workers.

Bouterse who won a second five-year term in general elections in May 2015, says that the country of about 500,000 people, sharing borders with Guyana, French Guiana and Brazil, now has no choice but to turn to borrow internationally as the economy is virtually bankrupt.

The economy depends largely on oil, bauxite and gold exports all of which have been taking a beating on the international market in recent years. Other key sectors include rice and bananas with rice exports being the healthiest because of a special export barter arrangement with Venezuela.

But critics like main opposition lead-

er Chan Santokhi are laying the blame for a near bankrupt economy squarely at the feet of the administration of Bouterse, arguing that Surinamese will only accept the fact that hardships have accrued from weak prices for bauxite, oil and gold. The remainder of the economic management problem must be linked to rampant corruption.

He says authorities have done nothing to stymie corruption and minimize or eliminate wasteful spending by a slew of state companies that are bleeding the treasury.

"The government has been deliberately wasteful and corrupt," says the former police chief who now heads the main Indo Hindustani Party.

Elections board faces audit

Continued from cover

urging the New York City Board of Elections (BOE) to "immediately reverse these errors in advance of June's congressional primaries."

Adams also called on New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer to "expedite the completion of his audit of the agency."

"Our City has a duty to ensure the BOE is properly funded, staffed, trained, and equipped to run 21st century elections," he said.

Brooklyn Assemblywoman Diana Richardson, whose parents hail from Aruba and St. Martin, said she also received "numerous complaints" from voters across her 43rd district that encompasses parts of Crown Heights.

Richardson said some voters' names were not in the voter registration book, and that their party affiliation was declared, "although they previously registered with a specific party."

Richardson was expected to write the BOE on Wednesday "to address this issue and to obtain information on what voters need to do to correct this error.

"Your vote is your voice, and the 43rd AD [Assembly District] will not be silenced," she said.

But while there were election day issues, some legislators were on the stump, endorsing candidates and trying to get voters to change their

minds.

Sen. Jesse Hamilton, who represents the 20th Senatorial District in Brooklyn, said a national conversation was "sorely" needed that turned to public housing and the challenges communities, like Brownsville, face.

He said recent visits by Clinton and Sen. Bernie Sanders to his district helped "focus attention on public housing and the measures we need to take to lift these communities up."

"Creating truly livable public housing, educating youth for the jobs of tomorrow, and tackling the public health challenges that face low-income communities, those are issues that deserve to be top of the agenda of the next president of the United States," Hamilton said.

"Communities that have faced under-investment need our attention," he said. "And I am glad to see that Secretary Clinton and Senator Sanders agree."

Herman Hall, the Grenadian-born publisher of Brooklyn's Everybody's magazine, said older Caribbean-American voters and older Caribbean political leaders, such as Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke, are supporting Clinton; while younger Caribbean voters and younger elected officials, such as Councilman Jumaane Williams, of Grenadian parentage, are supporting Sanders.

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Bichotte introduces MWBE legislation

By Nelson A. King

Brooklyn Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte has introduced a bundle of legislation that she says will greatly enhance economic opportunities for Minority and Women Owned Enterprises (MWBEs) and subcontractors throughout the state.

As the Assembly and the Senate take on issues relating to MWBEs, Bichotte, who represents the 42nd Assembly District in Brooklyn, said "the fight at its core is to continue to break down barriers."

The first piece of legislation introduced this year by Bichotte, chair of the Subcommittee on the Oversight of Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs), was A8700, "which opened up more discussion on these issues."

She also re-introduced A8044A, which was passed a few weeks ago.

Bichotte said she has traveled throughout the state and attended many community events, including sessions from the 2016 NYS Disparity Study, and has had an opportunity to hear from a wide range of stakeholders.

She said the legislation she has introduced "is informed by the many MWBEs" she has had an opportunity to come in contact with.

"And it is because of that, this legislation has the potential to transform how MWBEs and subcontractors conduct business in New York State," she said. Bichotte said the legislation falls mainly into five categories: Increased opportunities for MWBEs by attaching MWBE participation goals, such as those entities receiving real estate tax exemptions, and for sole source contracting; increased resources to expand the pool of certified MWBEs, such as appropriations for outreach, and a feasibility study on capacity building and mentorship programs; and increased transparency and accountability, such as the public sharing of data on MWBEs, companies who have received state contracts, and companies who have received waivers in regard to compliance with MWBE participation.

The other categories are: The way in which prime contractors and subcontractors will be paid and reported on in regard to MWBE contractual relationships, which are primarily MWBEs; and the lifting of barriers, such as the \$3.5 million cap on net worth, which limits the capacity and growth of MWBEs.

The 13 pieces of legislation are: A8700 - The purpose of this bill is to help widen

opportunities for Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises throughout the State of New York by attaching a MWBE participation goal to any grant received by a locality or municipality, as well as those entities that conduct business with said localities and municipalities; A9074A - the purpose of this bill is to require a minority and women-owned business enterprise participation goal requirement in order to receive exemption of new multiple dwellings from local taxation, such as 421-a.



Brooklyn Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte.

A9122 - would study what state agencies and industries would benefit most from having a capacity-building/mentorship program, and the duration and cost of such a program.

A9700 - would amend the sole source procurement process so that it will include the solicitation of MWBEs.

A9707 - would help enable under-represented MWBEs to be exposed to government contracting opportunities and resources.

A9708 - would allow the public to see which contracts have received waivers in relation to compliance with MWBE participation.

A9710 - would require contractors to report their contractual relationship throughout the life of the project with MWBEs.

A9733 - the Division of Minority and Women's Business Development would issue an annual report, which will summarize the different information required for their development including breakdowns by race, gender, contract type, value of contract, and number of contractors, both prime and subcontractors.

A9740 - would help stream line the payment process for both prime contractors and sub-contractors.

A9771 - would publish and announce agencies that have entered into a contract with the state.

A9772 - would require that real estate developers that are able to claim certain tax credits, abatements, and exemptions to attach a MWBE goal to their project.

A9774 - would eliminate the requirements that MWBE owners have a personal net worth of less than \$3,500,000 in order to obtain certification as a qualifying MWBE.

A9775 would require the NYS comptroller to report on Minority and Women-Owned Business development and contract spending.

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Green globe advocates welcome Earth Day

By Vnette K. Pryce

Climate change proponents of a greener globe are gearing for a celebration that annually hails this planet and all it has to offer. Earth Day will be acknowledged globally on April 22 with conscious and caring emphasis on preserving the environment. The idea of such a day became an initiative 46 years ago when UNESCO officially launched a mode of sustaining the universe.

In its genesis, communities campaigned to plant trees, enlighten others and establish information outlets to promote projects that could ensure a healthier climate.

With convincing indicators of the possibility of a problem of sustainability -- snow and ice melting in Antarctica at record rates, hurricanes, tsunamis, snow storms, earthquakes, typhoons, tornadoes, and other weather phenomenon recurring with unprecedented devastation, a movement has elevated the consciousness of the nation to become more active in inspiring others to ignite passion to save the Earth.

As a matter of fact, the one day event has now become a week-long appreciation of nature and everything green.

On April 17, Earth Day will be marked at 14th St. & Union Square (North Plaza) during a day-long acknowledgement of the severity of climate change.

Exhibitions, environmental campaigns, green businesses, kid's activities, live performances, and provision to recycle used clothing, electronics and textiles will significantly declare progress and a concerted effort to save the planet.

The car-free NYC celebration will engage participants in challenging ideas to motivate others to action. Mostly, a majority will spend the day planting trees.

This year, the theme "Trees for the Earth" forms the basis for their goal of a greener society.

"Let's plant 7.8 billion trees for the Earth."

That is the goal of the Earth Day Network.

"Over the next five years, as Earth Day moves closer to its 50th anniversary, we're calling on you to help us achieve one of our most ambitious goals yet -- we're planting 7.8 billion trees and we're starting now."

Organizers claim that "trees will be the first of five major goals "and in "honor of the five-year countdown to the anniversary the initiatives will make a significant and measurable impact on the Earth and will serve as the foundation of a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable planet for all."

Another method they are using to achieve their goals is to appeal to legislators and

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No sidelines in fight against climate change

By Kathleen Rogers

On April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans hit the streets to protest the environmental effects of more than 100 years of uncontrolled fossil-fueled industrial development. It was the first Earth Day.

What was intended to be a college campus teach-in soon spread to every community and city across the United States. It was and remains the single largest secular event in history. The sheer size of the protest -- along with increasing visual evidence of dire health threats associated with air and toxic pollution -- soon forced Congress to pass some of the world's toughest environmental laws, most of which include community right-to-know provisions and allow citizens to sue their government if it fails to enforce the law.

Citizens' rights have been enshrined in every major environmental law from that point on. These laws spawned others around the world -- many more stringent than those in the U.S. -- and most recognize the role of citizens in the enforcement of environmental laws.

Nearly 50 years later, Earth Day remains a day of reckoning, and now more than 1 billion people take action each year in almost every country on Earth. Some protest, many clean up their communities and plant trees, and millions more have their first exposure to environmental programs at schools and universities. Governments large and small make commitments and meet with

This isn't a fight in which any of us can remain on the sidelines and hope for the best. Unless we take these matters into our own hands, the agreement alone won't save the world's ecosystems from collapsing.

their constituents, while corporations make pledges to be more sustainable and responsible for the pollution they create.

It is fitting then that United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon chose Earth Day (April 22) for world leaders to sign the historic Paris climate agreement at U.N. headquarters in New York. At least 150 world leaders are expected to sign, making it the largest single signing of an international agreement in world history (another Earth Day first!). And it's happening not a moment too soon. On every front, global warming is becoming more immediate, more threatening and more irreversible, while scientific consensus and data on the health effects of climate change -- particularly on the poor -- mount.

Critics warn that the agreement's specific emissions targets are too low, that the pace of implementation is too slow, and it fails failed to specify penalties for non-compliance. That's where we the people come in.

Included in the climate agreement are provisions

that recognize the critical role civil society must play to make it work. It calls on citizens to "scale up their efforts and support actions to reduce emissions. It signals the need for all of us to be actively engaged in transforming our world from one dominated by fossil fuels to one driven by renewable energy. While these words don't amount to a call for revolution, it's clear both the United Nations and world leaders recognize that citizen participation in solving global warming has been missing. The success -- or failure -- of the agreement is on our shoulders.

This isn't a fight in which any of us can remain on the sidelines and hope for the best. Unless we take these matters into our own hands, the agreement alone won't save the world's ecosystems from collapsing, or our biodiversity, which supports all living things on earth, from disappearing.

Doing our part doesn't mean merely buying green products or inquiring how things are going. It means action. It means a direct challenge to the status quo. It means holding our elected officials accountable and voting out of office national, state and local leaders who won't take action on climate change. It means not passing the buck and hoping others do the hard work.

For many, getting involved means knowing how your retirement accounts and pensions are invested and demanding divestment from fossil fuel stocks. It means demanding that your children be educated for green jobs of the

Continued on Page 12

Caribbean Life

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Ultimately, a GOP farce in New York

The New York primaries were being touted as pivotal, and to a large extent they were. But on the GOP side, because of the bizarre plot twists that have dogged their nominee search, what they wound up with in New York was altogether a farce, in which the guy who dominated is probably still seen by the party establishment as its worst nightmare. Problem is, the rival who got beaten is a major horror show as well. Does riding high in a farce really change the dynamic?

That thousands of people in the Empire State signified, by casting their ballots for Donald Trump, that they consider him fit to occupy the nation's highest elective office, is chilling. In typical New York fashion, many of us react with a sneer that is New York's alone when such a scenario unfolds elsewhere. So, how does winning essentially a "no-contest" qualifier alter the toxic quality that the GOP brass sees in a Trump candidacy?

President Obama, the start of whose tenure was trigger

for Trump's constant dumbing down of the office of president (seeing as how the likes of Obama could occupy it), had it right when he said hardly was this presidential pretender headed for the White House. Being president, Obama pointedly commented, is not like running a game show. It's serious business. And those benighted souls notwithstanding, who wave a flag for Trump, the overwhelming lot of the American electorate know better. They know the Trump-for-president absurdity, a sick joke when it began, will so remain until it finally flames out. Trump has said he got into it because John McCain and Mitt Romney, the GOP's last two presidential picks, were sub-par performers. We're however inclined to bunch Trump with all the other overt and covert racists who were in the once crowded field, buoyed that Obama's elevation meant they couldn't possibly fail. Of course, given the noxious brand that is Trump, he evinced pride at being ensconced in the "overt-

Viewpoint

By Les Slater

ly racist" camp.

And in the midst of all the scummy utterances that have poured from Trump along the way, that might sometimes obscure it, this is the dimension to the Trump persona that is perhaps more concerning to us than any other — that he is a no-doubt-about-it bigot. Lest we forget, he immediately questioned whether the president was really an American, presumably seeing the Obama name as properly belonging in the immigrant community — with which, for him, there's no love lost — rather than a product of true Americana. He was obviously questioning whether someone of Obama's ethnicity could accomplish as much as Obama did at Columbia and Harvard, when he demanded that the presi-

dent produce supporting transcripts. On the night in 2012 that Obama had the temerity to defy Trump and others and win re-election, Trump famously called for a march on Washington in protest. He dismissed basketball legend Kareem Abdul Jabbar's revelation that he possesses a photograph for which Trump posed with him, Trump insisting it was impossible that he would ever have done so. Those xenophobic rants during the campaign against Mexicans, Muslims et al weren't aberrational. They come with the Trump territory.

Is it any wonder that David Duke of KKK fame would have endorsed Trump? Assorted pundits, in trying to explain the appeal Trump has for folks on the right, that has propelled him to GOP frontrunner status, frequently reference his being not the conventional politician, "a straight talker" and other summations alluding to how "different" Trump is. But renderings of Trump that

focus only on how atypical a political combatant he is and neglect the darker side of the package are in effect a public disservice.

There's got to be some compromising of the vaunted New York lustre when a certain sector, Republican though it is, manifests a solid preference for one who rates a big thumbs-up from a former grand wizard of the Klan, one who says "No way!" to having once posed for a photograph with a basketball great for the ages. This goes against the grain, surely, of what the best of the best of New York is supposed to be.

So, despicable Ted Cruz, Trump's main rival, got thrashed, his "New York values" jibe along the campaign trail not helping what was already a mission most impossible. But John Kasich, whose "moderate" tag makes him a persona non grata Republican, beat Trump in Manhattan. Ah, that New York elan. Very difficult, isn't it, to keep it all the way suppressed?



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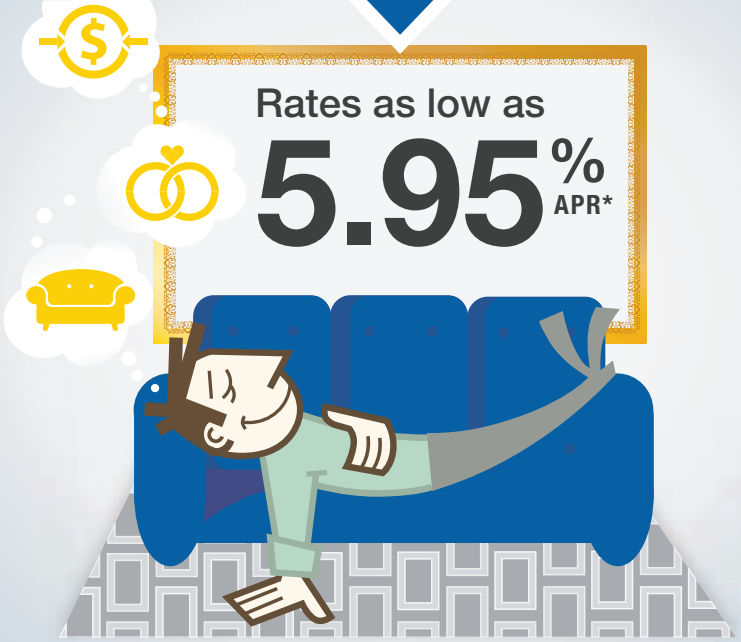


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OP-EDS

Save the world's ecosystems

Continued from page 10

future. It means showing up at town hall or city council meetings and asking about your community's survivability in a climate crisis. It means saying "No" to every new coal or fracking project, and retooling those communities for safer green powered jobs.

And there are no doubt countless other ways to act. Undoubtable, the

climate agreement makes it clear that governments don't have the power to solve climate change alone. We all must do something more than we currently are. Earth Day 2016 is not about crossing the finish line. When the agreement is signed, the hard work begins anew.

Rogers is president of Earth Day Network.

Preserve the environment

Continued from page 10

influential corporate executives.

"Let's divest from fossil fuels and make cities 100 percent renewable. Let's take the momentum from the Paris Climate Summit and build on it."

Since 1970 Americans have become more conscious about the environment and many routinely use energy efficient light bulbs and appliances, conserve water and electricity, recycle bottles, cans and disposable and are gradually becoming better adjusted to the notion of saving the Earth.

Community gardens are a common indulgence during the summer months. And farmer's markets seem to be a year-round amenity in most communities.

With softball sized hail stone more frequently raining down, violent lightning storms blazing the skies and other unusual weather patterns regularly occurring, Earth Day is becoming a daily ritual to conform.

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Bahamas to hold referendum on traditional values, fairness

By Azad Ali

Bahamas Prime Minister Perry Christie says the proposed referendum to amend the constitution will not allow for same sex marriages to become legal in the Bahamas.

Christie, who recently launched the YES Bahamas Campaign "Equal Rights for our Sons and Daughters," told his audience that the Bahamas will only recognize marriage between a man and a woman. The referendum will be held on June 7.

He said the referendum will not cause same sex-marriage to become legal in the Bahamas.

"Marriage in the Bahamas will be legal only if it is between a man and a woman, and male and female are determined at birth," he said.

The prime minister said the referendum does not seek to change Bahamian society or our traditional values — instead it seeks to change the Constitution so that it more clearly reflects those values and shared belief in fairness.

Christie said that the YES Bahamas Campaign will be relying on young and old Bahamians for their creativity and enthusiasm, visiting each of our islands, and providing information



Bahamas Prime Minister Perry Christie speaks at the Caribbean Energy Security Summit, Monday, Jan. 26, 2015, at the State Department in Washington.

Associated Press / Pablo Martinez Monsivais, File

to Bahamians on each of the amendments.

He said the Constitutional Commission will continue a very intense schedule of information sessions leading up to the June 7 referendum.

The prime minister said that the referendum was necessary to change the 1973 Constitution, which prevented Parliament from passing laws which would discriminate based on race or creed or place of origin.

But, he noted, that the framers of the Constitution "did not include sex, that is, they did not insert any language in the Constitution which would prevent Parliament from passing laws which discriminate against men or women."

Christie said that the June 7 referendum will allow for Bahamians to vote on four common sense changes to our Constitution, "so that Bahamian men and women are able to pass citizenship to their families in the same way and so that it will be impossible for any future Parliament to pass laws discriminating against either men or women.

He said the bill does not pose any radical change but to make sure that the supreme law of the land reflects "our values and our commitment to fairness."

Eugene campaigns to save summer programs

By Nelson A. King

Brooklyn Council Member Dr. Mathieu Eugene on Tuesday joined with the Campaign for Children, youth advocates and hundreds of young people who previously attended summer camp programs in an effort to "save summer camp programming" for more than 31,000 students throughout New York City.

Eugene, who represents the 40th Council District in Brooklyn, said summer programs are "crucial because they offer children a safe space to spend the day and learn while their parents are at work.

"These important programs also give children a creative outlet, and youth who attended the event spoke passionately about their need for these programs, and even preformed dance routines to showcase the skills they've learned through summer programs," said Eugene, chairman of the City Council's Youth Services Committee, on the steps of City Hall.

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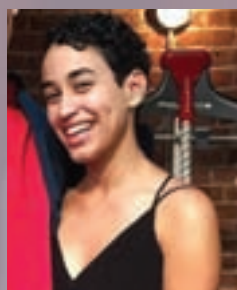
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CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP

Continued from page 4

education than we have in the English-speaking Caribbean," she said.

Dr. Longworth pointed out the figures are even lower in the Eastern Caribbean and lowest in the Windward Islands.

However, she noted, the situation has energized UWI to find ways, using new technologies, to ensure that access can be provided to persons who need a tertiary education.

This, she said, is being done through the UWI online courses where 21 new programs have been offered within the last 18 months.

Guyana

Guyana has become the 57th member of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), after joining the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 1998, according to a press statement from the Guyana Finance Ministry.

Membership in the OIC is a prerequisite to joining the IsDB,

The official public announcement of Guyana's membership will be made when Guyana's Minister of Finance Winston Jordan, makes his debut appearance at the 41st Islamic Bank Annual meeting in Jakarta on May 15.

Jordan will hold the title of governor to the Islamic Bank and a deputy governor must also be appointed before the next major gathering in Jakarta. This is one requirement expected to be executed by member states of the Islamic Bank, according to the statement.

Diplomats are urging Guyana to appoint its next ambassador to Kuwait to the OIC as well.

The finance ministry release, states this membership allows Guyana "access to concessionary resources, grants and interest free loans."

The IDB was established in December 1973 and officially opened its door to business in October 20, 1975, with headquarters in Saudi Arabia.

Jamaica

The Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA) will soon be introducing a tax stamp system for the monitoring of alcohol and cigarettes.

The system, which will be implemented on a phased basis, allows for the authority to verify the authenticity of alcohol and cigarettes in trade and trace the products on the market.

Commissioner of Customs, major (retired) Richard Reese, made the disclosure following a meeting with the Minister of National Security Robert Montague and State Minister Senator Parnell Charles at the agency's Newport East facilities in Kingston recently.

He explained that the electronically readable stamp will be placed on the products at the source.

Reese said that once the Contraband Enforcement Team or the police con-

duct inspections or surveillance and detect alcohol or cigarettes without the requisite stamp, "those good will be confiscated, including pharmaceuticals such as fake Viagra and Cialis.

Major Reese said the implementation of the stamp regime will be announced shortly.

St. Lucia

The St. Lucia Ministry of Health has deployed a team to conduct a full epidemiological investigation into the island's two cases of Zika virus and surveillance is also being stepped up.

But health officials have indicated that discouraging women from pregnancy, in light of the potential link between the mosquito-borne virus and the birth of babies with microcephaly — underdeveloped brains — is not in the country's anti-Zika strategy.

A 28-year-old woman and a 25-year-old man have been confirmed as the island's first cases, following testing by the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) in Trinidad.

"The individuals are stable and being treated as outpatients, according to the recommended protocol of care. The individuals did not have a history of recent travel to a Zika-affected country," the Ministry of Health said.

Senior Medical Officer, Dr. Sharon Belmar-George said the Ministry of Health had not followed the lead of others around the world advising women against getting pregnant.

Health authorities in several countries, including the Caribbean, have advised against pregnancy as a result.

Trinidad

The United Kingdom has updated its travel advisory to Trinidad and Tobago following the murder of a British national recently.

In the latest advisory, the UK says while most visits of over 30,000 British nationals are trouble-free, it warns of the murder of Adrian St. John on April 10, 2016 in Mt. Dor (a few miles from the City of Port of Spain) as well as the earlier murder of another British national in Tobago.

"There are high levels of violent crimes in Trinidad, including murder, especially in parts of the capital Port of Spain. Robbery and other crimes targeting tourists have occurred," the advisory said.

St. John was a young cricketer who was attached to the Chris Gayle Academy in the UK.

He was born in England and moved to Trinidad as a child, after which he returned to the UK where he grew up playing cricket.

He trained at Twenty20 star Chris Gayle's Academy in the UK, eventually becoming captain of the team from 2013-2015.

— compiled by Azad Ali



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Crime reaches crisis level in Trinidad

By Azad Ali

Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley says crime in Trinidad and Tobago had now become a national crisis as he expressed concern at the brazen and brutal ways criminals have been killing citizens.

Speaking to hundreds of delegates at People's National Movement (PNM) special convention at St. John's Ambulance Association, Port of Spain last Sunday, Dr. Rowley said there were three issues- security, economy and unemployment- that had been affecting the country and "attracting the attention of the Caribbean in a way that we have not anticipated".

Of the three issues Dr. Rowley said the most worrying was crime, since the murder rate for 2016 had reached 125 to date.

So for January, February and March, criminals have put away 125 of us. At that rate, if it does not abate we could be looking at about 500 people being killed in Trinidad and Tobago.

"So for January, February and March, criminals have put away 125 of us. At that rate, if it does not abate we could be looking at about 500 people being killed in Trinidad and Tobago. That is a whole unacceptable state of affairs.... unacceptable," Dr. Rowley told supporters at the convention.

He said while people continue to kill one another in a brutal and uncaring way, the government has a responsibility to find the perpetrators "and put them where they belong."

The prime minister said while many people believed that crime was a political issue, it was currently "a national crisis," noting that criminals were now using the Internet and cellphones to conduct their illegal operations.

Dr. Rowley said the detection rate of the T&T Police Service was poor, adding that "our detection level is totally unacceptable. We cannot have a detection level in the face of a crime wave and a killing spree like this. The criminals now know that the odds are in their favor. We have to undo this."



Party goers at SOB's.

Sounds of Brazil

Mayor cites Caribbean club operator with 'Larry Gold Day' proclamation

By Vinette K. Pryce

From now and in perpetuity, April 1, 2016 will be known as Larry Gold Day in New York City. The official proclamation was signed, sealed and delivered by New York Mayor Bill DeBlasio and was celebrated at SOB's where virtually every genre of music has had a showcase.

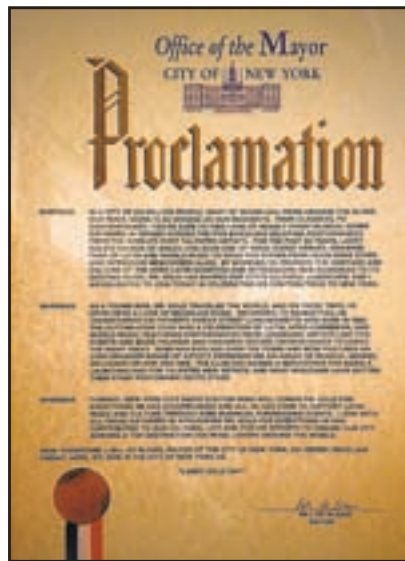
At the abbreviated home of Sounds of Brazil, the first citizen of the city presented the honor to Gold's 26-year-old son, Jordan during a fundraising event for listener-sponsored, WBAI-FM radio station.

Accompanied by his wife Chirlyayne McCray, the mayor relayed how during their dating years they stopped into the cultural showplace to catch a concert by an African superstar.

He recalled partying to the music of Nigerian juju musician Fela Kuti when the infectious band jammed inside the tropical night spot.

Who knew that one of the tallest politicians in NYC government snapped his fingers, moved his body or reveled to African soul sounds.

DeBlasio admitted his party days and lavished kudos on Gold for making SOB's the home of a variety of music. He lauded the club owner for being perceptive enough to diversify presentations in NYC and to respond to the needs of a variety of music lovers.



"SOB's has been the place we can depend on," for diversity, the mayor said.

As he spoke, the next generation Gold, a 26-year-old look-alike to his father watched as if he had missed the most historic concert staged inside the intimate restaurant / club.

If only he could have been there through the decades, since the early 1980s, to see numerous celebrities popping in and out of the Varick St. location to see virtually every reg-

gae act of note. Celebrated Caribbean talents on their own turf were able to broaden their realm from a tiny stage crowds ventured to witness.

They arrived in limousines, yellow taxis, gypsy cabs, and the number 1 train stopping at the Houston St. station.

Considering that Yellowman, Peter Broggs, The Mighty Diamonds, Brigadier Jerry, Freddy McGregor, Gregory Isaacs, Sugar Minott, Sean Paul, Buju Banton and Shabba Ranks all stepped up to the small stage making an imprint on the reggae legacy and the landmark that continues to enhance and influence entertainment in NYC must have been awe inspiring for the dead-ringer to the owner.

SOB's nourished a culture.

Nostalgia recalls the sugarcane vendor, the peanut seller and street promoters lingering long to hand out flyers to the next reggae attraction.

It was not all reggae though, a myriad list of performers represented jazz, hip-hop, rhythm and blues, salsa, samba, zouk, hi-life, soukous, calypso, soca, pop, spoken word and other genres.

The mayor acknowledged Gold's Midas' touch in promoting music and inside the same night spot revered for intimacy and carnival paid tribute to the club owner.

Erectile Dysfunction — more than a quality of life problem!

BY JACK RYAN

The benefits of seeking professional treatment for erectile dysfunction may seem obvious to both the patient and his partner. But what many men don't realize is that a thorough evaluation of this condition can uncover serious threats to their health.

Dr. Vitaly Raykhman, Director of the Accord Physicians Prostate Center in Sheepshead Bay along with Dr. Llewellyn Hyacinthe and Dr. Yuly Chalik, says that millions of men in the United States suffer from erectile dysfunction. Typically, he said, the man can't perform at all or is not satisfied with his sexual performance. The dysfunction can surface at any age, but it is more common in men 50 years old or older.

The problem can be psychological or the impotence may be caused by physiological abnormalities. In such cases, he said, the dys-

function may be related to diabetes or an indication of even more serious conditions. A series of clinical tests done at the Urologic Institute can help doctors determine the reason of impotence.

"It is important that men who are experiencing this problem be promptly and properly evaluated by a urologist."

Erectile dysfunction, he stressed, can be an early indicator of "metabolic syndrome," a name given to a group of factors that raise the risk for heart disease and other health threats, including heart attack and stroke.

"The fact that they are bringing this problem into their consciousness can give a physician several years of lead time in heading off these far more serious medical problems," said Dr. Raykhman. "Could a visit to a urologist indirectly save a patient's life?

Absolutely."

A skilled urologist can slow the progress of the dysfunction and with the proper treatment most patients can regain a more satisfying sexual experience.

Although surgery is sometimes necessary, "it's the last resort." Changes in lifestyle can often reverse the effects of erectile dysfunction. These include exercise, improvements in diet, and a reduction in smoking and alcohol intake. Erectile dysfunction can often be treated with medications such as Cialis, Viagra, Levitra or hormone therapy.

Dr. Raykhman stressed that because an erection is a vascular event, erectile dysfunction needs to be taken seriously.

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Vincientian attorney speaks to growing marijuana phenomenon



Dr. Eversley Linley makes presentation on marijuana.

Photo by Nelson A. King

By Nelson A. King

Noting that “a clarion call” for acceptance of the marijuana plant is gaining steam globally, a Boston-based Vincientian attorney, who practices law in Connecticut, is urging his compatriots to fully address “this growing phenomenon.”

In delivering the keynote address Saturday night, at the inaugural Awards Ceremony of the Friends of Sion Hill, at the Friends of Crown Heights Educational Center in Brooklyn, Dr. Eversley A. Linley said St. Vincent and the Grenadines is “directly positioned in the path of this imminent wave of change.”

Referring to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) 2014 data, Linley, who holds a Ph. D in Political Science from the University of Idaho, said that “St. Vincent and the Grenadines is one of the main producers and distributors of marijuana in the Caribbean region.”

“It is blessed with an ideal climate and soil that provide

the perfect environment for a high quality organic ‘cash crop,’” he said. “Ignoring this fact only conjures up the notion of denial, of a well-oiled, ‘black market’ infrastructural network.”

Linley, who focuses on International Law and Regional and Civic Planning, said drastic changes are sometimes “necessary and occasionally unavoidable,” adding that this occurrence is commonly associated with a “paradigm shift.”

He said, “this growing movement, that is breaking new ground towards cultural and social acceptance, must no longer be overlooked,” stating that “marijuana is embedded in cultures at all levels across the globe.”

“Decades of disassociation with the plant, crafted through the shrill lens of taboos and economic propaganda, are gradually becoming extinct,” said Linley, who is still St. Vincent and the Grenadines’ national record holder in the 800 meters in both the indoors

and outdoors event. He is also a native of Sion Hill, a village renowned for its athletic prowess, overlooking capital city Kingstown.

Throughout the course of his athletic career, Linley represented St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the 1988, 1992 and 1996 Olympics. In 1988, the former St. Martin’s Secondary and St. Vincent and the Grenadines Grammar School student was granted an athletic scholarship to the University of Idaho, where he obtained Bachelor’s and Master’s of Science degrees in Regional Development and Planning, and a Ph. D in Political Science, with emphasis on Public Administration and Regional Development and Planning.

Dr. Linley noted that the current affinity with marijuana is driven by a three-prong criteria: Pleasure and recreation; financial and economic viability; and pharmaceutical and medicinal use.

He said “change is coming,” regarding societal acceptance

of marijuana in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, adding that the future of the land, otherwise known as “Hairouna, lay at the forefront of this shifting culture.”

In order to respond to this “change,” Linley urged Vincientians, from all walks of life, to “coalesce and engage in civic and constructive dialogue.

“Failure to do so could produce irreversible unknown, unforeseen and / or unintended consequences,” he warned.

“Therefore, it is critical to consider the arguments presented on both sides of the spectrum, irrespective of one’s point of view.”

Hence, he called for “all hands on deck” to “promote, insightful discussion.”

But Linley said any engagement in civil discourse should encompass a “unified front,” stating: “We must strive to put aside argumentative obstruction and act in the spirit of good faith.”

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CaribNOG 11 kicks off in JA

By Gerard Best

MONTEGO BAY—Anyone interested in the development of the Internet in Caribbean may have already heard of CaribNOG, the Caribbean Network Operators Group. Over the past decade, this volunteer-based community of computer engineers has grown into a formidable influencer in the regional technology arena. Today, its twice-yearly regional gatherings are among the most highly anticipated events on the Caribbean's tech calendar.

CaribNOG facilitates education and training for those in the Caribbean responsible for designing, deploying and maintaining computer networks. This year, when the three-day event kicks off on April 20 in Montego Bay, Jamaica, CaribNOG will be breaking new ground.

"The Caribbean's technology landscape is evolving rapidly, and CaribNOG plays a key role in helping the region keep pace with global trends," said Bevil Wooding, one of the founders of the organisation.

"The same challenges experienced across networks in

larger regions are now confronting networks in the smaller, resource-constrained markets of the Caribbean. From cyber-attacks and network outages to malicious software and challenges of scaling networks to meet growing demand, network administrators have to constantly adapt and evolve."

Wooding has a unique vantage point into the intriguing world of Internet engineers, infrastructure and bottom-up decision making. As one of the region's leading voices in the technology arena and an Internet strategist with the technology research non-profit, Packet Clearing House, he has been instrumental in growing CaribNOG's influence regionally and internationally.

"At the eleventh regional gathering of CaribNOG this week, we're expecting our largest turnout to date, with participation from network operators, telecommunications regulators, academics, Internet service providers, engineering and computer science students, special interest groups and government representatives, drawn from across the

region and around the world," he added.

That's no surprise. The Montego Bay event has attracted the attention of major international technology players such as Google, Akamai, the Latin American Internet Registry (LACNIC), the Internet Society (ISOC) and the American Registry of Internet Numbers (ARIN).

"CaribNOG 11 is being hosted in conjunction with ARIN's public policy meeting as part of an ongoing collaboration between the two groups to increase awareness in the region of various Internet policy and technical developments," said Jamaican-born Stephen Lee, CaribNOG's program director.

Lee is a network engineer and CEO of U.S.-based technology solutions provider Arkitech. He added that CaribNOG also receives strong support from the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU), the inter-governmental agency responsible for information and communications technology in the CARICOM region.

"CaribNOG has worked



Bevil Wooding, internet strategist, Packet Clearing House, fields questions during an open session at CaribNOG 10, Belize City, November 2015.

CaribNOG

closely with the CTU over the years to educate government officials about technology trends and their impact on public policy."

The array of high-profile technology experts expected to speak at CaribNOG 11 includes Shernon Osepa, manager, Regional Affairs for Latin America and the Caribbean at ISOC, Albert Daniels, senior manager of Stakeholder Engagement for the Caribbean at the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers,

Bill Woodcock, executive director of Packet Clearing House, and Owen De Long of Akamai.

Also among the slate of presenters are representatives from local and regional organisations such as the Organisation for Eastern Caribbean States (OECES), the University of the West Indies (UWI), the government of Jamaica and Cable and Wireless.

CaribNOG 11 runs from April 20 to 22 at the Half Moon Resort in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

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Caribbean sees rapid growth in remittances last year

By Nelson A. King

While remittances to developing countries overall edged up slightly in 2015, the World Bank says, among geographical regions, Latin America and the Caribbean saw the “most rapid” growth rate in remittances last year.

The Washington-based financial institution said on Wednesday that the region’s 4.8 percent growth was due to the recovery in labor markets in the United States.

The bank said growth in Latin America and the Caribbean is expected to continue in 2016, albeit at a slower pace.

It said remittances are expected to reach US \$69.3 billion this year, from US\$66.7 billion last year.

Overall, the World Bank said remittances to developing countries grew only marginally in 2015, as weak oil prices and other factors strained the earnings of international migrants and their ability to send money home to their families.

In the latest edition of the “Migration and Development Brief,” released on Wednesday, the World Bank said officially recorded remittances to developing countries, including the Caribbean, amounted to US\$431.6 billion in 2015, an increase of 0.4 percent over US\$430 billion in 2014.

The growth pace in 2015 was the slowest since the global financial crisis, the World Bank said.

It said global remittances, which include those to high-income countries, contracted by 1.7 percent to US\$581.6 billion in 2015, from US\$592 billion in 2014.

The World Bank said the slowing in remittances growth, which began in 2012, was exacerbated last year by low oil prices, “which are taking a toll on many oil-exporting remittance-source countries, such as Russia and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.”

“Remittances are an impor-

tant and fairly stable source of income for millions of families and of foreign exchange to many developing countries,” said Augusto Lopez-Claros, director of the World Bank’s Global Indicators Group.

The World Bank said remittance flows are expected to recover this year, after “bottoming out” in 2015, with growth driven by continued economic recovery in the United States and the Euro Area, and a stabilization of US dollar exchange rates of remittance-source countries.

The World Bank noted that the Diaspora has assisted people affected by disasters by sending more money home.

But it warned that remittances may also fall if the disaster disrupts the money-transfer infrastructure.

“While climate change is likely to result in increased frequency and severity of weather-related disasters, the international community currently lacks a legal and institu-



Augusto Lopez-Claros, director of the World Bank’s Global Indicators Group. Associated Press

tional framework to cope with the affected areas,” the World Bank said.

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Tributes to Jose Rivera, dead at 53

By Nelson A. King

Scores of residents in the Red Hook section of Brooklyn and co-workers at New York City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) on Saturday paid their last respects to Jose Rivera, a long-serving employee at DOHMH, who died on April 14. He was 53.

Rivera, who lived in Red Hook for most of his life and whose late parents, Jose and Georgina Rivera, hailed from Puerto Rico, died at Methodist Hospital in the Park Slope section of Brooklyn, family members told Caribbean Life. He died five days short of what would have been his 54th birthday, they said.

Rivera worked at DOHMH as a principal administrative associate until he was hospitalized, according to his only son, Jose Antonia Rivera, 30. He said his father was a DOHMH employee for 30 years.

"He was sick for some time, but we didn't know the severity — that it [death] will happen," said the younger Rivera in an interview during the wake Sat-

urday evening at Raccuglia & Sons Funeral Home, 323 Court St., in the Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn.

Netisha Rivera, 35, Jose Rivera's elder of two daughters, said her dad was an extraordinary human being.

"I loved my father to death," she said just before the Home Going Service began at 7:30 pm on Saturday. "He was the best dad and great father. He was very kind — an all-round great dad."

Richard Campbell, Netisha's Jamaican-born fiancée, said he knew Rivera "for as long as I've known his daughter — 14 years.

"God has blessed us with a nine-month-old daughter [Savanna], and Jose got to meet his granddaughter before he moved on," Campbell said. "My mind is overwhelmed."

In their tributes, Rivera's former DOHMH co-workers told Caribbean Life that he had lived life to the fullest.

"I missed him," said Haitian-born registered nurse Gracita Marcellus-Coq. "He always called me 'Me Amor' [my love

in Spanish]. He helped me to improve my Spanish."

Trinidadian Margaret McMillan, another former co-worker, said Rivera was "one of us — another human being like us — it [death] could [have been] one of us."

Outside the funeral chapel, Lab Associate Michael Lamar, said he worked with the bilingual Rivera for 20 years.

"He loved life," he said. "He loved to fish; he loved the Pittsburgh Pirates. Everybody loved him.

"Jose was a good person," he added. "He'll go out of his way to do things for you. I used to call him 'Wasabia' — it's a back-in-the-day commercial. I the morning, we greeted each other as 'Wasabia'; and, going home, we said 'Wasabia.'"

Fellow mourner, X-ray Technician Erica Flowers, agreed that Rivera lived a good life.

"He was a great guy," she said. "I couldn't miss the memorial service for anything. He lived life under his own terms, and I loved him for that."

One of Rivera's former supervisors also told Caribbean Life



Jose Rivera.

that Rivera "dedicated decades of his life to serving the citizens of New York by providing critical services to the Health Department."

In his homily, Fr. Joseph Diele, chaplain for Caring Hospice on Avenue U in Brooklyn, said: "Jose sounded like a man who enjoyed life (as mourners concurred by clapping and shouting 'Amen!')."

Fr. Diele noted what were characterized as some of Rivera's favorite indulgences — "the music and the grilling."

"If we cannot enjoy life now, then we would not enjoy life there [in Heaven]," the Catholic priest said. "So much so, he knew his own sickness and did not say a word about it.

"He wanted to enjoy life, and he did," Fr. Diele added. "He knew how to live life. He did it his way."

Rivera's son said his father's body will be cremated and his ashes taken by Netisha to Puerto Rico.

Rivera is survived by another daughter, Milaya, 23.

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Four loyal 'birds' stick together

"The Blackbirds"
by Eric Jerome Dickey
c.2016, Dutton
\$27.00 / \$36.00 Canada
519 pages



Author Eric Jerome Dickey.

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

You and your girls are birds of a feather.

You flock together, preen together, share your nest when needed and, while you happily sing one another's praises, you'd never open your beak to spill their secrets. Then again, as in the new book "The Blackbirds" by Eric Jerome Dickey, you'd never crow about all the details of your own life, either.

A mere birthday wasn't good enough for Indigo Abdulrahman. Oh, no — she got a birth month.

She decreed it, planned it, and made her friends follow along with her wishes. A strong-willed woman born to Nigerian parents, Indigo was the tallest of the four women,

dark-skinned, with a hunger for the finer things — including men, of which she had two. And when a woman caught Indigo's eye, she wasn't above giving that a go, too.

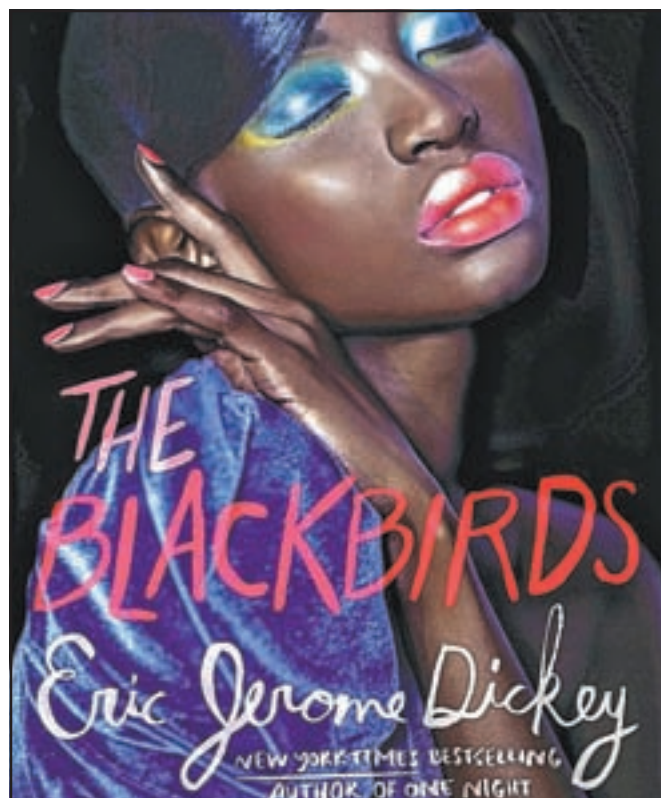
Kwanzaa Browne spent the weeks before her birthday crying over a man: she caught her fiancé cheating with a Brazilian woman, which was the last straw for Kwanzaa. It would take a lot for her to forget her

ex. A lot — including, perhaps, a romance with a handsome man she'd been watching for months.

Kwanzaa snagged him three weeks before Destiny Jones' birthday, which didn't matter to Destiny; she had nothing to celebrate. The man she loved didn't know an important truth about her, and she didn't know how to tell him — but before she could figure it out, he learned of her fame-not-fame, and it threatened to ruin everything.

As for Ericka Stockwell, some things were already in ruins by the time her birthday arrived: her once-abusive mother was around again, as was cancer for the second time. Even so, grateful for life, Ericka's bucket list was full that anniversary of her birth, and it included finding the love of her life. Unfortunately, once she found him, she knew she could never share the good news with her friends...

Aside from the gorgeous cover, size is likely the first thing



Book cover of "The Blackbirds" by Eric Jerome Dickey.

you'll notice about "The Blackbirds." At just over 500 pages, it's a brick — and I daresay it's an unnecessary one, at that.

Don't get me wrong: there's a decent plot here; Oh-My-Goodness twists; and characters that are gorgeous, loyal,

and cheated-upon every few pages. Since I love a good scandal, wow, that was fun — until those characters launched into mattress gymnastics and cutesy raunch-code, both of which become tiresome in short order.

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Shred Fest 2016

NEW YORK NY - As part of its ongoing efforts to help consumers avoid falling victim to identity theft, AARP New York is joining with New York State Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman to sponsor "Shred Fest 2016" a series of events to provide free shredding of personal financial documents and other sensitive records.

The Shred Fest will launch statewide on Tuesday, April 26 at Manhattan Plaza, located on West 43rd Street, between 9th and 10th avenues. Shredding service begins at 11 am and will continue until 2 pm, or until the on-site shredding service trucks reach full capacity.

"Identity thieves are constantly coming up with new and creative ways to target and take advantage of victims especially seniors," said Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman. "Shred Fest is an excellent opportunity to keep these scammers from getting a hold of your sensitive personal information."

In 2015 New York State residents registered over 100,000 complaints about fraud with the Federal Trade Commission.

"Identity thieves routinely search through dumpsters and trash cans, looking to find confidential information. Our Shred Fest 2016 events will allow consumers to discard this paperwork in a safe and secure manner," said Beth Finkel, state director of AARP New York. "Financial fraud causes millions of dollars in losses each year. With the tax-filing season behind us, we're encouraging taxpayers to do a spring cleaning of their old financial documents and other records."

Additional Shred Fest events in New York City are taking place in Harlem, Queens, and Staten Island:

- April 26, St. John's Episcopal Church, 1333 Bay St., Staten Island, NY; Noon - 3 pm or until truck is full;
- April 27 Adam Clayton Powell State Office, 163 West 125th Street, NY; 11 am - 2 pm or until truck is full;
- April 28, Bowne Park, 32nd Ave. & 15th St., Flushing, NY; Noon - 3 pm or until truck is full;
- April 29, Rochdale Village Mall, 169-65 137th Ave., Jamaica, NY; 11 am - 2 pm or until truck is full;
- April 30, First Baptist Church, 100-10 Astoria Blvd., East Elmhurst, NY; 10 am - 1 pm or until truck is full.

The New York City events are part of a series of Shred Fest 2016 events scheduled for communities across New York State and the nation during Money Smart Week® April 23-30, with support from the AARP Fraud Watch Network and the AARP Foundation.

A full list of events in New York State can be found here on the AARP New York web site.

To avoid having your sensitive information compromised, security experts recommend shredding of the following types of materials:

- Old documents: Papers that carry your Social Security number, birth date, signature, account numbers, passwords or PIN numbers.

- Banking: Canceled or unused checks. Shred deposit slips and ATM and credit card receipts, once you receive your monthly statements.

- Credit Cards: Preapproved credit card applications and incentive/gift checks from credit card companies.

- Medical: unneeded medical bills.
- Investments: Investment account statements.

- Obsolete ID cards: Expired driver's licenses, medical insurance cards and passports.

Shred Fest 2016 events are being held in 12 locations in New York State and at least 37 other states next week. Residents of other communities who wish to take advantage of a Shred Fest event may refer to online schedule. And for those consumers who use a home shredder, experts also recommend the use of a micro-cut model. Tests have shown that the scraps of paper from a straight or cross-cut shredder can be reassembled by identity thieves. With a micro-cut shredder, the paper is rendered into impossible-to-reassemble debris.

More information on how to keep yourself safe from identity theft fraud, and alerts regarding other types of scams, is available from the Fraud Watch Network at www.aarp.org/Fraud-WatchNetwork.

Shredding services will be performed by a third party. All documents and information provided for shredding are subject to that party's privacy and informational security policies.

About AARP

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as health care, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. We advocate for individual in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; www.aarp.org; AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP en Español, a Spanish-language website addressing the interests and needs of Hispanics. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at www.aarp.org.

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Poly-tricks impede Obama's plea to fund Zika

Zika virus funding will have to wait until after mosquito season ends this summer.

So says Republicans in Congress.

Despite the fact President Barack Obama requested emergency funding two months ago asking an allotment of \$1.9 billion to help combat the dreaded tropical Zika virus, last week top officials in Congress announced that a decision to fund the initiative will not be made until September.

With Congress slated to take a seven-week vacation this July and August, Zika funding will add to the many initiatives delayed by Republicans determined to frustrate Democrats.

Josh Earnest, White House press secretary denounced Congressional Republicans for failing to act on approval of the funds.

"At some point, they're going to have to choose whether or not their animosity toward President Obama trumps their desire to try and protect pregnant women in their states from this terrible disease," Earnest said.

White House budget director



Inside Life

By Vinette K. Pryce

Shaun Donovan said, "Given the uncertainty and the risks, we should not play with fire here."

Congress needs to act immediately. We cannot wait. There are activities that we cannot start now. There are activities in the coming months that we may need to stop doing."

As temperatures rise to peak mosquito breeding season, congressional Republicans are claiming that the White House is "politicizing" the Zika virus.

Resigned to the fact of an impending health emergency, some Republicans believe there is no urgency to fund research or even allot moneys to the initiative.

Paul Ryan, Republican speaker from Wisconsin said the House "will address this situation through the regular appropriations process as the need arises, and our appropriators are looking at how to

do just that."

Hal Rogers, Republican House Appropriations Committee chairman from Kentucky, said he needs more budgetary information from the administration to address the crisis.

"I can't in good conscience and out of respect for the taxpayer support a full request without proper information, without justification."

There are currently 346 cases of the Zika virus in the continental United States.

Health officials are saying that that number could rapidly rise as the number of mosquito bites increase. Out of the total cases, 32 were pregnant women, while seven of them acquired the virus through sexual activity.

In addition with newly released findings that the mosquito species responsible for transmitting the virus, is



Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, R-Wis., holds his weekly on camera press conference in the Capitol on Thursday, April 14, 2016.

Bill Clark / CQ Roll Call via Associated Press

now in 30 U.S. states — and not 12 as previously reported — chances are that there is a growing escalation and the disease could quickly rise to epidemic proportions.

Once thought of as a disease that can easily be contained, the Zika virus is now considered "scarier" than expected.

"Most of what we've learned is not reassuring," Dr. Anne Schuchat from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention explained during a recent White House briefing.

"Everything we know about this virus seems to be scarier than we initially thought."

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Jamaican artists Rosie Delmah and Conkarah put a reggae spin on Adele's "Hello."

Reggae touch to 'Hello'

By Laura Andrews

Jamaican artist Conkarah and Rosie Delmah's reggae version of British singer Adele's "Hello" is drawing continuous interest from viewers worldwide. The duet with a female and a male artists is vibrant with a classic reggae beat. The singers, referenced as a brother-and-sister team, starts the video with Rosie Delmah opening the song. The young singer with welcomed child-like innocence, in her "Hello," details with-

Continued on Page 38

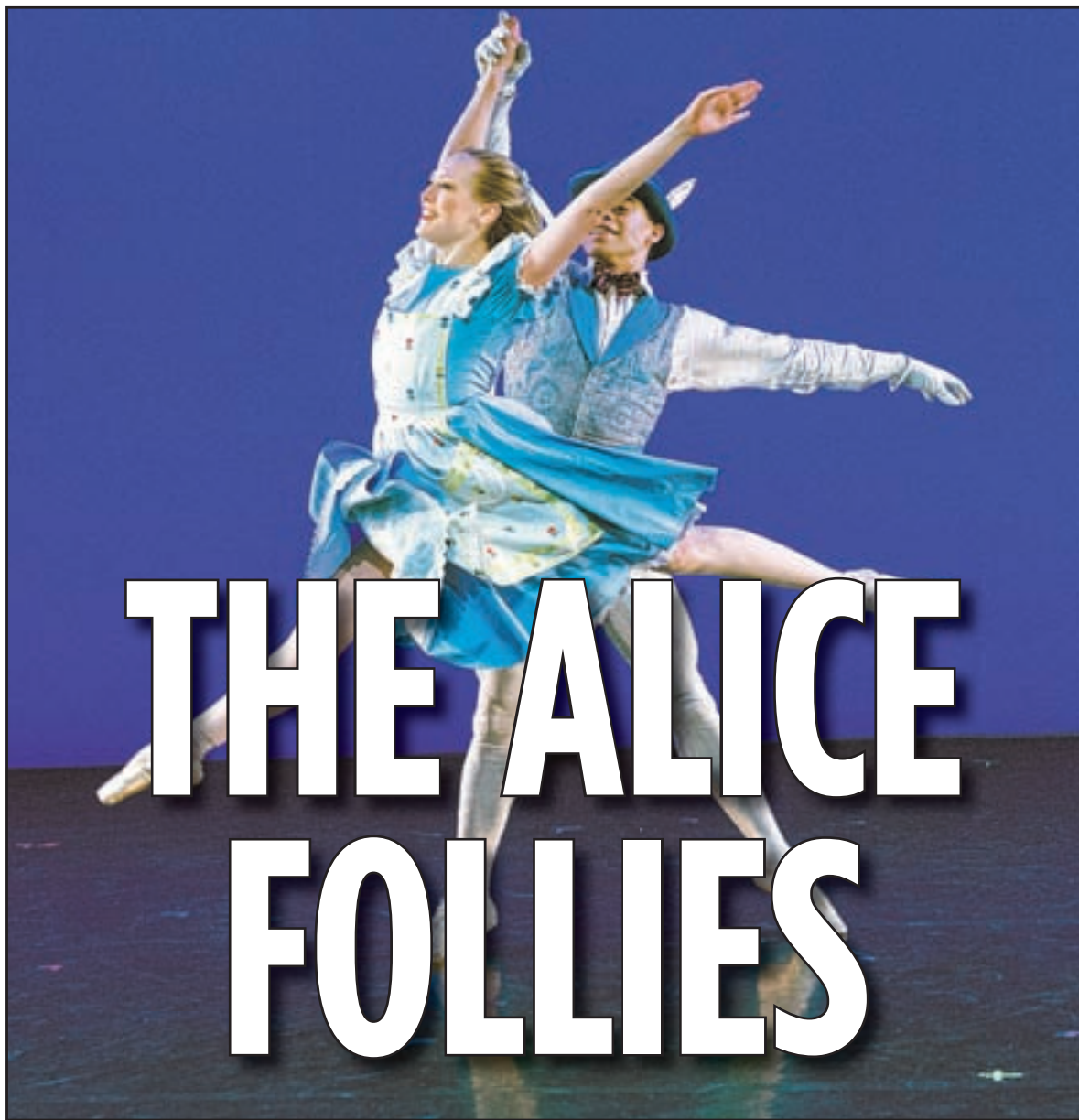
'Fire Fire' video released

Jamaican dancehall queens Kimiko 'Versatile' and Keiva 'D Diva' bust a move in the opening salvo of the hot new Ska video "Fire Fire" from award winning crooner Richie Stephens & The Ska Nation Band featuring Rankin Lele and Papa Leu (from Sud Sound System crew — the biggest Italian reggae band) on vocals. "Fire Fire" is the lead single from the 14-track studio album, which hit stores on April 15 (Pot of Gold, Adriatic Sound/Zojak World Wide).

Stephens baritone voice is powerful throughout the video and grabs your attention from the very first note.

Video directors Federico Giannace, Mose Ferri and Kem Style pan across to a shot with Flexi Doll (Kimiko & Shannon) and Imke from Germany in the next few frames. Other dancers featured

Continued on Page 38



New York Theatre Ballet presents Alice-in-Wonderland Follies.

Rachel Neville

NYTB presents another kids adventure

New York Theatre Ballet (NYTB) will perform The Alice-in-Wonderland Follies on May 1, 2016 at 3 pm at the 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Av, NYC. Tickets are \$25 for children 12 and under and \$35 for adults, and are available online at www.92y.org/Event/NY-Theatre-Ballet-Alice-in-Wonderland-Follies, by calling (212) 415-5500, or in person at the 92Y box office on Lexington Avenue at 92nd Street (hours of operation are Sunday - Thursday, 12 pm-8 pm, and Friday noon - 5 pm). For ages five

and up.

Follow Alice's adventures through Wonderland as she meets some of the most beloved characters in children's literature. Presented in a vaudeville setting, this eclectic ballet draws on many different dance forms — from Irish Step Dancing to African Juba to classical ballet — all of which combine to make a highly entertaining show.

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-Broadway World

This performance is made possible with support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

ABOUT NEW YORK THEATRE BALLET

New York Theatre Ballet (NYTB), founded in 1978 by artistic director Diana Byer, has been hailed by The New York Times as "an invaluable company." NYTB is dedicated

Continued on Page 38



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Brain-altered convict chases int'l terrorists

"Criminal"
Good (2 stars)
Rated R for pervasive profanity and graphic violence.
Running time: 113 minutes
Distributor: Summit Entertainment



A scene from the movie "Criminal."

rottentomatoes.com

By Kam Williams

CIA Agent Bill Pope (Ryan Reynolds) was in London on assignment to deliver a ransom to a computer hacker called the "The Dutchman" (Michael Pitt) when he was assassinated en route by a terrorist (Jordi Molla) with a vicious gun moll (Antje Traue). This would ordinarily be a big loss for the Agency, given the veteran spy's talents and abilities.

Luckily, government scientist Dr. Franks has been working on transferring memories from one brain to another.

And while he's been successful in several attempts with animals, he considers himself five years away from being ready for human trials.

Nevertheless, given the emergency, he is instructed to immediately implant Pope's

mind into that of Jericho (Kevin Costner), a death-row inmate in desperate need of a new lease on life. Next thing you know, the psychopathic murderer awakens from the experimental surgery raring to track down The Dutchman as well as

the creeps who killed Pope.

That is the point of departure of *Criminal*, a sci-fi splatterfest directed by Ariel Vromen (The Iceman). Curiously, the movie marks Ryan Reynolds' third venture into the brain swap genre, his previous being last

fall's *Self/less*. There, however, he played the recipient rather than the organ donor.

There isn't much point to my reciting the scatterplot storyline, since it makes even less sense than the picture's farfetched premise. Still, this high body-count, action thriller is apt to have a certain appeal to testosterone-sodden males seeking to satiate their blood lust by watching folks being blown away in spectacular fashion.

In the process, the film fritters away the services of an impressive cast which includes Reynolds, Tommy Lee Jones, Gary Oldman and Kevin Costner. The film features a fair amount of eye candy, too, in Antje Traue, Alice Eve, Natalie Burn and Gal Gadot who plays Pope's widow, Jill. As you might easily imagine, she and her daughter, Emma (Lara Decaro), are in for the surprise of their lives when hubby/daddy returns reincarnated as a redeemed convict in need of a loving family.

Independent & Foreign Films

Compadres (Unrated) Unlikely-buddies action thriller about a disgraced ex-cop (Omar Chaparro) who joins forces with a young hacker (Joey Morgan) to exact revenge on the mobster (Erick Elias) who kidnapped his girlfriend (Aislinn Derbez) and framed him for a crime he didn't commit. With Kevin Pollak, Eric Roberts and Hector Jimenez.

Dispatches from the Gulf (Unrated) Matt Damon narrates this documentary taking stock of the environmental health of the Gulf of Mexico a half-dozen years after Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Elvis & Nixon (R for profanity) White House drama recounting the historic, 1970 meeting of Elvis Presley (Michael Shannon) and President Nixon (Kevin Spacey) in the Oval Office immortalized by the most requested photograph in the National Archives. Cast includes Colin Hanks, Johnny Knoxville and Alex Pettyfer.

Hockney (Unrated) Reverential retrospective chronicling the career of David Hockney, one of the most influential artists of the 20th Century.

A Hologram for the King (R for sexuality, nudity, profanity and brief drug use) Adaptation of Dave Eggers' novel about a broke American businessman (Tom Hanks) who tries to recover by making a sales pitch to Saudi Arabia's monarch. With Ben Whishaw, Sarita



Kam's Kapsules

By Kam Williams

Choudhury and Tom Skerritt. (In English and Arabic with subtitles)

How to Let Go of the World (Unrated) Eco-documentary chronicling the efforts of environmental activists dedicated to reversing atmospheric warming trends.

Love Thy Nature (Unrated) Environmental documentary, narrated by Liam Neeson, celebrating humanity's connection to Mother Earth while warning of the ecological crisis threatening the survival of our species.

The Meddler (PG-13 for brief drug use) Romance drama about a grieving widow (Susan Sarandon) who moves from New Jersey to L.A. to be near her daughter (Rose Byrne), only to unexpectedly find romance with a retired cop (J.K. Simmons). With Cecily Strong, Jason Ritter, Lucy Punch, Casey Wilson and Jerrod Carmichael.

Nina (Unrated) Zoe Saldana plays the title character in this controversial biopic chronicling jazz singer Nina Simone's (1933-2003) rise to fame, her troubled private life and her dependency on her business manager (David Oyelowo). Featuring Mike Epps as Richard Pryor and Ella Thomas as Lorraine Hansberry. (In English and French with subtitles)

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TOP OF THE CHARTS

TOP 10 SINGLES

- 1 **Love Yourself**
Justin Bieber
- 2 **Stressed Out**
twenty one pilots
- 3 **Cake By The Ocean**
DNCE
- 4 **7 Years**
Lukas Graham
- 5 **Me, Myself & I**
G-Eazy x Bebe Rexha
- 6 **Work**
Rihanna Feat. Drake
- 7 **I Took A Pill in Ibiza**
Mike Posner
- 8 **Pillowtalk**
Zayn
- 9 **My House**
Flo Rida
- 10 **No**
Meghan Trainor

TOP 10 ALBUMS

- 1 **Cleopatra**
The Lumineers
- 2 **Gore**
Deftones
- 3 **Traveller**
Chris Stapleton
- 4 **Blurryface**
twenty one pilots
- 5 **Alone Together**
Skizzy Mars
- 6 **Junk**
M83.
- 7 **Book of Shadows II**
Zakk Wylde
- 8 **Hamilton: An American...**
Original Broadway Cast
- 9 **Death of a Bachelor**
Panic! At The Disco
- 10 **Chasing Shadows**
Angels & Airwaves

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A scene from Alice-in-Wonderland Follies.

Photo by Rachel Neville

NEW YORK BALLET

Continued from page 35

to inspiring a love of dance in diverse audiences through performances of chamber ballet masterpieces and bold new works, as well as innovative

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By pairing the ballets of legendary creators with those of contemporary visionaries, NYTB brings a new understanding and appreciation of dance. The

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NYTB is committed to reach-

ing underserved audiences by performing in small cities throughout the U.S. Its professional school provides ballet training based on the Cecchetti syllabus. Classes are offered at affordable prices. Scholarships are awarded to talented homeless and underserved children along with support for well-rounded learning.

'Hello'

Continued from page 35

sings, she uses her hand as if it were a telephone to demonstrate calling this distant lover, the song explains a person who is in need of an apology. Conkarah nicely follows up.

In his solo, he wonderfully embellishes the song with a sultry spark and well-placed energy, which converts remorse and misgivings with a touching up-to-date romantic confession. The song in the video demands your attention to hear repeatedly not only for the singers engagement, their commendable treatment of the song but also the attractions the video offers.

Embrace yourself for a relax setting in the Solomon Islands. Nicholas Murray, a Conkarah Music artist with the single name Conkarah, in one of his videos calls upon Robert Nesta Marley's heirs for a musical reach out on an island, as he wears a T-shirt indicating he is an unsigned artist. In "Hello" the Jamaican singer in the reggae version of "Hello," places you among warmth, radiant-ly-healthy children with per-

fectly aligned teeth enjoying soccer without shoes. Whether by accident or well-planned, as the two navigates "Hello" to musical territories likely to gain Adele's admiration, there is a scene of a father beautifully cuddling an infant. The children posing in a group photograph gracefully wait for the camera to focusing on them. At their designated moment, they resonate with their brand of child-like humor shown by funny faces and impromptu laughter. There special interaction leaves you puzzled and asking for children to return to this customary place in their childhood.

If the Solomon Islands is the venue of the shooting of the video, look forward to be placed in the South Pacific of sunken warships, lush greenery, scuba-diving blue water and an archipelago with homes near the picturesque waters leaving an indelible imprint in the life of a war hero turned President of the United States, John F. Kennedy.

Adele's "Hello" was number 1 on the Billboard single chart. The tract is the first to sell more than one million downloads in a week. The single is on the album "25," which has sold a record-breaking 3.38 million copies before the close of 2015.

Ska Nation Band



Richie Stephens (center) with the Ska Nation Band from Italy.

Continued from page 35

in the video include the beautiful Deadre (beach scene); Rifical crew; Elite Team; Rui and Shorti from Japan and Sonia Cubanita from Italy. Musicians include Richie Stephens & the Skanation band featuring Richie on lead vocal; Rankin Lele & Papa Leu - vocals; voice guitar / Fossa drums and Leo Klaus, bass (former member of Bag a Riddim, the official Sud Sound System support band).

Last November the entire Skanation band made the trek to Jamaica for a two-

week stay to shoot "Fire Fire." Scenes were shot on location at Movie Star Bar in Kingston and Hellshire Beach, famous for its white sands and cool, clean waters. Other scenes were shot in Bernalda, Italy, famous for being the hometown of Academy Award filmmaker Francis Ford Coppola. Coppola's directorial prominence was cemented with the release of the 1972 Godfather film which revolutionized movie-making in the gangster genre.

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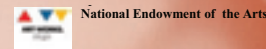
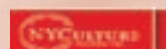
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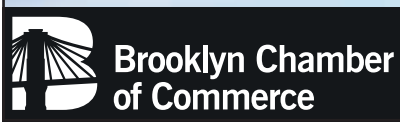
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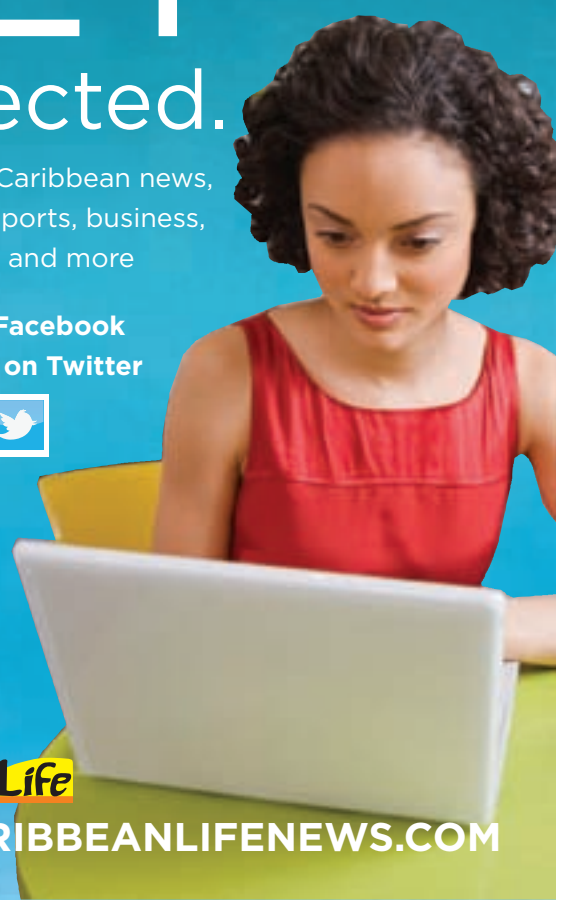
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West Indies' Dwayne Bravo celebrates after taking the catch to dismiss Australia's batsman James Faulkner during their ICC Twenty20 Cricket World Cup match in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Associated Press / Aijaz Rahi, File

Top Twenty20 wicket taker

By Azad Ali

All-rounder Dwayne Bravo became the first bowler to take 300 Twenty20 wickets when his new side Gujarat Lions trounced Kings XI by five wickets in the India Premier League (IPL) which started recently.

In reaching 300 wickets, the 32-year-old surpassed Sri Lankan speedster Lasith Malinga who sits on 299 wickets.

Continued on Page 42

Wildcats assistant coach has Caribbean roots

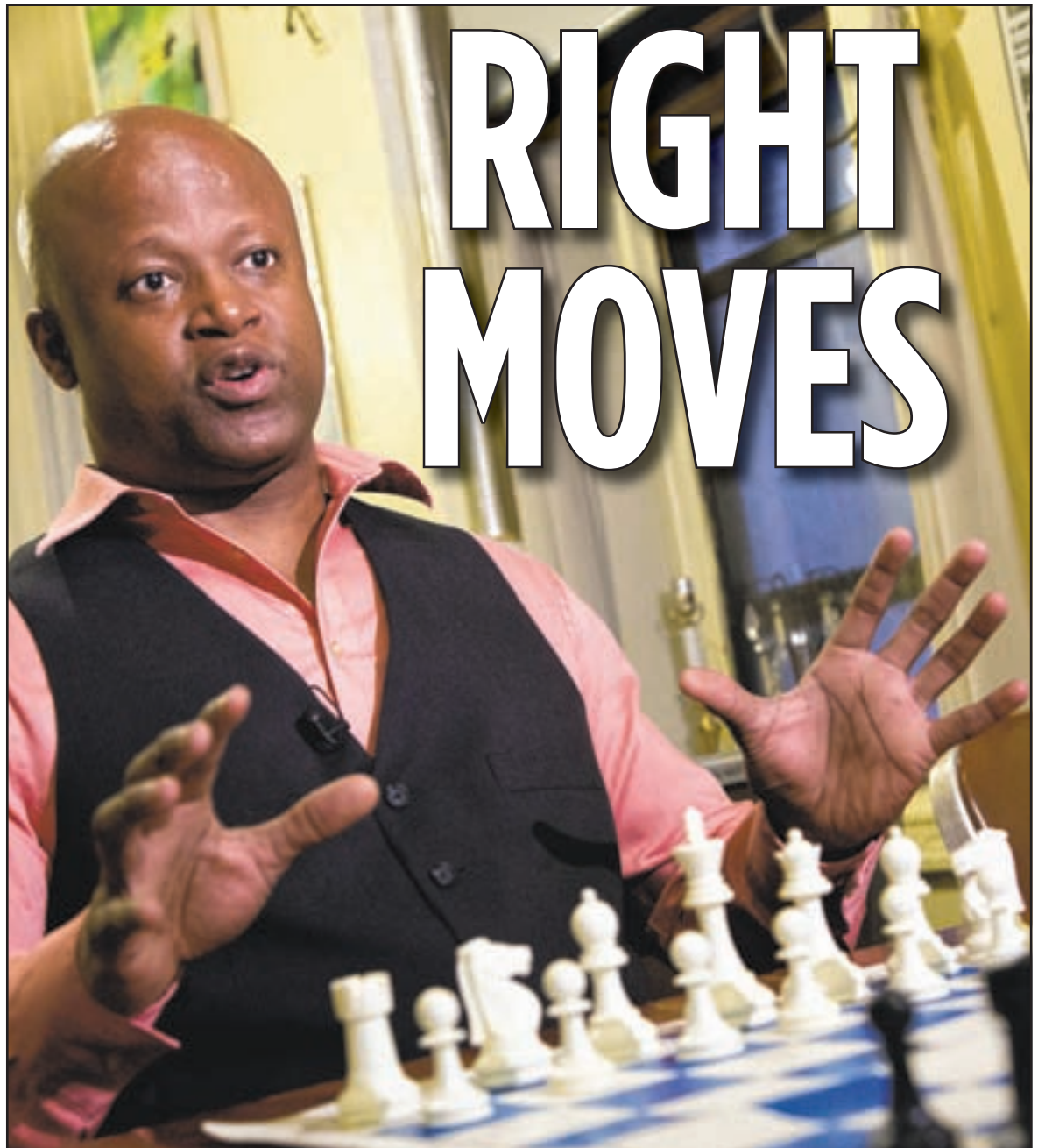
By Tangerine Clarke

Kyle Neptune, assistant coach of Villanova Wildcats Men's Basketball, is still on cloud nine after his team clinched the NCAA title, beating North Carolina to win the national championship recently, giving his Caribbean parents a gift of a lifetime.

Guyanese-born Alex Neptune told this publication that he and his wife Brenda are very proud of their son's accomplishments to date, stating that 31-year old Kyle has had a life-long passion for basketball.

"As a student, Kyle's team at Brooklyn Friends won the NYS Class Championship in 2001, from where he was

Continued on Page 42



RIGHT MOVES

In this April 12, 2016 photo, chess grandmaster Maurice Ashley talks during an interview at Chess Forum in New York. The Brooklyn resident has been inducted to the World Chess Hall of Fame in St. Louis.

Associated Press / Mark Lennihan

1st Jamaican enters Chess Hall of Fame

By Deepti Hajela

NEW YORK (AP) _ Maurice Ashley was 14 when he saw a high school friend playing chess and challenged him to a match. He lost badly, but it sparked a love affair that started him playing nearly non-stop ever since.

There were the countless hours competing against the hustlers in city parks, and the serious players at chess clubs in Manhattan. There

were the years spent against increasingly tougher competition in college, and ultimately against the best of the best at tournaments around the country and abroad.

All that playing has led the 50-year-old Ashley to some trailblazing accomplishments — the first African-American to be designated as a chess grandmaster, and last Wednesday, the first African-Amer-

ican to be inducted into the U.S. Chess Hall of Fame in St. Louis. He received his honor as the U.S. Chess Championship got underway, with Ashley taking on commentating duties.

When he got the call in January that he was being inducted, for his contributions as a player, coach and commentator, Ashley said tears came

Continued on Page 42



In this April 12, 2016 photo, chess grandmaster Maurice Ashley has his hand on a castle during an interview at Chess Forum in New York. The Brooklyn resident has been inducted to the World Chess Hall of Fame in St. Louis.

Associated Press / Mark Lennihan

master is done under the auspices of the World Chess Federation, known by its French acronym FIDE, and involves earning overall points and performing particularly well in chess tournaments.

At the time Ashley became a grandmaster, in 1999, he said there were about 500 or so players with the title. Currently, there are just over 1,500 grandmasters. They come from all over the world, but Ashley is still the only black American to reach that status.

Ashley, who makes a living from the game as a player, coach and author, says he wants to see more African-American players reach the highest levels. "It takes a lot of ground seeding to get players on that path," he said.

Some of that seeding involves the work Ashley does with school children, including at an after-school program in Ferguson, Missouri.

"Ashley is a great inspiration to younger black players, and to younger players of any race, that they could be a grandmaster too someday," said Frank Brady, past president of the Marshall Chess Club in New York, one of the oldest clubs in the country.

Overall, Ashley said his experiences in the chess world have been good, with only a few moments in which his race became an issue.

He recalled one incident when he was playing at a club and an older player came by and asked his opponent why he was letting Ashley beat him, using a slur to describe him.

"It hurt. I was angry," Ashley recalled. "Then he and I played eventually, two tournament games, and I beat him both times."

That's what makes chess great, he said.

"Your moves do the talking."

AFRICAN-AMERICAN GRANDMASTER

Continued from page 41
to his eyes.

"For me to hear that I'm being inducted for everything I've given to the game, that I've done to promote the game, that I've done to help young people play, and for the inspiration I've been, has just been absolutely incredible," Ashley told The Associated Press

in an interview at, where else, at Chess Forum, an all-things-chess shop in Manhattan.

Born in Jamaica, Ashley came to the tough Brownsville section of Brooklyn with two siblings when he was 12, reuniting with the mother who had left her children a decade earlier to carve out a better life, working as a nanny and later

in a string of office clerk jobs.

Ashley got serious about chess during his high school years and continued at New York's City College. From the start, he had one goal.

"I was transported to this world and I wanted to be one of the grandmasters and that's all I knew," he said.

The process of becoming a grand-

Kyle continues work at Villanova

Continued from page 41

awarded MVP of the tournament," said senior Neptune, who along with his Trinidadian-born wife Brenda, saw the spellbinding finish on the Houston basketball court.

Alex Neptune, a former sportsman in Guyana who played basketball, volleyball and table tennis, said Kyle went on to Lehigh University where, in his first year, his team won in their division and appeared in the NCAA tournament.

A graduate of Lehigh University with a major in journalism, Kyle briefly played professional ball in Europe and Puerto Rico, said Neptune, who hailed his son as being passionate about his job as a coach, and mentor.

With passion and drive for the game, and to coach, Kyle became the assistant coach at Niagara University and Hofstra University before joining the coaching staff at Villanova as the assistant basketball coach in 2012.

"We have dedicated our lives to making sure that we provided the best opportunities for both Kyle and our daughter

Alisha, and we are proud of both of their accomplishments to date. Alisha is in a leadership position at a New York City Charter school," he noted.

Alex Neptune, who said both him and his wife are now retired from corporate America, adding that when their son's team won the championship he was very happy. They hugged each other and told Kyle 'great job.'

"Kyle will continue to coach at Villanova. Most assistant coaches in college are in their late 30's and 40's," said Alex Neptune, adding, "Kyle is already busy on the road, recruiting players for next year, and future years. Coaching is a 24 / 7 365-day job."

"Many coaches, and assistant coaches go through their entire career never getting to the Final Four, much less winning it all, so this accomplishment by them is very big."

Alex mused that he asked Kyle if he could sneak him in to the White House when they go to meet President Obama later this year."

Villanova Wildcats Men's Basketball Team, which celebrated the outstand-



Brenda Neptune and Alex Neptune with son, Kyle Neptune, Villanova assistant coach with trophy after the thrilling win in Houston. Kyle Neptune

ing win of the second National Championship with a 77-74 over the North Carolina Tar Heels, under the American-born coach of Caribbean roots, no doubt benefited from the skill set the former basketball player brought to every champion, since 2013.

Head Coach Jay Wright said, "Kyle is a great addition to this staff. During his time at Villanova, Kyle demonstrated all the qualities you want to see in a young coach — commitment, passion, and the ability to communicate with young people."

Twenty20

Continued from page 41

The right-arm seamer finished with his best ever IPL figures of 4 for 22 runs from his four overs to restrict King XI to 161 for 6 off their 20 overs. King XI then cruised to their target with 14 balls remaining.

Bravo's feat follows other landmarks by other West Indians such as Anisa Mohammed (first 100 Twenty20 International wickets), Chris Gayle (first to hit 300 sixes in Twenty20s) and Kieron Pollard (first to play 300 Twenty20 matches).

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Vincientian athletic teams prepare for Penn Relays

By Nelson A. King

James Cordice, the architect behind St. Vincent and the Grenadines' participation in the illustrious Penn Relays in Philadelphia, Pa says preparations are well underway for hosting athletes from the Thomas Saunders Secondary School (TSSS) in next week's relays carnival.

"Preparations are on track," Cordice told Caribbean Life Monday night. "I'm very excited. This is the sixth year [hosting TSSS athletes] — sixth time around."

Cordice said the 18-member contingent — which comprises a manager, chaperone and coaches — flies into New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport early Sunday morning, and will then take a two-hour van ride to Philadelphia.

In previous years, the contingent flew directly to Philadelphia. But Cordice said the new route is more financially feasible.

As in prior years, the male

and female track stars will compete in 4x100 and 4x400m events during the three-day carnival, which starts on Thursday, April 29.

This year's male athletes are: Mickail Legair, Derold Samuel, Azare Samuel, Nigel Thomas, Neilo Thomas, Edwin Weston and Zenron Chance.

The female athletes are: Mickaila Slater, Cheslyn Simper, Oleisha Ryan, Zamesha Myle, Ariel Jackson, Kavesia George and Shanise John.

Godfrey "Fuzzy" Harry is the head coach; Chantel Legair, female coach; Larissa John, manager; and Farrah Bailey, chaperone.

Cordice said Vincientian national track star Brandon Valentine-Parris, who continues his winning ways in track meets in the United States, is expected to grace the tracks during the Penn Relays, at Franklin Field Stadium, at the University of Pennsylvania.

Valentine-Parris, who represented TSSS on two prior

Penn Relays, is expected to compete for Claflin University in Orangeburg, S.C., where he's currently on an athletic scholarship.

Bus and car loads of nationals from New York are also expected to trek to Philadelphia to render support to the Vincientian athletes.

Laverne McDowald-Thompson, president of the Brooklyn-based Council of St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Organizations, U.S.A., Inc. (COSAGO), the umbrella Vincientian group in the U.S., said COSAGO is organizing a bus-load of nationals to support the athletes on the final day of the meet, Sat., April 30.

McDowald-Thompson also told Caribbean Life that COSAGO has collaborated with the Philadelphia-based St. Vincent and the Grenadines Organization of Pennsylvania (SVGOP) in sponsoring the SVG Penn Relay Team for the fifth year.

"I am certain that our sponsorship aids tremendously since it helps to defray the cost of uni-



James Cordice.

Photo by Nelson A. King

form (running suits), accommodation, transportation and food for the week the athletes spend in U.S.," she said.

"It is very important to the organizations that they [athletes] are well cared for when they come to represent us here in the United States," she added. "In addition to our sponsorship, we rally support for the athletes to witness their participations in the games."

On track days, the athletes

will be fed through the efforts of Team Jamaica Bickle, an organization that provides meals to Jamaican and Caribbean athletes at the games, of which Cordice is an executive member.

Cordice said the TSSS athletes will be feted at a reception, on the night of the final day, at the Vincientian-owned Calabash Restaurant and Catering House on Lancaster Avenue in Philadelphia.

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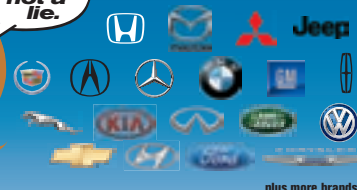


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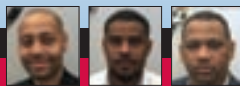
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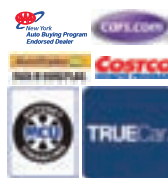
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ARIES: Mar 21/Apr 20
Aries, it is easy to get excited about the wrong things this week. Try not to be too reckless in your actions, and stick with someone like Libra to keep you grounded.

TAURUS: Apr 21/May 21
Taurus, you may be unable to keep your emotions in check this week, and you just might let more things slip than you hoped to. It's okay to open up once in a while.

GEMINI: May 22/Jun 21
Pursue a moneymaking idea, Gemini, because a partnership project is something right at this venture in time. Create a solid relationship with someone you trust and get started.

CANCER: Jun 22/Jul 22
Cancer, you keep hitting a wall with regard to a project. Accept that you will not make too much progress now and move on to something else. You can circle back later.

LEO: Jul 23/Aug 23
A particular goal may seem like an uphill battle to anyone else but you, Leo. You have the stamina, work ethic and the personality to overcome any obstacle.

VIRGO: Aug 24/Sept 22
Virgo, you may be ready to go out on your own and demonstrate your independence, but something is holding you back. A support system isn't a bad thing.

LIBRA: Sept 23/Oct 23
Libra, you may quickly tire of any tasks that are put in front of you this week. Repetition is just not your friend, so look for activities that may be more stimulating.

SCORPIO: Oct 24/Nov 22
Scorpio, repeatedly taking an unsuccessful approach won't produce new results. It's time to try a new tactic. Perhaps ask a friend for a different perspective.

SAGITTARIUS: Nov 23/Dec 21
Sagittarius, turn up the charm and you'll have more opportunities to get things to go your way. Just don't put on an act or others will see right through it.

CAPRICORN: Dec 22/Jan 20
Capricorn, you are often the one to help others, but this week you need some assistance. Accept any help you can get and thank those around you for their willingness to lend a hand.

AQUARIUS: Jan 21/Feb 18
Aquarius, distractions may be enjoyable this week, but you have to limit them or you will get nothing done. There's a lot on your plate that you have to complete.

PISCES: Feb 19/Mar 20
Tackling some financial problems this week, Pisces. Focus on old debt or something that has been plaguing you for some time.

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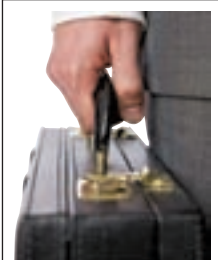
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Letitia James Warns Consumers About Classified Ads
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Office of the Public Advocate

NOTICE OF SALE
SUPREME COURT COUNTY OF KINGS, WILMINGTON SAVINGS FUND SOCIETY, FSB, D/B/A CHRISTIANA TRUST, NOT IN ITS INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY BUT SOLELY AS LEGAL TITLE TRUSTEE FOR BRONZE CREEK TITLE TRUST 2013-NPL1, Plaintiff, vs. RUPERTHA PRENTICE, VERONICA ROGERS, ET AL., Defendant(s).

Pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale duly filed on January 15, 2016, I, the undersigned Referee will sell at public auction at the Kings County Supreme Court, Room 224, 360 Adams Street, Brooklyn, NY on May 19, 2016 at 2:30 p.m., premises known as 1214 Schenectady Avenue, Brooklyn, NY. All that certain plot, piece or parcel of land, with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, situate, lying and being in the Borough of Brooklyn, County of Kings, City and State of New York, BLOCK: 4049, LOT: 120 Approximate amount of judgment \$340,583.41 plus interest and costs. Premises will be sold subject to provisions of filed Judgment Index#: 15445/09. Rosemarie Sailer, Esq., Referee Frenkel Lambert Weiss Weisman & Gordon, LLP 53 Gibson Street Bay Shore, NY 11706 01-048863-F00

Plaintiff AGAINST Kamar Jimoh, et al., Defendant(s) Pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale duly dated 1-4-2016 I, the undersigned Referee will sell at public auction at the Kings County Supreme Court, 360 Adams Street, Room 224, Brooklyn, NY 11201 on 5-5-2016 at 2:30PM, premises known as 559 Cleveland Street, Brooklyn, NY 11208-3505. All that certain plot piece or parcel of land, with the buildings and improvements erected, situate, lying and being in the Borough of Brooklyn, County of Kings, City and State of New York, BLOCK: 4049, LOT: 120 Approximate amount of judgment \$340,583.41 plus interest and costs. Premises will be sold subject to provisions of filed Judgment Index#: 15445/09. Rosemarie Sailer, Esq., Referee Frenkel Lambert Weiss Weisman & Gordon, LLP 53 Gibson Street Bay Shore, NY 11706 01-048863-F00

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