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Grenadian Ranisha McMeo portrays Greenz United's "OASIS."

Photo by Nelson A. King

GUYANA AWAITS OIL \$\$

The South American country prepares for transformation, oil wealth

By Bert Wilkinson

Last week, Guyana's main opposition party accused government of doing very little to get key infrastructural projects going and spur employment, suggesting that the administration is hedging all its bets on the massive oil and gas find off the coast.

This is despite the fact that U.S.-owned Exxon Mobil which first declared that it had found a humungous oil well at a location 150 miles offshore, will not likely pump the first barrel of oil before 2020.

As the days went by government has not done very much by way of answering the opposition charges but a chat with anyone connected with

the country's newest cash cow sector will realize there are frenetic preparations in the run up to 2020.

"We are sending or have sent a number of our staff for training in a number of areas, from petroleum law, to petroleum engineering among other areas and will soon have to separate the oil unit from the geology and mines commission as they would need to be apart," said agency Director Newell Denison.

Laws dealing mostly with regulating exploration rather than production companies are to be overhauled and local universities are being reoriented to deal more with engineering

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WIADCA launches 49th carnival

By Nelson A. King

With much fanfare, the West Indian American Day Carnival Association (WIADCA) on Thursday, Aug. 11 launched its 49th annual carnival at the Brooklyn Children's Museum, under the theme, "One Caribbean, One People, One Voice."

Several area representatives joined carnival officials, other dignitaries and masqueraders in the launch of the extravaganza that gets in full steam on Thursday, Sept. 1, culminating with the grand parade

on Labor Day, along Eastern Parkway, one of Brooklyn's major thoroughfares. "I think it's great for America, for the culture and heritage of the Caribbean," said State Sen. Jessie Hamilton,

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WIADCA President Bill Howard speaking with Trinidad and Tobago New York Consul Gen. Urvashi Ramnarine. Photo by Nelson A. King

West Indian American Carnival

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representative for the 20th Senatorial District in Brooklyn, in a Caribbean Life interview, as DJ Colin Gilbert struck up gyrating Caribbean rhythms. “We want to introduce the culture in the schools, so people can understand what’s going on.”

Stephanie Hill Wilchfort, president and chief executive officer of the Brooklyn Children’s Museum, said she was delighted to host the launch for the very first time.

“The parade is the most important event in Crown Heights,” she also told Caribbean Life. “They are our neighbors. We could not be more thrilled in hosting this. We’re grateful that WIADCA chose us.”

Trinidadian Jean P. Alexander, WIADCA board secretary and director of public relations and marketing, said, except for the previous two years, when the launch was held at Brooklyn Borough Hall, the event was held for three decades at Gracie Mansion on the Upper East Side in Manhattan.

“It’s wonderful because carnival needs open space,” she said about the new venue.

Alexander, who has been a WIADCA member for 40 years, said more than 45 adult and 40 children bands will participate in the carnival, which will also feature 12 steel bands, including one each from Toronto and Philadelphia.

She said 10,000 costumed masqueraders and more than three million spectators are expected to converge on Eastern Parkway on Labor Day for the grand parade.

“We’re going to have a very secured and safe carnival,” Alexander said. “We want the world to know that — plenty, plenty mas.”

Congresswoman Clarke calls on expatriats to vote



Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke addressing a Guyanese audience at Brooklyn Borough Hall recently.

Photo by Tangerine Clarke

By Tangerine Clarke

Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke (D-Brooklyn) called on Guyanese to go out and vote, and to take along anyone registered to vote during her address at the Guyana’s Tri-State Alliance’s 25th Anniversary at Brooklyn Borough Hall recently.

“I want to remind you that you have an obligation to get out and vote, and if you want to know how you could be an influence between the United States and Guyana, know that it is exercising your franchise here in the United States, as many other immigrant communities have done, that make a difference between the U.S. and other nations from which they hail.”

“I want to urge you, and I want to beseech you. We can make a difference. I don’t want it to be said that I am always bragging about Caribbean

people, and then you don’t show up to vote, and embarrass me,” quipped Clarke, adding, “I want everyone who has a vote, to go out and vote and take someone with you to the polls.”

The hugely popular politician, who represents the 9th Congressional District in Brooklyn, said she is honored to represent such a diverse district, and was full of praise for the expatriates, saying that Guyanese are an exceptional, and beautiful group of immigrants who she represents.

“Guyanese Americans embrace strong ties with their heritage. They hold many cultural events for members, and the strong ties between Guyana and the Untied States have allowed stronger ties with the Caribbean,” said the representative.

“It is an honor and privilege to represent you in Washington DC. It is just as

wonderful to commemorate the growth and development of your nation,” she added.

Also honoring the Republic’s Independence Anniversary, Clarke said, “Guyana is 50 years old and going strong. You faced challenges, but be encouraged that your souvenir nation continues to grow from strength to strength. You have embraced the democratic values and you will continue to grow as a nation, unique in your own culture, and your talent to be proud of, and I am certainly proud to represent you,” she added.

“I brag and I boast, that I have one of the most extraordinary constituencies, and you add significantly to that ability to brag and boast,” added Congresswoman Clarke, a vocal opponent of issues that negatively affect the community in which she serves.

Antigua

The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a Zika virus travel notice for Antigua and Barbuda and the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) following reported local mosquito transmission of the infection.

Local mosquito transmission means that mosquitoes in the area are infected with the Zika virus and are spreading to people.

Because the Zika virus is primarily spread by mosquitoes, the CDC is recommending that travelers to Antigua and Barbuda protect themselves from mosquito bites.



There is no vaccine or medication for Zika virus and the best way to avoid the infection is to prevent mosquito bites, the CDC said.

It said some travelers to areas with Zika will become infected while traveling but will not become sick until they return home and they might not have any symptoms,

The CDC also stated that sexual transmission of Zika virus from a male partner is also possible.

There is also the Gillian-Barre syndrome (GBS), a rare disorder that can cause muscle weakness and paralysis for a few weeks to several month, which is very likely triggered by Zika in a small proportion of infections, much as it is after a variety of other infections. Most people fully recover from GBS, but some have permanent damage.

Bahamas

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) says there is an opportunity for tourism-dependent economies such as the Bahamas to capitalize on the Chinese tourist market.



It is suggesting that many changes and investments would have to be made to capture more of this market.

It is estimated that in 2014, 117 million outbound Chinese tourists spent nearly \$500 billion, with leading destinations being Hong Kong, Macau, the



Cheers to Kirani and Lashawn

Grenada's Kirani James (left) and United States' Lashawn Merritt celebrate after winning silver and bronze respectively during the athletics competitions of the 2016 Summer Olympics at the Olympic stadium in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Sunday, Aug. 14, 2016.

Associated Press/ Lee Jin-man

United States and France.

The bank is predicting that the number of Chinese tourists would double by 2020.

It said the main constraints on Chinese tourism outside Asia are said to be the cost of long-haul travel and the limited amount of vacation time the typical Chinese worker is entitled to in the year.

An IDB report by Mark D. Wenner and Dillion Clarke on the "Chinese Rise in the Caribbean: "What does it Mean for Caribbean Stakeholders?" noted that an opportunity clearly exists for Caribbean tourism-dependent economies to target the higher income bracket, those who may be seeking different experiences and opportunities to explore far-flung and exotic cultures.

It was noted that for the Caribbean to capture more of the Chinese market,

many changes and investments would have to be made, including visa exemptions for Chinese nationals.

Dominica

Regional airline, LIAT will resume flights to and from the Douglas Charles Airport in Dominica starting Friday Sept. 18, 2016.

The airline was forced to suspend services to Dominica on Aug. 27 last year due to the passage of Tropical Storm Erika which resulted in severe damage to the island and closure of the airport.

LIAT will operate one flight to Dominica on Friday, Sept. 18, increasing to two daily flights from Saturday, Sept. 19.

All other flights into and out of



Dominica remain suspended until further notice.

Chief Executive Officer David Evans applauded the government and people of Dominica for their resilience over the past several weeks citing their tireless efforts to get the country back to a state of normalcy following the storm.

More than 20 people died when the storm battered Dominica.

Grenada

Another Grenadian has landed a top job with the sub-regional Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

Dr. Brian Francis is due to take up the post of director of Economic Affairs and Regional Integration from September, 2016 at its head



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OIL WEALTH

Continued from page 1

disciplines such as geology and mining.

After weeks of drilling off the western Essequibo coast, Exxon in May of last year reported a massive find at its Liza 1 well, suggesting that it might singly contain up to 1.4 billion barrels of oil and a yet to be determined amount of gas.

The firm has since successfully drilled a second well, "Skip Jack," a third is in progress and a fourth is on cards before yearend.

"In the early stages we are going to be rolling in the hundreds of millions. Later as it progresses, it will be in the billions," said Natural Resources Minister Raphael Trotman. Associated Press / Andres Leighton



Natural Resources Minister Raphael Trotman. Associated Press / Andres Leighton



A Canadian oil rig is seen in this June 29, 2000 photo in contested waters on the Atlantic coast. Associated Press / Ken Moore

The oil and gas find has come at a time when Guyana remains one of the few countries in the 15-nation Caribbean Community group of nations, which is still growing economically and which appears to have a bright future with its abundant mineral wealth outside of the lifeline tourism and hospitality sector of its regional neighbors.

Both Dennison and Trotman talk about being bombarded each and every working day for meetings with cash flushed international oil and gas companies, others in the supply support industry and professionals willing to offer their expertise to a country, which knows nothing about oil and gas.

Junior exploration company, CGX Energy of Canada, for example, appears to have made the smartest move by hiring and teaming up with Exxon to drill its own well at a concession nearby the Exxon oil field.

"We are about halfway through drilling. We should know what is going on in another three weeks," said CGX's Kamal Dookie.

Spanish-owned Repsol is also getting ready to begin exploration work even as Exxon, happy with what it has found so far, has asked authorities to grant it more acreage to widen its search area.

Trotman says that Exxon will be allowed in the first three to four years

to recoup its billion dollar investment through the sale of its production but it has "agreed to pay royalties on it," allowing Guyana to cash in what he terms "hundreds of millions of dollars at this stage" and billions very shortly after.

Officials are already talking about massive infrastructural projects, including construction of a paved six-lane, 350-mile highway through the jungle and mountain regions to northern Brazilian border, opening up new markets, the interior and cooperating with Brazil to access markets for its landlocked northern territories to the wider region and Central America.

Even the military is getting in on the action. Just this week, the force sent officers and ranks to a support ship near the drilling rig to train for oil spill emergencies while the private sector is openly discussing ways of cashing in on related investment opportunities.

As all this is going on, prices for gold, currently the main foreign exchange earner, are slowly creeping up bringing joy to miners after a few years of panic. Guyana also can still rely on rice, sugar, bauxite, timber, the fishing and agriculture sectors and a host of others. Now it also has oil and gas and its future appears secure.



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St. Lucia, Desert Star Holdings sign \$2B project

By Azad Ali

The St. Lucia government signed a US \$2 billion agreement to establish the "Pearl of the Caribbean" project in the south of the island.

The agreement was signed by Prime Minister Allen Chastanet and officials of the project's premier developer, Hong Kong-based Desert Star Holdings (DSH). The first phase of the construction will begin next year.

A statement issued by Invest St. Lucia said the signing of the agreement ends three years of negotiations between DSH and key state agencies Invest St. Lucia (ISL), the Citizenship by Investment Unit (CIU) and the Development Control Authority (DCA).

It said the multi-billion dollar project will occupy a 700-acre site and will include a marina, racecourse, a resort and shopping mall complex, casino, Free Trade Zone, extensive entertainment and leisure facilities as well as architecturally designed apartments.

The statement added: "Overall, the Pearl of the Caribbean Development is designed to be a well-balanced project with open space making up over 50 percent of the overall development. It is designed to be a sustainable and self-contained development and is expected to generate between 500 and 800 jobs in construction during the initial phase of implementation."

"The Pearl of the Caribbean is also set to play a lead role in the development of a new horse industry in St. Lucia, providing a new tourism and entertainment option for international



St. Lucia Prime Minister Allen Chastanet.

tourists as well as new employment opportunities for locals.

"Upon completion, the project will be able to house more than 1,000 racehorses and have the capacity to hold feature racing carnivals, establishing St. Lucia as a racing and entertainment center in the Caribbean and leveraging off the international appeal of the sport to promote St. Lucia to a diverse audience base," the statement added.

The statement continued: "The Pearl of the Caribbean is expected to appeal to international investors, especially in emerging markets like China, South East Asia and Russia."

Jamaica records increases in tourism arrivals

By Azad Ali

Jamaica has earned some US\$1.3 billion from tourism for the first six months of this year.

This is according to statistics from the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) which was sent to the Ministry of Tourism.

It showed there were more than two million visitors to the island, which resulted in a 7.5 per cent increase from the corresponding year.

A release from the ministry noted that for the first half of 2016, total arrivals were put at 2,084,963, with 1,135,080 stopovers, increase by 2.5 percent. Also, there were 949,883 cruise ship passenger arrivals, which went up by 14.2 percent.

Minister for Tourism Edmund Bar-

tlett said this is an indication that Jamaica is firmly on the path of welcoming four million visitors for 2016.

He noted that the highest number of visitors for any July in Jamaica's history was also recorded this year, amounting to 211,000.

Bartlett said the preliminary numbers for July exclude Jamaican nationals and members of the Diaspora, which is a four percent increase over the last year.

The United States of American and the United Kingdom remain Jamaica's strongest markets, with arrival figures of 147,053 and 15,782, respectively for the month of June.

Last year 3.7 million people visited Jamaica and spent more than US\$30 billion.

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TPPA could be discarded due to US political dynamics

By Martin Khor

Martin Khor is the executive director of the South Center, based in Geneva

PENANG, Aug 17, 2016 (IPS) — No country was more active in pushing for the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). In the five years of negotiations, the United States cajoled, persuaded and pressurised its trade partners take on board its issues and positions.

Finally, when the TPP was signed in February by 12 countries, it was widely expected the agreement will come into force within two years, after each country ratifies it.

But now there are growing doubts if the TPP will become a reality. Ironically it may become a victim of US political dynamics as the TPP has become a toxic issue in its Presidential elections.

Opposing the TPPA is at the centre of Republican nominee Donald Trump's campaign. He has declared the TPP would be a disaster, it would encourage US companies to move their production abroad and weaken domestic jobs, and called for the U.S. to withdraw from the agreement. In his typical extreme style, Trump said at a recent rally that the TPP "is another disaster, done and pushed by special interests who want to rape our country."

Bernie Sanders, the Democrat Presidential candidate who ran a surprisingly close contest with Hillary Clinton, championed the anti-TPP cause, saying: "We shouldn't re-negotiate the TPP. We should kill this unfettered FTA which would cost us nearly half a million jobs."

Hillary Clinton also came out against the TPPA, a turnaround from her position when she was secretary of state and described it as a gold-standard agreement. To counter suspicions that she would again switch positions if she becomes president, Clinton stated: "I am against the TPP, and that means before and after the elections."

They may all be reflecting popular sentiment that trade agreements have caused the loss of millions of manufacturing jobs, stagnation in wages and contributed to the unfair distribution of benefits in U.S. society, much of which has accrued to the top one or 10 per cent of income earners.

An article in New York Times (July 29, 2016) began as follows: "Democrats and Republicans agreed on almost nothing at their conventions this month, except this: free trade, just a decade ago the bedrock of the economic agendas of both parties, is now a political pariah."

Besides the Presidential candidates, two other players will decide the TPPA's fate: President Obama and the U.S. Congress.

Obama has been the TPPA's main champion, passionately arguing that it will bring economic benefits, raise environmental and labour standards and give the U.S. an advantage over China in Asian geopolitics.

Considering the TPP to be a key legacy of his presidency, Obama wants Congress to ratify the agreement before his term ends. But till now he has been unable to get the bill tabled because it would be

certainly defeated in the election season, given the TPP's unpopularity.

His last opportunity is to get the TPP passed during the lame-duck Congress session after the election on Nov. 8 and before mid-January 2017.

"I am against the TPP, and that means before and after the elections," Hillary Clinton

However, it is unclear whether there is enough support to table a lame-duck TPP bill, and if tabled whether it will pass.

Last year, a related fast-track trade authority bill was adopted with only slim majorities. Now, with the concrete TPPA before them, and the swing in mood, some Congress members who voted for fast track are indicating they won't vote for TPP.

For example, Clinton's running mate for Vice President, Senator Tim Kaine, who supported had fast track has now proclaimed his opposition to TPP. Other leading Democrats who have publicly denounced TPP include House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, and House Ways & Means Committee Ranking Member Sandy Levin who said: "It is now increasingly clear that the TPP agreement will not receive a vote in Congress this year, including in any lame duck session, and if it did, it would fail."

Congress Republican leaders have also voiced their opposition. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said that the presidential campaign had produced a political climate that made it virtually impossible to pass the TPP in the "lame duck" session.

House Speaker, Republican Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) who played a leading role in writing the fast-track bill, said he sees no reason to bring TPP to the floor for a vote in the lame duck session because "we don't have the votes."

Meanwhile, six House Republicans sent a letter to President Obama in early August last week asking him not to try to move TPP in a "Lame Duck."

Though the picture thus looks grim for Obama, he should not be under-estimated. He said when the elections are over he will be able to convince Congress to vote for TPP.

"I will actually sit down with people on both sides, on the right and on the left," he told the media. "We'll go through the whole provisions....I'm really confident I can make the case this is good for American workers and the American people." He added many people thought he would fail to obtain the fast track legislation, but he succeeded.

On Aug. 12, the Obama administration submitted a draft Statement of Administration Action, as required by the fast-track process for introducing a TPP bill. The document describes the steps the administration will take to implement changes to U.S. law required by the TPP. Obama can later send a final statement and the draft of the implementing bill describing the actual changes to U.S. law needed to comply with the TPP agreement.

Following that, a lot of deal-making is expected between the President and Congress members. Obama will doubtless offer incentives or privileges to some of the demanding Congress members in order to obtain their votes, as was seen in the fast-track process.

To win over Congress, Obama will have to respond to those on the right and left who are upset on specific issues such as the term of monopoly for biologic drugs, or the inclusion of ISDS (investor-state dispute settlement) in the TPP.

To pacify them, Obama will have to convince them that what they want will anyway be achieved, even if these are not legally part of the TPP because the TPP text cannot be amended.

He can try to achieve this through bilateral side agreements on specific issues. Or he can insist that some countries take on extra obligations beyond what is required by the TPP as a condition for obtain-

ing a U.S. certification that they have fulfilled their TPP obligations. This certification is required for the US to provide the TPP's benefits to its partners, and thus the U.S. has previously made use of this to get countries to take on additional obligations, which can then be shown to Congress members that their objectives have been met.

Obama could theoretically also re-negotiate to amend specific clauses of the TPP in order to appease Congress. But this option will be unacceptable to the other TPP countries.

In June, Malaysia rejected any notion of renegotiating the TPPA. The question of renegotiating the TPPA does not arise even if there are such indications by U.S. presidential candidates, said Tan Sri Dr Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria, then the secretary general of the International Trade and Industry Ministry.

"If the U.S. does not ratify the TPPA then it will not be implemented," she said. The other TPP members would have to resort to a "different form of cooperation."

Singapore Prime Minister Lee HsienLoong, on a recent visit to Washington, dismissed any possibility of reopening parts of the TPP as some Congress members are seeking. "Nobody wants to reopen negotiations," he said. "We have no prospect of doing better and every chance of having it fall apart."

In January, Canadian Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland said a renegotiation of the TPP is not possible. Japan also rejected renegotiations, which it defined as including changing existing side agreements or adding new ones. This is not going to happen, said Japan's Deputy Chief of Missions Atsuyuki Oike.

What happens if the US Congress does not adopt the TPP during the lame-duck period? The 12 countries that signed the agreement in February are given 2 years to ratify it.

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Time to focus on what's critical

All things considered, it's a pretty good timing sequence we have for the year's election schedule. In one sense, it was good that the candidates were blessed with all the time they needed to get us hip as to who was who. (Come to think of it, though, there's one joker about whom, the worst of the worst is what best appeals to him). But of greater importance, hardly ever is a general election not fully deserving of the interest we say it deserves.

The occasion of a new general election being topic one at this time clearly needs to be the big deal it's proving to be. Just the possibility of the nation selecting its first female leader is heavy stuff. Hillary Clinton, despite the efforts of some to paint her otherwise, has shown herself to be good at holding her own. When her candidacy was announced, Clinton was given a ringing endorsement by the New York Times, which many a candidate would die for.

Clinton's manner of dealing with her nemesis banging

Viewpoint

By Les Slater

the drums is proving so far to be precisely what's needed. She obviously is committed to sounding off consistently with matters that relate to common folk, rather than constantly attempting to make cheap shots, as is her competitor's fancy. Because of which, it's probably no surprise, that polls have been running the way we are told.

The effort made by Bernie Sanders, in his serious bid to earn the nomination, needs to be commended. The bottom line is that when Sanders realized that it was all over he responded with dignity, doing what he had promised should he not ultimately win. The issue now, of course, is for Sanders supporters to respond the way he does. We recall a former Sanders supporter, responding with much disgust to other Sanders folk

who seemed determined to continue the beat after it was all over. There's no reason for not believing Sanders when he says he'll do everything possible to make sure his supporters do the right thing. Obviously, having some time as this plays out is something we'll be watching.

But in this year's election, there's now a whole lot that concerns who is likely to get votes. The appearance this year of one candidate whose ability to run rings over less sophisticated folk, which has been well documented; is something of which we need to be constantly reminded.

It's no secret. Those who sell and hope to reap benefits from fear, are the ones who, by whatever means, decent citizens get to make sure those plans become stymied.

As we gaze upon the valued landscape from which comes such diverse cities, we can be assured that a multiplicity of changes in behavior will always be part of the scene. We recall, for instance the example back in 2000



Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton speaks during a campaign stop, Monday, April 25, 2016, in Wilmington, Del.

Associated Press / Matt Rourke

when candidate Ralph Nader saw it as good practice to ignore all that was being told to him, to the effect that his insistence on remaining in the presidential race in Florida was horrible and mean-spirited. And of course, it finally did in fact have a lot to do with George Bush winning the presidency that year. That's how it goes.

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Trade deal faces uncertainty

Continued from page 10

Enough countries to account for 85 percent of the combined GNP of the 12 countries must ratify it for the TPP to come into force. As the U.S. accounts for over 15 percent of the combined GNP, a prolonged non-ratification by it would effectively kill the TPPA.

Theoretically, if the TPP is not ratified this year, a new U.S. president can

try to get Congress to adopt it in the next year. But the chances for this happening are very slim.

That's why the TPP must be passed during the lame duck session. If it fails to do so, it would mark the dramatic change in public opinion on the benefits of free trade agreements in the United States, the land that pioneered the modern comprehensive free trade agreements.

Caribbean culture in the spotlight



One of the many African vendors at the Jamaica Arts and Music Summer Festival in Queens.

Photo by Laura Andrews

By Laura Andrews

Caribbean cuisine and fresh drinks from islands across the Caribbean took court among the diverse dishes from around the world at the 20th anniversary of the Jamaica Arts and Music Summer Festival. The objective of one of JAMS' organizers, Craig Crawford, is to "make JAMS more exciting, visual and an unbelievable experience for participants," was seemingly met with an array of food, vendors, music and entertainment. This year, the festival, which is set in Jamaica, Queens reached another heightened point.

"Every year our goal is to raise the bar on artistic talent and we encourage people of several cultures to participate in JAMS and we accomplished that," said Crawford, the host and artistic director for JAMS. "During this election year, JAMS plays a bigger role in bringing this multicultural community together, especially since one of our presidential candidates is trying to divide us by 'making America great again' whatever that means," added the talented saxophonist.

The unification message put into place by JAMS resonates around the world. A Burkina Faso vendor with one-of-a-kind jewelry returns to the Festival annually to promote African goods. "My job is to go to fair-to -fair," said the art-

ist who elected to remain anonymous by not revealing her name. Although travelling across the United States to showcase and sell her goods, this Burkina Faso-born entrepreneur explained that "culture is very diversified in outdoor festivals." As the Western spotlight on the African Diaspora vacillated, her interest in the art form of the business remain steady and aggressive.

"I started selling before the culture was strong," she noted. Since the 1980's her eye-catching jewelry contributed to the market. When asked in a face-to-face interview, the importance of buying African goods, this business woman replies, "It is different. It is beautiful. Consumers want their goods to be distinguished."

A quick glance at the range of earrings representing flags from the Caribbean to the shape of the African continent, explains the countless compliments this seasoned international negotiator clients' receive when donning her products. A recommendation this African woman, exposed to French culture and tapping into a flourishing Caribbean market in the most diverse county in the world at JAMS is making, is that African jewelry is beautiful. She adds, as the JAMS Festival comes to a close, "We have to manage to like ourselves."

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NYC 'Build It Back' calls for housing assistance

By Dawn Plummer

Some experiences will always remain vivid in our minds and some folks who experienced the devastation of Hurricane Sandy in 2012 are constantly being reminded of those horrific moments as they are still going through the ordeals of not having their homes totally refurbished.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, Housing Recovery office has once again announced the mayor's intentions to help these victims find a suitable housing until their home repairs are completed. After the HUB's program was revamped and replaced by the "NYC BUILD IT BACK," program, Hurricane Sandy victims, in Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island can now get some housing assistance. The office of NYC Housing Recovery is moving aggressively to have collaborative work established with some real estate agents, landlords, brokers and all affiliates to provide available apartments to homeowners whose homes need to be repaired.

The objective of this program is to temporarily house the

applicants of the "NYC BUILD IT BACK" program in an apartment until his or her home is completely refurbished. According to the Director of the "NYC BUILD IT BACK" program, Amy Peterson, "NYC BUILD IT BACK" has been on the move since 2014 and they are asking real estate professionals to help propel the program. The real estate agencies and landlords would provide at least a six-month rental to the applicants while their homes are under renovation. The rent payments are made through the Mayor's Office of Housing Recovery. The range of payment for each apartment is from \$1,495.00 per person, to \$2,700 for a family or household of five or more.

There are no background checks for applicants and residents with Section 8 vouchers are applicable. The "NYC BUILD IT BACK" ensures that homes are ADA compliant and so residents needing that service should have no complaints. In addition, Peterson noted that families with children should "keep in mind, that the office of Housing and Recovery will work with the parents to ensure that



Build it Back has now raised more than 250 homes citywide, started construction on over 3,000 and finished construction on over 2,000 — including 1,269 starts and 773 completes in Queens. cityhall.nyc.gov

their children remain in the same school." She also noted that the office of Housing and Recovery work to make applicants find apartments in close proximity to their houses.

Peterson further noted that "NYC BUILD IT BACK" program has reached out to local clergy leaders and other non-profit organizations to have their members participate in the program if they are in need of the assistance.

Hurricane Sandy victim, Jerry Corbin, strongly believes that the program is vitally important and that landlords and tenants should collectively work on this to let it happen. In his reflective moments of Hurricane Sandy, Corbin noted the lost is devastating. "I struggled for a while and all my personal properties and the physical items which carry pleasant memories are gone." Corbin

said the "NYC BUILD IT BACK" program is promising and the office of Mayor Bill de Blasio's Housing Recovery Program must use social media to help spread the word as there are several people who are still in need of the help. He also called on the landlords to cooperate in the effort of this building process, with all the parties involved, the tenant and the NYC office of Housing Recovery.

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It's more than a steamy love triangle

"You're the One I Want" by Shane Allison
c.2016, Strebtor Books
\$16.00 / \$22.00 Canada
317 pages

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

Mine, mine, mine.

When you were two years old, that was your favorite word. Everything you saw belonged to you, somehow, one way or another. If you liked it, it was yours. If you didn't like it, it was yours, too. And as you'll see in the new novel "You're the One I Want" by Shane Allison, some people never outgrow that.

Don't think Bree didn't notice that Deanthony was at Kashawn's birthday party.

Some might think it natural that he would be — they were twins, after all, so Kashawn's birthday was Deanthony's birthday, too. But Bree didn't think Deanthony would dare show his face after what happened. She surely hoped he wouldn't tell anyone that they'd slept together, because Bree was married to Kashawn.

Why did she do it? Bree didn't have an answer to that. She

loved Kashawn, that was for sure. He was a doctor, respected in their community, and he was smoking-hot. He loved her, too, though he knew she had a shady past as a dancer at a local gentleman's club. He treated Bree like a queen, so there was no reason for her to sleep with Kashawn's brother, except that she couldn't resist the way Deanthony looked at her.

Deanthony had always been a little jealous of Kashawn. Truth was, he was in love with Bree and he couldn't understand why she'd ever choose Kashawn over him. He was better for her in so many ways, and he knew she'd be happier with him — just as long as she never found out what he did after he left Florida to follow his dreams.

Bree's BFF, Tangela, had a plan.

That was nothing new; Tangela was always planning on Bree's behalf because it was all about Bree, wasn't it? She was always making Bree's life better, making Bree's marriage better, getting Bree what she thought she needed, helping Bree make Kashawn happy. All that, it was something Tangela hated, just as she hated Bree because Tan-

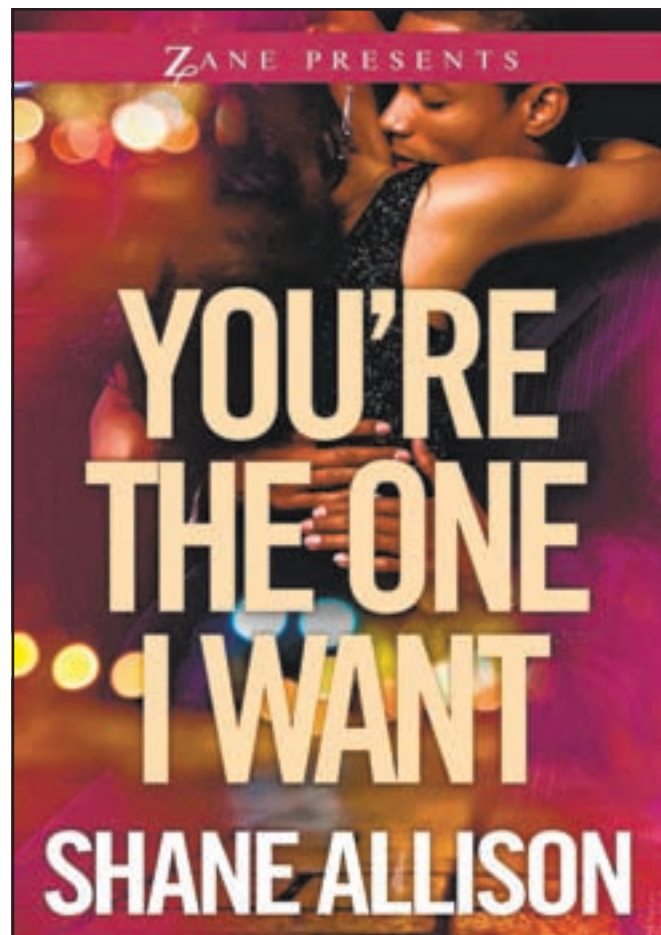
gela really just wanted Kashawn for herself. And here's the thing: much like Bree, Tangela always got what she wanted; plus, she really wasn't Bree's best friend.

Tangela wasn't anybody's friend...

Sounds complicated? Yes, it is, somewhat. Confusing conversation between characters doesn't help any, either — but then again, scintillating dialogue isn't why you'd pick this book up.

Filled with explicit sex, profanity, violence, lies, and cheating, "You're the One I Want" is an over-the-top story that you might not decide to read in public because it's steamy. I mean, wipe-the-fog-from-your-glasses steamy. Everything else is secondary in this book — the characters don't matter, the locale doesn't matter, even author Shane Allison's supporting cast is inconsequential here. The steam is at the stern, sex is what runs this book, and that's all you need to know.

I say that so you're clear that this novel is predictable and nasty, but readable. It's not horrid, but it is hot. And if you need that kind of escape, grab "You're the One I Want" and make it yours.



Book cover of "You're the One I Want" by Shane Allison.



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Tropicalfete reflects on 'Carnival Royalty' for Labor Day



Venise Hohenkirk portrays "Curitiba." Photo by Nelson A. King

'Escape to Rio'

By Nelson A. King

With the Summer Olympic currently taking place in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, Boom Mas LLC is "Escap(ing) to Rio" for carnival.

"This year, we want everyone to come journey with Boom Mas as we venture into Brazil — 'Escape to Rio,'" Band leader Trinidadian Jevon Douglas told Caribbean Life about this year's presentation.

Douglas, the son of Martin Douglas, president of the United States Steel Pan Association, said Boom Mas LLC began participating in the West Indian American Day Carnival Parade in 2014, with 400 masqueraders, to "promote, develop and celebrate Caribbean culture, arts, history and traditions within the young people in the community."

He said "Escape to Rio" comprises nine sections: Amazon Rain Forest, Birds of Paradise, Caipinha, Continga, Indigenous, Curitiba, Praisade Belezza, Rio de Carnival and The Brazilian Black.

He said each section comprise 40-60 masqueraders for a total of 400-600. Last year, 600 masqueraders gyrated with Boom Mas LLC, Douglas said.

He said this year, as in previous years, masqueraders come from "different nationalities," and can expect "good food, snacks, drinks and good music."

"The preparations call for many sleepless nights," Douglas said. "Our friends and family help."

Vincentian soca artiste Skinny Fabulous will rock on the float with KSP production, along with DJs Young Maddy and "all of Boom champion DJs from the radio station."

Boom Mas LLC is located at 926 Clarkson Ave., Brooklyn. Douglas can be reached at (347) 762-1515 or at www.boommas.com.



Model display costumes for "Carnival Royalty" presented by Tropicalfete.

Sara Brittany Somerset

By Nelson A. King

Tropicalfete is going back into history with its Labor Day presentation of "Carnival Royalty," according to president and founder Alton Aimable.

"With all our presentations of the past, there is a focus on education that goes along with costume building," said Aimable in a Caribbean Life interview. "This year is no exception, as we pay attention to our ancestor's style of costume."

Aimable said the multicultural arts organization, which was "conceived out of the love for Caribbean culture," will present four Children and five Adult sections in "Carnival Royalty."

The Children's sections are: Junior Carnival Baby, designed by Alton Aimable and Ashley Murray; Gem of the Antilles, designed by Daria Primus;

Empire, designed by Octavia Narcise; and Carnival Callaloo, stilt dancers, designed by Kenwyn Gibbs and C. "Book" Dolor.

The Adult sections are: Majesty, designed by Michael Dawkins; Core of the Mas, designed by Tammie Paige; Tropical Mas, designed by Shaina Campbell; The Heart of the Carnival, designed by Alton Aimable and Kenwyn Gibbs, Sr.; and Carnival Callaloo, designed by Gibbs and Dolor.

"We are a small intimate band of about 100 masqueraders," said Aimable, adding that masqueraders come from a wide cross section of the Caribbean and non-Caribbean communities. "Our goal is to display creativity, celebrate our heritage and have fun."

In addition, he said Tropicalfete will present eight individual costumes this year, stating that, for the past three years, the band focused on "doing big costume pieces," or individual characters.

Tropicalfete's carnival queen will be Ashley Norbert, portraying Caribbean Carnival Royalty. The other characters are: Daria Primus, portraying Purity of Carnival; Keran "Fimber" Deterville, portraying Blue Devil Mas; Claudia Narcise, portraying Madame Lorraine; Tammie Paige, portraying Coral in the Mas; Caitlyn Pierre, portraying Royalty on Stilts; Octavia Narcise, portraying Empire Thrown; Keiza Sealy, portraying Elegant Princess; and Shaina Campbell, portraying Tropical Vibration.

Aimable said masqueraders in Tropicalfete, who have been participating in the West Indian American Day Carnival Parade for the past six years, can expect "professional customer service and an opportunity to play mas at a reasonable price or for free in some cases."

He said the band has a team of vol-

unteers, captained by Gillia Satenay, and that the members' heritage is a cross-section of the Caribbean region "because we strongly believe there is growth in diversity."

Aimable said costume designers, over the years, have come from, among other places, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Barbados, Antigua, Grenada, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Panama.

He said some of the senior designers, such as Gibbs and Marcus Luke, have more than 20 years of costume production.

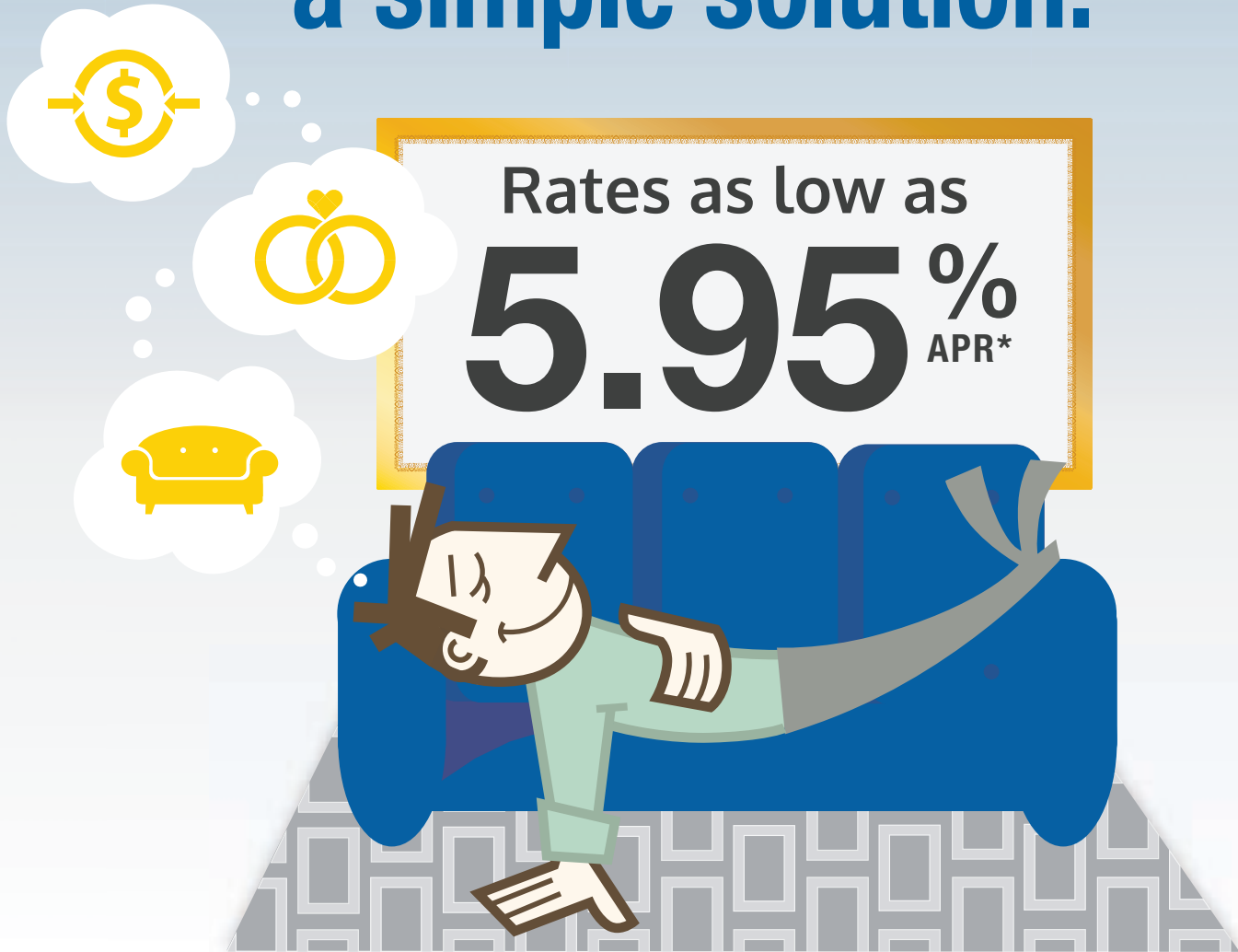
"It is very important to the organization to partner up some of our senior designers with upcoming designers or just people who express interest," Aimable said.

Masqueraders will move to the beat of DJs Kevin, Mad Stef, Book, Richard Button and Event Pro.

Established in 1999 as an online publication, and cultural resource center in 2011, Aimable said Tropicalfete, also a not-for-profit corporation, is focused on developing the community in the areas of arts and social services, with the aim of "educating the global community on Caribbean culture."

The band can be reached at tropicalfetes.com; mas@tropicalfete.com, or at 646-504-FETE.

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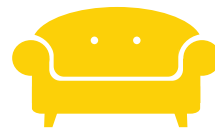
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CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP

Continued from page 4

office in St. Lucia.

In his senior position, Dr. Francis will be responsible for several key departments — Regional Integration (OECS Economic Union); Economic Development Policy including Agriculture and Tourism; Research Data; Trade Policy and Negotiations and the OECS Mission in Geneva.

The local economist, who currently works and lives in Barbados, is a former permanent secretary / director-general in the Ministry of Finance where he provided technical leadership in government's budget and fiscal policies, debt management, economic growth, economic planning and trade policy.

He also worked at the Ministry of Tourism, Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) and most recently as a senior lecturer in the Department of Economics at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus since 2004.

Guyana

Guyana is making moves to protect itself against Venezuela's persistent claims, says President David Granger.

The president said Guyana has its wealth to protect and the government must ensure that investors in the oil-rich industry feel secure with the investment.



He said there is a reason to believe that the discovery of commercial oil is what caused Venezuela to issue its most recent decree and accompanying behavior.

President Granger lamented that oil gives a main reason why the territorial settlement is so urgent.

Venezuela's President Nicholas Maduro on May 27, 2015 issued a decree, extending Venezuela's claim to Guyana's territorial waters. A map which was issued, accompanying the decree, shows that the claim includes the area where the U.S. oil giant company, ExxonMobil has found oil and continues to operate.

The president said he had several engagements with UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon for him to play his role as outlined under the Geneva Agreement that was signed between Guyana and Venezuela more than 50 years ago.

Jamaica

The United States Embassy in Kingston, Jamaica said that all interview dates for nonimmigrant visas have been exhausted for the rest of the year.

In fact, the embassy said the demand for visas is so heavy that it is scheduling 1,000 appointments daily.

A non-immigrant visa by definition is one used to persons who live outside the US, but who have a desire to visit the UN temporarily for various reasons, among them vacation, studying or on business.

The Jamaica Observer reported since last month scores of Jamaicans claim they were facing challenges in getting interview dates for the remaining four months of the year, due to the unusually high number of requests that have been made of the US Embassy.

According to the article, there is concern in some quarters, as many Jamaicans are now forced to shelve plans to visit the US later this year, to attend various events, including Thanksgiving celebrations (Thursday November 24) and spend time with family and friends.



Joshua Polacheck, Counselor for public affairs at the US Embassy told the Observer that the increase in applications has, in effect put a strain on the system at the Embassy. He admitted that all the existing dates for interviews had expired for 2016.

St. Vincent

The U.S.-based Center for Law and Democracy (CLD) is urging the St. Vincent and Grenadines government to review the Cybercrime Bill so as to bring it in line with international guarantees of freedom of expression.

The CLD is the second international organization to have called on the Ralph Gonsalves administration to review the proposed legislation now before Parliament.

Recently the international press freedom group Reporters Without Borders wrote to Prime Minister Gonsalves, calling for the revision of several clauses of the bill, which it said "are extremely damaging to the free flow of news and information and to public debate."



But in his response, Gonsalves said "substantial amendments" to the bill have already been made at the Select Committee stage and its report to Parliament will reflect these amendments.

In a statement, CLD said it was "strongly" recommending to the government that it reviews "the whole of the Cybercrime Bill to assess its compliance with and to amend it to bring it into line and constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression".

CLD said St. Vincent and the Grenadines is preparing to pass a Cybercrime Bill, which criminalizes a wide range of activities, including defamation, obtaining information without lawful excuse and cyberbullying.

The statement said while it recognizes the need to address harmful behavior online, including in some cases through the criminal law, "it is not legitimate to criminalize defamation and the scope of several of the other crimes as defined in the bill is simply too broad,"

-Compiled by Azad Ali



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SOUTHEAST QUEENS PROFILE - ADVERTISEMENT

Full STEAM ahead in music education

BY CAMILLE SPERRAZZA

The goal of Joe's Music Center & Performing Arts is to inspire students with music.

That's why the company is instrumental in working with the Department of Education, bridging the gap when so many arts programs were cut to make room for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) classes.

Now, the arts is being reintroduced into the classroom with the buzzword STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) — and Joe's Music Center & Performing Arts is leading them full STEAM ahead. As a John Maxwell certified coach, teacher, mentor and trainer Jolander Headley works with school principals to customize programs geared specifically to meet the needs of their students.

But that is one part of what the company does.

Its own on-site performing arts school has brought music and dance to the lives of thousands of students. There are currently more than 600 who receive private lessons, and there is still room for more. The staff of 44 teachers is always growing, as needed.

Here, children are trained for auditions to prestigious programs that include admission into LaGuardia High School and Frank Sinatra High School. There are usually two recitals per year. Many of those who have attended Joe's performing arts classes have gone on to receive college scholarships. Some of their students are expected to perform at Carnegie Hall in 2018.

One doesn't have to be school age to enjoy the sound of music, so classes are offered for toddlers and adults, too. A Music Fun Time class teaches children as young as 18 months to read notes



and introduces them to musical instruments such as the guitar, recorder, and piano. The company's founder and chief executive officer, Jolander Headley, is herself a gifted musician and music educator who learned to play the piano when she was a child.

"There are cognitive

benefits that music provides to young minds," she says. But if you weren't brought up that way, "It's also never too late to learn," she says. Adults are welcome. Registration is ongoing, and open year round.

Headley's husband, Grantley, is the company's chief operations officer. They both served as teachers when the business was founded in 1998, but those duties have been passed along to their own children, fellow musicians. The couple prefers to manage the operations now. Each year they bring students from Asia to the academy, enabling them to experience the culture and music of America. Locally, the company provides internship opportunities for students looking to learn about business, marketing, and music.

Headley is active in the community, as believes in giving back. She is a member of the South East

Queens Chamber of Commerce; a member of the Greater Queens Chapter of the Links; and a member of the Long Island/Queens Chapter of B Sharp, a national organization of Negro musicians.

Besides the educational component of the business, there is also a retail store which sells all types of instruments — everything from pianos to mandolins, and every musical accessory. There are books and audio/recording equipment.

Joe's Music Center & Performing Arts [114-04 Farmer's Blvd. in St. Albans's, (718) 454-3036, www.JoesMusicCenter.org]. Open Mondays through Fridays, 9 am-8 pm, and Saturdays, 8 am-5 pm.

Brooklyn location [550 Remsen Ave. in Canarsie, (718) 774-0700]. Open Mondays through Fridays, 11 am-8 pm; Saturdays, 8 am-5 pm; & Sundays, 10 am-5 pm



BY NAEISHA ROSE

side Avenue and a lot of Indian spots. There are West Indian places, too.”

The free and easy vibe of Jamaica is another definite plus for its inhabitants.

“If you live in Harlem or Brooklyn, everything is a little bit rough,” says Talleha Rose, 28, a freelance public relations manager. “Being here in Jamaica, Queens, is more relaxed. There is no drama. Everything is peaceful. The scenery is beautiful and it’s convenient.”

Bah, a graphic designer concurs.

“Since I came to New York...I traveled to other boroughs, but I found that it is hard to find parking in a lot of the boroughs. It’s congested,” says Bah. “With there being more private houses in Jamaica, it’s easier to live here. It’s not a perfect place, but it is a good place to live for me. I moved my whole family here” Rose also finds the tempo less frantic in Queens.

“People here are friendly. We all have problems, but unlike other places where people are aggravated and rushing to get to where they have to go, everybody here is chill. It’s because of the community. Jamaica, Queens, is just more reserved,” she says.

The parks throughout Jamaica are essential in providing both relaxation and fun.

This summer, the non-profit community organization A Better Jamaica, created by U.S. Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-Jamaica), hosted the inaugural Jamaica Dance Festival,



The striking Jamaica LIRR station (l) and the shopping scene on Jamaica Avenue are neighborhood landmarks.

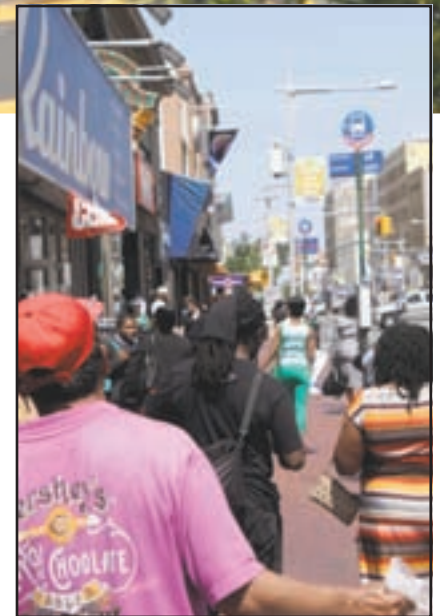


Photo by Michael Shain

which concluded last Saturday at Rufus King Park. IrieJam, a West Indian music fest, will have its 23rd anniversary at Roy Wilkins Park Sept. 4.

Music is one of the area’s claims to fame. Multi-platinum rappers Nicki Minaj, 50 Cent, and Run & DMC of the rap band Run-D.M.C. are some of the musicians who hail from Jamaica.

DJ Gully, 26, loves the area despite its troubled past.

“There were struggles with the hood situation and the street lifestyle. I had to go through a lot in the late ‘80s and mid-’90s coming up with drugs in the area, but things have changed for the better. Jamaica is common for having people that show love,” says the aspiring engineer who is specializing in sound at slain DJ Jam Master Jay’s studio.

“We stay together. We stick together. I’m from here. My

family is from here. I grew up here,” Gully says “The thing that I love the most is that we stay close by just having family around over here. That’s what I’m trying to do get into engineering. We work right here on Merrick Boulevard. Come check out our music.”

“Over here we have fairs here, too,” Sanchez says.

From April through August there are fairs taking place at the parks and on the streets. After the annual Easter Egg hunt in Captain Tilly Park, there is the First Presbyterian Church Street Fair in May, which is on 164th Street on Jamaica Avenue. The church, a historical landmark, is a 354-year establishment in Queens, and the oldest Presbyterian church in the United States.

The Jamaica Arts & Music Summer fair takes place on the first Friday and Saturday of August from Roy Wilkins

Park to 169th Street, and features an array of music, food and discount street shopping from area stores.

Jamaica also has some good schools.

“Right now I’m actually bringing my kid to a preschool that’s really good. It’s called Charles R. Drew,” says Sanchez.

When her son turns 18, he can possibly choose to go to St. John’s University, which has 17 Division I teams, and is located at Utopia Parkway. If he is looking for a more affordable institution post high school, York College, one of the senior colleges of the City University of New York, is by Guy R. Brewer Boulevard.

“There are a lot of job opportunities here and the schools are great,” says Anthony Gray, a cook at King’s Deli. “Jamaica is safe for a family man like me.”

Discover the 'Art, Food, and Soul Capital of New York'

BY CAMILLE SPERRAZZA

Moving forward, South East Queens will be known as the "Art, Food, and Soul Capital of New York," says Reverend R. Simone Lord, founder and president of the South East Queens Chamber of Commerce.

"It's the jewel of New York," she says.

She admits she likes this slogan a lot better than the unofficial title the area held for a while: "The foreclosure capital of New York," she says.

But while those days are behind them, there is still a lot of work to be done, and Rev. Lord seeks donors and volunteers to continue the efforts to transform the community.

The concept of coordinating these forces for change began two years ago when the South East Queens Chamber of Commerce formed. Rev. Lord looked around the neighborhood she loved and was upset with what she saw — far too many storefronts were shuttered; there was too much litter; no green space; and too many people were "hanging out," she says. One step at a time, she and her Board of Directors have addressed these issues, galvanizing neighbors to join together and make a difference.

"Together we can accomplish our goals," she says.

One of these goals is to bring greenery to South East Queens with the installation of 36-foot high planters.

"The planters are expensive, but the Jamaica Development Corporation has generously agreed to a match-grant of \$5,000," she says. Everyone, no matter what their budget or where they live, can pitch in by ordering an "I Love My Community" \$20 T-shirt at the Chamber's website. By Decem-



ber, Rev. Lord anticipates placing pine trees in these planters, and decorating them with lights for the holidays, brightening the atmosphere.

The Chamber has already installed colorful banners with floral designs in an effort to beautify the area.

"It's a holistic approach," she says. "We want people to take pride in the community."

There are ongoing efforts to create more jobs and bring training opportunities here. The Chamber helps direct traffic to small businesses with networking opportunities that introduce business owners to each other. The Chamber itself holds its own meetings at these local enterprises.

Restaurants such as Pa-Nash, O'Lavrador, and

G's Restaurant and Bar of Rosedale, are the fine food establishments that lend backbone to the title "Art, Food, and Soul Capital of New York." These "white-table-cloth eateries" are proud members of the South East Queens Chamber of Commerce.

A Chamber-sponsored event called "I Love My Community Festival," brings local artists and performers to a gathering at Baisley Pond Park on Aug. 27. Steel bands, horseback riding, and games are among the attractions. The entire neighborhood is welcome to attend, and family picnics are encouraged. There is no cost to the general public, but guests are asked to RSVP at the website, beneath the heading, "upcoming events."

Vendors are invited to

sign up on the website to be part of this opportunity that will help highlight their businesses to the community. There are currently about 100 members of the South East Queens Chamber of Commerce, and Rev. Lord anticipates this event will increase membership. Nonprofit groups and home-based businesses are invited to join for \$150, while storefronts pay \$250.

Rev. Lord has always had a calling to make the world a better place. She is affiliated with the People's First Baptist Church, and there, too, she focuses on encouraging people to live better lives. Enlightenment workshops were held at the church, located at 145-59 105th Ave. in Jamaica, for a three-day period in

August.

"It is part of our summer healing efforts," she says.

Rev. Lord credits the excellent Board of Directors at the South East Queens Chamber of Commerce with helping to revitalize the area. They are: Dr. Daniel Larroche, Kareem Vessup, Henif Russell, Jason Safford, Lisa George, Ayanna Mays, Martin Marcelle, and Bishop Norris Jr.

South East Queens Chamber of Commerce [www.SEQCOC.org, (917) 720-2485]. Call Mondays through Fridays, 9 am-6 pm.

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The perfect party hall



serve favorite family foods for everyone to enjoy.

“People love it,” says Bhupinder Bedi, the hall’s owner. “Once they make a party here, they never go anywhere else.”

The hall is already booked for every Saturday through the end of the year — and it has been that way since March. The chandeliers, wood floors, movie screen, and attractive stage are all big draws, with many families choosing to mark all their special occasions at Z’s. Bedi is pleased that the South East Chamber of Commerce, the community organization to which he belongs, hosts its meetings here, too.

But, the space wasn’t always used for parties. Bedi

owned the property for more than 20 years, and rented it as a music studio. When the tenants left, his wife

thought it was the ideal time to bring into the community something it lacked — a party hall. Guests have been dancing to the music since then. The couple invested \$150,000 to remodel the space. It’s been open for about three years now, and word of mouth has been so good, it reached Channel 1 News, and Bedi found himself being interviewed on television.

“There is no party too small,” he says. “We have something for every budget.”

Bedi, who has worked as

a children’s book publisher, and also in the real estate business, says he takes pride in helping everyone who comes to him. He wants them to be happy, and does everything possible to make that happen. It includes offering full refunds to people who find themselves in the unfortunate position of having to cancel a party at the last minute.

“It is something that happens,” he says. “There might be a death in the family; if so, we give them their money back.” Or, maybe there’s a snowstorm. Whatever the circumstances, “We work it out,” he says. “The main thing is everyone feels comfortable and is happy.”

Follow Z Party Hall on Facebook. See the photos, and perhaps post a few of your own.

Z Party Hall [92-07 172nd St. between Jamaica and 93rd avenues in Jamaica, (718) 558-3900]. Call seven days a week, 10 am-8 pm.



BYLINE

By Camille Sperrazza

When you want to have a party in South East Queens, the “go to” place is Z Party Hall in Jamaica.

Here, they may not be dancing on those high ceilings, but there’s sure a lot of fun happening on the floor.

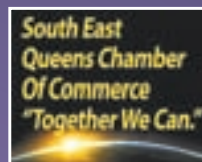
This lovely party hall offers affordable event space for weddings, Sweet 16s, baby showers, graduations, retire-

ments, engagements, and other life celebrations. It is able to accommodate up to 150 guests.

The good news is that while the hall takes care of the decorations, provides a disc jockey, and even offers security, guests looking to host a party are permitted to bring in their own food and drinks. This makes for a very cost-effective gathering. It also allows the freedom to

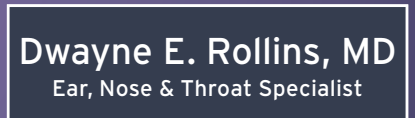
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TEA OF LIFE



Crowe's Funeral Home trusted by the community for 70 years

BY CAMILLE SPERRAZZA

Crowe's Funeral Home, Inc. has been serving the South East Queens community for more than 70 years.

It is one of the most well-known and successful family-owned African-American funeral homes in New York, says Chaplain Kenneth Brewster, who manages the business that was started by his grand-uncle, Samuel A. Crowe. The history dates back to when Crowe felt the calling to help people during their time of bereavement, so with a partner, he opened Ford's Funeral Home in the early 1930s.

It was 1945 when Crowe established Crowe's Funeral Homes, Inc. on South Road in Jamaica. To care for the growing needs of the community, he opened a second branch on Rockaway Boulevard, also in Jamaica, and later relocated, expanding to the present Sutphin Boulevard location.

Crowe was one of the pioneers of the political movement; instrumental in se-



curing jobs for a number of African Americans in the area. In the 1950s, he helped organize the Citizens-Evers Democratic Club, named after the late Medgar Evers. Crowe was affiliated with many of the local churches and ministers, as well as with many fraternal, civic, and political organizations.

Throughout this time period, the funeral home became known for the respect, understanding, help, and the courtesy it extended to the community. It is still that way today.

Brewster continues to

make Crowe's Funeral Home a presence in the community by providing vital care to the families that reside there. He offers pre-planning workshops to educate families about the services that are offered. Flexible pre-paid options offer peace of mind that personal requests will be carried out, and at the same times, eases family's financial and emotional burdens.

Losing a loved one is never easy, so Crowe's Funeral Home does everything possible to provide flexible options that allow families to choose services that are right

for them.

"Grief is not something that one should have to endure alone," says Brewster. "Crowe's Funeral Home is here to assist in every way possible, easing your burdens." It offers a selection of merchandise that reflects the unique personalities of loved ones.

Remodeling and beautification was done in 1997, bringing spacious chapels, beautiful chandeliers, artwork, and an elegant, spacious lobby to better accommodate family and friends.

The funeral home has achieved the prestigious "Pursuit of Excellence" recognition, for going above and beyond expectations.

"Only two percent of the funeral homes in the world have achieved this outstanding award," says Brewster. "You can count on us to help you make the proper decisions as we have the expertise to help you develop the right plan for yourself and the peo-

ple you love."

In keeping with the times, it offers live funeral webcasting services and online condolences. Brewster and his staff of experienced funeral-planning professionals will meet with family members to design a farewell event that respects each family's beliefs, traditions, and budgets. Just as important, it will take into consideration the loved one's life so that the final tribute is fitting and appropriate.

The landscaped floral gardens provide a warm and inviting setting for loved ones to offer tributes to cherished relatives and friends. It's all conveniently located just 10 minutes from JFK airport, 20 minutes from LaGuardia, and about 10 blocks south of the Long Island Railroad.

Crowe's Funeral Home [107-44 Sutphin Blvd. in Jamaica, (718) 558-0924, www.CrowesFuneralHome.com]. Open Mondays through Fridays, 10 am-8 pm; Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-5 pm.

Dr. Rollins keeping Queens in excellent health

BY CAMILLE SPERRAZZA

It has been said that the nose knows.

That's because, "Your senses of hearing, smell, and taste make up part of who you are," says Dr. Dwayne E. Rollins, ears, nose, and throat specialist. "They are critical to your enjoyment of life and your ability to communicate."

We all know what it's like when these senses are not functioning well because we've all experienced the sore throats, ear aches, allergies, and breathing issues. They are painful. They make us sick, keep us awake at night, and, if left untreated, can turn into serious problems.

Dr. Rollins is here to help. The practice has been caring for members of the community since 2006, treating them for chronic disorders and conditions that include sinusitis, ear infections, dizziness, hearing issues, allergies, snor-



ing, sleep apnea, voice disorders, head and neck masses, lymph node enlargement, and thyroid disorders.

When we suffer from these painful disorders, we are not alone. The American Academy of Otolaryngology says about 35 million people develop chronic sinusitis each year, making it one of the most common health complaints in America. Problems include allergies, smell disorders, polyps, and nasal obstruction due to a deviated septum.

In addition, the Academy states about one in 10 people from North America suffer hearing loss. Let's face it, just taking the subway to work or walking past construction sites can be an assault on the eardrums.

The throat is vital to communication. It is also the gateway to the digestive tract. When it hurts, we can't eat, and we can't talk.

Therefore, keeping the ears, nose, and throat functioning at optimum levels is essential to overall good

health. Patients can rely upon Dr. Rollins to provide honest and accurate diagnosis, as well as effective treatment.

Dr. Rollins, a native of Baltimore, earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Nebraska. He graduated from Howard University College of Medicine in 1998, with numerous honors including the Dow/Callender Fellowship in the Department of Transplant Surgery.

He completed a one-year internship in general surgery at New York University. This was followed by four years of training in otolaryngology. He completed his residency at the New York University Department of Otolaryngology in 2003.

The doctor is board-certified by the American Board of Otolaryngology, and he is a member of the prestigious medical honor society, Alpha Omega Al-

pha. He serves as treasure and chairman of the scholarship committee for the Clinical Society of Queens and Long Island. He often makes time to volunteer in the community, participating in local health fairs and school programs.

Dr. Rollins's expertise, the knowledgeable staff, and state-of-the-art technology at his office assure that patients will receive exceptional, personalized care. The doctor treats adults and children. It is the philosophy of the practice that all who come here will be treated respectfully, warmly and compassionately.

Dr. Dwayne Rollins [187-18 Linden Blvd. in St. Alban's, (718) 978-5447, www.dwaynerollinsmd.com]. Open Mondays and Wednesdays, 10 am - 5 pm; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 am - 7 pm; Fridays, 10 am - 3 pm; and every other Saturday.

Jamaica foresees forward strides in downtown development

BY PATRICK DONACHIE

trians travel through downtown Jamaica on any given day, while more than 200,000 pass through via the Long Island Railroad and 49,000 people use the subways each day. There are 49 different bus lines.

The area connects New York transit riders to John F. Kennedy International Airport via the AirTrain, which 16,000 people use every day.

Despite all this human traffic, business leaders, community members and elected officials say too few travelers and commuters stop in the downtown, which lacks amenities and services, sending lost revenue to other neighborhoods.

"We've been seen as an outer ring or an afterthought, and it's nice to see that the city has done a few things to start innovation in this space and build out," Rhonda Binda, the executive director of the Jamaica Center Business Improvement District, said.

Jamaica is on a roll with new projects on the books that promise to transform the central business district of southeast Queens.

Downtown Jamaica has been on the verge of a boom for many years now, but the 2008 mortgage foreclosure crisis slowed economic activity in the area.

After years of protracted conversations about development in downtown Jamaica, many of the players who have been pushing for more robust investment in the neighborhood say change is in the air.

"You just plug along, project by project," City Councilman Rory Lancman (D-Hillcrest), said. "And five years later, it's a whole new neighborhood."

The bustling downtown area is a major transportation hub for Queens and the entire city.

About 86,000 pedes-



The Crossing at Jamaica Bay is one of several new developments planned for downtown Jamaica.

"We already have the foundation. We already have the bones."

Queens Borough President Melinda Katz has been an active booster of downtown Jamaica development and formed the Jamaica NOW Action Plan last year. The plan proposes 26 actions to be completed in the next five years that will spur

Jamaica development. One proposed action is to install free Wi-Fi service along the Jamaica corridor, which Katz said would be available this summer.

"I think that Jamaica has the infrastructure for expansion and investment," she said. "Jamaica, Queens, is a hub of culture and tourism and

job creation. We want to make sure it was given the tools to provide for the future."

Proposed residential developments have been announced at an accelerated rate in recent years. The Crossing at Jamaica Station, to be located at the intersection of Archer Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard, across the street from the AirTrain/LIRR station, will contain 580 proposed residential units and three floors of retail space. BRP Companies filed a permit with the city in June 2015 to develop the property. U.S. Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-Jamaica) said the The Crossing was a vital part to area development.

"It sends the message that Jamaica is building and the opportunities are there," he said. "I've always said we were a transportation hub, but you can't be a transportation hub without the retail and the development."

There is also increased hotel develop-

ment in the area. Able Management, a New Jersey-based developer, intends to build a 26-story Hilton Garden Inn at the corner of Sutphin Boulevard and 94th Avenue, with completion of construction scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2017. A Flushing developer also plans to put up a two Marriott Hotels at the corner of Archer Avenue and 149th Street. The Hilton would contain 210 rooms, while the two Marriotts would contain more than 330 rooms.

A residential/retail development originally intended for 168th Street and 90th Avenue was delayed earlier this year. Greater Jamaica Development Corp., an organization created to encourage public and private investment in the neighborhood, owned the land and partnered with Blumenfeld Development Group in 2013 to construct a 160,000-square-foot retail store with a parking garage.

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SOUTHEAST QUEENS PROFILE - ADVERTISEMENT

Discover the power of tea with Tea of Life®

BY CAMILLE SPERRAZZA

Tea has been consumed for its health benefits in many parts of the world — and Americans are learning it can work as a natural remedy for them, too.

It's why Linneth Hall, inspired by her personal experience with the medicinal benefits of drinking tea, formed the company the Tea of Life Health Inc. about eight years ago. Hall grew up in the Caribbean ingesting an herb familiar to the people who live there — also known as semi contra epazote. At the time, it was used primarily for its anti-parasite benefits, she says.

But when Hall moved to the United States, she became re-acquainted with the tea. She now calls it “a miracle within reach” because of the multi-system benefits it offers the body.

“There are more than 100 health benefits,” she says. Among them are im-



proved liver, pancreas, and heart functions. It helps urinary tract infections, yeast infections, kidney disease, inflammation, and gastrointestinal illnesses, she says. In addition, it works to detox the body, providing it with energy. It promotes colon regularity, and offers headache and pain relief.

“It stimulates natural wound healing,” she says.

“We also have a patent on the idea that it shrinks uterine fibroids.”

It shrinks the enlarged prostate and improves the libido.

She says these findings are fact-based, as she and her children — also involved with the company — are all healthcare professionals. Hall is a nurse practitioner. Her son — Tea

of Life's vice president — is a surgeon. Both her daughters are practicing registered nurses.

“We are able to incorporate our medical background with the natural benefits of our products,” says Hall.

History, she says, supports these findings. In the 1800s, the Yucatan Indians used the herb for folk remedies. At around that time, a German pharmacist traveled to Brazil and observed the herb's use to promote health there.

“The World Health Organization [WHO] conducted its own studies in the 1970s and found the herb helps the body fight parasites,” she says. “That's when the WHO declared that the leaves and stalks were suitable for human consumption.”

Developing countries in the Caribbean, Africa, Mexico, Latin and Central America have used the

herb as a dietary supplement to help the body fight off parasites in adults and school children for many years, she says.

Hall belongs to the South East Queens Chamber of Commerce, and works to spread the word to the community about the medicinal benefits of this herb. She sometimes donates free samples to community events so that people can become familiar with the product and experience the health advantages for themselves. She personally uses the product every day.

It's available in capsules and tea bags.

Customers may place orders via telephone, on Amazon.com and on www.theteaoflife.com. The products are also sold in pharmacies and health food stores throughout the U.S. and Canada.

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SOUTHEAST QUEENS PROFILE - ADVERTISEMENT

Gaffney Funeral Home there in your moment of need

BY CAMILLE SPERRAZZA

Jeremiah C. Gaffney's Funeral Home Inc. is a family-owned business that has been meeting the needs of the community for more than 50 years.

It assists with the funerals of all people, no matter what their religious affiliations or their economic needs.

This was the philosophy of its founders — Jeremiah C. Gaffney Jr., a retired army major, and Doreatha Gaffney, a nurse, who started a funeral home in Georgia, later opened one in Harlem, and then moved to its current Inwood location in 1961. It is now operated by their son, Dr. Jeremiah C. Gaffney III, with the assistance of his four children: Jennifer, Jonathan, Leonard, and Lawrence.

"We always work hard to offer the best service to our neighbors in Inwood, and to the entire Tristate area," says Gaffney.

Providing personalized



service is a top priority, as is handling every detail from start to finish.

Arrangements can be made for international transfers, should these be necessary, and Jeremiah C. Gaffney's Funeral Home will work closely with other funeral directors and morticians.

Locally, they assist with hearse and limousine arrangements, can order prayer cards, and help with financial management.

"We know that an unexpected cost of a funeral can be overwhelming, and even impossible to handle on your own," says Gaffney. That's why they offer a care program, developed to support families.

Cremation, an alternative to earth burial or entombment, is becoming increasingly popular, and Jeremiah C. Gaffney's Funeral Home can assist with answering all questions and making these arrangements.

Dr. Gaffney's personal philosophy is to uplift others, and he serves as part of the ministerial staff at St. Peter Lutheran Church in Rosedale. He believes in encouraging scholarship and education, and doesn't just talk about it — he is a shining example. In the late 1990s Gaffney attended Oxford University, then obtained a doctorate degree in economics while studying in the Cape Coast of West Africa. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Bio Chemistry from Morehouse College, located in Atlanta, Ga. He later attended New York University, obtaining a Master's Degree of Science in Biochemistry. Still not enough, he went to earn a second Master's in Business Administration, from Adelphi University.

He furthered his education by attending the American Academy McAllister Institute of Funeral Service in New York, receiving a diploma in Funeral Services,

and taking all the necessary boards to become a licensed funeral director.

But that still wasn't enough. He is a licensed biostatistician, stock broker, and insurance agent. He takes pride in his involvement in the economic and social development of South East Queens, the neighborhood in which he was raised.

"It shapes who you are," he says. He grew up as a member of St. Alban's parish.

Incredibly, he is a member of 36 organizations, including the Omega Shi Phi Fraternity, and the Morehouse College Alumni.

Community involvement is very important to him.

"Where there is no vision, the people perish," he says.

Jeremiah C. Gaffney Funeral Home [92 Wahl Ave. between John Street and Mott Avenue in Inwood, (718) 471-2828 and (516) 239-9191, www.JeremiahCGaffneysFuneralHomeInc.com]. Available 24-7.

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Jamaica mines gold in most diverse Olympics ever

The Rio Olympics opened on Aug. 5 but for Jamaicans the quadrennial games really started on Aug. 10, four days after the population celebrated the 54th anniversary of independence. That was the day their 63-member delegation of athletes headed south to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to mine gold and other precious nuggets.

Jamaicans have been competing in the Olympics since 1948. With 15 Olympiads of medaling they have become a crowd-pleaser spectators love to bet on.

On their first outing in London, England they took one gold and two silver medals.

They have never competed without taking a medal home.

In 2008, their biggest haul of gold medals found them with half a dozen shiny, gold nuggets.

They were the pride of the Caribbean. But when they snatched 12 medals at the 2012 London Olympics — four gold, four silver and four bronze they upped their repete for a 50th anniversary of independence staging.

Significant to the world is



Inside Life

By Vinette K. Pryce

that gold is the signature swath of the tri-color banner to brand Jamaica.

It is the marker to the X that symbolizes more than sunshine but the genius of the green and fertile island governed by a majority Black people.

And although the USA holds the record of winning 17 of the 27 gold medals presented for clinching the shortest and fastest track and field sport in the Olympics, Jamaicans have become the gold standard for the 100m race and spoiler to US triumphs.

Perhaps, Carl Lewis and Jesse Owens are the most distinguished sprinters to win the coveted claim to victories. Owens in 1936 blazed glory to the disdain of German, Nazi-leader Adolf Hitler.

Much later in 1984 and 1988, Lewis championed the race.

Jamaicans have shut-out every country's best sprinters

since 2004 when Usain Bolt entered the arena. And on this go-round the superstar retained the glory for the third time and in the process emerged the one and only athlete to ever achieve a three-time Olympic gold for winning the premiere sporting event.

Bolt lit up Olympic Stadium Maracana just by strolling onto the field.

Probably the most celebrated athlete on the field, along with all-time greatest swimming U.S. champion and 23-time medal winner Michael Phelps they are the superstars of the 2016 Olympics.

Bolt's female equal, Shelly Fraser-Pryce has been a winning gold medalist through two Olympics.

On her third effort she was dethroned by Elaine Thompson, a fellow national.

However, all was not lost on Jamaica's acclaimed "Pocket



Britain's James Dasaolu, left, stands beside Jamaica's Usain Bolt before a men's 100-meter heat during the athletics competitions of the 2016 Summer Olympics at the Olympic stadium in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Saturday, Aug. 13, 2016.

Associated Press / Matt Dunham

Rocket." She managed to be among the triumvirate seeking the title winning a bronze.

The two-time fastest woman on the planet clocked seconds behind Thompson's 10.71 crossing the line at 10.86.

"By winning gold and bronze, Elaine and Shelly-Ann have demonstrated to the world the strength of Jamaican track and

field that we could claim two of the three medals on offer in one of the marquee events at the Olympics," Olivia "Babsy" Grange, Jamaica's Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports said.

"The baton passed to her friend, training partner and compatriot, means that the

Continued on Page 45

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Candace Samuel portrays "Pixies."

'Wings of Wonder'

By Nelson A. King

Last year, the Brooklyn-based Vincentian mas band Mas Productions Unlimited lured "International Treasures" in its West Indian American Day Carnival Parade production, but this year it is flying with the "Wings of Wonder," said Wesley Millington who hails from Sion Hill, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, as he prepares children masqueraders Monday night for a photo-shoot at the mas camp on Rockaway

Continued on Page 40

Mrs. America Pageant

By Tangerine Clarke

Mrs. Georgia America 2016, Onica Blaize, is the first Caribbean American to win the title in the history of the Peach state, and the first Guyanese-born who will compete among 52 equally beautiful and talented women at the national pageant in Las Vegas, Nevada, on Aug. 27.

Blaize, the daughter of popular Guyanese promoter, Wendy Williams, and the second black woman to vie in the Mrs. America Pageant, was crowned Miss Guyana USA 1994 at age 17, told Caribbean Life at a cricket match in Basely Park on Aug. 13, that she is super blessed to compete at the national pageant, and thanked her family and God, who she said have always influenced her life.

"I am happy to represent my heritage

Continued on Page 40



Japanese-born reveler Yuko Nakamura in pomegranate from the nature section of "Mama This is Mas." Photo by Tangerine Clarke

Kenneth Antoine returns mas to its glory days

By Tangerine Clarke

Costume designer Kenneth Antoine will return mas to its glory days where revelers will wear more than just beads and feathers, and nakedness, as he readies Antoine International to celebrate 25 years on Eastern Parkway, this Labor Day.

"The true art and culture of mas is dying. It is not being showcased as it should," contended the artisan who plans to design pieces that will show the beauty of carnival with creations that are designed to cover-

up revelers.

His portrayal of "Mama This Is Mas" will place emphasis on his junior Mas band this year, with a themed Aztec nation of revelers dressed as goddesses, farmers, nature, warriors, Mongolians and Africans.

Antoine's lower-level mas camp at 245 East 34th St., between Church and Snyder avenues in Brooklyn, showcases costumes which tell the story of the colorful culture, that the designer wants to pass down to future generations of designers and

revelers.

His passion runs deep for designing, and it shows in the tireless work that he puts into wire bending, creasing, and etching, to ensure each costume is complete to perfection, as seen on the walls, and on models at his mas camp who dressed up to be photographed by Caribbean Life.

Antoine said he has won titles in every completion, except for the Junior Large band crown, which he aims to capture at the 49th West

Continued on Page 40

TOP OF THE CHARTS

TOP 10 SINGLES

- 1 **Cheap Thrills**
Sia Feat. Sean Paul
- 2 **This is What You Came For**
Calvin Harris feat. Rihanna
- 3 **Ride**
twenty one pilots
- 4 **One Dance**
Drake Feat. WizKid & Kyla
- 5 **Can't Stop the Feeling!**
Justin Timberlake
- 6 **Send My Love**
Adele
- 7 **Don't Let Me Down**
The Chainsmokers Feat. Daya
- 8 **Just Like Fire**
P!nk
- 9 **Needed Me**
Rihanna
- 10 **Cold Water**
Major Lazor

TOP 10 ALBUMS

- 1 **Suicide Squad: The Album**
Soundtrack
- 2 **Unleashed**
Skillet
- 3 **If I'm Honest**
Blake Shelton
- 4 **Love Remains**
Hillary Scott & The Scott Family
- 5 **Blurryface**
twenty one pilots
- 6 **Major Key**
DJ Khaled
- 7 **XX**
O.A.R.
- 8 **Immortalized**
Disturbed
- 9 **Now 59**
Various Artists
- 10 **Lemonade**
Beyonce

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GLORY DAYS OF MAS ON THE PARKWAY

Continued from page 39
Indian American Day Carnival in Brooklyn.

"It I win in this category, I would have won in every category on the Parkway," said the master costume designer, whose rich colorful costumes are accessorize with wide headpieces.

To celebrate his 25th anniversary, kiddies will receive free costumes to mass in certain sections of the band, expected to attract some 200 masqueraders.

A \$25.00 fee will go towards snacks for the kids on the Parkway.

The adult band this year will be toned down but will showcase elements of his theme, he said, with just five sections. All costumes cost \$200.

Antoine International Mas camp is opened from Monday to Friday, 5 pm to 11 pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to midnight, and could be reached by calling 347-303-7857.



Antoine joins Amanda Borel, Khari Codogan, Yuko Nakamura of Japan, Adriana Lewis and Michelle Russel and Tehan Borel to showcase some of his creations.

Photo by Tangerine Clarke

Wings

Continued from page 39

Parkway in Brooklyn.

"They all have wings, and nobody ever saw them," added Millington in an exclusive Caribbean Life interview. "So, you are left to wonder what they look like."

With the annual participation of the Belizean New York Committee, Millington said "Wings of Wonder" will compete in the Junior Carnival, with four sections — three girls and one boy — with about 15-20 masqueraders in each section.

The girls' sections are: Fairies, Sprite and Pixes. Elf is the lone boy section.

Millington said Mas Productions Unlimited will also compete in the Junior King, Junior Queen and Individual Characters competition.

"This is just, basically, to keep the kids involved in the culture," said Millington, whose band has been competing in the West Indian American Day Carnival Parade for the past 24 years. "Most of the kids are born here [in the United States], of Caribbean parentage."

"Masqueraders can expect a good show, lots of fun," he added, disclosing that all are



Lauryn Formey portrays "Sprite." Photo by Nelson A. King

welcome. "Masqueraders come from all over. We don't discriminate."

He said veteran Vincentian mas producer Ricardo "Puzzle" Grant, as in previous years, is assisting with the production, along with members of the band.

"Hopefully, we'll have a few kids, and have fun," Millington said. "Registration is picking up."

He said D One Entertainment will provide pulsating Caribbean vibes to masqueraders during the Junior Carnival.

Millington said some of his masqueraders will participate in Vincy Day USA in Long Island this Saturday, Aug. 20 and at the SVG-Martha's Vineyard Cultural Showcase in Massachusetts the following Saturday, Aug. 27.

Caribbean beauty

Continued from page 39

and culture, and going to Mrs. America pageant means the world to me," said the 39-year old beauty queen, who added that she is honored to wear the crown as Mrs. Georgia.

Blaize's 18-year old daughter, Ariana who also competes in pageants, expressed her wish to see her mother on stage, since she was not yet born when her mother started competing in pageants 20 years ago. As such, Ariana signed-up Mrs. Blaize who went on to capture the title to the glee of her daughter.

"It is important being married, and to put Christ first, but it is also great that Mrs. America gives people like me the opportunity to showcase the institution of marriage," said the deeply spiritual beauty who migrated to America with her parents when she was just two years old, and lived in Miami before moving to Georgia.

"Every summer I visited my homeland so I know my culture and heritage very well. Going back every year gives me an opportunity to showcase my culture to my American-born children, whose parents are of Caribbean herit-



Mrs. Georgia America, Onica Blaize in Baisley Park, Queens.

Photo by Tangerine Clarke

16 years, someone she calls amazing. They are the parents of three children.

Blaize, is a public health advisor at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Georgia where she is pleased to serve.

"God has given me different segments in my life where I constantly touch lives," said Blaize, owner of Nic B Cosmetics, (www.nicbcosmetics.com), and an advocate for the rights of children abused by the foster care system.

Wily Texas Ranger tracks sibling bank robbers

"Hell or High Water"

Excellent (4 stars)

Rated R for graphic violence, pervasive profanity and brief sexuality

Running time: 102 minutes

Studio: Film 44 / Sidney Kimmel Entertainment / Lionsgate / OddLot Entertainment

Distributor: CBS Films

By Kam Williams

Tanner (Ben Foster) and Toby Howard (Chris Pine) are siblings but about as different as night and day. The former is impulsive, reckless and sociopathic, a combination which helps explain why he's spent a long stretch in prison for a violent crime. By comparison, his younger brother is a relatively stable, sensitive and chivalrous soul.

While Tanner was behind bars, divorced Toby has divided his time between raising his two sons (John Paul Howard and Christopher W. Garcia) and caring for his terminally-



Ben Foster and Chris Pine in "Hell or High Water."

ill mother. So, it's no surprise that upon his mom's recent demise, she cut that ne'er-do-well black sheep of the family out of her will entirely, leaving her sizable estate to her only honorable offspring.

Unfortunately, a shady loan officer (Richard Christie) had duped her into taking a reverse

mortgage on her cattle ranch for a pittance. Consequently, a predatory lending institution is holding a lien on land which Toby has just learned is sitting atop a fortune in untapped oil reserves. But unless the note is paid off by Friday, Texas Midlands bank will follow through on its threat to foreclose,

"Come hell or high water."

Toby wants to save the property and sign it over to his boys. Trouble is, he can't raise the cash. The dilemma has him considering breaking the law for the first time in his life.

Enlisting the assistance of his just-paroled brother, he

hatches a plan to rob Texas Midlands branches until they've raised the amount needed to retire the debt. The two proceed to embark on a spree aimed solely at the avaricious institution that had taken advantage of their very vulnerable mom.

However, the heists soon come to the attention of the Texas Rangers, and the case is assigned to Marcus Hamilton (Jeff Bridges) a wily old veteran weeks away from retirement. It's not long before he and his half-breed Comanche partner (Gil Birmingham) are on the pair's trail.

Thus unfolds *Hell or High Water*, a captivating, cat-and-mouse crime thriller directed by Brit David Mackenzie (Starred Up). Between Taylor Sheridan's (Sicario) engaging, character-driven script and a plethora of powerful performances by Jeff Bridges and company, this bona fide sleeper would be generating tons of Oscar buzz if it hadn't been released in the dog days of August.

A neo-noir masterpiece not to be missed!

Independent & Foreign Films

Billionaire Ransom (Unrated) Survival saga set on a remote island where a boot camp for spoiled-rotten rich kids is taken hostage by a gang of kidnapers. With Jeremy Sumpter, Phoebe Tonkin, Sebastian Koch and Ashley Walters.

Imperium (R for pervasive profanity) Crime thriller about an idealistic FBI agent (Daniel Radcliffe) who goes undercover to infiltrate a radical, white supremacist group. Cast includes Toni Collette, Tracy Letts and Sam Trammell.

Kampai: For the Love of Sake (Unrated) Foodie documentary exploring the critical contribution of rice wine to Japanese cuisine. With commentary by sake experts John Gauntner, Philip Harper and Kosuke Kuji. (In English and Japanese with subtitles)

Lo and Behold, Reveries of the Connected World (PG-13 for mature themes and brief profanity) Cyber documentary examining the impact of the internet on humanity. Featuring commentary by Elon Musk, Lawrence Krauss, Kevin Mitnick and Lucianne Walkowicz.



Kam's Kapsules

By Kam Williams

Making a Killing: Guns, Greed and the NRA (Unrated) Constitutional law documentary asserting that the National Rifle Association lobbies to prevent the passage of sensible gun legislation more for the sake of profit than to protect citizens' Second Amendment rights.

Mia Madre (R for profanity) Bittersweet dramedy, set in Rome, revolving around a film director's (Margherita Buy) attempt to care for her terminally-ill mother (Giulia Lazzarini) while shooting a movie with a disappointing leading man (John Turturro). With writer/director Nanni Moretti, Beatrice Mancini and Stefano Abbati. (In English, Italian and French with subtitles)

Morris from America (R for sexuality, brief nudity, teen drug use and partying, and pervasive profanity) Markees Christmas plays the title char-

acter in this coming-of-age comedy about a 13-year-old, African-American's adjustment to life in Germany after his father (Craig Robinson) takes a job in Heidelberg as a pro soccer coach. With Carla Juri, Lina Keller and Jakub Gierszal. (In English and German with subtitles)

The People vs. Fritz Bauer (R for sexuality) Historical drama, set in 1957, revolving around the German Attorney General (Burghart Klauszner) who brought Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann (Michael Schenk) to justice. With Rüdiger Klink, Andrej Kamnsky and Jorg Schuttauf. (In English, German, Yiddish and Spanish with subtitles)

Spaceman (R for drug use and pervasive profanity) Josh Duhamel handles the title role in this biopic chronicling the life after baseball of eccentric Boston Red Sox pitcher Bill

Lee. Cast includes Ernie Hudson, W. Earl Brown and Sterling K. Brown.

A Tale of Love and Darkness (PG-13 for mature themes and disturbing, violent images) Natalie Portman wrote, directed and stars in this adaptation of Amos Oz's (Amir Tessler) memoir about growing up Jewish in Jerusalem prior to Israeli statehood. With Shira Haas, Ohad Knoller and Makram Khoury. (In Hebrew with subtitles)

BIG BUDGET FILMS

Ben-Hur (PG-13 for violence and disturbing images) Remake of 11 Oscar-winning classic, a faith-based tale of revenge revolving around a prince (Jack Huston) forced into slavery after being falsely accused of treason by his adopted brother (Toby Kebbell), an officer in the Roman army. With Morgan Freeman, Rodrigo Santoro and Nazanin Boniadi.

Collide (PG-13 for violence, profanity, sexuality and drug use) Action thriller about a couple of American tourists (Nicholas Hoult and Felicity Jones) backpacking across Europe who end up on the run from drug smugglers in Germany. With Anthony Hopkins, Ben Kingsley and Nadia Hilker.

Hell or High Water (R for graphic violence, pervasive profanity and brief sexuality) Modern Western chronicling the cat-and-mouse pursuit of a couple of siblings (Chris Pine and Ben Foster) on a bank-robbing spree by an aging Texas Ranger (Jeff Bridges) and his half-breed partner (Gil Birmingham). Featuring Kevin Rankin, Katy Mixon and Dale Dickey.

Kubo and the Two Strings (PG for action, mature themes, scary images and peril) Animated fantasy, set in ancient Japan, about a young boy (Art Parkinson) who must locate a magical suit of armor worn by his fallen samurai father to defeat an inadvertently-revived, evil spirit with a vengeful agenda. Voice cast includes Charlize Theron, Matthew McConaughey, Ralph Fiennes, Rooney Mara and George Takei.

War Dogs (R for drug use, sexual references and pervasive profanity) Fact-based tale about a couple of young businessmen (Miles Teller and Jonah Hill) who get more than they bargained for after landing a \$300 million contract to arm America's allies in Afghanistan. With Ana de Armas, Barry Livingston and Bradley Cooper.

TOP DRIVER DISTRACTIONS

Using mobile phones

Leading the list of the top distractions behind the wheel are mobile phones. Phones now do more than just place calls, and drivers often cannot pull away from their phones, even when driving. According to the California Department of Motor Vehicles, studies have shown that driving performance is lowered and the level of distraction is higher for drivers who are heavily engaged in cell

phone conversations. The use of a hands-free device does not lower distraction levels. The percentage of vehicle crashes and near-crashes attributed to dialing is nearly identical to the number associated with talking or listening.

Daydreaming

Many people will admit to daydreaming behind the wheel or looking at a person or object outside of the car for too long. Per-

haps they're checking out a house in a new neighborhood or thought they saw someone they knew on the street corner. It can be easy to veer into the direction your eyes are focused, causing an accident. In addition to trying to stay focused on the road, some drivers prefer the help of lane departure warning systems.

Eating

Those who haven't quite mastered walking and

chewing gum at the same time may want to avoid eating while driving. The majority of foods require a person's hands to be taken off of the wheel and their eyes to be diverted from the road. Reaching in the back seat to share some French fries with the kids is also distracting.

Try to eat meals before getting in the car. For those who must snack while en route, take a moment to pull over at

a rest area and spend 10 minutes snacking there before resuming the trip.

Reading

Glancing at an advertisement, updating a Facebook status or reading a book are all activities that should be avoided when driving. Even pouring over a traffic map or consulting the digital display of a GPS system can be distracting.

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Djhal Kelly #10 (St. Kitts & Nevis) and Josh Charles #16 (Grenada) battle for the ball. Keith Dawson

Benna, Spice Boys reach semi-finals

By John Melbourne

The 2016 New York Caribbean Cup soccer championship continued last Sunday with Team Antigua and Barbuda defeating Team St. Kitts and Nevis 4-1 and Spice Boys defeating Team St. Kitts and Nevis 5-4. And for the first time this 25th anniversary season, the referees were forced to stop the games midway through each half to take water breaks.

After 35 minutes of action, the scores remained locked at zero when the Lucians broke the dead lock from a free kick. Kicking towards the Flatlands goal, the referee awarded St. Lucia a free kick just outside the 18-yard box. Leigh Marcellin found Thurston Joseph in the heart of the Benna Boys defense and was able

Continued on Page 44

Bolt statute to be erected

By Azad Ali

A statue of legendary Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt has been built and is ready to be erected in the historic Falmouth Square (Water Square) in Trelawny, Jamaica.

Bolt, who turns 30 on Aug. 21, was born in the rural community

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BOLT SHINES BRIGHT

Jamaica's Usain Bolt celebrates after winning gold in the men's 100-meter final during the athletics competitions of the 2016 Summer Olympics at the Olympic stadium in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Sunday, Aug. 14, 2016. Associated Press / Lee Jin-man

Jamaican sprinter wins another gold in Olympic 100

By Eddie Pells

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Usain Bolt sauntered onto the track, stretched out his arms and waved his hands, signaling for more applause.

He knew exactly how this night was going to go.

The sprinter-turned-showman's

swan song in the Olympic 100 meters Sunday night was a no-doubter — a pedestrian-by-his-standards 9.81-second sprint down the straightaway, but not so slow that he couldn't take time to point at his own chest with his thumb a step before he crossed the finish line.

"It was brilliant," Bolt said. "I didn't go so fast but I'm so happy I won. I told you guys I was going to do it."

He won his record-setting third straight title in track's featured event and his seventh Olympic gold.

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to drive the ball home.

It did not take long for the Benna Boys to respond by way of an Okeem Challenger free kick that somehow sneaked through the Lucian defense and eluded goalkeeper Chad Amari Phillip.

Perhaps attributed to the hot and humid conditions but Team Antigua and Barbuda played rather subdued this afternoon. Not their hustling, hard talking game we've become accustomed to this season. Anyway there was no further scoring as the teams went to the break tied at one apiece.

Right after the whistle to kick off the second half, Leigh Marcellin committed the unthinkable. He was called for a dangerous tackle and without hesitation was immediately red-carded by the referee.

Team St. Lucia paid almost immediately for Marcellin's indiscretion when Eugene Kirwan picked up a long ball down the right side and his cross over the middle found the head of Peter Byers to give Team Antigua and Barbuda a 2-1 advantage.

Shortly after, Kirwan got the first of his two goals when he turned inside on defender Kerwin Edwin and his left-footed shot had Phillip beaten all ends up.

Goal number four for the Benna Boys and the second for Kirwan occurred when Phillip illegally handled a ball inside the six-yard box and Kirwan scored on the resulting indirect kick.

The Benna Boys will now face the winner of next week's Team Haiti vs Team Guyana quarter final in the Aug. 28, 2016 semi-final.

The excitement in game two between Team Grenada and Team St. Kitts and Nevis did not really take place until the dreaded penalty shootout.

Both teams actually came close to scoring on several occasions during the 90 minutes of regular time but at the final whistle, the scores remained tied 0-0.

On the very first shot in the 'Penalty Shootout' Spice Boys goalkeeper Ken Searles came up big by saving Aiden Nurse's penalty kick.

Things really got tense with the shootout tied at three apiece. Up stepped goalkeeper Ken Searles for Team Grenada's fourth penalty kick. However, Kittishian goalkeeper Malik Liburd would not be embarrassed by his opposite number and blocked the shot to keep the PK level.

After the regulation five shots, the shootout was tied 4-4, so the contest went into sudden death shootout. With sudden death locked at two apiece, Spice Boys goalkeeper Ken Searles came up big once more by blocking Devonte Fahie's shot. That meant if Team Grenada scored their next penalty shot they would be in the Aug. 28 semifinals. Up stepped Raymond Alleyne calmly to bury the shot to send the Spice Boys to the semifinals.



Jamaicans celebrate Usain Bolt, of Jamaica, after he won the men's 100-meter final during the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, as they watch the race on a big screen in Half Way Tree in Kingston, Jamaica, Sunday, Aug. 14, 2016.

Associated Press / Collin Reid

USAIN BOLT IN FULL STRIDE IN RIO

Continued from page 43

He has already swept aside pretty much every sprinter who had any claim on being the greatest.

So, on a muggy night in Rio, Bolt took aim at Michael Phelps and the Olympics themselves, shoving the swimmer and all his 23 medals to the background and making this official: The Bolt Games have begun.

"I told you guys I wanted to set myself apart from everybody else," Bolt said. "This is the Olympics that I have to do it at."

Bolt beat American Justin Gatlin, who was greeted by the fans with raucous boos, by .08 seconds. Andre de Grasse of Canada took the bronze.

Bolt has a chance for two more golds — in his favorite race, Thursday's 200 final, where he has pronounced he'll be gunning for the world record, then the 4x100 relay Saturday night.

Speaking of world records — a few minutes before Bolt's race, world champion Wayde van Niekerk of South Africa eclipsed what many thought was the most-unbreakable mark in the book — Michael Johnson's 17-year-old run of 43.18 seconds in 400 meters.

Running out of Lane 8, where the lag puts him well in front of the rest of the field, van Niekerk never saw a soul — crossing in 43.03 and only glancing to his left when he approached the line to peer at the clock, which showed him what he had done.

"Usain Bolt will be retiring soon, but this could be the next star of the sport," Johnson said during his commentary on BBC.

But Bolt isn't done quite yet. The 6-foot-5 sprinter / celebrity overcame his typically slow unfurling from the blocks — he was second-to-last after the break.

"I just said, 'Take your time, and chip

away,'" he said.

Churning his legs to gradually build up speed, he eventually caught Gatlin with about 40 meters left and took it to warp speed. The rest was a matter of how hard he wanted to run to the line.

"From the start, really," Bolt said, when asked when he knew he was going to win. "When I got going, got to about 50 meters, I was all right. I could tell I was going to catch him."

Gatlin made Bolt work for it, the way he has for the past four years. He said the short turnaround between the semifinal and final sapped his strength, and Bolt agreed.

"First time we've had to jog to the warmup area to get ready for the final," Bolt said.

Gatlin finished with silver to go with his 2004 gold and 2102 bronze and, at 34, became the oldest man to win a medal in a non-relay sprint.

Bolt's Olympic Boulevard

Continued from page 43

of Sherwood Content in Trelawny, about 10 miles from Falmouth, capital of the parish.

The statue is expected to go up soon after Bolt's expected exploits on the track at the Rio Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

There are also plans afoot to name the Trelawny Multi-Purpose Stadium in Bolt's honor and a section of the roadway leading to the facility in

honor of other outstanding Trelawny athletes.

The road will be named the Olympic Boulevard.

Bolt, the world's faster man is a six-time time Olympic gold medalist, who set a 100-meter world record in 2009.

He will compete in the 100m, 200m, and 4x100m relay later this month at the Rio Olympics now underway in Brazil.



Jamaica's sprinter Usain Bolt is pictured with the Order of Jamaica.

Associated Press / Collin Reid, File

Summer Olympics

Continued from page 38
title remains in Jamaica. Well done to the both of them.”

Committed to taking home 11 medals, Jamaicans have been fierce competitors in their bid to reclaim glory they scored in Beijing, China and London, England when Bolt and Fraser-Pryce took the gold in the 100m sprint and showed the world the fastest man and woman on the entire planet.

With competitions in long jump, gymnastics, hurdles, steeplechase, discus, swimming, diving and relay races, Jamaicans are boasting their brightest color.

However also distinctive is the unprecedented diversity of the games.

The U.S. gymnastic team is a standout. With two winning acrobats representing the stars and stripes, Gabby Douglas and Simone Biles are the golden girls at the Olympics. Touted as the “best gymnast that ever lived,” Biles ranks as the most decorated gymnast in U. S. history.

She is the first female gymnast since Larisa Latynina to win a team, all around and an event final gold medal. That her grandmother Nellie Cayetano

— who raised her — migrated from Belize also scores another victory for successful and achieving emigrants.

Douglas has been a worthy gold-getter since 2012 in London.

Also scoring a win for diversity, it seems after almost centuries hearing that Blacks cannot swim, float or dive, Simone Manuel hushed racists by winning gold. Not one but more.

As the first ever African-American to win an individual medal in swimming, the Texas, freestyle Olympian will be bringing back two gold and two silver medals and dares to challenge anyone making the age-old misnomer.

“My color just comes with the territory...” Manuel said.

Add to that, the never-before spectacle of seeing an Olympian wearing head-to-toe covering with the name Muhammad on the back and USA, the country of origin?

At age 30, Ibtihaj Muhammad is the first Muslim American to wear a traditional hijab in Olympic competition. She won a bronze competing in the women’s sabre team fencing competition.

“The honor of representing Muslims and Black women is not one I take lightly” Muhammad reportedly said.

An American fencing champion, the New Jersey athlete is turning heads in Rio.

Another 30-year-old achiever is Michelle Carter. She brought home the gold for America for her powerful shot putt throw in Rio.

She is the first American woman to win the event since the competition entered the Olympics in 1948.

That she is also Black makes for even more cheering for her pioneering triumph.

Another Caribbean island claimed gold status when Puerto Rico won the very first medal ever.

Monica Puig, a tennis player was urged on by supporters shouting “si, se puede!”

After that it was game on for the Spanish-speaking Caribbean islander.

South African 400m runner Wayde van Niekerk dashed the hopes for Grenada’s flag-bearer, Kirani James to reclaim the gold. The Spice Island gold getter in London in 2012 took the silver and remained in the top three in the world for that distance.

Showing a presence albeit mostly during heats — Bahamas, Trinidad & Tobago and St.



Gold medallist Jamaica’s Elaine Thompson, left, and compatriot and bronze medallist Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce celebrate their medals for the women’s 100-meter final during the athletics competitions of the 2016 Summer Olympics at the Olympic stadium in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Sunday, Aug. 14, 2016.
Associated Press / Kirsty Wigglesworth

Kitts — continue to represent. her country but it was evident that each and every athlete also shared the burden of lifting the banner highest.

Jamaican swimmer Alia Atkinson finished a respectable eighth place during her water sport and was a fighter to the finish wearing her island’s colors.

Similarly gymnast Toni Ann Williams and diver Yona Knight Wisdom who competed in the three-meter springboard event did their island/nation proud.

During the opening ceremonies, Fraser-Pryce carried the black, green and gold flag of

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ARIES: Mar 21/Apr 20
Everyone recognizes your ambition this week, Aries. Channel your energy constructively and don't be ashamed to pursue your goals so strongly.

TAURUS: Apr 21/May 21
Taurus, tackle some slow and steady work this week rather than trying to be innovative or unique. There will be a time to innovate later on. Right now you need to prove yourself.

GEMINI: May 22/June 21
Gemini, you are in the mood to get started on something new over the next few days. Think about some tasks you have been putting off and develop a plan to address them.

CANCER: Jun 22/Jul 22
Cancer, take an intellectual approach to solving a problem that has been bothering you for quite some time. Ask a friend for advice if you find you need some help.

LEO: Jul 23/Aug 23
Leo, approaching someone who has not done his or her share of the work can be difficult. Tread gently because this person may have been distracted by something more pressing.

VIRGO: Aug 24/Sept 22
Your big ideas are highly valued, Virgo. Let others know what you are thinking and you may find that even more people are receptive to your ideas than you initially thought.

LIBRA: Sept 23/Oct 23
Libra, things have been going your way for some time now. It's exciting waiting for whatever is just around the corner. This unanticipated good fortune is just what you need.

SCORPIO: Oct 24/Nov 22
Open yourself up to a new way of thinking, Scorpio. While your way of doing things may be right most of the time, adopting a fresh perspective may help you see things more clearly.

SAGITTARIUS: Nov 23/Dec 21
Sagittarius, try doing something on the spur of the moment. Spontaneity may give you a rush that you may not have felt in some time. This could be just the excitement you need right now.

CAPRICORN: Dec 22/Jan 20
Try to meet some new people, Capricorn. Add to your collection of networking contacts, which will help further both your professional and personal lives.

AQUARIUS: Jan 21/Feb 18
Aquarius, relax when a stressful situation presents itself. Add some humor to the situation so you and others can handle it in the most positive way possible.

PISCES: Feb 19/Mar 20
Pisces, if others are uninterested in being social, find creative ways to enjoy some alone time. This may include music or artwork.

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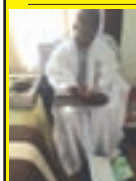


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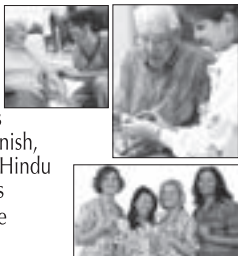
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Plaintiff, Murland Pierre, resides in Edison, New Jersey, Middlesex county and State of New Jersey is requesting a DIVORCE from Whitman Sylvance. Plaintiff, Murland Pierre no longer seeking child support from defendant, Whitman Sylvance. Plaintiff, Murland Pierre no longer seeking alimony from defendant. Plaintiff, Murland Pierre demands judgment ordering that plaintiff have physical custody of/be the parent of primary custody for the minor children; Emily S. If Defendant, Whitman Sylvance fails to provide a written appearance or answer within 35 days of the publication, the Court may enter judgment by default against Defendant for the relief the Plaintiff demands. Prepared by the court: Superior Court of New Jersey Chancery Division, Family Part Middlesex County. Docket No: F M - 12 - 1785 - 16 F, Murland Pierre vs. Whitman Sylvance, Defendant Civil action order.

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Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, Kings County on 08/12/2016, bearing Index Number NC-000982-16/KI, a copy of which may be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at 141 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201, grants me(us) the right to: Assume the name of (First) Ioanna (Middle) Angeliki Merika (Last) Sardelis. My present name is (First) Joan (Middle) Angeline (Last) Sardelis AKA J A Sardelis AKA Joan A Sardelis AKA Ioanna Auriemma. My present address is 96 Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11217. My place of birth is Detroit, MI. My date of birth is February 02, 1952.

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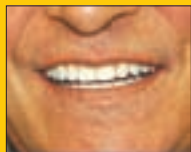
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