

# Caribbean Today

JULY 2018



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## OUTRAGE

Caribbean nationals seeking a better life in the United States are not immune to the fate being suffered by some migrants, including children forcibly separated from parents trying to enter the U.S. The government's decision sparked nationwide outrage and protests. Will Caribbean nationals be the next target of U.S. immigration crackdown? page 7A.



The life of a rising Caribbean American rap star ended violently last month.

While his music rose on the charts, XXXTentacion was gunned down in a Florida parking lot, page 11A.



Years ago they jokingly called Deandre Ayton "TFN" – tall for nothing. But last month the

Bahamian teenager's talent made him the first selection in the 2018 National Basketball Association draft, page 18A.



## 'BAD BOYS' TURN 50

Inner Circle is among music's most outstanding bands. Some members have changed, but the band's quality has continued to rise since it started out 50 years ago in Jamaica. The group, with founding brothers Roger, left, and Ian Lewis, is now based in South Florida, but Inner Circle shows no sign of slowing down, page 1B.



Photo credit: DagmarCanon Photography

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## NEWS



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# Caribbean American senator pushes for farm workers' benefits

GORDON WILLIAMS

An American lawmaker with Caribbean roots is pushing for added labor protections which, if successful, could reward laborers from the Caribbean with additional benefits, including overtime pay.

Kamala Harris, a U.S. senator from California whose father is from Jamaica, is heading a group of lawmakers trying to ensure laborers, including farm workers, get protections they have been entitled to since 1938, but were denied.

Thousands of farm workers from the Caribbean have come to the U.S. to earn a living over decades, providing labor on farms in states such as Florida. The practice was encouraged by Caribbean governments seeking to alleviate the unemployment problem in the region.

The first Caribbean farm workers reportedly arrived in the U.S. in 1943. Jamaicans are believed to make up the largest group of Caribbean guest work-

ers in the U.S. According to *encyclopedia.com*, in 1943 for example, Jamaica sent 11,000 men to 14 states in the U.S. The farm workers are usually employed to work harvesting seasonal crops.

An estimated three million farm workers are in the U.S. More than 80 percent are believed to be non-Americans. Some 75 percent of farm workers are believed to earn less than \$10,000 a year.

## SHORTAGE

Legal farm workers from the Caribbean usually come to the U.S. as an H2A Guestworker, a program set up by the U.S. government to address labor shortage in agriculture. According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), five Caribbean countries are eligible to send farm workers to the U.S. under the H2A program: Barbados, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.



Harris

Last month, lawmakers, led by Harris, introduced a bill in the U.S. Senate which would allow farm workers to be paid for overtime work, like most other U.S. workers. The farm workers would also be entitled to new minimum wage rights.

The new bill proposes to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act, passed in 1938.

That law provided for a minimum wage payment and time-and-a-half pay for overtime work.

Initially, some category of workers, including farm workers and domestic help, did not fully benefit from the Fair Labor Standards Act as some farm owners wanted to restrict compensation for workers. Harris and others are pushing for the new legislation. They claim the workers have been exploited enough, including being forced to work up to 12 hours a day.

## CORRECTION

"This bill will attempt to correct some of the injustices they face and guarantee they will get paid for the hours they work including overtime, and minimum wage which right now they are not entitled to by

law," Harris noted in a statement. "This is a matter of basic fairness and justice."

The proposed bill has received support from dozens of labor groups. Civil rights groups have also backed the initiative along with some of Harris's Democratic colleagues in the Senate, including Dianne Feinstein, Chris Van Holland, Richard Blumenthal, Cory Booker, Jeff Merkley, Mazie Hirono and Elizabeth Warren.

However, it is not clear if the bill will get support from Republicans, who control both houses of Congress and the office of the president, who would be required to sign the bill into law.

Under the new bill, farm workers would be required to receive time-and-a-half pay for work done beyond 40 hours.



# Ex-Guyana MP convicted of terrorism, dies in U.S. prison

NEW YORK – Abdul Kadir, a former Guyana member of Parliament who was sentenced to life in prison following a conviction of conspiring to commit a terrorist attack at New York's JFK airport nearly a decade ago, died in a United States prison last month.

Kadir, who also served as mayor of Linden, was believed to be in his mid 60s.

According to *News Source* online, family members in Guyana were informed of Kadir's death when they received a call from authorities in the U.S. It's reported that he fell ill early June 28 and was taken to the prison's medical facility where he died.

Kadir was convicted and sentenced in the U.S. in 2010, along with three other elderly men, for plotting to blow up gas pipelines at the airport. Throughout his trial, and even after being convicted, he maintained his innocence and repeatedly said he was wrongly

accused and wrongfully convicted.

## KEY WITNESS

The U.S. government had used the services of a drug convict informant as its key witness during the trial. The man had been sent to Guyana and met with members of the Muslim community in Guyana and Trinidad.

Kadir was reportedly approached by the man about his engineering experience. He, along with three other men, were arrested in Trinidad and Tobago and extradited to the U.S. where they faced trial in New York.

During an interview from behind bars in Trinidad before his extradition, Kadir declared his innocence and said he was never part of any plot to take harm to the U.S. or its people. At the time, he said he was "set up" because of his Muslim faith and the global war against the Islamic faith following sev-

eral terrorist attacks.

While on trial in New York, Kadir again declared his innocence, but U.S. prosecutors used his visits to Iran and other predominantly Muslim states against him. During the trial, audio recordings of conversations he had with the informant were also used.

Prior to his arrest in Trinidad and conviction in the U.S., Kadir served the People's National Congress as a member of Parliament for one term.

Before that, he served as the mayor of Linden, where he had worked for several years as a civil engineer.

- Edited from CMC.



Kadir

# Belizean gets life sentences for murdering Florida family

FLORIDA – A Belizean national was sentenced to four terms of life imprisonment after a jury last month found him guilty of four counts of second-degree murder.

Brian Omar Hyde, 22, an undocumented immigrant, was found guilty in April of murdering four members of his family, including his 37-year-old aunt Dorla Pitts, 17-year-old cousin Starlette Pitts and 19-year-old Michael Kelly.

The fourth count was for the unborn child of Starlette Pitts.

The attacks occurred on Aug. 11, 2015.

State experts had testified that a rape kit confirmed that Hyde's semen was inside his

cousin's body and that his DNA was on her body. They also testified that Hyde's shoes were stained in numerous places with the blood of all three victims.



Hyde

## AMNESIA CLAIM

During the trial, Hyde took the stand and claimed he could remember nothing from the day the victims were hacked to death in the home Dorla and Starlette Pitts shared with Hyde.

Hyde, who came into the

United States in Feb. 2015 after crossing the Mexican border to Texas, claimed the only thing he could remember was driving a vehicle he didn't have permission to drive as he crashed it into a picket fence at a park. Police believe Hyde was fleeing the crime scene. He was carrying one of the victims' personal belongings.

He also testified about the trauma he sustained in Belize where many of his family members were killed.

Hyde was re-tried after his first trial in November was declared a mistrial.

- Edited from CMC.



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## RECOGNITION: New York City designates section in Brooklyn 'Little Haiti'

NEW YORK – New York City Council has passed a resolution designating a section of Flatbush, Brooklyn as “Little Haiti”.

The resolution designates areas within the boundaries of East 16th Street, Parkside Avenue, Brooklyn Avenue and along Church Avenue, between East 16th Street and Albany Avenue, as “Little Haiti”.

The resolution was tabled in the City Council by Brooklyn Councilmember



Williams

Jumaane Williams, son of Grenadian immigrants, who represents the predominantly 45th Council District in Brooklyn.

Haitian American New York State Assemblymember Rodney Bichotte, the architect of the “Little Haiti” designation, last month joined Williams, City Council Majority Leader Laurie A. Cumbo and Councilmember Mark Treyger and Rafael Espinal, among leaders from several community groups for the presentation of the resolution.

### HOME

Bichotte, who represents the 42nd Assembly District in

Brooklyn, said New Yorkers from the Haitian community “represent a significant part of our city’s ever-growing cultural landscape.”

“In fact, Brooklyn is home to the largest percentage of foreign-born Haitian residents in New York State, with more than 40 percent of the foreign-born population residing in

Flatbush,” she said.

Alluding to data by the non-profit Migration Policy Institute, Bichotte said Brooklyn has the second highest – after Miami – concentration of Haitians in the United States, with an estimated 156,000 Haitian Americans residing in New York City.

Bichotte, the first Haitian

American in New York City to be elected to the State Assembly, said the passage of the resolution was “the culmination of months of hard work” by her, Williams, community leaders, activists and other elected officials.

- Edited from CMC.



## Former Haiti president, coup leader, dies in exile

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti – Former Haiti President Henri Namphy is dead. He was 85.

The former lieutenant general and coup leader died late last month in neighboring Dominican Republic, where he lived in exile, following a battle with lung cancer.



Namphy

Namphy headed Haiti’s

military dominated government after the fall of the Duvalier family dictatorship. He became head of the interim National Council of Government that took charge of Haiti in 1986 when Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier fled into exile in France. He also served as president before he was ousted in a coup in 1988.

Namphy’s presidency lasted three months. He fled to the Dominican Republic after being ousted.



## U.S. urges Guyana to step up human trafficking fight

GEORGETOWN, Guyana – The United States has called on Guyana to fund specialized victim services outside of the capital as the fight continues against trafficking in persons.

The U.S. State Department also wants those services to be unveiled for child victims and adult male victims of human trafficking.

That was one of the recommendations made in the State Department’s 2018 “Trafficking in Persons” report released recently.

The U.S. government also said it would like to see Guyana vigorously investigating and prosecuting sex and labor trafficking cases and hold convicted traffickers, including complicit public officials, accountable by imposing strong sentences.

### INSUFFICIENT

According to the report, while Guyana increased efforts to identify and protect trafficking victims, victim assistance remained insufficient, especially in areas outside of



Georgetown and for child and male victims.

On the other hand, the report found that the government fully meets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, resulting in Guyana remaining on Tier 1 list.

“The government demonstrated serious and sustained efforts by increasing funding for victim assistance, identifying and assisting more victims for the third consecutive year, and opening and operating a trafficking shelter outside of the capital area,” the report stated.

“Although the government meets the minimum standards, it did not provide adequate protection and shelter outside the capital, or for child and male victims.”



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## NEWS



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## Big push to make Puerto Rico 51st U.S. state

The United States Congress is introducing a bill aimed at making the Caribbean island of Puerto Rico the 51st U.S. state.

The bipartisan bill was filed on June 27 by Jennifer González-Colón, a non-voting Republican congresswoman from Puerto Rico. The aim is to make Puerto Rico a state by Jan. 2021.

"This is the first step to open a serious discussion to determine the ultimate political status of Puerto Rico," González told **NBC News**. "To sum everything up, this is

about equality."

More than a 30 Democrats and Republicans had supported the bill up to press time. Some cited the sluggish response of the U.S. government to the damage caused to Puerto Rico by Hurricane Maria as a reason the U.S. territory needed statehood.

## 'HARD TRUTH'

"The hard truth is that Puerto Rico's lack of political power allows Washington to treat Puerto Rico like an afterthought, as the federal government's inadequate

preparation for and response to Hurricane Maria made crystal clear," Florida Democratic Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy told **NBC News**.

Since 1898, Puerto Rico has been a U.S. territory. It was acquired following the Spanish-American War. Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, but not allowed to vote in presidential elections.

Puerto Rico doesn't have a congressional representative with full voting powers.



## Nevisian-born Hamilton, first U.S. treasury secretary, inducted into ICS 'Wall of Fame'

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Washington-based Institute of Caribbean Studies (ICS) has inducted Nevisian-born first United States Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton into its "Wall of Fame".

The induction of the late treasury secretary was part of a series of recognitions of Caribbean Americans in commemoration of Caribbean American Heritage Month by the ICS.

ICS said that when George Washington became the first president of the

United States in 1790, he selected Hamilton to be his first secretary of the treasury.

"Although Hamilton served in Washington's Cabinet for only five years, many historians regard him as the greatest and most influential secretary of the treasury in U.S. history," said ICS, whose founder and president is



Hamilton

Jamaican Dr. Clare Nelson.

Hamilton was born in 1757 in Nevis to Rachel Fawcett and James Hamilton, but spent the majority of his youth in St. Croix, where his formal education as a child was minimal.

He left St. Croix for New York City, eventually enrolling in King's College, now known as Columbia University. In 1776, he joined a local New York militia to fight in the American Revolution against the British.



## U.S.-based group welcomes CCJ ruling limiting Guyana presidential terms

NEW YORK – Rickford Burke, president of the Brooklyn, New York-based Caribbean Guyana Institute for Democracy (CGID), has welcomed the recent ruling by the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) on presidential term limits in Guyana.

Burke told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)** that last month's CCJ ruling "cements a new era in Guyana, where the constitution and the rule of law can reign supreme."

The challenge to the term limit came in the run-up to the historic 2015 general elections, when the People's Progressive

Party (PPP) lost to the A Partnership for National Unity + Alliance for Change (APNU+AFC) Coalition after 23 years in office, during which Bharrat Jagdeo served two terms as president. The challenge sought to allow Jagdeo to contest elections again.

"Article 90 (2) of the Guyana Constitution states that, 'a person elected as president after the year 2000 is eligible for re-election only once,'" said Burke.

"Jagdeo's proxies sought to have this constitutional provision declared null and void."

The CCJ accepted the

Guyana government's arguments, finding that the Constitution allows for the rights of the people to be expressed through their elected representatives in Parliament, therefore upholding the two-term limit for the presidency of Guyana.



Burke

- Edited from CMC.

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## Caribbean immigrants among 'violators' nabbed in raid

NEW YORK – The United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency says several Caribbean nationals are among 40 persons arrested during a four-day enforcement operation in New York State that ended June 21.

ICE said the operation targeted at-large criminal aliens, illegal re-entrants, immigration fugitives and other immigration violators.

Those arrested – 35 men and five women – were from 13 countries, including Jamaica, Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

The other countries were Brazil, Canada, Guatemala, Malawi, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Somalia and Latvia.

"This operation targeted public safety threats, such as convicted criminal aliens and gang members, and individuals who have violated the immigration laws of the United States – including those who



ICE crackdown nets criminals.

re-entered the country after being deported and immigration fugitives ordered deported by federal immigration judges," ICE noted in a statement.

### CRIMINALS

ICE said of those arrested in central, western and northern New York State, almost 30 per cent had criminal convictions or pending criminal charges.

"ICE will continue to ensure that New York state will never be a safe haven for criminal aliens," said Thomas

Feeley, field office director for ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) Buffalo, which covers the 48 county region.

ICE said other cases included individuals with convictions for serious offenses involving sexual

assault, assault, driving under the influence, firearms possession, theft, neglect of a child, larceny, illegal re-entry into the U.S., contempt of court and statutory rape.

Seven of the individuals arrested were accepted for federal prosecution for re-entry after deportation, a felony punishable by up to 20 years in prison. Those not being criminally prosecuted will be processed for removal from the country.

- Edited from CMC.



## Caribbean American legislators condemn U.S. Supreme Court's support of Muslim ban

NEW YORK – Two Caribbean American legislators have criticized the United States Supreme Court's decision to uphold a ban on travel from several predominantly Muslim countries.

U.S. Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke, daughter of Jamaican immigrants, and New York Councilmember Jumaane Williams, son of Grenadian immigrants, told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)** they were surprised by the court's decision.

"(U.S. President) Donald Trump introduced the Muslim ban to discriminate based upon the religion of people entering the United States, as he has stated on many occasions dur-

ing and after his campaign for the presidency," said Clarke, representative for the 9th Congressional District in Brooklyn.

"That fact, by itself, should have rendered the Muslim ban unconstitutional. History will look back on this decision as one where the Supreme Court clearly endorsed religious discrimination."

### SIGNIFICANT

Clarke said Muslim Americans and Muslim immigrants seeking to become Americans are and have been "a significant part of the rich fabric of our communities and civil society.

"(The) ... decision has

contradicted this long held virtue and is a regression in substance and in form," she added.

Williams, who represents the 45th Council District in Brooklyn, said the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling "enables institutionalized bigotry, codified racism."

In a 5-4 vote, the court's conservative justices said that the president's power to secure America's borders, delegated by U.S. Congress over decades of immigration legislating, was not infringed by the president's history of inflammatory remarks about the perils he said Muslims pose to the U.S.



## N.Y. comptroller honors Caribbean Americans

NEW YORK – New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer recently honored three Caribbean Americans as part of Caribbean American Heritage Month celebrations.

Stringer bestowed the honor on Haitian educator, community organizer and activist Dr. Monalisa Ferrari; United States Virgin Islands-born Pastor Gilford T. Monroe; and media personality of Panamanian heritage DJ Norie.

"We have three amazing honorees," Stringer said. "Our city has long been a beacon of hope for immigrants. From Canarsie in Brooklyn to Gun



Monroe

in ways that can't be counted. By bringing the arts, cultures, and cuisines from their home countries, they strengthen our diversity and enhance what David Dinkins called the 'gorgeous mosaic' that is NYC.

"That's why we need to make it easier for people coming here to become citizens."

### EDUCATOR

Ferrari works at the New York City Department of Education as a professional development coordinator and has previously served as a dean, middle school director, lead teacher and mentor.

She also serves as executive director for the United Front of the Haitian Diaspora and is president of the Society for Haitian Research.

Monroe has been a religious leader and community activist since moving to New York City in 1999. He serves as chaplain for the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) in New York and director of Faith Based and Clergy Initiatives at the Brooklyn Borough President's Office.

DJ Norie is an influential radio personality for dance hall reggae.

- Edited from CMC.



Ferrari

Hill in the Bronx, Caribbean American New Yorkers' vibrant energy, strong community, and entrepreneurial spirit have become part of the very fabric of our city."

### BUILDERS

"Our nearly one million Caribbean American citizens have made this city what it is today," he added. "You've helped build our boroughs, you've lifted up our neighborhoods, and you've served New Yorkers as nurses, doctors, police officers, lawyers, firefighters, and entrepreneurs.

"You're our neighbors, friends, colleagues, family members. And immigrants enrich us

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## Florida families urged to register for program to benefit moms, kids

Families in Broward County, Florida are being encouraged to sign up for the Women Infants and Children program (WIC).

WIC offers assistance to mothers and young children in areas such as nutrition. About 80 percent of 58,750 Broward residents who are eligible for WIC participate in the program, according to the Florida Department of Health (DOH). For the rest, it's a missed opportunity, according to Dr. Paula Thaqi, director of the DOH in Broward County, which operates WIC locally.

"Some women do not enroll early," Dr. Thaqi noted in a recent press release discussing the WIC.

"We want women to sign up when they learn they are pregnant so they can receive WIC benefits right away. WIC helps mothers, babies and young children be healthier."

### UNAWARE

According to the DOH, some families do not realize they can enroll in WIC as soon as a woman becomes



pregnant. There is no waiting for a pregnancy confirmation or for the birth.

WIC services include nutrition and breastfeeding counseling, referrals to other programs, and an electronic benefits card to buy nutritious food and artificial baby milk, if necessary.

Cereal, whole grains (bread, rice, tortillas, pasta), canned tuna and salmon, fruits and vegetables, baby foods, eggs, milk, yogurt, cheese, peanut butter, beans, fruit juice and are among the foods which can be purchased under the program.

### ELIGIBILITY

WIC serves pregnant women, mothers for six

months after delivery, breastfeeding women and children under age five. Families are eligible if household income is below 185 percent of the federal poverty level. That means, for example, monthly income under \$1,860 for one person, \$2,504 for two, and \$3,793 for a family of four.

Florida Medicaid recipients qualify automatically.

In addition to nutrition services, DOH-Broward offers free dental fluoride varnish to children up to age 20 in WIC-eligible families. The treatment prevents cavities. It's available at most of the seven WIC offices in Broward County.

For more information, call 954-767-5111 or visit <http://broward.florida-health.gov>. Appointments are available.

*Edited from an article submitted by Florida Department of Health in Broward County.*



## Florida urges residents to get ready for hurricane season

The Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) is urging residents to prepare for the 2018 hurricane season, which runs through Nov. 30.

"Hurricane preparedness should top our to-do lists," PSC Chairman Art Graham noted in a recent press release.

"Preparation is the best protection against dangerous storms. Build an emergency storm supply kit, gather important utility contact information, and prepare your home to help keep your family protected."

According to the release, Graham said the PSC's website has planning tools to assist consumers with hurricane season preparation. The PSC's "Hurricane House", includes preparation tips for homes and families, from planning an evacuation route, to installing

carbon monoxide detectors and dealing with downed power lines. Consumer tips on making a hurricane kit and storm preparation is also available.

The PSC said it also offers utility storm plans designed to minimize outages and help communities, businesses and families return to normalcy. The plans include PSC-mandated storm preparedness initiatives:

- Facility inspections, maintenance, and repairs;
- Vegetation management;
- Flooding and storm surge mitigation;
- Wooden pole inspections; and
- Coordination with other utilities, government, and community groups.

Follow the PSC on Twitter, @floridapsc.



## Red Cross offers steps to hurricane safety

MIAMI, Florida - The American Red Cross is urging people to take steps that will protect them during the hurricane season, which runs through Nov. 30.

"It's time to get ready now, before a storm threatens," said Joanne Nowlin, chief executive officer for the American Red Cross South Florida Region. The organization is offering the following tips:

- Build an emergency kit with a gallon of water per person, per day, non-perishable food, a flashlight, battery-powered radio, first aid kit, medications, supplies for an infant if applicable, a multi-purpose tool, personal hygiene items, copies of important papers, cell phone chargers, extra cash, blankets, maps of the area and emergency contact information.

Many of these items are available through the Red Cross Store at [redcrossstore.org](http://redcrossstore.org).

- Talk with household members and create an evacuation plan. Practicing the plan minimizes confusion and fear during the event.

- Be informed. Learn about your community's hurricane response plan. Plan routes to local shelters, register family members with special medical needs as required and make plans for pets. Take a First Aid and CPR/AED course ([redcross.org/takeaclass](http://redcross.org/takeaclass)) so you know what to do in case emergency help is delayed.

- Download the free Red Cross Emergency App to select up to 35 different severe

weather and emergency alerts on their mobile device. The content includes expert guidance on what to do before, during and after different emergencies or disasters from home fires to hurricanes. The app can be found in smartphone app stores by searching for American Red Cross, texting 'EMERGENCY' to 90999, or by going to [redcross.org/apps](http://redcross.org/apps).

If someone already has a disaster kit, now is the time make sure the food and water is still okay to consume and that copies of important documents are up to date. If they already have an emergency plan for their household, they should talk about it again with family members, so everyone knows what to do if an emergency occurs.

The Red Cross Ready Rating program helps businesses, schools and other organizations prepare for emergencies that can disrupt daily operations.

Ready Rating offers specific steps that organizations can take to be better prepared. It includes a planning tool to help their employees or members know what their roles are in the early hours of an emergency, what their next steps are, and a resource center with tools that help businesses, employees and students develop and practice preparedness plans.

More information about the program can be found at [readyrating.org](http://readyrating.org).



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## FEATURE



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## BUGGERY BACKLASH: T&amp;T religious leaders oppose same sex marriage

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad – Religious leaders in Trinidad and Tobago are objecting to any notion of same sex marriages taking root in the twin island republic and are urging the government of Prime Minister Keith Rowley to maintain that marriage is a union between a man and a woman.

The religious leaders are also calling on the government to publicly endorse their position.

Roman catholic Archbishop Jason Gordon told reporters recently that the church is united in its views regarding marriages.

“For us, male and female, we were created ... to be complementary and they were creat-

ed for the union of the male and female in a covenant called marriage for the unification of the spouses and the procreation of children,” said Gordon.

“And that’s how we have understood marriage ever since and it is a foundation of our whole society. This is not something where the Muslims, the Hindus or the Christians have any difference of opinion.”

## BACKLASH

The move by the religious leaders followed the April ruling by the T&T High Court that the buggery law is unconstitutional.

The government has already indicated it will appeal the ruling of Justice Devindra



Rampersad that the law goes against the basic rights of any citizen to enjoy the freedom of privacy and family life.

The High Court ruled it unconstitutional to impede on the rights of homosexual men and anal sex, a challenge that was brought against the state in 2017 by gay rights activist Jason

Jones. The judge said it was unfortunate when society, in any way, values a person or gives a person their identity based on their race, color, gender, age or sexual orientation.

“That is not their identity,” said Justice Rampersad. “That is not their soul. That is not the sum total of their value to society or their value to themselves.”

## CAMPAIGN

Dr. Desmond Austin, president of the Trinidad and Tobago Council of Evangelical Churches, told the news conference that the campaign would be to “encourage the parlia-

mentary agenda for September 2018 to amend the Marriage Act to define marriage as between one biological man and one biological woman.

“That’s because the family is the basic unit of society and a strong force of social cohesion and as such should be strengthened,” Austin said, adding that the family is entitled “to comprehensive protection from society and the state.”

He said the quest to obtain individual autonomy “has undermined the nature of marriage and will jeopardize its future.”

- Edited from CMC.



## ‘Caribbeanization of Black Politics’ spotlights long hidden dilemmas

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7A)

downtown Miami. The more than 600 interviews she and her students conducted with residents of Miami-Dade who identified as African American, Haitian American and Caribbean American, found that overwhelmingly, they all identified as being black. That was true even of people from the Anglophone Caribbean who did not identify as black in their homes countries.

That answered one of her key research questions: Do blacks in Miami-Dade, wherever they come from, have a shared racial group consciousness? Do they feel a strong sense of solidarity with other blacks?

Another research question: Do these groups agree that it would be good to work with other black people, regardless of differences and disagreements,

to gain greater political power? This was also answered overwhelmingly in the affirmative.

“Most of them think it’s the only way they will gain political power,” Dr. Wright said.



Dr. Sharon D. Wright Austin, right, discusses her research into “The Caribbeanization of Black Politics”.

Responses included: “We’ll never get anywhere as long as we’re divided.” “We have to put our differences aside and

work together.”

## ACTION

The question of how to actualize the desire for political co-operation was another matter discussed. Dr.

Wright said black people hold fewer elected offices and wield far less political influence in Miami-Dade than should be possible given their numbers.

Among other reasons, she attributes this to low voter registration, low voter turnout, and low levels of involvement in political activities such as attendance at political events, campaigning and contributing to political campaigns.

As an indication of what is possible, she pointed to the high turnout by black Miami-Dade voters in 2008 and 2012, when Barack Obama was a presidential candidate.

“People will vote at higher rates when there is a political candidate who excites them,” she said.

So what could be done to boost black political involvement? Maybe, Dr. Wright said, that’s the next research project.

Meanwhile, “The Caribbeanization of Black Politics” is being received with acclaim as an important contribution to the study of politics as it relates to black people from different backgrounds in the U.S.

“Moving beyond the New York City lens to Boston, Chicago, and Miami is something that has never been done in political science,” said Prof.

Greer. “This book is incredibly important.”

Story and photographs by Patrick U. Smikle, a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.



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## Will Caribbean nationals be next target in U.S. immigration crackdown?

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7A)

Mexicans,” April Ryan, a veteran journalist who covers the White House, said on CNN June 19, “it affects people from other nations to include Haitians, to include those from the Caribbean, Guatemala, Honduras.”

## RACE

Ryan linked the Trump administration’s immigration policy to targeting a specific race of the migrants seeking to cross the U.S.-Mexico border. Most Caribbean nationals are non-white.

“The president talked about the infestation of illegal immigrants,” she said. “That is racial. You cannot walk around that any kind of way. That’s racial.”

People of Caribbean heritage also believe certain immigrants are being targeted by the Trump policy.

“As a second generation American, the daughter of

Jamaican immigrant parents, I take these assaults on immigrant communities personally,” said Clarke.

Meanwhile, Trump’s decision to issue an executive order didn’t ease all concerns. It did not cover children already separated and failed to immediately outline how they would be reunited with families.

Observers have expressed concern about the conditions under which the children in government custody are being held, with some detention centers described as “cages”.

There were also reports that children were being abused, with some held in places where they’re exposed to lice, bed bugs and chicken pox. Audio recordings carried sounds of weeping children begging to be reunited with their parents.

## FEAR

Some, including the U.S. State Department, fear the children will suffer permanent psychological damage if they are

not reunited with their parents soon.

However, up to press time, the U.S. government was also unwilling or unable to publicly disclose where some of the separated children are being detained, especially young girls and babies.

It may not be possible to reunite all the children with their family, since some are too young to offer authorities help in finding their parents.

In addition, supporters of both major U.S. political parties are still furious that Trump and members of his administration lied about the policy in the first place. In announcing the policy, Attorney General Jeff Sessions made clear that children could be separated from parents who were detained as a way to deter illegal immigration.

Yet Trump and other administration officials, including Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, for weeks repeatedly insisted that only the U.S. Congress, not the

president, could stop the separation of migrant children from their families. They claimed that the law did not allow any other option. Trump eventually retreated from the policy created by his own administration by issuing the executive order.

That didn’t totally solve the problem or outrage, including sparking protests. Trump, some observers believe, is keen on attacking immigrants, especially if they are from countries not predominantly white, ahead of U.S. elections in November.

“So this is a bigger piece and, again, it’s about race and it’s getting that (Trump political) base to galvanize for the mid-terms,” said Ryan.

Some believe Trump will find other ways to attack immigrants, including those from the Caribbean.

“This administration has no bounds, even children don’t seem to matter,” Clarke said.





## Know your rights on immigration

In the current Trumpian “dictatorial” atmosphere of rule by executive orders, tweets and dog whistles, there seems to be a determined effort to use the derogatory and inaccurate term “illegal” to describe immigrants arriving at the United States border and wishing to apply for refugee and asylum status. That, of course, is another effort by this administration to present alternative facts. A “bigly” effort indeed.

Here are the facts, according to the U.S.’s own laws and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) guidelines, as laid out on its own website as it relates to refugee and asylum applicants arriving at the U.S. borders:



**FELICIA J. PERSAUD**

### DIFFERENCES

1: While some people use the terms refugee and asylum interchangeably, it’s necessary to note that there are distinct differences. While they are both considered protections to foreign individuals who feel their safety is in jeopardy if they return to their home country, refugee status is for those who are currently outside the U.S. Those who arrive at the U.S. ports or are already in the U.S., either through a visa or other means, can seek asylum status.

Both of these options, if approved by the U.S. government, would permit an individual to stay in the country indefinitely.

2: You can apply for asylum at the port of entry in the U.S. or, regardless of your immigration status, within a year of coming to the U.S. You cannot apply abroad.

3: In the U.S. there is no fee to apply for asylum. Asylum seekers can list their spouse and all their children on Form I-589, Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal.

### TWO PATHS

5: There are two paths to claiming asylum: affirmative and defensive.

**Affirmative Asylum** - To obtain asylum through the affirmative asylum process, an immigrant must be physically present in the U.S. An immigrant may apply for asylum status regardless of how he or she arrived in the U.S. or their current immigration status.

The immigrant may apply for affirmative asylum by sub-

mitting Form I-589, Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal, to the USCIS.

If your case is not approved and you do not have a legal immigration status, you will be issued a Form I-862, Notice to Appear, and your case will be referred to an Immigration Judge at the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). The Immigration Judge will conduct a ‘de novo’ hearing of the case. This means that the judge conducts a new hearing and issues a decision that is independent of the decision made by USCIS.

If the agency does not have jurisdiction over your case, the Asylum Office will issue an I-863, Notice of Referral to Immigration Judge, for an asylum-only hearing.

Affirmative asylum applicants are usually rarely detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and may live in the U.S. while the application is pending before USCIS, unlike what we are seeing now. Even if they are found ineligible, they can remain in the U.S. while the application is pending with the immigration judge even though most asylum applicants are not authorized to work.

**Defensive Asylum Processing** - A defensive application for asylum occurs when an immigrant requests asylum as a defense against removal from the U.S. For asylum processing to be defensive, the immigrant must be in removal proceedings in immigration court with EOIR.

Individuals are generally placed into defensive asylum processing in one of two ways:

- They are referred to an immigration judge by USCIS after they have been determined to be ineligible for asylum at the end of the affirmative asylum process, or
- They are placed in removal proceedings because they were apprehended (or caught) in the U.S. or at a U.S. port of entry without proper legal documents or in violation of their immigration status; or
- Were caught by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) trying to enter the U.S. without proper documentation, for example, crossing the border illegally and were placed in the expedited removal process.
- Or were found to have a credible fear of persecution or torture by an asylum officer at the border.

### JUDGE’S CALL

Immigration judges hear

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10A)

## Gone are the good ol’ days of The Good Samaritan

We were all told to do good deeds when we were children, for “God will bless you and good will follow you when you do good unto others.”

We were taught such things in Sunday school, along with stories about The Good Samaritan and others. We were told to be our brother’s keeper, help our neighbor, to lend a kind hand, give generously, look after those with less than ourselves.

But is this really sound advice in these modern times, where justice and karma are swift and people are punished for their kindness faster than you can say “What was I thinking?”

**But there is a downside to helping others, as it sometimes backfires and blows up in your face like the exhaust from an old diesel truck.**

A friend in need will just have more need after you bail him out, is the common thought. Let’s go back to the Biblical story of The Good Samaritan, who was the guy who helped a man who was beaten by a mob, stripped of his clothes and left for dead in the streets. The man from Samaria - The Samaritan - unlike all others, had pity on the victim, took him in and nursed him back to health.

Now that name is synonymous with doing good deeds.

“He was a good Samaritan, helping out people along the way.”

### DOWNSIDE

But there is a downside to helping others, as it sometimes backfires and blows up in your face like the exhaust from an old diesel truck.

Let’s take even the simple act of giving people a ride. Who dares do that now? There had been so many horror stories of drivers picking up people out of kindness and ending up robbed or dead. A kind deed, punished with extreme prejudice.

Now, even if persons see a sorry looking woman with a child on her shoulders, they dare not do a good deed and offer them a ride.

Acts of kindness are so often punished. Even the simple act of being a guarantor for a loan for a friend can lead to severe punishment. There are so many tales of this happening, one of which involved this co-worker from my past who took out a credit union loan and asked other staffers to guarantor said loan. Well, he skipped town, fled the country and left his co-workers holding



the bag and having to pay off his loan.

I know people who have taken in waifs off the street, given them a good home, sent them to school, only to have them turn around and rob them blind. One man swore to me that he would never ever help anyone in that way again.



**TONY ROBINSON**

### INSURANCE

Even doctors who are sworn to help others do not escape, as in the United States they have to buy malpractice insurance, for if they stop to render assistance to anyone in distress on the street and something goes wrong, they can be sued.

A victim is dying from an accident, a doctor stops to assist, but in the turmoil and melee of the emergency, something goes wrong. The patient’s life is saved, but still sues the doctor because he now walks

with a limp.

I have known women who took in men out of pity, only to be punished for their kindness. Or did they have ulterior motives? Who knows?

Still, the winds of the world have shifted and too often people are punished for

**Acts of kindness are so often punished. Even the simple act of being a guarantor for a loan for a friend can lead to severe punishment.**

acts of kindness. No one escapes. Judges have freed prisoners only to have them return and murder again.

Lend money and see what often happens. Benevolence is often bashed.

Still, we cannot stop doing good deeds. Just be careful, for more and more the odds are stacked against you and your Good Samaritan deed may be sorely punished.

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## VIEWPOINT



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**"We have hit an all-time low as a people and a country. It is one of the most inhumane, cruel acts that could ever be taken by the Trump administration. There is no act lower than ripping innocent children from the arms of their mothers"** - Caribbean American Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke last month joined the outrage over President Donald Trump administration's policy to separate migrant children from their parents at the United States border. Trump later signed an executive order overturning the policy, but offered no solution on how to reunite separated families.

**"What I've seen here in Trinidad and Tobago is amazing work by communities really trying to understand this issue and respond to it. The government**



**is very engaged, not just with us but other global partners and communities here so that they can learn what this legal framework should look like (to fight terrorism)"** -

Irfan Saeed, director for the Office of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, U.S. Department of State, praises T&T's efforts to bolster regional security.

**"This nation must learn from this episode and reject authoritarian leadership in all its forms and never allow the advances made to be rolled back by the obsession with power of a single individual"** - Guyana's Natural Resources Minister Raphael Trotman calling on nationals to reject authoritarian leadership as he reacted to last month's ruling by the Trinidad and Tobago-based Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) that two term limits for presidents of the Caribbean community (CARICOM)



country was not illegal.

**"It means that our constitution is supreme. It means that if the constitution says there are only two terms for a person wanting to be president, then that is the law"** - Guyana Prime Minister Moses Nagamootoo supports term limits for the country's president as well.



**"Children should not be punished because their parents brought them here in search of a better life, making sacrifices and experiencing hardships many of us couldn't even imagine. True patriots will never turn their backs on these youngsters. Let me be clear, these are children who know no other home, and all Americans should be proud to have them here. We will not push them into the shadows. We will fight to give them the chance to follow Lady Liberty out from those shadows"** - New York's Caribbean



**American Assemblyman Nick Perry defends DACA.**

**"No majority group has ever kindly given freedom/rights to any minority. We have always had to fight for it ... Black women have always had to prove themselves 100 percent more to get a fraction of basic human rights and respect. To work twice as hard to get a piece of what is owed to us. And from before we even know ourselves before we can even articulate our injustices, we are fighting for freedom. We are born fighting for freedom"** - Zeleca Julien, an activist from Trinidad and Tobago, explains the struggles of people of her race and gender.



**"A lot of persons may think that coming back from a baby is hard. Listen, every day is hard. Training itself is hard, so I am looking forward to the challenge"** - Jamaican Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, an Olympic and World Championship gold medal sprinter, explains her philosophy on returning to the sport after giving birth to her first child.



**"Upsetting, but not shocking ... on Easter, also known as Resurrection Day, to many, it was reported that after minutes of wishing the nation a Happy Easter, President Trump vowed 'no more DACA deal'"** - Rodneyse Bichotte, a Haitian



**American in the New York State Assembly, reacts last month to United States President Donald Trump's announcement that there will be no more Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).**

**"This is a tradition that successive administrations have continued, in the interest of democracy and accountability and we are extremely disappointed that Prime Minister Andrew Holness seems O.K. with the current state of affairs. Does he plan to be the prime minister who killed an effective and time-honored method of engaging with the press? We hope not and we call now for him to give his personal attention to this matter"** - Dionne Jackson Miller, president of the Press Association of Jamaica, expresses her frustration with the government for not resuming post-Cabinet press briefings.



**"It is like our birthright and we cannot allow persons from outside to come and take away our birthright. We have to position ourselves, we have to take on the mantle (and) do what we have to do ... as it relates to medicinal marijuana research"** - Science and Technology Minister Dr. Andrew Wheatley says Jamaica must stake its claim on all local strains for marijuana for research and development.



- Compiled from various sources.



## Know your rights on immigration

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9A)

defensive asylum cases in courtroom-like proceedings. The judge will hear arguments from both of the following parties:

The individual (and his or her attorney, if represented) and the U.S. government, which is represented by an attorney from Immigration and Customs Enforcement, (ICE).

The immigration judge then decides whether the individual is eligible for asylum. If found eligible, the immigration judge will order asylum to be granted. If found ineligible for asylum, the immigration judge will determine whether

the individual is eligible for any other forms of relief from removal.

If found ineligible for other forms of relief, the immigration judge will order the individual to be removed from the U.S.

Note that the immigration judge's decision can be appealed by either party.

These are the laws on the book, despite of what Trump says. Know your rights!

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



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*Jamaica Celebrating 56 Years  
of Independence*

INNER



**Inner Circle has been one of the world's greatest bands. The members are based in South Florida, but their music has resonated globally. It all started in Jamaica 50 years ago. Story on page 3B**

CIRCLE

**Caribbean  day**

**In 2018 Jamaica's Emancipation Day is Aug. 1.  
Independence Day is Aug. 6.**





A Caribbean Today special 56<sup>th</sup> Independence feature

## REACHING OUT: Jamaica moves to tap diaspora resources in U.S.

Jamaica's government is planning to more strategically harness the vast amount of resources available within the country's diaspora, according to Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Senator Parnell Charles Jr.

Charles said once a way can be found to pool those resources, Jamaica stands to benefit tremendously.

The minister of state made that declaration while delivering the keynote address at a reception given in his honor by Jamaica's Ambassador to the United States Audrey Marks last month at the Embassy of Jamaica in Washington, D.C.

Charles said that there was need to improve the communication that flows to the diaspora so that members can have access to more accurate information about what is happening in Jamaica and how the government can facilitate Jamaicans who support their country.

In his first direct interaction with the diaspora in the U.S., Charles, who was recently appointed state minister with responsibility for the diaspora, told the audience Jamaica must also give back to the diaspora.

"I want to carve out a new dispensation to find ways to have a mutually beneficial exchange between members of the Jamaican diaspora and my ministry," he explained. "I believe that there is still this mindset that the diaspora must be the only one to give. However, this giving must be a two-way street."

### INVESTMENT

The minister urged the diaspora to look at investing

in their homeland.

"Now is the time to invest in Jamaica as there are myr-

iad investment opportunities that await you in your home-



Charles, left, listens to 93-year-old Leo Edwards, who has served the Jamaican diaspora in various capacities of the past 70 years. At right is his 90-year-old wife Carmen. Looking on is Marks.

land, so I urge you to take advantage of this opportunity."

According to Charles: "We now need to focus on connectivity, partnership and facilitation so that Jamaicans living outside of Jamaica not only feel - but know - that they are not just seen as members of the diaspora, but that they are an integral part of the development of their homeland."

The reception was attended by Jamaican diaspora representatives from New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Delaware, Baltimore, Virginia and Washington, D.C. Charles was in the U.S. capital to lead Jamaica's delegation to the 48th Regular Session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS).



## Jamaica's Bartlett is 'Tourism Minister of the Year Worldwide'

KINGSTON, Jamaica – Jamaica's Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett is "Tourism Minister of the Year Worldwide".

Bartlett received the award in Germany at the recent ITB Berlin 2018, the world's leading travel trade show.

The award was voted on by the Pacific Area Travel Writers Association, a professional organization of travel writers founded in 1998 at the Pacific Area Travel Association (PATA) Conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Jamaica also won another major award as the "Best Tourism Destination for Adventure".

Bartlett said he is "both happy and humbled" to be recognized for such a prestigious award and in front of "an audience of the tourism and travel industry's finest."

"This is really for Jamaica and the outstanding team here at the Ministry of Tourism and, by extension, the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB)."

### GRATIFYING

Bartlett said the award is especially gratifying as it showed the hard work to sell Jamaica to the world is being recognized by industry players globally.

"We had a great 2017, and there is every indication that we will surpass all predictions for 2018," the minister said.

"Jamaica has a world-class tourism product that is in demand. We are now the number-one destination for British tourists and we have been seeing our numbers in Europe continuing on a steady rise. I was in Greece the other day for a think tank, and Jamaica continues to be all the rave."



Bartlett

Bartlett added that Jamaica is starting to see the benefits of having hosted the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development, which ran for three days last November.

"The kind of publicity we got out of hosting that mega conference is something we could never pay for," he explained.

"Jamaica is certainly poised for greatness, and tourism continues to be that main engine of economic growth that has the potential to solve our problems. We are out here in the marketplace, where we continue to have a bird's eye view of how well our product is being received by the rest of the world."

- Edited from CMC.



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# Salute to Jamaica

A Caribbean Today special 56<sup>th</sup> Independence feature

## 50 YEARS OF MAGIC: Inner Circle marks major milestone in music

**PATRICK SMIKLE**

On the night of June 10, the Jamaican band Inner Circle played to a near sold out crowd at Capt. Hiram's Resort in Sebastian, on Florida's Treasure Coast.

The next day the six member aggregation - Roger Lewis, who plays rhythm guitar, Ian Lewis the bassist, drummer Lancelot Hall, keyboard player Bernard "Touter" Harvey, vocalist Trevor "Skatta" Bonnick, and lead guitarist Ronny Gutierrez, the youngest and most recent addition to the band, along with their supporting crew, were on a plane bound for England. There, they were scheduled to begin their "Rockers 50" tour of European and Middle East countries.

The schedule includes 27 concerts in 20 European countries; three each in Spain and Switzerland, two each in the United Kingdom, Germany and Austria, and one in Slovenia, Morocco, The Czech Republic, The Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, France, Estonia, Greece, Serbia, Denmark, Slovakia, Sweden, Ireland and Latvia. In between, there will be concerts in Israel and Lebanon.

The band will be on the road until September.

### ENERGY

This may sound like a tough schedule for a group of musicians who, with the exception of Gutierrez, are not young men.

"Yeah, but they're used to it," said sound engineer Eric Lee-Young.

"We've done ten shows in eleven days in nine different countries," he told **Caribbean Today** during a rehearsal break at the band's Miami, Florida studios.

To hear Roger Lewis tell it, the band members relish touring. They are energized by it. He and brother Ian are the founding members of Inner Circle. While Roger hesitates to directly take credit for its formation, he does recall that he was "the first one to get the music vibe."

Roger was eight years old when his older sister took him to a Vere John's Opportunity Hour concert at Carib theater in Kingston, Jamaica. It was his first experience of live music.

"That's where the bug bit me," said Roger. "After that it was all about wanting to play the guitar, all about being on stage, all about music, music, music."

### STARTING OUT

By the time Roger started



The late, great Jacob Miller helped Inner Circle point the way forward.

high school at age 11 at Jamaica College (JC), he was already sneaking out of his Mona Heights, Jamaica home and into the nearby Mona Community Center to concerts by the top Jamaican bands such as the Mighty Vikings, and Byron Lee and the Dragonaires. It was about that time that he bought his first guitar.

At JC Roger, got together with another fledgling musician, keyboard player Michael "Ibo" Cooper, also a Mona Heights resident. Along the way, other young musicians would come and go, including drummer Willie Stewart and guitarist Stephen "Cat" Coore, who along with Cooper, would go on to form Third World, another great Jamaican band.

However, Roger and Ian Lewis remained the founding core.

The band got its first professional engagement when it played at an East Kingston nightclub. The main attraction was the Mighty Vikings, but that band was going to be late because of an earlier engagement. So Lewis and his yet-to-be-named band became the curtain raiser. It wasn't a resounding success. Some patrons booed.

"We didn't know what we were doing," Lewis admitted.

But they did get paid ... a meal of curried goat and rice for each member of the band.

### PERSERVERANCE

Early missteps notwithstanding, the band members persevered. With a regular weekend gig at the popular Tunnel nightclub at Liguanea, St. Andrew, members honed their skills and by 1968 Inner Circle (nobody seems certain how the name came about) was a fully-fledged professional unit.

Roger Lewis's recounting of the artistes the band played with and/or arranged for in those early years as a professional unit reads like a who's who of top Jamaican singers of the 1970s and early 1980s: The

Wailers (Inner Circle played on the groundbreaking "Catch a Fire" album), Eric Donaldson (they arranged and backed his massive hit "Cherry Oh Baby") Hopeton Lewis, the Slickers, Ken Boothe, Max Romeo, Junior Byles, Delroy Wilson and others.

Inner Circle worked with legendary producer

Clancy Eccles, who got the band involved in Bandwagon, a 1971-72 project in which a group of Jamaica's top artistes came together and did shows to support the successful general campaign of the Michael Manley-led People's National Party.

"Nothing like that has ever happened again in the annals of music connected to politics," Roger Lewis said. "It was great."

For a brief period, the band flirted with two lead vocalists - William "Bunny Rugs" Clarke and Jacob Miller. According to Roger Lewis, a difficult decision had

to be made. It came down to Miller, partly because Clarke (who would go on to replace "Prilly" Hamilton as the lead

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10B)

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# Salute to Jamaica

## A Caribbean Today special 56<sup>th</sup> Independence feature

### CALABASH: Jamaica's soul-soothing 'art of words' stirs conversation

DAWN A. DAVIS

ST. ELIZABETH, Jamaica - Every two years Treasure Beach, a sleepy fishing village on the southwest coast here, overflows with storytelling, poetry, music and crafts.

This year, the Calabash International Literary Festival was no different, with some of the best poets, writers and musicians from across the globe entertaining thousands hungry for the art of words.

With the gently lapping Caribbean Sea providing a meditative lullaby in the background, poets and novelists read from their works on the huge thatched-covered stage, moving listeners with their visually stunning poetic potions. Some cried, some laughed. Some leapt to their feet. Many bought books to keep the words and emotions close.

Among the poets on show were the United States-based trio of Jamaican Lorna Goodison, Guyanese-Grenadian Malika Booker and Liberian Jabbeh Wesley.

Goodison's works reveal the sensibility of someone who has lived a life filled with the special cadence and character that shaped her island home.

"When I was a very little girl, I went to the market with



Jabbeh Wesley

my mother and a man who sells herbs came up to me and said people would come all over to hear me because I would make them feel better," she told **Caribbean Today** during a break at Calabash.

Age five at the time, Goodison remembers being frightened. But the man proved prophetic. She's written numerous

poetry books, short stories, a memoir and essays, with many translated into other languages and anthologized. Goodison embraces her international acclamation.

"I have come to accept that maybe what I do in itself is inspiring," she said.

A snippet from her poem

"Two Little Girls" offers evidence.

*"Two little girls to sit in the garden to play at tea. I had good-hair, they sent me. My mother made me wear gloves, and I stepped past Miss Bea selling oranges at the gate past Curriman and George and Mr. Butty Past Vie who sold her waitress body and hovered above the gutter like a net-over-taffeta cloud..."*

#### LANGUAGE

Goodison is a professor of English language and literature at University of Michigan. She's an accomplished painter and her love of fine art aesthetics has shaped her sense of language.

"My work is very energy driven," Goodison mused. "I like work that is driven by the senses. I like the fact that you can smell it, taste it, and see it ..."

"Very often intense beauty will bring up intense pain and sadness, then I think of the opposite. It's always so much about light and dark."

The images of black and white, light and dark can be used to describe the life of Liberian-born poet/writer Patricia Jabbeh Wesley. A sur-

vivor of the Liberian civil war, Jabbeh Wesley writes poems about her experiences.

Dressed in regal African attire, Jabbeh Wesley delivered the emotional "War Baby" at Calabash.

*"... When all the real men had left for war, and the women, left behind to watch the rockets fall, to watch the children die of kwashiorkor, of measles, to watch it all go up in smoke, and then in the quiet, right when it was too cold to wait, commandos took the women in the early mornings and evenings, the bloodless part of the civil war, now becoming bloody ..."*

#### BEAUTY

Jabbeh Wesley sees beauty in cultural nuances. She told a story of encountering a group of women mango sellers on her way to Calabash. She stopped to buy, but wanted to keep the memory of the women and the landscape with her, so she asked the driver to take a photograph. It wasn't just about the women, who reminded her of West African fruit sellers. She believes she also became part of that landscape, melding into the cultural voices.

"I was fascinated by the music of the language and cul-

ture," said Jabbeh Wesley.

Now professor of English and creative writing at Pennsylvania State University, Jabbeh Wesley is completing her memoir. Her first time in Jamaica and Calabash left her hopeful.

"I am impressed by the kind of writing I see coming out of Jamaica, and the Caribbean," she said. "Part of it has to do with the cultural revolution that was highly inspired by Bob Marley and other great writers of Jamaican origin."

#### FEISTY

Malika Booker is one such voice. The product of Guyanese and Grenadian parentage, Booker's poetic sensibilities reflect the feisty, hot-peppered nature of the region. She is a multi-disciplinary and theatre artist, writer, poet and teacher.

"It's all about culture," Booker explained. "I look at a culture to get to the heart of it. My work is experimental. It's not linear. I'm more about finding different ways of telling a story. I'm more about beauty, emotions, colors."

Her reading of "Nine Nights", from her book of

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6B)

## Lorna Goodison wins Windham-Campbell Prize

Jamaican Lorna Goodison recently won the 2018 Windham-Campbell Prize, among the world's richest literary awards.

Goodison was born in Kingston. She attended St. Hugh's High School and the Jamaica School of Art. She teaches at the University of Michigan in the United States.

The Windham-Campbell Prize, worth \$165,000, is awarded for literary achieve-

ment or promise.

Goodison was one of eight writers to win the prize this year. She is the author of 13 collections of poems and two collections of short stories.



Goodison



**The Honorable  
Barbara J. Jordan**  
Miami-Dade County  
Commissioner  
DISTRICT ONE



## Congratulations on 56 Years of Independence!

The residents of Miami-Dade County join all Jamaicans, locally and abroad, as they celebrate their Independence. Let us all observe this milestone as Jamaica marks its 56th year of self-governance. Let's take a moment to rejoice and reflect on a country that has produced world renowned music composers, legendary sports figures, great literary artists, distinguished physicians, and record-breaking aviators.

Congratulations on this special day and best wishes for continued prosperity in the years to come!

Barbara J. Jordan

## BRIEFS

### Beres in Broward

Jamaican singer Beres Hammond will perform on **July 6** in the Aurene Theater at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts as part of his "All Love Tour 2018" featuring the Harmony House Musicians.

The center is located at 201 S.W. Fifth Ave. in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

### Jamaican Jerk Festival

A feast of jerk cuisine is on tap

this month in the Big Apple. The Grace Jamaican Jerk Festival heads to New York City from noon to **8 p.m. July 22** at Roy Wilkins Park.

For more information, call **718-425-1177** or visit **DCJerkFestival.com** or **JerkFestivalNY.com**.

- Compiled from multiple sources.





# Salute to Jamaica

A Caribbean Today special 56<sup>th</sup> Independence feature

## REGGAE ROCKS: Jamaica eyes significance of music tourism

KINGSTON, Jamaica – Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett has pointed to music tourism as a way of expanding the industry based on Jamaica's strength as the region's top entertainment destination.

Addressing a recent graduation ceremony in the western parish of St. James, Bartlett said that in order to fully capitalize, "we are positioning" the tourism sector to work strategically with the music industry to create valuable products and experiences for visitors.

"Our music continues to set Jamaica apart from rival destinations," the minister explained.

"Each year more and more reggae music fans converge on the island to enjoy great music and the offerings of a remarkable destination.

"The resounding success of music festivals like 'Reggae Sumfest' and 'Sting' have helped to enhance our international profile significantly,"



Festivals like "Reggae Sumfest" have been highly successful.

he added.

### BENEFITS

Bartlett said that while his ministry is committed to fostering the continued development of the entertainment industry and its full integration into the tourism product, he is fully cognizant that there is still more to be done to maximize the potential of "this important" sub-sector.

"So, as we put in place the

framework to further diversify our tourism product," Bartlett said, "we are well aware of the enormous benefits if we get this right.

"We have to give visitors more things to do when they come to our island. We have to tap into their passion points, and music is a great way to start. Simply put, we are placing a special focus on developing entertainment tourism as part of our growth

strategy," he added.

### NO COMPLACENCY

Bartlett said that while the country's goal of welcoming five million visitors annually remains on target, there is simply no room for complacency.

He said that as good as the current offerings may be, stakeholders should always be looking to innovate and focus on growing earnings per visitor and retaining more of

those earnings in Jamaica.

"It goes without saying that entertainment is an area in which we are world beaters," he added.

"Therefore we are taking the necessary steps to capitalize on the tremendous potential Jamaica has in this area to significantly boost our arrivals and tourism earnings," he said.

- Edited from CMC.



## Jamaican nurses in Florida rise to homelands healthcare challenge

**MICHELLE CAWLEY  
DRESERIS**

The valuable work of professional, deeply caring United States-based Jamaican nurses in their homeland and elsewhere has not gone unnoticed.

Prime Minister Andrew Holness recently recognized the outstanding contributions made by the Jamaica Nurses' Association of Florida, Inc. by presenting the Prime Minister's Medal of Appreciation for Nation Building in Community Service to the JNAF during a ceremony at Jamaica House in Kingston.

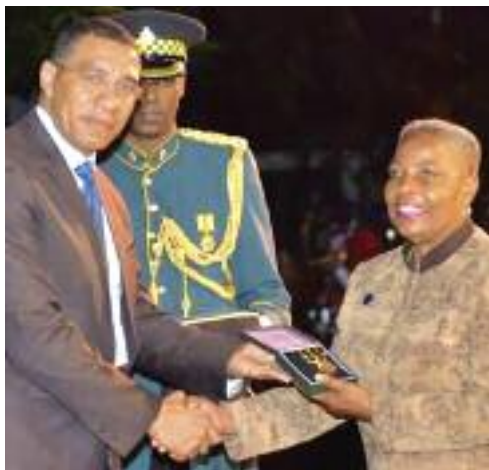
JNAF President Joan Howard received the large 24-karat gold medallion adorned with a black, gold and green ribbon - colors of Jamaica's flag - honoring her organization's 35-year-history of dedication to people and organizations in need of care in South Florida, Jamaica and around the world.

Holness presented 65 awards to honor individuals and organizations in Jamaica and across the diaspora for their significant contributions to the economic, cultural and social development of Jamaica. Other recipients included: Food for the Poor, Inc., the Florida-based charitable and relief organization; the National Library of Jamaica; and Beverly Ford, Jamaica's former honorary

consul, Houston, Texas.

### HONOR

On May 6, the JNAF held its Annual Nurses Week Service at Parkway Baptist Church in Miami Gardens, Florida. Howard, a registered nurse, presented the gold medal and flowers to the



Holness, left, presents Howard with the Prime Minister's Medal of Appreciation for Nation Building in Community Service.

JNAF's 1983 founder, retired nurse Joyce Harris Wright, and shared it with JNAF's past presidents and members in South Florida.

"I am honored to be alive to share in this prestigious award to the JNAF, the Jamaica Prime Minister's Medal of Appreciation for Nation Building in Community Service to Jamaica," said Harris Wright.

Howard embraced the JNAF and its accomplishments.

"I am so pleased to be surrounded by many of the other JNAF founding members," she said. "They took on the mission to empower nurses and to do charitable service in the community locally, and across the globe."

Howard works as a charge nurse in an intensive care unit at in Miami, Florida. She is also an adjunct professor, teaching nursing at St. Thomas University. As JNAF's president, she leads the organization's drive to back its members' ambitions to provide quality care.

"Our goal is to meet the needs of the less fortunate and to empower and be a support group for Jamaican nurses," Howard said of the

JNAF, which currently has some 200 members.

"We have a rich legacy of community service in Jamaica, Africa, Guyana, Haiti and other countries. Our nurses volunteer their time and pay their way on mission trips where we provide medical and nursing care along with teams of physicians and dentists. We

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8B)

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# Salute to Jamaica

## A Caribbean Today special 56<sup>th</sup> Independence feature

### Jamaica wants developed country status by 2030 ~ ambassador to U.S.

Jamaica is making great progress towards achieving its first long-term national development plan, according to Audrey Marks, the country's ambassador to the United States.

According to Marks, the plan aims to put Jamaica in a position to achieve developed country status by 2030.

In delivering the keynote address at the sixth annual fundraising dinner of Maryland-based Partners of Good Shepherd Jamaica recently, Marks said the plan is based on the comprehensive vision that Jamaica can be the place of choice to live, work, raise family and do

business.

Marks praised Partners for Good Shepherd Jamaica, crediting its activities to helping to achieve the targets outlined in Jamaica's national development plan in areas such as poverty reduction and access to education and health care.

#### STRIDES

According to the ambassador, Jamaica is making great strides in its macro-economic agenda, to the extent that for the first time in over a decade no new taxes were introduced this



Marks, right, speaks at the Partners for Good Shepherd Jamaica's fundraiser.

year. She said more Jamaicans are employed than in the history of the country, that the government has created over

60,000 new jobs in the past two years and has cut unemployment to 9.6 percent.

Marks said the Jamaican

dollar, which had depreciated over 50 percent between 2012 and 2016, has stabilized and has a floating exchange rate between J\$125 and J\$128 to one U.S. dollar.

However, Marks said that "despite the many good things that are happening in Jamaica, we are still struggling with crime, especially in the area of lottery scamming. As a result, the government has taken drastic actions to tackle this monster."



## Jamaica successfully secures bid for UNESCO Committee seat

Jamaica has secured a place on another UNESCO committee.

The country was elected unopposed to a seat on the Intergovernmental Committee of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) during the General Assembly of the Convention recently in Paris, France.

"Jamaica expresses its sincere thanks for the overwhelming support we have received," said Culture Minister Olivia Grange, who led the delegation.

"We are heartened by the show of camaraderie particu-

larly by St. Kitts and Nevis, who withdrew and in the end provided full backing for Jamaica to sit on the committee. We do not take this level of support for granted."

The other countries on the committee are The Netherlands, Azerbaijan, Poland, China, Japan, Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka, Cameroon, Djibouti, Togo and Kuwait

#### FIRST

The election to the committee marks the first time Jamaica is to serve on the UNESCO body.

Last November, Jamaica



Grange, left, discusses Jamaica's heritage with UNESCO Director General Audrey Azoulay.

completed a successful four-year mandate on the World Heritage Committee.

In addressing the General

Assembly, Grange encouraged countries that are party to the convention to make every effort to build capacity within local communities to increase sustainable development for creative practitioners, culture bearers and the community at large.

The minister emphasized the role which Jamaica's heritage has played in shaping the country's identity and in providing economic benefits to communities and individuals in Jamaica.

"Jamaica is proud of the fact that the musical heritage of the Maroons has been rec-

ognized through its inscription in 2008," she told the General Assembly.

"We also look forward to future inscriptions of our reggae music and the new religion of Rastafari, which we have given the world.

"Jamaica encourages all countries to seek to work towards recognition of their indigenous elements through inscription."

The 13th session of the ICH Committee will take place in Mauritius in Nov. 2018, where Jamaica's submission for the inscription of reggae music on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity will be considered.

- Edited from CMC.



## CALABASH: Jamaica's soul-soothing 'art of words' stirs conversation

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4B)

poems titled "Pepper Seed", reflected her haughty Caribbean-ness.

"... When Lazarus fas up and step across the threshold of he own wake, rank with corpse stink, the wake bruck up. Who put foot out of door quick time. Who start pray fast fast. Who faint and get revive with smelling salts. Miss Gibbs forget she hips bad, till she tek two steps and fall bra-tap. Mr. Power start moan bout the good good money he dash way on pretty funeral frock for Betty and now she can't even use it. Uncle Johnny start fling rum shouting You dead man, you dead! like libation have any power over the resurrect-ed..."

Booker founded an organization called Malika's

Poetry Kitchen, a space for writers to develop their craft and build community. She believes many writers are isolated. She aims to change that. The festival's audience, she believes, got her message.

"I found that at Calabash I didn't have to explain one poem," said Booker, who teaches creative writing and poetry to aspiring writers, "each poem could have its own space.

"When I got on stage and started reading I realized the audience was getting the nuances. Then it was just about the energy. It felt like a conversation."

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



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# Salute to Jamaica

A Caribbean Today special 56<sup>th</sup> Independence feature

## Destination Jamaica wins three top global travel awards

Jamaica has won three top travel industry awards in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Jamaica won the “Best Caribbean Destination” title, as voted by Canadian travel agents. The award was announced at the recent Baxter Travel Media’s annual Agents’ Choice Awards Gala. Jamaica also won the “World of Cruising Wave Award” for “Favorite Destination”, while the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) won the 2018 TravelAge West WAVE Award for “International Tourism Board Providing the Best Travel Agent Support”.

Director of Tourism Donovan White welcomed the latest accolades, noting that

Jamaica has much to offer travelers - the reason visitors keep coming back to the Caribbean island.

### ‘HUGE DRAW’

“Jamaica continues to be a top travel destination for many reasons,” White explained. “Our people are our greatest asset and continue to be a huge draw for those visiting. Not to mention that the destination offers exceptionally delicious cuisine and a diverse range of activities and accommodations that appeal to every type of traveler.

“Combined with its rich cultural heritage, fantastic climate and unparalleled hospitality, Jamaica is truly a gem in the

## New initiatives aim to boost Jamaica’s tourism industry

Jamaica’s Ministry of Tourism has embarked on several initiatives aimed at strengthening the capability of its current workforce.

They include the launch of the Jamaica Centre of Tourism Innovation (JCTI) and the Tourism Service Excellence Awards (TSEA).

A first of its kind in Jamaica and the Caribbean, the JCTI is part of the Ministry’s five-pillar growth strategy to provide new products, markets, partnerships, investments and the renewal of human capital. The government believes it will significantly and positively impact the growth of Jamaica’s hospitality and tourism education.

“The quality of our tourism product, the innovative development of our human capital and Jamaica’s continued recognition as the preeminent go-to destination in the



Bartlett

Caribbean are inseparably linked,” Edmund Bartlett, Jamaica’s minister of tourism, noted in a recent statement.

“With the Jamaica Centre of Tourism Innovation and Tourism Service Excellence Awards, we are investing now in our people for the prosperity of our collective future.”

### CERTIFICATION

Implemented by the Tourism Product Development Company, JCTI is aiming to offer specialist education certification programs in tourism and hospitality. Its mission is to develop the cadre of workers delivering service excellence to support Jamaica’s competitive edge as a world-class destination.

Earlier this year, Jamaica’s tourism product received a boost with the graduation of 150 persons certified in hospitality industry analytics and accredited as hospitality supervisors. Individuals also received the American Culinary Federation certification.



Members of the Jamaica Tourist Board team in Canada, led by Philip Rose, center, regional director, pose with the “Best Caribbean Destination” award at the Baxter Travel Media gala. Others, from left, are: Dan Hamilton, Emma Madsen, Louise Paquette, Judy Nash, Jacqueline Marshall and Raquel Queensborough.

Caribbean,” White added.

More than 5,500 agents voted in 43 categories.

In the U.S., the Jamaica Tourist Board celebrated its most recent accolade, the “2018

TravelAge West WAVE Award” in the category of “International Tourism Board Providing the Best Travel Agent Support”. The award was presented at the

Western Agents’ Votes of Excellence Awards at the Ritz Carlton Marina Del Rey in California.



## READY CHEF



Jamaican chef Wenford Patrick Simpson gets ready for a culinary demonstration during the Caribbean Tourism Organization’s (CTO) annual Caribbean Week in New York City last month. Simpson kicked off the week by preparing Jamaica’s national dish ackee and saltfish, served with bammy, at a Bloomingdale’s store in Manhattan.

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## 56th Independence service

An ecumenical service to recognize Jamaica’s 56th Independence will be held on Aug. 5 at the Cooper City Church of God in Florida.

The service will be held at 4 p.m. by the Consulate General of Jamaica in Miami. Reverend Karl Francis, senior pastor at the Living Word Open Bible Church in Cooper City, is scheduled to deliver the sermon. Dr. Clyde Bailey, executive pastor at Cooper City Church of God, will be

the officiating clergy.

The event, open to Jamaicans and friends of the diaspora, will also include cultural performances, including the the South Florida Caribbean Chorale, Tallawah Mento Band, Jamaica Folk Revue and Sierra Norwood Youth Voice Ensemble.

The Cooper City Church of God is located at 9191 Stirling Rd. In Cooper City.





# Salute to Jamaica

A Caribbean Today special 56<sup>th</sup> Independence feature

## JTB appoints new Midwest district sales manager

The Jamaica Tourist Board's (JTB) has named a new district sales manager for its Midwest, United States office.

Christopher Dobson's appointment is effective July 1. He will be based in Chicago, Illinois.

Dobson has more than two decades experience as a sales and marketing professional. He will oversee more than 14 U.S. states, working with travel partners to promote Jamaica.

In addition to designing and implementing programs and activities to meet the objec-

tives of the JTB's sales and marketing strategy,

Dobson will conduct seminars as part of the destination specialist program for agents wishing to become certified travel consultants. Educating the travel trade, corporate civic and consumer groups on the features, attractions and benefits of their clients' vacationing, and hosting



Dobson

meetings or conventions in Jamaica, are also part of his portfolio.

### RESURGENCE

"I am pleased to be given an opportunity to serve in this capacity and look forward to helping the destination grow its market share from the Midwest," Dobson stated in a recent JTB press release.

Prior to his appointment, Dobson was business development officer Northeast USA.



## Jamaican nurses in Florida rise to healthcare challenge

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5B)

educate and provide health assessments and screenings."

### MISSION

For the third year, between Aug. 15 and 17, JNAF nurses, partnering with doctors, nurses and dentists from Florida, New York and Georgia, will be at Dinthill Technical High School in Jamaica, where they plan to offer free health care, including screenings and vaccinations to students. They also plan to provide books and other school supplies.

The JNAF, a 501(c)(3)

non-profit organization, holds annual fundraisers to provide medical missions and two annual scholarships of \$1,000 for a nursing student in Jamaica and one in South Florida. The organization also has a choir, which sings classical, sacred, gospel, folk and reggae. But the JNAF never wavers from its core goal.

"Nursing is a dynamic field that takes passion because you're touching people's lives every day," said Howard. "You're problem-solving and always must be concerned about the safety and satisfaction of patients,

staff and visitors."

Their mission is not without obstacles.

"There's a shortage of nurses today," said Howard. "Baby boomers are retiring and the retention of experienced nurses is a challenge in healthcare today."

*Michelle Cawley Dreseris is a freelance writer for Caribbean Today. For more information on the JNAF, Inc., contact Joan Howard, JNAF Inc. president at [www.jamaicanursesoffl.org](http://www.jamaicanursesoffl.org) or [jamaicanursesflorida@gmail.com](mailto:jamaicanursesflorida@gmail.com).*



## Jamaican judge promoted to Circuit Court in Florida

Jamaican American Renatha S. Francis has been appointed a judge on the Circuit Court of the Eleventh Judicial District serving Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Francis's appointment by Florida Governor Rick Scott became effective last month. It elevated her from a judge in the Miami-Dade County Court, where she had been appointed by Scott in Aug. 2017.

Francis joins judges Tanya Brinkley and Teretha Lundy (retiring) as the only three black women in the cadre of 123 judges currently serving Miami-Dade County. She is the second black female judge to the county's Circuit Court. Retired Judge Melvia Green, who was appointed in 1989, was the first.

According to the Caribbean Bar Association, Francis joins a list of Caribbean immigrants who



Francis

have "sewn their own unique thread into the fabric" of the American society and culture.

Francis attended Bridgeport Primary School, St. Hugh's High School and the University of the West Indies in Jamaica before migrating to the United States.



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# Salute to Jamaica

A Caribbean Today special 56<sup>th</sup> Independence feature

## Government looks to boost investment infrastructure



Shaw

Jamaica's government is claiming commitment to providing an enabling infrastructure for investment.

According to Industry Minister Audley Shaw, Jamaica is fast becoming the Caribbean's poster child for fiscal prudence and economic growth, buoyed by a skilled and talented workforce with current and relevant legislative framework support established, as well as fledgling industries.

Speaking recently at the opening ceremony of the third staging of the Jamaica Investment Forum (JIF), the country's premier investment event, which was held recently in Montego Bay, Shaw explained he is charged with micro-economic mobilization. He told the gathering of business leaders, investors, entrepreneurs and media that the Jamaica government has sought to build a strong and robust landscape in which businesses can thrive, recognizing that comprehensive and supportive business facilitation frameworks are essential for investments and business development.

### PLATFORMS

According to Shaw, the government has begun to develop two complementary electronic platforms designed to allow

the investment and exporting community a more efficient service.

"The National Business Portal will be the central point through which all investment projects are routed, giving access to all relevant public stakeholders and thereby providing transparency and government cohesion," he said, "while the National Trade Portal will serve as a precursor to the Electronic Single Window, aimed at fast tracking information sharing, facilitating online application submissions and enabling back office interface among Government's Border Regulatory Agencies."

Shaw said the trade portal was approved by Cabinet in the 2017/18 budget under the Trade Facilitation Initiative. The World Bank is supporting both projects as part of its Foundations for Competitiveness and Growth Project.

### POLICY

The minister explained that Jamaica's move toward coordinating its development as a premier investment hub began with the forming of the National Investment Policy, approved for development by Cabinet in Feb. 2017.

"This pivotal blueprint is the overarching policy framework by which the government of Jamaica will attract and facilitate investments and will guide the development, administration and monitoring of the investment community, to ensure cohesion among all related initiatives, programs, incentive regimes and stakeholder contributions," Shaw said.



## Taylor is top female cricketer

West Indies women's team captain, Jamaican Stafanie Taylor, has been named the region's female "Cricketer-of-the-Year".

Taylor also won the West Indies "ODI Cricketer-of-the-Year" award.

Shortly after the announcement of the awards last month, the Jamaica government made a promise to do more to help develop women's cricket in the region.

Speaking during a closing ceremony of the recent



Taylor

Women's Championships, which was held in Jamaica, Jamaica's Sports Minister Olivia Grange said the women's game was becoming more prominent and more needed to be done to produce the next generation of players.

Grange said the Jamaican government, through the Institute of Sports, had partnered with the Jamaican Cricket Association (JCA) to stage a primary schools cricket competition, where it would be mandatory for two females to be included in the squad and at least one in the team.

- Edited from CMC.



## LEADERSHIP HONOR



Major Karl Chambers, center, president and founder of Integrity Children's Fund (ICF), receives the Eagle Award for his leadership and commitment to the organization's mission of delivering hope and education to Jamaica's vulnerable children. Presenting the award is ICF Vice President Dr. Chris Parker. At right is Marcia Chambers. The Atlanta, Georgia-based ICF has supported five educational institutions in Jamaica since its inception over 16 years ago. According to retired Major Chambers, the institutions that have benefitted are Jones Town Learning Center; Operation Restoration Christian School in western Kingston; Jacob's Well Basic School in Salt Marsh, Trelawny; Peter's Rock in upper St. Andrew; and Teamwork Basic School in Montego Bay, St. James.

## Jamaica hosts CARICOM heads of government conference

Jamaica will welcome 200 foreign officials to the 39th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) this month.

The meeting, scheduled to take place in the western capital of Montego Bay, will be hosted by Prime Minister Andrew Holness, who assumes chairmanship of the conference on July 1.

The foreign officials expected include heads of state and government of CARICOM and their respective delegations, officials from other regional hemispheric and international bodies and institutions, as well as members of the diplomatic corps, both local and overseas, who are accredited to CARICOM.

Foreign Affairs Minister Kamina Johnson Smith said Jamaica welcomed the opportunity to host the conference, which is expected to address several critical issues that impact the economic and social advancement of the countries of the region.

"We are honored by it (chairmanship), as it gives us the great chance to play a major role in the development of the implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and, of course, the general integration



Johnson Smith

**Among the key agenda items expected at the conference are crime and violence, disaster management and climate change, and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy.**

movement in line with our development objectives and those of CARICOM member States," she told reporters prior to the conference.

### ALL IN

Johnson Smith said that all 15 heads of CARICOM and heads of associate members have confirmed their attendance – adding that for the first time in 15 years, there will be full participation.

"We take the strong presence as a signal of confidence in Jamaica's chairmanship as well as, perhaps, a positive and renewed energy and vigor around CARICOM and the potential that it holds for us all," she said.

The minister further noted that two special guests will attend the conference – Sebastián Piñera, president of Chile, and Cuba President Miguel Díaz-Canel.

"We welcome both presidents with open arms and look forward to hosting them here," Johnson Smith said.

"... They will both have the opportunity to engage with heads in that context, and we very much look forward to strengthening our partnerships with both countries."

In addition, United States Deputy Secretary John Sullivan is scheduled to host a breakfast for foreign ministers on July 6.

### AGENDA

Among the key agenda items expected at the conference are crime and violence, disaster management and climate change, and the CSME.

The conference of heads of government, which consists of leaders of the member states, is the supreme organ of the Caribbean community and determines and provides its policy direction.

Jamaica's hosting of the conference this year is in keeping with the regular system of rotation within CARICOM.

Holness's tenure will last until Dec. 31.

- Edited from CMC.





# Salute to Jamaica

## A Caribbean Today special 56<sup>th</sup> Independence feature

### ALL THAT JAZZ: Myrna Hague's keeps a musical genre alive

DAWN A. DAVIS

Started in 1990 by acclaimed Jamaican jazz great Sonny Bradshaw, the Ocho Rios Jazz Festival solidified Jamaica's contribution to the musical genre.

Bradshaw, who died in 2009, kept jazz's authenticity alive by refusing to introduce other musical elements into the festival, which averaged 30 events during the week-long affair.

It was always pure jazz. Now approaching its 30th year, the festival has maintained its originality, thanks to the late Bradshaw's wife, jazz singer Myrna Hague.

"When Sonny died, I thought about how to go forward," Hague told **Caribbean Today**. "For me to keep the festival alive meant that there were a lot of things I simply couldn't do. I couldn't do 30 events.

"But, by then a lot of live music venues had closed and a

lot of instrument-playing musicians either migrated out of the profession or the country. The landscape had changed considerably.

"But, it's still strictly a jazz festival," Hague explained. "It's a labor of love. It's about keeping a genre of music relevant and making it available for the next generation."

#### TOP ACTS

From Ocho Rios to Runaway Bay to Kingston, this year's festival, held last month, attracted top local acts, aspiring young talent and internationally acclaimed musicians, including pianist Stephen Scott, bassist Curtis Lundy and Jamaican pianist Marjorie Whyllie, who has also taken over as conductor for the festival.

Incorporating workshops, seminars and jam sessions, Hague is aiming to reach a large cross-section of music lovers. She also teaches history of jazz at the University of the West Indies in a bid to maintain and enhance the music that has shaped her life.

"We are opening up to young people, making a space for them," said Hague.

"We talk about the tradition, we talk about the history, we try to relate it to the Caribbean. We try to position it to the Caribbean so that young people feel connected. And I



Hague

tell them there is no jazz without the Caribbean."

Hague's definition of jazz is bound in ancestral connections. It's a musical practice borne out of the African retentions that are still to be found in the Caribbean, she explained. At its heart, she added, is music designed for people who were not allowed to speak their truth, but play it instead.

#### MARK

Raised in the United Kingdom, Hague gravitated to the music of jazz greats early and started to make a mark in the industry by the time she was a teenager. She remains faithful to the arts.

"I love the business, theater, music, dance," said Hague. "I love the world of artistic expression. I couldn't see myself doing anything else."

Her first break came as a teen in the U.K. when she was chosen to be lead singer in a band at a popular restaurant at the time. She was invited to perform in Jamaica, with Bradshaw and his group as the backing band. The connection clicked.

Serious about keeping jazz alive in Jamaica, Hague is working on post-doctoral thesis on Caribbean jazz, which she plans to present in a series of workshops around the island. Hague believes the music is bound to change because of its organic nature.

"It's going to take on influences," Hague explained.

"As long as we are anchored in our own tradition we can add, we can subtract and we can create in the same way we went from the collective sound of New Orleans jazz to swing to bebop to cool."

She's not nervous about the future of jazz.

"Where are we at this moment and how we can speak our truth from the experiences that we are having right now is important," Hague said.

"But, we are grounded in our tradition. So, I have no fear that jazz is going to die."

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



## 50 YEARS OF MAGIC: Inner Circle marks major milestone in music

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3B)

vocalist in Third World) split his time between Kingston and New York, while Jacob lived in Kingston full-time.

Until his death in a motor vehicle accident in March 1980, Jacob "Killer" Miller, as he came to be called, was co-writer and lead vocalist on some of Inner Circle's biggest hits, including "Keep On Knocking", "All Night 'Till Day Light", "Tenement Yard", "Disciplined Child", "Peace

Treaty" and "Standing Firm.

A recording contract with Chris Blackwell's Island Records in 1978 crowned that success.

Miller's untimely death hit members hard and almost led to Inner Circle's disbandment. But the group reunited in South Florida with founding members Ian and Roger Lewis and keyboard player "Touter" Harvey being the core. Major successes followed. There were two Grammy nominations, including a "Best Reggae Album" win in 1993 for "Bad Boys". The single of the same name from that album was used as the theme song for the successful reality television show "Cops" (currently the longest running show on television) and the Michael Bey-directed feature movies "Bad Boys" and "Bad Boys II", starring Will Smith and Martin Lawrence.

The song "Bad Boys" is still a radio station staple across Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. So is Inner Circle's follow-up hit "Sweat (A La La La Long)".

#### REWARDS

Asked what the success of

these songs has meant for the band financially, Roger Lewis responds wryly, "Can't complain."

Inner Circle has also ventured into the business side of the music industry. Circle House, its recording studio and rehearsal facility, which started as a small venture in Hollywood, Florida, and has since moved to Miami, is used by top artists from all genres of music.

Did Inner Circle's founders ever think the "adventure" would last 50 years and become such a major international success?

"I never had a thought of us not being successful," Roger Lewis said. "Even after Jacob died."

The longevity, Inner Circle traces to a single-minded purpose of the group's members.

"When you have a core, moving in one direction, that's the greatest thing," said Lewis. "Whether that core be two people or five, once you have that core, you'll have longevity."

**Story and photographs by Patrick Smikle, a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.**



*Fifty six years strong. Happy Anniversary Jamaica.*

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# Salute to Jamaica

A Caribbean Today special 56<sup>th</sup> Independence feature

## 'DIAMOND': Kevona Davis aims to be Jamaica's next great sprinter

**GORDON WILLIAMS**

DOUGLASVILLE, Georgia – As the runners peeled off the final bend in the 200 meters at the Atlanta Georgia Relays (AGR) here, the crowd roared in anticipation. The showdown between two of the world's best young female sprinters was bubbling rapidly to its climax.

Jamaica's Kevona Davis and Tamari Davis of the United States were locked stride for stride as they thundered into the straight. On this late May day, however, the 15-year-old American would prove decisively better, pulling away from her older rival to win easily in 23.01 seconds.

The Jamaican, appearing in distress after the race, was ushered away to seek medical assistance. It was a disappointing end, but her coach Michael Dyke didn't seem unduly worried.

"She'll be O.K.," he told Caribbean Today here. "Kevona will bounce back."

Dyke's optimism isn't idle boast. Sixteen-year-old Kevona Davis is far better than the

23.79 she ran here. She was more than a full second faster at Jamaica's "Champs" for high schools in late March, clocking a personal best 22.72. At that meet, Davis also raced to 11.16 in the 100 meters, another PB. She shattered the meet record in both events.

Dyke believes Davis could easily become the next star in Jamaica's already crowded galaxy of world class sprinters, joining past female greats such as Merlene Ottey, Grace Jackson and Juliet Cuthbert, and current champions Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce and Elaine Thompson. The girl is gearing up to confront the women.

"We definitely have that in our plans, to have her ready for the national senior trials next year," Dyke said. "I'm not saying she will make the team (for the 2019 IAAF World Championships), but that's our aim."

### PROGRESS

By then, Davis will still be only 17. But the world has long been tracking her progress. An article posted prior to the 2017



- Photograph by Gordon Williams

Davis

World U18 Championships by IAAF, the sport's world governing body, claimed Jamaica had "unearthed another rare sprinting gem in the form of Kevona Davis." Despite the IAAF's projection of Davis as the "overwhelming favorite for gold in both the girls 100m and 200m," she left Kenya with only a bronze in the shorter sprint.

Yet Davis bounced back, setting Champs 2018 alight. Now she's aiming for life among the stars as well. If Dyke believes she can, Davis has no reason to doubt.

"He's my coach and any-

thing he says, that I will do," Davis told Caribbean Today here. "Because he knows what he's doing and he knows what he's talking about."

"So I'm not going to be the one to say I'm not going to do it because I don't feel like I can do it; because he knows I can. I always tell myself that."

### HERO

Davis, who the IAAF article called "Jamaica's latest diamond," also tells herself she can become as good as anyone, including her "hero" Fraser-Pryce, a multiple World and Olympic champion.

"I see myself at the same place that Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce is," Davis explained. "Like how she has dominated and has gone a far way in track and field."

Dyke believes her desire, armed with preparation—physically and mentally—will enable her to step up.

"She is very mature, very disciplined and someone who listens a lot," the coach explained. "We are hoping that nothing will impede her

progress, in terms of injury or anything, but she's very focused as one who wants to achieve at the highest level."

Dyke insists he won't "push" Davis and she'll get to her goals "naturally." The teenager from Edwin Allen High School won't rush either. She admits track is hard and sometimes she "hates that I have to go to training." But she embraces her blessings and knows there's plenty room for improvement.

Davis is also aware young Jamaican talent has flourished quickly, then faded, and that great competition, like Tamari Davis—who has a 22.48 PB in the 200—and Florida-based compatriot Briana Williams, who dominated this year's CARIFTA Games, will always be out there. Kevona is confident, but willing to bide her time.

"Oh yes," said Davis, who enters Grade 11 in September, "because a lot of athletes ... don't have this talent ... So I don't feel that pressure."



## Karate expert gets kick out of sport, helping others

**DAWN A. DAVIS**

Jamaican Newton James got into karate at age 14 purely by chance, motivated by the smile of a pretty girl.

"One day I saw this girl I had a crush on and I asked her where she was going," James recalled. "She said she was going to the YMCA for swimming lessons and she invited me to come along. I went the following week, and that's when my life changed."

While in the pool swimming with his friend, he heard shouting coming from an adjacent room. He went to investigate and was fascinated by the boys in white uniforms kicking and jumping in ways he never saw before. He knew then that he wanted to learn karate.

Today, James is soke, which means teacher of teachers or grandmaster in Japanese. A serious and dedicated student of the karate arts, James trained at the Kingston YMCA and at home until he reached a level where he and fellow students participated in martial arts demonstrations at various venues across Jamaica.

### REPRESENTING

Among his most memo-

rable performances was in front of the late Michael Manley shortly after he won he became Jamaica's prime minister in 1972.

James represented Jamaica at a tournament in the United States and, in 1976, at the first World Tournament held in Japan. His commit-



James

ment and talent eventually brought him to New York to study with noted grandmaster Kaicho Tadashi Nakamura of Seido Karate.

James began teaching youngsters karate at the New York YMCA until he relocated to Florida in 1990 and opened his first dojo - or karate school - specializing in the kyokushin form of the art.

"I'm not just teaching them karate, I'm teaching the

kids discipline so they can become better adults," he told Caribbean Today. "Through the discipline of karate that I teach, it helps them to excel, graduate from college, and make a better life for themselves."

### HONORS

James is celebrating his 50th year as a karate practitioner and guru. In 2008 he was inducted to The World Martial Arts Hall of Fame.

James continues to give back to his community. He teaches karate through Florida's after school program and reaches out to at-risk youth through his art form. His desire is to change lives through discipline, self defense and boosting confidence. He knows he's made an impact.

"It's incredible that at four o'clock in the morning you can get a call from Afghanistan from one of your former students thanking you for what you taught him because it is what saved his life while he was fighting the Taliban," said James. "So these are the things I look at that make me realize I make a difference."

*Dawn A. Davis is a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.*



## Wave of support rises for maritime education

Geneive Brown-Metzger, Jamaica's former consul general in New York, has, so to speak, found her footing in the water.

Following her tenure as CG - between 2008 and 2012 - Brown-Metzger looked at various sectors with potential growth opportunities for Jamaica and the Caribbean. She settled on the maritime industry. Geographically, the Caribbean is in a unique location to deal with the massive amount of products the sea.

Yet Brown-Metzger also wanted to prepare locals to take jobs critical to the maritime industry, such as engineering and logistics.

"This is why the Caribbean Maritime University (CMU) is so critically important to train those people to take up these significant positions to ensure that resources that are accrued by the maritime industry stay in the region," Brown-Metzger told Caribbean Today in a recent telephone conversation.

### TRANSFORMING

CMU, located in Kingston, Jamaica is the only internationally accredited maritime university in the Western hemisphere. It currently enrolls more than 4,000 students, including those from outside the Caribbean. Some, Brown-Metzger explained, are "poor, and some

were even considered at risk."

So, in 2016, Brown-Metzger established the American Maritime Foundation (ACMF) to support CMU scholarships and infrastructure development. According to her, ACMF, which she serves as president and executive director, has donated almost \$12 million to maritime education in Jamaica.

Others have helped. Roland Malins-Smith, founder of Seafreight Line Ltd, a maritime transportation company, has given \$150,000 to the ACMF, according to Brown-Metzger. Malins-Smith is among three leaders in the maritime industry scheduled to be honored in October for their contribution to the sector.

Rick Murrell owns Tropical Shipping, one of the biggest shipping companies which also hires CMU graduates.

"These companies have an interest in ensuring that these young people get the proper training," said Brown-Metzger.

"We are very lucky to have this level of support and engagement. It speaks volumes in terms of the importance of the CMU and secondarily the value of the ACMF to the process."

- Dawn A. Davis





# Food For The Poor Celebrates

Jamaica's 56 Years  
of Independence



**N**ow the largest charitable organization in Jamaica, Food For The Poor began assisting the island nation in 1982. Food For The Poor helps the poor of Jamaica by working with more than 2,500 churches and institutions for the distribution of food, medicine, educational supplies and other essentials.

- **Food For The Poor** is proud to be celebrating 36 years of helping the poorest of the poor in Jamaica and continuing its lifesaving work primarily in 17 countries in the Caribbean and Latin America.
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## Rising Caribbean American rap star XXXTentacion gunned down in Florida

Young, rising Caribbean American rap star XXXTentacion was gunned down last month in Florida.

The 20-year-old, born Jahseh Dwayne Onfroy to Jamaican parents, was shot dead earlier in the month while he was in his car in a parking lot in Deerfield Beach.

Onfroy was raised in South Florida. His first album was released when he was age 17. His second, released in March, hit the number one spot on the Billboard album chart. His single "Sad!", which ironically was played at his public memorial, became the top song on the Billboard singles chart shortly after he was killed.

Up to press time one person had been arrested in connection with XXXTentacion's death. Pompano Beach resi-



XXXTentacion

dent Dedrick Williams, 22, has been charged with first-degree murder. However, the Broward Sheriff's Office said another person of interest was being sought.

Despite his success, XXXTentacion ran into trouble with the law. He was

arrested and charged with beating his girlfriend. Yet his funeral last month suggested he had plenty public support. A public viewing of his body, held at the BB&T Center in South Florida, attracted hundreds of people.



## Fun, food talk lined up for South Florida Book Fest

Authors and panel discussions will showcase the vibrant and diverse literary culture of the Caribbean during the two-day South Florida Book Festival this month.

The event will be held July 20 and 21 at the African American Research Library and Cultural Center in Fort Lauderdale.

Among the scheduled Caribbean authors and presenters are chef Taymer Mason, author of the cookbook "The Caribbean Vegan", and Calibe Thompson, executive producer of "Taste the Islands". Georgia Bryce, Esther Tyson, Ash Cash and Ann Marie Sorrell will also be featured.

Mason will be one of the featured guests for the "Eat, Drink, Read: A Literary Culinary Experience" from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on the first day. Other guests include Kevin Belton, the New Orleans-based PBS television celebrity chef; Melba Wilson, Harlem, New York restaurateur; and Jerrelle Guy, food photographer and baker.

### MINGLE

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet the chefs and sample creations from their cookbooks. The culinary experience will be paired with

cocktails courtesy of Victor George and Barefoot Wine.

The following is a list of events on the second day:

### 10:30-11:30 a.m.

• "Inspirational Stories of Faith, Love and Spirituality". Panel of Philbert Lakes, Ezekial Williams and Georgia Bryce moderated by Dr. Rosalind Osgood.

• "State of Public School Education" - Susan A. Colton and Esther Tyson will discuss the state of public school education in Florida and elsewhere.

### Noon to 1 p.m.

"Living Your Best Financial Life: 8 Steps to Financial Freedom" with Ash Cash.

### 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

"Chronicles of a Serial Dater ..." moderated by Michelle Talbert.

### 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Chef Belton, Thompson and Martin Amado of "So Flo Home Project" will lead the discussion on how to become a television star.

### 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

"The Caribbean Vegan" with Mason, moderated by Desiree Rodriguez.

For more information, visit <http://www.sfloridabook-festival.com/2018/>.



## Caribbean teenager wows 'America's Got Talent'

Dominican Republican-born teenager Amanda Mena is turning out to be quite the sensation on the television show "America's Got Talent" (AGT).

Last month, 15-year-old Mena delivered a stirring rendition of "A Natural Woman", a song made famous by legendary soul singer Aretha Franklin.

The magnificent performance, coupled with Mena's story of overcoming bullies starting, earned a Golden Buzzer acknowledgement from Mel B, a AGT judge and a former member of the Spice Girls group. That means she advanced to AGT's live shows.

According to Mena, she moved to the U.S. at age four, where she struggled to assimilate into American culture.



Mena

She spoke not "a word of English" when she arrived. That and other factors, she explained, made her resilient.

"I got bullied a lot," Mena said. "So all that kinda gave me tough skin."

It showed on stage and

earned high praise from the judges.

"This is what I'm going to say to all those bullies," Mel B said, then pushed the Golden Buzzer.

Mena is no stranger to talent shows. At age 11 she won "La Voz (The Voice) Kids" on Telemundo, the Spanish-language network.



## IMFest in Miami Gardens

Amara La Negra, Dominican American recording artiste and star of last season's "Love & Hip Hop: Miami", is scheduled to headline next month's International Music and Food Festival (IMFest) in South Florida.

The event is scheduled for 6 p.m. Aug. 4 in Miami Gardens.

According to organizers, IMFest aims to highlight the diversity of South Florida, including its large Caribbean American community. Miami Gardens Vice Mayor Erhabor Ighodaro and Miami-Dade Commissioner Barbara Jordan and Miami Gardens

are co-ordinating the event.

"We are one of the most culturally diverse cities in the nation," Ighodaro stated in a recent press release to promote the festival.

"Miami Gardens is an eclectic mix of peoples from the diaspora. We are proud that IMFest celebrates our rich mosaic of demographics by showcasing a variety of ethnic foods, vendors, and genres of music like kompa, reggae, calypso, merengue, gospel, jazz, rap and Afro jùjú. We are a world class city that's all about the business of cultivating cultural diversity."



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## NEWS



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## Twice as nice, try T&T's 'doubles' delicacy

Doubles is a Trinidadian delicacy.

It is a snack-sized sandwich made of two flat-breads known as bara, filled with a curried chickpea (or channa filling) and served with hot sauce.

Here's the recipe:

### Ingredients

#### Flat bread or bara

- 1 lb. flour
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon yeast
- 1/4 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups water
- 1 tablespoon oil for frying

#### Chick peas or channa

- 2 cans of chick peas
- 2 tablespoon oil
- 1 teaspoon curry
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon cumin/geera
- 1 teaspoon masala
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1/2 onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 scotch bonnet pepper
- 5 leaves cilantro or chadon beni chopped finely
- Salt to taste

### Method

#### Flat bread/bara

Mix all of the dry ingredi-

ents together in a bowl.

Add water and knead until a smooth dough is formed.

Add a tablespoon of oil over the dough and cover with a cloth and let it rest for at least an hour or until double in size.

Spread a thin layer of oil over a clean flat surface and start making little dough balls, about two inches in diameter.

Heat oil over a medium to high flame.

Take each ball and flatten out the dough with your hands like you are making a tiny pizza. Fry in hot oil on both sides for seven to 10 seconds and then drain on paper towels.

#### Chick peas or channa

Heat about two tablespoons of oil over a medium flame. Add the onion, pepper and garlic and sauté.

Mix the curry powder, cumin or geera, and masala in water and add to the pot.

Sauté until golden and the curry is just about to get dry.

Drain the cans of chick



Doubles

peas/channa and add, quoting all of the peas. Pour enough water to cover the channa and simmer for about 15 minutes.

When it's nearly finished, smash a few of the chick peas or channa to thicken the sauce. Mix in the finely chopped chadon beni or cilantro and adjust salt to taste.

### Serving

Overlap two of the small flatbreads or bara on wax paper.

Add the curried chick peas or channa filling and top with pepper sauce or a tamarind or mango chutney and serve hot.

- Edited from News Americas.



## Caribbean chefs picked for 'Citi Taste of Tennis DC'

Two top Caribbean-born chefs are among selected for this month's "Citi Taste of Tennis DC" event in Washington, D.C.

Haitian Ron Duprat, and St. Lucian Shorne Benjamin are among 11 chefs who will present their recipes to guests at the July 30 event at The Hamilton Live.

Chef Ron, as he was known as a competitor on Bravo television's "Top Chef" program during that season's competition in Las Vegas, Nevada, combines Caribbean heritage flavors with French accents.

Duprat, currently the food and beverage director/executive chef for Bridgewater Golf and Country Club in Carmel, Indiana, has prepared meals for former United States President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle, plus entertainers Jay Z, Beyoncé and Usher.

### CAUSES

He is also affiliated with causes including the Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" campaign, "No Hungry Kids", the

"Black Culinarian Alliance" (BCA), "The Word and Actions", "World Central Kitchen" and "Clean Cook Stove".

Benjamin infuses a contemporary approach of Caribbean cuisine to create a style called "New Age Caribbean". He graduated from the French Culinary Institute in New York and has worked alongside Chef Jean George at the popular ABC Restaurant in New York City, alongside James Jermyn at the restaurant Maloney & Porcelli and at the New York City restaurant Falai.

Benjamin has been featured at the annual "Taste of the Caribbean" festival in Montreal, Canada and has served as executive chef for the annual "Rum and Rhythm" benefit hosted by the Caribbean Tourism Organization in New York.

Taste of Tennis features food prepared by leading chefs for major tennis tournaments throughout North America.

- Edited from News Americas.



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## Dominica offers mango, banana bread treat

In the Caribbean island of Dominica, bananas and mangoes are usually bountiful. They're delicious too.

So here's a yummy recipe for banana and mango bread.

### Ingredients

- 1 cup butter
- 1 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 3 eggs
- 3 cups self-rising flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon grated fresh nutmeg
- 1 1/2 mashed ripe bananas
- 1 small ripe mango peeled and pureed
- 1 cup golden raisins
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts

### Method

In a mixing bowl, cream the butter with sugar until

fluffy. Beat in eggs, one at a time, until incorporated.

In another bowl, combine self-rising flour with salt, cinnamon and nutmeg. Combine mashed bananas with mango puree.

Mix the dry ingredients and banana mixture, alternately into the creamed mixture, until batter is just combined. Fold in raisins and nuts.

Pour batter into two greased 8 1/2 x 4 1/2-inch loaf pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 to 60 minutes or until cake tester inserted in the center tests done.

Leave in pan for 10 minutes and then remove.

Serve when cool.

- Edited from News Americas.



## Farm Share food giveaway

MIAMI, Florida - Farm Share, in partnership with The Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department and the Parks Foundation of Miami-Dade, will provide nutritious food items to residents in need this month.

Haitian American Miami-Dade County Commissioner Jean Monestime and local radio personality Papa Keith

will join them from 9 a.m. to noon July 13 at a Farm Share food distribution event at Little River Park, 10525 N.W. 24th Ave. here.

The event is free and open to the public. Food will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis, while supplies last.

For more information, call 305-694-5121.





# WHO names video game addiction new mental health condition

It may no longer be harmless fun when Caribbean American and other children are consumed by watching and playing video games.

Getting hooked to the controls and screen could actually be dangerous, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), which recently declared "gaming disorder" a new mental health condition in its International Classification of Diseases (ICD) made public last month.

According to the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, the arm of WHO which has followed the trends surrounding video games and put forward the diagnosis, the problem may be growing, although not every experts believe it should be on the ICD list. However, WHO believes that its inclusion may



Getting hooked on games may be dangerous.

help to alert people to the possible existence of the condition and prompt them to seek help.

## FEATURES

Gaming disorder, WHO believes, can be identified by features. For example, if gaming takes priority over other

activities, and pushes those activities to the side, it should be cause for concern.

Another cause for alarm is when gaming activities continue even after they cause negative consequences. Finally, according to WHO, when gaming activities lead to distress and damage to relationships with, for example, family and friends or in educational,

social or job environments.

The fallout of gaming disorder can result in problems sleeping, eating and getting enough physical activity, which can directly affect physical health as well.

According to WHO, generally gaming disorder becomes a serious problem if it is identified as persisting for at least a year. The problem, however, must be properly diagnosed by a trained health professional. The organization is hoping that by including it in its ICD more people will be aware of the condition and seek to address it.

## DOUBTS

However, not everyone is

**Getting hooked to the controls and screen could actually be dangerous, according to the World Health Organization, which recently declared "gaming disorder" a new mental health condition...**

convinced.

"It's a little bit premature to label this as a diagnosis," Anthony Bean, a licensed psy-

chologist and executive director at The Telos Project, a nonprofit mental health clinic in Fort Worth, Texas, told news organization CNN.

"I'm a clinician and a researcher, so I see people who play video games and believe themselves to be on the lines of addicted."

CNN reported Bean saying, "they're actually using gaming 'more as a coping mechanism for either anxiety or depression'.

"... When anxiety and depression is dealt with, the gaming goes down significantly," Bean added.

However, supporters and objectors of the WHO's new diagnosis agree on one point: Concerned Caribbean Americans, especially parents, should get as much information as possible about the effects of gaming.

"That's by far the number one thing that comes in with parents who have concerns is, they don't even know what games are being played," Bean told CNN. "The first question to ask, then, is 'Why is this interesting to you?'"



## Free immunization for Miami-Dade County students

Immunization at no cost is being offered to students who attend schools in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), in partnership with the Urban League of Greater Miami and Jessie Trice Community Health System, will offer selected screenings, including

dental this month.

For more information on immunizations and screenings, including dates, times and locations, call **305-785-1739** or e-mail [jbpierre@jtchc.org](mailto:jbpierre@jtchc.org), or M-DCPS School Operations/ Comprehensive Health Services at **305-805-4600**.



## Rains are back, so too dangerous mosquitoes

Heavy rains bring mosquitoes.

After heavy rains of May and sub-tropical storm Alberto, the biting bugs are back and you should protect your family.

The bug to watch for is the Aedes mosquito. Small, black with white spots it lives close to people - outside or inside your house. They specialize in biting humans, and stay active all day.

Aedes mosquitoes carry Zika virus and other tropical viruses such as chikungunya and dengue fever. Up to press time this year, no locally transmitted cases of tropical diseases had been reported in South Florida. However, a few cases



Mosquito bites can carry harmful diseases.

have been reported in people who traveled to countries where the diseases are present.

"Everyone should be aware of mosquitoes and take steps to protect themselves,"

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14A)

# Fall Health

The October issue of Caribbean Today will feature a comprehensive examination of how the healthcare industry serves the Caribbean community. With a proven track record now in our 28th year of service to readers in the United States and the Caribbean Basin, Caribbean Today reaches an audience of over 112,000 highly qualified readers.

They have median household income of \$63,000 and enjoy a higher disposable income. 19% have a college degree; 32% have some college. In today's economy, our readers are highly educated. 69.6% own their own homes. 76% are between 25-54 years of age (readership study conducted by Circulation Verification Council). Caribbean Today is uniquely positioned to deliver product, retail and services messages to a community with which it is identified. Miami Dade Communications Department ranks Caribbean Today sixth overall out of the 72 publications that it does business with, and number one, as a Black publication.

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## HEALTH



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## Best Benefits: Breastfeeding awareness walk set for Aug. 4 in Miami

To promote the health benefits of breastfeeding, the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County and Healthy Start Coalition of Miami Dade will hold a breastfeeding awareness walk next month.

The event is scheduled for Aug. 4 at Tropical Park Stadium, 7900 Bird Road in Miami. Registration begins at 8 a.m. Activities start an hour later. The Big Latch On will occur at 10 a.m.

Participants at the event will have the opportunity to learn about the benefits of breastfeeding and relevant topics regarding health, nutrition, wellness, safety, advocacy and much more.

Activity booths will be available for children, with airbrush tattoos and balloon artists, face painting, free books, water slides, story time and a kids' fun tent. Free t-shirts for atten-



"Breastfeeding: Foundation of Life" is the theme of the event.

- File photograph

dees will be available while supplies last.

### LATCH ON

The Big Latch On is a global initiative that raises awareness of breastfeeding, encourages the formation of support networks between breastfeeding persons, and aims to normalize breastfeeding as a part of daily life.

The day's event is being held as part of National Breastfeeding Month. This year's theme – "Breastfeeding: Foundation of Life" – focuses on breastfeeding as the foundation of lifelong good health for babies and mothers. The goal of The Big Latch On will

be to have more than 200 mothers nursing simultaneously.

To register, visit <https://7thannualbfbwalk.eventbrite.com>.

Local WIC agencies offer resources and staff to help breastfeeding mothers. For more information about the Florida WIC program, call 1-800-342-3556 or visit

[www.FloridaWIC.org](http://www.FloridaWIC.org).

To learn more about "National Breastfeeding Month" and the benefits of breastfeeding visit [www.usbreastfeeding.org](http://www.usbreastfeeding.org), [www.llli.org](http://www.llli.org) or [www.flbreastfeeding.org](http://www.flbreastfeeding.org).



## Rains are back, so too dangerous mosquitoes

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13A)

said Dr. Paula Thaqi, director of the Florida Department of

Health in Broward County. "The best way to do that is to avoid being bitten. We recommend a practice called drain and cover."

### TIPS

Drain standing water in and around the house.

Get rid of water that collects in garbage cans, tires, buckets, roof gutters, pool covers, coolers, toys, flowerpots and plants with pockets, such as bromeliads.

Discard items where rain or sprinkler water collects. Clean birdbaths and pet water bowls twice a week.

Eliminate even puddles, because Aedes can breed in containers as small as a bottle cap. Aedes can also breed inside the home, in spots where water drips and collects.

Cover yourself and the openings in your home. If you go outdoors when mosquitoes are active, wear shoes, socks, long pants and long sleeves.

Spray your skin and clothing with repellent containing DEET or other approved ingredients. Keep windows and doors closed, and repair damaged screening.

To request brochures, call DOH-Broward at 954-213-0607.

Broward County Mosquito Control will consider spraying your neighborhood if you have a large number of mosquitoes.

Call 954-765-4062 or visit [www.broward.org/Streets/Mosquito/Pages/MosquitoSprayRequest.aspx](http://www.broward.org/Streets/Mosquito/Pages/MosquitoSprayRequest.aspx) for more information.

Edited from the Florida Department of Health in Broward County.



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## Top Grenadian athlete battles Graves disease

KINGSTON, Jamaica – Former World and Olympic 400 meters champion Kirani James of Grenada has revealed his battle with Graves disease, but says he is looking forward to resuming competition in earnest following a year-long break.

Last month, the 24-year-old competed for the first time since April 2017 when he won his favorite event at Racers Grand Prix here.

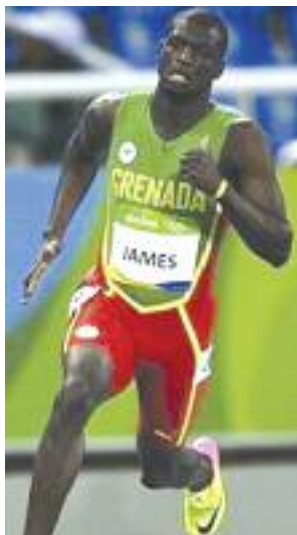
“I found out I had Graves disease and for people who don’t know what that’s about, it’s a disease that affects your thyroid,” James explained.

“And when it overacts it affects your hormones, speeds up your metabolism, weight loss, muscle weaknesses, shortness of breath, a lot of symptoms. Sometimes it varies. So I had to see doctors and be on medication.”

### LIFE THREATENING

Graves is an autoimmune disease which leads to a “generalized over activity of the entire thyroid gland,” according to the American Thyroid Association. It can in some instances be life-threatening.

James is one of the leading 400 meters runners in the world, having won gold at the 2011 World Championships in Daegu to become the



James

youngest-ever champion in the event, before topping the podium again at the London 2012 Olympics.

He also won silver at the Rio Olympics four years later, but was ruled out of last year’s London World Championships through illness.

Having not run competitively since last year’s Drake Relays, James

said he was focused on making a full recovery and enhancing his preparation.

### BLESSING

“(I am) trying to improve my health and preparation day by day,” he said. “It’s just a blessing to be here and competing.”

“It’s been a long road, so I am just glad to be back. And I just want to thank the Racers Grand Prix for inviting me and giving me an opportunity to come back and open up to see where I am at. I am just happy to be back.”

James showed no signs of his time away from the track, chasing down American Fred Kerley to win the 400 meters in a new meet record time of 44.35.

- Edited from CMC.



## Caribbean Premier League cricket returns to South Florida



The Jamaica Tallawahs will again be on show in South Florida.

Some of the best cricketers from the region are scheduled to showcase their talents in

South Florida next month during this year’s Caribbean Premier League (CPL).

## Shai Hope named West Indies ‘Cricketer-of-the-Year’

Stylish Barbadian batsman Shai Hope swept three awards, including “Cricketer-of-the-Year”, headlining the Cricket West Indies/WIPA Awards Ceremony staged here last month.

The 24-year-old, who has emerged as one of the Windies’ main run scorers over the last year, also picked up the “Test Cricketer-of-the-Year” and “ODI Cricketer-of-the-Year” awards, to clinch the major honors on the Caribbean men’s side.

For Hope, the awards add to his growing collection, having claimed the “Barbados Cricket Association’s President’s Award” earlier this year, as well as being named one of the five “Cricketers-of-the-Year” by the prestigious Wisden Almanack.

Evin Lewis collected the



Hope

The CPL’s sixth season of Twenty20 cricket will feature several matches in Lauderhill. The 2018 CPL is scheduled to run from August through September with many games played in the Caribbean.

However, Lauderhill will host the Jamaica Tallawahs with three games played at the Central Broward Regional Park. The South Florida match schedule is as follows:

• **Aug. 18** - Jamaica Tallawahs v. Guyana Amazon Warriors

• **Aug. 19** - Jamaica Tallawahs v. Trinbago Knight Riders

• **Aug. 22** - Jamaica Tallawahs v. Barbados Tridents

Six franchises will play in CPL’s T20 competition, the other two are St. Kitts and Nevis Patriots and St. Lucia Stars.



“T20 Cricketer-of-the-Year” award, while Guyana fast bowler Keemo Paul was named “Emerging Cricketer-of-the-Year” after taking 42 first class wickets and making the West Indies A, ODI and Twenty20 squads.

Batsman Devon Smith clinched the “First Class Four Day Cricketer-of-the-Year” award for his record-breaking 1,095 runs in the season. He averaged 84 runs per inning and struck six centuries.



## Barbadian is new Caribbean soccer boss, CONCACAF VP

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – Veteran Barbadian administrator Randy Harris has been elected president of the Caribbean Football Union (CFU), the body which governs soccer in the region.

Harris, who heads the Barbados Football Association, defeated challenger Hillaren Frederick of the United States Virgin Islands 27 to three at elections held in Moscow, Russia last month.

Last September, Harris was installed as acting CFU president after then President Gordon Derrick of Antigua and Barbuda was slapped with a six-year ban by soccer’s world governing body FIFA



Harris

over ethics breaches.

### SCANDAL

The CFU has come under close scrutiny since the infamous cash-for-votes scandal seven years ago, when leaders of regional soccer associations were offered cash bribes in exchange for their votes at the 2011 FIFA election.

There was massive fallout from the scandal with then CFU President Jack Warner of Trinidad and Tobago forced to resign and several other officials sanctioned by FIFA, following a high-profile investigation.

Harris, 59, was also last month elected the newest vice-president of CONCACAF, soccer’s governing body in North America, Central America and the Caribbean.



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## TOURISM/TRAVEL



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## Caribbean governments get air travel tax warning



Comito

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) has warned governments in the region about the adverse effects of high air travel-related taxes and fees on travel as they wrestle with balancing budgets.

“We recognize the challenges facing countries, but it is our duty to point out that taxing for additional revenue may have a reverse effect as tourists may choose not to

travel to or within the Caribbean and instead select other destinations because of the high cost of our destinations,” said Frank Comito, CHTA's director general and chief executive officer late last month.

In such a case, Comito said not only would governments see fewer tax revenues, but local businesses would likely suffer.

### EFFECT

“High upfront taxes also typically adversely affect on-island spending by visitors who do come,” he said following CHTA's participation in the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) Aviation Day conference in Barbados.

“They will either opt for shorter stays or spend less on activities, restaurants and attractions to offset the additional cost,” Comito added, noting that the region saw this

happen in 2010 and the immediate years following, “as the United Kingdom imposed large duties on travelers to, from and through their country.

Recognizing the damaging effect, Comito said Barbados successfully led the regional lobby against this “restrictive duty, which resulted several years later in the U.K. (United Kingdom) modifying it and helping to restore travel demand.”

Comito said while Caribbean tourist arrivals have grown in recent years, the region continues to lose global market share and growth within the region. He said travel is currently heavily skewed to less expensive destinations.

Likewise, CHTA said intra-Caribbean travel has declined significantly as the cost of travel within the region has skyrocketed.



## Barbadian hotelier is new CHTA president

MIAMI, Florida – Hotelier Patricia Affonso-Dass is the new president of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA).

Karolin Troubetzkoy of St Lucia, the regional trade association's outgoing president, handed over the gavel to Affonso-Dass last month at the CHTA's annual general meeting here.

Troubetzkoy was hailed for her personal contributions to the region during challenging times. She will now serve both as chair of CHTA and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association Educational Foundation (CHTAEF).

### FIU GRAD

Affonso-Dass, group general manager at Ocean Hotels in Barbados, is a graduate of Florida International University's School of

Hospitality and Tourism Management. She was born in Roseau, Dominica and lived in Trinidad and Tobago and Antigua and Barbuda before moving to Guyana where she grew up. She has made Barbados her home for the past 20 years.

Affonso-Dass

Affonso-Dass has been the president of the Tourism and Hospitality Association of Guyana and the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association. She runs the Ocean Hotels group, which is a family-owned company on the south coast of Barbados.

She will serve as CHTA president for two years.



## American Airlines to begin Guyana service in November

GEORGETOWN, Guyana –American Airlines is looking to begin its service to Guyana later this year, with four flights per week.

Last month, officials of the United States-based international carrier met with officials of the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) as they prepare to launch the Guyana service.

AA officials explained they are looking to begin full operations to the Guyana market on Nov. 15.

The carrier is promising that in the new year, it will increase the number of flights between Georgetown and Miami, Florida to five flights per week.

### HAPPY



AA will start with four flights a week to Georgetown.

GCAA Director General Egbert Field told AA officials that he is happy that such a well-established airline is showing an interest in the Guyana market. He noted that the GCAA is committed to doing its part in facilitating the application process of American Airlines, while assuring the airline officials of the GCAA's robust oversight capabilities.

AA has already started the process for approval to conduct scheduled operations

on the Miami -Georgetown route. The GCAA said the airline is coming to Guyana at a time when the country, for

the first time in its aviation history, will be hosting the International Civil Aviation Organization Air Transport

Meeting, scheduled for Nov. 21-23.

- Edited from CMC.



## CA plans free wireless in-flight entertainment

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad – Regional carrier Caribbean Airlines has announced plans to introduce free wireless in-flight entertainment on its Boeing 737-800 fleet.

The new service – Caribbean View - will allow passengers to stream movies, television programs, games, magazines and more Caribbean content to their personal devices via a browser using Bluebox Aviation Systems', Bluebox Wow platform.

“Caribbean Airlines is

focused on enhancing the customer experience, and we are excited to introduce ‘Caribbean View’ as part of our in-flight entertainment package,” said the airline's Chief Executive Officer Garvin Medera.

“The wireless service will be free to all Caribbean Airlines passengers and the Bluebox Wow platform gives us the quality we want to deliver, in a flexible solution that fits our service upgrade plans.

“Bluebox Wow offers a powerful and flexible proposition that will ensure Caribbean

Airlines can deliver a fresh and vibrant service that is extremely easy for passengers to access, two things we know are important to an engaging IFE service,” Kevin Clark, Bluebox's chief executive officer.

Bluebox Wow will be deployed across Caribbean Airlines fleet of 12 Boeing B737-800 aircraft, on flights over two hours and above 10,000 feet.

- Edited from CMC.



## ... Adds daily flights from North Carolina to Barbados

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – United States-based carrier American Airlines has announced the addition of non-stop daily service from Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT) to Grantley Adams International Airport (BGI) beginning Dec. 19.

The announcement came just weeks after the carrier unveiled its third daily flight from Miami International Airport to Barbados, which is also set to launch Dec. 19.

As a result, Barbados is anticipating a demand for additional flight service given the growth in U.S. arrival numbers. In 2017, Barbados welcomed 188,970 U.S. visitors – a 30-year high.

“Our airline partners have been instrumental in the growth of visitation from the United States,” said Barbados's newly appointed Minister of Tourism and International Transport Kerrie Symmonds.

“This new service signals tremendous confidence in Barbados and constitutes a 100 percent increase in seat capacity into and out of the island.

“Increased service to these important cities will help to ensure another year of record passenger arrivals to our destination.”

### DEMAND

Meanwhile, American

Airlines' Managing Director for the Caribbean Alfredo Gonzales has described Barbados as a destination in high demand.

“One month after announcing additional service to Barbados from our Miami hub, we're thrilled to continue growing our presence in the island with new daily service from our Charlotte hub, both operating during the winter,” Gonzales said.

“As the demand continues to grow over the years, today we're proud to serve as the leading U.S. airline in the island with up to 28 weekly flights.”

- Edited from CMC.



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~ A CARIBBEAN TODAY SPECIAL FEATURE

## HEAD OF THE CLASS: Bahamian picked first in 2018 NBA draft

## GORDON WILLIAMS

Teenager Deandre Ayton showed off ample Bahamian pride after being selected first in 2018 National Basketball Association (NBA) draft last month.

Ayton, a 7' 1" forward/center who was born in Nassau and played college basketball at the University of Arizona, was made the top pick by the Phoenix Suns on June 21.

During an interview with sports television network ESPN, shortly after stepping off the stage at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York, Ayton happily opened his jacket to show off the colors – including those of The Bahamas flag stitched to the inside.

"I want to represent my country the best way I can," said Ayton, who in previous media interviews has repeatedly mentioned "242", The Bahamas area code.

## NO SURPRISE

Ayton, who turns 20 on



Ayton playing in college

July 23, was not totally surprised that the Suns selected him. He predicted the club's move prior to the draft. However, he couldn't hide his joy on draft day.

"It means the world to me," said Ayton, who moved from The Bahamas to California, then Arizona, where he attended high school. He spent a year with the Wildcats, where he was the to named All Pac 12 team and was "Freshman of the Year" in the conference.

It's a long way from times when Ayton was jokingly referred to as "TFN" – tall for nothing – as he struggled to develop his basketball skills. However, playing another sport helped make him better.

"I was fortunate that soccer helped me not be a clumsy guy and be pretty nimble on the court," Ayton was quoted as saying in **The Bradford Era**.

## NOT FIRST

Ayton is not the first Caribbean-born player to become the top draft pick in the NBA. He's not even the first Bahamian.

Mychal Thompson, also from Nassau, was selected first by the Portland Trailblazers in 1978. Thompson played for three different NBA teams, winning the title twice. His son Klay currently plays for the Golden State Warriors, which has won three NBA titles in the last four years, including the 2017-18 crown.

Jamaican Patrick Ewing, who currently coaches Georgetown University, was selected first by the New York Knicks in 1985. He had an outstanding professional career and was eventually inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in the United States.

Becoming the top NBA draft pick doesn't guarantee success in what's widely recognized as the world's best basketball league. In 2013, Canadian-born Anthony Bennett, whose mother is from Jamaica, was selected first by the Cleveland Cavaliers. He played for four different teams – Cavaliers, Minnesota Timberwolves, Toronto Raptors and Brooklyn Nets. Bennett currently represents Maine Red Claws of the NBA G League, a lower tier professional competition.

## CONFIDENT

However Ayton, who began basketball when he came to the U.S. at age 12 and sprouted to 6' 5", is confident he will have NBA success as he grows with the Suns.

"We're a young team," he told ESPN, "and we're ready."

Basketball experts praise his skills at both ends of the court. He recorded 24 "double doubles" – points and rebounds – in college.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 19A)

## Bahamas poised for public sector digital transformation

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Bahamas will boost competitiveness by reducing the time and cost of carrying out administrative procedures with the government by encouraging digital transformation of

the public sector with a \$30 million loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

By 2025, the goal is to increase by 70 percent the number of people using online

government services to obtain a certified copy of their birth certificate and use the property registry, the Washington-based financial institution noted last month.

The IDB said the project

also calls for the design and implementation of a cloud-based service for the government that will allow other public institutions to have access to infrastructure-shared e-government apps throughout the island chain. It said a data analysis office will be created to support the design and management of public policies.

## PLAN

The plan will finance the easing of administrative procedures and online access to reduce costs; increase the use of information and communications technology in the public sector, instill more transparency in government operations and boost auditing and oversight tools.

The IDB said over the past 10 years The Bahamas has "endured a prolonged stretch of economic stagnation," with average annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth of just 0.5 percent.

"The Bahamian economy remains dependent on tourism, which directly or indirectly accounts for 46.1 percent of economic output, and financial services, which contribute 15 percent of GDP," the IDB statement noted.

"Efforts to promote eco-



The goal is to boost use of technology.

economic growth by attracting foreign investment and facilitating local business activity have been hampered by the country's limited competitiveness.

"The goal of this project is to promote and encourage the use of IT (information technology) in the public sector, and thus reduce costs for people and companies dealing with the government and enhance transparency in government operations," it added.

"It is also believed that the project will have a positive impact on the Bahamas' competitiveness ranking compared to other countries."

The IDB stated that this reduction of processes and requirements for the completion of procedures will have a positive impact on the competitiveness rating of the Bahamas with respect to that of other countries.

- Edited from CMC.



The Honorable  
Barbara J. Jordan  
Miami-Dade County  
Commissioner  
DISTRICT ONE



## Celebrating 45 years of Independence

As the Bahamas observes its Independence Day, Bahamians locally and abroad will commemorate this historic occasion. The residents of Miami-Dade County join in celebrating this milestone and we all will reflect on the many contributions of Bahamian people.

Congratulations on this special day, and best wishes for prosperity in years to come!

*Barbara J. Jordan*  
Barbara J. Jordan



~ A CARIBBEAN TODAY SPECIAL FEATURE

# JUNKANOO SPIRIT: Feeling passion, pride of The Bahamas

## What is Junkanoo? Who performs it? When and where is it performed?

Junkanoo is the national festival of The Bahamas that was started by slaves who came to the Islands during the 16th century. Saying the word Junkanoo to most Bahamians gets their hearts beating faster and their breathing gets shorter and faster. It's hard to express in words because it's a feeling, a spirit that's evoked within from the sound of a goatskin drum, a cowbell, or a bugle.

Traditionally, Junkanoo celebrations were limited to Boxing Day (the day after Christmas) and New Years Day. However, today Bahamians and friends of The Bahamas make Junkanoo a part of everyday celebrations, year round.

## How did you learn the tradition?

Being born in The Bahamas and living in the inner-city in Nassau (Over the Hill), we were exposed to its infectious rhythm from birth. Most of us had relatives who participated. We had few store-bought toys, so as kids we would make our instruments. We made drums from empty gallon powdered milk cans and used plastic table cloths as



The celebration carries its roots from Africa.

skins, fastened on by strips of rubber cut from old bicycle tubes.

Cowbells were made from small empty cans half-filled with stones, and then mashed in at the open end, or we would use a shaker from the Poinsettia tree. Whistles or horns were made by blowing across the top of empty bottles. Pre-teen kids from the block would have their own mock parades on a daily basis during the months leading up to the Christmas season.

## Tell us about the costumes, including how they are made.

Originally, paraders would use almost any readily available items from around the house or yard: old, colorful clothing, banana leaves, or shirts and pants covered with sponges. Years later (during the 1960s), flower and water would be used

to make paste to fasten tissue paper and fringed crepe paper to pants and shirts. Felt is used in the USA instead of crepe paper for the basic background color.

In The Bahamas, there are multiple categories of costumes. Many group costumes are made up of cardboard, wire, and plastic rods. The cardboard is painted, outlined, and then dressed by pasting colorful paper beads and jewels to depict a theme. This is a very time consuming and expensive process.

## Tell us about the instruments you use.

Traditional Junkanoo musical instruments include drums made from open-ended, wooden or metal barrels covered in goat or sheep skin. Cow skin is used to cover bass drums. A store-bought floor tom is used as the rhythm drum today because skins are not readily available. Cowbells are still homemade by welders. Brass and woodwind instruments are commonly used, as well as black horns and whistles.

## What do you all enjoy about practicing this tradition?

Participating in Junkanoo gives you a feeling of release, passion, and pride as you see how observers become mesmerized by its unique sounds.

There is a reward in bringing joy to others who may otherwise have a grim day.

There is no end to its creativity in costume making and in learning new music or dance moves. It promotes a spirit of belonging and teamwork

towards a common goal.

*The article above was edited and reprinted from an interview conducted by HistoryMiami with Langston Longley in 2014.*



## 'Bahamas Flag Day' parade

The 45th anniversary of Independence in The Bahamas will be observed this month with multiple activities in South Florida.

Among them will be the first "Bahamas Flag Day" on July 7. It is expected to feature a parade of cars traveling from the BB&T Center in Sunrise to Markham Park, where a picnic will be held. The events are presented by a

Bahamas Independence Committee, led by The Bahamas Consulate General's Office for Florida. It includes representatives from The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Bahamasair, the National Association of The Bahamas, The Bahamian American Federation of South Florida and various other organizations.



## WHAT'S HAPPENING

The Bahamas became a fully Independent from the United Kingdom on July 10, 1973.

This year, The Bahamas will celebrate 45 years of Independence. Below are some of the activities scheduled to mark the occasion this month in South Florida:

**July 7 – 11 a.m.,**  
Independence picnic at Markham Park, 16001 W. State Rd. 84 in Sunrise.

**July 15 – 3: 30 p.m.,**  
Independence Ecumenical Service at St. Agnes Episcopal Church, 1750 N.W. Third Ave., Miami.

**July 21 – 7 p.m.,** National Association of The Bahamas

Scholarship Black Tie Gala at Shula's Hotel and Golf Club, 6842 Main St., Miami Lakes.

**July 22 – 3:30 p.m.,** North Florida Bahamas Independence Service at All Nations Life Development Christian Church, 862 S.W. Glenview Ct., Port St. Lucie.

**July 28 – Noon to midnight,**  
The Essence of The Bahamas Festival, 4490 N.W. Second Ave., Miami.

For more information about activities marking The Bahamas Independence, call the Consulate General's Office in Miami at **305-373-6295.**



## TALENT FOR TASTE



The Bahamas was among the top prize winners during this year's "Taste of the Caribbean" competition held in the United States last month. Jamall Small, from The Bahamas was crowned "Caribbean Chef of the Year", while teammate Hazen Rolle was named "Caribbean Junior Chef of the Year". Rolle also received the Hans Schenk Commemorative Award for the "Most Innovative Dish Utilizing Indigenous Ingredients". Photograph shows the happy Bahamas team proudly displaying its national flag, along with medals won in the competition.

## HEAD OF THE CLASS: Bahamian picked first in 2018 NBA draft

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18A)

"(Ayton's a) prototypical big man," ESPN college basketball commentator Jay Bilas said. "... Complete offensive player."

Ayton is also an efficient defensive player, especially as

a shot blocker, they claim.

"He's a rim protector," said former NBA star-turned-ESPN commentator Chauncey Billups, who also believes Ayton could become "a generational big" man.

Ayton was accompanied

to the draft by his parents, Andrea and Alvin, plus, reportedly, an official delegation from The Bahamas led by Michael Pintard, minister of youth, sports and culture.



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