

Belize's leading newspaper

59 years later, Nora Parham exonerated!

by *Khaila Gentle*

BELMOPAN, Sun. May 15, 2022

Friday, May 13, was an emotional and momentous day for the family of Nora Parham as a decades-long saga finally concluded with the passing of the motion to posthumously pardon and exonerate her at the sitting of the House of Representatives. The motion to seek to move the Belize Advisory Council to advise Her Excellency the Governor-General to exercise the Prerogative of Mercy for Parham, the only woman to have ever been executed by the State in Belize, was presented by the Minister of Human Development, Families, and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, Hon. Dolores Balderamos Garcia, in a rare moment that saw both



Nora Parham, deceased

sides of the National Assembly united. Parham had been arrested and

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Tourism Minister dismisses FECTAB claims

Hon. Anthony Mahler, Minister of Tourism, said that any agreement with Norwegian Cruise Line hinges on increased calls to Belize City.

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 16, 2022

Last week, the president of the Federation of Cruise Tourism Associations of Belize (FECTAB),

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Anthony Mahler — Minister of Tourism

Bomb threat at KHMH

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 16, 2022

On Friday, the national referral hospital, Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital (KHMH), went on high alert following a bomb threat that was made via

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Patients evacuated from KHMH following a bomb threat

Belmopan resident against gas station construction



Gas station development

BELMOPAN, Mon. May 16, 2022

Today, a resident of Belmopan took to the media to express her concerns over the construction of a gas station being developed adjacent to her property on North Ring Road. In a letter written to the mayor of Belmopan, Sheran Palacio, on May 9, the concerned Belmopan resident, Ms. Antonio Cawich, pointed to major reasons that the residents of the area believe their property and

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Micah Goodin caught up in fire

See story on page 2



Micah Goodin—Deputy Mayor of Belize City

Mundialito Tournament kicks off at MCC

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 16, 2022

On Saturday, May 14, the Anthony Mahler Mundialito Tournament, an initiative of Pickstock area representative, Hon. Anthony Mahler, kicked off at the MCC Grounds in Belize City.

The tournament, in which 8 teams and between 200 and 300 kids will be participating, will take place every Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to noon over a period of 13-15 weeks.

“We’ve been doing this for 10 years now, so we know what we’re doing. This Mundialito Tournament has produced some of the best players in Belize and that [has] gone up to the A-teams, and some of them have become superstars. We create an environment where these children under 13 can have good, clean fun. COVID has put us back, but we



Launch of Mundialito Tournament

will initiate the program and continue to build on it,” remarked Minister Mahler.

“... The beauty about this, the best players, we take them to a camp in Florida, to the Barcelona Camp, or the Real Madrid Camp so we take at least two or three players to get even more exposure and training,” Mahler further mentioned.

Minister Mahler said that the tournament also serves as a medium through which kids can develop friendships among themselves, thus preventing gun violence.

“It is important. If you become friends out here, it would be hard for you to pick up a gun and shoot that person when you’re 16, 17, [or] 18 if the streets

have gotten you. It’s hard for you to hurt your friend, and so that is what we want to do—create an environment where these people can be friends from a young age. They move up through sports, and they can be on the semipro football team and they can be on the national teams,” said Minister Mahler.

Other members of the government, as well as representatives of the Football Federation of Belize (FFB), were present for the commencement of the

Mundialito Tournament, including the Minister of Youth, Sports and Transport, Hon. Rodwell Ferguson; Minister of State for the Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy, and Logistics, Hon. Gilroy Usher, Sr. president of the Football Federation of Belize (FFB) Sergio Chuc; and FFB operation director, Ian Jones.

Micah Goodin caught up in firefight

Shots were allegedly fired from the back seat of a black SUV being driven by the Deputy Mayor.

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 16, 2022

This weekend, police reported on a Saturday night shooting incident involving the Deputy Mayor of Belize City, Micah Goodin, that resulted in one person being grazed on the neck. While Goodin was not identified as the triggerman, Commissioner of Police Chester Williams has said that the Police Department is looking for any possible grounds on which to revoke the gun licenses of Goodin and the other license holders said to be involved—all of whom are reportedly employees of the Belize City Council.

According to police, the altercation took place sometime after midnight on Saturday, May 14, when two groups of friends socializing at *Thirsty’s* restaurant and bar in Belize City got into a quarrel.

“The police investigation reveals that there may have been some altercation or misunderstanding between two groups of persons who were socializing at this establishment, and during the event, Micah Goodin may have intervened to quell the dispute between the parties and he got into his vehicle along with two other persons and drove off. While driving off, one of the occupants of Micah Goodin’s vehicle fired several shots, and one of the persons with whom they had the misunderstanding returned fire toward Micah Goodin’s vehicle, causing four bullet holes and one person who was inside the vehicle got a bullet graze to the neck,” Commissioner of Police, Chester Williams told reporters.

According to police, the person whose neck was grazed, identified as Tae Medina, was taken to the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital (KMH), treated, and released. The COMPOL further noted that the three persons detained for this incident are all employed at the Belize City Council.

“Police have since detained Micah Goodin, Tarique James, and Kenyon Tillett. Tillett is a traffic warden, Tarique James is an employee at the

Belize City Council, and as you have rightly said, Micah Goodin, is the Belize City Council’s Deputy Mayor. They were detained for the investigation of that particular incident...,” stated Commissioner Williams.

Since then, police have charged Kenyon Tillett with the offenses of discharging a firearm in public, two counts of aggravated assault, and one count of wounding. Tarique James, the person believed to be the shooter who fired bullets from the back seat of Goodin’s vehicle, was charged with discharging a firearm in public. Deputy Mayor Goodin was detained for 36 hours before being released.

Police have confiscated the firearms from all three license holders in order to carry out ballistic testing to ascertain whether all weapons were used.

“I have since directed the police to take away all firearms from the three individuals who are in possession of licensed firearms. The firearms will be sent to the forensic lab for ballistic purposes, as we still need to ascertain if all three guns were fired or only two were fired. I have also directed OC CIA to submit to my office a report

on the incident, and I am going to write all three license holders to show reasons why their firearms licenses should not be revoked. I want to say this, every licensed firearm holder must bear in mind that having a firearm license is a privilege, and it comes with heavy responsibility,” COMPOL Williams said.

He reminded the public that going to an establishment and drinking with a firearm in one’s possession is an offense.

“If it is that there is any evidence to suggest that these persons were consuming alcohol and had their weapons on them, that should be sufficient grounds to have their licenses revoked, and once that is the case, I certainly will ensure that their licenses are revoked,” COMPOL Williams said.

The two individuals charged are to be arraigned today, and according to the police, even if the parties decide to withdraw charges against each other, the matter of publicly discharging their firearms will be a complaint from police.

“When it comes to the discharging firearm in public, that’s a matter for the police; they cannot withdraw that complain,” COMPOL Williams said.

Bomb threat at KMH

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a telephone call to the facility. Scores of medical staff and patients were seen at the entrance ramp of the hospital seeking safety while bomb experts from the Belize Defence Force conducted a sweep of the hospital. By 11:00 a.m. the all-clear was given to the hospital management, and patients were returned to their wards by noon, but not before hours of waiting

outdoors.

The bomb threat was reportedly made by an allegedly mentally disturbed patient who had just been released from the hospital.

“We’ve been told that the call has been linked to a particular person who might have a psychiatric condition. I am going out on a limb by mentioning that,” Dr. Andre Sosa, Chair of the KMH Board of Governors, told local media while standing outside

the hospital with patients and medical staff in the broiling morning heat.

Patients from various sections of the hospital, some of whom were in the ICU and operating theatre, had to be evacuated. Newborn babies and mothers were also outside, along with those who were in the emergency section. The only patients not evacuated, according to Dr. Sosa, were those in the COVID-19 group.

Police found the person who allegedly made the threatening call later that day but had to take her back to the hospital, since, according to the authorities, the individual was in “no condition to be detained.” There is no indication if the patient has been released or if any charges have been brought against her, but it was reported that the individual had been under police guard at the hospital since Friday evening.

Village council elections underway

Since the 2022 village council elections commenced on Sunday, the People's United Party has secured several uncontested wins.



Village Council Elections 2022

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 16, 2022

Sunday, May 15, marked the first day of this year's village council elections, which are set to take place over a period of six weeks. So far, the People's United Party has managed to secure several wins, with a number of them being the result of uncontested elections.

Of the twenty-nine villages that held elections on Sunday, the People's United Party won eight that were uncontested. Of the twenty-one that were contested, the United Democratic Party managed to secure wins in only two villages, with the People's United Party prevailing in a total of seventeen.

This past Sunday was also nomination day for some thirty-eight villages whose elections are set for Sunday, May 22. Of those villages, at least 13 saw no representation from the

United Democratic Party. The People's United Party, in a press release issued this week, has already claimed victory in those thirteen villages.

During an interview with local media last week, Hon. Julius Espat, the representative for Cayo South, stated that the results of the elections will indicate whether or

not the people of the country are satisfied with the work of the current administration.

"If they believe we are doing a good job, they will elect us. If they believe that they want to do a protest vote, we welcome it, because if they do a protest vote then I will just have to put in more work," he said.

Hon. Espat's statement came just a few days after the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Moses "Shyne" Barrow, suggested that villagers use their vote as a form of protest to express dissatisfaction with the present government. At the beginning of the month, the party leader had undertaken a tour of the country's villages in preparation for the upcoming elections.

By the end of the six-week period, on Sunday, July 3, elections will have been held in a total of 190 villages across the country.

Senior Courts Bill deferred



Supreme Court of Belize

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 16, 2022

The introduction of the Senior Courts Bill, by means of which the upper courts are to undergo a critical transformation that will include the replacement of the Supreme Court with a new High Court, was deferred during Friday's sitting of the House of Representatives until a later date. The Government of Belize recently announced the changes to be made to the country's judicial system via a Cabinet release and a subsequent media appearance by the Attorney General, Magali Marin Young.

The Attorney General had said that

consultations were conducted with key stakeholders in the legal system and had indicated that the first reading of the Senior Courts Bill would take place last Friday. But during the meeting of the House of Representatives on Friday, Minister Francis Fonseca rose to inform the House of the deferral of the introductory reading of the bill. No reason for the delay was given.

The Senior Courts Bill would place both the Court of Appeal and the High Court (which would replace the Supreme Court) under the administrative leadership of the Chief Justice.

Trade Licensing Bill sparks outrage; Ministry clarifies



Hon. Oscar Requeña presents Trade Licensing Bill 2022

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 16, 2022

The Trade Licensing Bill 2022, which was introduced during a sitting of the House of Representatives on Friday, received widespread backlash over the weekend—so much so that it prompted the Government of Belize to issue a statement clarifying the terms of the bill.

The Minister with responsibility for Labour and Local Government, Hon. Oscar Requeña, rose to present the bill on Friday:

"Chapter 66 of the Laws of Belize makes provisions for the requirement for anyone intending to carry out a trade or sale of goods or services in a municipality, town, city in Belize to apply for a license at the locally appointed trade licensing board to conduct such trade," said Hon. Requeña.

The new bill expands the current trade licensing requirements to include a wider range of business persons and entrepreneurs, including entertainers, e-business operators, and peddlers. The bill was not received well by most Belizeans, however, with many saying that they felt the fees outlined in the bill that would be required to obtain a trade license would put an even greater strain on businesses already struggling to make ends meet. Many Belizeans particularly criticized the proposed Schedule 7 of the Trade Licensing Act, which lists the classes of business that are required to apply for trade licensing and the maximum fee that would be paid by them.

In response, the Ministry of Labour stated in a press release issued on

NGC: Garifuna communities should "vote Garinagu"

Garifuna Council has expressed concern regarding non-Garifuna persons running for office in a Garinagu community in this month's village council elections.

by Khaila Gentle

DANGRIGA TOWN, Stann Creek District, Sun. May 15, 2022

The National Garifuna Council (NGC) has commented on instances of non-Garinagu vying for office in a Garifuna village in this month's village council elections via a press release which states that the council encourages its members and the wider Garifuna community to "exercise their rights and choose leadership that will represent the best interests of the Garinagu."

In the release, the NGC stated that it does not support partisan politics, as it has in no way positively impacted Garifuna people, and it remarked that the welcoming nature of the Garifuna people, influenced by their way of *Au bun, Amürü Nun* (I for you, you for me) has often proven to be detrimental to their wellbeing.



Garifuna flag

"Let us put aside our differences for the future of our Garifuna communities and ensure the continuity of Garifunaduoun," said the press release.

"Let us not allow anyone who does not put the best interests of our people first to take control of our Garifuna communities. We encourage you to support genuine and committed Garinagu vying for different positions in this year's Village Council elections in Barranco, Hopkins, Georgetown, and Seine Bight," the NGC release added.

While the press release has proven to be divisive among the Garifuna community online, one high-profile member of the community, Garifuna Nation Speaker Joseph Guerrero, expressed some support for the NGC. Guerrero weighed in on the matter—drawing attention to the fact that this is

Tren Maya might pass through Belize

by Charles Gladden

CITY OF BELMOPAN, Mon. May 16, 2022

During the sitting of the House of Representatives on Friday, May 13, Prime Minister of Belize, Hon. John Briceño, mentioned the possibility that Tren Maya, a railway originating in Mexico that will be passing through several destinations in the region—with goods and tourists being transported to various points along its route—might be passing through Belize. According to the Prime Minister, Belize and Mexico are currently discussing the feasibility of Belize's inclusion in this large-scale initiative.

Tren Maya (which in English means “Maya Train”) is part of an initiative being carried out by the Mexican president, and will involve the construction of a 900+ intercity railway that will pass through the Yucatan Peninsula.

According to Prime Minister Briceño, the aim of the project is to have a land route that connects tourist destinations in the Caribbean with lesser-known sites inland, and to increase transportation and economic growth in the country.

“One of President Lopez Obrador’s flagship projects is the Tren Maya. This

project is a 1500-kilometer train track, beginning in Palenque, through Merida, Campeche, Cancun, and Tulum, and ends in Chetumal. It is designated to facilitate trade and tourism in Southern Mexico. And last year, when I met with the president in Morelos, I expressed to the president our desire to have Tren Maya come to Belize. On Saturday last week, the president confirmed that Mexico is desirous of extending Tren Maya to Belize,” said Prime Minister Briceño.

Prime Minister Briceño said that an economic study is underway to determine the possibility of Tren Maya passing through Belize and he noted the ways in which Belize can benefit from Tren Maya.

“The Central American Bank for Economic Integration, CABEI, is undertaking a study to see how Tren Maya can be extended into Belize. Now, I don’t want to get excited and say, ‘Oh, John Briceño wants to run a train track through Belize.’ We have to study to ensure that the economics works and that it can be feasible. But, if we can get Tren Maya coming into Belize, Madam Speaker, you could imagine the thousands of tourists that can easily come from the Cancun area into Belize and trade. The transportation of our products to and from Mexico will also



be able to be done more effectively, more efficiently, and at a much lower cost. We believe, Madam Speaker, that this initiative has a real potential to drastically change transportation from Northern

Belize, which can bring us benefits to tourism and industry,” stated PM Briceño.

Tren Maya is estimated to cost 1.5 billion USD to construct.

Trade Licensing Bill sparks outrage; Ministry clarifies

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Saturday that it found it necessary to make a statement of clarification “as a consequence of erroneous and misleading mainstream and social media representation”.

In that statement, the Ministry said that the repeal and replacement of the Trade Licensing Act is a part of a process that has been ongoing since 2014 and has included “extensive consultation with private and public sector stakeholders across the entire country.”

It added that the bill does not place any licensing requirements or fees on street or roadside vendors, as many persons had been claiming, and that the bill only considers those whose establishments have a “productive footprint of 600 or more square footage.”

The Ministry also clarified that the fees shown in the proposed Schedule 7 of the Trade Licensing Act only outline the maximum fees that could be charged.

It also noted that the new proposals aim to establish trade licensing fees for license holders for a definitive 3-year period.

“This eliminates the requirement for the local authority to conduct annual assessments for established and licensed businesses as well as provides certainty and stability for business owners,” it stated.

“The ministry underscores that the bill was tabled for its first reading only and has been referred to the Political and Constitutional Reform Committee for its consideration. The ministry further encourages all interested parties to make representation to the House

Committee at its sitting when announced by the National Assembly,” the release concluded.

Nevertheless, the Ministry’s press release did not deter local artists, entrepreneurs, and small business owners from continuing to voice their opposition.

Also weighing in on the matter was Minister of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, Hon. Francis Fonseca, who clarified that while the bill was introduced at Friday’s sitting, it has not yet been made into law.

“All concerns and queries now being expressed regarding the Bill will be taken into account and duly considered before the Bill is returned to the House for its 2nd and 3rd readings. The Minister has already indicated that certain changes will be necessary,” he stated.

Hon. Fonseca noted that as the Minister of Culture, he acknowledges the concerns being raised by artists and entertainers, especially considering the current economic climate. But he also stated that the Bill aims to establish “sustainable economic development” within the country.

“To achieve this requires a properly structured economy which protects and respects legitimate investments and generates fair, reasonable revenues for the government. We cannot have an economy in which 50% of the participants follow the rules, register their businesses and pay license fees while the other 50% operate completely outside of the formal economy while remaining in direct competition to the first 50%,” he said.

Once the bill is made law, it is not expected to come into effect until January 2023.

Belize featured on *Sports Illustrated*

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 16, 2022

The Belize Tourism Board (BTB) shared today that Belize has been featured on the cover of the 2022 swimsuit edition of *Sports Illustrated*. The cover, which features bestselling author and supermodel Maye Musk (who is the mother of Elon Musk), was shot in Placencia Village.

According to the BTB, Belize has been featured along with Barbados, the Dominican Republic, and Montenegro as part of a 4-cover issue.

This year’s swimsuit edition of *Sports Illustrated* is aimed at celebrating diversity in backgrounds and body types and features “28 powerful women”.

In addition to the 74-year-old Musk, models Jasmine Sanders, Hunter McGrady, Kate Bock, Natalie Mariduena, and Leyna Bloom are also featured, with all the photos having been shot by world-renowned photographer Yu Tsai.

In unveiling the 59th issue of its magazine, *Sports Illustrated* spoke about the many charms of Belize:

“Beyond the natural wonders, archaeological marvels and adrenaline-



inducing adventures, it is truly the warmth of the Belizean people that makes Belize so special. The blending of cultures in Belize has resulted in one of the happiest and most peaceful countries in the region, and has garnered a widespread reputation as one of the world’s friendliest destinations,” the magazine stated.

“Belize’s feature in the magazine and on the cover represents an extraordinary success for the country,” stated the Minister of Tourism & Diaspora Relations, Hon. Anthony Mahler.

NGC: Garifuna communities should “vote Garinagu”

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the first time that the NGC has supported a “Garifuna First” stance.

“Slowly but surely they [the NGC] are beginning to listen to reason,” said Guerrero, who went on to state that organizations such as the Garifuna Nation and Garivision, through their advocacy work, laid the foundations for the council

to issue a press release such as this one. “Never before had the NGC before now been this bold in advocating for Garifuna,” he stated.

Not only has the release been divisive among Garifuna persons, but it has also stirred up some controversy outside of the community, with some Belizeans calling it “irresponsible”, “xenophobic”, and “too political”.



There was a time

Sun. May 15, 2022

The fan turnout at the 2022 National Track & Field Championships this past weekend at the Marion Jones Sports Complex track was dismal. Granted, there were other events, sporting and otherwise, competing for the attention of the small Belize City population seeking entertainment or just an outing after a long week of work and/or school. After all, this was the weekend of the annual Crooked Tree Cashew Fest. And there were other special events too, e.g. a Bikers Fest by the Belize Brain Awareness Society at BTL Park, and the Ahmadiyya Basketball League finals at Mexico Center, as well as 1st Division football games at the MCC, all taking place on Sunday. And then there was a Mundialito event on Saturday at the MCC, and U17 football games at the Marion Jones Sports Complex field on Saturday also. But still, there is no excuse for just a handful of fans witnessing some of the best athletes in the country engaging in fierce athletic competition to test their speed, strength, skill and endurance. Our nation's fittest, strongest, and fastest males and females from across the nation were on display this weekend at the Marion Jones Sports Complex, but many Belizeans were quite unaware, and very few were on hand to witness the once-a-year spectacle. But we can hardly blame them.

In all major sports in the country, e.g. football, basketball, cycling, volleyball, etc., there are events held at various times throughout the year, culminating in the climactic finals, where a regional and then a national champion is determined. The district or regional championships have their gathering of fans supporting their favorite teams or individual participants, but it is at the national championships that we normally expect to see large crowds, following an intense advertising campaign. A robust seasonal competition only serves to whet the appetite and build the anticipation of fans for the national championship finals.

Of course, with the two-year hiatus due to Covid-19, and the still struggling economy due to rising fuel prices, fan turnout at most events has been far less than what it was in brighter years, but at least for the "Nationals" there is the expectation that fans across the country would be reminded of the occasion and encouraged to attend. Not so with the BAA 2022 Nationals. Many fans were not even aware that the National Track & Field Championships were taking place over the weekend. Unlike Dara's "Ride for Health" ads, which hit the airwaves over a month before the event, track & field meets in Belize City are somewhat of a virtual secret.

With varying success, some sporting organizations, perhaps in their quest to curtail expenditure on their advertising budget, do limited or no spending on advertisement of their events in newspapers or television, but have chosen the new pathway of social media, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., as a cheaper method to spread the word to fans. Whatever their chosen vehicle for promoting their event to fans, the turnout to events of the Belize Athletic Association (BAA), and in particular at its National Championships, has been poor

for years now, but it doesn't have to be that way.

While the members of the BAA executive and their loyal inner circle go about the business of organizing track meets featuring young, aspiring athletes, there appears to be little concern about the level of fan turnout. A lot of planning and dedicated work, much of it voluntary, goes into conducting the event, but the general attitude expressed by certain BAA executive members is that "this is the way it has always been around our track meets, and the reason is because track & field is not a popular spectator sport in Belize."

We beg to differ. Perhaps BAA executives are too young to recall the glory days of athletics in Belize. Though it was only once a year, the annual September Track & Field meet at the MCC Grounds in the 1960s was a spectacular event that saw massive crowds witnessing the races, and even congregating around the dramatic final legs of the high jump contest. Track stars were local heroes in those days. The spirit waned in the 1970s, and was briefly rekindled at a massive Sports Spectacular in March of 1980 at the MCC.

This weekend's 100m and 200m national male champion, Shawn Gill, is currently in his third year of studies at Texas A & M, where he had secured a scholarship through the efforts of Belize 1960s sprinting champion, Colin Thurton, who is currently a certified coach at that university, and also had assisted another Belizean star, Kaina Martinez, in securing a scholarship there. Shawn was also disappointed in the fan attendance at this weekend's National Championships, as he says he is accustomed to performing in front of many thousands of fans at regular meets in the U.S.

Belize's still reigning 1500m and 5000m national male champion, Albert Davis, who was tested by the valiant efforts of 14-year-old Demetrie Meyers in those events, also expressed disappointment at the very small number of fans that witnessed the dramatic finishes to both races.

Belizean-American athletic coach Greg Meyers, whose three children, ages 12, 14 and 16, all gave outstanding performances, was impressed with the talent on display by other Belizean athletes as well; but he also expressed his dismay with the lack of proper promotion of the event. Greg also reiterated his position that there is great economic potential for the sport of athletics in Belize, where with proper investment and planning, the Belize Athletic Association and the country could realize huge economic benefits from hosting international track & field events.

Part of the problem with sports in general in Belize has always been the political will, and the reluctance to direct a significant portion of the national budget to sport development. Belize governments have traditionally seen sports as a necessary avenue of expenditure to keep our youths busy and out of trouble; but in missing the great economic potential of sports as an industry, they shy away from investing significant public funds where it is needed to make the industry "take off." Our present Minister of Sports, Hon. Rodwell Ferguson, has expressed a sincere desire to see sports develop for the betterment of our youth in Belize, but while Meyers said he left his meeting with the Minister impressed by his sincerity, he was disappointed that the minister was looking to him, Meyers, to source and secure the necessary funding for his envisioned development plans. Meyers advised that seeking foreign funding, as the minister suggested, will only mean that at the end of the day, most of the financial returns will not come back to Belize as they should. It sounded much like the F.D.I. (foreign direct investment) song that has been popular with Belizean politicians; but Meyers warned that if foreign entities invest their funds, they will be the ones dictating how the resulting "pie" is shared down the road.

While our nation's future is currently being adjudicated at the ICJ, the development of sports in Belize, and athletics in particular, is still a matter requiring much discussion and focus from those who determine the allocation of our tax dollars.

At the ground level of our athletics association, it is business as usual, with little anticipation of any major change in the atmosphere at local track & field meets. But there was a time, way back "eena di day," when track & field athletics was a big and exciting affair in Belize. And it can and should happen again. Where there is a will, there is a way.



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Publisher: Evan X Hyde
Editor-in-chief: Marco Lopez
Business Manager: Jacinta Hyde
Make-up & Design
Artist: Dwayne Murillo
Executive Secretary: Eden Cruz
Compositor: Tyra Welch
Lithography: Clive Smith
Printer: Kent Brooks

Please email Correspondence:
editor_amandala@yahoo.com

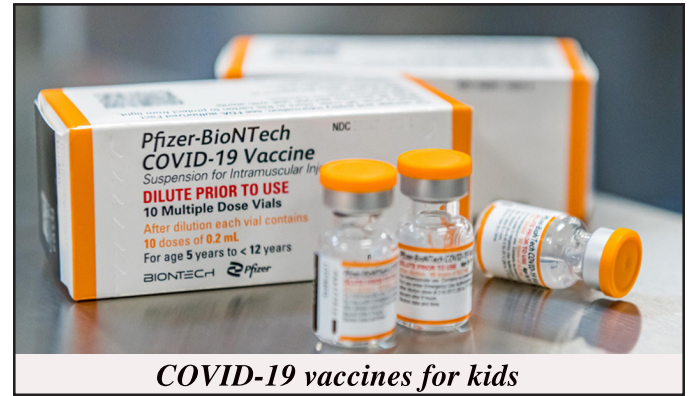
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GoB borrowing money to buy vaccines

The Briceño administration sought approval on Friday in the House of Representatives for a US\$6.2 million loan from the World Bank to support the country's COVID-19 response.



BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 16, 2022

At last Friday's meeting of the House of Representatives, a motion was tabled for a US \$6.2 million loan from the World Bank, under the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development-Belize COVID-19 Response Project. According to Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, the borrowed funds will be used to pay for COVID-19 vaccines that have been previously acquired and dispersed across the country, and to purchase pediatric COVID-19 vaccines for children in the country between the ages of 5 and 11 years old.

At a briefing held last week by officials from the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW), including Director of Public Health and Wellness, Dr. Melissa Diaz-Musa and Ministry of Health advisor, Dr. Natalia Beer, it was announced that a batch of Pfizer vaccines will expire at the end of this month. Dr. Musa and Dr. Beer reported that 49% of the total population is fully vaccinated and shared significant data on the life-saving advantage of receiving full dosage of the COVID-19 vaccine, especially for those with pre-existing

conditions.

Covering the cost of these vaccines is just one of four aspects of the COVID-19 response that will be financed with the funds secured through the loan, said PM Briceño when he explained the reason for the US \$6.2 million loan motion to the House.

"These funds are to support four initiatives: one, support the purchasing of COVID-19 vaccines. These funds can assist us in purchasing the Pfizer vaccines for children, ages five to eleven years, and we will also retroactively finance the cost of hundreds of thousands of doses of COVID-19 vaccines already purchased by Belize. It will support the purchase of auxiliary kits, personal protective equipment, and related needed medical supplies. Three, enable the continuation and scale-up of the country's vaccination effort, including communication and sensitization activities, additional mobile vaccination units for hard-to-reach populations, and digital monitoring of vaccinations, and four, contribute to improving the knowledge and capacity of the Ministry of Health and Wellness on the

environment and social management aspect pertaining to COVID-19 vaccination and beyond," said PM Briceño.

In response to the Prime Minister's claims regarding how the borrowed money would be spent, however, the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Moses "Shyne" Barrow, pointed out that there was already a \$7-million allocation in this fiscal year's budget, and he questioned the necessity of this loan, given our international partnerships (including the COVAX facility) by means of which vaccines are donated to the country.

"This particular loan motion, I'd like to point out to the Belizean people that in the budget debate there is a line item for seven million dollars to purchase vaccines. One has to ask, with the friends we have with world powers that are giving away vaccines, why do we need to take another loan after just allotting seven million dollars to get vaccines?" said Hon. Barrow.

He went on further to assert that in the Public Accounts Committee, information is not forthcoming on the spending of the government to cover COVID-19 expenses. In responding to

Hon. Barrow, however, Hon. Julius Espat, Minister of Infrastructure Development, insisted that the Leader of the Opposition's information was simply wrong.

"Madam Speaker, I have been to every meeting of PAC where we have quorum, and that is all that is necessary in a meeting, and we have given the Chairlady (Hon. Tracy Pantón) all the support that she requires," stated Espat.

The Minister of Health and Wellness, Hon. Kevin Bernard, also rose to support the motion, and echoed the Prime Minister's statement that the Health Ministry would be using a portion of the borrowed funds to purchase the pediatric COVID-19 vaccines.

"While, yes, we may be coming with another motion, it is also important for the Belizean society and for yourself to be informed that we are acquiring pediatric vaccines for our children 5 to 11, which we did not have, so this loan will help us to pay for these vaccines and other necessities that the Ministry of Health and Wellness requires for the deployment of these very important vaccines to our children," Hon. Bernard said.

One man charged for Sunday night shooting

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 16, 2022

Last night, a 20-year-old man identified as Steve Ferrell, who was riding his bike on Rasta Street in the direction of Central American Boulevard, was shot by one of three men who came out of a yard and fired several rounds in his direction, hitting Ferrell in the upper left thigh and left ankle.

He is currently listed in a stable condition at the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital, police reports say, and one of the men believed to be his assailants has since been detained by police. That alleged assailant — Michael Gladden, a resident of Antelope Street extension — is to be charged for use of deadly means of harm, dangerous harm, discharging a firearm, and other related offenses, said Fitzroy Yearwood, the communications director of the Police Department, at a weekly police press briefing this morning.

"He is presently detained. Due to quick police response, he was



Michael Gladden detained on Central American boulevard

apprehended minutes after the incident occurred, a little after 8:00 last night," ASP Fitzroy Yearwood said.

Police are yet to ascertain a motive for this recent city shooting. Investigators may soon be able to gather some information, since they have been granted permission to interview the shooting victim. Of note, reports are that the weapon believed to have been used in the shooting, a 9mm pistol with serial number 34967, with an extended magazine containing three live rounds, has been found in an open lot on Neal Pen Road.

A police investigation continues.

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Cannabis is illegal in Japan, Taiwan, and the UK

by Colin Hyde

It pains me when people say bad things, especially when they have no proof of what they're saying. At the minimum a human being should operate on the three-strike rule, if it can be afforded. There are situations where one has to make snap decisions about other human beings. If you have received information that a man is a date rapist or a child seducer rapist, you will go crazy if you hear they are around your daughter or sister or niece or any young female. The man might be the victim of a cruel lie, but circumstances can dictate how we act, at times. If there is no urgency, we must apply the 3-strike rule to our brother, at the minimum.

We're mere human beings; we won't always do the right thing, but we should strive to. I should put in here that anyone who tells you that a "judger is a sinner" needs to upgrade their wisdom bank. We are definitely caught midway between first and second base if we judge souls. I don't care how much theology we may have studied, we can't judge human hearts. But human character, we have the full license for that, especially when they are in or aspire for leadership positions. We have every right to put the microscope on the teacher, the youth leader, the religious

leader and, more than all, the ones who are in politics.

It is a fact that a certain amount of us are predisposed to mental issues, various mental issues, without ever taking a non-prescribed medicine. Everyone who falls, can't cope, becomes zombie-like, becomes homeless, isn't a victim to drugs. Whoa there, if they took a drink, don't be too quick to put the blame on alcohol; if they took a smoke, don't be too quick to put the blame on the marijuana.

We need numbers, from thorough, unbiased research. Where did these overzealous people get their numbers from? I know we human beings have agendas, and the fight to discourage alcohol and drug use is not a bad agenda at all, but we can't justify our position by plucking, cherry-picking everything that we find favorable. Whoa there, only politicians have license to toy with the truth.

You've noticed that the discussion about crack cocaine and cocaine isn't getting much mention. That's because the kitchen sink is being thrown at weed. For the agenda, everything bad must be thrown at that herb. We know that crack cocaine and cocaine are here. We know that because from time to time planes loaded with cocaine land in Belize, and cocaine is found floating

in the sea. We know it because the authorities tell us that those of us who are seduced into running the drug get paid in cash, and product.

Based on my personal knowledge, I can say how therapeutic, how relaxing, how stimulating, yes, a drink (or two) is to me and people I know. Is weed therapeutic, relaxing, and stimulating to those who smoke it? Ah, we know how therapeutic, relaxing, and stimulating coffee is to those who drink it, because they tell us they become irritable if they don't get a cup in the morning.

Before we look at our three countries, I will say that it is generally accepted that modern living is a lot more stressful than old-time living was. I would guess that living in a socialist state is a lot less stressful for adults than living in a capitalist state. Rat race, dog-eat-dog survival of the fittest, is hard on the mind, and there can be few conditions worse than being among the 50% in our country who don't know where their next meal is coming from. There's a whole lot of grin and bear it, kip haat, going on in our country.

These stats, they are for general consumption only. It's just a look at the mental side of life in three highly developed countries that don't allow the relief of weed to their citizens who might find solace there. Cannabis is ILLEGAL in Japan, Taiwan, and UK.

JHPN (Japan Health Policy Now) estimated that 4,193,000 Japanese were living with mental health issues in 2017. That's 3.3% of their population, Braa. If you extrapolate that to Belize, that works out to around 15,000 of us having serious enough mental issues affecting our lives. JHPN says mental health cases in Japan are greater than "people who have been diagnosed with cancer, stroke, acute myocardial infarction, and diabetes combined."

The *Taiwan News* said an astonishing 30% of children and teens in that country "suffer from some form of mental illness." Keoni Everington of the *Taiwan News* said a study of children and youth, supervised by Susan Kao, a professor in psychiatry at the College of Medicine of National Taiwan University, found the most common illness in children "was ADHD (11.1%) [and that was followed by] nightmare disorder (8.8%), phobia (6.4%), conduct disorder (4.4%), separation anxiety disorder (3.3%), oppositional defiant disorder (1.9%), social anxiety disorder (1.8%) and autism (1.0%)."

The study "found that the lifetime prevalence of suicidal thoughts was 7.9%", and that 310 out of every 100,000 children had "considered suicide in the six months before the survey."

The website mind.org.uk/ said that in any given week in England 8% of people reported *mixed anxiety and*

depression, 6% generalized anxiety disorder, 4% post-traumatic stress disorder, 3% depression, 2% phobias, 1% obsessive-compulsive disorder, and less than 1% panic disorder. 3% reported suffering from antisocial personality disorder in their lifetime, 2% borderline personality disorder, and 2% bipolar disorder. The website said "suicidal thoughts and self-harm aren't mental health diagnoses", but "over the course of someone's lifetime 1 in 5 of us have suicidal thoughts, 1 in 14 of us have self-harm thoughts, and 1 in 15 of us will attempt to kill ourselves."

The bottom line here is that many people are hurting, and it's damned unconscionable to have such draconian attitudes toward something as benign as weed, a herb that is therapeutic, relaxing, stimulating to some. People aren't thinking this thing through. Of course, the church offers its solutions. Ha, ha, a sign in an old movie said: *revolution is the opium of the intellectuals.* Ah, everyone has their thing. I'd never complain with anyone who finds an opiate in religion.

A very famous poet said no man is an island. Bully for those of us who find sufficient solace in the church building. I just don't think it is Christian to send the police after the brother smoking his bush in his corner. Please don't think about going after me and my little cup. Praise God for giving man the brilliance to work a little magic with sugarcane.

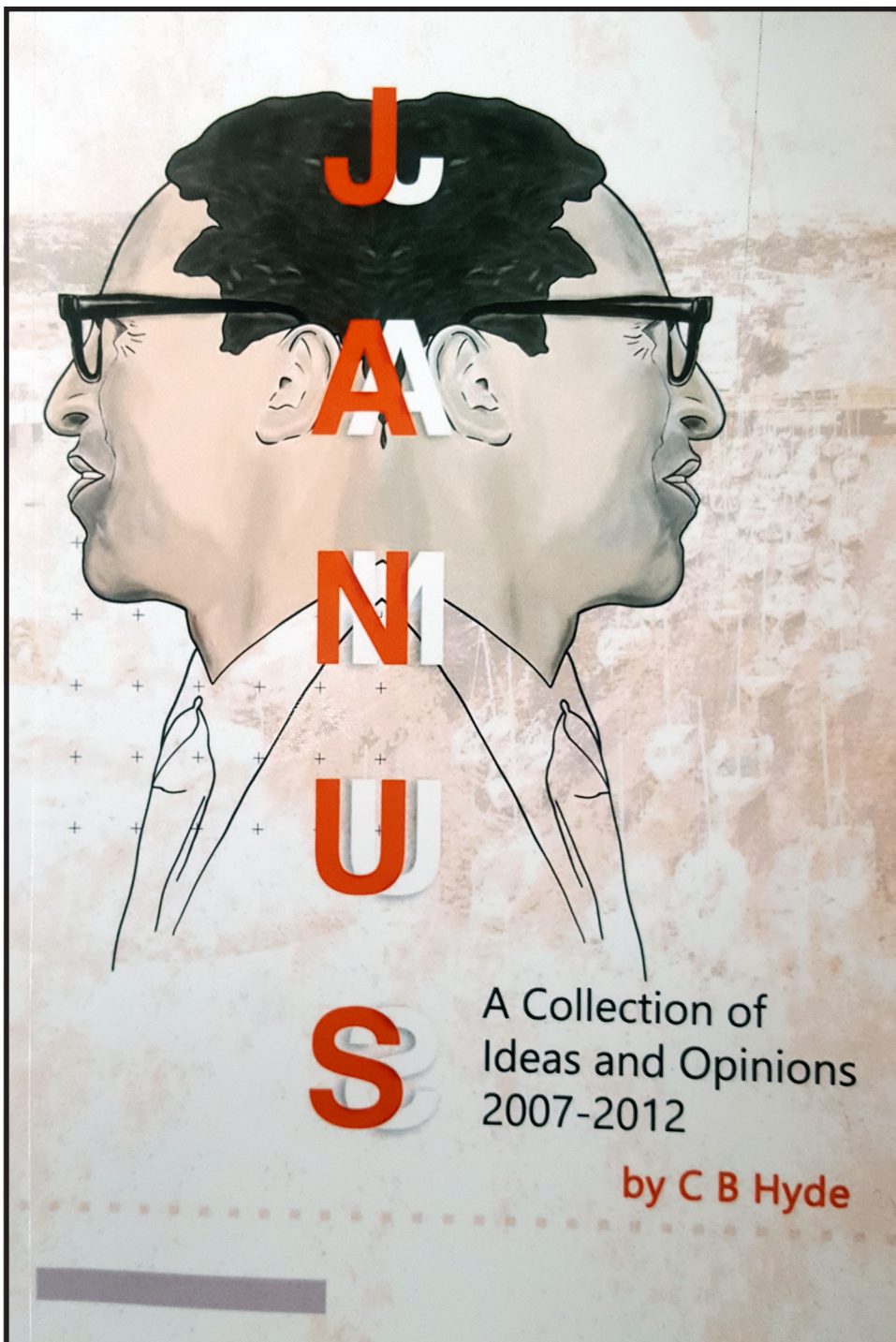
A kinder, gentler Julius

What's this, what's this, has the Cayo South Area Rep found religion? Pere must be saying, would that this present kinder, gentler Julius was in existence during the time I presided over the House. What a thorn in Pere's side Julius was. Ah, Pere, God alone knows how he survived those years.

Seriously now, folk, it is good of Julius to give credit to the UDP for projects they started that are good for Belize. Me, personally, I was getting sick of hearing the UDP bleating that the PUP was stealing all their works.

Seriously now, folk, our Area Rep must shut down the next journalist who tries to needle him about some Blu promise to build, what, 10,000 houses. Belizeans are smart and practical; they expect the new GOB to build, and with good policies facilitate this construction. Of course, the state of our economy means the Blu doesn't stand a snowball's chance in hell of building/facilitating enough to satisfy the housing ambition.

Seriously now, folk, doesn't Julius's ministry have the budget to buy yellow paint to daub on those *unaware* sleeping policemen/raised crossings on the highways?



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Hubo un tiempo

Domingo 15 de mayo de 2022

La participación de los fanáticos en el Campeonato Nacional de Atletismo de 2022 el fin de semana pasado en la pista del Complejo Deportivo Marion Jones fue pésima. Por supuesto, hubo otros eventos, deportivos y de otro tipo, compitiendo por la atención de la pequeña población de la Ciudad de Belize buscando entretenimiento o simplemente una salida después de una larga semana de trabajo y/o estudios. Después de todo, este era el fin de semana del festival anual del marañón de Crooked Tree. Y también hubo otros eventos especiales, por ejemplo, un festival de motociclistas a cargo de Belize Brain Awareness Society en el Parque BTL, y las finales de la Liga de Baloncesto Ahmadiyya en el Centro México, así como partidos de fútbol de primera división en el MCC, todos los domingos. Y luego hubo un evento de Mundialito el sábado en el MCC, y juegos de fútbol sub-17 en el campo del Complejo Deportivo Marion Jones el sábado también. Pero aún así, no hay excusa para que solo un puñado de fanáticos sea testigo de cómo algunos de los mejores atletas del país participan en una feroz competencia atlética para probar su velocidad, fuerza, habilidad y resistencia. Los hombres y mujeres más aptos, más fuertes y más rápidos en todo el país se exhibieron este fin de semana en el Complejo Deportivo Marion Jones, pero muchos beliceños no lo sabían y muy pocos estaban presentes para presenciar el espectáculo anual. Pero difícilmente podemos culparlos.

En todos los deportes principales del país, por ejemplo, fútbol, baloncesto, ciclismo, voleibol, etc., se llevan a cabo eventos en varios momentos del año, que terminan en las finales culminantes, donde se determina un campeón regional y luego uno nacional. Los campeonatos de distrito o regionales tienen su grupo de aficionados apoyando a sus equipos favoritos o participantes individuales, pero es en los campeonatos nacionales donde normalmente esperamos ver grandes multitudes, tras una intensa campaña publicitaria. Una sólida competencia de temporada solo sirve para abrir el apetito y crear la anticipación de los fanáticos para las finales del campeonato nacional.

Por supuesto, con la pausa de dos años debido al Covid-19 y la economía aún en apuros debido al aumento de los precios del combustible, la participación de los fanáticos en la mayoría de los eventos ha sido mucho menor que en años más brillantes, pero al menos para los "Nacionales" existe la expectativa de que a los fanáticos de todo el país se les recuerde la ocasión y sean animados a asistir. No así con las Nacionales de la Asociación de Atletismo de Belize de 2022. Muchos fanáticos ni siquiera sabían que el Campeonato Nacional de Atletismo se llevaría a cabo durante el fin de semana. A diferencia de los anuncios de "Recorrido por la Salud" de Dara, que salieron al aire más de un mes antes del evento, las reuniones de atletismo en la Ciudad de Belize son casi un secreto virtual.

Con éxito variable, algunas organizaciones deportivas, tal vez en su afán por reducir el gasto en su presupuesto de publicidad, gastan poco o nada en la publicidad de sus eventos en los periódicos o la televisión, pero han elegido el nuevo camino de las redes sociales, por ejemplo, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., como un método más económico para correr la voz entre los fanáticos. Cualquiera que sea el vehículo elegido para promocionar su evento entre los fanáticos, la participación en los eventos de la Asociación Atlética de Belize (BAA por sus siglas en inglés), y en particular en su campeonato nacional, ha sido pobre durante años, pero no tiene por qué ser así.

Mientras los miembros del ejecutivo de BAA y su leal círculo íntimo se dedican a organizar encuentros de atletismo con jóvenes aspirantes a atletas, parece haber poca preocupación sobre el nivel de participación de los fanáticos. Se necesita mucha planificación y trabajo dedicado, en gran parte voluntario, para llevar a cabo el evento, pero la actitud general expresada por ciertos miembros ejecutivos de BAA es que "así ha sido siempre en nuestras competencias de atletismo, y la razón es porque El atletismo no es un deporte popular para espectadores en Belize".

Rogamos diferir. Quizás los ejecutivos de BAA son demasiado jóvenes para recordar los días de gloria del atletismo en Belize. Aunque era solo una vez al año, la reunión anual de atletismo de

septiembre en el Recinto MCC en la década de 1960 fue un evento espectacular que vio multitudes masivas que presenciaron las carreras e incluso se congregaron alrededor de las dramáticas etapas finales del concurso de salto de altura. Las estrellas del atletismo eran héroes locales en esos días. El espíritu se desvaneció en la década de 1970 y se reavivó brevemente en un espectáculo deportivo masivo en marzo de 1980 en el MCC.

El campeón nacional masculino de 100 y 200 metros de este fin de semana, Shawn Gill, se encuentra actualmente en su tercer año de estudios en Texas A & M, donde obtuvo una beca gracias a los esfuerzos del campeón de carrera corta de Belize de la década de 1960, Colin Thurton, quien actualmente es entrenador certificado en esa universidad, y también había ayudado a otra estrella beliceña, Kaina Martínez, a obtener una beca allí. Shawn también se mostró decepcionado por la asistencia de los fanáticos a los Campeonatos Nacionales de este fin de semana, ya que dice que está acostumbrado a actuar frente a muchos miles de fanáticos en encuentros regulares en los EE. UU.

El actual campeón nacional masculino de 1500 y 5000 m de Belize, Albert Davis, quien fue puesto a prueba por los valientes esfuerzos de Demetrie Meyers, de 14 años, en esos eventos, también expresó su decepción por el pequeño número de fanáticos que presenciaron los dramáticos finales de ambas carreras.

El entrenador atlético beliceño-estadounidense Greg Meyers, cuyos tres hijos, de 12, 14 y 16 años de edad, tuvieron desempeño sobresaliente, también quedó impresionado con el talento que mostraron otros atletas beliceños; pero también expresó su desaliento por la falta de una adecuada promoción del evento. Greg también reiteró su posición de que existe un gran potencial económico para el deporte del atletismo en Belize, donde con la inversión y la planificación adecuada, la Asociación Atlética de Belize y el país podrían obtener enormes beneficios económicos al albergar eventos internacionales de atletismo.

Parte del problema con los deportes en general en Belize siempre ha sido la voluntad política y la renuencia a destinar una parte significativa del presupuesto nacional al desarrollo del deporte. Los gobiernos de Belize tradicionalmente han visto los deportes como una vía de gasto necesaria para mantener a nuestros jóvenes ocupados y fuera de problemas; pero al perder el gran potencial económico del deporte como industria, evitan invertir importantes fondos públicos donde se necesita para que la industria "despegue". Nuestro actual Ministro de Deportes, el Honorable Rodwell Ferguson, ha expresado un sincero deseo de ver el desarrollo de los deportes para el mejoramiento de nuestra juventud en Belize, pero aunque Meyers dijo que salió de su reunión con el Ministro impresionado por su sinceridad, estaba decepcionado de que el ministro esperara que él, Meyers, obtuviera y asegurara la financiación necesaria para sus previstos planes de desarrollo. Meyers advirtió que buscar financiamiento extranjero, como sugirió el ministro, solo significará que, al final del día, la mayoría de los rendimientos financieros no regresarán a Belize como deberían. Sonaba muy parecido a la canción de I.E.D. (inversión extranjera directa) que ha sido popular entre los políticos de Belize; pero Meyers advirtió que si las entidades extranjeras invierten sus fondos, serán ellas las que dicten cómo se repartirá el "pastel" resultante en el futuro.

Si bien el futuro de nuestra nación se está adjudicando actualmente en la CIJ, el desarrollo de los deportes en Belize, y el atletismo en particular, sigue siendo un asunto que requiere mucha discusión y atención por parte de quienes determinan la asignación de nuestros impuestos.

En el nivel básico de campo de nuestra asociación de atletismo, todo funciona como de costumbre, con poca anticipación de cualquier cambio importante en la atmósfera en las competencias locales de atletismo. Pero hubo un tiempo, allá en aquellos días, cuando el atletismo de pista y campo era un asunto importante y emocionante en Belize. Y puede y debe volver a suceder. Donde hay voluntad hay un camino.

Zelensky and the Pandora Papers

After getting an understanding that the U.S. will invest over \$30 billion to support the president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, and other 47 nations with all kinds of modern weapons with intentions to crush Russia, since it looks like the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has an eager interest of setting up several military bases at Russia's border line, I became interested in knowing a little bit about what is so special about the comedian/actor, who is today president of Ukraine. So, by going through such research I came across the following which I find to be of interest. Permit me, our dear readers of this column, to present to you a summary of the report entitled "**Pandora Papers Reveal Offshore Holdings of Ukrainian President and his Inner Circle**" published by Elena Loginova (OCCRP/Slidstvo.Info) on October 3, 2021:

The comedian and actor, Volodymyr Zelensky, stormed to the Ukrainian presidency in 2019 on a wave of public anger against the country's political class, including previous leaders who used secret companies to stash their wealth overseas. The revelations come from documents in the Pandora Papers, millions of files from 14 offshore service providers leaked to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists and shared with partners around the world, including OCCRP. The documents show that Zelensky and his partners in a television production company, Kvartal 95, set up a network of offshore firms dating back to at least 2012, the year the company began making regular content for TV stations owned by Ihor Kolomoisky, an oligarch dogged by allegations of multi-billion-dollar fraud. In the heat of the campaign, a political ally of incumbent President Petro Poroshenko published a chart on Facebook purporting to show that Zelensky and his television production partners were beneficiaries of a web of offshore firms that allegedly received \$41 million in funds from Kolomoisky's Privatbank. Serhiy Shefir is Zelensky's

top presidential aide, while Ivan Bakanov heads the Security Service of Ukraine. Shefir narrowly escaped an apparent assassination attempt when his car was fired on outside Kyiv on September 22. He was unharmed, but his driver was wounded. The day after the attack on Shefir, the country's parliament passed a bill that would create a register of oligarchs and bar them from financing political parties or taking part in privatizations. Zelensky said that the attempt on Shefir's life will receive a strong response and will not influence his fight against vested interests. A spokesman for Zelensky declined to comment.

Mr. Holmes' New Neighbors

It is unclear what most of the offshore network was used for, but a partial answer to the mystery can be found on London's Baker Street, near the residence of another famous fictional character: Sherlock Holmes. The area is one of several pricey parts of London favored by foreign investors using anonymous shell companies. The documents also show that another Kvartal 95 shareholder, Andrii Iakovlev, obtained a roughly 1.5-million-pound (\$2.3 million) apartment in the Westminster Palace Gardens building, a short walk from the Houses of Parliament, in 2015 after his BVI company purchased another BVI company that owned the property. When contacted by a reporter, Iakovlev said: "Young lady, I don't speak with people I don't know. Contact our lawyers." Iurii Azarov, a Ukrainian lawyer who has worked for Zelensky and his partners and whose name appears on some of the documents found in the Pandora Papers, also declined to comment.

Mid-Election Maneuvering

There is no sign that Zelensky himself was a part of the London property deals. Ivan Bakanov, another Kvartal 95 partner who now serves as Ukraine's secret police chief, was the beneficiary of another company that acted as nominee and trustee for the four other

men's ownership of Maltex. The transfer documents were prepared by Iurii Azarov. Roughly six weeks later, the same lawyer, Azarov, signed another document that stipulated that Maltex would continue to pay dividends to Zelensky's Film Heritage—even though it no longer owned any stake in the company. The document, a client profile of Maltex prepared for Fidelity, disclosed that the company's five largest sources of revenue were Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Belize, and Cyprus. The Pandora Papers documents do not contain details on the size of any dividend payments, or how many may have been made. Financial crime consultant Woods said the share transfer was possibly a "charade" aimed at hiding a stake in Maltex while still being able to make money off it. "We don't see any valid reason why such a private citizen should be precluded from venturing to conduct his business internationally, including through a BVI [British Virgin Islands] business company, if so deemed fit." The company did not respond to follow-up questions about Zelensky's other partners, as well as the transfer of his shareholding in Maltex Multicapital Corp to Shefir's partners.

A Wider Web

During the campaign, the pro-Poroshenko member of parliament Ariev claimed that Zelensky and his partners were the beneficiaries of an offshore network of companies that received \$41 million in payments that originated from Privatbank, the Ukrainian financial institution that the oligarch Kolomoisky is alleged to have looted. Ariev's allegations were detailed in a chart he publicized on Facebook showing a complex web of transactions between layers of companies based in offshore havens including the BVI, Cyprus, and Belize. The chart showed money flowing from the bank via a series of apparent shell entities to companies alleged to have been owned by Zelensky and associates. Ariev has

by Clinton Canul Luna

not provided documentation to back up his claims. The financial flows that are visible from the documents appear to be connected to their television production business, of which Kolomoisky was a client. Among them is Ruslan Ryaboshapka, who was picked by Zelensky as the country's top prosecutor in 2019, but ousted from the role in early 2020. He told OCCRP he believes this was due to pressure from the oligarch Kolomoisky. "A president shouldn't own offshore companies. In general offshore companies are bad, whether they're owned by a president or not," Ryaboshapka said. He called moving money offshore "an old tradition" in Ukraine, because the country was perceived as a dangerous place with "no rule of law." But still, the use of such companies today raises red flags of "tax evasion or the legalization of dirty money," he said. "That's the essence of offshore companies."

fincasolan@gmail.com

May 15, 2022

Finca Solana
Corozal Town

CLINTON CANULLUNA'S NOTE: Belize, a religious country, believers of the Hebrew Christian Holy Bible, we need to give God thanks for not having this type of corruption among our leaders in general, and we do not share a border with Russia, because we would be in hell. However, we don't know as yet what will be the outcome of the International Court of Justice decision regarding the Guatemala claim, and I repeat, CLAIM. On the other hand, I am prophesying that the northern part of Belize will become part of Latin America. You may like it or not!

200+ laptops donated to Sadie Vernon



Deborah Martin, principal of Sadie Vernon Technical High School

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 16, 2022

On Friday, May 13, Sadie Vernon Technical High School in Belize City

received 260 Dell laptops from the Social Investment Fund (SIF), through funding from the Caribbean Development Bank and the assistance of the Ministry of Education.

The donation is a part of the Ministry of Education's initiative to equip five high schools on the Southside of Belize City with technical equipment that was initially aimed at enabling students to participate in hybrid learning during the COVID pandemic

but will continue to be useful, despite the complete return to the classroom.

"How they will be used? Definitely to be in our computer labs, because currently we have outdated machines

that are moving quite slow, and so my students will benefit definitely from our two labs to use them in that. So, that's the plan. We do technology-connected lessons, so, with that, they will be able to use it not only for the business subjects and the subjects that are like information technology or the computer literacy courses," said the principal of Sadie Vernon Technical High School, Deborah Martin.

The Chief Education Officer in the Ministry of Education, Yolanda Gongora, mentioned, upon the handing over of the laptops that the ministry, in its distribution of such equipment, is particularly focusing on the needs of students who are less privileged than others.

"We want to ensure that we want to continue to offer the needs of our students, the welfare for our students,

the access for our students, the equity. We may not, at this point, provide for every single student but we are able to for some that have the needs more than others. It's important for us to identify the needs of our students as we move forward in this new time," outlined Gongora.

Sadie Vernon High School is one of five schools that will be receiving such donations. The other four schools are Maud Williams High School, Gwen Lizarraga High School, Belize Rural High School, and Bella Vista High School in the Toledo District.

The total value of the donation was 679,393.95 BZD—\$645,424.25 of which was donated by the Caribbean Development Bank, while the Government of Belize contributed 33,969.70 BZD.



REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL

The Hopi farmer championing Indigenous agricultural knowledge

Michael Kotutwa Johnson is on a mission to show that millennia of Native American land practices can provide valuable lessons for growing food and sustaining the Earth.



Hopi farmer Michael Kotutwa Johnson in his corn field in northeastern Arizona [Courtesy of Michael Kotutwa Johnson]

by Jane Palmer

Arizona, United States – Michael Kotutwa Johnson scans the barren landscape and wonders if he'll get a crop this year.

It is March and the Hopi reservation, which stretches across high plateaux in northeastern Arizona, appears as a patchwork of varying shades of brown: The mesas – deep bronze in the morning sun – stand stately over beige houses and the light tans of sand-covered fields, shrubs and grasses. Dryness reigns. Within hours of arriving on the reservation, hungry winds suck the moisture from mouths, skin and eyes, leaving only grainy dust in their wake.

It is hard to imagine plants, or any life, surviving and thriving in this water-starved scene, and yet for millennia, maybe more, Hopi farmers have grown corn, beans and squash in their fields, feeding their families and keeping their communities strong and healthy.

The Hopis are one of the oldest living cultures in documented history, with a past stretching back thousands of years. This Native American tribe now lives on the 1.5 million acres (607,000 hectares) of its reservation in Arizona, which comprises only a small portion of its traditional lands. The Hopis live primarily in villages on high, arid mesas that receive less than 10 inches of rain and snow each year. But born farmers, they've learned how to grow crops in this unforgiving environment.

"Hopi farming is a testament to our faith," says Johnson, a Hopi farmer with a solid frame and easy smile, who sports a Carhartt cap over his salt-and-pepper ponytail.

According to their origin stories, when the Hopi people first emerged into this world, they met with M̄asaw, guardian and caretaker of the Earth, who granted them a gourd filled with water, a planting stick, and corn seeds – all they needed to grow food. But to survive, M̄asaw said, they would need one more vital ingredient: faith – faith in everything they do. For the Hopi, that meant always planting their corn and farming, whatever the obstacles.

For centuries, the Hopi have survived the full gamut of environmental challenges and the effects of colonisation, keeping their traditions and stewardship practices alive. But in the last few decades many Hopi have stopped farming and producing food with devastating effects on the tribe's health: By the early 2000s, a high proportion of the formerly lean Hopi were obese and nearly a fifth had high blood pressure or diabetes according to an assessment by the Natwami Coalition, an affiliation of Hopi organisations dedicated to preserving Hopi farming traditions and strengthening the local food system. Now, instead of growing their food, many Hopi drive a four-hour round trip to supermarkets off the reservation and pay a premium for gas and groceries.

There are myriad reasons why the Hopi are farming less, ranging from lack of financial support to the frequent drought caused by climate change. But Johnson embodies the Hopi way of patiently and methodically looking for solutions. He is only focused on finding a path that will bring the Hopi back to farming and reclaiming their food sovereignty and health.

North Korea: More than a million Covid cases feared



Employees spray disinfectant and wipe surfaces in North Korea's capital, Pyongyang

Mon. May 16, 2022 (BBC.com)

North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un has lambasted health officials and ordered the army to help distribute medicine, as a wave of Covid cases sweeps through the country.

More than a million people have now been sickened by what Pyongyang is calling a "fever", state media said.

Some 50 people have died, but it's unclear how many of those suspected cases tested positive for Covid.

North Korea has only limited testing capacity, so few cases are confirmed.

North Koreans are likely to be especially vulnerable to the virus due to lack of vaccinations and a poor healthcare system. A nationwide lockdown is in place in the reclusive country.

State media said Mr Kim led an emergency politburo meeting at the weekend where he accused officials of bungling the distribution of the national medicine reserves.

He ordered that the "powerful forces" of the army's medical corps step in to "immediately stabilise the supply of medicines in Pyongyang City".

The country announced its first confirmed Covid cases last week - although experts believe the virus has likely been circulating for some time.

Mr Kim has imposed "maximum emergency" virus controls, including lockdowns and gathering restrictions in workplaces.

The international community offered to supply North Korea with millions of AstraZeneca and Chinese-made jabs last year, but Pyongyang claimed it had controlled Covid by sealing its borders early in January 2020.

Full articles can be view at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-61436270>

First published by BBC news

Honduras 'retakes sovereignty' by nixing corporate enclaves

by Jared Olson

La Ceiba, Honduras – In a rare display of unanimity, the Honduran Congress voted last month to reverse a controversial law that had facilitated one of the most widely loathed economic projects in this Central American nation.

The law allowed for the creation of special economic development zones, known by the Spanish acronym ZEDEs – semi-autonomous corporate enclaves where investors could govern as though they were independent entities, taking advantage of separate tax schemes, security forces and labour regulations.

While foreign investors and Silicon Valley luminaries had intermittently supported ZEDEs as a driver of economic development, many Hondurans spent years protesting against them, saying the enclaves would displace rural residents while selling off national sovereignty.

The revocation by Congress of the ZEDE law, passed in 2013 and staunchly backed in the ensuing years by the administration of now-imprisoned former President Juan

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It is a quest that has taken him away from his own farm for lengths at a time, and engaged him in the realms of science, policy and outreach. But he sees those steps as just another way he is called to rise to M̄asaw's challenge. "We're a faith-based society," Johnson

says. "Everything we do, we're supposed to have faith behind."

Full article can be found at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/5/15/the-hopi-farmer-championing-indigenous-agricultural-knowledge>

First published by Aljazeera

GoB passes bill in House to tax Boledo

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 16, 2022

At the sitting of the House of Representatives on Friday, the Briceno administration introduced an amendment to the Lotteries Regulations that would restore a 12.5% tax rate for government lotteries (thus removing a tax exemption for government lotteries

that was granted by the Barrow administration) and would also increase the license fee for local lottery operations from \$2 million to \$2.5 million. The draft legislation is entitled the Lotteries Control (Amendment) Regulation of 2022.

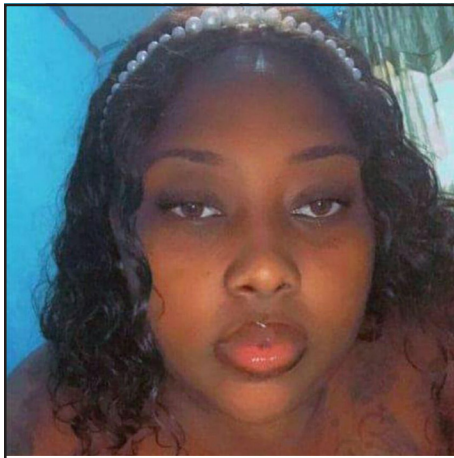
Prime Minister John Briceno, during

Hon. Barrow speaks in House of Kayjah Burgess' case

Hon. Moses "Shyne" Barrow took a moment during the sitting of the House of Representatives to highlight the case of Kayjah Burgess—a young woman who claims she has suffered years of sexual abuse at the hands of her stepfather, but has received little support.



Hon. Moses "Shyne" Barrow



Kayjah Burgess

BELMOPAN, Mon. May 16, 2022

At Friday's sitting of the House of Representatives, the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Moses "Shyne" Barrow, rose during the passing of the motion to exonerate Nora Parham—who had been wrongly convicted for the death of her abuser—to highlight the case of Kayjah Burgess.

The twenty-four-year-old Burgess first made the news after being charged with aggravated assault and using insulting words against her stepfather, Keith Yearwood—following a confrontation in their home during which she reportedly pulled a knife on him. Burgess' mother, however, had intervened and prevented any further physical conflict. At some point before the incident, the 24-year-old had claimed in a social media post that she had been a victim of sexual abuse at the hands of her stepfather for several years. Burgess also mentioned that, while she had made her mother aware of the abuse, nothing was ever done to address it.

In the House of Representatives on Friday, however, Hon. Barrow, referencing Kayjah's case and noting a commonality between the abuse she allegedly experienced and the abuse/injustice suffered by Nora Parham, remarked, "I would ask that with the same tenacity and the same determination that we have approached this very noble cause, we not forget the people that are still suffering from this vicious plague of our society."

Both Burgess and her attorney, OJ Elrington, spoke with local media house Channel 7 News and claimed that when Burgess went to file a complaint with the police, they refused to accept her report. According to Burgess, the report was only accepted after the intervention of the Commissioner of Police, Chester Williams. Communications director of the Police Department, ASP Fitzroy

Yearwood, spoke briefly on the matter during Monday's press briefing.

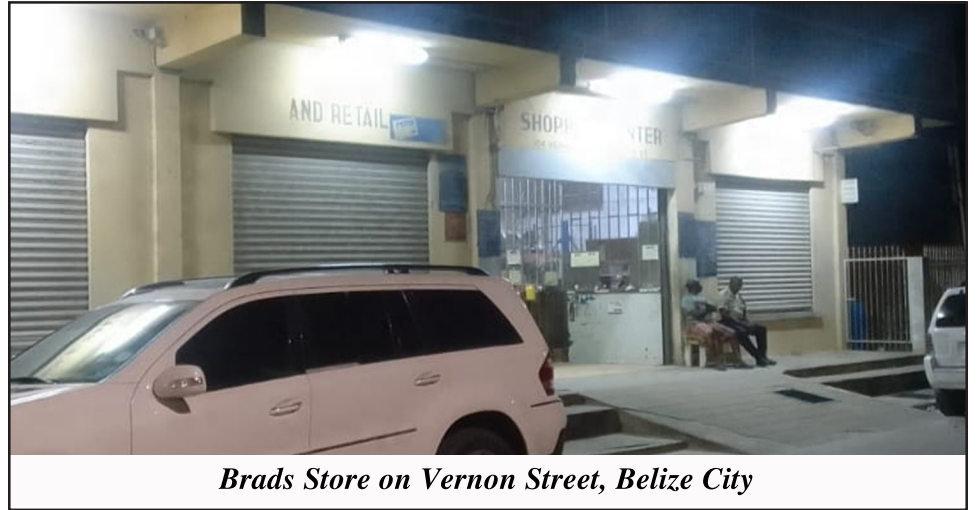
"It is not a practice of police to turn anyone away when you come to make a report. And I am certain that the Commissioner of Police will address this if any officer did any such thing like that. As soon as I get a copy of the formal report, I will make that available to you. I haven't seen the complaint from her and her attorney, but I'm certain that as soon as I am in a position to answer your questions, I will do so," he stated.

When asked about allegations that his connections to the person whom Burgess wished to make a report against affected the way that she was received, as well as allegations made by the Leader of the Opposition during the sitting of the House, the Communications Director stated that he was "disappointed".

"I have since consulted with my attorneys, because as we all know I am the police public relations officer, so you're not referring to anybody else. And I would never interfere with any investigation being carried out by the Police Department against any member of my family or the broader public. I have built my career for the past 26 years, and many people could make any allegation against you; it is your right to lawyer up and fight that allegation," he stated.

Frustrated, Kayjah Burgess has taken her plight to the media. And last week, she explained why she finally felt motivated to make a public social media post:

"I've come out. I made the post and, to be honest, I just made the post to warn mothers like, listen to your children no matter what. It doesn't matter if you think you have a troubled child or whatever, you listen to your pickni at all times because you never know what all is going through your child's mind and you know mothers should listen to their child," said Burgess to 7News' Cherrisse Halsall.



Brads Store on Vernon Street, Belize City

his presentation on the motion, stated that the 2011 Statutory Instrument 88 that was introduced during the Barrow administration, removed the tax just as the government lottery was being privatized — resulting in a loss of government revenue of close to 60 million dollars since that time, according to the PM.


"Recall, Madam Speaker, that on the 17 of September 2011 the Dean Barrow administration signed Statutory Instrument 88 of 2011. In this SI, government lotteries were the only of all lotteries exempted from taxes; all other lotteries were subject to the lotteries tax and remain so subject today. It is curious, to put it mildly, that such purported exemption from Lottery Tax was introduced at a time when the Boledo and other government lotteries were being privatized, so that only 1 party, the concessioner, would benefit from such exemption," PM Briceno

went on to note.

During his remarks, the PM alluded that the concessioner, widely known to be Brads Gaming Company, may be owned wholly or partially by a well-connected UDP affiliate, who may have personally benefitted from the exclusive licenses and the granting of the lotteries tax exemption.


"After a decade from a privatized tax-exempted government lottery, this PUP administration inherited a government in dire financial straits...", the PM said. He went on to note, "In this regard, the Ministry of Finance has been assessing the lotteries tax exemption for government lotteries and has determined that it needs to be taxed as any other lottery game. Based on a combination of figures provided and further investigation, it is estimated that a lottery tax on government lottery charged at a

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Youth versus experience at BAA Nationals

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 16, 2022

The above picture from the Facebook page of the Belize Athletics Association (BAA) tells a story about attendance at the National Track & Field Championships 2022 which were held this past weekend, Saturday and Sunday, at the Marion Jones Sports Complex track. In the picture, 14-year-old Demetrie Meyers (left), who recently Silver medaled for Belize at the Carifta Games in Jamaica, is being overtaken near the end of the Male 5000m Open race by reigning Belize champion, Albert Davis (right), 28. Davis clipped Demetrie near the finish line in both the 1500m on Saturday and the 5000m on Sunday morning; but Demetrie's older brother, Daniel, 16, with fresher legs, got the better of Davis later on Sunday morning in the 800m. Their younger sister, 12-year-old Mallory won both the Female 1500m Open on Saturday and the Female 800m Open on Sunday, but settled for a close second behind reigning Belize champion Anna Camp in the Female 3000m early on Sunday morning.

(More details on BAA Nationals in our weekend issue.)



Demetrie Meyers, 14, (left) and Albert Davis, 28, (right)

Jewel Fury takes lead at Week 6 of NAWL 2022 Opening Season

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 16, 2022

After a shaky start with a draw and a loss, defending champions Jewel Fury of Belmopan have strung out three straight victories, to assume leadership in the Group A standings at Week #6 of the National Amateur Women's League (NAWL) 2022 Opening Season.

It was scoreless in first half at the Isidoro Beaton Stadium on Saturday afternoon, May 14, between Jewel Fury and Sagitun Girlz from Independence, but second half goals from Janivi Quiroz (60') and Khalydia Velasquez (67') were enough to give Jewel Fury the 2-nil win. The victory pushed Jewel Fury one point ahead of Sagitun Girlz to lead the Group A standings. (See standings below.)

Meanwhile, in another Group A match at the Norman Broaster Stadium, it was the visiting San Pedro Pirates coming away with the 3-1 win over Verdes Rebels. Goals for the Pirates came from Elva Nunez (40') and Iamara Baptist (51' & 72'), while the lone goal for the Rebels was by Shayla'Lee Flowers (68').

In Group B action on Saturday at the Ricalde Stadium, home standing Corozal United Warriors could not hold a 1-nil first half lead through Rashida Mossiah (24'), as visiting Santa Elena Strikers came back with 2 second half goals from Derria Ramirez (67' & 71') to register the 2-1 road win.

The other Group B game was on Sunday afternoon at Ricalde Stadium, and saw group leader Bay City FC maintain their perfect record with a 6-0 win over Wagiya United SC. Sharing the scoring for Bay City were Alisha Terry (25'), Nora Ramirez (38' & 66'), Anahie Blanco (43'), Darina Tzul (69') and Shante Chacon (89').

Nat'l Amateur Women's League 2022 Closing Season Standings at Week 6, Sunday, May 15, 2022								
GROUP A	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Diff	Pts
Jewel Fury FC	5	3	1	1	10	3	7	10
Sagitun Girlz	5	3	0	2	10	10	0	9
Rumberas FC	4	2	1	1	5	1	4	7
San Pedro Pirates	5	2	1	2	6	8	-2	7
Verdes Rebels	5	0	1	4	5	14	-9	1
GROUP B	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Diff	Pts
Bay City FC	5	5	0	0	44	0	44	15
Cayo Dreamers	4	3	0	1	13	6	7	9
Wagiya United SC	5	2	0	3	14	12	2	6
Santa Elena Strikers	4	1	0	3	2	31	-29	3
Corozal United Warriors	4	0	0	4	1	25	-24	0

Upcoming Week 7 schedule:

Splash Running Club from Placencia



Some members of Splash Running Club from Placencia

BELIZE CITY, Sun. May 15, 2022

With over forty members, male and female, from all districts across the country, the Splash Running Club, based in Placencia, was well represented at the National Track & Field Championships this weekend at the Marion Jones Sports Complex track in Belize City. The team is sponsored and managed by Splash Dive Club owner Patty Ramirez who travelled with a group of members from Placencia to Belize City for the event.

Saturday, May 21

3:00 p.m. – (A) Sagitun Girlz vs Rumberas FC – M.A. Stadium in Independence

4:00 p.m. – (A) San Pedro Pirates vs Jewel Fury FC – Ambergris Stadium

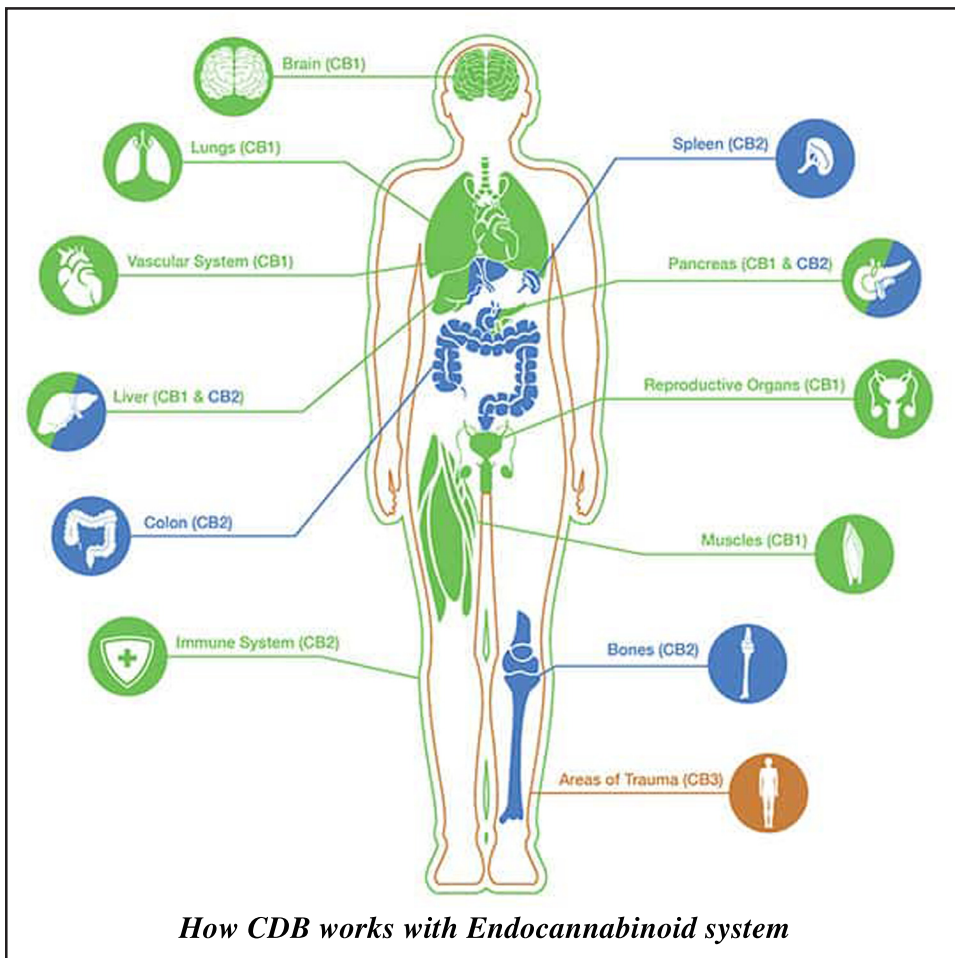
3:00 p.m. – (B) Cayo Dreamers vs Corozal United Warriors – Norman Broaster Stadium

Sunday, May 22

3:00 p.m. – (B) Santa Elena Strikers vs Bay City FC – Norman Broaster Stadium

Health & NUTRITION

A Simple Guide to the Endocannabinoid System



The endocannabinoid system (ECS) is a complex cell-signaling system identified in the early 1990s by researchers exploring THC, a well-known cannabinoid. Cannabinoids are compounds found in cannabis.

Experts are still trying to fully understand the ECS. But so far, we know it plays role in regulating a range of functions and processes, including:

- sleep
- mood
- appetite
- memory
- reproduction and fertility

The ECS exists and is active in your body even if you don't use cannabis.

Read on to learn more about the ECS including how it works and interacts with cannabis.

How does it work?

The ECS involves three core components: endocannabinoids, receptors, and enzymes.

Endocannabinoids

Endocannabinoids, also called endogenous cannabinoids, are molecules made by your body. They're similar to cannabinoids, but they're produced by your body.

Experts have identified two key endocannabinoids so far:

- anandamide (AEA)
- 2-arachidonoylglycerol (2-AG)

These help keep internal functions running smoothly. Your body produces them as needed, making it difficult to know what typical levels are for each.

Endocannabinoid receptors

These receptors are found throughout your body. Endocannabinoids bind to them in order to signal that the ECS needs to take action.

There are two main endocannabinoid receptors:

- CB1 receptors, which are mostly found in the central nervous system
- CB2 receptors, which are mostly found in your peripheral nervous system, especially immune cells

Endocannabinoids can bind to either receptor. The effects that result depend on where the receptor is located and which endocannabinoid it binds to.

For example, endocannabinoids might target CB1 receptors in a spinal nerve to relieve pain. Others might bind to a CB2 receptor in your immune cells to signal that your body's experiencing inflammation, a common sign of autoimmune disorders.

Enzymes

Enzymes are responsible for breaking down endocannabinoids once they've carried out their function.

There are two main enzymes responsible for this:

- fatty acid amide hydrolase, which breaks down AEA
- monoacylglycerol acid lipase, which typically breaks down 2-AG

What are its functions?

The ECS is complicated, and experts haven't yet determined exactly how it works or all of its potential functions.

ResearchTrusted Source has linked the ECS to the following processes:

- appetite and digestion
- metabolism
- chronic pain
- inflammation and other immune system responses
- mood
- learning and memory
- motor control

How the COVID-19 Pandemic Led to Parental Burnout

Written by George Citroner on May 9, 2022 — Fact checked by Dana K. Cassell (healthline.com)

According to new research from The Ohio State University (OSU), many parents are experiencing 'burnout' due to stress induced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new study finds that 66 percent of working parents during the pandemic met the criteria for parental burnout, which happens when chronic stress and exhaustion overwhelm a parent's ability to function or cope with stress.

"I think this study reflects how much parents are struggling and how much the pandemic has taken a toll on parents and their relationships with their children," one of the study's authors, Kate Gawlik, DNP, RN, associate professor of clinical nursing at The Ohio State University College of Nursing and a nurse practitioner, told Healthline.

"We, as parents, can only do so much, and we are doing the best that we can," she continued.

Researchers surveyed parents during the height of the pandemic

The findings are based on survey data from 1,285 working parents, collected between January and April 2021 – before vaccines were approved for children and while many pandemic restrictions were still in place.

Past studies have found parental burnout as being distinct from the more commonly recognized job burnout associated with high-stress occupations like law and healthcare.

A researcher surveyed 900 parents and found that parental burnout may be experienced as having exhaustion in your parental role, feeling different from your previous parental self, and it may lead to feelings of being fed up and also feeling emotionally distant from your children.

According to Bernadette Melnyk, PhD, vice president for health promotion, university chief wellness officer, and dean of the College of Nursing at OSU, parental burnout doesn't just affect parents but also negatively affects their children.

"Not only is parental burnout associated with increased anxiety, depression, and alcohol use, but it is related to punitive or harsher parenting practices," said Melnyk.

Researcher was motivated by her

- sleep
- cardiovascular system function
- muscle formation
- bone remodeling and growth
- liver function
- reproductive system function
- stress
- skin and nerve function

These functions all contribute to homeostasis, which refers to stability of your internal environment. For example, if an outside force, such as

personal experiences

Gawlik explained that several months into the pandemic, she was feeling rundown.

"I was trying to do everything for everyone," she said.

"I was trying to keep up with my job responsibilities, home-school my elementary school and preschool children, be a good spouse, put meals on the table, clean my house, be an emotional support system for my family, among other things."

Gawlik said she was exhausted trying to keep up with everything when she came across the term parental burnout and thought to herself, "that's it," this is what she's feeling.

"And I knew I was not alone in feeling like this," she said.

"I thought it would be interesting to conduct a study and find out more about parents, specifically working parents like me, who were experiencing burnout with the hope of using this information to inform interventions to help those affected and ultimately improve parent-child relationships," she continued.

Parental stress can adversely affect children

Melnyk said that parental burnout and other emotions are transmitted to children.

"For example, anxious parents are likely to have anxious children," she said. "Parents who are burnt out are likely to have children that are having issues with anxiety/depression and acting out behaviors."

She warned that we must "act urgently" to help parents experiencing burnout to avoid crises for the parents and mental health problems in their children.

Why parents should focus on their own needs

Dr. Alex Dimitriu, double board-certified in psychiatry and sleep medicine and founder of Menlo Park Psychiatry & Sleep Medicine and BrainfoodMD, noted that parents need to focus on themselves first.

"Self-care is the first priority," he said. "It is mandatory for the parent or caregiver to assure that their own basic biological needs are met – besides work and parenting."

Dimitriu advises caregivers to focus

Please turn to **Page 15**

pain from an injury or a fever, throws off your body's homeostasis, your ECS kicks in to help your body return to its ideal operation.

Today, experts believe that maintaining homeostasis is the primary role of the ECS.

Full article can be found at: <https://www.healthline.com/health/endocannabinoid-system#functions>

First published on www.healthline.com

59 years later, Nora Parham exonerated!

Continued from Page 1

wrongfully convicted for the death of her partner and abuser, and was sentenced to death.

“We are here, to shine a light—a spotlight—on the issue of domestic violence and to correct in the way that we can the injustice and the stain on our history that that event caused,” said Hon. Balderamos Garcia.

According to Garcia, the historic moment that took place on Friday was the result of many years of work and not solely on her part.

“This is the work of many, many years of many, many people—people including Dorla Bowman, Judith Alpuche, even Judge Lisa Shoman. And, of course, we’re so very happy that the family could be here in such numbers today,” she stated.

The presentation of the motion saw all the members of the House, including the Speaker, Valerie Woods, rise to face the family of Nora Parham in the gallery, including five of her eight sons who stood, emotional and tearful. Harry Parham, Nora’s eldest son, who was 15 years old at the time of her death, spoke with the media afterward.

“We had said all the time, well, when we heard about a posthumous pardon in the beginning, you know, I shook my head and said ‘that’s not what we want,’ you know; what we want is the exoneration of her character, because we knew that, well, not only a gut feeling, but looking at records of what happened in the trial and all of that, we recognized that they were not listening to her. They were not accepting her statements. They were not accepting other people’s statements. And we saw, well I saw, a great bias when it came to the decision that the courts made,” he stated.

The passing of the motion will not only see Nora Parham posthumously

pardoned but the sentence of death by hanging that had been imposed on her and carried out on June 5, 1963, will be revoked, thus exonerating her.

“Even the jury was pretty biased, because I think, if I am right, I think most of them were what we call civil servants and all of them were men, right. And being civil servants, and colonialists, of course they will support the system as it was at that time,” he added.

Harry Parham told local reporters that the family is both happy and relieved that even the Government of Belize has acknowledged what Nora’s relatives have known from the very beginning—that she had been wrongly convicted.

In April of 1963, Nora Parham pled not guilty to the charges of setting her abusive partner, Ketchell Trapp, on fire in their family latrine—an incident which Trapp himself had admitted was not Nora’s fault before passing away. She stood trial before Judge Clifford de Lisle Innis and a jury of twelve men. Within four hours, a guilty verdict was delivered.

“No black flag, no bell, and not even any noise audible to the public was made when eight o’clock came and Nora was hanged,” reported the *Belize Billboard*, run by Philip Goldson, the day after her death. But while there was no black flag raised and no bell rung on the morning of June 5, 1963, approximately 200 persons, including Nora’s eight sons, kept vigil outside the prison.

Outside the National Assembly, Harry Parham recounted to the media



Nora Parham’s five sons get emotional as she is pardoned

the moments when he bore witness to the abuse that his mother had suffered over the years:

“When I was about seven or eight years old, some nights, I used to have to leave home to run to the police station to ask somebody there to come and take him [Trapp] out of the house,” he said.

According to the eldest son, after Nora’s execution, her eight children, whose ages ranged from 3 to 15 years old at the time of her death, were separated and sent to various other family members to be raised.

After Hon. Balderamos Garcia’s presentation, several Members of Parliament rose to give statements on the matter, including Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Moses “Shyne” Barrow, who asked that other instances of domestic violence and abuse against women be treated with the same tenacity that was directed to the Nora Parham case. The LOO cited the recent case of Kayjah Burgess, who after alleging that she had been suffering from years of sexual abuse at the hands of her stepfather, was charged with aggravated assault; as well as another woman, a government office worker, who after reporting to the police that she had been raped, ended up being

shot.

“I would ask that with the same tenacity and the same determination that we have approached this very noble cause, we not forget the people that are still suffering from this vicious plague of our society,” said Hon. Barrow.

The passing of the motion for Nora’s posthumous pardon comes just over two months after it was announced that Cabinet supported the proposal that had been raised by Minister Balderamos, and less than a month shy of the 58th anniversary of Nora Parham’s death. Harry Parham told local media that the family was planning on having an event at Nora’s grave on June 5th of this year in remembrance of her and that the pardon came at the perfect time.

“Having this done now is a great relief to us and we see this as something that whenever the general public looks at this now, they will look at her with a different frame of mind,” he said, with a smile of contentment on his face.

“They will look at her now, they will recognize themselves that what was done was a grave injustice; not only in her life being abused, but also that she was dishonored in the courts,” he added.

Tourism Minister dismisses FECTAB claims

Continued from Page 1

David Almdarez, went to great lengths during a press conference to sound the alarm on what he claimed is proposed legislation aimed at increasing the cruise tourism activity in a specific part of southern Belize—Harvest Caye, a cruise destination owned by Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) in conjunction with the Government of Belize. No such legislation was introduced at Friday’s sitting of the House of Representatives, and on Saturday the Minister of Tourism stated that the remarks made by Almdarez contained no facts or substance, and he dismissed those remarks as nothing more than pontificating by FECTAB, an organization he refers to as defunct.

“FECTAB has a right to express themselves, but they have to get the facts. They don’t know anything, absolutely anything,” said Minister Mahler.

He went on to say that the discussions between the government

of Belize and the owners of Harvest Caye were centered primarily on the removal of the cap on the number of arrivals at the Harvest Caye destination that is currently in place to offset any impact that increased cruise tourism might have on overnight visits at the nearby destinations in Placencia and elsewhere in southern Belize.

He further stated that a study that was conducted shows that the Harvest Caye facility has a potential yearly capacity of around 750,000 to 1 million passengers—more than double the current capped numbers, set at around 400,000.

He noted as well that while the proposed expansion is still in its initial phase, government, in exchange for the removal of the cap on arrivals at Harvest Caye, would require that more ships make calls in Belize City, for the creation of a multi-destination model in Belize.

“We believe that there is more capacity on the island. We have been talking to Norwegian, but they (FECTAB) don’t even know that we

are in negotiations that if we expand the numbers down south, that we are negotiating to put ships in Belize City back. That is the only way we are going to do it,” said Minister Mahler.

While FECTAB expressed concern about losing significant revenue as a result of what they believe would be a shifting of cruise tourism to southern Belize, Minister Mahler insisted they are working to achieve the opposite.

“I’m working hard to bring more ships to Belize City, and even in the discussion with Norwegian, it is to put more calls in Belize, but Belize City as well,” the Tourism Minister said.

Conversations to increase the number of ships that arrive in the Belize District from major cruise lines, as well as smaller vessels, are ongoing, said Minister Mahler. He went on to say that this is why it is a priority that a docking facility is built in Belize City to cater to the berthing of the large cruise ships and reduce the process of tendering passengers to shore.

“We have Belizeans down south too, and they too deserve a living.

Cruise tourism is not designated for Belize City solely, but I believe that it creates opportunities for people in Belize City to be entrepreneurs, to be creative, and to invest in small and micro business, and we will continue to focus on that. In fact, we are having discussions with other cruise lines, but smaller ships that would navigate through our waters for a couple of days and go to multiple destinations in Belize, and so that is on board. We are talking to Carnival, Royal Caribbean, Norwegian, all of them, MST, and a host of others for more ships to come to the Belize District, but major cruise lines are saying as the ships become larger, tendering port will not be the best situation for them, and so our priority would be to complete a docking facility wherever.”

He outlined that the conversation to expand the cruise tourism industry across the country, both down south and in the Belize District, is still at its initial stage with the international cruise company and partners at NCL’s Harvest Caye destination.

Belmopan resident against gas station construction

Continued from Page 1

investments may be at risk due to the construction of the gas station — a development being carried out by businessman Pete Lizarraga.

The letter states, “1. The close proximity of these fuel tank pits to my existing fence line now poses a hazardous risk of fumes and explosion not only to the personal safety of my patrons and the guests, but also to other residents living nearby. 2. Note that one of Belmopan’s main storm drain discharged arteries may have been compromised due to the fact that the previously open storm drain has been backfilled by Mr. Lizarraga with the underground cylindrical concrete culverts and soil. While the construction will make more land available for Mr. Lizarraga, it may compromise the rate of discharge of this previously open storm drain and, as a consequence, could lead to flooding in this area of

my property.”

Cawich asked for a stop order and for inspection of the work by City Hall and the Ministry of Works in her letter, and when interviewed today, she shared that she did see some government vehicles come to the location, but the construction work continued on as scheduled.

“I wrote a letter to the Mayor on Monday and asked her to please send somebody to check that all the building codes were adhered to or followed. I did not hear any response from them; however, I did see some vehicles with yellow plates I am not sure if they were from the City Council or from the DOE on Tuesday, but the work did not stop; the digging did not stop, so officially I have not gotten any response from any one of these institutions,” Ms. Cawich stated.

She said that while they recognize that no business enterprise should be undertaken at the expense of another,

the safety of the neighborhood is the primary concern at this time.

“I would like to record the fact that the construction of one business enterprise should not be at the expense of another. As pioneer investors in this area, we ask you to please uphold our rights to fairness and equal opportunity of long-term success of both Mr. Lizarraga’s investment and my investment and also the safety of all concerned in this neighborhood,” her letter states.

This evening Pete Lizarraga told AMANDALA that they covered all their bases and got all the relevant permits and approvals needed for the construction of the gas station in the area. He said that he had not seen the letter sent to City Hall at the time of the call but communicated, “we’ve been very careful with all the permitting and all-out planning. I could probably understand the concern of the resident, that they might not want a gas station at the

property because they live next door, but we’ve taken all the steps that we need to; we’ve gotten all our permits. There is not much more we could do.”

Cawich, on the other hand, feels that her complaint fell on deaf ears, and because the works are now at an advanced stage, she believes that little can now be done to stop it.

“I believe that had the institutions acted faster, or at least to try to stop the work until a proper revision was done, then you know he wouldn’t have already spent the money, so I do understand now that the work is already done or whatever that was going to happen already happen, but it still doesn’t minus from the fact that I asked, I did ask for help and I believe I feel like nothing was done, especially I feel let down by my Mayor, because that was the first person think about when this happens,” Ms. Cawich said.

Honduras ‘retakes sovereignty’ by nixing corporate enclaves



A demonstrator holds up a banner during a protest Fredy Rodriguez and Reuters

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Orlando Hernandez, means that such projects no longer have standing within the framework of the Honduran legal system.

ZEDEs were “the last coup de grace that [the previous government] did to the country: selling off the national territory in pieces”, Maria Carrasco, a Honduran PhD student living in Tegucigalpa, told Al Jazeera. She welcomed the law’s revocation, saying the controversial project had been “the icing on the cake” after years of government corruption and mismanagement.

Xiomara Castro, the left-wing president inaugurated in January, thanked Congress for “repealing the criminal ZEDEs and defeating those who tried to steal our sovereignty”. The first female head of state in Honduras, Castro had made revocation of the ZEDE law a signature campaign promise.

‘Proceeding confidently’

Exactly how the repeal will affect companies that bought into the ZEDE scheme over the past decade is not yet clear.

In a news release following the vote,

Honduras Prospera, a United States-based investor, said it had “every intention of proceeding confidently with plans to invest hundreds of millions of dollars and to create tens of thousands of good-paying jobs in Honduras in reliance upon its acquired rights under the ZEDE framework”. A denial of those rights by the state “would plainly violate its obligations under international and domestic law”, the company added.

Fernando Garcia, the presidential commissioner tasked with opposing the ZEDEs, told Honduran media that the Castro administration was preparing an executive decree to allow businesses within existing ZEDEs to continue operating, under the condition that they submit themselves to new economic regimes.

There were several functioning ZEDEs in Honduras, including Ciudad Morazan, in the city of Choloma; Prospera, along the north coast; and Orquidea, in the southern department of Choluteca.

Full article can be found at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/13/honduras-retakes-sovereignty-by-nixing-corporate-enclaves>

First published by Aljazeera

How the COVID-19 Pandemic Led to Parental Burnout

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on their basic needs.

He recommends that parents follow ‘SEMM,’ which stands for sleep, exercise, Mediterranean or another healthy diet, and meditation, or at least make sure they regularly get some quiet and “alone time.”

Melnyk said it’s not selfish to practice good self-care, adding that it’s necessary to take good care of others.

“As part of taking good self-care, parents need to take a few short recovery breaks during the day,” she said.

This can include drinking a warm beverage slowly while focusing on the present moment, getting some physical activity, and taking some deep abdominal breaths when feeling stressed, Melnyk recommended.

She advises parents to be “self-compassionate” and not put such high expectations on themselves that are difficult to live by.

“We need to get better at saying no without guilt, as guilt and worry are the two most wasted emotions,” she said.

Melnyk noted the importance of practicing resiliency and coping skills that serve as protective factors against

burnout, depression, and anxiety.

“Such as mindfulness, taking a dose of vitamin G for gratitude every day, and cognitive-behavioral skills building,” said Melnyk.

She also said parents should ask for help, especially if they are experiencing burnout, anxiety, or depression to the point that it is interfering with their concentration, judgment, or functioning.

“It is a strength to recognize when we need help, not a weakness. Let’s shift our current paradigm from sick/crisis care to wellness and prevention!” Melnyk said.

The bottom line

New research finds nearly 70 percent of parents experience burnout due to pandemic-related stress.

Experts say the pandemic has taken a toll on parents and their children as chronic stress and exhaustion overwhelm the parent’s ability to function or cope with stress.

They also say that self-care is a priority to mitigate burnout, and it’s not selfish to put your own needs first or weakness to ask for help when feeling overwhelmed.

Article first published by www.healthline.com

GoB passes bill in House to tax Boledo

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rate of 12.5 % on gross monthly income, the same rate charged on other lotteries, would yield almost 5 million dollars yearly. It is unfortunate that this lottery tax was not being collected before under the past UDP administration. If it had been, over the period of the consecutive exclusive license procured by the concessioner,

it would likely have yielded over 60 million dollars in much-needed tax revenue for the government, 60 million dollars, apart from the profit that they make, you know, and they are making a killing,” the PM added.

A new Statutory Instrument, SI 51 of 2022, removes the exemption legislated in 2011 and introduces a \$500,000 increase to the license fee paid by local lotteries.

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Telephones: 501-280-4703/202-4477

Our email address for business & advertising are
amandalapress@gmail.com and amandalpress@yahoo.com
For news, letters and articles: editor_amandala@yahoo.com