

Cannabis referendum triggered

Churches meet the threshold for the cannabis referendum by just 137 signatures: 20,112 petitions recieved, 18,891 accepted



Cannabis plant

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 4, 2022

The Governor-General, Dame Froyla Tzlam, will issue a writ of referendum within 30 days, after receiving confirmation today from the Elections and Boundaries Department that the churches have met the 10% threshold necessary to trigger a referendum on the legalization of cannabis in Belize. A number of petitions were rejected, a

total of 1221, but the church's strategy to get more signatures than needed proved to be worthwhile, since the threshold was met with only 137 petitions.

At this time a total of 187,527 voters are registered, Chief Elections Officer Josephine Tamai explained to local

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Mason kidnapping trial delayed, jury sent home



Norman Rodriguez – Attorney for Ashton Vanegas

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 4, 2022

Five men convicted for one of the most heinous murders in modern Belizean history are set to stand trial for yet another high-profile crime, this time, the 2016 kidnapping of Lloyd and Rose Friessen. Danny Mason was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2020 after being convicted along with Ernest Castillo, Ashton Vanegas, Keiron Fernandez, and Terrence Fernandez of the murder and beheading of Pastor Llewelyn Lucas. Today, the group returned

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Two elderly persons killed in separate RTAs

by Charles Gladden

VALLEY OF PEACE, Cayo District, Mon. July 4, 2022

Over the weekend, two elderly persons died as a result of road traffic accidents. The first fatal accident, which claimed the life of 80-year-old Santa Chun, occurred on Friday, July 1, while Chun was walking on the side of the highway in the Valley of Peace, Cayo District, after buying tortillas. The other accident took place on Sunday, July 3, in Carmelita Village, Orange Walk District, where 69-year-old Crispin Moreno Francisco was killed instantly when he was hit by a pickup



Santa Chun, deceased

truck while crossing the Philip Goldson Highway.

According to an initial police report, the driver of the pickup which hit Chun in Cayo, 43-year-old Jesus Felipe Galdamez, a vendor, told police that at around 7:40 p.m. on Friday night he was traveling in his pickup truck in the direction of Valley of Peace as he headed to Belmopan when he suddenly saw Chun walking on the side of the highway. Galdamez said he tried to swerve to avoid hitting Chun but to no avail. He

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Dangriga man, 33, killed by companions

DANGRIGA, Stann Creek District, Mon. July 4, 2022

Early this morning, a 33-year-old man was killed in the cultural capital, Dangriga, and his body left close to his home in the New Site area. Emerson Nunez was with two other male persons and had just left his house with them when he was killed, police said today. The family of the victim believes that he would not have been at his home, or out so late, with persons he did not know. The communications director of the Belize Police Department, ASP Fitzroy Yearwood, expressed a similar opinion to reporters today.

"We at the Police Department are looking at the angle that maybe he may have known these persons, and it would

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Emerson Nunez, deceased

Ministry of Housing employee crushed by tractor

See story on page 15

St. Francis staff not being accused of wrongdoing just yet, says GM

At their Annual General Meeting last Sunday, members of Saint Francis Xavier Credit Union reinstated Rafael Dominguez, Sr., as their general manager along with a new board of directors. One day later, several employees were suspended, prompting a walkout by disgruntled staff. But Dominguez says the suspensions are part of an ongoing audit.

by Khaila Gentle

COROZAL TOWN, Mon. July 4, 2022

Fourteen employees of Saint Francis Xavier Credit Union were suspended last week by a new board of directors, prompting a walkout by staff members, but newly reinstated general manager of the credit union, Rafael Dominguez, Sr., says that the suspensions were a necessary part of an internal audit being done at the credit union. He also noted that, since the initial suspension on Monday, the number of employees being placed on administrative leave has been reduced to nine.

According to Dominguez, the move to suspend staff from various departments was prompted by numerous complaints, including allegations that members’ accounts were being mishandled.

“We had a number of questions, we had a number of complaints, including some ideas and suggestions to improve the credit union, but what most concerned us at that time was because members were still having that confusion in their head—that allegation that something is not right with their account, including, as far as I can recall,

seeing that money was missing,” explained Dominguez in an interview on Friday.

Dominguez also mentioned that other members were claiming that, despite not having an ATM card, they were receiving reports that withdrawals had been made from their accounts through the ATMs.

“So we started to analyze those things, and we said, okay, well then we have a mandate from the membership whereby we, coming back in office, we need to establish and start doing an audit of the credit union, because we don’t know how the credit union would have been left at that time. So, coming back in office, we decided to take out people from different departments, as the board and the Supervisory Committee needed to do a walk-through to find out on the different departments how those departments were left. Or how they were operating. And that was the reason why the board and management decided the need for us to suspend employees, with pay, and put them under administrative leave,” he further explained.

On Sunday, June 26, the longstanding leadership dispute at Saint Francis

Xavier Credit Union (SFXCU) seemed to have finally concluded after members elected a new board of directors, credit committee, and supervisory committee with Rafael Dominguez at the helm as general manager. But last Thursday’s walkout, which took place at the credit union’s main branch in Corozal Town and was led by the head office manager, Elvis Canul, proved otherwise.

Canul told reporters that the protest occurred after an unproductive meeting with the credit union’s board of directors, and that it was done to “stand firm in solidarity with the people who were unjustifiably suspended.”

But Rafael Dominguez, Sr., claims that the meeting was only unfruitful due to limited time.



Rafael Dominguez, Sr. – General Manager, Saint Francis Xavier Credit Union

“I want to believe that during the course of that discussion, that dialogue as to clarify why the suspensions were merited and why the credit union was going through that process, the time was limited, and that was when I started to see what the other employees who were headed by the head office manager Mr. Elvis Canul was creating—probably he thought it would have been something good, naming it in solidarity of the employees that were suspended,” said Dominguez, adding that the board had met to speak with Canul on several occasions in an attempt to explain the situation at the credit union.

Dominguez, Sr., says that management is not yet accusing any of the suspended employees of wrongdoing, and are instead awaiting the results of the recently launched audit. He said that when they came into office, the initial intention was never to dismiss any employee.

“At the first instance we can say that we do recognize probably the tone of the [suspension] letter was not the proper wording that we would have used, but we are in the process of

changing that and having it to be an administrative leave. Nevertheless, meaning to say that employees—we cannot accuse them of any wrongdoing at this moment until we can have a complete report of what the auditors are reporting after their findings,” he said.

Suspended employees include two senior personnel from the recovery department, a cashier, an internal auditor, an IT department worker, a branch manager, and a compliance officer. Their administrative leave is expected to last a minimum of two weeks.

Protesting employees had claimed that even a janitor was unreasonably suspended. That suspension, said Dominguez, was lifted along with those of four others after some reconsideration.

Following Thursday’s walkout, the disgruntled credit union staff also held a demonstration on Friday, July 1.

Saint Francis Xavier Credit Union is one of the largest credit unions in the country. According to Dominguez, Sr., so far services rendered to members have not been severely affected by the protests.

Simone Biles to receive Presidential Medal of Freedom

by Khaila Gentle

WASHINGTON D.C., Mon. July 4, 2022

Olympic gymnast Simone Biles will be among several other outstanding persons to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom—the highest civilian honour in the United States—from President Joe Biden.

According to the White House, the medal is awarded to individuals who have “made exemplary contributions to the prosperity, values, or security of the United States, world peace, or other significant societal, public or private endeavors.”

Biles, along with sixteen others, including Denzel Washington, Megan Rapinoe, Steve Jobs, and John McCain, will be awarded this Thursday. The 25-year-old gymnast, whose adoptive mother—Nellie Cayetano Biles—is Belizean, will become the youngest athlete to receive such an honor, taking the title from Tiger Woods who had been awarded in 2019 at the age of 43.

Upon announcing the list of awardees, President Biden praised Biles for being an advocate for athletes’ mental health and safety, children in the foster care system, and victims of sexual assault. He also commended Washington, an Oscar-winning actor, for his extended work with the Boys & Girls Club of America, and Rapinoe, Biles’ fellow Team USA Olympian, for her advocacy for gender pay equality, LGBTQ rights, and racial justice.

“These seventeen Americans



Simone Biles, American gymnast

demonstrate the power of possibilities and embody the soul of the nation – hard work, perseverance, and faith,” said the White House.

Other awardees include Father Alexander Karloutsos, former Vicar General of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America; Alan Simpson, who served as a U.S. Senator for 18 years; and Diane Nash, a founding member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee who “organized some of the most important civil rights campaigns of the 20th century.”

Simone Biles was recently in Belize for the Fourth of July weekend—spending the holiday on Ambergris Caye. The gymnast, who holds Belizean citizenship through her mother, has often referred to the country as her “second home”.

Unidentified hit-and-run victim found on highway



Tatoos on victim’s body

by Charles Gladden

STANN CREEK DISTRICT, Mon. July 4, 2022

Police are asking for the assistance of the public to identify an unknown Hispanic male person labeled by police as “John Doe” who was found on the side of the road between Miles 16 and

17 on the Southern Highway in the early hours of Saturday, July 2.

At around 5:00 a.m. that morning, police were called to the scene and saw the body of the unidentified man with severe head and body injuries, which caused police to believe his death was

BCCI not opposed to minimum wage increase

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 4, 2022

The Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) is not opposed to the Government’s goal of increasing the country’s minimum wage from three dollars and thirty cents to five dollars per hour, says BCCI president, Marcello Blake. They are in support, however, of a phased approach when it comes to the implementation of such a wage increase.

“At the end of the day, we understand where we are—we understand where the average consumer-worker is, and we recognize that the cost of everything is going up, right. And so at the end of the day, we must work towards getting where there’s a livable wage for all,” said Blake in an interview last week.

“We continue to advocate for a formula-driven approach, where in fact it becomes a phased-in approach, where we don’t jump from \$3.30 to \$5.00 overnight, because obviously that will impact all businesses in their operating costs, and so really it needs to be a little bit more predictable and palatable for businesses to continue to make the adjustments, as was done with the Social Security wage band adjustment,” he added.

On Friday, the Government announced that it had moved closer to implementing an adjustment to the country’s minimum wage with the enlistment of a consultant from PPF Capital Belize Limited that will aid the Minimum Wage Task Force—a team on which the BCCI has representation—in holding consultations with stakeholders countrywide. After those consultations, a plan for the gradual implementation of the new minimum wage is expected to be submitted.

“We are looking at it to ensure that, as I said before, there’s something in place that allows for the predictability and allowing for that planning to occur



Marcello Blake – President, Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry

so that businesses can adjust. Because you will appreciate that if there’s a sudden shock to the system, then it’s almost inevitable that employers would not be able to keep necessarily all the employees they have, because automatically the cost of doing business increases overnight. But if there is a phase-in approach, where it can be done gradually, we can all plan to ensure that we try and keep things together as best we can without necessarily having to impact the workforce that we employ,” said Blake.

In light of the Government’s initiative, however, many have raised the question of whether a \$5 minimum wage is enough, especially considering the fact that Belizeans, along with persons in many other parts of the world, are currently faced with a steady increase in the cost of living due to rising inflation rates. As it stands, the pump price for one gallon of premium gas is currently more than fifteen dollars—three times the newly proposed minimum wage.

The last time the country saw an increase in its minimum wage was a decade ago when the current wage of \$3.30 (US \$1.64) was phased in over a period of five years from 2007 to 2012.

Hon. Christopher Coye explains SIB’s GDP rebasing exercise

The Statistical Institute of Belize recently updated the methodology that it uses to estimate the country’s GDP—a move that resulted in record-breaking numbers for GDP growth for the first quarter of 2022.

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Thurs. June 30, 2022

The Statistical Institute of Belize recently revealed that there was record-breaking growth in Belize’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the first quarter of 2022, surpassing even pre-pandemic levels of production recorded in the first quarter of 2019. According to the SIB, the country’s GDP grew by 5.3%, or \$61.3 million—a figure that it arrived at after updating the methodology it uses to measure the country’s economic activity.

That methodology is known as the System of National Accounts (SNA). And the SIB, as part of its modernization initiative, transitioned from the now outdated SNA 1993 to the SNA 2008 after finding that the former method significantly underestimated the output of several industries, and omitted newer industries altogether. With the new SNA, it was found that the country’s GDP over the years had been underestimated by some 27.6%.

Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, Hon. Christopher Coye, explained this change to KREM News:

“Belize had been using the System of National Accounts for 1993 or thereabouts—an old methodology for the determination of its GDP or the GDP estimates for the country—over the past so many years. Since 1993, there has been an updating or a new approach that has been introduced through the UN Statistical Division. That’s the System of National Accounts for 2008, I believe. Belize had yet to adopt that in the determination of its GDP, so I think a few years ago that effort began,” he said.

According to Coye, the way GDP was being calculated under the old methodology reflected an economic structure based in the 1980s—back when agriculture played a much larger role in



Hon. Christopher Coye – Minister of State, Ministry of Finance

the economy and tourism was a much smaller industry. Now that that’s changed, he said, it only makes sense that a new, updated methodology is adopted.

One example Hon. Coye gave of an economic sector that had been significantly overlooked by the old SNA is the BPO sector.

“That didn’t exist in the 80s, but certainly that plays a significant role and a growing significance to our economy, so it’s important that that sector as well as all the other sectors that contribute to our economy be counted,” said Hon. Coye.

According to the Finance Minister of State, the significant increase in GDP also changes the country’s debt to GDP ratio—potentially taking it below the 100% mark to somewhere around 80%. Earlier in the year, the IMF made a recommendation to the Government of Belize that it should aim to reduce its debt to GDP ratio to 60% by 2030. This came after the Government told the IMF that its goal was to bring the ratio to 80% by 2025 and 70% by 2030.

“As you can now appreciate, we are on the precipice of achieving that 80% mark in 2022, not 2025, so we are ahead of target,” he stated.

Tropical Storm Bonnie claims 5 lives

Now a category 1 hurricane, the system is moving along the southwest coast of Mexico and strengthening, according to the National Hurricane Center.



BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 4, 2022

The third hurricane of the season, Bonnie, is slowly making its way along the coast of southern Mexico and strengthening, according to the 10:00 a.m. advisory from the National Hurricane Center. The system made landfall on the Caribbean coast between Nicaragua and Costa Rica last Friday and has since ripped through Central America, claiming up to 5 lives so far, before heading back over the waters of the Eastern Pacific.

Reports are that 4 persons were washed away by the swollen rivers in Nicaragua. One man, 43-year-old Juan Carlos Alemán Mendoza, reportedly died while trying to save passengers from a local school bus that was

washed away by the flooding.

In El Salvador, one person has been confirmed dead: a young lady; and one man is still missing and being searched for.

“...BRINGING ROUGH SURF AND THREAT OF RIP CURRENTS TO PORTIONS OF THE COAST OF SOUTHERN MEXICO...,” this morning’s advisory from the NHC noted. Mariners have been warned that the surf and rip current could be life-threatening.

At this time, it seems that the storm is headed out to open water, since there are no coastal watch warnings in place, but persons living along the southern and southwestern coast of Mexico are asked to monitor the progress of the storm.

Exchange program allows Belizean educators to teach in the U.S.

Participate Learning is a program that grants teachers from around the world the opportunity to live and teach in the United States for three to five years.

by Khaila Gentle
BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 4, 2022

Participate Learning is a cultural exchange program with the United States that allows educators from across the globe to gain international experience by teaching in the US. According to the program’s recruitment coordinator, Ronald Ramirez, those teachers who apply and are accepted into the program go on to teach students aged five to eleven about the customs, traditions, geography, and history of their country.

Ramirez explained in an interview that Belizean teachers who take part in the program can expect their skills in education to increase significantly.

“What are the Belizean teacher—what are his expectations or her expectations—they’re gonna have continuous improvement as a professional educator. They’re going to have a lot of workshops every month. They’re gonna become better and better teachers because they’re gonna be learning about new strategies and about new technologies too. So that’s one of the best benefits of the program,” he said.

According to Ramirez, participating teachers receive the same salary as North American teachers—US \$35,000 to \$55,000 annually, before taxes—as well as other benefits such as medical and dental insurance.

“The main objective of Participate Learning is to unite the world through



Ronald Ramirez, Recruitment Coordinator, Participate Learning Latin America

global education. Because we want future US citizens to have empathy on different cultures,” said Ramirez.

Interested teachers can go to participatelearning.com, where they can learn more about the program and apply. Applicants are required to be employed by a public or private institution and have a Bachelor’s Degree in Education. They must have at least two years of teaching experience and a valid driver’s license, with at least one year of driving experience. Applicants must also be vaccinated.

If successful, teachers will then go to the US for a period of three to five years. And according to Ramirez, participants’ family members—their legal spouse and all children under 18 years old—can accompany them. Their spouse would be able to work legally in the US and the children will be able to attend a public school for free.

Participate Learning partners with schools in three states: North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. Teachers have the choice of teaching in English or, if they are bi-lingual, in Spanish.

Prime Minister John Briceño hands over CARICOM Chairmanship

by Khaila Gentle
PARAMARIBO, Suriname, Mon. July 4, 2022
CARICOM leaders are convening this week for the 43rd Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government which takes place from Sunday, July 3, to Tuesday, July 5, and during which Prime Minister John Briceño will be passing CARICOM chairmanship to the president of Suriname, Chandrikapersad Santokhi.

Last week, Hon. Briceño reflected on his chairmanship over the past six months via an interview released by the Government of Belize Press Office:

“It’s been a very intense six months, but gratifying because we felt that we managed to get a lot of work done ... President Santokhi will take over as the President of Suriname, and whilst we were in Belize we decided to set up another, what we called a ‘Cabinet Portfolio’ and we put him responsible for industrial development. So we look forward to seeing what are his plans—what are his ideas—when it comes to that matter, but also it’s going to be a continuation of the work that we have done. I have every confidence in President Santokhi,” he stated.

During that interview, Prime Minister Briceño also expressed his hopes that, through working more closely together, CARICOM nations can continue to have their voices heard on the global stage.

At the opening ceremony of the 43rd Regular Meeting, Prime Minister Briceño addressed the leaders of CARICOM. During that address, he thanked the people of Suriname for their hospitality throughout the conference, commending President Santokhi and his team for doing an excellent job in hosting the meeting. He also welcomed Hon. Dickon Mitchell, the newly elected prime minister of Grenada, who is attending his first Heads of Government meeting.

CARICOM Secretary-General Dr. Carla Barnett also spoke at the opening ceremony:

“In the past six months, our Community has had to maneuver through very delicate situations. The



Prime Minister John Briceño - Outgoing CARICOM Chairman

calm and steady hand of our outgoing Chair, the Honourable John Briceño, Prime Minister of Belize, ensured that the overall interests of the Community remained the guiding principles of our actions. Thank you, Prime Minister,” she remarked.

“In welcoming our new Chair, His Excellency President Chandrikapersad Santokhi of Suriname, I am confident that given his energy and vision for CARICOM much can be achieved during his stewardship,” she added.

President Santokhi, during his address, said that: “We find ourselves at a crossroads, and this is the moment, to re-assess, refocus and recommit our endeavours, to ensure sustainable development and prosperity, for the people of the Region, ultimately aimed at leaving no one behind. But we require leadership and willingness, to go for broad cooperation,” he stated.

Also on the agenda for this week’s conference are discussions surrounding the advancement of the CARICOM Agri-Food Systems Agenda, climate finance, security issues, matters arising from the 49th Meeting of the Community Council, and an update on COVID-19 and other emerging health issues. The Heads of Government are also expected to receive updates on the border issues between Belize and Guatemala as well as Guyana and Venezuela.

At the end of the three-day conference, regional leaders will select the date of their next summit, which is scheduled to take place in the Bahamas.

provide support to at-risk youths who are interested in learning about the tourism industry in Belize City and will give them an opportunity to learn about and experience the tourism attractions in Belize.

The Tourism Summer Camp that will be offered is the brainchild of Stamp, a grassroots community activist who was once involved in gang activity and is now dedicated to assisting young ones in the community to avoid such a lifestyle. Through the new initiative, he will be getting at-risk youths near tourist communities involved in afterschool programs and field trips, through which they will become Belizean travelers themselves.

Over the last 15 years, Stamp has spearheaded a Jah Love program, but, according to Stamp, a number of kids have entered and left the program and

fallen back into a life of crime and gang activity, and he noted that such programs need to be a recurring activity to prevent a return of participants to their previous lifestyles.

“We need the programs to be consistent. We don’t want it to be a one-summer thing and quit, because we will lose our kids hand-over-fist that way. We took about 25 kids on our last trip, and out of that 25, we lost at least about 15 of them. So it is very important that we have a consistent, you know, people are helping, because we’re trying to build a bond that is missing with these kids for 44 years,” expressed Stamp.

Evan Tillet, Director of Tourism, highlighted the importance of the programs for at-risk youths.

Timmy Stamp holds Tourism Summer Camp



(l-r) Evan Tillet, Director of Tourism; Glenford “Timmy” Stamp, Coordinator of the After-School Program

by Charles Gladden
BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 4, 2022
On Friday, July 1, Glenford “Timmy”

Stamp signed two agreements with the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) and the Belize Audubon Society (BAS) for the holding of summer camps that will



Goliath at our waterfront

Mon. July 4, 2022

Happy Independence Day to all USA citizens, and that includes Belizean/Americans!

Today is a special day for Americans, as it marks the date in 1776 when they ratified their Declaration of Independence from then colonial master, Great Britain, although their war of independence lasted from 1775-1783. A civil war later followed almost a century later, 1861-1865, a very violent and bloody affair, before that nation began settling into what has become world renowned as a shining pillar of democracy, where the American Constitution is paramount, and no man is above the law. But their democracy is being severely tested at this very moment, as their citizens’ constitutional right to own and bear arms makes the situation fraught with dangerous possibilities, as previously demonstrated by one Donald Trump who conspired to unleash the racist underbelly of American society in what could still possibly become a violent dismantling of their treasured democracy in his stubborn quest for power. So far, the rule of law has maintained, and we all hope that it stays that way, because by kinship and money, Belize is closely linked to the USA.

Our little Belize, in contrast, was supposedly born through a “peaceful, constructive, Belizean revolution,” where the same former colonial master, Great Britain, peacefully transferred power to Prime Minister George Price on our Independence Day, September 21, 1981. Guns have always been illegal in the hands of Belizean citizens, unless a special permit, not

easily secured, is approved by the Commissioner of Police. But, while we have not experienced an officially declared “civil war” in Belize, over the years, from before slavery days to present, there have been occasional eruptions of violence and civil disturbances requiring the official security forces to intervene and bring the situation back to normalcy. And with the advent of crack cocaine and the related gang conflicts over the past three decades, Belize has experienced a murder rate that has frequently reached what is internationally recognized as “civil war” levels, above 30 per 100,000 citizens a year. While guns remain illegal in Belize, it is common knowledge that illegal guns are present in great numbers among the criminal elements through the drug connections with international traffickers. Consider that reality along with the current cost-of-living crisis facing poor Belizeans, creating a mood of desperation, and on top of that we have what appears to be an economic “hit man” threatening the livelihoods of some of the few remaining

workers that have heretofore enjoyed a relative measure of financial comfort and security in the Belizean economy.

Through her two and a half centuries of existence, the USA has been a country of guns; and they have still managed to maintain law and order and their democracy. But by exploiting the lingering vestiges of racism at its core, former president Donald Trump has put the American democracy to a real test, as his lies and demagoguery have so infected and inflamed his loyal followers, that many were willing to employ violence “to save their democracy” from what should have been the peaceful transfer of power on January 6, 2020. Depending on what direction the current U.S. Senate Committee hearing takes, and the screws do seem to be turning against Trump, it is left to be seen whether this power maniac will try again to inflate his fanatical and well-armed followers towards a violent resistance against the course of justice. As the wheels of justice turn slow, the vaunted American democracy may be seriously tested in the near future; and we in Belize can only watch and pray, because as the saying goes, when America sneezes, we catch a cold.

Meanwhile, here in the Jewel, we have our own looming crisis. With the increasingly hard economic times, many in the over-50% poverty class are already under tremendous stress. Illegal guns are plentiful among the drug dealing gangs. The so-called criminal element views established society as their enemy, and they may well sympathize with the workers’ plight, and will certainly take advantage of any civil disorder that might result if the embattled stevedores reach a breaking point in their one-sided battle for economic survival against the perceived tyrant at the Port.

Belize is still a relatively peaceful country, despite the high numbers of murders, a significant portion being from gang conflicts and occasional random targets related to turf issues. Our challenge is to try and maintain this little peace, even while dealing with the reality that one big fish amongst us seems intent on devouring all our children. And somehow, despite the declared purity of our justice system, to the ordinary person in the street, the game does not seem to be fair, because he always wins.

“In God we trust” that the mighty USA will solve their Trump problem and secure their democracy. Many Belizeans have also become American citizens and many others reside there, so as a people we are intricately involved and invested in the outcome of that situation, even as we keep a watchful eye on the international arena and the looming threat of greater global, economic and military upheavals in the East vs West conflict that may emanate from the Russia vs Ukraine affair.

But here in Belize, our big concern, that is if we want to continue being a proud, independent nation and not become a one-man controlled “banana republic”, should be the Goliath in our midst. The quicker we take off the blinders, and come to realize that “this English man” did not come here to bring wine and roses to little Belize, but to “rape and plunder” our nation’s wealth through legal but often quite immoral means. And those with any measure of doubt can start their enlightenment by asking any former, proud shareholding member of BTL back in the nineties, after Ashcroft took control and arbitrarily STOPPED paying dividends, prompting many to sell their shares, which he proceeded to gobble up. And that was only the beginning of this financial shark’s legal feeding frenzy on the Belizean people’s assets.

Governments/politicians come and governments/politicians go in Belize; but, whether red or blue, the “puppet master” remains. The Belizean prime minister with the best record of trying to stand up to Ashcroft appears to be the Rt. Hon. Manuel Esquivel. Privy to his thoughts, here is how his wife, Cathy Esquivel, assessed Michael Ashcroft in her 2021 biography of her husband, Manuel Esquivel, “Still Waters”. On page 218, she wrote:

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(estb. 1969)

Business and editorial offices:
3304 Partridge Street, Belize City, Belize, Central America is printed twice weekly by the Amandala Press.
Telephones: 501-280-4703/ 501-202-4477

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Belize City, Belize

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amandala.com.bz

Oceana: We Fish Right, Eat Right



by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Wed. June 29, 2022

On Monday, June 27, Oceana hosted its Fish Right Eat Right Forum: Closing Data Gaps with Technology, with the objective of highlighting the ways technology is being used in fisheries management by various partners of the Fish Right Eat Right initiative, as well as pinpointing the outcomes of the project “Market-Based Incentives for Responsible Fishing”.

Specifically, at this year’s forum, Oceana Belize put a spotlight on the effectiveness of an app that it launched last year, through which restaurants and seafood lovers can trace the origins of the fish they had bought or were consuming—thus making themselves aware of the source of the catch they bought, and the processes used to harvest that seafood that ends up on their plates.

Vice President of OCEANA Belize, Janelle Chanona explained to the local media more about the initiative.

“We can look at how much conch and how much lobster is going out, but there was really a data gap in terms of domestic fin fish locally, because that’s considered, it’s not being exported. It’s a national market, we didn’t have much idea of what

was being consumed there and so when the initiative looked at just Caye Caulker and San Pedro in terms of how much fish was being consumed particularly through national and the international demand via the tourism industry,” she said.

She went on to state, “One of the presentations showed that lobster can get stressed, so depending on how you catch lobster and how you ice it and how you handle it, you end up with droopy lobster versus another plump lobster. So that was interesting in terms of here we are thinking maybe only humans get stressed, but the way you catch lobster also dictates the quality of the meat and I think that could be an anecdote in terms of the way we handle our fish in terms of how we catch them, the gear that we’re using,” Chanona added.

Outreach & Project Director for OCEANA Belize, Jacinta Gomez, put into words how the app works.

“It’s a virtual marketplace app with an e-monitoring and e-reporting component. And these three components come together beautifully to give end consumers in restaurants or at fisher markets the opportunity to really see, visualize, and see video footage of how your fish is being caught and when the fish is landed on the vessel. So it is a full circle in terms of traceability of fin fish,” she said.



Goliath at our waterfront

Continued from **Page 5** “Even though making money is at the heart of his strategy, Ashcroft is driven more by his need to win at any cost. Entering into any agreement with him is unwise since the fine print always gives him an unbeatable advantage, and his deep pockets ensure that he can outlast his adversaries in the Courts.”

Belizeans need to pay a little more attention to the developing situation with our brave stevedores at the Port, and whether we will continue to be a peaceful country and an independent nation. Our conservationists know that when we chop down the forest, our desperate Jaguars will soon begin preying on farmers’ cattle and sheep. It is one thing to keep a “broken” slave in “his place;” but when a man has tasted freedom and dignity, as have our generations of stevedores, they will not go down to a new enslaver without a fight. And those of us who think that it doesn’t concern us one way or the other, may soon realize that we have to decide whose side we are on, who we are with, David or Goliath. And it is clear that this Goliath will not be defeated in court. Only the people, coming together, can save Belize.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Vacancies exist for the following positions. Successful candidates will be required to obtain a security clearance and undergo a medical examination.

(1) Housekeeper (2positions):

BASIC FUNCTION OF THE POSITION:

Duties include day-to-day housekeeping, organizing, dusting, vacuuming, laundry services, changing and maintaining bedding, ironing, cleaning floor and counter surfaces, assisting with plans for events and functions, serving at these functions, shopping for household supplies, maintaining shopping records and inventory, pet care (if applicable), tending to house plants, identifying maintenance issues, and escorting staff. All responsibilities shall be completed on time and thoroughly, with utmost integrity and honesty, and in a manner representing the highest U.S. standards of customer service.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED:

- At least two years prior experience in housekeeping is required
- A good command of reading, writing, and speaking English is required
- Must have initiative, good interpersonal skills and flexibility

(2) Chef:

BASIC FUNCTION OF THE POSITION:

Duties include but are not limited to planning, budgeting, shopping, preparing and presenting a variety of meal services for the residence and for events of 2 to 200 guests. With an understanding of nutritional balance and essential elements, the Chef’s repertoire must include a diverse and wide range of cooking styles and meal types, including appetizers for receptions, baked goods, desserts, and the ability to create vegetarian/vegan meals and cater to gluten sensitivities. The Chef will also be required to maintain expense records for each event or function, create menus, manage inventory, and assure the highest standards of safety, cleanliness, and proper food preparation and storage. The Chef is required to plan menus in advance and carry out the actual purchasing of supplies and ingredients necessary to produce the dishes reflected in the set menus. All responsibilities shall be completed on time, with integrity and honesty, and in a manner representing the highest U.S. standards of customer service.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED:

- At least three years of culinary experience in a hotel/restaurant setting is required
- Associate Degree or completion of culinary/catering certificate program or in the absence of an Associate Degree, five years of culinary experience in a hotel or restaurant setting
- Must have a fluent command of reading, writing, and speaking English, and the ability to follow recipes and cooking instructions of varying complexity
- Must have initiative, good interpersonal skills and flexibility

WHO MAY APPLY: Applicants must be in possession of a Belize social security card valid for employment and/or a resident/work permit, and be eligible for appointment under Belize’s local laws.

HOW TO APPLY:

Interested candidates must submit a letter of application, current resume, two references and all other applicable supporting documentation by email to BelmopanJobs@state.gov. All applications must include in the subject line which position they are applying for (**eg: Employment Application for Chef position**). Incomplete applications will not be considered. For a complete copy of the position description listing all duties and responsibilities, please send an email to BelmopanJobs@state.gov or call at 822-4011, Ext. 4242. The deadline for submitting applications is **Friday, July 8, 2022**.

Best sign we're back to normal, almost

by Colin Hyde

I was very thirsty around noon one day, after spending the morning in More Tomorrow, and when I reached the George Price Highway I decided I needed a cold one immediately, so I drove to the nearest cool spot, a cantina. I knew beers there would cost more than at a regular shop, one of which was just a quarter mile up the road, but innocence led me to think I'd get a noon price. I said I expected to pay a little more, and I told the waitress I was just about quenching my thirst, that's all. Six dollars for a regular beer, wow!

The beer was really cold, and while drinking it I was reminded of the time I was in San Pedro and I decided to get me an orange juice at the first business place I met on the way to where I was going. I have that habit. I used to be selective about whom I asked for assistance, for example directions if I'm in a new area, and along life's course I decided that the best way to save myself from assessing people was to just ask the first adult person that came by. I modified the *modus operandi* some when a young lady gave me a look that said, *Mister* – I wasn't called Dad's then — *Mister, you are the definition of farad*. I earned that look because the hood of my car didn't have

a prop and I needed someone to hold it up just ten seconds while I poured some water in the radiator.

About that orange juice on La Isla Bonita, I got wap \$6 on that one too. In the worst of times, for farmers, you could get a sack of oranges from them for that amount. Give the devil his due, that hotel's orange juice had ice flakes forming in it, but oh the price, it was way too high for a local, especially one who has had the good fortune of living in the Stann Creek Valley. You don't need a refrij if you live in Alta Vista in December and January. In the morning you take a short walk down to the grove and select your well-chilled oranges, the best, Valencia on sour orange rootstock, Valencia oranges so sweet the solids are beginning to crystallize.

One day each week I'm in Belize City for a little camaraderie, and in the nights when I'm traveling home, especially if it's late, it's been my habit to look over to see if the little place on the north side of the George Price Highway that gouged me is still opened for business. They never disappointed. That cantina never sleeps. Ah, the warm folk who work there are never too tired, never too eager to get to bed early, always on the ready for the late-night traffic.

And then along came Covid and shut a lot of things down. I think most of us want to forget as much as we can, so

I'll just say I knew when I passed by the night before the GOB shut us down that the light in the little cantina would be gone. I looked anyway. It was. I looked the next time I passed by too. Unfailingly I look over, and weeks became months, and months became two years, but no light there, only darkness. Hmm, I peered over sometimes when I passed by in the daytime too, hoping to see at least a little crack between the door and the jambs, the windows and the sills, but *all was locked and barred*.

It's bad news, a business shutting down. It's a dark day when people show up for work and the gate is locked with a chain and padlock, or there's a fast-talking auctioneer working over an eager crowd in the yard. That place jacked me alright; what an exorbitant price for a Belikin beer! I just hope that employer spread the profits with the employees; oh, and I hope they all like a late-night show.

Hey, I don't endorse *Gentleman's Bar*; no pastor has to tell me that's a real generous name for that business's patrons. What I am is pro-business. That's why I let out a cheer last week when hooray, the no-brighter-than-a-kerosene-lamp lights were back on. Ha, maybe it's my despondency on seeing the place always shuttered, why I almost forgot to look their way last week when I passed by. I was actually by it, and had to glance back. It must be instinct, to look. They say a turtle will travel miles and miles to mate and lay eggs on the beach where they were born. But I don't claim anything so incredible and majestic.

Keeping it positive, it's real nice to know that if I ever need a beer I know where to get it, if I've got 6 bucks. Whew, could there be a better sign that we're back to normal, and if we're not, that we're almost there?

Judge Shoman for the way she turned a line about a violin and a tune. I say, we there, wounded and biting our tongue so we didn't fall into libel! But we shouldn't be so surprised. Before we made the mistake of giving him our big job, Mr. Dean was a criminal lawyer, and if you're looking for a cold breed to staff a prison in the Arctic, they are prime suspects.

Oh boy, we owe Mr. Luke Martinez, the president of the NTUCB, for noticing that, ehm, jet planes were about to take off on fire sale while our innocent eyes were focused on Tacoma and Mahindra. Luke's diversion of the Marshalleck Inquiry triggered a veteran PUP press officer who, like the disappointing mommy's boy who couldn't kech game and so took his ball and went home, pulled the plug on the session. That disruption made us very unhappy, because it provided an escape hatch for dozens more crooked UDPs who were to be paraded before us in the glaring light.

When it was learnt that the plug had been pulled by someone in the PUP's Press Office, that was patterned off the Reich *Propaganda Ministry*, everyone hollered Vaughan Gill, the notorious host of the dangerous *Vibes* morning show, and we weren't ashamed of ourselves when we learned it was another, not he. PUP press officers are six of one and half dozen of the other. Those bohgaz are all the same. Anything one could or would do, the other two or three could and would do too.

The word about later was that it was that upstart Rudon who deserved the blame. Since he was volunteered, he not only hasn't bothered to put in a denial, but in fact he is lapping up the part, acting like a man who takes pride in being a bad egg. Well I want him to know we were insulted by his nerve, and if he wasn't a lucky so and so, he'd still be on the hook.

Because the lead interrogator, Mr. Marshalleck, lapsed, we can thank Mr. Rudon for his rudeness. Bah, ex-ministers who sat in the hot seat at the Inquiry got government vouchers that dwarf what they made in a year in office. If Rudon hadn't pulled da plug on Luke, mid-broadside, more crooked UDPs would be in on the feast. Thus, by interrupting Luke, Rudon prevented a bad thing from becoming a Civic Center- sized debacle.

Notice

Notice is hereby given that TAIJO Technologies Inc

- is in dissolution as of the 27th of June, 2022 and Tai, Sheng-Yu is the liquidator

Notice is hereby given that MLA Technologies Inc

- is in dissolution as of the 27th of June, 2022 and Chang, HSIU-MEI is the liquidator

Notice is hereby given that ACA International Co., Ltd.

- is in dissolution as of the 27th of June, 2022 and Tai, Sheng-Yu is the liquidator

Notice is hereby given that Golden Business Co., Ltd.

- is in dissolution as of the 14th June, 2022 and Chen, Nai-Teh is the liquidator.

Notice is hereby given that Global Hawk Group Ltd.

- is in dissolution as of the 26th May, 2022 and Umbrella Corporation is the liquidator.

Rudon interrupted Luke and saved the treasury

My gudnis, how people find hog heaven in strange things! I bet Dean Barrow adored Ned Pitts. Oh how he must have loved the prime-time Hubert Elrington. In the midst of our suffering, our getting raked for 145 thousand sakkin dollars because Lawyer Marshalleck forgot to cover his base, Mr. Dean worshipped at the altar of

A change is gonna come!

If you've never listened to Sam Cooke sing the above song, you haven't lived or experienced life and living, in my humble opinion. Whenever I listen to that song, it affects me deeply, down to my *tuch*, the Mayan word for bellybutton. It's a song of hope and optimism and heartbreak and disappointment, and then again, of hope! In these unpredictable times we live in, we need to find that hope, that silver lining, even if it seems farfetched!

I've always read that the worst part of any century is the beginning and the end. The 21st century is no different, with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, 911, Covid and Ukraine and worldwide inflation and instability! The 20th century began with WWI, then the plague 1917-1919, and on and on. There was no respite from war and suffering in that century. Technological



Goliat en nuestro embarcadero

Lun. 4 de julio de 2022

¡Feliz Día de la Independencia a todos los ciudadanos de EE. UU., y eso incluye a los beliceños-estadounidenses!

Hoy es un día especial para los estadounidenses, ya que marca la fecha en 1776 cuando ratificaron su Declaración de Independencia del entonces amo colonial, Gran Bretaña, aunque su guerra de independencia duró de 1775 a 1783. Una guerra civil más tarde siguió casi un siglo después, 1861-1865, un asunto muy violento y sangriento, antes de que esa nación comenzara a asentarse en lo que ha llegado a ser mundialmente conocido como un pilar brillante de la democracia, donde la Constitución estadounidense es primordial, y ningún hombre está por encima de la ley. Pero su democracia está siendo severamente puesta a prueba en este mismo momento, ya que el derecho constitucional de sus ciudadanos a poseer y portar armas hace que la situación esté llena de peligrosas posibilidades, como lo demostró anteriormente Donald Trump quien, en su obstinada búsqueda del poder, conspiró para desatar el vientre racista de la sociedad estadounidense en lo que aún podría convertirse en un desmantelamiento violento de su atesorada democracia. Hasta ahora se ha mantenido el estado de derecho, y todos esperamos que se mantenga así, porque por parentesco y dinero, Belize está muy ligado a los EE.UU.

Nuestro pequeño Belize, por el contrario, supuestamente nació a través de una “revolución beliceña pacífica y constructiva”, en la que el mismo antiguo amo colonial, Gran Bretaña, transfirió pacíficamente el poder al primer ministro George Price en nuestro Día de la Independencia, el 21 de septiembre de 1981. Las armas siempre han sido ilegales en manos de ciudadanos beliceños, a menos que el Comisionado de Policía apruebe un permiso especial, difícil de conseguir. Pero, si bien no hemos experimentado una “guerra civil” oficialmente declarada en Belize, a lo largo de los años, desde antes de la esclavitud hasta el presente, ha habido brotes ocasionales de violencia y disturbios civiles que requirieron la intervención de las fuerzas de seguridad oficiales para regresar la situación a la normalidad. Y con la llegada del crack y los conflictos de pandillas relacionados en las últimas tres décadas, Belize ha experimentado una tasa de homicidios que con frecuencia ha alcanzado lo que se reconoce internacionalmente como niveles de “guerra civil”, por encima de 30 por cada 100.000 ciudadanos al año. Mientras que las armas siguen siendo ilegales en Belize, es de conocimiento común que las armas ilegales están presentes en gran número entre los elementos criminales a través de las conexiones de drogas con traficantes internacionales. Consideren esa realidad junto con la actual crisis del costo de vida que enfrentan los beliceños pobres, creando un ambiente de desesperación, y además tenemos lo que parece ser un “asesino económico a sueldo” que amenaza el sustento de algunos de los pocos trabajadores que quedan que hasta ahora han disfrutado de una medida relativa de comodidad y seguridad financiera en la economía de Belize.

A lo largo de sus dos siglos y medio de existencia, Estados Unidos ha sido un país de armas; y aún han logrado mantener la ley y el orden y su democracia. Pero al explotar los vestigios persistentes del racismo en su esencia, el expresidente Donald Trump ha puesto a prueba la democracia estadounidense, ya que sus mentiras y demagogia han infectado e inflamado tanto a sus leales seguidores, que muchos estaban dispuestos a emplear la violencia “para salvar su democracia” de lo que debería haber sido la transferencia pacífica del poder el 6 de enero de 2021. Dependiendo de la dirección que tome la audiencia actual del Comité del Senado de EE. UU., y los tornillos parecen estar girando contra Trump, queda por ver si este maniaco del poder intentará nuevamente incitar a sus seguidores fanáticos y bien armados a una resistencia violenta contra el curso de la justicia. A medida que las ruedas de la justicia giran lentas, la cacareada democracia estadounidense puede verse seriamente puesta a prueba en un futuro próximo; y nosotros en Belize solo podemos velar y orar, porque como dice el refrán, cuando América estornuda, nosotros nos resfriamos.

Mientras tanto, aquí en la Joya, tenemos nuestra propia crisis inminente. Con los tiempos económicos cada vez más difíciles,

muchos en la clase de pobreza de más del 50% ya están bajo un estrés tremendo. Las armas ilegales abundan entre las bandas de narcotraficantes. El llamado elemento criminal ve a la sociedad establecida como su enemigo, y bien puede simpatizar con la difícil situación de los trabajadores, y ciertamente se aprovechará de cualquier desorden civil que pueda resultar si los estibadores en conflicto llegan a un punto de ruptura en su batalla unilateral para la supervivencia económica contra el tirano percibido en el puerto.

Belize sigue siendo un país relativamente pacífico, a pesar de la gran cantidad de asesinatos, una parte significativa de los conflictos de pandillas y ocasionales blancos aleatorios relacionados con problemas de territorio. Nuestro desafío es tratar de mantener esta pequeña paz, incluso mientras lidiamos con la realidad de que un gran pez entre nosotros parece tener la intención de devorar a todos nuestros hijos. Y de alguna manera, a pesar de la pureza declarada de nuestro sistema de justicia, a la persona común y corriente en la calle, el juego no le parece justo, porque él siempre gana.

“En Dios confiamos” en que el poderoso Estados Unidos resolverá su problema de Trump y asegurará su democracia. Muchos beliceños también se han convertido en ciudadanos estadounidenses y muchos otros residen allí, por lo que, como pueblo, estamos intrínsecamente involucrados y comprometidos con el resultado de esa situación, incluso mientras mantenemos un ojo atento en la arena internacional y la amenaza inminente de mayores levantamientos globales, económicos y militares en el conflicto Este vs Oeste que pueden emanar del asunto Rusia vs Ucrania.

Pero aquí en Belize, nuestra gran preocupación, es decir, si queremos seguir siendo una nación orgullosa e independiente y no convertirnos en una “república bananera” controlada por un solo hombre, debería ser el Goliat entre nosotros. Cuanto más rápido nos quitemos las anteojeras, más pronto nos daremos cuenta de que “este hombre inglés” no vino aquí para traer vino y rosas al pequeño Belize, sino para “violar y saquear” la riqueza de nuestra nación a través de actos legales pero a menudo medios bastante inmorales. Y aquellos que tengan alguna medida de duda pueden empezar a esclarecerse preguntando a cualquier antiguo y orgulloso accionista de BTL allá por los años noventa, sobre lo que ocurrió después de que Ashcroft asumiera el control: cómo DEJÓ arbitrariamente de pagar dividendos, lo que provocó que muchos vendieran sus acciones, que él procedió a engullir. Y ese fue solo el comienzo del frenesí de alimentación legal de este tiburón financiero sobre los activos del pueblo beliceño.

Gobiernos/políticos vienen y gobiernos/políticos van en Belize; pero, ya sea rojo o azul, el “dueño del circo” permanece. El primer ministro beliceño con el mejor historial de intentar enfrentarse a Ashcroft parece ser el Muy Honorable Manuel Esquivel. Al tanto de sus pensamientos, así es como su esposa, Cathy Esquivel, evaluó a Michael Ashcroft en la biografía de 2021 de su esposo, Manuel Esquivel, Still Waters. En la página 218, escribió: “Aunque ganar dinero está en el centro de su estrategia, Ashcroft está más motivado por su necesidad de ganar a toda costa. Es imprudente llegar a un acuerdo con él, ya que la letra pequeña siempre le da una ventaja inmejorable, y sus bolsillos profundos aseguran que pueda sobrevivir a sus adversarios en las Cortes”.

Los beliceños deben prestar un poco más de atención a la situación en desarrollo con nuestros valientes estibadores en el puerto, y si continuaremos siendo un país pacífico y una nación independiente. Nuestros conservacionistas saben que cuando talamos el bosque, nuestros jaguares desesperados pronto comenzarán a acechar el ganado y las ovejas de los granjeros. Una cosa es mantener a un esclavo “quebrado” en “su lugar”; pero cuando un hombre ha probado la libertad y la dignidad, como lo han hecho nuestras generaciones de estibadores, no se rendirán a un nuevo esclavizador sin luchar. Y aquellos de nosotros que pensamos que no nos concierne de una manera u otra, pronto nos daremos cuenta de que tenemos que decidir de qué lado estamos, con quién estamos, si David o Goliat. Y está claro que este Goliat no será derrotado en los tribunales. Solo el pueblo, unido, puede salvar a Belize.



One of the United States Congressional leaders in the investigation into the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D. C., is a Republican named Liz Cheney, a congresswoman from Wyoming.

I wasn't sure whether she was a senator or a congresswoman, so I went into the computer. At the time, it was branded in my mind that she was the daughter of a United States fighter pilot who was shot down over North Vietnam during the Vietnam War and served four or five courageous years in a Hanoi prison cell. But that pilot was John McCain, who later became a senator for Arizona and a Republican Party candidate for U.S. president when Barack Obama first won for the Democrats in 2008.

There would have been a lot of egg on my face if I hadn't checked the computer. This is the type of thing which happens to you as you age.

There was, however, a certain amount of accuracy in my original thinking, in that Liz Cheney is the daughter of a former Republican vice-president, Dick Cheney, who was

considered one of the hawks in the United States war against Saddam Hussein's Iraq which began under false pretenses in 2003.

In becoming one of the leaders of the attack on Donald Trump, who most people consider the most powerful politician in the Republican Party, Liz Cheney is demonstrating an amount of courage which should be respected, and praised.

The reason I had confused Liz Cheney with a daughter of John McCain is because Donald Trump, who dodged the Vietnam War draft on flimsy medical excuses, had publicly insulted John McCain, an authentic war hero, before he died of cancer a couple years ago. The McCain family was, of course, much hurt by the insult to their patriarch.

The socio-political climate in the United States is very confrontational, for several reasons. But racism factors greatly into the cauldron-like American atmosphere.

European immigrants, whose descendants form the white American population majority, waged war against the Native American

population of America to seize the eastern and middle-western territory of the United States. Then they moved further west and down south. When the white Americans began moving south, they grabbed huge areas of land, all the way from Texas to California, from the Mexican people, who had outlawed slavery during the presidency of Vicente Guerrero, who was black, in the late 1820s.

Today, the American empire is being threatened by drugs, hedonism, and immigration by people of color. Remember, this was a republic which fought a bloody civil war over slavery between 1861 and 1865. The whole world can see that white Americans love high-powered guns and they are inclined to violence as a solution to problems. Hence, January 6, 2021.

I have said earlier that Donald Trump is the most powerful leader in the Republican Party. Belizeans have had enough experience with party politics as an institution to know that Liz Cheney may have committed political suicide by opposing Donald Trump.

I never studied United States

history, and all I know of American politics is what I see on cable television. But I am convinced that if the Biden presidency ever moves to indict and incarcerate Trump, the U.S. will break out into some kind of civil war. This is real.

In Belize, we have benefited greatly, since the end of the American Civil War, from our proximity to the United States, the fact that we are English-speaking, and the fact that Belize and the United States basically share Christian beliefs. But today, the crisis in America grows. There is more and more evidence that Trump used violence in an attempt to overthrow Joe Biden's victory in the November 2020 presidential election. This is what January 6, 2021 clearly constituted—seditious conspiracy. Real seditious conspiracy, not a brief newspaper article.

Remember this, Belizeans. Home is where, when you have to go there, they have to let you in. (The words of Robert Frost.) You saw what has been happening to the Ukrainians. They have no home to go to.



Uno de los líderes del Congreso de los Estados Unidos en la investigación del ataque del 6 de enero de 2021 al edificio del Capitolio de los Estados Unidos en Washington, D. C., es una republicana llamada Liz Cheney, congresista de Wyoming.

No estaba seguro de si era senadora o congresista, así que entré en la computadora. En ese momento, estaba grabado en mi mente que ella era la hija de un piloto de combate de los Estados Unidos que fue derribado en Vietnam del Norte durante la Guerra de Vietnam y cumplió cuatro o cinco valientes años en una celda de la prisión de Hanoi. Pero ese piloto fue John McCain, quien más tarde se convirtió en senador por Arizona y candidato del Partido Republicano a la presidencia de Estados Unidos cuando Barack Obama ganó por primera vez para los demócratas en 2008.

Hubiera tenido mucho huevo en mi cara si no hubiera revisado la computadora. Este es el tipo de cosas que te suceden a medida que envejeces.

Sin embargo, había cierta precisión en mi pensamiento original, ya que Liz Cheney es la hija de un ex vicepresidente republicano, Dick

Cheney, quien fue considerado uno de los halcones en la guerra de Estados Unidos que comenzó bajo falsos pretextos en 2003 contra el Irak de Saddam Hussein.

Al convertirse en uno de los líderes del ataque contra Donald Trump, a quien la mayoría de la gente considera el político más poderoso del Partido Republicano, Liz Cheney está demostrando una valentía que debe ser respetada y alabada.

La razón por la que había confundido a Liz Cheney con una hija de John McCain es porque Donald Trump, quien eludió el servicio militar obligatorio en la guerra de Vietnam con excusas médicas endebles, había insultado públicamente a John McCain, un auténtico héroe de guerra, antes de que muriera de cáncer hace un par de años. La familia McCain, por supuesto, estaba muy herida por el insulto a su patriarca.

El clima sociopolítico en los Estados Unidos es muy conflictivo, por varias razones. Pero el racismo influye en gran medida en la atmósfera estadounidense similar a un caldero.

Los inmigrantes europeos, cuyos descendientes forman la mayoría de la población estadounidense blanca, emprendieron la guerra contra la población nativa americana de

América para apoderarse del territorio del este y medio oeste de los Estados Unidos. Luego se trasladaron más hacia el oeste y hacia el sur. Cuando los estadounidenses blancos comenzaron a moverse hacia el sur, arrebataron grandes extensiones de tierra, desde Texas hasta California, del pueblo mexicano, que había prohibido la esclavitud durante la presidencia de Vicente Guerrero, que era negro, a fines de la década de 1820.

Hoy, el imperio estadounidense está siendo amenazado por las drogas, el hedonismo y la inmigración de personas de color. Recuerden, esta fue una república que libró una sangrienta guerra civil por la esclavitud entre 1861 y 1865. Todo el mundo puede ver que los estadounidenses blancos aman las armas de alto poder y se inclinan por la violencia como solución a los problemas. Por lo tanto, 6 de enero de 2021.

He dicho antes que Donald Trump es el líder más poderoso del Partido Republicano. Los beliceños han tenido suficiente experiencia con la política de partidos como institución para saber que Liz Cheney puede haberse suicidado políticamente al oponerse a Donald Trump.

Nunca estudié historia de los

Estados Unidos, y todo lo que sé de la política estadounidense es lo que veo en la televisión por cable. Pero estoy convencido de que si la presidencia de Biden alguna vez toma medidas para acusar y encarcelar a Trump, Estados Unidos estallará en una especie de guerra civil. Esto es real.

En Belize, nos hemos beneficiado enormemente, desde el final de la Guerra Civil estadounidense, de nuestra proximidad a los Estados Unidos, el hecho de que somos de habla inglesa y el hecho de que Belize y los Estados Unidos comparten básicamente creencias cristianas. Pero hoy, la crisis en América crece. Cada vez hay más evidencia de que Trump usó la violencia en un intento de derrocar la victoria de Joe Biden en las elecciones presidenciales de noviembre de 2020. Esto es lo que claramente constituyó el 6 de enero de 2021: una conspiración sediciosa. Conspiración sediciosa real, no un breve artículo periodístico.

Recuerden esto, beliceños. El hogar es aquel lugar donde, cuando tienes que ir, tienen que hacerte entrar. (Palabras de Robert Frost.) Han visto lo que les ha estado pasando a los ucranianos. No tienen casa a donde ir.

My view: Russia is not to blame



by Clinton Canul Luna

The Western media has been reporting that the war, the Russia/Ukraine war, started in February 2022. However, those who know say the contrary—that the Russian Ukrainians wanted to be a part of Russia, and the Nationalist Ukrainians wanted to be part of Europe. The European leaders, along with Washington, were expecting that the conflict would have ended with the Nationalist Ukrainians having complete control over Ukraine and would have joined the European Union and NATO. It so happens that the massacre of the Russian Ukrainians in Donbass commenced on April 6, 2014. From the beginning, the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, had reported it to the United Nations Security Council. However, they did nothing about it. They gave a deaf ear to it, as if they didn't know absolutely anything regarding the issue. So, the Russian Ukrainians had to bear all the massacre, all the killings, the ill-treatment, the raping of their women and children done by the army of the president of Ukraine. The struggle lasted eight years—8 years of suffering that the Russian Ukrainians went through, until finally Putin decided to come in to help his people, because his people were

asking him from the beginning. That was how the Russia/Ukraine war started on February 21, 2022. The United States and the European Union made the actual president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, believe that they were going to help him, both economically and with heavy weapons, and it is known that they invested 40 billion dollars in Ukraine and that they sent endless weapons of high modern power. Even so, today, Russia has dominated all of Donbass and other places that it had in mind to control in the Ukraine. Both the United States and the European Union, including England, have sent thousands and thousands of soldiers with heavy weapons and advanced technology, according to them, to defend themselves against Russia, but so far Russia has not attacked any country that has to do with NATO. So this war, when will it end? It is not known. According to the president of the United States, Joe Biden, Russia is to blame for everything, and he is a liar. He and the other leaders that make up NATO know perfectly well the lie they are telling. Putin is not to blame for the economic situation or the hunger that the world is suffering. If not, it is

they who have their corporations involved in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia, who have been eating all the wealth of those countries, of those continents and have people hungry because they do not pay them what belongs to them equitably, that is, for the work they do. They have entered and stolen and continue to steal, and a change is necessary, the new world order. That is, the individualistic neoliberal capitalist system imposed by Washington and its followers, NATO, does not work for the well-being of humanity in the world. Anyhow, permit me, our dear readers of this column, to present to you, a segment of Colonel Richard Black's (retired) presentation on an online conference of the Schiller Institute's June 18-19 Conference. Col. Black was head of the U.S. Army's Criminal Law Division at the Pentagon and served in the Virginia legislature first as representative and then as a state senator. The following was posted on YouTube by 'El minero joven de Monclova' under the heading "El Senador Richard H. Black de los Estados Unidos dice la verdad de la guerra en Ucrania," dated June 28, 2022:

sovereignty are you willing to sacrifice for peace?" Stoltenberg's remarks suggest that NATO recognizes that the war is lost. It's now become an unpleasant distraction that simply needs to be wrapped up, as far as NATO is concerned. The sanctions war has failed. The entire financial might of the Western world was unleashed against Russia. The Biden administration swore that the Russian ruble would be crushed into dust. They boasted of destroying the Russian economy and inspiring a revolution. They would create such hardships that Russia would revolt and overthrow their president, but today the ruble is stronger than before the war. This year it has been the strongest of all currencies. Russian inflation peaked around 15 percent and is expected to subside, but as their inflation tops out, Europe's and America's have just begun skyrocketing dangerously. Even this morning, the price of bitcoin dropped 5,000 points in just overnight. The stock market is becoming extremely erratic and rocky. Biden's attempt to strangle Russian trade has failed. Far from blocking their trade with other nations. The Economist reports that Russia is generating a record trade surplus with a billion dollars a day flowing in from oil and gas. Russia's 250-billion dollar trade surplus more than doubled its surplus in the year before the war. Despite sanctions, Russia has forged stronger ties with China, India, South Africa, Iran, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, all of which continue trading at enhanced levels with Russia.

Let me start right off by saying that I believe that Ukraine has lost the war. Of course, the war is not over, but it is lost. Let me show you why. This has become an artillery duel. Russia fires 50,000 shells a day 10 times more than Ukraine. The Washington Post says that Ukraine is almost completely out of ammunition, and there are no replacements for its Soviet era ordinance. On June 10th, the Post reported that Ukraine is suffering a thousand casualties a day, including 200 killed. The rate of casualties has doubled in just three weeks. Let's put that in perspective. Vietnam was America's last truly bloody war. We lost sixty thousand men in ten years. That's about six thousand killed every year. With a much smaller population, Ukraine is losing 6,000 soldiers killed every month. This is a casualty rate 12 times higher than we suffered in Vietnam, but you have to then look at the populations of both countries. Before the war broke out, Ukraine had 43 million people, but with refugees it's down to just 38 million today. The U.S. population during Vietnam numbered about 200 million. So, our population is roughly five times larger than Ukraine's. This, on a 'per capita basis' this means that their casualty rate is roughly 60 times greater than the U.S. suffered during the very bloody war in Vietnam.

Ukrainians have fought with courage, but no nation can sustain such casualty rates for long. Ukraine is finished. On June the 12th, yesterday, NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, all but admitted that Ukraine would soon be forced to sue for peace. He said, "The only question is, what price are you willing to pay for peace? How much territory? How much independence? How much

Important countries in the global South, are refusing to obey Washington's order to impose sanctions. Independent countries fear the U.S., but they resent being told who they may and may not trade with. Dictating sanctioned policy to sovereign nations is diminishing the world's respect for America. From the outset of the war, Russians have never experienced shortages of food, housing, heating fuel or gasoline. Anyone who expects Russians to crack from the loss of Gucci purchases, or purchases of Big Mac hamburgers, do not understand the Russian psyche. Hopes of ousting President Putin have died. On March 1st, British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, predicted that sanctions would bring down the Putin regime. Since then, Boris Johnson has nearly been ousted himself in a parliamentary vote of no confidence. At the same time, President Putin's popularity rose to 83, which is greater than any of his western counterparts.

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Store at BATSUB robbed

An assortment of men's care products, alcohol, cigarettes, and other products were stolen from the duty free San Cas Super Store on the BATSUB side of Price Barracks, British soldier suspected

by Charles Gladden

BELMOPAN, Thurs. June 30, 2022
The San Cas Super Store, which is situated inside the Belize Defence Force compound at Price Barracks in Ladyville was robbed this week. The items that were stolen from the store included alcohol, cigarettes, men's deodorant, chocolate candy bars, and several other small items. The Minister of State in the Ministry of National Defence and Border Security, Hon. Oscar Mira, confirmed that the store was indeed robbed and told reporters that the robbery was carried out on the side of the compound which houses the British Army Training Support Unit Belize (BATSUB). "It's a police matter. It has been handed over to the Ladyville police to investigate. Of note, Price Barracks is divided in two. We have the Belize Defence Force side of Price Barracks, and then you have the BATSUB of Price Barracks. The store is located [on] the BATSUB side of Price Barracks. There's a video that captured the incident, and police are investigating at this point in time. I think they have made some headway. I haven't gotten the results of the



Hon. Oscar Mira, Minister of State in the Ministry of National Defence and Border Security

investigation as yet. But all indications are that it was done by a member of the BATSUB side," he said. Mira added, "It is a duty-free store for BATSUB personnel, so it's not for BDF. It is for BATSUB personnel. As part of the agreement that BATSUB and the British Army [have] with Belize, they have access to duty-free, and that is a duty-free store. So indeed, there will be those items of liquor and cigarettes and they cater [to] the British soldiers."

Coast Guard officer charged for wounding stepdaughter

After being on the run from police for several days, Coast Guard officer Alberto Espinoza was found and charged with wounding his stepdaughter.

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 4, 2022

After being on the run from police for several days, 34-year-old Coast Guard officer Alberto Espinoza, a resident of Trial Farm, Orange Walk District, was found and charged with wounding his stepdaughter with a knife during a domestic dispute on Tuesday, June 21.

Reports of the incident indicated that shortly after 6:00 p.m., Espinoza and his 18-year-old stepdaughter, Daxia Martinez, got into a heated argument, during which he cut the teen in her face and stabbed her in another part of her body.

Martinez was taken to the Northern Regional Hospital for treatment.

After being on the run, Espinoza handed himself over to the police on



Alberto Espinoza, found and charged

Tuesday, June 28, and was criminally charged with the use of deadly means of harm and wounding.

Salvadoran man pleads guilty to rape of child, 5

Salvadoran national, Bairo Geovanny Gomez, pleaded guilty to the rape of a 5-year-old child.



Bairo Gomez, pleaded guilty to rape

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Thurs. June 30, 2022

Salvadoran national, Bairo Geovanny Gomez, appeared in the Supreme Court on Wednesday, June 29, and pleaded guilty to raping a 5-year-old child—an

incident that occurred over three years ago.

Prior to the submission of his plea on Wednesday, Gomez had spent three years— since 2018— on remand at the Belize Central Prison after being initially charged. He was denied bail because of his being a possible flight risk due to his nationality.

Gomez was accompanied in court on Wednesday by his attorney, Leeroy Banner, and, on the advice of Banner, he pleaded guilty to the offenses, purportedly to spare the minor any additional trauma of recounting the incident at a trial and also to save the court’s time.

The proceedings took place “in camera” (within the judge’s chambers) to protect the minor victim, who is now eight years old.

Justice Suzanne Lamb scheduled Gomez’s sentencing hearing for July 11.

Dangriga woman is 2022 Fisher of the Year

Dawson received the 2022 Fisher of the Year award while Jason Young and Marcio Gonzalez were recognized as this year’s Outstanding Fishers.



Outstanding Fisher: Marcio Gonzalez, 2022 Fisher of the Year: Vonetta Dawson, Outstanding Fisher: Jason Young

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Thurs. June 30, 2022

Vonetta Dawson of Dangriga Town was recognized as the 2022 Fisher of the Year this week at a ceremony marking the end of Fisherfolk Month—held under the theme “Collective Action for a Safe and Resilient Belizean Fisheries”.

Dawson, or “Miss Von,” as she is affectionately known, was nominated for the award by both her daughter and her sister. She told the media that while she did not expect it, she is grateful for the award.

“I really appreciate that they appreciate fishers more now. I thank mi daughter and mi sister fi nominate mi fu dis,” she said.

Throughout her life as a fisher, Dawson has braved many challenges, including facing powerful storms beyond the reef, being overlooked as a woman in the fishing industry, and even battling cancer.

“I think as a woman eena fishing, most people nuh look pan we as doing the same stuff as guys. But the things weh I’ve been through, ah still continue on and deh pan the sea and fish...In a way that da weh push mi fi continue,” she said.

Dawson’s father, Samuel Dawson, was also a fisher. According to her, going out on trips with him was what fueled her love for the craft from a very young age. She is planning on eventually passing the torch on to her sons, who also love fishing.

“I love fishing; I take care of my family with fishing, and fishing is my life—I won’t give up on fishing. I will die on the sea,” she remarked.

In addition to receiving a glass plaque

courtesy of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Belize, the 2022 Fisher of the Year was awarded \$3,000 from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation. She also received a gift basket from Belize Electricity Limited and souvenirs from Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association and Oceana Belize.

Along with Dawson, two other persons were recognized for their outstanding work as fishers. Marcio Gonzalez and Jason Young were each awarded \$1,250, along with gift bags, and the title of Outstanding Fisher of the Year.

Jason Young, who is from Rancho Dolores in the Belize District, was nominated by Eliceo Cobb of the Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association. He is a third-generation fisher and has been fishing for over two decades.

Marcio Gonzalez, a fisher from Chunox Village in Corozal, has also been fishing for several years. He told the media that his path toward becoming a fisherman—and a boat captain—began at the age of thirteen when he worked as a cook on a sailboat with his uncles. He expressed gratitude for the fact that fisherfolk are being recognized by various organizations for their hard work.

All three persons were recognized for their good fishing practices, such as participating in organized fishing groups and working towards sustainable blue development for the country.

The award ceremony, which took place at the University of the West Indies Open Campus in Belize City, took place on Wednesday, June 29, which is also Caribbean Fisherfolk Day and International Fishermen’s Day.

we’ve had a black president, but that only brought out the worse in those inclined to that feeling and belief, of superiority! Go to any city in America, red or blue, and you can witness the difference, the separation of the haves, and those scraping the bottom of the barrel, just to survive! The inequality and injustice are so shockingly obvious,

so barefaced, that it’s almost unbearable, almost unbelievable! Almost!

So, a change is gonna come, but will it be for the better or worse? Thanks, Sam, for giving us hope! Thanks for lifting us up, even if it’s just through your music! Oh! And Happy Fourth of July!

A change is gonna come!

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advances helped us overcome some of what ailed us, but it was a rough century nevertheless!

For those of us who have lived, I mean truly lived, not existed, through all these rapidly changing times, it has been very sobering. We can’t take anything for granted; at times it seems ridiculous, taking one step forward and two steps back, almost Sisyphean! The more things change, the more they remain the same! Women rights are being taken away, minority rights are

being taken away by legislation and with the approval of a fascist Supreme Court! Education now is being tailored to match the views of a right-wing minority; up is down and down is up. I mean, WTF? Strange times indeed!

Imagine, Sam Cooke wrote this song in 1962, 60 years ago, when the rights of many of us were curtailed to suit the dominance of a hostile majority! I wish I could tell Sam, show him, that instead of progress, we are rapidly regressing, to a time we’d rather not even think about! We live in an apartheid United States, and I mean that literally! Sure,

PBL closing for repairs

Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Marcello Blake says that while the full effect of the upcoming PBL closure on consumers remains to be seen, shipping lines have been working with the port to try and minimize those effects as best as possible

by *Khaila Gentle*

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 4, 2022

The Port of Belize Limited (PBL) will be ceasing operations for 8 days on July 28th—one of three scheduled periods of closure for maintenance in 2022. According to the president of the Belize Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCI), Marcello Blake, efforts have been made to minimize the effects of the closure as much as possible, including through the advanced notice given by the Port.

That notice, issued in mid-May, explained that essential maintenance needs to be conducted on the trestle that links the pier head to land in order to “preserve port operations for the next few years ahead” and that, during the period of closure, no vessel operations—which means discharging and loading—will be conducted.

The repairs involve replacing three trestle girders, with a period of 10 days being required for the replacement of one of the girders while eight days will be required for the replacement of each of the other two. The first closure is scheduled for July 28 to August 5; the second for September 1 to September 9, and the third for October 6 to October 16, 2022.

“We very much regret and apologize for the potential supply chain disruption

and inconvenience that these closures might cause you,” stated the PBL.

In an interview on Friday, Blake said that shipping lines have been actively involved in trying to minimize the impacts of the closure by shifting port call dates. Nevertheless, consumers can still expect to see some effects, including a shortage of certain brands on shelves for a brief period. This comes in addition to already existing issues that suppliers have been facing.

“Can I say there will be no impact? Definitely not. It can’t be none, because we already know that there are issues that quite a number of the suppliers are faced with, even with the regular supply chain, even without the port closure, so there are already—as you can see—fewer brands playing on the shelves. So there’s already to some extent a shortage that is being played, and you’ll notice that while some brands pop out onto your shelves back again, others exit for a little while, and it all comes back to the aspect of the logistics in getting products in,” Blake said.

According to Blake, BCCI members, at least, had some time to adjust and prepare for the periods of closure.

“In regards to the port closure, yes, there was what we view as advanced notice. The port met with the chamber executive and we were advised of the details behind the need for the closure.



Now immediately following that, they put out their own releases and have been publishing that in the newspaper almost on a weekly basis. We also sent out communication to our members,” he stated.

“So, members had, I think, time to try to adjust—I won’t say that they had sufficient time for all, particularly in the case of the July date, but I think for the other two I think there should be ample notice in order to try and adjust their orders if anything,” added the BCCI president.

The Port of Belize opened its trestle and pier head, which allows onshore berthing of cargo ships, on July 1, 1980—42 years ago. Blake noted that it’s been quite some time since the

trestle and pier head have seen any maintenance, and so while the decision to close the port was a difficult one, it was necessary.

“It’s been quite some time—and even that was highlighted in our initial meeting with the Port, you know, that a lot of this has gone for far too long and so it was very important for them to make that hard call at this point in time to do the closures in the manner that they are.”

Blake also added, “it won’t be overnight, but it’s always a work in progress to try and improve the working environment for both sides and particularly for our members who need to clear their goods, and of course those who need to export as well.”



Menyelek Marin Coleman – artist

BELIZE CITY, Mon. June 4, 2022

The Library of African and Indigenous Studies is hosting a one-month-long film summer camp for youths of the community geared at empowering these young ones, ages ranging from 8-12 years old, by helping them acquire skills in film photography. Menyelek Marin Coleman, a professional LA-based photographer, has been immersed in the art form since he was 12 years old. The now 30-year-old told us that his camera has taken him all over the world, and he would like to share this skillset with young people in his roots country of Belize, in hopes that it would create a spark and open doors for these youth as well.

“Places that I haven’t been able to get to by myself, my camera has been able to get me to those places, and one of the biggest things I think I’ve learned over the last decade is that there are so

many people outside, people that look like me that tell my story, so my goal is to create more photographers,” Menyelek shared.

The summer camp, warmly titled the “Breddah Cliff Augustine Youth Film Photography Summer Camp” is the first of what is planned to be a 10-year initiative, to track the progress of these young filmmakers, and help them build on their skill set each year. This initiative is in honor of one of UBAD’s original members, Cliff Augustine, who recently transitioned, and was made possible with kind donations from his family. YaYa Marin Coleman, chairperson of UEF, said that the family hopes to continue supporting the initiative.

“So they donated a small yet critical seed money for us to have the camp this year, and it is a hope as a family that they will continue to make that donation, and they have also advocated for additional funding. This year is unlike any other; besides it being a film photography camp, mi only belly pain di lead the camp,” Sista YaYa said proudly.

UEF hosts film summer camp

LA-based photographer and artist Menyelek Marin Coleman is partnering with the UEF to host a 1-month-long film camp for Belize City youths.

Yes, if the name of the photographer seems familiar, it is because Menyelek is YaYa’s son. She said that it was her first time seeing him engaged in teaching a class, and what is even more meaningful to her is that the professional US-based photographer took it upon himself to take up leading the summer camp.

“The intention is to continue have this camp and weh different, unlike a lot of other camps, and these children are ages 8 to 12 years old, they come from the St. Martin’s community, Mayflower community, Yabra community and offa Faber Road. These are African children. We want to keep this came cohort, maybe for the next 10 years, because we want to track them. The youngest one is 8, so by the time he is 18, we want to be able to say, dis da how we see dis young man develop. It’s so important. We tend to get a new batch of children, but we can’t say weh kinda impact we really had,” she remarked. She further stated that one of the volunteers at the summer camp has been coming to the library since she was 12 years old, and now her daughter is currently a participant in the summer camp.

Menyelek said that the children will be learning film photography, and he noted that this method of capturing images, while to a great extent replaced

by digital photography—is making a comeback, and in a way will instill a sense of discipline in the art form that has been lost in this digital age.

“What they are actually learning this summer is film photography. I am a primary pusher for film photography, because it forces you to stay in the moment, and you have to wait; you will have a week and a half to get your photos back like it used to be in the 90’s when I came up. But now with digital photographers, you can take 500 pictures in a day and you are trying to sort through 500 pictures as opposed to giving them a guideline of, you get one shot, once you take it, move on to the next one. If you didn’t get it, then you know next time you might,” he said.

He said he believes that we need more in-country photographers, taking photos and marketing them internationally, as opposed to foreigners taking photos and leaving with them.

“I didn’t know until I saw it, so my goal is to show the children that there is another way, other ways to make money, and other ways to be content creators ... I feel like people come here to shoot here so much, and they leave, but why aren’t we shooting photos of our country that we live in and sending them back with it?” Menyelek said.

Two elderly persons killed in separate RTAs

80-year-old Santa Chun died after being knocked down on the Valley of Peace Road, and 69-year-old Crispin Moreno Francisco was hit by a Toyota Ranger pickup truck in Carmelita Village while crossing the Philip Goldson Highway.

Continued from Page 1

stopped and assisted Chun by transporting her to the Western Regional Hospital, where she succumbed to her injuries sometime after 11:00 p.m. that night.

Since then, police have detained and charged Galdamez with manslaughter by negligence, causing death by careless conduct, and driving a motor vehicle without due care and attention.

Galdamez voluntarily gave urine samples to the police, so he did not receive a NIP (Notice or Intended Prosecution).

The family of Chun is now urging that speed bumps be placed in the village to prevent speeding on the highway, which could cause another family to lose a loved one.

The second fatal traffic accident, which occurred in Carmelita Village, took the life of 69-year-old Crispin Moreno Francisco, who was fatally hit by a Toyota Ranger pickup truck while crossing the Philip Goldson Highway.

Police arrived at the scene around 7:15 p.m., and were told by the driver of the Toyota Ranger pickup truck, Cadie Rhaburn, who hit Moreno Francisco, that he was traveling along the highway and was approaching a Chinese store when he saw Moreno Francisco crossing the highway hurriedly and tried to avoid hitting Moreno Francisco but failed to do so.

Moreno Francisco was flung a distance away due to the impact of the



Crispin Moreno Francisco, deceased

hit and died instantly when he landed on the pavement.

Jamie Moreno Francisco, a son of the deceased, has said that his father would often cross the road by himself in order to get to the store and he would often advise him to be careful of the traffic, as his father is a stroke survivor.

“Sometimes when he wants to walk around to go to the shop to buy something he would normally cross, or if I’m around I’ll do the errand for him, because you know the traffic is really high, and you got drivers who are driving, but they don’t drive with due care and attention... I always told him, ‘Dad, one of these days you need to watch the road because the road is not like what you think. And the situation that you will be in, you won’t be able to make it like us who have two better feet’,” said the grieving son.

“I used to come down every weekend or every two weeks to watch him, treat him the best although we went through our ups and down, but we’ll leave it in God’s hands, because he knows what he’s doing. But he was good, we treat him [well]. I love him because he’s my flesh and blood and the only thing you can do is to come together and make sure everything is accomplished in the proper way,” he continued.

Moreno Francisco believes that a speed bump should be installed in the area to avoid more accidents due to the lack of lights in the area.

“I think the people who are in charge of the highway are supposed to do is to try to make a bump in this area, because normally when the night comes, it is very dark; that’s the error. But normally, sometimes people see things at the moment, but when they put on their high beam, and that’s when they say sorry, because it’s too late,” he said.

Police have detained Rhaburn, and charges are currently pending.

Timmy Stamp holds Tourism Summer Camp

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“In the tourism industry, we have far-reaching abilities across the entire country, and we have to start preparing the next generation of people that are passionate about tourism. And so, this program is quite fitting, as it places at-risk youths to immerse themselves in tourism, and partnering along with Mr. Stamp and the Audubon Society will allow the kids to not only be in education afterschool program but also to get the experience of what it is to be a Belizean traveler, to be a tourist in Belize,” he said.

“Many know Mr. Stamp and his very hard, arduous work, working with at-risk youths in the city. This is an opportunity for these kids to get out, but also any opportunity that we have to help Mr. Stamp and these youths, I think, is worthwhile. We are more than happy to help, and we are looking for any future collaborations to continue working with Mr. Stamp,” said Amanda Acosta, Executive Director for Belize Audubon Society.

Mason kidnapping trial delayed, jury sent home

Justice Francis Cumberbatch decided to dismiss the jury; case management sessions take place on July 20 and 21, and a new jury will be selected in September.

Continued from Page 1

Magistrate’s Court for a jury selection (*voir dire*) and the possible commencement of the trial, but this was put off after the presiding judge, Justice Francis Cumberbatch, dismissed the jury on the grounds that they may have been prejudiced.

Following the afternoon session, Norman Rodriguez, attorney for Ashton Vanegas, explained to reporters, “One of the concerns raised by a senior counsel is that since every defendant can object to five of those people, just a normal objection if you don’t want them on the panel, and since there are five defendants, he was saying that you should have at least 25 representing the 5 defendant objections and 9, but that did not happen, and there was 24.”

He said there was an adjournment until this afternoon, and during that time the counsel for the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) was to make submissions to the court, but the judge considered another issue at that time—the impartiality of the jury.

“When we came back, the judge looked at another issued raised, and that is that the jury had become privy to a part of the process, and the judge in his own discretion and wisdom decided to discharge the jury,” Rodriguez said.

He said that the next jury will not be selected until around September of this year, so the official commencement of the trial would be delayed until then. In the meantime, however, the parties have agreed to engage on other matters related to the case in a case management session to be held later this month.

“I believe it is September when a new jury’s life will come into play, and then we will be able to proceed with the trial, but in the meantime, the judge along with counsels in chambers decided that we could address some other issues, through case management, and so we

are set for the 20th and the 21st to return to court for those matters to be addressed,” Rodriguez said.

The case stems from the claims of Mennonite Lloyd Friessen, who has said that Mason conned him out of \$300,000 in a fraudulent corn shipment deal the victim fronted the cash for. The shipment, which was to come from Argentina, never reached the country, and the former major producer from out of Spanish Lookout started to press Mason to return the money. This was when Mason allegedly lured him and his wife to his Intelco Hill residence under the pretext of having a business meeting but then kidnapped them with the help of his reportedly armed workmen and took them to his ranch.

It is on that same ranch that Pastor Lucas is believed to have been beheaded weeks later. Friessen said that they were both threatened by Mason, and that he was told he would have to pay \$2,500 weekly instead of getting his money back, and that if he said anything to the police, Mason would find out, since he had connections inside the department. Friessen told police that he paid the money for a few weeks before fleeing the country.

If convicted for the kidnapping, Mason and his accomplices could potentially be sentenced to even more time on top of the life sentences they have received. Each of the men has to wait 30 years or more before they will be eligible for parole.

That previous case is going to be called up for appeal shortly, attorney Norman Rodriguez said today during his interview.

“That is going through. There have been certain little issues as in every process and more so in the legal process, but those have been ironed out and we are getting near to the appeal being heard. No date as yet.” Rodriguez said.

Unidentified hit-and-run victim found on highway

Continued from Page 2

a result of a hit-and-run accident.

Over the weekend, police sent out fliers which contained photos of John Doe’s back tattoos in an attempt to get the general public’s assistance in identifying him.

Since the discovery of the remains, one person has contacted police and suggested the possible identity of the dead man; however, police do not believe that the body belongs to the individual mentioned by the member of the public who contacted the police, since the skin complexion of that individual does not match that of the body that was found.

Currently, the body of John Doe, who

was dressed in a blue shirt and black short pants when he was found, lies at the Southern Regional Hospital and is to undergo a post-mortem examination.

“We’re hoping that if you’re out there [and] haven’t seen your relative since the second of July you will come forward and try to help us identify this person,” said Communications Director of the Belize Police Department, ASP Fitzroy Yearwood.

“... Unfortunately, I don’t want to be gruesome or anything, but the injuries have disfigured his face, so we’re relying on the tattoos that maybe one of his relatives or maybe a common-law would be able to identify these tattoos and assist us in trying to identify this person,” he further said.



Decisive Round 1 Week 2 of National Bank of Belize Amateur Interdistrict Championship 2022

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 4, 2022

Twenty (20) teams from the ten (10) football zones of the country paired off last weekend, June 25 and 26, in Round 1 Week 1 of the National Bank of Belize Amateur Interdistrict Championship (NBBAIC) 2022.

This past weekend, July 2 and 3, the same teams clashed in the second leg of their home-and-away series. According to the tournament plans, the 10 series winners along with the 6 best losers from the Round 1 series will then get to participate in the knockout Round of 16.

Here are the results from this past weekend’s Week 2 games.

Saturday, July 2

At 6:30 p.m. at the M.A. Stadium in Independence, Bella Vista FC and Libertadores FC drew, 3-3. Goal scorers: Bella Vista – Jose Cerritos (14’), Richard Arnold (33’) and Jeovanny Reyes (73). Libertadores – Shedrick Swaso (4’ & 20’) and auto goal by Bella Vista. (Week 1 – Libertadores FC, 4-3, over Bella Vista FC. Aggregate score, Libertadores FC, 7-6, over Bella Vista FC.)

At 7:00 p.m. at Marshalleck Stadium in Benque Viejo, it was Benque Verdes Jrs., 3-1, over Galacticos FC. Goal scorers: Benque – Jamil Cano (45+’), Danny Jimenez (74’) and Yostyn Garcia (84’). Galacticos – Jarrel Young (39’). (Week 1 – Benque and Galacticos drew, 3-3. Aggregate score, Benque Verdes Jrs., 6-4, over Galacticos FC.)

At 8:00 p.m. at Isidoro Beaton Stadium, Atletico FC shut out Silver Creek FC, 6-0, with goals from Wilfredo Galvez (7’, 45’ & 90’), Tyriq Ciego (22’) Jahmani Hope (60’), along with an auto goal by Silver Creek’s Floyd Ack (86 A.G.) (Week 1 – Atletico, 4-1, over Silver Creek. Aggregate score, Atletico FC, 10-1, over Silver Creek FC.)

At 8:30 at the M.A. Stadium in Independence, Bambas FC and ZBoys FC were scoreless in regulation. (Week 1 – Bambas and ZBoys also drew, 1-1, for aggregate 1-1 score.) In the penalty shootout, it was Bambas FC, 4-2, over ZBoys FC.

Sunday, July 3

At 4:00 p.m. at Ricalde Stadium, Caribbean Rum Boys prevailed, 3-0, over Corozal United Ballers, with goals from Andir Chi (28’), Camilo Sanchez (82’) and Rodrigo Argueta (85’). (Week 1 – Caribbean Rum Boys, 3-0, over Corozal United Ballers. Aggregate score, Caribbean Rum Boys, 6-0, over Corozal United Ballers.)

At 4:00 p.m. at the MCC, Mavericks FC won, 2-1, over Lake-I FC. Goals: Mavericks – Estevan Nicholas (36’) and Mathew Ricketts (66’). Lake-I FC – Traveyon Martinez (63’). (Week 1 – Mavericks and Lake-I drew, 3-3. Aggregate score, Mavericks FC, 5-4, over Lake-I FC.)

At 4:00 p.m. at Louisiana Football Field, Progreso FC dropped Jokers FC, 3-1. Goals: Progreso – Nestor Heredia (21’), Jaheim Augustine (71’) and Leocardio Briceno (90+’). Jokers – Johan Tut (9’). (Week 1 – Progreso, 5-1, over Jokers. Aggregate score, Progreso FC, 8-2, over Jokers FC.)

At 4:00 p.m. at Norman Broaster Stadium, it was Conquerors FC, 2-0, over Flames FC with both goals coming from Edilberto Caliz (47’ & 51’). (Week 1 – Conquerors, 3-1, over Flames. Aggregate score, Conquerors FC, 5-1, over Flames FC.)

At 4:30 p.m. at the Carl Ramos Stadium, it was Kelly Street Bombers, 3-0, over Griga Conquerors FC, with goals from Quince Briceño (6’ & 84’) and Steven Baizar (66’). (Week 1 – Griga Conquerors, 2-1, over Kelly Street. Aggregate score, Kelly Street Bombers, 4-2, over Griga Conquerors FC.)

At 6:30 p.m. at Carl Ramos Stadium, Hopkins Ibayani got the 2-0 win over Santa Elena Royal United, with a goal each from Issanie Valentine (30’) and Kenyon Martinez (69’). (Week 1 – Hopkins, 2-1, over Santa Elena. Aggregate score, Hopkins Ibayani, 4-1, over Santa Elena Royal United.)

Below is the ranking table at the end of Week 2. Teams ranked #1 to #16 will move on to the Round of 16 Knockout, beginning this weekend.

No	NBBAIC 2022	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-	Pts
1	Atletico Football Club	2	2	0	0	10	1	+9	6
2	Progreso FC	2	2	0	0	8	2	+6	6
3	Caribbean Rum Boys	2	2	0	0	6	0	+6	6
4	Conquerors FC	2	2	0	0	5	1	+4	6
5	Hopkins Ibayani	2	2	0	0	4	1	+3	6
6	Benque Verdes Jrs.	2	1	1	0	6	4	+2	4
7	Libertadores FC	2	1	1	0	7	6	+1	4
8	Mavericks FC	2	1	1	0	5	4	+1	4
9	Bambas	2	1	1	0	2	1	+1	4
10	Kelly Street Bombers	2	1	0	1	4	2	+2	3
11	Griga Conquerors	2	1	0	1	2	4	-2	3
12	Bella Vista FC	2	0	1	1	6	7	-1	1
13	Lake I FC	2	0	1	1	4	5	-1	1
14	ZBoys FC	2	0	1	1	2	1	-1	1
15	Galacticos FC	2	0	1	1	4	6	-2	1
16	Santa Elena Royal	2	0	0	2	1	4	-3	0
17	Flames FC	2	0	0	2	1	5	-4	0
18	Corozal United Ballers	2	0	0	2	0	6	-6	0
19	Jokers FC	2	0	0	2	2	8	-6	0
20	Silver Creek FC	2	0	0	2	1	10	-9	0

Round of 16 Knockout (one game only) schedule:

Saturday, July 9

7:00 p.m. – Conquerors FC vs Lake-I FC – Ambergris Stadium
7:00 p.m. – Benque Verdes Jrs. vs Griga Conquerors FC – Marshalleck Stadium
7:00 p.m. – Libertadores FC vs Kelly Street Bombers – Ricalde Stadium
8:00 p.m. - Atletico Football Club vs Santa Elena Royal United – Isidoro Beaton Stadium

Sunday, July 10

11:00 a.m. – Progreso FC vs Galacticos FC – Louisiana Football Field
3:00 p.m. – Mavericks FC vs Bambas FC – Victor Sanchez Union Field
4:30 p.m. – Caribbean Rum Boys vs ZBoys – Louisiana Football Field
4:30 p.m. – Hopkins Ibayani vs Bella Vista FC – Carl Ramos Stadium

Women’s League Group Semifinals Leg 2 results; Championship Finals on Saturday at FFB Stadium

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 4, 2022

The National Amateur Women’s League (NAWL) 2022 Opening Season is drawing nearer to its championship final. This past weekend, the Semifinals Leg 2 were played in both Group A and Group B, and for the first time since their inception, defending champions Jewel Fury will not be in the league finals, having been edged out in a penalty shootout by San Pedro Pirates in Leg 2 of the Group A semifinals.

Having lost their Group A Semifinal Leg 1 by a 2-1 score to San Pedro Pirates at Ambergris Stadium the previous Saturday, June 25, defending champion Jewel Fury rebounded to take the Semifinal Leg 2 by a 1-0 margin at the Isidoro Beaton Stadium this past Saturday, July 2, to tie up the aggregate score at 2-2. The game winner for Jewel

Fury came in second half from Eris Galdamez (71’). But the ensuring penalty shootout was decided by a penalty conversion from Iamara Baptist of San Pedro Pirates, who thus claimed the Group A Semifinal series victory and a spot in the NAWL Group A Finals.

The other Group A Semifinal Leg 2 was more decisive, as Sagitun Girlz repeated their 3-0 score from a week ago against Rumberas FC on Saturday at the M.A. Stadium in Independence, to make it an aggregate 6-0 margin and a spot in the Group A Finals. Netting a goal each in Leg 2 for Sagitun Girlz were Sabrina Eiley (6’), Reah Burgess (8’) and Zulma Ortega (18’).

It was a foregone conclusion in their Group B Semifinal Leg 2, after Bay City FC had crushed Santa Elena Strikers, 11-0, in Leg 1 the previous week at the

Norman Broaster Stadium. It was more of the same this past Saturday at the Ricalde Stadium, where this time it was Bay City, 10-0, over Santa Elena Strikers, for a 21-0 aggregate final score. Sharing the scoring in the Bay City 10-0 victory on Saturday were Darina Tzul (4’ & 8’), Alisha Terry (10’, 12’ & 44’), Nora Ramirez (27’) and Kaite Jones (18’, 67’, 75’ & 78’).

The other Group B Semifinal Leg 2 was a bit more interesting since the 3-0 victory the previous week by Wagiya United SC over Cayo Dreamers at the Carl Ramos Stadium was not insurmountable. But Wagiya United came away from the Norman Broaster Stadium on Saturday with a 1-0 victory over Cayo Dreamers, to make it a 4-0 aggregate score. Wagiya’s goal was by Taryn Arnold (33’).

Championship, promotion & relegation

Up next are the Championship Finals, where Group A plays for the 20200 NAWL Opening Season Championship, and the Group B winner gets to advance to Group A in the NAWL 2022 Closing Season. The last place team in Group A, Verdes Rebels is automatically relegated to Group B for the Closing Season.

Upcoming NAWL 2022 Opening Season Group Finals schedule:

Saturday, July 9, NAWL Group Finals

4:00 p.m. – (Group B Final) Bay City FC vs Wagiya United SC – FFB Stadium

6:00 p.m. – (Group A Final) Sagitun Girlz vs San Pedro Pirates – FFB Stadium



Benque and San Ignacio/ Santa Elena Basketball

by Karim Juan

SAN IGNACIO TOWN, Cayo District, Sun. July 3, 2022

Week 4 of the Benque and San Ignacio/Santa Elena 2022 Basketball Tournament continued this past weekend at the Resilience Center at the Victor Galvez Stadium in San Ignacio Town. One weekend of regular season remains after which playoffs will commence. The Under 15 and Under 18 teams will battle in a best-of-three playoff series while the top 4 teams in the Open division will advance to the semi-finals.

Below are the scores, standings and the upcoming schedule.

Friday, July 1 results

(Under 18) Love Soul Mambas, 66-33, over Snipers. Love Soul Mambas – Zoren Deceuninck 20 pts, Kishawn Usher 14 pts, and Tashawn Haylock 9 pts. Snipers – Christian Baeza 11 pts, and Emerson Corrales 10 pts.

(Open Male) Benque No-Hops, 86-30, over Vikings. Benque No-Hops – Elvis Usher 25 pts, Kysslon Kysling 22 pts, and Cadeem Ford 18 pts. Vikings – Kenrick Nunez 12 pts, and Alvan Gentle 9 pts.

(Open Male) Outdoors, 58-48, over Tigers. Outdoors – Alejandro Baptist 16 pts, and Arnell Galvez 10 pts. Tigers – Kareem “Pulu” Cardinez 16 pts, and Alton Wade 13 pts.

Saturday, July 2 results

(Open Male) West Kings, 40-35, over Vikings. West Kings – Matthew Morales 12 pts, and Kieran Dart 8 pts. Vikings – Alvan Gentle 16 pts, and Mohamed Garcia 10 pts.

(Open Male) Venom, 63-54, over Outdoors. Venom – Elvert “PG” Arriola 14 pts, Joel Montejo 12 pts, and Joahn “Cutto” Bermudez 10 pts. Outdoors - Kevin Brown 14 pts, Alejandro Baptist 13 pts, and Gregory Buckley 13 pts.

(Open Male) Benque No-Hops won by default (20-0) over Tigers, who were a no-show for the game.

Below are the standings with 1 week remaining for the regular season.

TEAM	GAMES	W	L	Pts
OPEN				
Venom	6	6	0	18
Outdoors	5	4	1	13
Assassins	4	3	1	10
Benque No-Hops	5	2	3	9
West Kings	4	2	2	8
Vikings	5	0	5	5
Tigers	5	0	5	5
UNDER 15				
Assassins Jr.	2	2	0	6
Benque Basketball Academy	2	0	2	2
UNDER 18				
Love Soul Mambas	2	2	0	6
Snipers	2	0	2	2

Playoff scenarios for Open Male Division

#1 seed – Venom has already clinched the #1 seed.

#2 seed – whoever wins the game this weekend between Assassins and Outdoors will be the #2 seed.

#3 seed – whoever loses the game this weekend between Assassins and Outdoors will be the #3 seed or

Benque No-Hops can be the #3 seed if they win their game and Assassins loses their 2 games.

#4 seed – whoever wins the game between Benque No-Hops and West Kings will be the #4 seed. Assassins will be the #4 seed if they lose their 2 games and Benque No-Hops wins against West Kings.

Eliminated from Playoff Contention – Vikings and Tigers.

Upcoming Schedule

Below is the schedule for this coming weekend. The games for this weekend will be played at Mopan Technical High School Auditorium in Benque Viejo Town.

Friday, July 8

6:30 p.m. – (U15) Assassins Jr. vs Benque Basketball Academy

7:30 p.m. – (Open) Benque No-Hops vs West Kings

9:00 p.m. – (Open) Outdoors vs Assassins

Saturday, July 9

6:30 p.m. – (U18) Snipers vs Love Soul Mambas

7:30 p.m. – (Open) Assassins vs West Kings

9:00 p.m. – (Open) Vikings vs Tigers

Ministry of Housing employee crushed by tractor

Derrick Banner, an employee of the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing, died on his way to a community clean-up operation.

by Charles Gladden

CRISTO REY, Cayo District, Mon. July 4, 2022

Derrick Banner, 30, an employee of the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing, tragically lost his life on Saturday, July 2, while traveling from San Ignacio Town towards Cristo Rey Village, Cayo District, to participate in a community clean-up exercise.

According to an initial police report, Banner was operating a John Deer tractor moments before 7:00 a.m., on Cristo Rey Road near Monkey Falls and was going up a steep hill when he lost control of the tractor, which overturned—leaving him pinned under the heavy machinery.

When police arrived at the scene, they found Banner with multiple severe body injuries. He reportedly was in severe pain.

Banner was transported to the San Ignacio Community Hospital but



Derrick Banner, deceased

succumbed to his injuries at around 7:40 a.m. while receiving treatment.

According to the Communications Director of the Belize Police Department, ASP Fitzroy Yearwood, police are currently investigating Banner’s death, which they believe could have been caused by mechanical malfunction, and the tractor which Banner was driving is scheduled to be inspected on Monday, July 4, to determine what caused it to overturn.

Dangriga man, 33, killed by companions

Continued from Page 1

have known these persons, and it would want to appear that if you have someone in your home and then you walk out with them, those persons had to be some form of friend or something for you to let that person into your home unless it was under some form of duress, and we do not know,” Yearwood said this morning.

He said that Dangriga police arrived on the scene sometime around 1:00 a.m., and found Nunez suffering from apparent gunshot wounds. Neighbors report hearing a loud argument among the three men followed by three gunshots.

Two weeks ago, punta rock artist Robert Coote was killed in Dangriga, but ASP Yearwood said that so far there is no indication the incidents are connected.

Dangriga, a relatively peaceful municipality, has been plagued by increasing gang violence, with many groups of young men involved in gang activity and turf wars similar to that seen in Belize City. Commissioner of Police, Chester Williams stated in December that steps have been taken to address the growing gang problem in that town.

Nunez’s death is the latest in Dangriga. So far, police have not arrested anyone or detained any of the two supposed suspects for this most recent homicide.

Cannabis referendum triggered

Continued from Page 1

media today; 10% of that amount, the required threshold to trigger a referendum, is 18,754. The churches were able to garner 18,891 accepted signatures, of the 20,112 that were submitted.

A referendum is set to be held in about 60 days following this confirmation, and the Minister of New Growth Industries, Hon.Kareem Musa, has projected that date for the holding of the referendum to be sometime around September this year.

Musa also remarked that the church’s success shows that our democratic process is at work.

The legislation to legalize cannabis and create a framework for the development of a cannabis industry in Belize has been tabled in both houses of Parliament and passed. While the government will not be legally bound to abide by the results of the referendum, it will be able to ascertain the stance of the general public as it relates to cannabis legalization.



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TENDER FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF ELECTRICAL AND AIR CONDITION SYSTEMS AT THE CENTRAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OFFICE

1. Tenders are invited from Electrical and AC companies for the monthly maintenance or as needed of the Electrical, and Door and Fire Alarm Systems and for the quarterly maintenance of the Air Condition Systems at the Belize National ICT Center and Sub Office in Belmopan.

2. Procurement of the services will be conducted through Open Tendering Procedures.

3. The contractor will be expected to provide prompt and efficient operation and maintenance of the complete Electrical, Door and Fire Alarm, and AC systems for one (1) year commencing September 1st, 2022, and ending August 31st, 2023.

4. **Requirements:**

a. The Tenderer should have executed at least five (5) similar work contracts over the past 3 years.

b. The Tenderer should have at least 5 full-time employees on staff specifically trained for operation and maintenance services of Electrical, Door and Fire Alarm Systems, and AC systems. The full list of the employees, viz., name, age, designation, qualifications, and experience should be attached with the Technical Bid.

c. The successful tender will be expected to provide the following Electrical and AC Maintenance Services:

Electrical Maintenance Program

i. All equipment shall be maintained as per the guidelines of the manufacturer.

ii. Inspect, clean, and test all components of the electrical distribution system, such as circuit breakers panels, and switch gears.

iii. Inspect, clean, and test the fire alarm, door alarm, emergency lighting systems, and all lights and lens in the buildings.

iv. Inspect, clean, and test the hydrogen detector system.

v. Repair or replace all electrical components relating to the distribution system, fire and door alarm systems, and lighting systems as needed during the routine monthly service.

vi. Repair or replace all electrical components relating to lights, light fixtures, switches, and outlets as reported by the Customer, within three (3) working days of notification.

vii. Immediately notify the customer of any urgent repairs that are needed for the emergency lights, fire alarm, door alarm, and breaker panels and take corrective action immediately or no later than 24 hours of notification of the customer.

viii. Submission of reports after inspection and works have been completed. The reports should be submitted in both hard and electronic formats.

Air Conditioner Maintenance Program – CITO Building Corner Mountain View Blvd and Dry Creek Street

ix. Clean and replace dust stop air filters as per manufacturer recommendations or as needed.

x. Application of Algae tablets, bleach, and liquid additives in condensation lines and moist areas of the air conditioning system.

xi. Check the entire system for unusual operating conditions, such as excessive noise, condensation, ice build-up, loose insulation, and correct any defects as required.

xii. Check thermostats to ensure they are in proper working order. Operational checks to be carried out and adjustments calibration made as required.

xiii. Check evaporator and condenser, blowing out of coils with high-pressure washer and cleaning solution.

xiv. Clean drain pan and all drain pipelines.

xv. Check refrigerant and line for leakage. Inspection of the compressor, all piping, joints, and system components. Conduct pressure checking as required.

xvi. Check all motors and shaft bearings for incidence of wear and replace if needed.

xvii. Check the condition of all contacts in motors and controls. Ensure tightness of all connections and check evidence of over-heating. Correct as may be required.

xviii. Touch up, partial or complete painting as may be required to prevent corrosion.

xix. Clean diffuser grills.

xx. Check ductwork and insulation and replace if needed.

xxi. Submit a detailed report after each service maintenance

d. The company should be capable of offering a 24 hours on-call service for air conditioners and electrical and fire alarm systems to respond to unanticipated emergencies, particularly in the server room.

5. The following services should be included in the financial offer and should not be billed separately:

a. Travel and subsistence

b. Diagnosing issues that require a call out but no remedial work such as a circuit breaker tripping

6. Any costs related to the preparation and submission of tender bids are the sole responsibility of the tenderer.

7. Eligibility Criteria

All Tenders shall include the following:

a. Letters of Good Standing from:

a. Belize Tax Service

b. Belize Companies Registry

c. Belize Social Security Board

b. Current Trade License

c. Evidence of five (5) similar past jobs/contracts over the past three (3) years.

d. Two references

e. Evidence of Electric License for the electricians who will be servicing the electrical systems over the term of the contract.

f. Evidence of Certification in Air Condition maintenance for the AC technicians who will be servicing the AC systems over the term of the contract.

8. Evaluation Criteria

Bidders will be evaluated according to:

a. Capacity: formal academic qualification and Certification in related field

b. Specific Experience: Experience in providing the service requested

c. Past Performance: Similar Jobs undertaken in the past three (3) years

d. Integrity: On the information provided in respect of business certificates

e. Financial Offer

9. Only bids that satisfy the Eligibility Criteria will have their Technical and Financial Offers reviewed. The bid will be assessed on a weighted average – 50% for Technical Merit and 50% for Financial Offer.

10. Price should be inclusive of General Sales Tax (GST) payment of 12.5%.

11. Additional information can be obtained from Ian Smith at Tel: 828-5169 or by email at Ian.Smith@CITO.gov.bz.

12. Questions shall be type-written in English and shall be sent via email to the following address:

securitytenders2022@cito.gov.bz. The deadline for queries is 25th July 2022. Responses from CITO will be type-written in English and will be emailed to the requester and may also be made available to other Tenderers subject to confidentiality.

13. Tenders are to be submitted in separate Inner Envelopes – one for Technical Offer and another for Financial Offer – and both included in an outer envelope. The outer envelope should mark:

“TENDER FOR THE MONTHLY MAINTENANCE OF ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS AND QUARTERLY MAINTENANCE OF AIR CONDITION SYSTEMS AT THE BELIZE NATIONAL INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) CENTER BUILDING (BELMOPAN)”

14. Deadline for tender submission to the Central Information Technology Office, Belmopan is 1st August, 2022 at 10:00 am.

15. Tenders will be opened in the presence of the representatives of the tenderers on 2nd August, 2022 starting at 10:10 am.

16. The lowest or any tender will not necessarily be accepted. Late bids will be disqualified and returned to the sender unopened.

17. This procurement opportunity can also be viewed at <https://blz-cppnb.caricom.org> or <https://procurement.gov.bz>.